

GREECE

COUNTRY READER TABLE OF CONTENTS

Herbert Daniel Brewster	1940-1942 1946 1947-1952	Clerk, Athens Election Observer, City Unspecified, Greece ECA Officer, Athens
Claude G. Ross	1946-1949	Political Officer, Athens
Norbert L. Anschutz	1946-1951 1951-1953	Greek Desk, Washington, DC Political Officer, Athens
William G. Colman	1947-1948	Personnel Specialist, American Mission for Aid to Greece, Athens
Smith Simpson	1947-1949	Labor Attaché, Athens
Archer K. Blood	1947-1949 1950-1952	Consul, Thessaloniki Political Officer, Athens
Ben Franklin Dixon	1948-1951	Greek Desk, Washington, DC
John F. Correll	1948-1952	Labor Attaché, Athens
Victor Skiles	1948-1950 1954 1959-1960	Import Control Officer, Athens Director, Greece/Turkey/Iran Division, Washington, DC Director, Greece/Turkey/Iran Division, Athens
Ralph S. Smith	1948-1951	Public Affairs Officer, Patras
Jack K. McFall	1949	Economic Officer, Athens
James C. Warren, Jr.	1950-1954	Economic Analyst, Marshal Plan, Athens
Margaret V. Taylor	1951-1953	Information Officer, USIS, Thessaloniki
Thomas S. Estes	1952-1954	Director, Joint Administration Services, Athens
Corey Venning	1952-1954	Athens

Murat Williams	1953-1954	Consul General, Salonika
Royal D. Bisbee	1956-1958	Public Affairs Officer, Thessaloniki
Philip W. Ireland	1955-1958	Consul General, Thessaloniki
Edward W. Mulcahy	1956-1959	Consular Officer, Athens
Murat Williams	1956-1959	Greek, Turkish, and Iranian Affairs, Washington, DC
Charles W. McCaskill	1957-1960	Consular Officer, Thessaloniki
William E. Rau	1959-1961	Consular Officer; Thessaloniki
Victor L. Stier	1960-1965	Information Officer, USIS, Athens
John P. Owens	1960-1962 1962-1966 1966-1968	Consul, Thessaloniki Political Officer, Athens Greek Desk, Washington, DC
William Tapley Bennett, Jr.	1961-1964	Deputy Chief of Mission, Athens
Peter B. Swiers	1961-1964	Consular Officer, Athens
Herbert Daniel Brewster	1961-1965 1966-1969	Political Counselor, Athens Greek Desk, Washington, DC
Daniel Z. Zachary	1961-1962 1962-1965 1969-1973 1977-1981	Economic Officer, Athens Consul, Thessaloniki Economic Officer, Athens Consul General, Thessaloniki
Ronald D. Flack	1963-1965	Administrative, Economic and Consular Officer, Athens
Robert J. Wozniak	1963-1969	Assistant Cultural Officer, USIS, Athens
Norbert L. Anschutz	1964-1967	Deputy Chief of Mission, Athens
Harry I. Odell	1964-1968	Economic Officer, Athens, Greece
August Velletri	1964-1969	Political Officer, Athens
Stuart W. Rockwell	1965-1970	Deputy Assistant Secretary, Near East Affairs, Washington, DC

James C. Warren, Jr.	1965-1974	Manager of Esso-Papas, Athens
James H. Morton	1966-1968	Head of Consular Section, Thessaloniki
Robert V. Keeley	1966-1970	Political Officer, Athens
Arnold Denys	1967	Consular Officer, Athens
Lucius D. Battle	1967-1968	Assistant Secretary, Near Eastern Affairs, Washington, DC
Douglas Watson	1967-1968	Consular/Political Officer, Athens
Abraham M. Sirkin	1967-1972	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Athens
Barrington King	1967-1972	Political Officer, Athens
Archer K. Blood	1968-1970	Political Officer, Athens
A. David Fritzlan	1970-1971	Consul General, Thessaloniki
Douglas G. Hartley	1970-1972	Economic Officer, Athens
Lynne Lambert	1970-1973	Consular Officer, Athens
Diane Dillard	1970-1973	Junior Officer, Athens
Charles Stuart Kennedy	1970-1974	Consul General, Athens
Elizabeth Ann Brown	1970-1975	Political Counselor, Athens
Leonardo M. Williams	1971-1975	Assistant Cultural Officer/Director; Bi-National Center, Athens
Frank Athanason	1972-1974	Chief, Army Section, Military Assistance Group, Athens
	1974-1977	Liaison Office, NATO Headquarters, Athens
Richard L. Jackson	1972-1975	Deputy, Consulate General, Thessaloniki
	1975-1977	Commercial Attaché, Athens
Dean Dizikes	1973-1975	Consul General, Athens
Robert S. Dillon	1974	European Affairs, Washington, DC

Wells Stabler	1974	Assistant Secretary, European Affairs, Washington, DC
George S. Vest	1974	Deputy Assistant Secretary, European Affairs, Washington, DC
Jack B. Kubisch	1974-1977	Ambassador, Greece
Michael M. Mahoney	1974-1975	Consular Officer, Athens
George M. Barbis	1975-1979	Political Officer, Athens
John Ratigan	1976-1978	Greek Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Ronald D. Flack	1976-1980	Commercial Attaché, Athens
Robert J. McCloskey	1978-1981	Ambassador, Greece
Gregory L. Mattson	1979-1983	Political Counselor, Athens, Greece
Charles W. McCaskill	1979-1983	Political Counselor, Athens
William E. Rau	1980-1984	Economic Counselor, Athens
David T. Jones	1982-1983	Greek Base Negotiations Team, State Department, Washington, DC
Richard Sackett Thompson	1982-1984	Greek Desk Officer, Washington, DC
David M. Evans	1982-1986	Political Advisor to Commander-in-Chief, London, England
John Nix	1983-1985	Political Officer, Athens
Robert J. Wozniak	1983-1988	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Athens
David T. Jones	1984-1985	Greek Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Parker W. Borg	1984-1986	Deputy in the Office of Counter Terrorism, Washington, DC
Elizabeth Ann Swift	1984-1986	Deputy Consul General, Athens
Perry W. Linder	1984-1988	Administrative Officer, Athens
John Nix	1985-1987	Political/Military Officer, Athens

Robert V. Keeley	1985-1989	Ambassador, Greece
Ellen Boneparth	1986-1989	Labor Attaché; Athens
Gregory L. Mattson	1986-1990	Political Counselor, Athens
James Alan Williams	1990-1994	Deputy Chief of Mission, Athens
Thomas M.T. Niles	1993-1997	Ambassador, Greece
Barbara H. Nielsen	1999-2001	Cultural Affairs Officer, Athens
Alphonse F. La Porta	2000-2003	Political Advisor to Commander of NATO forces in Southern Region, Naples, Italy

HERBERT DANIEL BREWSTER

Clerk

Athens (1940-1942)

Election Observer

City Unspecified, Greece (1946)

ECA Officer

Athens (1947-1952)

Herbert Daniel Brewster was born in Greece of American parents in 1917. A His first posting in Greece was as a clerk at the embassy in Athens from 1940-42. As a Foreign Service officer he served in Athens, Ankara, Beirut, Paris, Berlin, Naples and in the Department of State. His assignments were mainly concerned with Greek affairs. He was interviewed in 1991 and 1992 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

BREWSTER: By way of introduction the thrust of my career has been primarily on my rather unique background: the role of languages, in my Foreign Service work, the help that this facility gave me, the way the assignments were selected, and then working with the languages I had. It was a career that was a very rewarding one in that I was not out of place at any post; every assignment made very good sense.

Q: Your assignments centered around Greece, Turkey, and NATO. When were you born and where were you born?

BREWSTER: I was born in Salonika, Greece, of missionary parents on December 4, 1917, and lived there until I was thirteen. I began my schooling in a German school, starting with German

and Greek in the first grade and French in the fourth grade. It was a small class of eight because the German school had just been permitted to reopen after World War I. There were a couple of Americans, two or three Greeks, and some from the Jewish community in the class. We spoke English at home, but Greek was the lingua franca. At thirteen we came to New York City. I went to the Lincoln Preparatory School of Columbia University and was actually moved forward from the sixth to the eighth grade because the German instruction was so very thorough. The only English that I had had before that time was a biweekly letter to my grandparents and speaking English at home. My mother never knew when I did speak in a dream whether it was going to be in German, Greek or English; I had the option, depending on whom I was mad at at the time. Then after a sabbatical in the United States, in the Boston area, we returned to Greece...

Q: *That was when?*

BREWSTER: 1930. I went back for two years to the German school in Athens, moved away before Hitler came in, and went to Athens College for two years. I graduated from Athens College -- an American High School in Greece -- in the so-called special class, about fifteen Greek Americans who had come out as boarders to learn Greek. All that work was handled in English. It was very good preparation, but I did need a year at Phillips Andover to grow up, round out, and adjust to American life. I graduated at sixteen and a half and so I had a senior prep year at Phillips Andover. That laid the groundwork for a very lucky break of a four year scholarship at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. The six Olin Scholars had to be selected; regionally and two of them had to be from West of the Mississippi or abroad. In 1935 I doubt whether there were more than three or four candidates for the latter slots. The oral exam, which I dreaded, was rather simple and centered on what the Acropolis looked like. I majored in German and French and was on my way to the University of Bordeaux in June of 1939 for an additional year of study for a master's degree, but war clouds were gathering. So I went to Athens, where my parents were, in August. Suddenly the Germans invaded Poland. September 1, 1939. My father said let's go up to the Legation and you volunteer. So I went up there and they couldn't take on volunteers, but the Ambassador's Special Assistant, Stephen Kalligas, had to go in for basic training and get into uniform so I had forty-five days at the Legation for the munificent pay of \$80.00 a month. Stephen came back to his job and I then went to Robert College in Turkey and taught English for the balance of the school year, until June of 1940, by which time Washington had established a regular clerk's job in Athens. That permitted Cavendish Cannon and Burton Berry to establish the job for me.

Q: *Cavendish Cannon was the Ambassador at the time?*

BREWSTER: No, both were Second Secretaries. Cavendish Cannon took the most interest in me and sent a telegram to Robert College saying that the job was open for me, did I want to come? So I took it. I started June 4, 1940, two days after King Constantine was born. I will always remember now when his birthday was. In retrospect, that first year was spent in the code room and the file room and using my Greek. The invasion by the Germans came in the month of April, 1941, and the British were all kicked out at that time.

Q: *Who was the Ambassador at that time?*

BREWSTER: The Minister was Lincoln MacVeagh, who had been there since he was appointed by Franklin Roosevelt.

Q: What was your impression of how the Embassy viewed the situation? For a while anyway the war was elsewhere, so at that time what was the attitude of the Minister and staff towards the war? Also how did they view the Greek political situation?

BREWSTER: They were conscious, very conscious by the time I got there, of the imminent war and its meaning for Greece. This came on October 28th, the day on which General Metaxas said to the Italians, "No." They said they were moving into Albania and the Greeks said "No." The Greek-Albanian war started in earnest that winter. Many soldiers were lost by frostbite that winter, so we were in a war with the hospitals filling up. The Greeks were into it already; it was in a serious situation because they foresaw the Germans coming through Greece later. What the Greeks prided themselves on was having held the Italians up in Albania which threw the timetable off for the Germans to come south through the Balkans, and that affected their timetable on their move vis-a-vis the Soviet Union which carried into that terrible winter.

Q: What was our attitude at the Embassy, was it one of neutrality or one of encouragement?

BREWSTER: We were doing what we could to encourage. Lincoln MacVeagh was a great philhellene; he was close to them, he spoke Greek as a scholar, so we were well clued in. And the Greeks had the natural propensity to come to us. The British and we were the only two nations and they saw the British phasing out, so they were on our doorstep a great deal of the time.

Q: How did we react when the Germans came through, defeated the Yugoslavs and came down? What did the Embassy do?

BREWSTER: The Germans move went through Yugoslavia and arrived at the Greek border April 6, 1941. It took them twenty-two days to make it to Athens and raise the swastika on the Acropolis. With their very fast move through and with the British retreating, we were by that time looking at the job of taking over British interests. It was obvious that we would be doing that as long as we could. It was a hectic wartime period. We burned all of our cables, we disposed of things, that was one of our big chores. The Germans came through. One side-bar on it is that the British left eighty cars down on the beach at Varkiza as they pulled out on the ships. The Embassy had thirteen people and we were able to sequester one car apiece. It was my first vehicle -- a 1937 Ford convertible. I did not know how to drive but I got an Embassy driver who helped me learn fast. But that was April 27 and we were closed down by June 10th.

Q: Why were we closed down?

BREWSTER: We were closed down because the United States closed down the Italian Consulate General in Chicago, and the Italians equated Athens with the consulate general. They said, "You do that and we will kick you out." And so we left. This was six months before Pearl Harbor.

Q: In the meantime, did we have much to do with the German occupying army or the Italian occupiers?

BREWSTER: With the Italians. The Germans went right through and turned over matters to the Italians administratively, so we did have some actions with the Italians at that point. They were the ones who communicated the order to close down; it may have come from Rome. So everybody there -- and you had Foy Kohler and George Lewis Jones, both third secretaries; Cavendish Cannon and Burton Berry, Second secretaries; and the staff -- went to Rome and then waited for eight weeks for visas to go through the occupied Balkans to Istanbul and Cairo, respectively. Foy Kohler and Lewis Jones went to Cairo; Burton Berry came to Istanbul and opened a listening post there for the Balkans.

Q: Before you left Greece, during the time of the occupation, what was the attitude of the Greeks -- you were as close to being a native of Greece as one could possibly be -- toward what had happened?

BREWSTER: They were mourning the Greek-Albanian front campaign, which was still going on. There were heavy losses in that battle. You were in a war situation. When the British left many soldiers hid in Greek homes and were around and the Italians were trying to round them up. Many preferred to stay there or didn't get away in time. In fact I was on a trolley one day and because I looked like someone who could very well be a British soldier who had gotten lost, there was someone in the back making signs to me to get off, get off. Finally I did get off, and he came around and said, "They are looking for you; I know that man, he's with the secret police and they are after you". (They had some Greeks who were working with the other side.) Nothing happened from it, but it was the sort of atmosphere you were in. It was tense.

Q: How well did you feel the Italians were taking hold? How did the Italians and Greeks mesh in this particular part of the occupation?

BREWSTER: Not well, not well. The Greeks couldn't stand the Italians. They had just been fighting them and that was very difficult for them to take. But some Greeks bounce back as long as business is going on; they were putting things away and buying gold and making life liveable. Of course everybody was worried and the subsequent winter was a very bad winter. They had Swedish ships bringing food in because there was real starvation in Greece the winter of '41-'42.

The relations between the Italians and Germans were not good either. I can illustrate that by what I thought was one of Burton Berry's smartest moves. When we got to Rome Burton said, "Come on Dan, let's go back; we've got eight weeks to wait out here and I've got things to do. You come along as my interpreter, and we'll go back to Athens. There is nothing that says we can't go back while we're waiting." So we went back and stayed at Loring Hall. All we had was Loring Hall of the American School of Classical Studies and the safe there and he set up a consulate. His idea was -- we're here, we can at least do consular type work and help people out and show them that we are not really out of it, that we love them and all that. He was a very good person with the Greeks; he also had one of the greatest Greek coin collections to which he wanted to add. Two Italian soldiers came in one day, gun in hand, and one said, "Open that safe." Burton said, "What do you mean?" and he said, "Open the safe; I'm telling you to open the safe." Burton told him,

"There's nothing in there; we just have some papers in there. It's an American safe and you have no reason to ask that." "Yes, yes, we want it done." "I tell you what, go to the German Kommandatura and get the general to sign a document asking me to open the safe and bring that back." They were never seen again. They were Italians working on their own, throwing their weight around but with no real authority because the Germans had bigger fish to fry. So that was an illustration I think of how the German and Italian relations were not so good. But the Germans went on to Africa, after the big battle of Crete in May 1941, so that's where their interests were. They were fighting people and the others were just left as an administrative backdrop.

Q: The defeat of the British in Crete must have been a terrible blow to all of you, wasn't it?

BREWSTER: Yes, it was. They fought very hard and the Greeks fought very hard there too. They remember that period too.

Q: Then you all took the train and went to...

BREWSTER: We came through the Balkans and ended up in Istanbul, and then I moved to Ankara for fifteen months as a clerk. But they had opened a listening post in Istanbul to cover the Balkans now occupied by the Germans.

Q: There had not been a post in Istanbul before?

BREWSTER: Yes, the post was there; it was converted into a place where the United States had a Romanian desk officer following events from Romania, interviewing Romanian refugees. Lee Metcalfe was there, he did Yugoslavia; I did Greece when I came down with Homer and Margery Davis. He was the president of Athens College who also came to Turkey. So we had three persons on Greece and one each on the other countries. Greece was very heavy because we had to cover Smyrna, or Izmir, as the boats called "Caiques" were coming out that way and a lot of the leaders came through on their way to set up the Greek government in exile in Cairo.

Q: You were in Ankara then for eighteen months or more?

BREWSTER: Just fifteen months and then I moved back to Istanbul.

BREWSTER: Then in March of 1946 I went out for the Greek elections. The team was headed by James Keeley; Bruce Lansdale was on the team and anybody they could gather who spoke Greek. We went out for two weeks and chased around the Greek countryside. On election day I flew in on a little one engine plane, landed on a Tripoli road -- that is the way two of us were conveyed in -- to just stand in at the election booths and watch the voting.

Q: This was of course a very important election; what was your impression of it and the issues?

BREWSTER: The Russians had boycotted the election, they didn't come, the British sent some people in, the French sent a few and we had the bulk of the people and we covered as many outposts as we could.

Q: What was the situation in Greece? You had been away for five or six years, you come back and obviously it was devastated economically, but was it a dangerous place to be?

BREWSTER: No. The ground war really hadn't...and the guerrilla war...I was there through all of it and it was not a threat to us in the cities at all. They had had fifteen months of this, things were at peace, they were relieved. Things were going well as far as I could tell.

Q: Even up in the mountainside?

BREWSTER: I don't think that by 1946 it had developed all that much. You didn't have massacres with brothers killing brothers. That came out much more in '47 and '48 because then you were fighting against a Van Fleet and the Greek Army -- they were getting the Army people out. And before it had just been sniping.

Q: You went out there with what idea -- hoping the democratic side would win? Then what was the other side?

BREWSTER: Well the main side was that the elections would be honest so the Russians could not claim that these were dishonest elections. It was -- do you want to chose to be on the Russian side, the communist side, or the democratic side? The Russians did not want to put that up to a vote in which they participated. And we were there primarily to prove to the world...It was like a small U.N. operation going in, because where our observers saw something going wrong or if someone came up and said, "Hey, I saw him putting in two," they would go to bat and talk to the election clerk about it, and talk to the judge and so on. You were there as judicial advisors and observers. And the same thing happened on the question of the King. This was March and the other one was in September of '46.

Q: And you were at both of those?

BREWSTER: No, I didn't go to the second.

Q: And then you went back to Greece, which was fascinating but not an easy time. You served there about three years?

BREWSTER: Five years.

Q: Oh yes, from '47 to '52.

BREWSTER: I came back -- and this is one of the side-bars: The Embassy had said, "You're never coming back here, not until your parents retire." We arrived September of 1947 and I said, "What's my job?" They said, "There isn't any job. We have nothing from Washington saying what you are to do. So you go down...Mike Crosby has just done six months in the visa section, we will give you that job. Learn from Mike in a week and then he can move up into the political

section and do that job." That is where everybody starts, and you had the visa applicants all way round the block at that time. So I broke into my Greek and used that a lot, there were eight or ten Greek staff as support; it was down in the basement of that building. Then I moved to the economics section and John Enepekides was writing prolific dispatches and all I had to do was just look at them, ask him a few questions and edit them and put my signature on them.

Q: He being the local employee, a Greek employee who, as in so many places, knew the scene and did the whole thing?

BREWSTER: Yes, they did they whole thing. Constance Harvey was my immediate boss; there were just two of us in the economic section. I never could have written one of those dispatches from scratch; he had the facts and was a first class Greek employee. So that went on for a year, until on July 1, '49 when the Foreign Service had to dislocate one hundred officers to either USIA or ECA.

Q: ECA was the Economic Cooperation Administration which later became AID?

BREWSTER: Yes. So they offered me Branch Public Affairs Officer to Salonika as one choice, the other was Special Assistant to the ECA Mission Chief, who was John Nuveen. The John Nuveen, The Bond Magnate, himself. I chose John Nuveen; since we were expecting our first child in thirty days and we wanted to stay on in Athens.

Q: Where had you gotten married?

BREWSTER: We were married January, 1946, when I was back here waiting for the Greek elections. We had our doctor all chosen there, so I went with ECA. And that was a very interesting assignment because by 1952, at least, they had two hundred American officers working at the ECA Mission. We were running Greece; we had a weekly meeting with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet every Wednesday at 12:00 where we sat face to face and handled problems directly with the Prime Minister. Anyway it was full control; we were spending two hundred million dollars and we wanted to be sure where it was going. Our directors were very highly qualified people, many of them senior personnel. The whole rice program, for instance, grew up in Anthele. Peasant people said that you could never grow rice. Well, the American technical personnel did it in a small village right up near Lamia where you had enough water. There is a statue honoring Walter Packard now in the village square. You also had a currency control person performing the bank function to be sure that they didn't misspend their aid. The foreign trade administration had seven or eight Americans who were hands on advisors to the Ministry of National Economy.

My job was reading the thirteen Greek newspapers by 8:30 in the morning and sitting in on a briefing for the directors and the whole staff where I could give them the highlights of what they needed to know, and have it done on American basis without having a Greek national do it, where you wouldn't feel so free to discuss "now what do we do about this." That was basically the job and I did it three years and then Bill Kontos, who was also on the staff, succeeded me for three years.

Q: During this period of time you were there -- and it was a very traumatic time -- what was happening on the political-military scene in Greece and how did we view developments there?

BREWSTER: That was handled very much by Van Fleet. The great disappointment of Van Fleet and all his generals and staff was that the Greek Army was a city army. It did not want to get out and really tussle with, or try to suppress, the guerillas. They were having great reluctance getting into battle with them. They were good on the periphery and they would fend off...trying to run into the city, but they would not get out and match up with them. To the military that seemed awful. They attributed it to the fact that Van Fleet did turn things around on that score and so he became the hero of the right wing, and he was conservative himself. One doesn't know -- among the Greeks you had the right wing that was glad to be going after these fellows, but there were a lot of Center Union people who could just as well have been on the other side, or might have been if they had been back in their own little village. It was a fight with your conscience a bit as to how hard you clobbered these people and what sort of a war to run against them.

Q: Some of the stories you heard -- about the mass deportation of children, if you weren't with us you were against us, the wiping out of small villages by both sides -- must have hardened sides up or was it still a matter of debate about far right or far left?

BREWSTER: No, it got to be a very personal thing. With the Greeks if you have lost an uncle you forget what side he's on. He died, he was killed -- and I think that things would go very much in terms of "did you lose anybody?, have you lost someone?, is the brother safe?, was the village surrounded?, did our house get burned down?" It was very much which end of the thing you ended on for all these people in the villages. In all those years we were able to travel; the one restriction or one advice was not to travel the coast road from Corinth back or forth to Athens at night. You might have a raid, because they were back in those mountains and rocks and three or four could come down and stop a car. Not that they would kill you but they were sort of semi-brigands, the ones that got in that close. We still traveled, we traveled less, but we would go down to Mycenaea dunes but we would come back during the day, in the afternoon. Northern Greece had a lot more troubles up there.

There was also a big debate between General Van Fleet and Dwight Griswold, Governor of Nebraska. He was supposed to be the political counselor to Van Fleet. The Embassy was very much "anti" all this accumulation of more generals, more advisors; the Embassy, frankly, also resented the ECA. When you have twenty-two officers and the others have two hundred who are running major issues it leads to jealousies.

Q: Headquarters for these contingents was the Tamblon Building, the Treasury Building, right in the heart of Athens.

BREWSTER: Yes.

Q: I have heard stories of how some Greek politicians at receptions would go up to the ECA head and completely ignore the Ambassador. Most of the time that was who, Henry Grady?

BREWSTER: Yes, and then Jack Peurifoy.

Q: What was your impression of how Henry Grady ran things and how he got along with the American military and the ECA?

BREWSTER: On a confrontational basis, the relations were not good. By the time I got over to the ECA in June of 1949 the ECA was very strong, I don't know that Grady lasted much longer than that because they brought out Peurifoy as a sort of pacifier. You know -- "come on out, we can't take this Grady situation much longer." It was too much power and too much money being expended, but it saved Greece. A lot of Greeks probably put a good deal of money in their pockets in that period too. I was fortunate in one sense, I went over to the ECA job and they said, "what are you going to classification of your job?" I said, "I am at present an FSO-5, \$4500." "\$4500? Oh no! That's not in line with our pay scale. How's \$6600? Why don't we just write it up that way?" I said, "All right by me, if you want to give me a temporary raise."

Q: For the record, there was a very difficult time for some years with the ECA and then AID having a different salary schedule much higher than the Foreign Service scale. Different quarters, better quarters, everything was better; a tremendous amount of friction. It didn't make for a smooth working relationship.

BREWSTER: This probably happened at other posts too. But that led to probably a most interesting assignment. In July of 1952 I went to Paris with the Greeks and the Turks on each side. They were just joining NATO. I had the Greek delegation of eight, the Turkish delegation of eight, and I was the USRO (U.S. Regional Officer) for Greece and Turkey.

Q: I want to get to that but first what about Peurifoy? I have heard in other interviews that he was a hard charger and not universally liked. An operator was sort of the term. I have heard both plus and minus. What was your impression of how he operated in that situation?

BREWSTER: He was a hard charger. He came into a difficult situation and worked at it. Someone right here in the city who can tell you is Norbert Anschutz. He came out as his Deputy Chief of Mission.

He was in the military and knew Peurifoy well. Peurifoy later took him to Thailand with him. Norb is still here, he lost his wife to cancer this summer; he is a very good person. He was competent and an affable type, you could get along with him. The Greeks liked him until he got to playing hardball. John Nuveen was a smooth fellow. He had major problems with the size of their mission; trying to find housing for hundred people and solving the PX problems. Nuveen himself had the air of a gentleman and was an excellent businessman, but I am sure he could also be stiff or he wouldn't have been brought out to that job.

Q: What was your impression about the Greek relationship here? This relationship in many ways resembles what developed in Vietnam, where if things weren't working out we were taking it over, and this can leave a bitter taste. Maybe we reaped some of that bitterness in later years, in the seventies. Was this at all disturbing or was it just a feeling that the Greeks can't do it, they'll squabble too much, so lets just get on with it?

BREWSTER: The Greeks really appreciated the amounts that were coming in on the economic side and the aid they were getting. They frequently felt "Oh, I know things better than that guy." But then the Agricultural-Rice, Walter Packard, man came out and really did things going through the ministries, gets down to the local mayor of the town, persuades him and the local agricultural specialists that its possible. But these hands on people got out there. People like Bruce Lansdale from the Farm School at Salonika were great admirers of these people because they really knew their business. They would say, "This can be done," bring out pictures to prove the point; it got to be like a Point Four program. Much of it was dependent on the project and individuals; if the project was constructive like that I am sure it was very welcome. If it was a question of cutting back and not letting them import another forty Mercedes then they didn't like it. By and large the economy was going along well enough that they appreciated it.

Until '56 you really didn't have stability on the political side. Those governments were coming and going about every twelve months: Sophoulis, Tsaldaris. None of them were very good, they brought in all their old cronies. Once 1956 came along and Karamanlis was elected Prime Minister, we phased out on major economic aid. In fact I was there in 1963 and for the seventeenth time we told them "the last \$30 million dollars of aid, this is the last." Ambassador Labouisse told Karamanlis that, but Vice-President Johnson wanted a trip, the one when he visited Iran and Turkey and he came through Greece to tell Karamanlis for the eighteenth time. He came for the meeting at 10:00 in the morning and read from his one page document and Karamanlis across the table responded, "Was that it?", meaning did we have to come down or could we have handled this by phone? You don't need to send a Vice-President out to just do that. By that time economic aid was over.

Q: Let's go back to Paris; you were in NATO from 1952 to 1955. What was the relationship between Greece and Turkey that you were dealing with?

BREWSTER: Greece and Turkey were both admitted to NATO in November of 1951. That was the time when NATO was set up in Paris; Lord Ismay, the NATO Council, the whole shebang. We had nine officers who worked with Burke Elbrick and Edwin M. Martin: Martin Hillenbrand was "Mr. Germany;" Joe Scott, Mr. Italy, and so on. I was assigned to the two newest members that came in. The significant part was that they were new boys on the block and not very welcome. The Danes had voted against them, they had to be pulled around. What you were basically doing was having two-thirds of GTI suddenly a part of Europe.

Q: GTI being Greece, Turkey and Iran?

BREWSTER: Which is what we were a part of. It was like saying "You are now Europeans." They had a time adjusting. They both sent in first class teams to make the best impression on others; it was their first multi-lateral venture. Frequently they would come to us and say, "Well how are you going to vote on this?" " Tell us what that meant." "How do you see this as an issue that will affect us?" We were the listening "colleagues" where we could sit down with them and say, "Come on now, don't hold this one up just because of that word. This is what's being achieved." It was breaking them in. I was assigned primarily because I had been in Turkey and Greece and it made good sense, and I spoke the one language.

Q: I remember many years later I was in Naples talking to a man, in the position you later became political advisor to, saying that really the Greek-Turkish combination was strictly that they were both keeping their eye on the other and that the Soviets were not the prime concern of either. What was the attitude here in the early fifties; how did our Greek and Turkish representatives look at the mission of NATO?

BREWSTER: They liked it; it was bringing them into a new club and the club was influential countries where you could see people -- foreign ministers would come by. It was bringing them in from the outposts. And they weren't mad at each other; they were both as good as they could be but they didn't have bilateral problems. They didn't have overflight problems and things of that sort in any major way. They sent in their best teams in an effort to impress the other teams, the donor countries, that "we're deserving."

Q: So they weren't at each other. But this was at the height of the Cold War, the Korean War was not yet over; how did they feel about the Soviet threat?

BREWSTER: The Turks never spoke about it that I can think of, and the others -- I think it was just a reflection of their own guerilla war. I don't think they were worried about a Soviet thrust, but they were glad to follow what was being designed for Europe even though they were on the periphery of it: the strengthening that was being done in Germany, the role of Germany, the role of France in it. They were tag-enders; perhaps 10% of the effort was devoted to Greece and Turkey, the big issues were amongst the big countries involved.

Q: Things had not settled down at that time; NATO was still growing, still in its early development stages.

BREWSTER: There were big issues between the Germans and the French, in the rearming of the Germans. That was key.

Q: How did you find your role? You had your two clients there; did you find yourself spending a lot of time with other Americans, and maybe other NATO representatives, acting as the friend in court for the Turks and the Greeks? Explaining their interests and desires to people maybe looking askance at these people from the periphery coming in?

BREWSTER: No, I didn't sense that. In my contacts with them I didn't want to be interpreting what I thought the Greeks wanted. I didn't want to be in the role of an advocate because with a Greek or Turk you never know whether what they are saying is the position or whether they are going to go back and revise it. And then the boss says, "You never should have told them that." Bingo! There is so much in play on that side. But I was there at their beck and call; had they not come in I wouldn't have been there, that job would not have had to be filled. It came at a very good time and led in to the Turkish desk officer job.

Q: Did you get any feel about how the American circle at NATO felt about France and France's role in NATO?

BREWSTER: I don't have enough...

Q: Well you wouldn't have been focusing on that. Then you came back to Washington for about three years; from 1955 to 1958 you were the Turkish desk officer. What were the main things you did?

BREWSTER: Setting up all of the meetings that the Turkish Embassy wanted in State or with Defense, participating in those, screening the reports from Turkey, the messages and telegrams and so on, answering all of those. The Turks were very polite, very good; they are excellent diplomats in their manner, their suaveness. The Ambassador, and another person, paid attention to us -- we had a Deputy Director above us. They know how to go about keeping the desk officer informed and a part of it as if they appreciated your value, your worth. The one difficult thing was the horrendous night in Istanbul when they wiped out a lot of the Greek stores. That was on my watch, just about as I came on board; I don't think I had been there more than a week.

Q: Didn't they attack the Patriarch or something? These weren't Easter riots were they?

BREWSTER: No. It was in the middle of '55. It was what led the Greeks to cut down their community from something like 40,000 to 8,000 in subsequent years. It was just an outrageous riot. Are the historian's books out yet for '55?

Q: I don't know.

BREWSTER: That was the only difficult part. It was basically a normal desk job. (In the case of Greece I was Country Director.) The Turks were responsive to things we asked them to do. I think, but I would have to check it out, that we did ask them to cut the oil off at one point, in the '56 crisis. And they did it.

Q: This was '56; this was the Suez crisis?

BREWSTER: Suez. Again, I would have to dig into that to find out what they did. One thing on the Greek-Turkish thing that I have run into is that the Greeks will not acknowledge that the Turks have ever done anything for the Americans. "They never were at your side." I took one Greek Vice-President into see our Vice-President and he came right back and said, "Well now, from what I hear they did pretty well in Korea. I understand they were rather outstanding, almost brutal, soldiers on the Korean front, and they saved our neck a number of times with the way they thrust their sixteen hundred men into the thing." -- That's my last memory, forget about World War II. That's something that the Greeks never think of, it's a question of who's done what to whom. The Turks were fierce fighters.

Q: How were the relations between the Greeks and the Turks in those days? With the riots, etc., were you finding yourself sort of the Turkish advocate in NEA as opposed to the Greek one for matters of aid and others like that?

BREWSTER: No. That was one bad case; we were all against the Turks on that one. I put up no defense or anything of that sort. I choose not to say I was Turkish desk officer when I am around Greeks. But I exaggerate because my thesis on aid economic and all that is that in most cases a

good handshake and a glass of beer and sitting down with key people can save you \$30 or \$50 million dollars if you only explain your reasons. That's why this joining NATO was useful. They were being brought into a big club and they were on their best behavior. That was the time when you could have gotten almost anything from them. So I came off well with the Turks because they all knew me from the work I had done for three years with them. The Turks do not complain; if they have complaints they keep them quiet. The Greeks will operate differently and you are exposed to much more complaining.

Q: We can agree because I spent four years as Consul General in Athens and I found it wearying; I was very glad to leave. Individually I liked the Greeks very much, but I found the constant complaining and accusations of the Americans being behind everything just gets tiresome after awhile.

BREWSTER: And it goes on now. The Macedonia thing; we are to blame for everything.

CLAUDE G. ROSS
Political Officer
Athens (1946-1949)

Claude G. Ross, a Californian, was born in 1917. A Foreign Service officer, he served in Ecuador, Greece, New Caledonia, Beirut, Cairo, Guinea and as ambassador to the Central African Republic, Haiti and Tanzania as well as in the Department of State. He was interviewed by Horace Torbert in 1989.

Q: You went to Athens next.

ROSS: Right. This was the only time that I got a post that I asked for.

Q: You're one up on me; I never got one.

ROSS: This was the only time. Ambassador Scotten was going to the United States, and I'd been there now close on to four years. By this time, V-J Day had come and gone, and he knew I would be leaving at some point. He asked me what I would like to do, so I gave him a list of three posts -- Athens, Madrid, and Vienna, in that order. He got to Washington, and shortly afterwards, I got a message from him saying, "Sorry, couldn't get you Athens. You're going to Madrid." Well, that was all right. I certainly couldn't complain.

About two weeks later, while he was still in Washington, he sent me another message: "You've got Athens." So in November of 1945, I got orders to go to Athens. As it turned out, I didn't leave Quito until February of 1946, because my replacement, who was coming from Lisbon, Halleck Rose, never received his orders. It wasn't until January that this omission was discovered. Finally, they cranked it all up, and I left Quito in February 1946, my wife, meanwhile, having gone back to Los Angeles in December of '45 with our two-year-old son.

Q: *She had the child in Quito?*

ROSS: She did. I might say, parenthetically, we nearly lost her there. The birth itself was easy, but she went into shock and bled some hours after. I had to go tearing around town in the dead of night to get the doctor. Fortunately, I got him. He told me later that if I'd been about five minutes later getting back to the house . . .

Q: *We had just gotten you to Athens from Quito.*

ROSS: I'd been in Los Angeles, taking leave, then went to Washington briefly for a little period of indoctrination. I worked on the desk for about a week or two, in the course of which I met my Ambassador, Lincoln MacVeagh. He said, "You're going to be a political officer. I'm delighted to have you." So he had me primed for that.

We went to Athens by ship, the first time in my life I'd ever traveled by ship. However, it was not exactly a luxury liner. We went out in a decommissioned naval transport. I don't think they had done anything to decommission it, except to take the guns out of the gun tubs. The crew was still the same, and all announcements to passengers were made on a "Now hear this" basis.

Q: *This was a U.S. ship?*

ROSS: Yes, this was called the SS Marine Shark. It had been a troop transport. I don't know how many passengers it carried, but the accommodations, such as they were, seemed to be full. There were maybe three or four two-person cabins. There was a number of six-person cabins, with three bunks on either side of the room. Then there were large dormitory arrangements. As I say, they had done nothing, really, to convert this to civilian use. My wife shared one of these with five other ladies, one of the six-berth rooms. I shared one with five children, five boys below the age of ten, including my own son.

Q: *Nice and restful.*

ROSS: So I had from the second of May until the sixteenth of May in these conditions. There were about 15 or 16 deck chairs. I think I counted them once. They had been appropriated by the first people aboard. We were not among them. We couldn't use the one kind of recreation area -- a saloon -- aboard the ship, because the ship was deporting somebody back to Italy for white slavery and drugs.

Q: *A Mafia type.*

ROSS: Yes. He and a couple of his cohorts were in there, so that was out. You had to sit on the hatches or maybe up in the gun tubs.

Q: *This was what year?*

ROSS: This was the month of May. It was all right. From that standpoint, there was no problem. But I remember vividly there were three sittings at meals, and if you were on the second or third,

you didn't have to have a menu to know what dinner had consisted of, because it was all over the tablecloth. These naval types who were serving were smoking cigarettes with ashes this long on the cigarette dropping into the food. It was a colorful crossing.

We got there, and I called on the Chargé d'Affaires. The Ambassador was still in the States. He said, "Mr. Ross, we're happy to see you. We're particularly happy. You know, yesterday we fired the administrative officer. We would appreciate it very much if you'd take over the job until we can get a new man out here in maybe two months." I said, "Of course." What could I say? Well, I was administrative officer for my first year there.

This was a year in which the post more than doubled, because, as you will recall, I got there in May of '46, and in September of '46, just after the plebiscite for the return of the King, the communist rebellion began, the Andartes, as they were called, came down out of the hills. So the civil war was under way.

The British, who had been the power that was shoring up the Greek Government at that point, were finding it financially impossible to continue the burden. We took over with aid to Greece and Turkey, and the Truman Doctrine. So from about March of '47, we took over part of the burden that the British had had. That meant a tremendous augmentation of staff. When I entered the job as administrative officer, I had half-time services of a secretary, two code clerks, one disbursing officer, who had an American clerk working under him. That was it as far as American staff was concerned. I was the next to junior career officer on the staff. So it was a real challenge to administer the post.

I had, as it turned out, a very useful professional experience. I learned all kinds of things. I became a certifying officer almost at the very beginning, but then I was signing my name, certifying accounts in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. It really puts iron in your soul.

Q: You probably picked up some Greek, too, didn't you?

ROSS: I should have mentioned this perhaps earlier. I began learning Greek the week after I met my wife. That was before I took the written exams for the Foreign Service. So I had a fair amount when I got there.

Along about April of '47, shortly after the Truman Doctrine was inaugurated, we began getting the advance people for the aid mission and the buildup of Embassy staff. We were inspected by H. Meryl Cochran. I have been inspected by him twice. I was inspected by him in Ecuador, and then I was inspected by him in Athens. His coming was heralded a month or two before hand by tales out of posts that he was inspecting en route to Athens -- horror stories about sacking this officer and that, including my counterpart in one Embassy. (Laughs) So we were braced for this. He came, he did his inspection. As I say, I'd been inspected before, so that, I suppose, was a bit of a help.

One thing happened while he was there which really struck me. Near the end of the inspection, he sat down one day and composed a telegram to the Department on our staffing problems, because we were really being run ragged. Three days later, we got a message from the

Department, assigning six officers and five clerks. These were Class 2 and 3 officers, and my replacement as an administrative officer, who happened to be a staff officer, but a staff officer of Class 1 or 2, a retired lieutenant colonel. Then for the secretaries, what they had done was to go around and pull one out of five different European offices.

Q: So you really got some attention.

ROSS: Yes. That telegram assigned Harold Minor to be political counselor, Horace Smith to be number two on the economic side, a senior Class 3 officer to be head of the consular section, poor Tom Wasson, who was later killed in Jerusalem, to be number two in the political section. It was a high-powered group of officers.

Shortly after that, this administrative type arrived. I relinquished my duties and became a political officer and aide to the Ambassador. I had already been protocol officer from the time I arrived at the post, so I was used to a lot of correspondence with the Foreign Office on protocol matters and all kinds of things. I also was liaison with the Palace, which was very interesting. That became more and more interesting as we began to get visitors from the outside, who obviously wanted to see the King and Queen.

I was aide to the Ambassador, and this was a trying time for Ambassador MacVeagh, because with the advent of the aid mission, the lines of authority got very blurred. So there was a conflict that developed between him and the aid director, ex-Governor Griswold. This went back and forth and back and forth, and eventually, the Department sort of knuckled under, and Ambassador MacVeagh lost the contest.

While all of this was going on, his wife was dying of cancer at the post, and it was a very difficult time for him. About a month and a half before she died, he moved me into his office. I had my desk in his large ambassadorial office.

Q: He wanted somebody there.

ROSS: Some support. So that's what I did. I spent a lot of time at the residence and actually was in the residence talking to him, when the doctor came out of the bedroom and told him his wife had just died. It was a very moving thing.

Q: It was a close relationship.

ROSS: It was.

Q: Do you have any comments on MacVeagh's style and qualities?

ROSS: From my standpoint, he was an excellent Ambassador. He had been a classmate of Roosevelt's at Harvard, and had been appointed as Minister to Greece in 1933, was there until '41, when we came out and the Germans moved in. Roosevelt then sent him as Minister to Iceland in '42, then Minister in South Africa in '43, when the Greek royal family was in South Africa, then in '44, up to Cairo to be Ambassador near the government of Greece and the

government of Yugoslavia in Cairo, and eventually just to the government of Greece. Then about four or five days after the Germans evacuated Athens, he moved back to Athens as Ambassador to Greece.

He was a classical scholar. He didn't speak modern Greek, but he knew ancient Greek and loved the country, of course. The Greeks all knew him well and loved him. He was a gentleman of the old school in every way. A marvelous drafter. He wrote really brilliant dispatches. I learned more about writing dispatches from the time I spent with him than from any other experience.

Q: *"Having the honor to"?*

ROSS: Yes, the old form. "I have the honor to" and "respectfully yours." But his were really very, very good.

In those days, I think airgrams were introduced while I was in Greece, but everything else had been done by dispatch and telegram. We used telegrams rather sparingly.

Q: *Because you had to encode them yourselves.*

ROSS: And you couldn't just dash them off. MacVeagh was a real influence on my development, for which I was immensely grateful. He then went to be Ambassador to Portugal until '52. Then in the beginning of '52, he became Ambassador to Spain, and it was under his time in Spain that the first base agreement was signed.

Q: *Then he left shortly after Eisenhower came in. He had a long career.*

ROSS: Yes. He had 20 years as chief of mission. When he came through to Washington in 1952, if I may jump ahead for a moment, I was there. I had just come in from the field, not from Athens, but from another post. He asked me if I would go to Madrid with him, and I was greatly tempted, but I couldn't. Under the old system, you had to spend at least three years of your first 15 in Washington. It was a regulation which was observed very carefully in those days. So I couldn't go. I was greatly disappointed.

After MacVeagh left, Ambassador Grady came in.

Q: *Who also had trouble with the aid mission chief.*

ROSS: Yes, but he, I guess, perhaps was a little more adept at bureaucratic in-fighting. He'd been an assistant secretary and been an ambassador in India.

Q: *Did that change your function?*

ROSS: No. I continued as political officer, protocol officer, as liaison, and, to a certain extent, as aide to the Ambassador, but was never in the same close relationship I'd had with MacVeagh. But I worked closely with Mrs. Grady, who was a rather flamboyant Californian of Spanish descent, from a prominent Spanish family. So I had a lot of work to do with the Palace, arranging

all kinds of functions.

I remember, for example, that in 1948, when [Louis] Mountbatten came out through the Mediterranean to go back to London, he came to Athens. Then there was a three-way tug-of-war about who was going to entertain him and how, because the Palace obviously wanted him, the British Embassy wanted him, of course, and the American Ambassador and his wife, who had been in India, knew the Mountbattens. So I got involved in trying to work out all these arrangements. We finally ended up giving a big reception for him. I remember standing behind the Gradys in the receiving line, telling them who was coming, so they could come out with the names when shaking hands as though they knew all along.

Q: *An invaluable function.*

ROSS: It worked very well. I remember at one point, my wife was standing behind Mrs. Grady, who had Mountbatten, of course, next to her, and all of these dowagers were being presented to Mountbatten. He turned around and said to Mrs. Grady -- my wife, of course, heard this -- "Bring me some cuties!" (Laughs) Which, of course, we did.

As political officer, I had a fascinating time with the civil war going on. We weren't able to do a great deal of traveling around because of the conditions. We were very careful about exposing staff members to possible violence. There was a real danger. I remember the Minister of Justice was assassinated right on a street corner in Athens by guerrillas. But we could make excursions to the outskirts of Athens, the suburbs.

Our second and third years there, we lived in Psychiko, which was a few miles outside of Athens, and you could hear firing at night from beyond there so we weren't able to do that much traveling. A lot of the Peloponnesus was off limits to us.

Q: *That was pretty well the condition 20 years later.*

ROSS: We were able to get down as far as Corinth and Mycenae. The islands were all right. I had one very interesting trip in May of '48 to eastern Macedonia and Thrace, flying up to Salonika, then joining Consul General Raleigh Gibson and Gerry Drew, then the deputy U.S. representative on UNSCOB, the United Nations Special Commission on the Balkans. We traveled partly along the coast by the island of Thasos. Then once we got to Thrace, to Alexandroupolis, we took a Greek Army train, running roughly parallel to the Turkish border, as far as we could go to see what the situation was there.

I remember this train was composed of a lot of old, moldy coaches from the Orient Express. There was the threadbare red crushed velvet and all the rest of it. We had two or three of these coaches on the train, but ahead of the engine there was a couple of flatcars loaded with rock or some heavy cement blocks to detonate mines. That was quite an experience.

On the way back from this trip, I got into Salonika, went to the airport to fly down to Athens, and was out on the tarmac when the plane that I was to take came in, an old DC-3. One of the passengers to get off was a man named George Polk, who was an American correspondent, fairly

well known, who had been in Greece for sometime. I had a little conversation with him. He asked me what I'd been doing. I told him. I asked him what he was doing, and he said he'd come up to do a little investigating and reporting out of Salonika, but he didn't go into any details. So that was that.

I went back to Athens. About three days later, he turned up missing and eventually was discovered to have been murdered. They never really determined to full satisfaction who was responsible, whether it was the guerrillas or whether it was extreme rightists who were trying to create some kind of an emergency situation to embarrass the government. But I remember General Donovan came out from the United States to investigate this. He interviewed me, because as it turned out, I was the last Embassy officer to have talked to him. But I couldn't really tell him a great deal. He certainly hadn't said that he was going to try to get in touch with the rebels, which is what he, in fact, did. Anyway, that investigation went through several phases, but never fully revealed who was responsible. The incident did result in the establishment of the Polk Award.

Q: Yes, that's where I've heard the name. You went to Nouméa next?

ROSS: Yes. Nothing ever happened easily, you know. In the fall of '48, I got home-leave orders. It wasn't convenient for the post that I leave immediately, so I left in February of '49. In those days, you were able to travel by ship. By that time we had a second son, who had been born in Athens. We traveled on one of the Four Aces, not the Constitution or the Independence. Four days out, we put into Genoa. A friend of mine who had served with me in Athens, who had since been transferred to Germany, happened to be in Genoa when a cable came in from Athens to the Consulate General for me. When we docked at Genoa, he was on the dock side there, waving this cable. He came aboard, and this was a telegram transferring me to Nouméa.

Here I am, four days out of Athens, had left a household full of furniture there, with Gerry Drew in it house-sitting for me.

NORBERT L. ANSCHUTZ
Greek Desk
Washington, DC (1946-1951)

Political Officer
Athens (1951-1953)

Norbert L. Anschutz was born in Kansas in 1915. A Foreign Service officer he served in Greece, Thailand, Egypt and France as well as in the Department of State. He had two tours in Greece as well as serving on the Greek Desk. He was interviewed in 1992 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

ANSCHUTZ: I had an office on the top floor of the Executive Office Building, the Old State building. I remember one day I was at home because I had a bad cold. I had a telephone call from

the office saying that Mr. Henderson had assigned me to the staff of the US Representative on the first Security Council Investigative Commission. Now this was a commission which was the first organization of this type set up by the Security Council to investigate the charges of Greece against its northern neighbors...Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. Greece alleged that these Communist countries were supporting the Communist effort in Greece to overthrow the monarchical-fascist government, as it was referred to.

Q: This was when?

ANSCHUTZ: This was in the fall of 1946. Again I have to owe an early indoctrination to Loy Henderson's thoughtfulness of putting me on the staff there. The US Representative was Mark Ethridge, who had been the editor of the Louisville Courier General what had a very high professional standing. Mark's deputy was a fellow by the name of Harding Bancroft, who was also a Harvard Law School lawyer, a couple of years ahead of me, I hadn't know him before. He came from the United Nations sector of the State Department. Also on the staff was Cy Black, who later was a professor of Middle East and Balkan history, as well as Russian history, at Princeton. Another staff member was a former scholar by the name of Harry Howard.

Q: How did we operate and what were the issues which you were dealing with at that time? The NEA branch included Greece in those days.

ANSCHUTZ: Yes. In fact it was included in NEA until about 1968.

The American interests, of course, were to arrest the spread of Soviet influence. The Soviets, of course, had moved into Bulgaria and had supported Tito in Yugoslavia as well as the Communist elements in Albania. The object of Soviet East Bloc policy was to overthrow the more or less conservative government...Royalist Government...in Greece. There had been all during the war considerable amount of fighting between the monarchical-fascists on the one hand and the Communists on the other hand. The Security Council investigation had been requested by the Greek Government and supported by the Western Allies, the United States, France, Britain, all of whom, of course, as members of the Security Council were represented on the Commission. So the Commission was no small thing because there were 11 Representatives and their staff.

When the Commission established itself in Athens, which was just about the end of December, 1946, a considerable amount of effort was spent trying to determine what the modus operandi of the Commission would be. The Communists, as it were, the dissident elements in Greece supported by the Soviets and their allies, had been extremely active and were making a rather, I think, transparent effort to influence world opinion concerning the situation in Greece by alleging all sorts of atrocities and human rights violations, etc. by the government of Greece, which were inflicted on their opponents, again largely Left and Communist elements. The tactics of the...let me call them Soviets because they in effect orchestrated the resistance to the Security Council Commissions' activity. Their tactic was to allege all sorts of violations, not only activities along the northern border of Greece, but in an effort to show general discomfort and resistance to the Greek Government, they picked out alleged atrocities or problems in various parts of the country, including the Peloponnisos and in the Greek islands.

In order to respond to these various allegations, the Commission was broken up into subcommittees in which most, if not all, of the participating nations had a representative. In my capacity, as the American representative on one of the subcommittees, we went to places like central Greece, to Larisa; to some of the Greek islands where there were prison camps; we went into the Peloponnisos and, of course, later we went up to the northern border area. Later, the Commission as a whole, went into Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania.

As the subcommittees approached the site of their respective investigations, the opponents of the government had their orchestrated reception committee who were demanding the expulsion of the monarchical-fascist government. This was all done, of course, not only to impress the committee but such members of the press as accompanied the subcommittees.

In our deliberations in Athens as to where and when the subcommittees should be despatched, one of the places was up in the hills in the central mountainous area of Greece, to the west of the Larisa of Plain, a town called Agriniane. We paraphrased one of the slogans we used in the United States during the war...Is this trip really necessary? But the Soviets insisted that we had to go to Agriniane. So we went by jeep to the nearest place and then had to walk overland for some hours.

Now, as I have suggested, the Soviet tactic was always to appear as liberators in every area which we visited. They had also arranged for a welcoming committee for us. We had come to decipher the tactics and it was decided that we would no longer let the Soviets be the first ones into these little towns or villages.

Q: On the committee I assume there was always a Soviet representative?

ANSCHUTZ: There was usually a representative of each of these countries. Now some of the smaller countries didn't have staffs large enough to have a representative on each one, but the major powers did. So we had what I call the Agriniane handicap where the Soviet representative and I virtually foot raced ourselves over several hours of mud and slush to...I don't remember if I arrived first, but at least simultaneously with the Russian.

We were quartered in these extremely poor houses. I am sure the inhabitants gave us everything they had. The hospitality was warm. The next morning we were awakened by a bugle call. We got outside and here about 200 yards away was a group of men all lined up in military formation. They provided some military exercises, as it were, and then marched away into the hills.

Well, apparently the point of this whole exercise of going to this remote spot in the mountains was to provide the Leftist Communists and their associates with the opportunity to present their men and resistant fighters as an organized military force which could theoretically permit them to qualify under the Geneva Convention as organized forces of war. These several hundred men dissolved themselves into the hills, but it was one of the few times...the only time to my knowledge, but there may have been others...where our group actually saw an organized military type activities on the part of the guerrillas.

After a period where we had exhausted most of the charges induced by the Soviets and their

allies, we then moved the mission up to Salonika and there was more of the same. We went into various small areas in northern Greece in our subcommittees. We also got into southern Albania. Then, having been through all this, it was decided that groups would go into Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. So there were groups, in which I participated, that went into Bulgaria...Sofia, and to Belgrade, where the usual ritual hearings were held and all the allegations of the depredation of the monarchical-fascists were repeated ad nauseam all for the benefit whatever press, both Western and Eastern, was available.

Then I think some of us got back to Salonika. The Commission had decided that it would in the great tradition write its report in Geneva. So three of us made a jeep trip from Salonika to Sofia, to Belgrade, to Budapest, to Vienna, to Geneva. One of them was Bill Lawrence, who was a well-known international correspondent for the New York Times, and the other was Mark Ethridge's wife, Willy Snow Ethridge, quite a character.

We eventually emerged in Geneva and the report was written in which the Western powers said all the right things and the Eastern Bloc contested all these things with their dissent. We returned to the United States and the matter was discussed by the Security Council. At least, to a certain degree, the allegations of the Greek Government were sustained by the Council report. At least the Greek Government was not censured in a way that would have been politically embarrassing to it.

Q: After these reports were written did the group of you from the West, and you particularly, could you sign this report with ease?

ANSCHUTZ: Well, I think we tried to be objective about the matter and I think we fully understood what the Soviets and Communists were trying to do. We felt it was our mission to lay that out to the extent that we could in this type of diplomatic document, and I think we did.

Q: I take it that the Greek Government was not playing completely with unsullied hands.

ANSCHUTZ: You know, I don't recollect the detailed incidents that we looked into, but the civil war in Greece was a very vicious thing.

Q: Oh, nasty.

ANSCHUTZ: And it in effect continued for several years thereafter. One little story that always amused me. The story goes that Churchill came to Greece at the end of the war, or in the final days of the war, and is alleged to have in effect said, "Now, who is in charge here?" And one of his staff said, "Well, General Plastiras is the head of the government." Churchill is alleged to have said, "Plastiras? Me thinks he does have feet of clay."

Q: I take it that that trip turned you into a Greek specialist?

ANSCHUTZ: Yes, it very much influenced my future assignments.

Q: Was that about the time when you moved into Greek Affairs?

ANSCHUTZ: Yes. While we were still in Greece, on March 7, 1947, I was in southern Albania some place, the Truman Doctrine was announced. The Truman Doctrine, which provided for the support of Greece and Turkey against Soviet pressure, had been influenced, I think it is fair to say, to a degree by the reporting of the Commission. I do not say it was crucial or critical, but the reporting from our embassies and from Mark Ethridge, I think certainly tended to support the decision to declare the so-called Truman Doctrine. This was a decision which was taken before the final writing of the report and before the consideration of the report by the Security Council. But it was part of a general political reaction to Soviet pressure on Greece and Turkey.

Shortly after I came back I was assigned to Greek Affairs in the Office of...I have forgotten exactly what it was called. There was an office set up to implement the providing of assistance to Greece and Turkey under the terms of the Truman Doctrine. It was called the Greek-Turkey office. George McGhee, who was later Assistant Secretary of State, was appointed to be the director of the office. I was in charge of the Greek segment under that. I spent some time, a year or so, in that capacity.

Subsequently I was assigned to the Greek Desk, I think first as an assistant and then became the Greek Desk Officer. During this period while I was the Greek Desk Officer, Jack Peurifoy was assigned as Ambassador to Greece. It was in that connection that I met Jack for the first time. I did the usual things that the Desk Officer would do in arranging briefings, background and other activities to prepare Ambassador Peurifoy for his post. As it happened, Jack went to Greece and came back on consultation about a year after going out. In those days, this would have been early 1950, people from the Desk went out to meet the Ambassador. So I carried my spear and stood strictly at attention as the Ambassador returned. He got off the plane and greeted everyone warmly, as was his wont. He then took me by the arm and said, "Norb, you are going back to Greece." Well, in point of fact I did.

I arrived in Athens in October 1951...

Q: I would like to backtrack just a bit. While you were working on the Greek Desk and Greek-Turkish affairs, these sort of meld into each other, George McGhee was running things. How did he operate? He was an important figure in the diplomatic equation in those days.

ANSCHUTZ: George had been a very successful petroleum engineer. He also married the daughter of a very well-known petroleum engineer. So George had made a lot of money and I think his wife's family had a lot of money. He was, I think, very well established with the Democratic machine. He was a very intelligent, able fellow and had a businesslike approach to problems. He approached his problems with great energy.

I have another little anecdote about George. Some years later, when I was in Athens, and George was Ambassador in Turkey, George came over to Greece to make a visit to Mt. Athos. In those days less use was made of the radio and telephone and telegram and more use was made of despatches. So in the course of human events, I received in Athens a copy of the despatch that George had written describing his visit to Mt. Athos. He described in great detail the dilapidation and general deterioration of the situation which he found there. But the thing that I have always

remembered was the final sentence of this despatch which is a typical McGheeism. He said, "What this place needs is some young, vigorous monks."

Q: While you were in Washington, what was your impression of how things were going in Greece?

ANSCHUTZ: This would have been in the late forties and maybe 1950. We, the United States, under the Greek-Turkey program was spending what was a very substantial amount of money at that time. We had developed an aid mission and a military mission which was to train and support the Greek armed forces. In a sense they worked well because the Greeks were so needy. They were highly cooperative and with the American military supplies and some American military counseling from the Joint US Military Advisory Group, the sort of shattered Greek military organization was gradually put into some sort of workable organization. And the work of the guerrillas was somewhat circumscribed.

I think it is also fair to say that as the American assistance increased so did the assistance from Yugoslavia and north increase. So there were some rather significant military conflicts during that period. But, basically, it went reasonably well, as we all know, and the guerrillas were vanquished or expelled.

In that period too we had not only the military thing, but, for example, there was a campaign of abducting Greek children and sending them up to Bulgaria, Eastern Germany and possibly Poland.

Q: I think also to the Soviet Union, around Odessa.

ANSCHUTZ: That's possible. I don't think I ever knew where they all were.

Q: We are talking about significant numbers, thousands.

ANSCHUTZ: Yes.

Q: Were you getting some of the heat from what appeared to be sort of a bureaucratic problem in Greece at the time where the economic assistance mission had direct access...I heard that when a diplomatic reception was held all the Greek officials would head towards the head of the economic assistance group and leave the Ambassador sort of standing by himself. Did you catch any of this feeling?

ANSCHUTZ: Well, certainly the senior members of the economic mission were very important and I am sure that they were cultivated by the authorities. But I didn't have the feeling that the American Ambassador was ever eclipsed by them. I wouldn't have said that. We did have a large American presence there. There was the economic mission, the military mission, the CIA and all of the Service attachés had substantial staffs plus the fact that there were Air Force units stationed down there at Hellinikon Airbase for various types of support missions which were conducted, I think, in a number of countries in the Balkans and Turkey. It was an important airbase to the whole region. We also had, which I think was more important later, important

communication and monitoring facilities in Greece.

Q: What was your impression of the reporting of Ambassador Grady? What was your impression of him and Peurifoy?

ANSCHUTZ: I think Grady was an able fellow. I never served directly under him. I think I made a visit there once while he was ambassador. I think Grady was adequately in control of the situation there. I guess part of this time under Grady, Sophocles Venizelos was prime minister.

Jack Peurifoy was a very different sort of man. Jack had come from the administrative side of the State Department and, I think, he had been very active in organizing things like the United Nations Drafting Convention in San Francisco in 1945, in his senior administrative position. Jack was a very warm personable fellow. He made many friends and as a result of friends both in the State Department, but also in the Congress, he was then appointed Ambassador to Greece. For the most part I think he was a very effective ambassador.

I came to know Jack very well because I worked for him twice. I have always accorded him very high marks for leadership. Jack had courage to make decisions, but he also, which was almost equally if not more important, inspired loyalty and effort on the part of his staff. People liked to work for him because he was very genuine and warm, but also because he took the general attitude that your function, whatever it was, was to tell him what you thought the situation required. He did not try to pretend that he understood more about everything than everybody else. This, at least in my experience, is the kind of thing which evokes response out of the subordinates. If the subordinates have the feeling that the superior is looking to them for guidance, it tends to invoke a strong loyal effort on the part of the subordinates.

In his relationships with the Greeks he was very warm. I think the environment within the Embassy was highly satisfactory under Jack Peurifoy. He did not pretend to be the world's greatest expert on Greece or Greeks, but he was open to comments and advice and frequently accepted it with appropriate appreciation.

Q: Were you either on the Desk or at the Embassy when the Polk case came up?

ANSCHUTZ: I guess I was on the Desk at that time.

Q: I can't remember his name.

ANSCHUTZ: George.

Q: George Polk, a correspondent who was killed in Thessaloniki.

ANSCHUTZ: I don't remember whether I was on the Desk or still handling Greek affairs in the Office of Greek-Turkish Affairs. But I had very little to do with that except to read about it.

Q: Then you went out to Athens and were there from 1951-53. Had the situation pretty well cleared up? Were the Greek Monarchy forces pretty much in control by that time?

ANSCHUTZ: Yes. They were. By the time I left, they were very definitely so. Of course, the monarchy, King Paul and Queen Frederika, were very extremely able and gracious people. They invariably made a very good impression on visiting American dignitaries, Congressmen or other government officials. And they also recognized early on that the Central Intelligence Agency was a very effective and relatively direct route into the White House. They played that accordingly.

Q: Did we see Queen Frederika as a problem at that time, or did that come later on?

ANSCHUTZ: I would say that became more of a problem later on. In the early days she was lady bountiful. She was very effective in going through beleaguered areas and bringing various types of relief supplies, etc. She developed something called the Queen's Fund, which supported various types of Greek handicrafts. She did a number of those things. She was extremely effective in public relation activities.

Q: What were you doing at the Embassy?

ANSCHUTZ: At first I was in charge of political/ military affairs. One of the things I got involved in was the Greek application to become a member of NATO. There was always the problem of military budgets as well.

Then I was shifted over to become the Political Counselor the second half of my tour there.

Q: What was our initial reaction when the Greeks applied for NATO membership? Were we encouraging them?

ANSCHUTZ: I think basically we supported it. I remember one of the early issues was who should be in command of the NATO naval forces in the Mediterranean. The position which I took and which was accepted by Charlie Yost, who was our DCM, and by Peurifoy, was that it wasn't a question of trying to displace the British in the Mediterranean. The British at that time didn't really have the capacity to do it and the Greeks wanted to be on the side of the angels. They wanted us to have control in the Mediterranean and to have our substantial deployment in the Mediterranean and that was finally accepted.

Q: It became CINCSOUTH stationed at Naples.

ANSCHUTZ: Yes.

Q: When dealing with political/military affairs you must have always been looking over your shoulder at the Turkish situation? Did you feel that you were the Greek advocate and somebody in our Embassy in Ankara was the Turkish advocate, or were you trying to work together to balance this very contentious relationship?

ANSCHUTZ: Well, there was that. Of course, at that period the Greeks weren't sufficiently vigorous so that they could make much of an issue about the Turkish thing. So those relations

that were historically very tenuous were at that very particular moment not so bad...I guess the question of Cyprus had not become very acute at that time...

Q: It was still really under British control.

ANSCHUTZ: Yes, that is correct. I wouldn't have said that at that time the Turkish problem was too great. I don't remember of whether there was the question of sovereignty of some islands or not.

Q: When you were running the political section there...later this became a very split area over how we should approach Greece...but in this period were the people looking at the Greek picture and dealing with political affairs pretty unanimously on how we were going to operate?

ANSCHUTZ: I think there was always some tension in the situation between what might be called the conservative and the liberal factors in the body politic. There were elements in the government which were basically anti-monarchist. I think at that time the general feeling in the Embassy was that the monarchy was a very useful unifying political force in the country. There were leftists in the government or at least in the Parliament, who were anti-monarchists. I am thinking now of George Cartalis who was a very intelligent man who was an officer or minister in the economic sphere. And there were people who had been involved in the non-Communist resistance in Greece. There were elements who felt that the monarchy had sort of eclipsed itself and gone off to Egypt during the war after the German invasion. In Greece there are always, as you know, many different points of view.

Q: Was George Papandreou a factor in those days?

ANSCHUTZ: Yes, he was. I wouldn't say he was a terribly important factor, but he had been at one point Prime Minister. I remember we used to see him from time to time.

Q: One further thing before we move on to your next assignment. Later, when I served there from 1970-74, I had very much the feeling that our Embassy was dominated...some embassies are AID embassies, some embassies can be military embassies or State Department embassies and some CIA embassies...I had the feeling that we were in a CIA embassy, that it was running things. How did you feel about the role of the CIA, we are talking about the early fifties?

ANSCHUTZ: The role of the CIA was important, very important. When I first arrived in Greece the Station Chief was a Greek-American by the name of Tom Karamessines, a fellow for whom I had very high regard. I think they worked fairly closely together...the Embassy and the CIA Station. Because of the general situation there, that is to say, the political fragmentation and the economic poverty, it was a fairly rewarding environment in which to operate. As is so often the case, one wasn't always sure just what relationships some of your contacts in the Greek government had with other agencies in the American government.

Q: Well it was a period when the CIA was being generous with payments to people, which has its negative side as well as its positive side.

ANSCHUTZ: I remember, for example, when we were there the first time, we developed a very close relationship with Caramanlis, who was, I think Minister of Roads, or something like that. We used to see each other socially because he loved to go to the movies and his favorite movies were what were when I was a boy Saturday afternoon serials. He liked those and, for example, we would occasionally go and they would have an evening of, shall we say three or four sequences, or something of the sort. Then we would go out to supper. Caramanlis became to be well regarded and I am sure when he became Prime Minister that he had sympathetic assistance from the American apparatus.

There is no question about that and, of course, one of the...these are the operational challenges of any large mission, whether it is Greece or any place. Each one of the services wants to have its finger in what it considers to be its pie. And I was much more aware of this in my second tour in Greece. The military mission would have its tentacles into the military organizations. The Air Force people would have their tentacles into one part of it, the Service attachés would have their tentacles into another part of it. The Agency would maybe have tentacles into the whole thing.

WILLIAM G. COLMAN
Personnel Specialist, American Mission for Aid to Greece
Athens (1947-1948)

William Colman earned his M.A. from the University of Missouri and took a commission in the U.S. Navy in 1942. After the war, Mr. Colman served as Personnel Specialist in the American Mission for Aid to Greece, in Athens, and worked for the Economic Cooperation Administration in Korea and Japan. He was interviewed by Melbourne Spector in 1996.

COLMAN: Athens, yes. There, for the first time, I met Hubert R. (Hugh) Gallagher. He was the Director of the Civil Government division of the Mission. The Chief of Mission was Dwight Griswold, former Governor of Nebraska. He and Gallagher had known each other in connection with the Council of State Governments for whom Gallagher had worked in prior years. Hugh asked me to be his deputy, I don't think we ever had more than four or five people working in the division. He was number one and I was number two. I conducted a general survey of what the personnel situation was in the Greek government. Of course there was a lot of patronage. Also, they had copied several aspects of French Civil Service in earlier years.

Q: *So you were dealing with a French model?*

COLMAN: A French model and also British to some extent, and I will always remember my first meeting with Minister of Finance Helmis, who you might say was really the minister of administration for the Greek government. He looked after financial, personnel and central management matters. He was explaining the greatness and the competence of the Greek personnel system. He said that the war had been a very disorganizing influence, but that before the war Greece had been recognized as "one of the very best personnel systems in all of the Balkans!" (I had naively been expecting him to say "Europe".)

Q: One of the best personnel systems in all of the Balkans!!!

COLMAN: All of the Balkans. This was an important transition point for me in two respects: The transition into working abroad; and the opportunity within the field of public administration central management that might allow me to get over into organization and management as well as personnel issues.

On another occasion, the Greek Government came to Hugh and said, "We've got a terrible mess here in the Ministry of Public Works and we would like you to have a look taken at that." We looked at organization structure and so forth and made some recommendations, a few of which were, I think, adopted. An interesting conference occurred between Gallagher and the Minister of Public Works, his name being Nicolliades. There was a lot of duplication in the field offices of the Public Works Ministry and Mr. Gallagher was kind of impatient. He said, "Mr. Minister don't you realize that that's poor administration?" The Minister replied, "Of course it's poor administration, Greece is a poor country!" I remained in Greece for about a year, arriving over there in August of 1947 and coming back to Washington in July of 1948.

Q: May I interrupt a minute Bill, and ask, before you leave Greece. What did you find, say, on the personnel system; what did you do? Did you try to convert it all to a US model or did you...?

COLMAN: As the expression goes, "That's a very good question." That was my first instinct, but I discovered that it was a serious mistake and I again tried to help the Greeks develop an improved system based on their own history and culture.

Q: I believe we were talking about your experience with the Greek Personnel System and you were making some comments. I think you said you had written an article about it, Bill.

COLMAN: Yes, I did. The article was entitled, "Civil Service Reform in Greece" and published in the *Public Personnel Review*, which was a publication of the Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada, 1313 East 60th Street in Chicago. The title of the article as I submitted it was "Civil Service Reform in Greece: A Failure!" The editorial staff refused to publish it unless those two words, "a failure" were removed.

Q: They didn't want to admit to it?

COLMAN: They didn't want to admit that civil service systems failed. Now, there were a lot of things wrong with the civil service system in Greece. Immediately after we got there, several things were apparent. They were over-staffed, they were inefficient, and the civil service was not capable of carrying on the day-to-day operations of the Government, not to mention the expanded (and remember civil war between two major factions was going on at that time) the expanded and vigorous military and economic programs needed.

The most pressing problem was a requested increase in civil service salaries by the Greek Government since employee unions were threatening to strike if their demands were not met. After we had negotiations, a compromise was reached with the understanding that the Greek

Government would put a freeze on all new appointments, reduce civil service strength by 15,000 positions, eliminate overtime pay and reduce pay for serving on committees and finally, last but not least, an increase in the work week from 25 hours to 40 hours. Of course we wonder where we got the 40 hours. The answer; United States. The most important lesson that I learned about technical assistance to foreign countries from the experience in Greece was that it is a terrible mistake to try to transplant the practices and structures and so forth from federal, state, and local governments in the United States over into another country.

Q: May I interrupt there? If you don't transplant then what do you do?

COLMAN: You try to look at the needs that country is facing and ask yourself the question, "Starting all over to deal with this particular question, how ought we to organize it?" and not think well let's pass a Civil Service Law that provides A, B, C, copied out of a statute from Illinois or some other state, or the US federal government.

Another major question, and this still, I believe, pervades our foreign Assistance to other nations: "To what extent should the United States Government require, or demand that countries receiving economic aid to take steps to improve or modify governmental practices?" That's a major question. If the answer to that is yes, then should the United States try to lay down detailed plans or should it confine itself to objectives and ask for the reaching of the objectives by such means as the sovereign country would decide? The tendency of a lot of people, and I discovered this not only in Greece but in the ECA technical assistance program, that too many of our people are transplanting or trying to. That tendency is very understandable, but the main lesson that I learned from my Greek experience, was the necessity for flexible approaches.

Q: Very good. What do you think generally? Do you feel that you and Hugh Gallagher and others--do you think you made a difference in Greece?

COLMAN: Yes. We stirred things up and got them to recognize that they ought to make some changes. The pressure was kept on by our successors, our mutual friend Ford Luikart, for example. They adopted some legislation, those things they agreed to do that I mentioned a minute ago, about changing the work week and so on. My understanding is that in a later year they passed a civil service act of some sort, but with more rhetoric than substance.

Q: Really.

COLMAN: They moved off the dime and so some progress was made. It certainly gave me a big dose of caution for future matters of that kind. When I came back to the US I asked about the details of the Marshall Plan and...

Q: So the Marshall Plan had been passed while you were in Greece?

COLMAN: That's correct.

SMITH SIMPSON
Labor Attaché
Athens (1947-1949)

Smith Simpson was born in Virginia in 1906. He entered the Foreign Service initially as a labor attaché serving in Belgium, Greece, Mexico, India, Mozambique as well as in Washington. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy and Jack Crowley in 1991.

SIMPSON: So I went back to Belgium persuaded that we were going to stay in Belgium for a while, only to find a cable awaiting me from a quick trip I made to Holland after my return, instructing me to proceed forthwith to Athens.

At that point I almost resigned. I didn't see myself leaving Mrs. Simpson in bed in this weakened condition. Furthermore, I didn't understand why this was not a persuasive ingredient of departmental thinking. But then I reflected: If every officer resigned when an assignment was very difficult, we wouldn't have a Foreign Service. So I obediently got myself transportation to Athens.

Our oldest daughter had contracted a lung problem -- again, because of conditions in Europe. We'd had to send her to a school in the mountains in Switzerland, so I stopped off in Geneva and went up to the mountains to see her. We hadn't seen her for some time. And then I went on to Athens.

I arrived there without any instructions, and none were awaiting me. So when I paid my call on the ambassador, I said, "Mr. Ambassador, what are my instructions?"

He said, "You don't have any."

So I said, "What am I here for?"

He replied, "We have a problem. The Communists have a considerable representation in the labor movement. And they say that they're going to see to it that no American aid reaches this monarcho-fascist regime. To prevent our supplies being unloaded they will strike the longshoremen. 'If you bring in longshoremen,' they say, 'we'll strike the dockers, so that the stuff won't move from the docks. Then if you bring in dockers to move it off the docks, we'll strike the truck drivers and the railroads. And if you bring in trucks and drivers to cart it, we will strike workers at the points of destination.'" So MacVeagh said, "This is the problem."

I asked, "Have you any suggestions?"

He replied, "You're the labor attaché."

Bill Braine, who was the British labor attaché in Rome, and Sam Berger, who was our labor attaché in London, had been brought in, and the three of us set about to negotiate an agreement setting up a free Greek trade union confederation. One had existed earlier in Greek history, but

under Metaxas, who was the dictator, the trade union confederation had been brought under the control of the dictatorship. Then came occupation and Communist penetration of the labor movement, so that there was no Greek labor confederation. So we negotiated one. We brought in the leaders of the various factions.

Q: Was Irving Brown or any of the AFL people cooperating with you?

SIMPSON: Irving Brown came to Athens at that time. He was on the periphery, because this was not really his job but he wanted to keep informed as to what was going on. He did not take part in the negotiations.

To make a long, arduous negotiation short, we got an agreement. And it included the Communists. For strategic reasons, we wanted the Communists in it. We wanted to be able to say this was representative of all factions. For some reason, they agreed to come in -- perhaps just to know what was going on. But they signed the agreement along with the others. And that agreement set up a provisional executive body to hold office until free trade union elections were held.

Q: Were they affiliated with the WFTU?

SIMPSON: Not yet. That was one of the tugs of war that entered into the negotiation. At my suggestion, that question was deferred for a decision by the duly elected executive body. The agreement also included sending a delegation to the International Labor Conference, which was then meeting in Geneva, because we felt this would be a good thing to get these fellows out of the quarrelsome atmosphere of Athens and breathe a little free air, expand their horizons, get them to realize that there was a big issue for them in the reception that they were going to have from the rest of the Western world, that they would be able to make a case in Geneva that they were not part of a monarcho-fascist regime, that they were independent, and explain how they came to be independent and so on.

Immediately on the signing of this agreement, Messrs. Braine and Berger departed in haste. The reason for their hasty departure was that agreements had been negotiated before on at least three occasions, two by representatives of the British TUC, and the other by the WFTU, which sent Louis Saillant to Athens and they had negotiated agreements which had evaporated after they had left Greece. The prospect was that this would also happen in our case, that no sooner would the negotiations come to an end and the negotiators disperse than the factional quarrels would resume and the whole thing would fall apart.

It was one of the functions of the American labor attaché there to see that this didn't happen. It took a little doing, because the Greeks, a very lovable people, are intensely individualistic, just as in ancient times. So it was difficult to keep them together, to move the newly organized provisional executive into planning for free trade union elections. This meant cleaning up union lists, because the Communists, and perhaps the Metaxas dictatorship, had resorted to the good old Tammany Hall device of enrolling names from tombstones. So in order to hold free trade union elections, the union lists had to be cleaned up. Fortunately, we had an incorruptible judicial system in Greece, so we used the judges to clean up the lists and to supervise the elections,

thereby guaranteeing the thing would be done properly and fairly. All this took a little time and effort but it was done.

Early on, after Braine, Berger and Irving Brown had departed, I felt I just had to get out into the country to sell the program. We were dealing up to this point almost entirely with Athenian labor leaders. Most of these were as much politicians as labor leaders. And those who were not actually in politics and sitting in the Chamber of Deputies, as was Fotios Makris, had at least party affiliations and subsidies, and we wanted this ended. We wanted a free, independent labor movement.

I talked over on a trip with the ambassador. He saw no objection. He said, "I want to warn you, though, that you are getting beyond the safe precincts of Athens." I understood. I was then in the economic section of the embassy. Its chief and other officers didn't express themselves one way or the other whether they favored my travel or didn't favor it, whether they supported it or didn't support it, I was on my own and it was my decision, with, as I say, the Ambassador's approval.

In the meanwhile, we had got a group off to the International Labor Conference in Geneva. Among these were some of the leading factionalists, because they saw this as a glorious opportunity to get out and breathe some free air and enjoy the sights and flesh pots of Geneva. When they heard through their pipeline that I was planning this trip and I would take along with me the acting secretary general of the newly established labor confederation, they immediately objected for they were members of other factions than his. They felt that such a trip would enhance the prestige of the acting secretary general. They sent me a telegram from Geneva asking me to postpone the trip until they got back. I declined to do this. I didn't feel that anything needed for the success of our aid program should be postponed in deference to factional interests. If this was something we felt must be done, we were going to do it. Furthermore, I didn't want to lose the momentum germinated by the negotiations. I wanted to keep that momentum going. So the acting secretary general and I started out.

But before we did, desiring to see how well I could cope with this kind of a venture, using an interpreter, and him providing travel, I took a short trip outside of Athens to the trade union center in Volos

Finding I could get my points across through an interpreter I started out on the longer trip. This was the trip to Northern Greece. We flew to Salonika and then took the train across by stages. Sometimes we would move by car if the distance was short.

The Communists were well aware of this trip. When I told my interpreter, "I want to go incognito," he replied, "You'll never go incognito. Your face is your passport. Anyway, the Communists know who you are and what you're up to."

I should go back and say that three days after we had negotiated this agreement, the Communists received instructions from Moscow to drop out. So they recanted on the agreement. They said, "We're no longer a part of it."

I told them, "You signed it."

They said, "Well, never mind. We are no longer part of it."

Q: *Were they the majority in the labor movement?*

SIMPSON: I had concluded they were not. I had a strong suspicion that their power came from a well-organized, well-disciplined minority. I felt that the ambassador may have exaggerated their ability to frustrate our aid program, although I recognized that a well-organized minority can produce strikes without majority support -- wildcat strikes.

We started out, first checking in at our consulate general in Salonika. I asked the consul general if his staff had any knowledge of the area or the people in it. He said no, they didn't, but one officer had gone out on a short expedition. That was as much travel as they had done.

We took all reasonable precautions. For example, I recall a meeting in a town we were going to visit which we alerted not too far in advance, because the guerrillas were dropping their calling cards everywhere we went. The acting secretary general that I would depend upon him to see to it that the word got the word around and the union hall was full to overflowing. The gloom was so thick you could cut it with a knife. My message cheered them up. I was much moved to see how the visit of someone from Athens reassured them they were not being forgot and better times were on the way through American aid. I pleaded with them to hold free and fair union elections, clean up their unions and get a free and independent labor confederation going which could cooperate with us. They responded with cheers.

So we went around. We were constantly beset, of course, by rumors of Communist insurrections in towns we were to visit. I can remember, there was a strong report that the Communists were going to produce an uprising in Kavala the night we were there. Was this for real, or was it just a scare tactic so that we wouldn't appear in town? If we said we were going to be there, we couldn't afford not to appear. So we held to our schedule and there was no uprising. We had our meeting undisturbed.

And I can tell you, at these meetings I was very impressed by the intellectual caliber of the ordinary Greek worker. After I had made my talk before a meeting, some fellow would get up in the back of a dimly lit hall and begin to orate. He would recall the grandeurs of ancient Greece, and then present a philosophic analysis of the situation facing Greece, which put me to shame. I couldn't match this. All I could do was to speak very simply of the immediate need of their establishing themselves as a free trade union movement in order to cooperate with us, and we were there to help them, to help their country, so we needed them as partners. That was my theme. So it was very simple, very down to earth, urging them to cooperate with their provisional executive and with the judiciary in cleaning up the trade union lists, holding elections, and getting themselves in a position to function effectively with us.

So we went all the way across Macedonia and Thrace. We, of course, encountered expected difficulties. When we went through a narrow defile on our way to Alexandroupolis, the train was fired on and we had to duck under the seats. And then on the way back, a fellow came down the track headed towards our train, waving his hand. It turned out that he had discovered a mine

under the tracks. He was what they called a keeper of the fields. He would walk around fields to make sure nobody was trespassing on other people's olive orchards. In his walking around, he had happened to pick up the railroad track and was walking along that, and just saw that some ground had been disturbed in one place. He took a closer look and discovered there was a mine, so he ran down the track in time to spare us some inconvenience.

Q: When you were having the meetings with the local labor people, was there any heckling by the Communists?

SIMPSON: No.

Q: The Communists just probably didn't come.

SIMPSON: Apparently they didn't show up. Or if they did, they thought it wiser not to speak up.

Q: You talk about the shooting and all. Was the civil war in full scale?

SIMPSON: In full scale. At that time it was concentrated in the north where my trip took place. I scheduled it through that area because I felt we had to defy the Communists on their own grounds. It wasn't important that I travel through the Peloponnesus, for example. I felt I had to take them on, on their own turf. This was needed. The morale of the Greeks in the north was low. They were very despondent. So it was a tremendous boost to their morale to have somebody show up, interested in them and in their plight, assuring them that if we got effective cooperation from the Greek people and their government we could reverse the situation. Such a trip was very useful not only from a labor standpoint, but from the standpoint of Greek morale and the success of our aid program.

Our aid program, I might say, was underway -- at least in Washington. President Truman signed the aid bill on the day I arrived in Athens, but it was taking a long, long time to assemble the personnel. Not many people were eager to serve in as chaotic a country as Greece. The labor part of the aid program really didn't get underway until Clinton Golden arrived. And that was, according to my recollection, sometime in September (1947). So months were going by without much sign of our aid materializing. In the meanwhile, it was the labor attaché at the embassy who had to keep going the momentum generated by the May agreement, plead for restraint in wage demands and deferment of strikes and otherwise keep the labor situation from deteriorating still further.

Q: Did you have an exchange program? Could you send Greek labor leaders to the United States?

SIMPSON: No, we needed them right there. The ones that we would normally have sent were the ones who could produce the leadership votes in union elections which would bring the new confederation in existence.

Q: After your time there, how did you feel about what you had accomplished?

SIMPSON: What I had accomplished...well, that reminds me of the meeting of American labor attachés in Geneva, which I flew to right after my trip and had made my report to the embassy and to the department. The labor attaché meeting was already underway in Geneva, so I got there a little late. One of the questions Dick Eldridge (our labor attaché in Paris) asked me was, "Smith, what do you expect to come out of all this?"

And my simple answer was, "Nobody knows."

But your question was what I accomplished. I held the Provisional Executive together until our aid got underway. Out of this came free trade union elections, through the instrumentality of the judiciary. There came, therefore, a freely elected national labor convention and out of that a freely elected executive, and thus a free labor confederation -- the first Greece had had for decades. People were organized who would cooperate with us in the aid program. They had difficulty sticking together, and it was my job to see they did stick together and keep their eye on the ball, which was the reconstruction of Greece. I got restraint in calling strikes. I inspired a willingness to tighten belts so as to get recovery going.

When Clint Golden arrived, as the labor man in our aid mission, he had a staff which could work with him in the aid program. My main job then became simply to hold the confederation together. Clint said to me, "You do that, because you know these people, you've been through it, they trust you. So you keep at it, you keep them together. I'll deal with wages and other labor questions involved in the reconstruction of Greece." That's how we divided our work. Clint and I worked very well together. He was a wonderful person to work with, a genuine, warm-hearted person who was absolutely above board. He was simply and exclusively interested in getting the job done. He had no turf feeling whatsoever.

One of the problems of holding things together was, of course, the desire of people in the government, including Constantine Tsaldaris, the prime minister (later deputy prime minister) and minister of foreign affairs, to keep their hands on the labor movement. So I had to go constantly to Tsaldaris, report to him what was going on, and use those opportunities to reinforce our desire that this be an independent labor movement, that only an independent one could possibly serve the Greek cause.

We nearly lost our battle in my last months there. This would have been the end of 1948, when all the elections had been held, and the national convention assembled. An old crony of Metaxas thought this would be an opportunity for him to stage a come-back. So he ran for secretary general. He had a lot of money, and I always suspected it came from Tsaldaris, because the Metaxas crony was able to bribe enough votes to really give us a run for it. He nearly won. Irving Brown was on the scene as the AFL's fraternal delegate to the convention and he and Alan Strachan, who had succeeded Clint as the AMAG labor adviser, pitched in to help hold the moderates together.

Q: After two years there, you moved to Mexico City as first secretary.

SIMPSON: That's right. Yes, and I left Greece thoroughly worn out.

Q: *Were you a labor attaché there as well?*

SIMPSON: Yes. As a reward for Greece, I was offered a choice of Mexico City, Rio, Ottawa, and Stockholm, which was a nice choice to have. I chose Mexico, because I felt I'd always had the American point of view about the Mexican- American War, but I'd never heard the Mexican view. And I got it very quickly. There were plenty there who rejoiced to find a Norte Americano who was interested in hearing their side of that conflict.

ARCHER K. BLOOD
Consul
Thessaloniki (1947-1949)

Political Officer
Athens (1950-1952)

Archer K. Blood was born in Illinois in 1923. As a Foreign Service officer he served in Greece, Germany, Algeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan and in Washington. He had three tours of duty in Greece. He was interviewed in 1989 by Henry Precht.

Q: *Then you were off to Thessaloniki. The Greek civil war was on at that time, wasn't it?*

BLOOD: That's right.

Q: *What were some of your impressions of political conditions in Greece at that time?*

BLOOD: Well, Thessaloniki, being the main city in the north, was sort of a focal point of the struggle against the guerrillas. We were at one time shelled by the Andartes, as they were called. The town was under curfew virtually the whole time I was there. It was difficult to go very far out of town on the roads because the roads were mined, and you ran into dangers of having your vehicle damaged. The United States military presence there was very small in Thessaloniki. We had, I think, two or three Army officers, and that was all. We also though had a British --

Q: *There were observers? These American Army officers were observers or were they --*

BLOOD: Observers and advisors to the Greek Army. We also had a brigade of British troops there, and there was a rather strong British military presence there and also including some British officers advising the Greek police.

Q: *Were the British engaged in actual fighting against guerrillas?*

BLOOD: No, they were not. Several of the British were killed in the shelling because one of the mortars landed in their area, but they were not engaged in the fighting. Nor were the Americans.

Q: *What was the status of U.S. aid to Greece at that time?*

BLOOD: Oh, we had a tremendous aid effort called AMAG, American Mission for Aid to Greece, engaged in a whole range of educational, agricultural, financial activities.

Q: *Military as well?*

BLOOD: And military aid, of course, also, yes. Most of that, of course, was centered in Athens, and we were a bit out of that. And let's see. Also, the George Polk murder case was perhaps the most --

Q: *This was the American journalist?*

BLOOD: Interesting. The American journalist who arrived in Thessaloniki and had announced -- this was in the spring of 1948 -- and announced that he wanted to establish contact with the leader of the Andartis. He was found murdered subsequently. Later on there was a trial in which several of the recumbents were convicted in absentia of his murder. But the case aroused a great deal of interest in the United States. Wild Bill Donovan was sent over to represent the media and to be sure that the case was investigated. Our consul general, Raleigh Gibson, I think, spent ninety-nine percent of his time on that case. I, myself, was not involved in it at all.

Q: *The allegation is that he was in fact murdered by the Greek rightists who wanted him out of the way and wanted to besmirch the reputation of the communists.*

BLOOD: That's one of the accusations. The government case is -- that is, the Greek government case against the communist -- is a bit flawed. Recently a book has come out about that written by Edmond Keeley, who was the brother of Robert Keeley who has been our ambassador in Greece, which I think takes a rather skeptical view of the convictions of the Andartis.

Q: *Did you have any contact with Polk at that time?*

BLOOD: No, I did not except that I was married in Thessaloniki on May 14, 1948, and the next day was leaving for my honeymoon in Italy when his body was discovered, but I kept going.

Q: *What were your principal duties? Were you a visa officer?*

BLOOD: I was consular officer so I had -- a large part were visas. Also, we had quite a bit of work with seamen, citizenship matters, notarials, regular gamut of consular work. The most interesting perhaps aspect or different aspect to me was the Ministry of the War Fiancée Act which allowed American servicemen, veterans of World War II, to bring in fiancées from abroad without reference to the quota. And many Greeks tried to take advantage of this, and we would constantly be dealing with Greek girls who would come in with letters from a young man in the States saying, "I have been working for your uncle in his restaurant, and he showed me your picture, and I have fallen madly in love with you. I want to marry you. Please take this letter to the American consul and get a visa." So our job was to decide in fact whether this was true love or fraud, and most of the time, we decided it was fraud.

Q: *Oh, that's too bad. You probably prevented a lot of real romance.*

BLOOD: I doubt it, I doubt it. When you have a nineteen-year-old boy and a forty-five-year-old Greek woman who have never met, it didn't strike me as an ideal basis for marrying.

Q: *What about the political work in the consulate at that time? I suppose that we were at a virtual state of war with the rebels, we had no contact them.*

BLOOD: Oh, no, we had no contact with the rebels.

Q: *How far left did our contacts go in the Greek political spectrum?*

BLOOD: Well, it's hard for me to answer that because I was doing just consular work. The consul general, who was the only one doing political work, was fully engaged with the Polk murder case and the subsequent investigation. We really didn't do any significant political reporting from Thessaloniki.

Q: *Then after Thessaloniki, you were off to Munich?*

BLOOD: I spent sixteen months there and suddenly received orders in the beginning of March to be in Munich by the end of March. This is 1949.

Q: *After Munich, you were back in Athens again?*

BLOOD: Yes.

Q: *Did you speak Greek by this time?*

BLOOD: I had a little Greek, yes. I was assigned to the political section as biographic officer. Actually the interesting reason was -- I understand why I got that assignment is that Claiborne Pell, who is now the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and who was a young Foreign Service officer at the time, had been assigned to that but decided to retire from the Foreign Service so that job came open, and I got it.

Q: *Maybe if you had retired at that point, you'd have been the senator. [Laughter]*

BLOOD: I would have preferred it. [Laughter]

Q: *Well, tell us something about your political work in Athens.*

BLOOD: Yes. Well, the job actually developed somewhat differently. I continued to do biographic work, and I enjoyed that thoroughly. In fact, I drafted some very long biographic reports. I was very much taken by the New Yorker profiles and tried to emulate them. I was

doing a bit of psychological profiling also in examining Greek political figures. But I was also asked by Ambassador Peurifoy to become the protocol officer of the embassy which I did. That took a great deal of my time. It also meant that I had to look particularly after congressional visits. I also was a liaison with the palace. Any Americans who sought audiences with the king or queen of Greece would have to come to me, and I would intervene on their behalf or discourage them, as the case might be.

Q: What kind of relations did we have with the palace at that time? How would you characterize them?

BLOOD: Very, very close, very good relationship. The United States ambassador, of course, at that time was really sort of a viceroy in Greece. He sat in on the meetings of the war council. The war with the guerrillas had just concluded, but the United States still was providing massive economic aid, and we were very intimately involved in the political developments in Greece.

Charlie Yost was the deputy chief of mission at the time. A splendid, splendid officer. I remember one of my delights of that tour was reading his analysis of that labyrinth and very complicated Greek political situation.

Q: What was the strength of nationalism among the people that we dealt with in the government, the king and his ministers? Were they uncomfortable with the kind of viceroy role that we exercised?

BLOOD: No, I don't think most of them were. I think they accepted it as a benefit to Greece. After all, it was U.S. help which had enabled Greece to defeat the communist threat to the government. Oh, sure, there must have been some who objected to the heavy U.S. role, but it certainly didn't come from the palace nor do I think from the leading political groups.

Q: Intellectuals and journalists were --

BLOOD: Oh, some of them, yes.

Q: Okay. Anything you would like to recall from that period, any incident?

BLOOD: No. It was a very, very busy two years. And also my family increased from one to three in that two years.

Q: Was Cyprus a problem at that stage?

BLOOD: It was just beginning to be. I remember with another officer from the political section going downtown to watch a demonstration by Greeks concerning Cyprus and sort of getting pushed around by the police as a result of our being on the fringes of the crowd. It was just beginning.

Q: Just beginning.

BLOOD: Yes.

Q: *All right. Then after Greece, you were off to Algiers.*

BEN FRANKLIN DIXON
Greek Desk
Washington, DC (1948-1951)

Ben Franklin Dixon was born in North Carolina in 1918. As a Civil Servant he was the officer for Greek Affairs in the Department of State. Entering the Foreign Service he was posted to Morocco, Thailand, Pakistan, and various assignments in Washington. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990 and 1991.

DIXON: Well, while I was in Paris, at the conference there, I had been transferred to NEA. I was to finish up the conference. Then I went to Greece, to sort of learn the country. And I spent three or four months in Greece.

Q: *This was when?*

DIXON: Nineteen forty-eight, summer of '48. At that time, we were very much concerned. We had Tsaldaris and Venizélos, who were opposing political parties, but on the right. We made them join forces and have a government. Things were pretty bad. I mean, things in Greece had just been awful. The Greeks had been encouraged to join with the Andartes to fight the Germans. A lot of the Andartes, under Markos, turned out to be just strictly Communists who were trying to take over Greece. So it was not only fights between the rightist parties, but also, in the leftist parties, those who were leftist-inclined but patriotic to Greece, and those were leftist-supplied who were trying to follow the Soviet direction. This made for terrible squabbles in Greece. Terrible things were done. And the Greek government, in places where they were trying to operate, had big, in effect, camps in which they retained people they felt that were not trustworthy. The American government felt that they were not being very sure about some of the people. We felt they had more people detained than they should have, and it was causing a lot of dislocation and a lot of other political problems.

So one of the things, while I was learning there about Greece, I went down south and took a look around there. The Peloponnisos by that time had been pretty much cleared of the Andartes forces, but there were still some places here and there. The British police mission had a group in the Peloponnisos. We had taken over from the British, but they were sort of supervising things down there. I went down and made a call on them, and they said they have an interesting situation. We went out, and they had cornered a bunch of Andartes in a building, the Greek security police or Greek army, sort of indistinguishable. And they had I don't know how many people in there. But the British were saying, "Look, they're cornered. Just call them and tell them to come on out. They're going to be there until they have to come out, so they might as well come out now." Well, they tried that, and they didn't come out. In a little while, the Greeks found a way of setting their house on fire. Which they did, and they began to stream out of there. And

the Greeks shot them as they came out, so the British tried to stop them. Well, they finally did stop them, but it was an awful mess.

Q: *It was a pretty brutal situation.*

DIXON: Well, you know, during the war, I saw just as brutal situations, too. And I don't know, you know, it's hard to say whether these people had been threatening them. It's very difficult.

I remember, in the Caribbean when I was on a transport, we came fairly close to a British ship. It had stopped what looked like a merchant vessel, and there were people getting in boats getting out of the ship. The British, it wasn't a destroyer, it was one of those smaller...

Q: *Corvette, probably.*

DIXON: The British corvette swung around and just gunned up a whole boatload of those Germans and made them get back in their boat. They had put explosives in the ship, and they made them go back and undo the explosives, and then they took them prisoner and took the ship. The Germans were going to blow up the ship. But the British, you know, just to show them they meant business, they killed a whole boatload. They got a machine gun and shot them all down. The rest of them went back on the boat.

You know, it's difficult to say what was warfare and what was... The conditions in Greece were terrible.

Q: *Oh, no, no, I... Well, now, you went through this sort of indoctrination bit. You were there, this was, what, you say '48?*

DIXON: Yes. Well, I came back and went on the Greek desk. But I also went up in the northern part of Greece where the fighting was going on.

One of the people said, "You know, we can take you right up to the front lines; you can hear the bullets whistling and so forth."

I said, "Look, I was the assistant division operations officer. I can understand a military situation from the map. I almost lost my life in my own war, I'm not going to go and take a chance in your war. So I'm staying right here."

But I did do a foolish thing. We went up to Thessaloniki. When they had fought up into the Yugoslav border and the Yugoslavs had opened the border, I went up to Gnjilane, over what had been a mined road. Which was pretty idiotic to do, but I was just anxious to see what was going on there. Bob Menem and I were the first people to go out to Makron Issos Island, which is off the east coast of where Athens is, at the end of Attica, and saw that concentration camp. They had cleaned it up, but you could tell things had been pretty elementary for them.

Q: *What was your impression, at the time, of the Greek government? I mean, as an American.*

DIXON: The Greek government, mainly run by us. We had a tremendous...we poured in, through the AID thing, people in almost every department of the Greek government, to help them do their accounting, to do their...I don't know, you name it. And we had people there who were specialists to help them get the government back together and working. And that went on for a couple of years until they got the government sort of in place.

In 1945, they had had the Varkiza Agreement, which was supposed to distinguish between people who were loyal Greeks, who were leftist, or even on the rightist side, that had fought against the Germans, and the people who really looked to the Soviet Union for guidance, so to speak. It was that, I think, for the first time, made it pretty clear as to which side was which side. But it had not really penetrated out in the country very much. And, you know, the Andartes were controlling northern Greece at that time, so they had no real way of knowing what this was about.

Q: Many of those villages were just taken over by one side or the other. Back on the desk, what were our major concerns about Greece?

DIXON: Our major concern was to free Greece. We had 25,000 Greek children who had been taken into Albania, Bulgaria, and God knows where. We tried to get those children returned. We tried to keep the Greek government moderate and reconstructing the country. We tried to keep the Greeks out of stirring up the pot in Cyprus, where we were having a lot of problems. The British were not really respecting the civil rights of the Cypriots. They were not doing things that would make the Cypriots happy at staying Cypriots. We were trying also to ameliorate relations between Albania and Greece, and Bulgaria and Greece. The Bulgars were particularly difficult because they kept going into the Ebro River and coming into Greece and one thing and another. The Greeks were mainly responsible for what they called North Epirus, which was Albania, and they were doing a lot of things they shouldn't have been doing there.

So we were interested in reconstructing the country, trying to get the government in a moderate posture and carrying out the reconstruction. We were trying to get a political easing-down of the animosities between the loyal leftists and the loyal rightists. We were also trying to train the Greek army to protect and defend itself. So we were concerned with military programs, aid programs, advice to the government, and all these other...

Q: What about the king? Did we have any particular feelings that the king was...?

DIXON: The king was welcomed back. He was more or less apolitical. His wife, however...

Q: Was this Frederika?

DIXON: Yes. She was the granddaughter of the Kaiser, cousin to the king of England. She was very fond of General Marshall, and she used to give letters to the embassy, which were sent to me, and I took them to General Marshall.

Q: He was secretary of state at that time.

DIXON: He was secretary of defense. He had been Secretary of State. In '49, he was Secretary of Defense.

One of the letters was asking that he get her estate returned to her in Austria. It was necessary to restate her estate in what they called the Grund Book in Austria. I set up the scheme to get this done, and I think they did do it. But the Queen was always fiddling with political problems and politicians and so forth. And one of the things we tried to do was sort of calm her down a bit.

Q: Well, she continued to be that, even after her husband died and her son took over. She continued to be a major thorn in the diplomatic saddle, or something like that, didn't she?

DIXON: Yes.

Q: How much control did you feel that we had, say, with the Greek parties?

DIXON: Well, I think we had no control over the leftists. You know, we were Santa Claus to the rest of them -- except the leftists didn't acknowledge it -- but we were Santa Claus to Greece. It was hard for them to, you know, do anything that we didn't like. And we really sat hard on a few things.

One thing we were not entirely able to stop was some graft that went on. I remember that Tsaldaris, who was the prime minister after I was there, was later accused of taking a bribe. He was running again for office, and he said it was untrue, filed a suit against the person that alleged this, and so forth. After he lost and was out as prime minister, the court case came up. And he said, in effect, that the article said, "Dressed in a gray suit, Prime Minister Tsaldaris went into the Customs House in Piraeus and accepted a bribe from so and so and so and so." Tsaldaris said he was not, he was wearing a brown suit. But all that time, he'd held off any trial of the thing, and that was the only thing that he...

Q: What about Ambassador Peurifoy? He was one of our most active ambassadors I think we had around. What was sort of your impression and that of the desk on his style of operation and his effect?

DIXON: Well, I remember one dispatch...not dispatch, one something I wrote. He had spoken to a Greek club, something like the Rotary or something like that, at which I think he said that they should stop having proportional representation. I forgot the king or the queen had said something. And I wrote a memo for George McGhee, who was the assistant secretary, saying, in effect, that Peurifoy had gone to the extreme limit of what an ambassador should go in saying publicly about what another government should do, and that he had gone about as far as the king had in saying something else that he shouldn't have said.

Jack Peurifoy was primarily an administrator. He had no political sense at all. He had first-class people: Bob Memminger, Norm Anschutz, Hal Minor, some of our best people there. He listened to them very carefully. He made an excellent ambassador.

We were having lots of problems with the British government about Cyprus and a couple of

other things in Greece. He wrote a telegram in which he said he didn't mind telling the British about some things, but he didn't think we should get in bed and tell all. Dulles was greatly offended by this and said he wanted him removed. Well, people tried to get Dulles to come off it, and he wouldn't. Jack was brought back. He had been very popular; everybody liked him. When he came back -- I always met him at the airport -- he came back looking pretty wounded. He said, "I gather I'm in pretty bad odor."

And I said, "Well, I don't think Secretary Dulles likes you."

And he wanted another job. I think Dulles didn't want to give him a job. But he looked around and found there was a job in Guatemala. And Earl Warren, who had just been appointed chief justice, he got to speak in his behalf, and he was given the job. Earl Warren was at the Supreme Court, and had not been there more than a week or something like that, and Jack wanted him to come down and swear him in. So arrangement was made, and we held that up in Dulles's office. Dulles was on the Hill talking to somebody, and he came back. We were all standing there. In the meantime, Warren had brought a gown, a Justice gown, to put on. He didn't know how to get it on. So we were there trying to open the gown and figure out how to put it on and so forth, when the elevator opened and out stepped Foster Dulles. He was so surprised, he opened his mouth wide and his false teeth fell out. So we had to pick his false teeth up, and we got the robe on Chief Justice Warren. Peurifoy looked very pleased; Dulles, gritting his teeth, looked absolutely furious.

But Jack went on to Guatemala, where they had that big to-do. But he did an excellent job in Greece.

Q: Well, it really was this thing that Dulles was such a sort of puritan that he just didn't like...?

DIXON: He was a silly ass.

Later on, I worked in NEA as the political-military type for George Allen. We were having what they called Operation Alpha, in which we were trying get the Israelis and the Egyptians to be more friendly to each other. And there were certain stages we were trying to go through. The Egyptians were running out of military equipment and they wanted more military aid. And Dulles was not particularly inclined towards it. I used to go with George Allen to talk to Dulles. I made the mistake, the first time I went there, of taking a bunch of papers with me, a couple of which I thought George might want to have. So we talked to Dulles, and he asked George something.

George said, "What about this?"

And I said, "Well, I've got a paper."

And I took it out of this thing and gave it to Allen, he gave it to the secretary. I was sitting next to the secretary; Allen was sitting on the other side.

Dulles then picked up the papers and said, "What are these?"

I said, "They're not related to this. I've got something I've got to do, and I've just got my papers with me."

"Well, what are they?" he said. "Let me see them."

So he took the papers and looked through them and asked me some questions about them, which got the thing off the track, but anyway I got the papers back and we got back on the subject.

And one day, we were in there... The Egyptians had given an ultimatum, in effect, saying they'd been offered the arms they wanted from the Soviet Union, and were we going to give them or not?

Dulles said to Allen, and Francis Russell was also, who running the Alpha Operation, he said to Russell, "Have the Egyptians answered this last thing we sent them?"

Russell said, "No."

He said, "Well, we're not going to give them the arms. I don't think the Russians are going to do it."

So, you know, we lost the ball game.

Q: That was the beginning of... It was actually Czech arms, wasn't it, or something like that?

DIXON: I've forgotten what it was, but it was from the East, yes.

Q: But this was a real change that soured relations for...

DIXON: It soured the relations for years. And, you know, it was not anything that we did, but what we didn't do. And Dulles was responsible for it.

Q: And it was more by gut reaction rather than by...

DIXON: A lot of the things he did were emotional.

Q: Emotional rather than sitting back and this was a considered opinion of the Near Eastern Bureau or something like that. You, at that point, were basically saying we... I mean, you, I'm talking about you, George McGee, and all. I mean, the idea that we should make some accommodation to the Egyptians?

DIXON: Exactly. We all felt we should. But Dulles wouldn't do it.

Q: Well, back now to Greece for just a bit. Were you there during something that's gained a lot of notoriety now, the Polk affair?

DIXON: Yes, I was in Thessaloniki after the thing had happened.

Q: *Could you explain what it was, for the record, and then how we responded.*

DIXON: Well, George Polk was a correspondent who had been in Athens. He was getting ready to go home, and he had been trying to talk to Markos.

Q: *Markos being the head of the...*

DIXON: Head of the Greek Andartes.

Q: *Which were the Communist...*

DIXON: Soviet-directed Communist organization.

Polk, through some sort of hokey-pokey, had been touched. You know, the Greeks are great for saying: I don't know anything, but my cousin knows this, and his friend is the man that does this and that and the other. Suddenly, out of all this kind of very Greek ambience, he had wandered into somebody who was going to introduce him to Markos, to get an interview with Markos. He went up to Thessaloniki, and what did he do? He talked to our people there in the Consulate General. Wally Gibson was the consul general. He talked to them, and I think they tried to suggest that there might be some hokey-pokey going on. But he went and met somebody. And the next day they found him floating in the bay. Some people thought he'd been in a rowboat and they'd shot him in the boat, or they'd maybe shot him ashore and taken him out in the boat and put him in the bay. It wasn't quite clear. But who shot him was a great problem. At that time, we felt it was very difficult to know who did it. It could have been done by the rightists; it could have been done by the leftists. None of it made much sense. There was no motivation for it on either side. We were very suspicious of all these... We had a number of things that said it was the left and it was the right, you know, all sorts of stories. None of them really made much sense. There was no motivation for it. So we came to the conclusion that something had gone wrong and this guy had known too much about somebody who was in the leftist operation who was in Thessaloniki. So when it didn't come off, they shot him. That seemed to be the prevailing opinion.

I understand there's now a book out which says, in effect, that Tsaldaris had some sort of draft scheme in which he was depositing money in some New York bank, and that Polk had found out about it and gone to Tsaldaris and said he was going to expose it unless he told him the whole story and so forth and so on, and that Tsaldaris had set this thing up. I think that's probably not true, but it's quite a mystery what happened there.

Q: *It's one of those things that is played-on, to show how the American government tried to cover something up.*

DIXON: I haven't seen the book.

Q: *No, I haven't. I read one by the brother of, I think, Keeley. Anyway, I read one, and there does*

seem to be an attempt to show this being a cover-up, that it was done by the right rather than the left.

DIXON: Well, the leftists were trying very hard to push that story. I just don't know, and I don't think anybody really knows. The people in the Consulate General in Thessaloniki and the CIA, who was Harlan Beebe, I think had gotten a pretty good line on what had happened. But, as I say, there's no motivation for it, unless it was that Polk had gotten on to the leftist organization in Thessaloniki that were, in effect, well hidden from the Greek police and so forth, and when they didn't get him to see Markos, they were frightened and they shot him. It's not impossible that Tsaldaris may have done it. Not impossible, but I think it's unlikely.

Q: It could have been done by a small coterie of the right, a small coterie of the left...

DIXON: Or somebody could have just decided, you know, for their own reasons. You know, there are a lot of people that are more Catholic than the pope and decide they're going to take matters in their own hands. Certainly nothing came out at that time, or since then, that really is positive proof of what happened. These are speculations, I think.

Q: How did we view Turkey? I mean, you were on the Greek desk and there's always the Cyprus issue. How did we view Turkey in those days?

DIXON: Well, Turkey didn't get involved in the Cyprus issue very much. It was the British versus us. And we had lots of hard sessions with the British, telling them to get off their ass and have some elections there and get some local government going on. They didn't have to rule the island, but have cities have their own mayors and do anything. The British picked out a labor leader they thought would attract attention, and he turned out to be a weak willy. Their efforts in trying to get their own party started there, these things were so good. We said: What difference does it make, you know, if you just give them some measure of self-government and let them do certain things? Which they were not. The British kept picking them up and interning them and this sort of thing. And we felt that they were being pretty stupid about it. And there's a long series of things in the, you know,...what are those things we put out every year about foreign affairs?

Q: Foreign relations series.

DIXON: ...of memos I wrote about these meetings, that I think give a pretty good insight to what we were trying to do there.

Q: You worked with George McGee quite a bit, didn't you? He at that time was the assistant secretary for Near Eastern Affairs. What was your impression? How did he feel about the situation that you were dealing with? What was his style of operation and how effective was he within the department, would you say?

DIXON: George McGee is a very able guy. He has a new idea about every five minutes -- ninety percent of them no good, but ten percent of them pretty good. But he's got objectives that he's got in the back of his mind. You know, he parlayed himself into this position. He went to Oxford. He

was a geologist and he wrote on a potential oil-bearing shale in Algeria. The French government, I think he saw that they got a copy of his paper on this. They sent him down to Algeria, and they brought in oil. And they gave George some money. George's idea was to make a million dollars by the time he was twenty-five. He came back, and he knew Will Clayton, he got himself a job in the State Department, and then he got this job as assistant secretary for NEA. But, in the meantime, he'd brought his money back from England, bought some property in Texas, and made I don't think a million but three million by the time he was twenty-four and half, or something like this. And then he came in the State Department. He had a very agile mind and was quite capable, though he was very voluble, said too much, pushed too much on the ideas that were not really good. They had a lot of trouble talking him out of things. But I think the overall effect of his reign in NEA was very positive and very good.

Well, I was very much impressed. There was this guy named, I think, Tsouderos, who was sent over by the rightists in Greece, who wanted to go ahead and set up a certain kind of government, which, in effect, obviously, they could control. And they felt that the reaction against the Andartes was such that the Greek population as a whole would have voted for this in their current mood. McGee perceived this right off, and he said, "Look, I realize that you feel you can get a friendly vote for this kind of government, which is a bit too strong, it seems to me, by taking the vote right away." But he said, "I'd like to see really a more measured time, when people would look at both sides of the question before we go into this." And I thought he showed great perception. He just said this, and McGee, in responding to it, that was his off-the-hat response. And I think it was very wise.

They did put off elections until things had calmed down some and they didn't have soldiers at everybody's village and that sort of thing. When that didn't go off, they wanted to put off elections for a good while. And finally they did hold elections. And Papagos, who was a general who had been nonpolitical, was elected. In Papagos, we got a government that was fairly moderate. They had effective people in the thing. The old cabinets had been primarily political alliances between the Venizélos and the Tsaldaris parties. Papandreou, who was a very able guy, had this...

Q: *This was not...*

DIXON: This was the father of the one now.

Q: *Andreas is the son.*

DIXON: Yes, Andreas's father was prime minister for a short period. And he was a pretty good, level-headed fellow. He was an eccentric. I'll never forget, when I went down to the Peloponnisos, we came past this village and he was making a speech. And I had been to see him. The embassy said, "We haven't had much time to pay attention, it would be nice if you went down and talked to him." So I did go in and talk to him. We got to this village, and he was making a speech in the village square. So I walked in to sort of see what the reaction was and so forth. He saw me there, and he was very pleased that I'd come to hear his speech. It was only accidental. But he gave me a book that he had written, which he signed. He lived about a block and a half from the embassy, and I saw him a couple of times after that. He was very pleased that

I had taken the trouble to go down to hear his speech.

But, generally speaking, the main political people were the Tsaldaris and Venizélos. They went out. The Greek government, for the first time, began to finance itself in about '52 or '53, and to start paying on their debts, which they had not paid since 1824 when the bishop raised the flag over the fortress in Patras.

We felt that things were going really well. Then Greece and Turkey joined NATO, and we began a more serious effort to help them with their forces. With a different objective -- not fighting the Andartes, but to be able to defend that part of Greece.

Q: Well, at that time (again, we're trying to go back), everything was not predicated on Greece versus Turkey. I mean, this was not the focus of balancing these two antagonists.

DIXON: That happened much later on. Greece and Turkey both were being helped. We were advising both of them to take it easy with the other. The thing that brought this on, there was a soccer game between the Italians and the Turks in the stadium in Athens. The Greeks all cheered for the Italians, and the Turks were about to break off diplomatic relations with them. We worked hard on trying to keep the peace between Turkey and Greece.

When they both came into NATO, they were of course allies. Things got even more difficult, because some of the Greek islands, you know, are right on the Turkish coast. And I remember one day the Turkish ambassador came in and said that they were very much concerned that you could hear a cock crow from one of the Greek islands off the southern part of Turkey, and that the Greeks were putting soldiers there, and they were, in effect, putting soldiers onto all those islands. Where they had been all along -- well, some of them. There wasn't much Andartes fighting in the islands, but there had been soldiers there. Well, all of a sudden, they became very sensitive to it, and we had a hell of a time trying to placate the Turks and the Greeks and keep them working in the NATO saddle, so to speak.

The thing that really got this off on a bad footing was Cyprus. I remember, when I left the Greek desk doing work for George Allen, who was assistant secretary after McGee, we had had Archbishop Makarios come almost every year to the U.N. and ask that Cyprus be joined to Greece. Senator McCarran, from Nevada, had a big Greek constituency there and he was very beholden to Makarios. Before Jack Purifoy went to Greece, McCarran came with Makarios to call on Purifoy, to say, in effect, that the Senate would not vote on any appropriation for the State Department unless we allowed Cyprus to join Greece. This made a big impression on everybody in the State Department. It didn't work out that way, but, you know, the warning was clearly there, and McCarran was still pretty strong in the Senate. We had followed a policy of trying to get the British to behave better, to get the Cypriots, through our consulate, through Bill Porter there, to calm down, to take it easy and not do anything rash. We tried to explain to the Turks what we were doing and not to get excited. And we were able to keep the lid on the Cypriot thing.

When I left the desk, they were getting ready for the... Every year, we had this, when the General Assembly came open, because it came up before that, and Makarios would show up, and

McCarran and so forth. They said they thought we ought to take a new look at our policy, that maybe we should stand for elections for self-government and so forth and so on. Rather than just tell the British they ought to do it, they wanted to come out.

And I said, you know, here we've tried this for a number of years. And the thing that seems to work best is to keep the wraps on this thing until we can get the British to turn it around. We think, in due course, they may do something. And we think that's the best way to unlock this situation, rather than trying to get it open and try to stand for elections or talks on different things publicly, what we were trying to do with the British.

They didn't take my advice, and they started on a different track. And exactly what I said would happen if they did this did happen. My name was mud in GTI, you know, for being right.

Q: Oh, there's nothing worse. Nothing worse.

DIXON: They hardly spoke to me for six months after that.

JOHN F. CORRELL
Labor Attaché
Athens (1948-1952)

John F. Correll graduated from Kenyon College and became a teacher in Mansfield, Ohio. He began his career in the labor unions in the early 1930's when he became the educational director for the local union. He was brought into the State Department by his friend, Cleon Swayzee. In addition, he has served at labor attaché in South Africa, Spain, Cuba and England. He was interviewed on March 9, 1990, by Morris Weisz.

Q: John, excuse me, I wouldn't want the record to be incomplete in that respect. You were the last Labor Attaché assigned there for many years. Later on people like McHale served as Labor Attaché there, but that was after a hiatus of many years.

CORRELL: Yes. They disguised it with a particular terminology I think at that time. I then transferred to Greece, and, as a little interlude, let me say that I was educated at Kenyon College, and, of all things, I had majored in Greek. I knew the language pretty well. I knew the history, I knew the drama, I knew the philosophy. So I think providence had a hand there in getting me assigned to Greece.

Now as you know, Morris, the Marshall Aid Plan was then getting underway and it had a very good concept of labor, with many labor people in Washington advising them. They recruited some of the best labor people that you could imagine. For instance, Alan Strachan, our mutual friend, was sent to Greece, where he was head of the Labor Division of the Marshall Plan Aid Mission. Fortunately we got along famously. I had some of my tasks cut out for me, and he had his tasks cut out for him. And we were able to carry them out together to the mutual advantage of

our country's total objective there. We both became very well known in the Greek trade union movement, which at that time had quite a reputation for fighting Communists, and Fotis Makris, who became quite a favorite of ours, and John Potsetcis (sp?) and John Calamaris (?) all became very friendly to us labor people.

Now we used to sponsor all kinds of activities, and Alan had quite a staff over there on productivity, apprenticeship, and so on. And I maintained contact with the Ministry of Labor and the Greek labor movement. And we participated in those great parades of those days. As you probably know, the Greeks will parade at the drop of a hat, and we had some very remarkable, impressive parades with the flags flying and the bands playing. But that was on the surface. Underneath it all, we were tussling with Communists, who were trying to infiltrate the trade union movement, and we beat them hands down, because we had the people who knew labor, knew the labor movement, and we had very willing people in the Greek labor movement who were our friends. I was in Greece for about four years, and it was during that time that I used to go to Paris to conferences and meet many of my labor friends as well as other Labor Attachés.

Q: I want to interrupt you for a moment because I want you to cover one other matter. There are many countries we will be covering in which there was both an Embassy Labor Attaché and a USAID Mission labor man, and where there was frequently some conflict between them, especially if one came from one part of our labor movement and the other from the competing part. You came from the Federation of Teachers, which was in the AFL, but you had been working with the CIO. In any event . . .

CORRELL: Yes, but that did not occur in Greece, because Alan Strachan was from the United Automobile Workers, CIO.

Q: But also -- and I have known both of you. -- I would say that your personalities are such that you were able to avoid conflicts. What was the line of demarcation in your respective functions? You were in the State Department. He was in AID. What was the demarcation between your two functions?

CORRELL: Well, primarily it was that Alan concentrated on training of the unions in apprenticeship, productivity issues, trade union accounting, and trade union organization. He had a staff of about seven pretty good people, who were specialists in those fields. Now on my side. .

..

Q: John, I love you dearly. Some of them were good, and some of them were less than good! (laughter)

CORRELL: Well, I speak only of the good ones.

Q: Good, good.

CORRELL: They were all great friends of mine; they were always welcome at the Embassy. I would take over, for instance, on Labor Day to give the Labor Day party, and we had a good man as our Ambassador, John Peurifoy, who understood labor very well. And we invited the Greek

unions to have a great celebration on our Labor Day. And we always had good speakers, and that was a very mutually agreeable occasion in which we became very close friends.

Thank goodness I could speak a little Greek by that time. I had been trained in Greek in college, but the Greek that they were speaking was modern Greek, and I was trained in ancient Greek. I went to school at the State Department and took some courses in diplomacy, so I got along very well and could use the usual phrases. One of the major things that I did there was to attend the labor conferences that they had. They would bring in the trade unions, small and weak as they were, from the outlying areas in Greece. One of the strong places was Thessaloniki, where they had a good, strong trade union movement.

As you know, the Greeks are mariners and we had a very strong union of the mariners, which had its offices over in Piraeus. But to get back to your question, there was no problem of demarcation between our functions. Alan and I both went to labor meetings. I attended most of the meetings that he had over at the Marshall Aid Mission offices, and we got along very well.

Q: Let me see if I've got this correct for the purposes of future interviews. There was no line of demarcation in your function in the sense of conflict, but generally the AID function was to train and help the trade unions, which was an admitted and encouraged part of both the Marshall Plan and the Greek-Turkish aid program, which existed even before the Marshall Plan. Your job was as an Embassy official to keep the Embassy informed on the importance of the labor aspects of Greek society, to interpret what was happening in the labor field generally, not only in the trade union field?

CORRELL: Yes, in general that's exactly what we did. And I made many reports of course. I reported to the Embassy staff the major developments that were going on. If Alan Strachan wanted to see the Minister of Labor, that was fine; if I wanted to talk to somebody in the labor movement, whom he was working with, that was fine. So, in general, I don't think we could have had a better arrangement. Now why was that? That was probably because of our personalities and because we both wanted to build a strong Greek trade union movement, which we did. And the Communists ultimately gave up on the labor movement in Greece. I was in Greece approximately, as your dates will show, three and a half in the early 1950's. I went there in 1948 and came back in 1952. Now from there . . . Unless there are other questions you would like to ask me about Greece, . . .

VICTOR SKILES
Import Control Officer
Athens (1948-1950)

Director, Greece/Turkey/Iran Division
Washington, DC (1954)

Director, Greece/Turkey/Iran Division
Athens (1959-1960)

Victor Skiles was born and raised in Idaho. He graduated from the University of Idaho in 1940. After graduation, his favorite professor helped him obtain a fellowship with the National Institute of Public Affairs. In 1942, he entered the Navy and was stationed in Berlin. His assignment to the military government operation was that of assistant to the head of the Food Distribution. He has also served in Germany, Israel, Afghanistan and Italy. He was interviewed by John Kean on December 4, 1998.

Q: *What was your role in Greece?*

SKILES: I went down there to be, in effect, the import control officer. That was one of those situations where, at that time, the U.S. was providing the bulk of foreign exchange for imports. The mission had a trade division which had an import side and an export side. I went down to take over the import side, and I guess its functions were pretty well self-defined. It was to program and monitor the use of foreign exchange availabilities, whether provided by the U.S. or out of the Greek economy, to use for essential imports. This required a sort of a rationing system and import controls. But not long after I got there this whole trade function was transferred to the government of Greece, out of the U.S. mission. I didn't want to go to work for the government of Greece, so I stayed with the mission and became a special assistant to the mission director. There were two of us, and basically we tried to cover the waterfront for the Director and the Deputy Director for Operations, to screen virtually everything for them. An example of our functions vis a vis the Greek Government was to provide the staff work and to attend with the Deputy Director for Operations of the U.S. Mission, Ken Iverson, his weekly meeting with the Minister of Coordination.

Shortly after I took up this job, the Washington ECA office, in preparing the congressional materials for the upcoming year, decided to add an element into the appropriation request that they had not had in there earlier, and that was for technical assistance. So we were asked, as were the other missions, to get up an illustrative technical assistance program in a big hurry, and I was given that job in the mission. My functional description was an overall special assistant, but basically I became the SA for technical cooperation fairly early in the game, and this lasted most of the time that I was there.

A little anecdote: we responded to the Washington request for program submissions and they were asking for \$25 million for the whole ECA area for a year, and we got up some programs, not all of which were all that practical, which added up to about \$22 million, as I recall. As soon as the wheel turned sufficiently far, we got a cabled authorization out of Washington to proceed with the \$22 million technical assistance program. I guess what had really happened was that the other missions weren't quite in a position to get up many good and practical sounding projects that early in the game, so Greece was authorized more than it rightly deserved; and more than we could sensibly use.

Q: *The Greek-Turkish aid program began in 1947, if I remember correctly. And it operated initially as a kind of independent entity, there being not yet at that time any Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan formally came into existence, if I remember correctly, in April 1948, and*

missions began to be established in all the other countries. But because of the Greek-Turkish aid program, the Greek and Turkish missions were well ahead of the others in terms of having evolved and formed a system of operations and a structure, so were able to be out in front.

SKILES: That's the point I was trying to make. We had the people already on the ground. We had, for example, an industry division that I suspect few other missions had at that point, and the division chief not only had ideas, but he had people working in certain parts of the industrial activities in the economy. Similarly in food and agriculture, when you have that sort of competence available, it is a much shorter step to get on paper a program that can be presentable and useful for discussion purposes, than it is for a mission that just doesn't have those kind of people.

Q: What were some of the principal elements of this technical cooperation program?

SKILES: Oh John, it's been a long time since I've thought about that, but basically, except for a couple of fairly largish surveys in water resources and in the industrial sector, I don't think they varied all that much, except in terms of projected size, from the things that we did in the TCA countries, very shortly thereafter. The question of agricultural development was not so much a question of what you do, but how much of it do you do? In all those places we saw a need for a local organization to do the things our extension service did here at home. You can approach that as a very small service with a very few people in a Kenya a few years later, or in a Greece, where the proposal was for a country-wide program, a fairly big program with a large number of people.

Q: You mean Americans?

SKILES: Both. Americans and locals. So I think that determines the magnitude and the dollar figures a lot more than the types of activities. Also in Greece we were not averse to "doing things" as contrasted with the later emphasis on demonstration projects.

Q: The whole character of the program in Greece, however, was more of the sort that would have been characteristic in a defense support country, than in a country where technical cooperation was our primary function. You would try to rehabilitate the economy as a means of both overcoming the insurgency and of gaining a political alignment within the country that would be supportive of our posture vis a vis the communist threat.

SKILES: Yes. It was, indeed, a forerunner of what came to be called Defense Support or Supporting Assistance, in which crucial factors include foreign exchange utilization for essential imports and the employment of resulting local currency or counterpart availabilities. One of the primary concerns was protection - I can't say stability except in the sense of trying to reestablish stability - of the Greek currency. The U.S. also had considerable participation on the military side.

Q: Sure.

SKILES: And there's another distinction, and that is that the aid program at that time was

basically a headquarters kind of operation. We had people in the field, but we'd have, for example, one man in a city up country, another in a mid-sized city mid-country; maybe a dozen of these field representatives. We didn't really have program operators in those places. You mentioned the insurgency - security was certainly one of the great inhibitors once you got out of Athens.

Q: Did you have any large force of contract personnel working with local institutions?

SKILES: Well, I don't know how to answer that.

Q: No university contracts, no road building contractors? How were these things being done?

SKILES: The reason I don't have an answer, or don't quite know how to answer is that when you got hold of something like a major dam development and irrigation project, initially the problem with the project is what kind of a dam do you need and how do you get it constructed? Well now, for this sort of thing, we would use an EBASCO. In that sense, yes, we had contractors. But we didn't have such things as university contracts in institution building.

Q: EBASCO meaning an engineering and construction firm?

SKILES: Yes, who were supposedly very good in the power generation field.

Q: Electric Bond and Share, by name, in the old days?

SKILES: This is a complete aside, but by the time I got there, they had had a change in mission directorship, and the name of the new mission director was John Nuveen. I say this in response to your comment about Electric Bond and Share. Yes, it's the John Nuveen of the Nuveen Securities family. His predecessor in Athens was a former and well-known mayor of San Francisco.

Q: In those days, the programs undertaken in Europe were able to command the participation of a lot of high level people, both from industry and from government, because it was, after all, the primary thrust of U.S. foreign policy at that point, right?

SKILES: I think that's right. True also in Washington. The people who were in ECA and in the upper layers of the State Department were not your run of the mill politicians, nor by and large were they the people who had gone up in the foreign service. This kind of service was relatively new and certainly challenging to a number of big names.

Q: Sure. How long did you stay in Greece?

SKILES: Not so long. I came back here in 1950. And I then had to face the real difficult decision again of what to do, whether to stay in the foreign field (and if so, what to do within it) or whether to go back to domestic activities. This became somewhat crucial to me, because the man who was primarily responsible for taking me to Greece, and who had been deputy administrator of SMA some years earlier, had returned from Greece before I did, and was at that time one of

the nameless special assistants to the President, the President being Harry Truman. He invited me to join his little staff over there, and I can tell you it was difficult to avoid taking advantage of such an opportunity. However, I concluded that I really wanted to stay in the international field.

I suppose the logical thing to have done would have been to go with the ECA in Washington at that point, but I thought that if I were going to stick with the international field I ought to get all the way into it, rather than continue with the presumed to be temporary agency that was running the Marshall Plan.

Q: That was a two-year stint in a somewhat different environment than your Israel experience. We had I guess, a dwindling program in Greece, a vigorous program in Turkey, and a very vigorous program in Iran, of major proportions by world standards, as well as NESAs' standards, right?

SKILES: Right. I'm not sure I would characterize the Greek program as dwindling at that stage, although in some respects it certainly was. At least it was not expanding. A large part of mission responsibility was in terms of what had been going on from '47 onwards.

Q: The insurgency was behind us. It was coming around to being a more normal kind of economic assistance, technical assistance program.

SKILES: Yes. Greece was much more on its own feet, in terms of the AID program. We were talking earlier about the 1948-49 period, when I was out there, and at that time the U.S. was providing a bulk of the foreign exchange available to Greece as a country for imports of any kind.

Q: Because it wasn't generating much foreign exchange on its own.

SKILES: And by the mid-50s period, it was doing much better in the international economic arena. Iran, I think you've characterized well.

Q: O.K., Vic, we're going to turn to Greece, Turkey, and Iran to follow where we just left off, and we will perhaps spend a little time talking about the issues and problems in the three countries: Greece, Turkey, and Iran.

SKILES: Right. One of the reasons it was interesting and rewarding to me to move into that area is that it put me back in very close touch with some old associates. Raymond Berry and Bill Rountree had both been special assistants to the ambassador in Greece at the time that I was special assistant to the ECA mission chief, then were running GTI at the Department, although Raymond fairly quickly moved up to the next higher level, as did Rountree subsequently. In the meantime they had not been completely out of my circle of acquaintance. For example, in the early days of Point Four, while I was doing the regional coordination job, Rountree had come to me with a proposal that we do something about the locust threat in Iran, which at that particular moment seemed to be the country's most serious problem. They did indeed have a locust

scourge, and as I learned more about it, I discovered that this was an old problem, but usually not so much in Iran as it was a bit further south, on the Arabian Peninsula, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and so on. But what Bill was interested in, was whether the U.S. could in some way involve itself in a locust eradication program, and frankly, my reaction was not too optimistic, because it seemed to me precisely the kind of thing that Point Four did not want to get into at that time, but I agreed to try to pave the way with the Administrator, and set things up so that he, Rountree, could come over and make a personal pitch, based on a very good understanding of what was required, and I must say a knowledge of what the real problem was. So this happened, and somewhat to my surprise the Administrator said, "Sure, go ahead."

So we launched a locust control program in Iran. Fairly expensive; we hired some light planes to go over and serve as crop dusters, the crop being these hordes of locusts which really cleaned the landscape, and obviously this had to be done in a hurry. Now I say, "we" did this. Actually, I didn't have a whole lot to do with it once it got started. At that point operational responsibilities were in the functional divisions, and the agriculture people did most of the work in getting that project, which essentially was an aerial spraying operation, rolling. Eventually, this became something else. The United Nations FAO became interested in organizing a locust control program for the whole of that area, headquartered in Addis Ababa, and we contributed a great deal to the formation of that project and continued to make financial contributions to it for some years.

The Greek supply mission was run by a couple of old Greek friends, one of whom had married the American nutritionist in the U.S. Mission in Athens, and by two first-rate American women who had run the office in the U.S. Mission in Athens that I was initially in charge of, before it (and they) transferred to the Greek trade mission.

GTI had its share of problems, and there were knowledgeable people in State as well as elsewhere, not only knowledgeable, but people with whom I felt that I could work without a lot of preparatory endeavors. Unfortunately, Iran, the first year or so that I had that job, was consumed, or at least our division was consumed, largely in a defensive position in a battle which had been launched by Congressman Hardy, who was head of one of the subcommittees, and apparently, an arch-enemy of our mission director from earlier times, particularly when Bill Warne, the mission director, had been the regional director, I think it was, of the Bureau of Reclamation, out west. Acrimonious relationships had developed. Hardy had called Warne on the carpet to account for the Iran program, and an awful lot of time was spent that year, I'm tempted to say virtually the full time of the Iran desk officer, in researching records, trying to help find out how these problems got from A to B, how they became issues, and so on. It was not all that pleasant a period, and yet we had a big mission, a big program. Things just had to keep going forward, despite the diversion of a good deal of our manpower to the protective side of things. In Greece and Turkey it was quite different. In a sense, our problems there were more internal. A) in terms of trying to continue to get adequate budgetary levels for some very significant programs, and B) because there are other units of government, other than the mutual security program, that had big interests there, and C) the mutual security program. This was an area where we were involved in military forces as well as economic development. These not only had to be kept in mind, but had to be coordinated with defense and other interested parties. General Reilly, who previously had been Mr. Stassen's Assistant Director for Management, was

our mission director in Turkey at that time. Here again, we had a large program and were involved in some activities that were certainly not usual to a Point Four kind of program, but much more common in a Marshall Plan kind of approach. We were heavily involved in reforms that would get the mines into greater production, for example. Heavily involved in transportation, even railroads, to move goods around. A number of things like this internally, as well as a major focus on balance of payments problems, and the need for financing for what we jointly regarded as essential imports. To a large degree the same was true for Greece. A smaller country, more concentrated resources and problems, A) because it was a smaller country, and B) because the government had its fingers into more things in its representation. Both countries had supply missions in the U.S. and both were quite effective.

Q: That is to say, the government was involved in what way?

SKILES: It was still controlling imports and exports, for example, though not nearly to the degree as at the time I had been out there, but it was still not an open market, as far as importers were concerned.

Q: And it would have been our view that it would be a better situation if the free market was allowed to operate.

SKILES: It would be a better situation when the free market was allowed to operate, yes. But I don't think it's fair to say that we were arguing for an opening of the floodgates at that point. Partly because it was largely our money we were talking about, and we were not adverse to making sure it was getting into the channels that we wanted it to be in, or spent for the things we wanted it spent for. And, as I suggested earlier, we had military assistance programs in both of those countries. The approach to the countries is what made things really different for us, and as I've indicated before, you can't really be concerned, be involved in what is essentially a balance of payments kind of program without having the country as well as the individual segments as your major concern. Therefore, we had to get into country balance of payments problems. The causes, the cures, the wherefores, along with demonstrating a concern for people problems. In Greece the per capita national income was still only about \$300 per year, which was not nearly as low as some of our customers, but still very low.

Q: Low by European standards.

SKILES: Certainly low by European standards, and Greece gradually was becoming a member of the European community. Security concerns are obvious: not only the internal war that they had been through, but the fact that it borders on the Eastern Bloc a good deal of the causes of the war were inspired by the "other side." We had substantial military representation there and worked very closely with the Greeks in this area. At home you were much more involved in interagency considerations. We became concerned, for example, along with various State Department elements, the Treasury Department, Agriculture, and so on, in getting up and doing country evaluations, balance of payments assessments. In a sense macroeconomic approaches which TCA certainly had not been doing, which we had tried to some extent in Israel, but it hadn't become an art in TCA. I suppose those were the main differences.

SKILES: Well, that came about I think, at least partly from a feeling on my part that the particular things that I had gone to Israel to try to accomplish were pretty much in the background and that it was time to move on. From the agency point of view, the Israel mission was pretty well staffed, and there was a need in Athens. Keep in mind that I was two years out of touch with the Athens situation by this time. I was transferred over to Athens late in '59, after a preliminary trip from which I came away with some disquiet, because of the organizational arrangements that had been arrived at, but I didn't think I really had much of a choice. So I went with a conviction that this was the way it was going to be, so that the real job was to make it work. The arrangements involved maintaining the AID mission, but combining it -- other people had different metaphors; I always referred to it as combining at the throat - by giving the Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs the mantle of mission director (whether he did much about the mission or not) and having the AID person then in the role of deputy mission director, in effect to oversee the operations of the AID mission. It quickly became apparent to me after arrival there, that this was indeed a marriage at the throat, and I couldn't see much prospect that it could be carried out very satisfactorily, still within the AID context, or living up to some of the doctrine that I assumed AID wanted to maintain as long as it had a mission in a place. Certainly it didn't fit in with my ideas of what I wanted to do in the future. Now to put it bluntly, I think I can say it was clear that the ambassador wanted to get rid of the AID mission, to dispense with the personnel, but to keep assistance flowing. He had previously been ambassador to Brazil and a number of other places and I understand that his approach had been fairly consistent and quite understandable, and that was as long as he was representing the President of the United States in a country, he was going to be in charge of whatever went on there, and if this meant bringing it under his own personal wing, then so be it. It didn't really mean that, but that was the direction of his influence. I thought what it really meant was that the people working with the Greeks were a source of irritation and to the extent that our semi-controls (a representative on the committee that controlled the use of counterpart, for example) still existed they were an insult to Greek sovereignty. On the other hand, "President Eisenhower is coming out on a visit and we must arrange a gift of not less than five million dollars." After a period of examination and evaluation, I came to the conviction that the best thing for the United States to do was to bring the Ambassador's thoughts to the logical conclusion which was to me to close out the mission, which had been very important and effective, but perhaps its time had come. The proposed revised function was not appropriate for an AID Mission. I've always looked back with a sense of chagrin and to some extent sorrow at the Greek experience, because I bailed out; because I declined to go on with the experience. When I was exposed a bit more to the Washington outlook on things, it was clear that it was a problem area in Washington relations, as well as in Greece. I suppose I should mention that the AID Administrator at that time was a career Ambassador who had been the last previous Ambassador to Greece. There were forces working in both directions, and their conclusion had been to try the middle ground, and I felt guilty having to some extent torpedoed this, by declining to stay on out there.

Q: *This was in Athens?*

SKILES: Yes.

Q: How long were you there?

SKILES: I suppose it was May by the time I actually got out, 1960.

Q: So about six months.

SKILES: Yes. I was starting to say that I'd become convinced that it was basically an impossible sort of situation and if the decisions were not taken to phase out the Mission then I had no interest in continuing with the hybrid. No such decision was made. Instead, they sent out in the top job a senior foreign service officer, who had also been previous USOM director in Tel Aviv, had served earlier in Yugoslavia and in a number of areas as a senior agricultural advisor, and for a short time had been the administrator of the Foreign Agricultural Service, or OFAR (Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations), as I think it was called then. In other words, a senior foreign service officer whose background really was much more AID than Foreign Service. He was to take the place of the economic counselor, and your old friend Bob Hubble, who was the GTI director at that time, was going out in the deputy's job.

Q: So it was a different structure, right?

SKILES: No, it was the same structure, different personnel, but it did come closer to combining at the head, not the throat. Jack Haggerty was going as the State Department man, even though his most recent assignments had been with AID. I think it was an honest effort to bridge this gap that had developed and was getting wider. When I briefed Haggerty I told him I thought it was an impossible arrangement, but that if anybody could make it work he ought to be the one. I don't know how it really worked out. I didn't see him for a couple of years after that, then I asked him, and he said, "Not worth a damn." I guess witness to that is the fact that his predecessor had been relieved early and Haggerty was invited out of the foreign service at the conclusion of his tour there. I don't recall just how long he stayed. It was in a way, a very undignified way to bring about an end to what had been one of our most effective AID missions up to that point in time. There were a number of functions which I thought deserved a continued presence of some kind or another. These were primarily along the lines of continued oversight of a good deal of money, both in terms of local currency and dollars, in the pipeline, and for which AID had responsibilities to the Congress as well as to the Administration. But accepting the Ambassador's point of view that our very presence was continuing a relationship which he considered at this juncture harmful rather than helpful, I couldn't see that an AID mission as such had any business being in business there. And I certainly don't think you need an AID Mission just to give money away

RALPH S. SMITH
Public Affairs Officer
Patras (1948-1951)

Ralph S. Smith was born in Yonkers, New York in 1921. He grew up in New England. He graduated from Yale University in a wartime accelerated class in

1942. Immediately afterward, he entered the Navy, where he would spend the next four years on sea duty. He has also served in Belgium, France, Zaire, and various post at the Department of State. He was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt on April 29, 1992.

Q: *What year was that?*

SMITH: That was in 1948, during the Greek civil war. The assignment lasted three years.

Q: *So you were on the Information side when you were in Patras?*

SMITH: Yes, I was public affairs officer as well as vice consul. In fact it turned into a one-man post. There had been a consulate in Patras when I first arrived; but there wasn't enough shipping going through there any more, so the Department closed down the consulate and just left me there, with a Greek staff. It was basically a Cold War operation. The Greek civil war was still going on -- you had to use a military convoy to go from Patras to Athens, for example. But as the military situation improved, we tried to make contact with a Greek population, in the western part of the country, which had been substantially brain-washed by the Andartes, the Communists.

Q: *In your attempt to get information out to a population that had been subjected to a good deal of Communist brain-washing, did you find considerable opposition to what you were trying to do? What was your experience? Did you have much success?*

SMITH: It worked so well that it was really quite surprising. Of course, the Greek population had been through all of the Second World War and then through the civil war, and so I think they were really starved for contact with the outside world. In any case, as the situation gradually opened up we were able to get amazingly extensive use of our materials by the provincial press - - mostly minuscule newspapers that were set by hand. And our mobile film unit was able to get into mountain areas...the first outsiders, really, to come in for some time. You have to remember, of course, that a great many people in the rural areas had never seen a moving picture before. We were repeatedly told that the Andartes had promised moving pictures, and people seemed to find it hugely amusing that finally it was the Americans who actually provided them. So, altogether, I would say there was great receptivity to our information programs.

Q: *You were telling me, off tape a moment ago, how interested the State Department was in what was going on in the boondocks, and I think you ought to speak to that. One thing I would like to comment on is that in those days the State Department still pretty much went through the old diplomatic channels regarding what a consul was supposed to do and what a political officer was to do. They didn't get out into the countryside as much as some of the people who were on the information side of the program. I suppose, therefore, they were very interested in what you were finding out when you were going out to these various rural spots. Could you speak a little about that, and also about what the situation was on the border during this civil war time?*

SMITH: Well, there weren't any other regular sources of information about my area at that time. So in any case, I was very pleased indeed to receive a Commendation from the Secretary of State for my reporting on that area. Naturally I still have the document -- Instruction No. 51, dated

April 25, 1950. It begins with that felicitous bygone formulation, "The Secretary of State has the honor to refer to..." But now about the border...The Greek civil war finally came to an end when the Yugoslav border was closed and the Andartes could no longer use Yugoslavia as a sanctuary. The reason it was closed, as you remember, was that Tito had a falling-out with Stalin.

Q: Were there any other incidents in the course of your three years there that you might like to highlight, or have you talked enough about that assignment?

SMITH: Two very agreeable recollections. One was a visit to Patras by Ambassador Peurifoy, whom I very much admired. He was traveling together with the British ambassador and with the King and Queen of Greece, no less. The other was a visit by a most amiable Foreign Service inspector, Walton C. Ferris. They both seemed to enjoy their visits, but what strikes me now is that they commended both me and my wife Lilian, both verbally and later in writing. For at that time it was considered quite normal for husband and wife to operate as a team in the Foreign Service.

JACK K. MCFALL
Economic Officer
Athens (1949)

Jack K. McFall was born in Colorado in 1905. As a Foreign Service officer he was posted to Canada, Greece and was Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations. Subsequently he was ambassador to Finland. He was interviewed by Horace Torbert in 1988.

MCFALL: Then after I'd been in Montreal as consul about two years, orders came from the State Department for my emergency transfer to Greece. So I departed Montreal as quickly as I could and was moved on to Greece within a few days to become First Secretary of Embassy in Athens.

Greece was a very interesting duty tour! This was the beginning of the Truman Plan to revitalize the Greek economy which was in shambles. The guerrillas were within about six miles of Athens. It was a very difficult period. General Van Fleet was representing our military interests there. Our economic aid program was then under the "ECA" - the Economic Cooperation Administration. You remember that organization called ECA. The ECA in Greece had some 2,400 employees located in a building in downtown Athens, and the embassy had a personnel of only about seventy or seventy-five, so it was somewhat a matter of the tail wagging the dog. Of course, the Greeks, in their own inimitable way, were working at the game of playing both ends of the rope against the middle, an art at which they have been historically adept. So they were getting from one side what they had been largely unsuccessful in getting from the other.

Q: Had we already started the Truman Plan?

MCFALL: Yes, it was under way. Yes, it was in the process. That's why ECA had the 2,400 employees.

Q: Sure. Yes, that's right. They were debating this in the Congress when I entered the Service in 1947.

MCFALL: That's right. Our Greek venture was the realization of it. I was head of the economic section of the embassy, and, of course, economics was really the key to success in Greece - the economic situation. It was very, very difficult and challenging.

You might find interest in a parenthesized comment at this point. I found out that Nuveen -- you've doubtless heard of the Nuveen Mutual Funds -- this was John Nuveen. He was the head of the ECA in Greece at that time, and Henry Grady was the American Ambassador in Greece. I was told, shortly after I arrived on post there that they hadn't spoken to each other for a period of several days. The relationship between them was severely strained and so you can imagine how the Greeks fed on this situation. Because of this mutual disdain they had one for the other I naturally asked myself, "Just how was I going to be able to accomplish anything in the embassy in the economic field with a situation like this facing me?"

I remember I had told Constance Harvey, who was my deputy in the embassy, that I was going to take a different approach to things. I was going to go down to the Tamian Building, where the ECA was located, and I was going to start on the ground floor and go from office to office, talking to anybody who would talk to me, whether they be officer, cleaner, messenger, or whoever was there. I was just going to introduce myself and say I'd just arrived, I was with the embassy working on economic and commercial matters, and I looked forward to having an opportunity of working with them and getting to know them and hoped that we could work together.

Well, this approach, admittedly unconventional, went on for about three or four days. I'd call up my office in the embassy every couple of hours to see if there had been any phone calls for me. I think the break came on the third day. I called my office and was informed, "Oh, yes, Mr. Nuveen has just called, and he said he understands you're down there in his building, going around introducing yourself to everybody, and he wants you to come to his office right away."

So I went up to his office wondering what kind of a reception I would receive. I had not yet met him. To my relief and surprise, he greeted me most cordially and said, "I understand you're going all through my shop here introducing yourself. What is this all about?"

I replied, "Well, to me it's just a simplistic act. I thought it would make sense for me to begin to know these people I have been calling on before I really get busy here in Greece. It just seems to me to be quite basic. There's nothing mysterious about it."

"Well," he said, "at least it's a novel approach. I don't know if I've run into anybody who used quite that type of approach." So it was that I got off on a fine footing with Nuveen. He appreciated it.

Then I was successful at a cocktail party in finally getting Grady and Nuveen to shake hands. I approached Grady and asked him, "Please, Mr. Ambassador, come over with me and shake

hands with Nuveen." To my surprise and relief, he did. So the ice was broken, but the thaw was not an enduring one.

Then just a few days later, the ambassador called me in my office to come up to his office immediately. As I entered his office, I found him livid, absolutely livid. He was shaking a paper which he held in his hand. He said, "What do you know about this telegram?"

I replied, "What telegram, sir? I don't know what you're talking about."

Grady said, "This telegram from the Secretary of State recalling you to Washington. You've only been here for about three months, and you're just a junior officer. What in the hell is this all about?"

I looked at him and said, "Mr. Ambassador, I have not the remotest idea why I should be recalled. If you have a telegram there that says I'm to be recalled to Washington, I have no idea whatsoever as to why. Maybe it's for me to resign from the Service for some reason. But for whatever reason, I wouldn't have the slightest idea what it might be."

Well, he looked hard at me then and said, "But you do have an idea!"

That did it. I jumped up from the seat at his desk and said, "All right, Mr. Ambassador. If this is the kind of a Foreign Service that I have to live with, where I'm called a liar by my own ambassador, I don't want any part of it." I left his office, slammed the door in departing, and thought, "Well, this is the end of a short-lived career."

I didn't see the ambassador or hear from him for four or five days, and I studiously avoided anything connected with him. I didn't even want to see him. I was so incensed I even went so far as to compose a letter or resignation which, fortunately, I never sent as the decision to send or not to send it was overtaken by events.

Then about the fourth day after the episode, there was a phone call from the ambassador's office. "He wants you to come right up." So I went up and was met at the door by the ambassador. He was full of smiles. "Please sit down, Jack. Have a chair right here. Sit right here."

Such solicitude provoked a thought on my part. "There's something up now."

Grady then said, "How long is it going to take you to get ready to leave here to go to Washington?"

I said, "To get ready to leave? Am I going to leave?"

"Oh, yes. I want you to go just as soon as you possibly can arrange it."

I said, "Well, for what in the world am I going to Washington?"

He looked at me in a manner that I would define as sheepish and said, "Well, I'm sorry, but I'm

under strict instructions not to tell you."

I said, "Now isn't this a fine kettle of fish, Mr. Ambassador. You charged me with knowledge about why I would be ordered back to Washington when I had absolutely no knowledge thereof. Now you have the knowledge and won't tell me."

He said, "I know, but that's the way life is. I'm under instructions not to tell you anything."

In the meantime, my wife had had to leave Greece at the insistence of our real estate broker and return to Washington to repair an invasion of termites in our Washington, D.C. home. The invasion was a full-scale one. We'd rented our house to Senator Knowland of California at that time, and he had planned to have lunch at our home with President Harry Truman, and Knowland didn't want anybody to know about it, Truman being a Democrat and Knowland a Republican, so he had invited Truman to his home - our home - on Woodland Drive, which we owned at that time. Just as President Truman came to the door, the termites swarmed, and, as it was described to me, the swarm was so huge, one couldn't see anything but termites. It was just one total swarm of termites.

So Knowland then had to take Truman to the Shoreham hotel for the lunch, and the Knowlands had to move out of our house. So it was that my wife, Martha, had to come back from Greece to the dirty work of termite damage repair.

Q: The luncheon wasn't quite as private as originally planned.

MCFALL: No! Martha had to come back from Greece, repair the termite damage and put the house in order, and so she did. Then after she'd accomplished that laborious chore, she was preparing to sign a two-year lease on our house with the military attaché of the Pakistani Embassy for what we expected would be the rest of my tour in Greece - a tour of at least two or three years.

And then a very fortuitous even took place. The administrative officer of our embassy in Athens had come back to Washington on home leave, but somehow or other, in moseying around the State Department, he had apparently found out why I was coming back to Washington, but he had been instructed never to breathe it to a soul. In the meantime, he met Martha in Washington. Martha told him, "I'm just about through with the termites. I will have all the repair work done, and I'm arranging to rent our house for two years to the Pakistanis."

He appeared surprised and said, "No, Martha, you must not rent that house. You must not rent that house! I can't tell you why you mustn't rent it, but you must not do it!"

Well, my wife thought he was off his rocker, but she agreed not to sign any rental papers dealing with our house during the ensuing three days.

I arrived in Washington, then, two days later still having no idea why I was being summoned to Washington and my wife thinking I was in Greece. I was instructed to report to Jack Peurifoy, then an under secretary in the State Department. Then, at this point, Peurifoy unfolded the

mystery of my summons to Washington. He told me, "Secretary Acheson wants to interview you for a job as Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations."

JAMES C. WARREN, JR.
Economic Analyst, Marshal Plan
Athens (1950-1954)

Mr. Warren was born in New Jersey and raised there and in New York City. After service in the U.S. Army Air Corps in World War II and graduating from Princeton, University he joined the Marshall Plan in 1950 and was sent to Greece, where he worked in its Finance and Program Division until 1954. After returning to the US, Mr. Warren entered the private business sector, working first with the American Overseas Finance Corporation, and later with the Standard Vacuum Oil Company (Exxon and Mobil) in New York City and in Athens, Greece. Mr. Warren was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: You arrived in Greece when?

WARREN: August 1950.

Q: The war started June 25th. What was Greece like when you arrived?

WARREN: Greece was a very poor, hard scrabble country at that time. It had barely terminated the civil war. The reconstruction of the wartime damage to the economy, which was very severe, had only just begun to be visible. It was not a country of the kind of grinding poverty and social structure that you find in the Far East or Southeast Asia or Latin America. There was a dignity to everything. Even poverty. It was palpable. Nevertheless, it was hard scrabble and very close to the vast in terms of viability. We were still at that time providing 2/3 of the foreign exchange requirement of the country. Greece's total outlay in foreign exchange at that time was roughly \$400 million. We were providing \$280 million of that, the balance being their own, shipping remittances, exports, emigration remittances, etc. So, it was still a formidable dependency on an external patron.

Q: You were an economic analyst. What did you know about economics and analyses?

WARREN: Nothing.

Q: That was the rather I suspected. What did they do with you?

WARREN: They assigned me to the Finance and Program Division. I performed a variety of odds and ends of analytical bits and pieces. Eventually, I gravitated to something which required a huge amount of analysis and discipline and work and which I made more or less my life out there, which was the import program. This was programming all of the imports for the civilian economy plus the non- military- hardware requirements for the Greek armed forces.

Programming all of that and analyzing it, finding out what the real needs were, separating the pepper from the fly-specks, and trying to do the most rational job one could of investigation and analysis and then development of actual programs. About a year after I came to Greece, roughly the summer of '51, there I was in charge of the Greek import program. It's astonishing to me that at age 24 I should be holding down such a responsibility.

Q: What was your impression of the Marshall Plan structure in Greece?

WARREN: It was a huge mission in which there was replicated almost every aspect of Greek society – the Agriculture Division, the Export Promotion Division, the Labor Division, the Civil Government Organization and Methods Division, the Public Health Division, the Mining Division, the Construction Division, the Power Division, etc. There were between 180 and 220 Americans, specialists who were the core of each of those divisions assisted by clerical support staff, interpreters, and local specialists, some of whom were very good.

Q: Here is a country that's been ravaged by war, but it's not like going to Nepal. These were people who had been part of Europe and here is a 22 year old kid coming in. There seems to be a misfit. What did you have to offer that they didn't have to offer?

WARREN: Assiduousness, nothing more. Concentrating on the task. Also, it was the Greek government's job to try to get from the U.S. the maximum amount of aid in any given fiscal period. That was their job. It was *our* job to see to it that they didn't pull that particular wool over our eyes. We had to be just as smart, maybe smarter.

Q: Part of it was checking on accountability? Or were you more in the ordering side?

WARREN: There was an end use group in the Controller's Department who would investigate to see to it that indeed the spare parts that were brought in for bus bodies were indeed used for that end; to see to it that the refrigerators that were brought in to IKA, the social security administration of Greece, for up-country clinics to store antibiotics, that they were used for that purpose and not to cool water for the headquarters staff, that kind of thing. I was privy to those reports and could use those as parts of my analysis of what was required so that I could try to keep an eye on such things as excess stockpiling of items.

You have to look at that Marshall Plan experience as a couple of different things. I mentioned this kind of bargaining relationship between one government and another in which it is their task to try to get as much as they can. If it meant stockpiling stuff against a rainy day, so much the better. All of our statutes and guidelines ran in the opposite direction, that the stuff was to be used, it was to be used for the purpose declared, it was to be used for socially and economically viable projects, etc. That was one level.

At another level, you had a whole different set of dynamics. You take a guy out of the Kentucky Agricultural Extension Service or the California Irrigation Service and you match him up with his opposite number in the ministry of agriculture or communications. All of a sudden, you have an equation in which $1+1=3$. You had this terrific drive of the Greek to get something done combined with the American, who's got an equal drive to get something done. The American has

the money. So, you have these two guys working together producing something. My god, they did! So, while my concentration really was on what you would call the flow items, items required to keep the economy on an even keel, you had technicians in the American operating divisions who were working with their opposite numbers in the Greek government who were producing the agreements and the implementation of those agreements to put in place the reconstruction projects and then beyond that the development projects. The PPC, the Public Power Corporation, was an American invention. It was a transmogrification of TVA and the New Deal experience into Greece. It was American-invented, American-conceived, American-managed, American-set up, and then handed over after this extensive training period to Greek management. It was a brilliant operation.

Q: You were doing this for how long?

WARREN: Four and a half years.

Q: How did you find the high command of aid on the American side?

WARREN: The first mission chief was Dwight Griswold. He had been the Republican governor of the state of Nebraska. He behaved in Greece very much like a governor and sometimes that didn't go over just right. He got into a terrific fight with the then ambassador, who was an angel, Lincoln McVeigh, a marvelous person who was not a streetfighter. Griswold beat McVeigh, forced him out. Then Griswold departed after he had been there a year and his place was taken by an investment banker from Chicago, John Nuveen, who equally got into a fight with the Embassy, which was then under Henry Gray. The problem was in the terms of reference of that mission chief's assignment. If you go back and look at the letters that were sent under Marshall's signature to Dwight Griswold, it's just filled with fuzzy, bureaucratic words that were bound to cause trouble – words like “coordinate.” What is “coordinate?” It's just bound to lead to trouble and it did. If both McVeigh and Griswold had been equally angels, they still would have gotten into bureaucratic turf wars. Their successors were bound up in the same fight. Finally, it did emerge that the ambassador came out – this would be at the end of Gray's tenure – as chief of mission in the diplomatic sense and reporting to him would be JUSMAG and the head of the American aid mission in a country team structure. But it took three or four years to work that out. There was a lot of cost to making that.

Q: Was the civil war going on at all when you were there?

WARREN: It was over. There were still signs of it. There were a couple of places where you had to travel by convoy. There were a number of villages in my personal experience that still had local militia, but the civil war was over.

Q: How about Greek counterparts? Did your job have a Greek counterpart?

WARREN: The counterpart of the Finance and Program Division of the mission was the Ministry of Coordination in the Greek government. There was your counterpart relationship. When you were in Greece, you may recall names like John Pezmazoglou, who had been deputy governor of the Bank of Greece, a very able economist, very good, who when you would have

heard his name was in exile up in Grevena, sent there by the colonels. John was Permanent Under Secretary of the Ministry of Coordination when I knew him, assisted by John Lambrukos, and Niko Kyriazides. These would be approximately the three guys that I would be working with. They would present their estimates of the balance of payments for the coming year. We would present ours. Bob Paige and I, Ed Tannenbaum and I, guys like that.

Q: Did you have an economic specialty backup team in Washington or somewhere where you could call upon them when you were getting over your head in matters?

WARREN: There were several aspects to this. Number one, in the Marshall Plan organizational chart, it should have been that the mission in Athens would report to Paris to OSR or SRE, the Office of the Special Representative, which was the regional subheadquarters for the Marshall Plan in Europe. It was run by Harriman and Milton Katz. Our line of authority should have been from Athens to Paris, Paris to Washington. So, there should have been somebody looking over our shoulder in Paris. However, Greece - under the so-called Truman Doctrine - preceded the Marshall Plan by a year. That communication was direct from Athens to Washington. So, that kind of direct Washington-Athens, Athens-Washington communications relationship kind of continued even though bureaucratically we should have been reporting to Paris. The real center of gravity for us was not Paris; it was Washington. There, some very interesting things happened. In the summer of 1951, the young man who was then on the Greek Desk - and he had been there for a couple of years - Frank Mahon, had been long enough in the headquarters to have achieved a measure of respect and authority. Along comes another guy who is somewhat older than Frank and with a different kind of experience. He comes out of the mission to Rome. He is a native Venetian by birth. Victor Sullam. Vic Sullam was something to see in action! He was sharp as hell. He was charming when he wanted to be charming. He was mean as a billygoat when he wanted to be mean as a billygoat. In the presence of Frank, who had achieved considerable stature by that time at the Marshall Plan headquarters, and with the inspiration of Vic Sullam, the headquarters began to look very slant-eyed at the whole network of Greek and American programs that were sponsored by the Greek government and our mission in Athens together. They began to say, "Hey, we have met the enemy and he is us." They were the real authors of something called the Greek Stabilization Program in which they said, "No more of this fooling around. We're now getting serious about something, the provision to Greece of a currency in which the people can believe, the drachma. No longer the gold sovereign." They enlisted the help of a wonderful guy named Ed Tannenbaum, also deceased, who was the author at age 25 as a young Air Force lieutenant of the German currency reform of 1948. You know what that means.

Q: That was a turning point in Germany.

WARREN: Absolutely. Both of those things. He did it at age 25. It was not Earhardt. Earhardt was informed after the fact. Ed Tannenbaum then was sent to the mission in Athens as the principle economist. The then mission chief was gently retired. That was Charles Lapham, a nice guy, a former mayor of San Francisco, a political appointee. His place was taken by Leland Barrow, who was a good technician. He was not a personality type. So, the new religion was the Stabilization Program. It really turned things upside-down. It created a revolution inside the mission. It was powerfully resisted by every one of the operating divisions. It meant the end of their program.

Q: Their rice bowl was being broken.

WARREN: Yes. I quoted in that paper of mine this heartfelt cable by the chief of mission, by Lapham, in the middle of this battle, in which he says, "I'm taking my fireman's ax and I'm going to chop down the house which we have constructed. I've received my orders." It's a passionate cable. It exemplifies the extraordinary fight. The Embassy participated in this fight. It lined up against the Stabilization Program and in support of the operating divisions of the mission. Ambassador Peurifoy, Yost, Anschutz, Harry Turkel. A terrific internal fight. Peurifoy actually tried to get the two guys on the Greek desk in the headquarters of the Marshall Plan here fired.

Q: Did you feel that you were part of "them and us" – Marshall Plan versus embassy?

WARREN: Oh, yes. It was fierce.

Q: I am told that Greece was one of the prime examples where everybody went to the head of the Marshall Plan... You'd have a reception and the ambassador would be sort of bypassed and the Greeks would all head to the Marshall Plan.

WARREN: Oh, sure. That's where all the money was.

Q: Also, did you find that you were living a different style of life?

WARREN: Yes. The Embassy was dealing with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with its old way of doing business. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was dealing with the Embassy. Here we were, in the mission – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs? What's that? We deal with the Ministry of Coordination here, the Ministry of Agriculture there, the Ministry of Industry here, the ministry of power over there. We were resented by the ministry of foreign affairs of the Greek government. We were at various times in a state of guerrilla warfare with the American embassy. Some of the memoranda and cables sent by the Embassy to Washington at that time were really designed to pull the rug out from under the Mission.

Now, we in the Mission were engaged in the stabilization exercise. It was radical. It was strong medicine. As it happened, it worked, and it worked brilliantly. But it scared the starch out of the embassy, it really did. They were afraid of it. It was too radical for them. It made them very nervous. Peurifoy put his career on the line on this one. Some minor accommodations were granted to him. It was a big fight.

Q: The Greek political structure is very personal. This is not you're a Democrat or a Republican. You belong to what amounts to tribal chieftains and you follow somebody. These are not broad-based political alliances. They are personal based and fairly close. So, you end up with all sorts of deals made. You have a lot of money to play around with. Greeks have always been businessmen. I would think you would have to take that line "Beware of the Greeks accepting gifts." It must have been a hell of a... It's not just that we had a program, but you were talking about people dealing with this.

WARREN: You have to remember something special - the Greek secret weapon. The Greek secret weapon, and I mean it not entirely as a joke, is an uncanny facility for making *his* problem *your* problem. It made the Americans who were involved passionate advocates. If you were the mining engineer in the Mission, by God, nobody was going to cut down your mining program because that was the way you were going to save and uplift these poor peasants who had been downtrodden and put in the dust and you became passionately involved in that. Well, the Embassy became passionately involved in maintaining the level of economic aid, without radical transformations, in the same way that we became radically committed to the Stabilization Program as a way of saving Greece. It was very emotional, it really was.

Q: Did you find that Greek politics intruded at all?

WARREN: The Greek government was always in those days changing. At least the cabinets were changing. The governments were kind of in and out. People were taking turns at being ministers. So, Greek politics did intervene in that sense. It meant that if one were working on a project or a program, particularly a program involving tax reform or governmental organization and method, where there are a lot of toes that get stepped on, our specialist would be working with the Greek government specialist. They would be moving back and forth and both of them reporting to their respective ministers and the minister talking to the chief of mission from time to time and bringing the Minister of Coordination in. Things would be kind of moving toward a resolution. They would take time. Then the government would fall. The guy is out. The minister is out. You'd have to start all over again. So, in the Mission, cries of maddening frustration at this kind of delay were the usual pattern. Yes, politics was intervening and obstructing the progress of these programs. We wanted to reform the world by Saturday night and it wasn't getting done. Equally, the program ran into political opposition because it stepped on toes too violently in an economic sense. So, we were proposing closing of certain tax loopholes and the guys that benefit from those tax loopholes have a direct access to principle FSNs in the Embassy, to the Minister Counselor for Economic Affairs, Harry Turkel, and Harry Turkel goes to the embassy and says, "These guys in the Mission are pushing for something that's crazy and is going to cause trouble." Yes, there is a lot of politics involved.

Q: Sometimes when we come in to do something, at a certain point, you say you've got to brush the Greeks aside and say, "We know what to do and we're doing it." I saw this when I was in Vietnam. We tend to take over.

WARREN: When were you in Vietnam?

Q: '69-'70.

WARREN: I was there in '60.

Q: Was there this attitude?

WARREN: By and large, the guys that we had in the mission were good, able men who had a kind of a New Deal reformist zeal. They caught this Greek bug, they got onto the Greek secret

weapon, and so they wanted to do something. They knew they had money behind them.

Q: What about the Greek shipowners, Niarchos and Onassis and others, and maybe others of their ilk?

WARREN: The Greek shipowners first of all were really only marginally members of the Greek economy. Their assets were floating assets off in the ocean. The Greek government was fooling itself if it thought it could reign these people in and glob onto them. We were equally wrong in going along in the parallel from time to time in that belief. So, if you treated them as floating assets somewhere in the world and looked with approval upon their occasional remittances of some money to pay for salaries and pensions and victuals and things like that, well and good. But if you tried to make them an integral part of the economy, you were simply courting trouble.

Q: Was George Papandreou much of a factor while you were there?

WARREN: George Papandreou, the old man, was a ridiculous figure. He was Minister of Coordination for a good part of the time I was there, but he was a silly and ineffective minister. He ran his affairs as if he were a provincial chieftain in the Mani. If you had a serious matter to discuss with him as minister and there you were with your chief of Mission and you had an appointment to talk about monetary policy with him, you'd find his anteroom filled with old widows who were trying to get some money from the government to replace their donkey which had fallen off the cliff.

Q: How about the king? There were two kings.

WARREN: There was Paul... I think the Americans probably made a mistake in believing that the royal house in Greece could ever make itself a permanent part of the structure there. I think that King Paul and Queen Frederika for a while did a commendable job of boosting morale during the civil war and during the early reconstruction phases, but I think that as the American aid program succeeded in the Stabilization Program and as the Americans then on the basis of that success began to withdraw, the vacuum was rather quickly filled by an ambitious Frederika and that got them into trouble because you cannot be a permanent institution if you play a political game in which you are possibly going to be at the wrong end of the confidence vote.

Q: When the Eisenhower administration came in in '53, people were being Stassenated.

WARREN: As I read the newspapers today about the George Bush administration, I am reminded of the year 1953, in which Eisenhower accompanied by such people as Stassen came in and there was a palpable loss of direction and policy surely for the first six months, no question about it. Palpable loss. The problem is, the Republicans come to power so rarely in Washington in the White House that they tend to believe their own campaign propaganda. They start to act on the basis of that and then they get themselves into a jam. One of Stassen's first acts coming in as head of the Marshall Plan was to subject everybody in the headquarters to an intelligence test. He fired those who got the highest mark.

Q: There was a certain percentage cut.

WARREN: Yes. In that first six months, I can recall very clearly there was a palpable sense of loss of direction.

Q: We're getting close to ending this session. For your job in Greece at that time, what was the end game for you?

WARREN: I would say that the Stabilization Program started in the fall of '51. It ran for a year and a half and culminated in the devaluation of April 1953. On the basis of that success, the aid program was cut back because it wasn't needed and by the summer of '54, it was very clear that that chapter had come to its end. I could see that my work was finished. I was no longer necessary. The Greek government was perfectly capable of doing it all itself. The principles of the stabilization exercise were now burned in blood on the foreheads of the key guys who would run the economy for the next 12 years. It was time for us to retire. It was certainly time in that circumstance for me to retire. I moved back to Washington. I was in Washington for six months and decided that that was the end of my government career. I quit and went up to New York.

MARGARET V. TAYLOR
Information Officer, USIS
Thessaloniki (1951-1953)

Margaret V. Taylor was born in 1925 in California. She joined the Information Service in 1951, served in Greece, Israel, Indonesia, Japan, Finland and in Washington. She was interviewed in 1990 by Lewis Schmidt.

TAYLOR: I went through a little training program and then my first assignment was to Salonika, Greece. So off I went and enjoyed the experience thoroughly. I was working with what was then the policy of the agency to mass-distribute films -- that is to have a mobile unit with film showings around northern Greece -- and I was doing some work in other areas of the agency's activities. There were only three Americans at that small branch post. So I got involved in other things as well.

Q: May I ask you what your official title was? What position you were holding within the USIS in Greece?

TAYLOR: Well, I was sent out as a secretary, but there was relatively little to do in that capacity so I was, in effect, a trainee and the PAO then seemed to be more interested in having somebody who could operate in the various media of USIA.

Q: Who was your PAO at the time?

TAYLOR: Albert Miller, a very capable, nice man whom I really enjoyed. He was active and interested; unfortunately for the service, he didn't stay with it. He just completed that tour and then decided to go back to the United States and settle down. I'm still in touch with him and value that relationship very much.

But the Consul in Salonika also was very interested in the work of the Information Service and so he and Bert Miller worked together in trying to really reach out to the northern Greek people and to keep activities going that would reach and influence them.

This was the period when that sort of mass contact was more prevalent than the more specialized contact that came later on. But while I was there, we began getting U.S. Naval visits for the first time since World War II. And so there was a lot of activity with the ships, getting people on to the ships for visits and trying to arrange contact between the ship's officers and the local people, ship visits, PR events, and so I was involved in that also. We had a small library and I did a certain amount of traveling throughout northern Greece, helping to set up little reading rooms and working with an English teaching specialist who came up from Athens, trying to encourage the study of English throughout Northern Greece, and working with the school system.

Q: What did you feel was the attitude of the Greek people towards the United States at that time? Did you encounter any anti-American feeling among the Greeks or how did you read it?

TAYLOR: I didn't experience any anti-American feeling. The Greeks have vast contact with the United States through so many Greek people who've come to this country to settle, and there was a great reaching out to the United States. It was still a very difficult period in Greece because they had been badly devastated by World War II. The German bombing of Greece created a lot of devastation. The aid that was being used from the United States to help rebuild countries and the contacts, as I say, through family relationships, left a very supportive and friendly relationship with Americans.

It was a nice time to be there in terms of simply going into essentially hospitable environments and feeling that we were able to provide some element of help to the people who were really struggling. The people were poor. But the Greeks are very outgoing, so they enjoy getting to know people, including Americans and other foreigners.

Q: So I suppose that the main thrust of your program then at that time was primarily a program of giving the Greeks information about the United States and stressing the friendship between the countries? Is that a correct assumption?

TAYLOR: Yes, that is the correct assumption. The Agency was still developing its policies and becoming more focused, but at that time, there was great emphasis put on materials about the United States: the movies, the documentary films that we showed, books in the libraries were about America in its various aspects. We also worked with newspapers in northern Greece to disseminate information about the United States.

But, also it was a time when relationships were important, in effect, simply showing the American flag.

Q: That was also the period, 1951-1953, when we were subjected to a great deal of the McCarthy harassment. I suppose being in Salonika you did not get directly attacked by the Cohn and Schine clowns as they came around? I know they visited Greece, but did they impinge, at all,

upon your program?

TAYLOR: Well, they certainly did. We were shielded, of course, because northern Greece seemed a long way away from Athens. We did, of course, get to Athens for meetings and people came to visit us occasionally, but Salonika -- it was a backwater. However, Cohn did manage a trip to Salonika and looked around, which was characteristically unpleasant. We also heard about their activities in Athens and had a very firm impression of how unpopular they were with the Embassy.

I don't have a clear recollection of how much the Greek people were affected by this. I suppose those who were more sophisticated and knew something about the Washington scene were aware of it, but I think the Cohn/Schine episode was probably mostly confined to the Americans there.

Q: Yes, I think except for whatever stories may have appeared in the press, the Cohn and Schine group did not impinge much on the populations; they were after the professionals in the Agency program. Of course, at that time, you were still a part of State, the information and education operation which was then within the Public Affairs Bureau of the State Department?

TAYLOR: Right. Then, in 1953, there was the separation between State and the Information Service, the latter becoming an independent agency. Because of my lack of tenure and inexperience, I was "RIFed." So my career appeared to be coming to an abrupt halt, and I made preparations to return to the United States.

I got as far as the airport in Athens where I was greeted by a USIS officer with a telegram from Washington that said, in effect, "Dear Taylor, you're going to Tel Aviv. So I, more or less, turned on my heel and went off to Tel Aviv. While I had very little tenure and experience, apparently someone else had even less, so I went to Tel Aviv where I served just for six months, completing that original two-year assignment.

THOMAS S. ESTES
Director, Joint Administration Services
Athens (1952-1954)

Thomas S. Estes was serving in the Marines in Peking when he was approached by the then Third Secretary Cecil Lyon about becoming joining the foreign service. Though he began only as a clerk, he took the Foreign Service Exam and became an officer. In addition, he has served in Algiers and as Ambassador to Upper Volta. He was interviewed by Ambassador Dwight Dickinson.

ESTES: '51, yes, January to March '51. I was instructed to advise the Department after finishing the course whether it should send other Foreign Service Officers there. It was a fascinating assignment and I did recommend that other FSOs attend that course. Leaders of business and industry attended it and that was one of the valuable aspects of the course.

As a result of that assignment I was sent to Athens as First Secretary of Embassy and Director of the Joint Administrative Services. Ambassador John Peurifoy was the first ambassador to be made a Chief of Combined Missions by President Truman. He had been given that title because the former ambassador and the former chief of the economic mission were not on speaking terms. Consequently, their staffs found it difficult to help Greece recover -- which was the reason for our being there. The British had to give up. In addition to the Embassy and the economic mission, we had the Army, the Navy, and any number of civilian agencies. The Joint Administrative Services provided support for all the civilian agencies in Greece and certain support services for the military agencies. We had a couple of airplanes, motor boats, some 1200 vehicles, a check cashing operation (we began payment of salaries by check), gasoline sales -- whatever it took to give needed support to the substantive agencies working to restore the economic viability of Greece. JAS was something like a major industry.

Obviously, a lot of decisions had to be made. One of the most critical for me did not concern our operation but rather the reaction of a newly-designated Assistant Secretary of State for Administration in the Eisenhower administration, Isaac W. Carpenter, Jr. He was the head of a major paper company with several plants east of the Mississippi and headquarters in Omaha. He was visiting selected posts with the current Assistant Secretary, Tom Wailes, an old friend of mine. Since I was Director of JAS the Ambassador appointed me as escort officer for the visit. Things went along fine until the second or third day when Mr. Carpenter said something about JAS that was not correct -- apparently he had misunderstood something in a briefing. I set the facts straight as politely as possible. The next day Mr. Carpenter again made an incorrect statement about our operation and again I gave the correct facts. He turned to me -- this was in a rather large meeting -- and said, "Do you realize that's the second time you have contradicted me or corrected me in two days?" I replied, "I'm sorry, Mr. Secretary, but I think its my job to provide correct information when you are on a tour like this." He made no response but I sensed he was not used to corrections. He and Tom left the next day and later I reported to the Ambassador on the visit. I said he would probably receive some kind of flack from the new Assistant Secretary because of what I had said. About two weeks later the ambassador called me to his office and told me to sit down. He said, "You were right, I have something from Mr. Carpenter. He wants you to be his deputy and would like me to release you in 24 hours."

COREY VENNING
Athens, Greece (1952-1954)

Corey Venning was born in Spanish Fork, Utah in 1924. In 1948, she received an A.M. in International Relations from the University of Chicago. She served as a Foreign Service Officer in India and Greece. This is an excerpt from a self-interview. The Italic passages are excerpts from letters; non-italic text are excerpts from Ms. Venning's memoirs

We got to Athens at 6 a.m. and were met, taken to a hotel, and left there. The clerk insisted there were no reservations for us.... we finally got a room, had a bit of breakfast and went to bed. At 4:30 p.m. I got a phone call from the Embassy apologizing all over the place; the fellow who met

us had not been told we were posted here and somehow had taken us to the wrong hotel. So we packed up again, went to the right hotel, were invited out to dinner, and both folded up at 10, went home and slept until 8:30 this morning.... this hotel is all right except that we have to go 2 blocks away to eat in a very poor mess where the charges are high and we had a fine time getting food for the cats. Also there is no phone and was no electricity from last night until this afternoon.... the U.S. has a very fancy office of about 100 people who have taken over hotels and restaurants for the Americans out here and are responsible for the "care" we've had so far. I am going to get us a house, but quick.... We are so well taken care of that I haven't yet gotten to the office -- too busy arranging the simple necessities of life -- but Athens in general looks like a lovely place. (July 30, 1952)

A fitting beginning for our posting at Athens. In the event, we spent nearly three months in two small starkly furnished rooms in that hotel, which had been taken over by the American mission.

I've had some of my furniture taken out and put in [the rooms] -- the furniture was pretty badly mashed up en route; hope the maple, which hasn't yet arrived, fared better -- so it isn't bad, but I had to wax it all myself, which was an awful job. Have fixed up one of the two baths as a kitchenette but with no refrigerator and only a hotplate cooking is a chore. (Can't eat in the hotel dining room as our meals would cost \$7.00 per day). Have also been doing the laundry by hand and ironing on a sleeve board.

Robin is just an angel -- he has washed the dishes several times & is always interested in helping to get the meals (still throws his clothes around, though!). There are battalions and regiments of boys his age around, and a lovely swimming pool behind the hotel, besides large grounds to play in, trees to climb, etc., and he is enjoying himself. If I can make him sit still long enough, & fend off "the guys," I'll have him write you soon. You know -- he wants to write but can't resist playing & says "later." (August 25, 1952).

I don't remember what I did, until Robin's school started, about getting him looked after while I was at work. For I did get to the office, two days after our arrival. But for reasons that I hope will become apparent, I shall mention my work only incidentally until after describing other aspects of our lives in Athens. Suffice it to say here that the American Mission in Greece included the several hundred people employed by MSA, the Aid agency (more, now that aid was only a fraction of its former level than when it was at its high, and including the 100-odd people devoted to looking after the housing and other basic interests of American mission personnel), several hundred -- perhaps more -- military advisers, and the Embassy, which with the USIS probably had about 50 American personnel, including clerical people and attachés but not including six or eight Marine guards or the CIA office, whose size I was never able to estimate. Nor could I estimate the number of Greeks employed by these various offices. MSA and the military (except the Marine guards at the embassy) kept American hours. In partial conformity with Greek commercial and government hours and the traditional -- and sensible -- long Mediterranean siesta, the embassy was open from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. five days a week, reopened from 5 to 8 p.m. two or three weekdays, and embassy personnel had duty alternative Saturday mornings. This will explain my freedom for such activities as Cub Scouts of afternoons.

Robin starts school tomorrow ... Thank goodness Uncle Sam came through and agreed to pick up all but \$100 per year per child of the tuition... It was \$335 and most of us had no idea how we were going to meet it. He's really very anxious to get started again, although he makes the usual boy-noises of disgruntlement about it....(September 18, 1952)

I had hoped to enroll him at Athens College, an excellent school run under joint Greek and (nonofficial) American auspices, attended by the children of the Greek elite and a few European and other foreigners. But Robin's still-tenuous command of Greek, and more important, the financial aspects, precluded that option. So he went to the American school, one set up by the military and oriented on strictly American lines. Although its academic standards stood up well by comparison with most American public schools, they were by no means at the level either of Athens College or of his school in Bombay. On the other hand, he made scads of friends and thus had a great time.

Life in the hotel became less and less possible. It was extremely difficult to make us good meals out of cans, with no refrigeration, and with a single-burner hotplate to cook on. Yet it was out of the question, financially, to eat regularly in the hotel mess. Having no car and the PX being twenty miles away in Piraeus, I was dependent on nearby Greek sources of groceries except when a colleague's wife remembered my plight and was kind enough to offer me a lift. It was of course impossible even to consider entertaining, repaying any of the numerous invitations that came my way (official invitations did not require reciprocation, but others did).

But there were three good things about our hotel stint. First, Robin rapidly made acquaintance with many of his future schoolmates and became friends with them. Second, the difficulties of getting to the PX made it necessary for me to learn at least enough Greek to shop; I got a Greek language book worked hard on it, and made quite a bit of progress.

Robin left his sweater outside at the hotel and it was stolen -- poor child, now he has to wait till one I ordered from Sears comes. Our trunks from Charlotte, with the few warm things we had before we left, haven't come yet. (October 18, 1952).

I made urgent representations to the administrative people about housing, but got little sympathy and no help. Why? In the first place, these people were employed by MSA and had the pay and allowance structure of that agency, which in Athens was different and much more generous than that of the Foreign Service. Then, as I later discovered, the US had taken over most of the hotels and many of the good rental houses in the Athens area, so for practical purposes all the military, and all MSA and Foreign Service senior officers, most middle-ranking ones, and even a few juniors (including my Class 5 colleague in the economic section) had this housing, which was fairly good to begin with and nicely maintained by the US government. And of the junior officers, most had at least some, and several a great deal, of private income; they could afford to rent places far outside the range of those of us -- I only discovered three besides myself -- who had to live on our foreign Service salaries. Of the three, one, a bachelor, had a tiny dingy apartment, and the other two very uncomfortable habitations.

The administrative people had a list of available housing, and when in September my car had arrived and at last been put together, I looked at a lot of them. They were uniformly unlivable for

Americans (e.g no heat, no electric outlets, no kitchen cabinets or facilities other than a cold-water sink), and uniformly priced at the very top of the range of possibility.

At last I found a place on my own. It was still under construction but was almost finished, and would be quite satisfactory:

Now the administrative people are in it: they insist on seeing places and passing on rentals, etc., before we sign a contract. This is a good idea per se, as people may not be sufficiently watchful and get themselves into messes. But they have fouled this one up; called me this a.m. to tell me the owner had decided not to rent it after all. I was no end downcast, so decided to call the owner myself. He most emphatically denied saying that, in fact said he had planned to come and see me this afternoon.... the place isn't quite finished and the heating system isn't in. He wants me to get one from the US for him. This is ok with me; he will pay me in drachmae and I will order it -- fortunately I have lots of weight allowance left.... This routine seems to be fairly common around here. The admin. people have taken exception to it, on the ground that I should demand a fully finished place. They, of course, have no such place in sight to offer us, so I guess we are supposed to exist in the hotel forever. I have made a deal with the landlord, that if I get him the heater, he will spend half the difference (they cost 3 times as much here and anyway there are none on the market) on extra shelves and closets and so on.... (September 29, 1952)

But that one fell through. In desperation I took a place on the JAS list:

We moved into a house Monday....All my furniture has to be refinished and much of it mended; I have to have kitchen cabinets and things made; the electrician put in 6 wall outlets so we can hook up a minimum of lamps, etc. [all at my expense]. When you take a house unfurnished it's really unfurnished. This one is "furnished", with 2 cots, table and 4 straight chairs, 3 stuffed chairs and 1 end table [all in nearly unusable condition]. It isn't as nice as I wanted, but it can be quite comfortable and attractive with my things in it. (October 14, 1952)

Have also hired a maid -- a strapping good-tempered girl. She speaks only Greek so our Greek is progressing rapidly. She doesn't know how to serve but is willing and bright so I can train her. And she can certainly work: I never saw such scrubbing and so on, and she washes [by hand, in cold water] great quantities of stuff every day. This is good because every stitch of stuff from Bombay was filthy -- all the trunks were banged so they cracked, etc. So it's blankets, bedspreads, curtains, slipcovers, table linens, towels -- everything. (October 18, 1952)

Anna was twenty, and came from Serifos, that island which Socrates used as the example of "the sticks." It had apparently changed little from his time. She was more than willing to work and learn. She learned to serve, and to more or less follow American standards of housekeeping. I could not teach her to cook. Much as I hate generalizations, I must say that the Greeks, like the English, are not by nature cooks. How it comes about that their standard occupation on emigration to the United States was in restaurants I do not know. I suspect that is one reason why the American taste for good non-indigenous food remained so primitive for so long. So I did the cooking -- she did learn to chop vegetables, which always helps, and did the cleanup, a big item when -- both in this place and the one we took later -- it was all a cold-water job.

Thank goodness the refrigerator is here and will be installed within a week. The carpenter was there almost all day yesterday installing kitchen cabinets and storeroom shelves. These are among the many things not included in "furnished" houses here. Robin is doing a bit of carpentry too; has his stuff set up on his verandah. (November 12, 1952)

Unfortunately, the place could not be made "quite comfortable and attractive." It was the ground floor of a house built in the pretentious "elegant" style affected in Eastern Europe at the turn of the century: marble floors and pillars in the main rooms, cavernous high ceilings, gloomy and dark, impossible to get or keep clean. The two bedrooms and bath were primitive. The kitchen was furnished with a cold-water sink and nothing else. There wasn't enough power for electric cooking, so I got a two-burner kerosene hotplate. There was no telephone, and unless a telephone and line were already installed on the premises, one waited for months to get one. And, contrary to the description given me, there was no central heating (and no fireplace), and no way to heat water except on the kitchen hotplate. We bathed cold, and as cold weather set in I acquired two portable kerosene heaters (smelly), which we lugged around with us, doing our best to be a little less cold. At table we would sit each with a heater on one side of his chair; after ten minutes or so we would move it to the other side, in a sort of single-unit toaster effect.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, I entertained on at least one occasion.

We had Christmas dinner with some nice American friends. I followed the Greek custom of playing cards on New Year's Eve, and my Greek beau and I won a fair hunk of money before midnight and champagne broke up the game. Then home, and I made eggnog for a party I had yesterday at noon... a great success, about 50 people, but boy! try beating up 5 dozen eggs -- separated -- and 10 quarts of cream some morning between 2 and 3:30 a.m. [with a hand beater]. The stuff filled the inset pan of the roaster, the pressure cooker and two other big pots! and was awfully good really. I had a lot of people -- the chargé d'affaires, a lot of Embassy people, some from the other embassies, the Governor of the Bank of Greece and his wife and a few from the ministries, and a couple of business couples.... all my beaux and such other presentable single men as I know, and some pretty and nice gals. I told each of the beaux-and-other-presentables he had to see that so-and-so was looked after, sicced them on them so to speak, so all had a fine time of it and the last of them didn't leave until 5. I went and got Robin, who was over at my boss's house playing with their 10-year-old who is one of his best chums, and when we got home found a small delegation from the party had returned. In view of the holiday today they thought we should have a party later. It was the maid's well-deserved night out so we ... [took] Robin and made a night of it.... It was glorious fun and Robin was thrilled to stay up until midnight (January 2, 1953).

Our purgatory in that house, which still beat the hotel, went on for five months, until mid-April. Then:

We've moved out of our old house; got a very good deal on a new one ... out in the country -- 11 miles from my office, but less than a mile from the school where Robin will go next year.... it is warm, has central oil heating and has a telephone.... Robin... plans a vegetable garden and a "shack" out back. (March 12, 1953)

Our landlords had used our cottage as a summer place until the war. They had repaired the worst damages of its German and later communist occupation, but the stucco exterior was still pockmarked with bullet holes. The Dimaras' had survived the German occupation relatively intact, but had lost a son to the Greek civil war. They were of "old" Greek society. Mrs. Dimaras kept her grandmother's high school diploma framed in her drawing room, explaining to me that in her grandmother's day, literacy itself was rare enough even for well born young women. This I understood from the pride my own maternal grandmother took in her education by the Episcopalian ladies. Mrs. Dimaras visited Paris annually, and on her return invited me to lunch and admire her new wardrobe and recent tucks in an ongoing facelift procedure. An interesting and likable character.

One reached the cottage by driving down a country road from, Kifisia, then through an olive grove. It stood on enough ground that we could make a small garden and enjoy the fish pond in front. Even more ambitious projects were possible:

If Anna will take care of them, I think I'll buy 3 or 4 chickens, as eggs are \$.10 apiece on the local market and the storage eggs at the Commissary (.62/doz.) taste very "storage-ey." (March 27, 1953).

I think nothing came of this chicken project.

I put some of our rattan furniture from India in the glassed-in verandah through which one entered the cottage, and the rest in the squarish room it gave onto. To the right of this room was a dining room and to the left a bedroom that became Robin's and into which his teak furniture fit nicely. Behind the squarish room was a small cozy room with a fireplace; we used the two rooms as living room. Giving off the back center room was my small bedroom. The bath and kitchen occupied the back corner on the other side. The maid's quarters was a small separate building just beyond the door leading outside from the kitchen. Mama sent the bird's eye maple bedroom furniture Aunt Mary had given me, the beautiful dining set from our Ogden house, and the huge ugly sofa and overstuffed chair that came with the house at 706 Wallace in Coeur d'Alene.

There followed great remodeling of my drapes from India, all sorts of other refurbishing, and a huge order to Sears Roebuck for lamps and other household items. When this order arrived half the things had been damaged because of careless packing, and the other half were either items I had not ordered or were otherwise wrong; many of the things I did order did not arrive at all. Some hot correspondence followed, and eventually my order was almost properly filled. A few months later a Sears man came through Athens drumming up business with the Americans stationed there. At my request he came to my office, full, I think, of thoughts of a nice big order. Instead, I showed him the correspondence. He looked at it, sighed, and said, "You know, when orders come in they are given, by weight, to girls who may or may not be high school graduates. They have a daily quota, and sometimes orders get filled rather carelessly." Thus began a long and often difficult relationship. The good part of Sears is that you get exactly what is described in the catalog or what you see in the store, no more, no less (if it doesn't say preshrunk and colorfast be sure it will shrink and run; if it doesn't say washable be sure it will disintegrate, but if it does say these things the items will perform accordingly). The bad part is in delivery. I had

my last go-round with them in September 1995. I have learned how to win these skirmishes quickly and to my satisfaction.

Within two or three months the little place was in good order and, with occasional exceptions for failing electricity and so on, both Robin and I enjoyed living there.

One day in the Fall of 1953 I found Anna and Robin in one of the olive trees in the grove between the road and our house, busily harvesting the ripe crop. Anna said she would put them in brine to make our winter supply. "But", I expostulated, we mustn't pick those olives. They don't belong to us. They belong to the demos (municipality)." "What is a demos?" "It is the town itself -- all the people. All the people own these olives, and they will be harvested and the demos will sell them." "Well, if the olives belong to all the peoples, we are just taking our share now!" I didn't feel up to a full scale civics lessons in Anna's Serifos Greek.

We finally got our washing machine.... Anna was so pleased with it, after washing everything in the bathtub for 6 months... She had never used one before...[I demonstrated the first wash]; when she went to use it the second time she reported it was kaput... it didn't heat the water! Now that we understand about putting hot water in the machine to begin with, all is well. (March 27, 1953)

I have mentioned that the American Mission had a PX and a commissary. The PX was useful for buying cigarettes, beer and hard liquor, men's and some boy's clothing of the type favored by military customers and families, Kleenex, toilet paper and a limited selections of cosmetics, and all sorts of gadgets and gewgaws such as 400-day clocks from Germany, which in my experience invariably went permanently out of order after a few months. The commissary, located in Piraeus (nearly 20 miles from our cottage) was well supplied with canned and frozen things, and cold storage vegetables. I don't remember where its perishable dairy items came from. I continued to use both PX and commissary, but on a decreasing scale as I became familiar with what was available locally. The butchers stocked excellent Argentine beef and quite decent lamb, pork and poultry. Local fish and seafood were fresh and delicious. Produce was strictly seasonal -- we never had a salad that included both lettuce and tomatoes, for example -- and it wasn't always visually perfect, but how freshly delicious! We found a bakery in a village not far from our cottage; when Robin and I drove over for a bread supply the bread was often hot from the oven, and often there was one less loaf in the load by the time we got home. Good, and clean, dairy products were also to be had, and of course lovely olives and delicacies such as pita (in Greece pitas were made of mille-feuille dough stuffed with spinach, cheese, or meat), dolmades (stuffed grape leaves), moussaka, and sweet pastries.

That I had learned enough Greek to make my wants known in detail helped. I would march into the butcher shop armed with my American, French or Greek cookbook, and have long conferences about which cuts would be best for my purposes. Then the butcher would haul down the side of meat that hung there and cut it to my order. Oddly enough meat prices were not much different for the choicest cuts than for the others; therefore my dinner-party mainstay became roast tenderloin of beef, a luxury I have rarely indulged in since. I became a special favorite with these shopkeepers because I could interpret and mediate when on occasion when I entered a shop the proprietor would be trying his level best to suit the wants of some Army wife who hadn't had

time to make the trip to the commissary and who had the common notion that if you shout loud enough in English anyone would understand you: "I want this-or-that, and I want it nigh-eece!"

My car was stolen a few days ago, a common occurrence around here, but the police found it within 2 days and all the damage was a jammed lock and cut ignition cord. Gangs of kids steal them, go joyriding in them, and leave them when they run out of gas. (May 1953)

Not long after this I decided to sell the Chevy, which used a lot of expensive gas and never ran very well, and less well after its hard life after I left Bombay and before it got to Greece. A woman friend of mine had a little Fiat and loved it. So, after much backing and filling with the administrative people, I imported a Fiat. And loved it.

The memorable part of this whole transaction, however, was the selling of the Chevy. The buyer was a woman who would use it as her prika (dowry) and set up her intended as a taxi driver. There followed a three-hour session including the happy pair, each of the lawyers, and me, all but me hammering out the details with even more acrimony than usual in such cases among Greeks (even their casual conversations sounded like quarrels to the foreign ear; they weren't quarrels, it is just the way the language sounds. Someone told me that when I spoke Greek "it sounds like music." My voice is certainly not musical except by comparison). The main bone of contention was the bride's unwillingness to hand over title to the groom. What if the marriage didn't work out? If she didn't keep title, she couldn't get her prika back. I then made my one and only comment: why didn't she get the taxi-driver's medallion or whatever it was, then hire him to do the actual driving? Owners and drivers did not have to be the same people. That wasn't practical; women didn't get taxi drivers' medallions in Greece. I don't know how that problem was finally decided. Maybe the bride, who was on the far side of marriageable age, folded. But the deal did come through. There followed an afternoon when one of the lawyers arrived at my office with a suitcase in which were packed \$2000 in drachmae. The largest drachma bill being 10,000 -- \$.50 -- it took the afternoon to count it.

Our own little maid, Anna, was saving almost her whole wages for prika. She intended to buy some ghi (land), with it. Though as yet she had no fiancé I knew that her whole ambition in life was to marry (as it was with Greek peasant women generally), and that once the prika was there a candidate would present himself. So for her Christmas present in 1953 I gave her many yards of white satin and a lace bridal veil, both from Sears. Alas, it turned out she really wanted a ready-made bridal dress. Ready-mades were pretty bad in Greece, but from her point of view they represented status and luxury that made-to-order things like the black silk dress uniform with white organdy apron and cap, that I had my own modiste make for her, could not match.

And alas, late in 1953 Anna fell madly in love. So madly that she became pregnant. That separate little maid's house was a very bad thing for Anna, the little girl from the sticks of Serifos. And her prika was by no means complete.

Somehow the whole thing seemed to fall in my lap at one point. There was a session in my living room one evening with Anna, the young man and his parents. His mother, an unpleasant old peasant woman, kept wringing her hands and moaning that for her son only a koritzi (virgin) would do. I commented that he had already had his koritzi. This didn't count, of course.

I suspect this session was intended to produce the money to make up the prika from me. If that was the case it didn't work, for I didn't have any extra money and didn't feel myself responsible for Anna's behavior.

I didn't resent this attempt, or any of the other real or alleged sharp practices that made many of my compatriots dislike and despise the Greeks. A mercantile people, most of them desperately poor and all long under oppressive foreign rule, then subjected to the rigors of the German occupation and the subsequent bitter civil war, were unlikely to have the high ethical standards about money that more comfortable people professed (but did not uniformly practice, I had noticed). And there was much about the Greek character that was truly lovable. In fact I loved Greece and felt at home there: the starkly beautiful landscapes; the quality of the light, which so many have ecstatically remarked on; the sense and evidence of layer upon layer of human history present for contemplation; the warmth I sensed in people of all stations in life.

I don't remember the details of the denouement of the Anna episode. She threatened to have an abortion and to have her hymen resealed; then she would again be koritzi. Possibly she did that. In any case she left my service. I did not feel responsible for what had happened to her, but I could not lay myself open to further problems, and I discovered that she had slacked off dreadfully in her work. She had been with us over a year, I had been very busy and insufficiently watchful about the domestic order:

The house [is] filthy and great piles of laundry stashed away. But I found a really good laundry which is also cheap -- took 62 pounds of stuff to them the other day! -- and got a really good cleaning woman who is working her head off. Decided to do spring housecleaning now (although it's snowing out) since we would have to do so much in any case.... Our new regular maid will come beginning the 1st.... She is 45 and unlikely to fall madly -- and I use the term in several of its meanings! -- in love. (January 26, 1954).

Anna wanted me to find her another American kyria (mistress), but I did feel that doing so would imply some responsibility on my part to her next employer, and that she needed the watchful eye and discipline of a Greek mistress.

The next maid, unfortunately, didn't last long. She came as the maid of a friend of Marnie's, who was unemployed after the friend's transfer. Our security man, to whom we were supposed to apply for investigation of all household employees, said she had convictions for prostitution on her record.

In itself this didn't make firing her mandatory. Give the poor woman a chance, I thought, so I kept her on. But when Marnie came to dinner one evening and after the maid had come in to serve, Marnie told me this woman was not the same person as her friend's maid. I didn't have to fire her. She had decamped before she finished serving dinner.

A few weeks after that a competent woman named Keti came to us. I remember little about her except that she stayed with us until we left, doing a good job of work. So much for servant problems.

In another area of practical life, early on I

...found an excellent dressmaker -- the wife of one of our senior Greek employees took me to her (speaks only Greek so so far it has been via interpreter but am learning fast there, too),. [She is making me several dresses and suits] so I shall be able to put away my summer things at last. I'm sure glad, too. It is cold as the devil with no heat. With low-quality coal at \$50 a ton we're not going to heat the house much but will just wear warm clothes instead. (October 18, 1952)

Over time Eleutheria made me by far the best wardrobe I have ever had. She had an atelier employing seven or eight women; her husband owned a fabric shop; Pat continued to send me material from DeGrand's. Eleutheria didn't need prepared patterns -- just show her a picture or draw her a sketch, the final result would be perfect. She made me coats, dresses, suits, evening and hostess clothes, sportswear -- everything. Although I tossed quite a few of these in my late-1950s dead funk, I was still wearing some of them in Rome in the early 1970s, and still have a lovely black lace shawl that accompanied one of Eleutheria's Spanish-y evening dresses. I also found a milliner who went to Paris twice a year and bought rights to make hats copying the current couturier models. At about \$25 each these were not cheap for me; still I got half a dozen glorious ones. And had a briefcase and a beautiful large black leather bag custom-made from another shop; these were still with me in the late 1970s. Finally, the hairdresser and the masseuse, both of whom came to my house to do their work on me.

At the practical level, then, Greece for me was an odd mixture of serious difficulty (housing, car) and luxury of a sort I have not enjoyed since.

For his part, Robin thoroughly enjoyed Greece -- even more, I think, than he had enjoyed India.

Christmas is descending, fast... Robin has two parties to go to, and I've been copped for any number of "small toys -- say about \$2" --for this and that charity -- joyous Noel, and we're getting a tree and all that stuff as usual. His bike arrived by APO -- in order to get it here on time they dismantled it and it arrived in three sections (I hope it's three sections -- that's all that arrived), and tomorrow a man is coming to put it back together again.(December 12, 1952)

In scouting Robin acquired another major interest:

[He] is mad about Cub Scouts, and the Economic Counselor's wife runs the whole thing and apparently thinks I'm mad about it too. I personally have reservations about the whole organization -- remember how you felt about Campfire girls? -- but it's doing him no harm and is a help on things like bathing and keeping his room neat. I occasionally have to go to a committee meeting or feed fifteen little boys cookies and stuff like that, but am hardly breaking under the strain. (December 12, 1952)

In fact, Margaret Turkel (the Economic Counselor's wife) and I had the main burden of the cub scouts. Margaret did the programs and supervised the activities. Providing refreshments and other minor tasks were supposed to be taken by scout mothers in turn, but for some reason or other most of the scouts were from military officers' families, and those mothers were very good

at worming out of their turns. One, when I called to remind her that her stint was coming up, flatly refused: "The colonel's wife is having a bridge party that afternoon, and I won't have time to deliver cookies to the cob scouts. My husband's career comes first." Margaret and I, and later Laura Smith, supplied refreshments and doing the other minor tasks most of the time. And Robin was a bit demanding: he didn't want me handing out PX-bought cookies like the other mothers except Margaret and Laura did (when they did anything at all); he wanted "your good cookies." So I spent some evenings at cooky-baking. I didn't mind.

The high point of Robin's Cub Scout career was a visit to the (Greek) scout camp on Mt. Olympus, which had been lent to the American den for a week. I that doubt much actual learning and lore went on, but the boys simply loved it. Perhaps for good reason --- when the troupe got back and barreled off the train in Athens I had never seen such a dirty, unbathed bunch in my life. Paradise for boys!

Since Robin's school ran from 8 a.m. to noon (no afternoon sessions), in the Spring of 1953 I arranged with Mme. Aspasia Mastradonis, a connection of my landlady Mrs. Dimaras, to lunch with us four days a week, during which I, too, could practice my French, and then give Robin an hour's lesson afterward. Or that is what I thought I had arranged. My French was shakier than I had imagined. For on the first day, after "Madame" had met me at the office and I had driven us both to our house and luncheon was over, and I left her with Robin while I napped. When I got up and came into the living room, Madame pulled out my instruction books from her bag, and I got my French lesson. This arrangement continued for over a year. Madame charged me \$17 per month (and lunch), a bargain, I thought. "She speaks no English but after learning Greek from people who speak no English I really think it's the best way."(May 1953)

Brought up in France where she was born of a French mother and Greek father, and identifying herself as of the "classe moyen", Madame was an unusually cultivated woman and a strait-laced but truly dear person, devoted to her family and holding to high standards of behavior and achievement for her children. She was a fine teacher. By the time we left Greece Robin had excellent command of French for a child his age. She became genuinely devoted to Robin, as well, and we to her. When in 1954 I went to the States for three week's temporary duty I had no hesitation in leaving Robin in the Mastradonis' care. And it was through Madame and my unexpected French lessons that I became familiar with the great French classics of the 17th through 19th centuries -- most of my reading in Greece was in French. Neither Robin nor I have ever forgotten dear Madame.

I'm already wondering about prep schools -- he'll be in 6th grade next year and prep school starts with 8th or 9th. He'll almost have to be in a private one because of his different and more advanced academic background. Even [his] school here, which is way behind his school in India, is a good year ahead of most American public schools. And I think when he's 13 or so he should be in a good boy's boarding school. There are things a woman can't do for a boy as he grows up.(May 1953)

That this school was academically ahead of the typical American public school didn't make it a very good one, either academically or otherwise:

I am still very much dissatisfied with his school, and so are some of the other parents. Of course the big tuition fee adds fuel to our fires. Maybe we can arrange something better next year. (December 22, 1953)

The school's basic deficiencies were all rooted in its in fact being a ghetto school, albeit the ghetto was a golden one. There was no attempt whatsoever to take advantage of its being in the heart of the great cradle of Western civilization; on the contrary, the attempt was to make it into a wholly and perfectly "American" school. This attitude of course extended far beyond the school:

What with American school (which is certainly no prize as a school), American movies, American commissary and PX, American cultural tours and so on, one would think our compatriots wouldn't be scared of contamination... but no, [everything] has to be a completely American show. Of course it's impossible to reproduce exactly the life of one country in another, so what we get... is an exaggeration of our weaknesses and veiling of our virtues, so naturally the people around us think we really are a howling mob of gum-chewing, rough-talking, pushing, comic-book (exclusively!) reading savages.... then earnest parents wonder why their kids "don't like" their Greek neighbor children, or pride themselves on that fact. (December 4, 1953)

"R. ... has perfect teeth, eyes, everything. What luck! (August 24, 1954). In 1953 some ailment had been diagnosed as mumps, but since he got a real case of mumps later in Chicago, I suspect this was a misdiagnosis, as also, I suspect, was a diagnosis of amoebic dysentery in both of us. If it was amoebic it was nothing like that which I had suffered in Bombay. I rather lost respect for the military's level of health care for dependents and nonmilitary official personnel:

... the dentist (an American Navy one), after having looked at my mouth half a dozen times and not listening to my complaints about general pain in the gums, discovered I had trench mouth -- besides amoebic! So he drained the abscesses and put a pack in, and for a week I was going around like a zombie, from the combined effect of penicillin (for the trench mouth), Terramycin (for the amoebic) and codeine (for the pain.).... doped as I was, I had to drive in each morning for the shots, because it is \$6. round trip by taxi and could not be considered official business so I could not have a car, and not for any price will a technician come to the house to give the shots. Once at the dispensary, you wait interminably along with everyone else -- everything from colicky babies to families smitten with scarlet fever, waiting there right with you.... it is all in what you are looking for whether you decide it's just the d--n foreigners or all of us who do things stupidly sometimes. It does amuse me though when any of the children's diseases assume epidemic proportions that the dispensary sends out urgent warnings to people not to touch local milk or this or that, and then probably wonder why everyone gets it anyway -- everyone who visits the dispensary.... I have always used a private Greek doctor before but now decided to take the risks of the "free services." (August 14, 1954)

Social life is heavier on the purely official side here than in Bombay but not so bad on the unofficial side. I have been to a couple of dinner parties, so life isn't dull, although now I've seen the local night life I can do nicely with very little of it -- you know I've never liked the night-clubby business and much prefer just a good dinner or something. Have also found some good bridge in Athens. (early September, 1952)

...every evening for over a week has been one damned party after another; things I can't get out of, and it will go on until Sunday.... That is the part of this life I like least. (April 20, 1953)

To me official social life could only be characterized as deadly. If brief greetings in reception lines count as meetings, I did meet some notables, among whom I remember Adlai Stevenson and Emperor Haile Selassie. I do not remember meeting any well-known representatives of literature or the arts at these official functions.

April 30, 1953

To: The Ambassador

From: Corey B. Sanderson Second Secretary of Embassy

Subject: Attached letter

I have just received the attached letter, of which I believe Paragraph 4 may be of considerable interest to us, in case the Embassy has not yet been informed of Mrs. Roosevelt's plans.

/s/ Corey B Sanderson, Second Secretary of Embassy

The letter in question was from the director of the International House Association, who I had met when he was in Mrs. Roosevelt's entourage when she visited Bombay. I was in process of starting an association chapter in Athens. However, if in fact she visited Athens neither I nor the new chapter was included in any of the functions in her honor, for I remember nothing of such a visit.

I especially dreaded embassy parties attended by King Paul and Queen Frederika, and being on excellent terms with Ambassador and Mrs. Peurifoy they seemed to attend most of them. One didn't sit if either the king or the queen stood, and they seldom sat down. One didn't leave before they did, which was seldom before 2 a.m. -- and our office hours began at seven. It was at these functions that I learned to nurse a glass of soda water for hours.

The king was affable enough, but the queen was very much on her dignity except with the Peurifoy's, and as I learned to my embarrassment, especially so with juniors. I was drawn by Mrs. Peurifoy into a conversation between them and introduced to the queen. After her "How do you do?" and my murmur, "I am honored, Your Majesty," some moments of silence ensued. Thinking the ball must be in my court I ventured a pleasantry to the effect that I envied her her recent trip to Germany.

Never before or since have I been so mercilessly and wordlessly snubbed. You see, this was my first brush with royalty, and no one had bothered to tell me of the "don't speak unless spoken to" rule -- or for that matter of any other matter of protocol beyond a few forms of address and who ranked whom at table and in reception lines. I wonder if anyone else ever made the same mistake.

And there was a lot of this official social life; my present guess is at least once a week and often more than that. Not only at our embassy, but occasionally at others, and sometimes at the residences of the head of MSA or other high-level Greek, American or other foreign officials.

At least one of these affairs turned out to be amusing, or at least not dreary. It was a dinner party the outgoing head of MSA gave for his successor, who was newly arrived and as yet without his family. I think I was invited only to "make up the table." While the company dipped their pre-dinner drinks we sat in the drawing room where Mrs. Barrows, the outgoer's wife and very "cultured" in an art- and music-appreciation sort of way, had (so as to shorten the time it would be necessary to make conversation?) put Grieg's A-minor warhorse for piano on the phonograph. As the juniors in the assembly a colleague from the political section and I sat nearest the machine. In the first movement there is that purling piano section, followed by a short pause and then the crashing descent of octaves. When the quiet part came to a close I misjudged both the length of the pause this especially dramatic rendition of the piece would involve and the acoustics of the room, and whispered "OK, give 'em hell!" This was intended only for my listening partner but carried, in dead silence, throughout the room. The crashing octaves that followed octaves didn't quite drown out the audience's laughter.

Then at dinner I was placed next to the Spanish ambassador. During the main course the guest of honor managed to overturn his glass of deep red wine onto the Venetian-lace tablecloth, a prized trophy of our hostess. She paled, but smiled and not very successfully tried to treat it as Nothing at All. The Spaniard then whispered to me: "Oh, I am so happy he did that and not I. My wife is here and his isn't!"

At another dinner -- this may not have been an official one -- our Greek host, an enthusiastic hunter, proudly served his twenty-four guests with a huge quantity of larks he had bagged shortly before. After serving ourselves at a buffet we guests sat at rather tippy little tables for four. Larks are tough, and silver-bladed table knives are dull. Sure enough, on my first or second try to cut into the bird it went shooting off my plate into a corner of the room. I was mortified. But my spirits revived as the meal went on and larks began to festoon floor and tablecloths all over the place. In fact the tough larks and dull knives resulted in quite a noisy and festive affair.

I tried to put the best possible face on all these social goings-on:

Social life is getting more pleasant here -- the same round of frankly rather dreary diplomatic cocktail parties, but also I'm now seeing some very nice Greeks and British and others, as well as getting to know who are the most stimulating Americans. (September 29, 1952)

Have met some interesting Greeks, am doing a bit of night life, and finding a few bearable Americans among a group which on the whole is about as stogy a bunch as I ever want to see (the wife on the Independence was a fairly good sample of the appalling average). (November 17, 1952)

This weekend promises to be fairly exciting. Am going tomorrow evening to the premier of a play -- black tie -- with a character from the office, have a Sunday picnic date, including Robin, with a charming Greek Navy officer and most exciting of all have been bidden to the King's Birthday

Ball on Sunday evening. this last is one of the current mysteries around here. Invitations to this - which is the event of the year, is supposed to "make" one socially, and for which Athenians fight tooth and nail -- are sent, in very small quantities, to the various Embassies and legations here. We got five, meaning the chargé d'affaires, his wife, and three other people to be chosen by him. It is apparently unheard of for diplomatic people to get personal invitations -- but I did, and that direct from the Court Chamberlain. Well, I don't know the Court Chamberlain and don't think I've met anyone else at the Palace, and I am as curious as everyone else about it.... Our protocol officer, an eligible but rather un-fascinating bachelor, gets to go along as my escort and is delighted. (December 12, 1952)

I was also invited to the ball the following year. These birthday balls were interesting as spectacle, the guests being resplendent in white tie and ball dresses, some of the latter obvious Paris originals and the ladies much bejewelled (not all Greeks were poor by any means). I learned to do a decent curtsy for the royal couple. I also observed, on a trip to the ladies' room, that beyond the ballroom and a couple of other public rooms, beyond the elegance of the gorgeously costumed and physically magnificent Evzone guards who stood at its gate, the palace was little more elegant than most Greek domestic interiors: there in an anteroom stood a carelessly groomed and uniformed maid, surrounded by dusty nondescript furniture. Like other Mediterraneans, Greeks spent little energy on the interiors of their houses.

Beyond this, other than the spectacle and the social cachet of an invitation, I have to admit that the balls were little more interesting than official social life in general.

I seem to enjoy a rather extraordinary social position among the rest of the diplomatic corps, the Palace, and that group in Greek society which isn't notorious for running after foreigners (I myself have no idea why all this should be but it is). (January 2, 1953)

Both in India and Greece local people would occasionally say, obviously meaning it as a compliment, "But you don't seem like an American." At first I resented this, and never became comfortable with it. I was glad and proud to be an American. I did, though, come to see something of what they meant. I was neither like the unfortunate stereotype of the brash or brassy American woman of the movies (and alas not unknown outside them), I felt no need either to fall all over foreigners or to be smarmily, warily "friendly." They are just people, different from me -- but who isn't? Americans or non-Americans, one finds people one feels "right" with and others one doesn't.

I later discovered that the birthday ball invitations, and perhaps much of the rest, had been arranged by a couple of young palace officials whom I had met at some function or other, and who had been much impressed with my eagerness to learn Greek, more and better Greek than one needs with shopkeepers and taxi drivers, and my interest in modern as well as classical Greek drama and literature. They asked me to come along to occasional meetings of a little circle of Athenians and foreigners with similar interests. Though conversation at these evenings was almost exclusively in Greek and French, I much enjoyed what I understood, and the company in general. Later on some of these people took me to a performance of two of the Athens opera (incredibly, painfully bad) and productions of classical plays in the theater of Herodotus Atticus. The performers used the classical texts but gave them modern pronunciations. These

performances were inspiring to me, and gave me the ambition, partially realized many years later, to learn to read and enjoy the old plays in their original language.

Some of my Greek associations also came about through the Enepekides, our senior Greek advisor and his wife Anna. When I knew them the Enepekides were probably in their late forties. They had a fine son, George, who was a couple of years older than Robin. John Enepekides had worked for the embassy since long before the war, knew the Greek political scene intimately, and besides being charming was invaluable -- I should say the most useful member of the economic section, Greek or American. Anna was simply delightful, sweet, self-effacing, beautiful with her prematurely gray hair. She was enormously helpful to me. It was Anna who put me in touch with my excellent modiste and milliner and helped me with many other practical aspects of life in Athens. The Enepekides gave parties -- cocktail parties, dinner parties, at which both food and company -- American, Greek and other -- were delightful; these parties were fun.

The Enepekides were close friends of the Turkels, with whom I also soon established close ties -- tightened by the great friendship that arose between Robin and young Bill Turkel, and by my fondness, which was mutual, for both Harry and Margaret and their children. Bill was a few months older than Robin and Margaret, a couple of years older. Our families saw a good deal of each other. Among other things they came to our house for Thanksgiving and Robin and I to theirs for Christmas, as the younger children and I often did with Porters later.

Harry was a lawyer by training, and I believe that -- like Clyde Dunn in Bombay -- he had been brought into the Foreign Service by lateral entry (i.e. at a higher rank than that of those who came in, as I did, young and by examination). If so, he was among the best of these transfers I ran across. The Turkels had had several previous posts including, if memory serves, at least one in South America and another in Germany. Harry was thoroughly competent in the substantive part of his work, but detested administrative and organizational details, with results I shall describe later. He was a most pleasant and mannerly man. Margaret was an avid visitor to local sights and the Greek islands. She also ran the American cub scout and girl scout troops in Athens. She spent an immense amount of time and energy on the scouts.

Although towards the end of my tour of duty Harry was saying he had the days counted until he could retire, he in fact did not do so until some time in the 1960s. I think Athens was indeed his last overseas post. His last major assignment, by which time he had the Foreign Service rank of Career Minister and the diplomatic rank of Ambassador, was the negotiation of the permanent status of a small piece of territory on the Rio Grande that up until then had been in dispute between the United States and Mexico.

Shortly after his retirement he fulfilled a lifelong ambition to visit the last stronghold of his ancestors. He made a trip to Masada, in Israel. On its heights he suffered a fatal, and I think quite unexpected, heart attack. Margaret first learned of this when she got a telegram from the local consul informing her of his death and demanding immediate decision as to disposal of the remains. Heartless, and not something Margaret was equipped to cope with. Fortunately young Bill was then in Saudi Arabia as an oil company executive and could take over.

Margaret spent her last years in Georgetown, with frequent visits to her children, both overseas, and tours of the United States and the rest of the world, always refusing to travel by plane. I saw her several times in Washington, and visited Williamsburg with her. I last saw her in the mid-1970's, when she and I and Brynnie Rowberg, who had been in Athens when we were but by then was also then retired, had a reunion at Brynnie's home in Northfield, Minnesota. After our weekend she and I came to Chicago on the train -- not at that time a very comfortable trip (not that air travel was comfortable, either) -- and she spent a night with me before going on to her next destination. She died a couple of years later.

Brynnie Rowberg, whom I mentioned above, was a Foreign Service Staff officer at the embassy. I do not remember what her duties were, but one can be sure that whatever they were, they were carried out thoroughly and efficiently. Brynnie never married. Personally strict in her manners and morals, as became the daughter of a pioneer Scandinavian family in Minnesota, she was tolerant of the ways of others and had a marvelous sense of humor. She was also very bright. We have remained in touch over the years, for a long time only at the Christmas-card level but more recently as fairly frequent correspondents. Her letters well reflect her personality and character. I am always delighted to get one.

The Donners were my other closest American friends during most of the Athens period. Athens was Joe's first post. A little, but not much, younger than I, they were a beautiful and charming young couple, and a rich one. Pam was a Cushing and a Vanderbilt by birth, Joe of a family of Pittsburgh steel-mill owners. This never seemed to matter in the earlier part of our association. Joe and I, neither of us overburdened with work, spent a lot of office time chatting over the delicious cups of Turkish coffee a little man came round with several times during each day. The Donners and I offered each other mutual aid and comfort through those awful official parties. We frequently dined at our house after we moved into the cottage, and Robin and I made many a pleasant visit to their luxurious, but not pretentious, place on the beach beyond Piraeus.

It was there that I had one of the frights of my life when Robin and another guest, a young but grown man, took off for a buoy that looked to be a couple of hundred yards offshore. But they swam and swam, interminably -- and I learned that in fact the buoy was nearly a mile out. Thank God they reached it at last, I looking on in agony from the distance. But would Robin ever make it back, after a five- or ten-minute rest? He did, and wasn't even winded.

Possibly because of their exceedingly privileged education and upbringing, the Donners -- Joe at least -- could be delightfully naive. During one of our office conversations he mentioned that on the previous evening he and Pam had gone with some Greek acquaintances to Chez Lapin, an upscale Athens nightclub/supper club. "One thing odd about Greeks," he observed, "we saw a lot of older men with younger girls -- maybe the men marry late, or maybe it's strong family ties, because the Greeks we were with said the girls were with their uncles." I burst into giggles and explained what "uncles" meant ("sugar daddies," in the parlance of the 1930s). Joe was shocked, and disbelieving: "No, that must be wrong. They wouldn't let people like that into the Chez Lapin!"

Some time in the summer of 1953 Joe requested a big favor of me. His sister Carole was coming for a visit. She was passionately devoted to things Greek, especially to things Byzantine- and

Crusader-Greek, and she desperately wanted to tour the Peloponnesus. No satisfactory guided tours were available, and Joe was sure Carole couldn't manage that rather rugged experience on her own. Would Robin and I accompany her? Joe intended that we would make the tour in the huge black limousine that the Greek government regularly rented for the use of visiting dignitaries like Marshall Tito (perhaps in addition to being huge it was armored; I don't know), and the Embassy for visiting Senators and such. The car came equipped with a trustworthy and knowledgeable driver. When I protested that there was no way I could finance our share of such an expedition, Joe insisted that that was no part of his plan; I would more than earn our fare by being along, not as a chaperone but as a sort of companion and protector.

After considerable soul searching I accepted this proposal. Carole turned out to be a lovely girl of about twenty, retiring by nature. I liked her very much, and she liked me and Robin. From Robin's and my point of view the trip was a success, offering unforgettable sights and views said to be of significance clear back to the Trojan wars. There were other unforgettable experiences as this enormous vehicle made its passage over narrow, tortuous and thoroughly rutted mountain roads. The driver was careful, but he was also Greek. He could not always resist turning an ascent or descent into a real thrill for himself and something akin to terror in Carole. It was also hot and dusty, the car -- and we -- covered and caked at the end of each day. But the sights, and the whole experience, were more than worth that.

Except for the Athens area itself and a couple of islands like Rhodes and Mykonos, tourism was not yet developed in Greece. During our several day's wandering around the Peloponnesus we had to depend on the accommodations and meals available wherever we stopped. The places were always clean, but were simple indeed. Washing arrangements included only a basin and pitcher in each room. I am sure Carole had never missed a daily bath, except possibly if she had been ill. She suffered. Meals were at a similarly simple, sometimes barely edible, level, the main meat item invariable being lamb -- on occasion, read goat.

At last, early one evening, we reached Patras, Greece' largest city after Athens and Salonika. There we put up at the best hotel, a modest three-story one fronting on the brick-paved plaza next to the docks. It also looked pretty simple, but it boasted a bathtub. Not private baths or running water in the rooms, but at any rate a bathtub. Patrons could order hot baths; when the bath water was heated and in the tub the patron would be called to come and enjoy. Carole simply longed for a hot bath. Robin and I could make do with sponge downs from the ever-present pitcher in the room. So Carole ordered the bath. About forty-five minutes later a maid announced Bath Ready. Carole gathered up her things and descended from the third floor, where our rooms were, to the ground floor, where the tub room was. She was back in less than five minutes, distraught. True, the water had been heated and the maid had turned on the tub faucet -- but she had forgotten to put the plug in the tub, and then apparently made a leisurely trip to announce Carole's bath. When Carole got there all the hot water had drained out! I don't remember how we dealt with this.

By now the evening was well along and we were hungry. Patras being a port we had high hopes for some delicious seafood. On recommendation of the hotel proprietor we looked in at two tavernas (cafes or restaurants), both nearby, both also fronting on the dockside plaza. Neither was exactly elegant, and we saw no other women customers. But we were hungry. We settled on

one of them and entered. When menus were presented, they were in Greek. I looked at the list, then asked the waiter if there might be a seafood item as well. No, kyria, only what is on the menu. I looked up and said, "Carole, we can have lamb, lamb, lamb or lamb."

I think Carole was very happy to get back to Athens next day, though her intellectual passion for things Byzantine and Crusadal had not in itself abated.

On my first visit to the office there was Jim Hewes, the training-class clown, beaming with delight at my arrival. I had not known that he had been transferred from Karachi to Athens. Very much the same old Jim -- "poor Jim Hewes" as he invariably became known to the compassionate among his associates. Not prepossessing physically, afflicted with "diarrhea of the vocal chords" and without a shred of discretion on any subject including fairly delicate diplomatic matters. One would hear Jim's voice over the chatter at an embassy party, holding forth about the wisdom, or more often the folly, of some American or Greek or NATO, or whatever, policy. All this aside, Jim was bright, he had been educated at the best private schools and at Harvard, he had passed the Foreign Service written examination.

Jim gave me the opportunity for one of my frequent gaffes in the early stages of my learning Greek. We were dining at the Enepekides', seated at tables for four. Jim and I were dinner partners, with a Greek couple making up our table. After the fourth or fifth course Jim announced, in his stentorian voice and terrible accent, "Zhay manjay trow, Zhay manjay bienne" ("J'ai mange trop; j'ai mange bien", meaning, "I have eaten too much, I have eaten well." A bit disgusted, I said, "Oh, isthe yematos." ("Oh, you are full.") At which point the Greeks exploded into laughter. They explained: in Greek, only women could be "yemata," the only word I had yet learned for "full." Men couldn't become "yematos." After a good meal one was "hortasmenos," or "hortasmena" depending on one's sex. After that our table was even more convivial than before, and I have never forgotten either "yematos" or "hortasmenos".

Jim, the Embassy, and I limped along uncomfortably until Spring 1953, when Jim was "selected out" of the service. Thereafter I saw him every few years, always at his instigation, until some time in the mid-seventies. He eventually got a Ph.D. in history and for some years worked in, I believe, the Army Historian's office. Then we lost touch.

The Smiths arrived some time in mid-1953. Harry and Laura were, I should say, about 40. Both were small blonde mild-mannered people, with two small blonde lively boys spanning Robin in age. Their house was not far from ours, and what with natural affinity, geographic proximity, our boys' becoming pals and fellow Cub Scouts, and Harry's being no. 2 in the Economic section, we became fast friends and saw a lot of each other. Harry was a Foreign Service Officer of long standing and they had several posts behind him.

In some ways our natural affinity would seem odd. Smiths were thoroughgoing unreconstructed southerners, from Alabama or at any rate somewhere in the deep south. They weren't fond of the memory of Abraham Lincoln. When once I said I'd be proud to shake Ralph Bunche's hand Laura replied, "Well, I wouldn't!" Nor did they have much use for Jews. And while I was anything but a knee-jerk liberal, their politics were down-the-line rightist. But we didn't harp on

these differences. There was too much we did have in common, too many things, including a number of excursions and at least one trip, the families enjoyed together.

Occasionally Laura would set me straight. "Corey, you mean you spent your evening last night making date bars for those cub scouts? It's all right for me and Margaret [Turler] to do that, but you work. You haven't nearly as much time as all those women who send a couple of packages of stale stuff from the PX!" "No, you shouldn't try to let Robin understand you're not perfect. By God, Harry is my kids' father and I make them understand he is perfect!" Not that I had to work at Robin's understanding, I fear.

Harry -- I suppose for reasons I shall come to later -- left the Service well before retirement age and set up a successful brokerage-investment office in College Park, Maryland. They once had lunch with us in Boise, passing through on a vacation trip to Alaska. We kept touch for many years, and when Willy was an up-and coming young businessman and he and his bride moved to the Chicago area, and Robin a new father doing his M.A. at the University of Chicago, they came for dinner one evening. But again, some time -- perhaps when the younger children and I were in Rome -- we lost touch.

Among other friends Don Simmons, the American, was an engineer who worked for EBASCO, which was building dams and tunnels in Greece with U.S. foreign aid resources. He was a sweet grandfatherly man, a widower I think, who was fond of me and Robin. That my father had supervised the construction of the Zion highway and tunnel impressed him. Besides being good company to us he did everything he could to help me out professionally, including taking us with him on at least one overnight inspection trip of the works he was in charge of. When we got to the site of the one I remember -- a tunnel -- he was chagrined to learn that unless he wanted a workers' revolt on his hands I could not enter the tunnel to get a good look at the work. In Greece a woman in a tunnel was bad luck and meant death and destruction, just as women aboard used to be thought bad luck on merchant ships, only more so in the Greek case. I didn't mind. I reminded him I had old and many recollections of a tunnel a-building, and suggested that insofar as the report I intended to write was concerned his own observations and descriptions, relayed to me, of the progress of construction would be more technically accurate than mine. But I was pleased that Robin could go into the tunnel and see the sort of thing his beloved granddad had been involved in. Needless to say Robin was delighted. I spent a couple of happy hours prowling around the site while they traversed the depths.

When I went to the States on temporary duty in mid-1954 Don saw that I met his brother Jack, then protocol officer of the Department of State. I remember Jack as the charming if harassed man who was theoretically in charge of the American side of things during the British Queen Mother's visit, which coincided with my own. He told me that "even when she's sober" he simply couldn't get Mamie Eisenhower to commit to times and places for meetings. Mamie "wanted to 'play it by ear.'" I didn't envy him his job.

An Englishman, Leslie Kemp, made a wonderful dinner guest, and also squired me about to official functions, making them considerably less ghastly. Given his position I would pray that, as seemed usually to happen when I gave a dinner party, the power would go out at the crucial moment. But it never did when he was there. I am morally certain the minions at the power

company kept track of his movements and saw that his way was lighted and his dinner nicely cooked and on time.

Robin and I enjoyed weekends patrolling the Eastern Mediterranean on Kemp's eighty-foot sailing vessel, which he had had made in England and then brought through the French canals to Piraeus. It slept twelve and its crew included a fine cook. Besides staring at the sea bottom, every detail perfectly clear at thirty or forty feet down, and enjoying other nautical recreations, Robin and I could relish quenelles and such delicacies at elevenses, at lunch, at tea, at dinner. In the evenings our host and the other adult guests and I would play bridge or listen to each other's tales of adventure -- of which the others had much more to contribute than I had -- or just sit and admire the glories of the Mediterranean under the moon.

Andreas Apostolides, the Minister of Agriculture, was in some ways another story:

[He] is in a terrible dither because I haven't got a maid [after Anna left and before Keti appeared]. Apparently he thinks I am going absolutely to break under the strain without a maid for two weeks. Although I asked him what he thought all American women did -- he was there for four years during the War -- apparently around here no lady is capable of handling things herself. Which suits me fine -- there is a good deal to be said for this idea of being a delicate violet. So he said I should just take the first one who comes along, but I won't, but I did promise him I'd bring Robin and have dinner every evening we aren't invited out, and explained I'm not doing any laundry or cleaning anyway! (Jan 20, 1954).

It must have been early Fall 1953 that I met him, for it was at a largish dinner party at Yost's, our Minister Counselor, and we dined on the terrace of their house. By the way, the Yosts were cultivated, well-educated people, not overwhelmed by the glory of their position; their parties weren't purgatorial.

I was seated at a table with Andreas, who an American colleague at the Embassy had previously characterized as "a terrible rightist." Coming from my informant, and given the general character of the almost handpicked-by-Americans Greek government of the time, that was saying something. Terrible rightist or not, I found him charming, though at sixty-two he was in my eyes ancient. We got on famously. He must have invited me to dinner or something, because apparently he came to a dinner of mine not long after, and by then I knew that the junior did not invite the senior first.

At any rate, I heard shortly thereafter that he had resigned the Ministry. There then arrived a postcard from him, dated December 6 and bearing a Swiss postmark:

Dear Mrs. Sanderson:

You must have wondered what happened with me. Soon after your dinner party I was taken ill from thrombosis phlebitis rather seriously. I went to Paris and here, and finally I am kept in bed for a month in a very nice hospital in Zurich ... I hope that before Xmas I will be back. I tried

your phone before I left but I did not get it and as I was not feeling well I gave up. I will be looking forward to see you again if you also are not very busy.

Sincerely yours,

Naturally, when I learned he had come back to Greece I telephoned him. He seemed most pleased to hear from me. Unfortunately, he said, he was still confined to bed, but he was at home and hoped I would pay him a visit.

Which I did. He was indeed confined to bed, but in pleasant circumstances in his plain house (as I have observed, Greeks don't seem to waste much time or thought on domestic interiors), well looked after by a nurse and a devoted housekeeper of long standing. We both enjoyed my visit. Shortly afterward ensued the every-evening dinners I mention above in my letter to Mama, and our friendship cemented. I took to dropping by once a week or so on my way home from work; his house was not far out of my way. Sometimes I would bring Robin or a woman friend along. Andreas liked Robin and enjoyed the company of pretty women.

He was one of the best conversationalists and story-tellers I have ever met. He described his life and his family in detail. One grandmother was an Englishwoman, who -- in the 1870s! -- was touring the Ottoman Empire on her own when she met and married his grandfather and then stayed happily in Greece for the rest of a long life. Other relatives and friends had almost equally interesting lives. He himself had been married at least twice -- perhaps three times, the limit for Greek Orthodox -- but none of these wives was still in the picture. He had two or three children, all of whom lived abroad and to whom he did not seem deeply attached. His stories about his life and his friends, in Greece, in America, and in Europe, were interesting and well told. He had fought with the anticommunist forces in the Balkans and southern Russia during the upheavals after the Russian revolution, he had engaged in a number of businesses, and had long been prominent on the Greek political scene. But, perhaps given my situation and from a sense of delicacy on his part, we didn't really discuss politics, Greek or American. There were too many other things to talk about.

His health of course prevented him from taking up his old Ministry or another one. I remember his complaining of that none of the people at the American Embassy who had been such friends of his had called or shown him any attention at all since his resignation. Were all Americans so cold? Except myself, of course, and I was not among those "old" acquaintances.

After this I made what I hope was a tactful suggestion to our agricultural attaché, with whom I was on good but not personally close terms, that Apostolides would appreciate seeing him and his other friends at the Embassy. As far as I know nothing came of this. People are busy, you know.

At one point he began to feel better. He was no longer bedridden, but sat in an easy chair. He said he would soon resume a bit of social life. On the strength of this I invited him to a small dinner a couple of weeks hence. At almost the last minute he called: He had had a relapse and couldn't make it. Poor man, I never saw him in that chair again.

After leaving Greece I had two or three letters from Andreas, then nothing. I suppose he died. It was a friendship I value, though as we shall see it also had costs for me.

I also had, rather early on, a Greek suitor of sorts. I met him at an Embassy function. He was of good family and a junior officer in the Greek Navy, and if ever I saw a Greek god in the flesh it was he: of moderate height, well built and with a fine carriage, of that golden-blond classical complexion (deep-cream skin with plenty of color, dark-blond hair, heavy-lashed blue-gray eyes), a facial bone structure Pheidias would have immortalized in marble. To be quite frank I remember rather little about his personality or conversation. It must have been pleasant enough.

He gave me quite a rush. Dinners at charming intimate little tavernas, an excursion to Xalchis on Euboea, where at lunch beside the channel Robin and I learned that the numerous "summer hats" floating in the current were in fact big jellyfish, and other outings I no longer remember.

This was all very well, but even then I knew something of Greek customs and exigencies. For this reason I went out of my way to impress on him that I was not monied, not a lady who would bring a dowry into a marriage. It took him several weeks to get this through his head. How could an American woman, a diplomat, who had her own house and accoutrements, including a refrigerator, nice clothes, and so on, not Have Money? He did finally get it through his head. And I saw no more of him. I had known all along that it would be this way, and it didn't bother me. In his circumstances Adrian, no rebel, could not marry a portionless woman. It was fun while it lasted.

There were also quite a few evenings of bridge, scrabble and just getting together, sometimes "just us girls" with women friends, sometimes mixed.

Robin and I are going to the country for a long weekend with friends, and are really looking forward to it (April 8, 1954).

Robin and I and a (girl) friend of mine are off tomorrow for a long weekend at Hydra We are going to Delphi soon. (May 28 1954)

How we loved Hydra! Our favorite island. It is really just a mountain top that sticks above the sea. A pretty little town, no cars (no earthly room for them or the necessary roads), our small and plain hotel facing the cobbled waterfront where we could watch the boats moving in and out and the little boys battering squid against the quay to tenderize them, a tiny and utterly private cove where we could swim and Marnie pursue her tan. When we went to Delphi we were almost alone with the few peasants and many ruins, these latter seeming to echo with the oracle's hollow voice. We also went to Olympia (this I think with the Donners), to the great theater at Epidaurus, and a few other places.

Robin and I -- just the two of us or in company with others -- made many little picnics and excursions in and close around Athens, to sights classical, Byzantine, Turkish. Even more than Rome, Attica is a palimpsest. I especially remember a pristine day at Sunion, the glorious little

temple shining like a diamond in its perfect setting of brilliant sky above and clear blue sea far below.

We also did a fair amount of dining out. We especially enjoyed the dockside Piraeus restaurants where one chose one's main course as it swam in the restaurant's tank, and ate with the bustle and life of the port at our elbows, so to speak.

With older friends I learned to enjoy one aspect of Athens night life -- the tavernas, where the food might be so-so but the singing and dancing (the latter mostly by men) was unforgettable. Here I got my taste for Greek -- and near Eastern -- popular music. I hope that music is still popular, and hasn't been run off the road by hard rock and such. It reminded me of Indian music, and later, when I began to hear pre-Gregorian chant European music, of that.

Here might be a good place for one observation about Greece: when I was there (I of course don't know about now) Greeks fiercely asserted their European-ness, in contrast with Turks, Bulgars, and other "Asiatics." Yet when they were going on a trip west they were "going to Europe." And I think the subliminal text was the right one here. Greece gave birth to Western civilization, but -- then and since -- in its own social mores and general culture and the temperament of its people it has much in common with Asia that is foreign to the West as we know it. And in large part, bravo for that.

Then there was the American Navy. The Sixth Fleet made several visits to the Piraeus during my time in Athens, and all were festive occasions. The officers went out of their way to cultivate the relatively few attractive unattached American ladies (and for all I know some of the attached ones) whom they met. For me there was at least one amusing episode:

The Navy was in town when one late afternoon I sat down at a sidewalk cafe, ordered a coffee in Greek and pulled out my Papastratou cigarettes. There followed a very frank discussion of my various physical charms by a group of Naval officers seated at a nearby table. Just as I finished my coffee an American bus pulled up and out shot a bevy of little boys in cub scout outfits; this was the rendezvous place for them to be picked up by their mothers. Robin came rushing over, full of information about his day's activities, and we took off.

Along with the Ambassador and his lady I was among the embassy people invited to lunch aboard the flagship next day. As we climbed aboard I noticed one of yesterday's officers, a nice-looking one, standing rather pale and discomfited in the reception line. And then, by some coincidence, we were seated next to each other at table. He turned to me: "You gave me an awful scare! When I saw you coming up that ladder I remembered yesterday afternoon and thought 'My God, that's the ambassador's wife!'"

My other extracurricular activities in Athens were more limited than in Bombay: a speech or two -- but with so many Embassy and MSA officers, most senior to me, nothing significant. Almost as soon as I got there I was elected president of the Business and Professional Women's division of the American Women's Club. This election I soon realized was "from hunger": not only did no one else want the job (I didn't really want it myself), but the organization itself was dying. We put it out of its misery a few months later. But not, alas, before a huge group of American club

women arrived on a cruise ship and had to be shown around and their arrangements with the few Greek groups of this sort facilitated. All I really remember about this is that I had to preside at a very large dinner -- perhaps the final item on the program -- at which, and at length, the Americans made suggestions as to what the Greek women could usefully do. The suggestion I remember is an interminably lengthy plea for putting highest priority on establishing a program to plant trees and shrubs along the roads from Athens to Piraeus and other suburbs. I am great on beautification, but here was a country slowly and with a great deal of reasonably well-placed American aid picking itself up from a vicious occupation and a long and even more vicious civil war, full of rubble, poverty, illnesses going untreated and children uneducated for want of resources, women's status in many ways resembling that in nearby Muslim countries -- and rich American ladies lecturing their counterparts on tree-planting. Besides, the thing had gone on and on and I had to go to the bathroom. Somehow I managed to bring it to a merciful close.

A few weeks later I almost regretted that the club ladies hadn't scheduled their visit then, when the worst earthquakes in living memory struck Greece. The Athens area suffered only a few tremors strong enough to pull buildings down, and as I recall there were no fatalities there. The Ionian islands suffered most. On his return from a quick visit to Ithaca to estimate the damage Harry Turkel, shock still registering on his face, said he had been with the troops entering Berlin and Hamburg in 1945, but Ithaca was far worse. Thank God the Sixth Fleet was nearby and steamed in to do splendid work at giving immediate relief, and American government and private organizations also contributed mightily. I felt proud of us then.

All of us Americans at the Embassy had reason to become more or less familiar with the never-ending requests, from relatives and friends, from friends of friends, from distant connections of one sort or another, from people and organizations we couldn't remember ever having heard of, to render special help in doing everything from arranging hastened emigration, or emigration of Greeks whose situations did not exactly fit the American immigration requirements, to getting money and other help to specified Greek individuals and families. I suppose the others treated these matters as I did: we did what we could, which wasn't much, and forwarded the requests to the consular section or appropriate areas of MSA.

Then there were the requests to offer personal help and hospitality to Greek-Americans, friends of friends, who were visiting the Old Country, perhaps for the first time. I vividly remember the Cooper twins, young nieces or granddaughters of an acquaintance of Mama's. They visited me at my office on their arrival, full of enthusiasm. They had their plans made in detail; they would tour the great sights of Athens for a day or two, then take off for the ancestral village somewhere beyond Mt. Olympus. How great to meet and come to know cousins and granduncles and the whole village -- everyone in it seemed to be related to them! Three weeks later they were back. They couldn't wait to get on their ship. There wasn't a single toilet, or any running water, in the whole village! People almost never took baths! The food was terrible, and people slept on straw! or a beaten-earth floor. And how those poor women worked, and how badly they were treated! and the Cooper twins and other young girls were watched like hawks. If a girl even flirted a bit, let alone kissed a boy, her reputation was done for. And all the grown women wore black all the time, because they were so often in endless mourning for not only near but distant relatives and usually had only one set of clothes. Terrible! Thank God for America, God's country!

I have thus far said little about my work in Athens. I have wanted to keep this part of the story in one more or less coherent piece, because it was so important in my decisions for my future and Robin's.

On that first day at the Embassy -- two days after our arrival -- I left official cards for the Ambassador and other senior Embassy people, and met my colleagues in the Economic section. Within the next few days I also met the ambassador, the Minister-Counselor, and the four or five other officers in the Embassy's Political Section, and -- though I remember nothing of this -- no doubt the officers in its Consular Section.

The Economic Section chief, Harry Turkel, had the rank of Counselor of Embassy. There was also a second-in-command -- this post was empty for over a year after I arrived -- four other FSO's (Bob Phillips, Joe Donner, Jim Hewes, and myself) senior Greek advisor John Enepekides, three male Greek clerks who handled routine commercial matters, three Greek women secretary-stenographers, and part of the services of an American secretary, who also worked for the political section and who took dictation of and typed our classified material. The agricultural and labor attachés were Foreign Service Reserve Officers and were included in the economic section, but because they had been detailed to Athens for temporary duty there by their respective cabinet agencies, operated autonomously. Joe and Jim were Class 6 officers, Joe on his first Foreign Service assignment and Jim not having been promoted.

Harry told me I would be responsible for reporting on financial affairs:

I've been humping at the office, trying to get on top of a very complicated subject -- international finance is not the sort of thing one becomes expert in without effort! (August 25, 1952).

The work is going along famously; I'm up to my ears in currency, import-export policy, investment policy, oil, and Lord knows what else. (August 28, 1952).

I have the job pretty well pinned down, and can now do a bit of extra studying and so on. (September 18, 1952).

Not surprising, because the only specific job I had was to call the Bank of Greece each morning and get the previous day's unofficial gold and drachma exchange prices. From time to time I took care of other very minor matters, unless and until Bob Phillips took them over. Most days at the office became filled in with long chats with Joe Donner and Jim Hewes, and later on with shopping and visits to the modiste. I was emphatically not overworked. The desperate need for me that had precluded any training period in Washington was nonsense. If there had been any rationale at all for rushing me to Athens it was some bureaucratic fear that unless it looked like the "slot" must be filled immediately, it might be lost.

I had been just a bit chilled when Harry remarked when we first met that Patty Byrne, who had had her first post at Athens, was a "crackerjack." To me "crackerjack" described a fast and accurate typist. That wasn't exactly what Harry meant, but in essence my chill was not ill-taken. For, though Harry was a dear man he had the typical mind set of men of his time about women. He was obviously and unredeemably unconscious of his prejudices in this respect. Patty was not

a very good one to precede me either, because she was a sweet, brainy, but humble little girl who was so impressed with having been let into the Foreign Service at all that I doubt she would have noticed if her work had been really that of a sort of glorified administrative assistant.

Bob Phillips had exactly the same rank as I, having been promoted to class 5 at the same time I was, though he had been longer in the Foreign Service. He was ambitious and not very well-bred; his manner of dealing with American and Greek colleagues in the section, except Harry and John Enepekides, was brusque; with other Greeks with whom he had contact it was more reminiscent of a car salesman, or on occasion a bill collector, than a diplomat. It soon became apparent to me that rank notwithstanding, formal work allocation notwithstanding, Phillips was for practical purposes second-in-command. Harry had enormous admiration for his competence ("Oh, no," I remember thinking to myself, "not another Belehrad!") Because of Harry's extreme distaste for administrative and organizational tasks, and his preoccupation with battles with his MSA opposite numbers -- and perhaps with personal devils -- Phillips ran the Economic Section show.

After a few weeks of this I asked Harry if Phillips actually had his authorization to take over the other officers' work and deal with their opposite numbers; Harry rather apologetically said, "Yes. I depend on Phillips."

... my colleague and nominal superior is on leave -- not far enough, unfortunately; he keeps popping in and sticking his nose in current affairs.... the rest of us can work as a team, but this jerk is really a fly in the ointment. He and I have exactly equal rank, but he got here first and is really bucking for a promotion. I hope he gets the old rodeo treatment instead. (December 12, 1952)

Some excerpts from my responses to questions on a "position description" of December 1952 (such a description for each position had to be filed annually), will indicate, in a muted way, both the level of my work and my feelings about it:

(Q.: "Kinds of work you do", demanding details):

I edit drafts ... prepared by local employees ... keep this office's records of currency circulation and gold holdings and prices... routine reporting on petroleum affairs...except lubricating oils.... I do not have continuous responsibility for any one subject.

(Q.: "Elements of difficulty"....

A. [in the work itself;

B. in public and internal relations required by the work;

C.:Initiative and Judgment requirements]:

A.: "I do not find any of the above listed work difficult....I refer all problems, except those of a purely routine character, to my supervisors....My work sometimes requires application of the principles and methods of economics.

B.: Occasionally I meet American and foreign businessmen and officials.... I deal regularly with no officials, but do maintain regular contact with the secretary to the American member of the Currency Committee [this young woman supplied me with the daily currency and gold figures

mentioned above].... with the [Greek] economic assistants in this Section... editing their drafts and occasionally deciding how a given problem shall be solved. For example, I may have to decide whether to answer a letter immediately or await further information before doing so. C.:....On the whole, the position occupied by me does not require much initiative or independent decision beyond that of phrasing drafts."

I kept hoping. My letters occasionally remark on being "busy at the office." No doubt this was in part my adoption of the local rhetoric. The fact is we were hellishly overstaffed. Everyone was always talking about being ferociously busy. Yet in the economic and political sections of the Embassy, and in those MSA offices I saw anything of, people always seemed to be at leisure. Even Phillips, for all his plum-grabbing and preemption of others' responsibilities, wasn't what I would call overworked. Joe and Jim, who had never had real jobs before, might well take the pace to be "work." Others might just enjoy idleness, or have reconciled themselves to it. But I couldn't. I wanted to work, to show what I could do, and to learn, so that I would be prepared for more responsibility. And, in the Foreign Service or later on, I could never get it through my head, or never accept and play it, that one's real accomplishments were often a good deal less important to one's career than one's ability to thrive in the vomitus game of office politics.

Then something good happened:

I have been working on some rather important things in the office, involving a lot of conferences and things as well as reports. I think the Economic Counselor is beginning to see how ridiculous the situation in this section is, with a talented but immature man of my own rank treating me like a dimwit clerk most of the time. The important assignments are coming straight from the boss now and I have very little to do with the other one. Of course there's nothing personal at all -- naturally he wants to make the most of the situation; I also am ambitious and won't let my interests be pushed aside for his. Anyway, I hope this change isn't coming too late. Because I have been quietly encouraging the head of the administrative section, [which had overall responsibility for both the Embassy and the MSA] who is an extremely competent man and whose ideas on the role of administration in the FS coincide with mine, in the notion that he needs me as an FSO assistant. He is an FSO himself, and like me believes we have to learn this administrative game if we're going to beat it, and keep it from getting a stranglehold over the entire service.... I like the econ counselor very much and have great respect for his competence but I am certainly learning nothing and doing very little, or haven't been until recently. I've just been grinning and bearing it and spending a lot of time loafing and at the modiste's and so on, but you know that isn't what I like.... I don't feel badly about trying to engineer the change because two months ago I told the econ counselor I disliked the setup and if I had to take much more of Phillips' highhandedness was going to ask for a change. He said, as I know, that Phillips is just pinch-hitting for the no. 2 of the section..... well, the no. 2 isn't coming and it looks like the temporary situation may last as long as a year -- it's been five months already -- and maybe the no. 2 slot will be cut out. So I'm not sneaking behind anyone's back, in doing what I announced I would do if the circumstances remained the same. Everything I have had a chance to do has turned out like a batch of your biscuits, and one or twice I have had to go in and tactfully patch up a mess someone else made of something, so my stock is up around the place, in contrast to the fairly obvious notion of everyone that I was the usual bit of female window dressing the FS has to put up with. They have to put up with me, but not like they thought. (January 2, 1953).

Nothing came of the possible transfer to administration. The "important work" involved plans to devalue the drachma from 15,000 to 30,000 to the dollar. I have no idea why Harry assigned me to help him in the Embassy's role in this. Possibly he knew that though Phillips seemed to be good at trade disputes and such, and didn't mind that he busied himself with all sorts of things assigned to others, and that he had preempted my own supposed assignment to relations with the Bank of Greece and its American aides -- perhaps Harry had perceived that for all his "competence", Phillips could never get financial matters through his head. He couldn't understand exchange rates or their significance for prices or markets or economies in general, or the meaning of balance of payments and balance of trade and so on. And possibly he found all this just too boring. People who can't understand something often do find it boring.

Anyway, I got the job. And worked hard at it. Of course any plans for a devaluation must be kept entirely dark, or the devaluation's effect will have been dissipated long before it takes place. Harry and I at the Embassy (and the Ambassador of course), a couple of people at MSA, and certain high officials of the Greek government and the Bank of Greece, were the only ones "in on it."

Imagine my horror at the beginning of one fine morning when into my office strolled Jim Hewes, just arrived and still in his hat and coat, grinning from ear to ear, and saying "Well, well, what's all this about a devaluation?" My God! Who had spilled the beans to Jim Hewes? But "Who" didn't really matter. Someone had. And it had to be stopped. Was there any way to shut Jim up? No one had found one yet. And when had these beans been spilled? How many people had Jim, or his informant, spread the news to already? What did Jim know about it, beyond that it was on the table and that I was involved with it?

I responded to his question by muttering, "Yes, I've heard something about it." But Jim was not to be put off, as I knew he wouldn't be. He knew, he said, that I was "on the team", and began to besiege me with questions about specifics and details. From this I could gather he knew nothing beyond the bare fact that the idea of devaluation had been broached and taken up. So I took advantage of the one weapon I had: Jim held me in high regard, idealized me in fact.

First, I had to find out when Jim had learned about this. How many others could be in on it by now? Jim said he'd just heard about it on his way to work. (Could it have been from Harry himself? I couldn't imagine so, but I also had very little to go on with regard to Harry's own discretion. And it didn't really matter Who).

Then I begged. "Jim, for God's sake, PLEASE don't say anything -- not a word, don't even let the word 'devaluation' out of your mouth. Don't you see, if it gets out I am the one who is going to be blamed, because I am a woman and 'women can't keep secrets'? You don't want me fired in disgrace, do you?"

Thank God he did see. And of course what I said was the simple truth. Had it gotten out I would be blamed. Not only am I female, I was the junior member of the team.

As soon as I got rid of Jim I went to Harry and told him about it. I also told him that Jim knew no details of the thing and that I thought he had heard about it almost immediately before he came bustling in to me. And I told him how I had tried to shut Jim up.

Having "covered my arse" and did my duty by telling Harry what had happened, I dropped it. It was up to Harry and the higher-ups to carry on from there. I don't know how they handled it, except that the expected date for the devaluation was rather drastically moved up. And, in terms of our team's expectations for the results, it worked pretty well.

Then things went back to normal. I must have complained again to Harry, for in March 1953 he asked me to give him a memo on the organization of the office and how I thought it might be improved. I began by saying that the economic counselor (Harry) was overburdened, as I think he felt he was. Otherwise the memo was just too tactful. Here are some excerpts:

Largely because of the continuous state of inter-office emergency created by the press of urgent business [!] for at least the past eight months, the work of the section has been handled on a rather "catch-as-catch-can" basis. This was probably necessary for a while, as two of the three junior officers had been such a short time in Athens. But the junior officers in question have been here for 8 and 10 months respectively; if after that time an officer is incapable of satisfactorily doing the work suitable to his rank and experience and/or necessitated by the requirements of the office, he should be replaced. The catch-as-catch-can system, as a permanent thing, is wasteful of time and effort and creates confusion both in and outside the office.

Then followed an analysis of the various aspects of the work of the section and who was assigned to what specific jobs.

"It should be stressed that the above indicates only the system written down in the CERP and usually followed; at any time, on a given topic or general field, one of another officer may take up something in a field not assigned to him. Conversely, there is very little exchange of information or mutual effort on problems falling into two or more subject categories.

Then my recommendations: *that the work of the office be assigned according to major divisions, not bits and pieces of each distributed to several officers with ad hoc exceptions taking place without notice to those officers, and that officers be held to responsibility for coordination with colleagues on matters falling into two or more areas.*

After having read my memo Harry said he thought it was a good one, but that after all he would rather just "go along like we are going now." He hated administration and didn't want to be bothered running an office. By that time his own morale, like that of all the others except Phillips, was low and it continued to worsen: he said at our joint Turkel-Venning Christmas dinner in 1953 that he had the days counted until he could get out of Greece and possibly out of the Service.

Phillips was transferred in late Spring 1953. At last "... we're able to do really effective and responsible work." (May 18, 1953). But it didn't really help. There simply wasn't enough work to do. Shortly after Phillips left Harry Smith arrived as the long awaited no. 2, and Jim Hewes'

place was taken by a fresh-faced newly-minted FSO-6. There simply wasn't enough work to keep six Embassy officers and God knows how many MSA people busy on Greek economic affairs.

The ass I was always writing you about, who was finally transferred, got promoted and I didn't.... It makes me furious, because it was simply made impossible for me to show what I could do -- in fact I think my attempt to do so worked against me. (May 28, 1954)

Some time later I read in the Foreign Service Journal that Phillips had been awarded some kind of Foreign Service medal for rescuing someone from drowning. Good boy. Several years later Margaret Turkel mentioned that the Phillips's had divorced and he had resigned from the Service.

I much admired Harry Smith's cool acceptance of a professional life of leisure. He had another string to his bow: he would sit at his desk all day, poring over the Value Line and other investment services he got through the diplomatic pouch, making charts and graphs, but always ready for pleasant general conversation and office gossip, or the occasional eruption of official business. Harry was an old hand in the Foreign Service. Maybe he had run into such situations before. As a Class 3 officer he had a good income and "as long as he kept his nose clean," and Harry would certainly do that, little likelihood of not being able to saunter along through a few more posts to a good consul generalship, or even a minister-counselorship, and a pleasant and remunerative retirement.

Harry was not didactic with me, but I think he hoped by example to calm me down a bit, and to his credit he succeeded to some extent. But impatience would get the better of me:

I seem to have a terrific knack for working myself out of a job. Have next to nothing to do in the office and think I will use that as another lever to get out of here. You know I have liked the country but hated the office from the word go, and would give my eyeteeth for a transfer, even a direct transfer, to a really good post.(March 17, 1954)

I have practically nothing to do in the office so attend to my personal business, shopping, etc. with great care and study a lot.... the truth is nobody has enough to do, and we are still frightfully overstaffed. Maybe some people like it that way. (May 28 1954)

Once in a while things were better:

Have been having a good time. 48 rich and successful Detroit businessmen were here on a big junket. Sunday evening the Amb had a reception and [I] had the time of my life. Next day were conference and lunch and so on, and that evening a business dinner, attended by the 48 and about 50 other Greek and American business men and officials, and me.... this went on, one way or another, until Wednesday morning, and the place resembled a real post for a change and not a back-alley army establishment. (May 7, 1954)

I remember only two items I dealt with, though there must have been others. One had to do with fig exports from Greece to the U.S. Now Greece was desperate to increase exports, having a frightening imbalance of trade (the main reason for the devaluation, which did some but not nearly enough good). And unfortunately about all Greece had to export was tobacco that found

little popularity in hard-currency markets, olives and wine that weren't international favorites, currants and figs, shipping -- and Greeks. So a move was on to increase Greek fig exports to the U.S. Sure enough, who raised up as one in wrath and opposition? The Greek-American fig growers in California, who in another of their manifestations made constant application to the American Congress and Executive to increase aid to Greece, to help Greece get on its feet and become prosperous, &c.

The other was an oil refinery. Oil refineries and air lines seemed to be the great status symbols for what were beginning to be called "underdeveloped countries." I had had some experience with plans to build an oil refinery near Bombay. When word got around that Greece might have an oil refinery, every oil outfit from the Seven Sisters to types whose prior dealings in oil must have been in the snake variety, every Greek entrepreneur who could wangle an appointment, or preferably a connection, with someone in the Embassy or MSA, and half the Greek government, became obsessed with the thing. All of the "impossibles," it seemed to me, and a few of the "possibles," landed in my office, initially at least. Then much talk, much of it pure castles-in-the-air, about capacity and other technical considerations, sources of crude (Greece had none), financing, markets and so on. Maybe this was the origin of my occasional remarks in letters about being busy. I don't remember if a refinery actually got under way at that time.

In the course of these and other dealings, I learned something. In our training, and in the ongoing rhetoric, it was always stressed that we must hold our cards very close to our vests when giving information during negotiations, while at the same time exerting every effort to get all the information we could. I often found that I had to give very little information indeed -- my interlocutors were much more interested in their own affairs than in ours -- and that as to getting it, the problem was getting them to stop. Perhaps this had to do with my being a stranger (as people tell their lives' secrets to strangers on trains and plains), or perhaps with my being female. Women couldn't keep secrets but they are supposed to listen and be sympathetic. And given the increasingly miasmatic "security" atmosphere in my part of the U.S. government, there was an awful lot of stuff I didn't want to know.

The Narpati contretemps. Early on in India our economic officer (Paul Geren, the straitlaced avid Christian) had introduced me to a youngish Indian newspaperman. I believe he was a "stringer," not by any means a prominent figure in the world of Indian media. I did not find him either especially useful or at all attractive, more than a little dim in fact.

In India Narpati was at best an occasional nuisance, sending or bringing me useless press releases, trade lists and so on. But when I got to Greece he began to bombard me with letters and telegrams, these becoming increasingly affectionate and including statements of love and proposals of marriage. He said he had a picture of me which I had given him. I had given him no picture, but Paul Geren had taken snapshots during the party at which Narpati was introduced to me and he may have gotten a copy of one of those with me in it. The man had obviously gotten a fixation. I answered none of these missives.

Then to my consternation in September 1953 he wrote that he planned to come to Europe and to see me. This must not be. A stalker at five thousand miles was one thing, on my doorstep quite another.

After some thought I concluded that, uncomfortable as it made me to do so, I must seek help in this. I went to Harry Turkel and to the Embassy security officer and showed them Narpati's letters. I was confident, Narpati's being such a wispy little man, that in a physical confrontation I could hold my own. But naturally I wanted to avoid what would be at best a nuisance and might possibly evolve into some kind of scandal involving me and possibly the Embassy. They fully agreed with me. They would issue orders to the Marine guards that anyone of this name or description was to be told I was out of the country for an indefinite period, that he was not to be allowed to enter the Embassy premises, and that if he did show up I should have some escort in and out of the building. There was little likelihood that he could obtain my home address or telephone number. Then I wrote him a letter, the only one I had ever written him or would write him:

December 3, 1953

Dear Mr. Narpati,

Your letters stating your plans for visiting Europe, and inviting me to meet you in Italy and suggesting that if I am unable to do so, you come to Greece, have reached me. I have also received a number of letters and telegrams from you since September 1952.

You will recall that we were introduced in Bombay by Mr. Geren, who indicated to me that you were well and favorably known to him and that you and I might find continued acquaintance mutually useful in our respective professional fields. In this connection I once invited you to my house for tea, once accepted a business luncheon invitation by you, and once attended in your company a pleasant evening party given by your Indian Navy friend and his wife.

Such social contacts among professional acquaintances are common throughout the world. They do not reflect more than ordinary amity among the persons involved. When, on the occasion of the evening party referred to above, I suspected your interpretation of the situation was different from mine, I regretfully but immediately and firmly decided against continuation of our acquaintance. Your next invitation to me being of a non-professional nature, I declined, and subsequently, when pressed, I informed you of another personal commitment on my part. There was no need to so inform you, but I felt that to do so might accomplish more easily and gracefully the discontinuation of our acquaintance. The fact that this commitment no longer holds does not in any way alter my position with regard to the possibility of a renewal of any kind of a relationship between us.

I had hoped that, when your letters and telegrams to me remained unanswered, you would realize that I do not wish to see you or entertain your suit and shall not do so, but apparently I was mistaken. I shall not see you in Rome, in Athens, or anywhere else. I regret very much having to take such a bald and uncompromising attitude, but it seems to be necessary now.

Best wishes for your other plans, and for your future health and happiness.

Sincerely yours,

I did not hear from Mr. Narpati again. But the story continues: somehow the CIA got in on it. One day I was summoned to their head honcho's office and gently grilled on this association. I showed the H.H. Narpati's letters to me and mine to him. I told him our conversations had involved only matters of local trade and economic interest in Bombay at the time, and the usual desultory social exchanges of remarks. I could tell the CIA nothing more, except that as far as I knew Paul Geren and myself were the only consular people Narpati knew in Bombay; perhaps Check, as a member of the Press, also had a nodding acquaintance with him.

The CIA expressed concern that Narpati might be some sort of agent. My retort was that the man was obviously off his rocker, and that not in a way likely to be of use either to India or to some other foreign Power; he was more to be pitied than investigated. I hope that headed them off. Poor Narpati.

Thus we come to the second source of my discontent with Athens and the Foreign Service. "Security" issues in one form or another had become prominent with regard to the State Department and the Foreign Service long before I got to Athens, as the Belehrad episode shows. Many in the Service blamed Truman for some of the follies and excesses of all this. I should say that most of the Foreign Service people I knew, except possibly one or two of the younger among them, voted for Eisenhower in the 1952 election and welcomed the change in Administrations. Not just because of the "security" business; the Foreign Service was on the whole quite conservative, many of them long uncomfortable with New Deal policies of all kinds.

Well, we got Eisenhower. We also got Dulles, Scott McLeod and their ilk. Immediately after the election the drums began beating for drastic reductions in force in the Service. I myself would welcome this per se; as I have indicated I thought our foreign establishments were grossly overstaffed.

But the way these "rifs" as they came to be called, were accomplished, insofar as they were accomplished, and the grounds on which many of them were made, made the cure worse than the disease. As far as I could see the firings were invariably firings of the most vulnerable, not of the least useful. For example, the Vienna embassy at one time was left with thirty-six officers and not one American secretary to do their classified clerical work. I suppose some of the officers learned to type.

The Service is in a very bad way right now. A lot of people -- some have been in for 25 years -- are being summarily fired on 30 days' notice. It's all been staff corps so far [at the Embassy] but there's talk of speeding up selection-out procedures for FSOs, too.... Much as I feel we need drastic reduction in staff, I can't think doing it this way will help. Apparently the system is to decide that certain jobs are unnecessary and just fire whoever happens to be in them at the moment. Result: a lot of good people are let out, and our real bottlenecks -- asses who are in essential jobs (like George Small) -- remain to assure the works' being gummed up in future. Also, since people don't know, when they go out to lunch, whether they'll be working that afternoon or not, very little work gets done. In one case a man had been on home leave and was embarking for the next post when he was urgently called to Washington. He put his wife and children on the boat, went back, had some conferences and was talked into flying [to his post],

where on his arrival he found he had been fired. He had of course had to go into debt to outfit the family for the new post and can't recover any of it. Other cases are almost as gruesome. I have seen a lot of things I didn't like in the Service, but up to now I've thought we must put our shoulders to the wheel or else leave the Service to the little foxes. Now I'm beginning to think that a career spent abroad, which is hellishly expensive and where if you happen to have a responsible post during one Administration you're likely to get the boot in the next, despite being a "career officer" without political ties, is a pretty sad story. And we may as well not kid ourselves that we're able to do really effective and responsible work. When I get home next time I'm definitely going to look around. This is very little if at all more "secure" than private business; it carries less prestige; no one admits you earn your keep. (May 18, 1953)

Overhanging all this was the implication that by definition people in Foreign Service were of doubtful loyalty to the United States. Sen. Joseph McCarthy was in his glory. And seemingly no stone was left unturned. Casual acquaintances from years ago, if they were suspect, made you suspect, too, as did quite accidental family ties. I occasionally wondered if Uncle Gaby, by then a confirmed rightist and supporter of Whitaker Chambers in the Hiss trial, and his Spanish-War past connections might not become a cause against me. The Embassy's security officer was now joined by two more. No reduction in staff there.

....everyone has to fill in complete new security forms; addresses of every place you've lived since 1937, all associations, etc. So don't be surprised if the FBI calls on you again. To the best of my knowledge there have been three full investigations on me already. So with all the other [FS people]. Naturally, one's friends begin to think there must be something wrong, after being queried four times in seven years about what I was like at age 15.... The practical aspect of the gimmick is that no one can be promoted until the investigation is complete. So almost no one has been promoted for over two years because of these interminable investigations. (April 5 1954)

Aspects of this "security" and the antics of its operatives could be amusing. A fresh-cheeked young Irishman with a newly minted Georgetown degree was one of our expanded security staff. He was at a party at Brynnie Rowberg's one evening when Brynnie showed her guests her mirror-ceilinged bedroom. The pretty little house had previously been the residence of a mistress of a cabinet minister. Brynnie, who had been posted in Italy and France, began to expand on similar phenomena there when our new colleague, scandalized, broke in: "Well, the Catholics in those countries certainly don't act like that!"

It was less amusing when Marnie Wiesender, a close friend, telephoned me at my house one evening. Through the static occasioned by a poor telephone system overburdened by taps variously installed, I suspected, by the Greek, the Russians and the Americans, I could gather she was agitated. She had been to a party of mine recently, as had one of his security colleagues. He had visited her at her office that afternoon, wanting to know all about me: my past and present, whom I knew, what were my interests and hobbies, where I traveled, and so on. He let slip that he had noticed not one, but two, books by Karl Marx sitting on my bookshelves. Even one would have been one too many.

Nor was it amusing that an order went out that all local employees must be out of the Embassy building by five minutes after closing time, and none could come in and work after hours or on

Sunday. This included John Enepekides, who on occasion worked practically round the clock, to the great advantage of American policy in Greece. When I saw him being escorted out of his office in none too courteous a manner shortly after official closing time one day, when for some (surely unique!) reason I also was staying late, I drew one of the Marine guards who was doing the escorting into my office and expostulated with him: Mr. Enepekides and I were working on an urgent project, Mr. Enepekides had been a loyal employee of the Embassy long before he, the Marine guard, was born! The reply: "How do I know he won't pull a gun on me when I come in on my rounds?" I don't remember my response. Perhaps I was rendered speechless (also a near-unique phenomenon). The order stood for some weeks, until the Ambassador himself canceled it.

When I was instructed personally to go through every sheet of onionskin and other paper in the bulging four-drawer file cabinet that sat in my office and sort out all material marked "Restricted" and "Confidential" (higher classifications were kept elsewhere), so that the security people could have a look at them, I rebelled. I pointed out that such a job would take whole weeks, that this stuff went back to when the Embassy was reopened in 1945, that a lot of people simply went berserk with the glory of being able to stamp papers with security classifications, and that I would eat my hat if my safe contained anything any spy would find useful, let alone be a piece in a security jigsaw. I didn't add that the likelihood of these security types understanding any document having to do with trade or finance was next to nil. Somehow this project was given up, and somehow (I think) I escaped serious "security" notice.

Perhaps putting up a good stiff fight was the secret. When "the gold dust twins," Roy Cohn and his cute little sidekick Schine, arrived in Athens to sound of trumpets and beating of drums, everybody was scared to death. Even Marnie, who confessed to me that she had actually fallen so low as to answer one of their queries by saying she was sure Sen. McCarthy had only the good of the country at heart. They did not visit me, so I was spared. But they did visit the USIS library and demand to see a complete list of its holdings and to order anything they found objectionable removed. Whereupon the librarian, a tall ramrod-straight Irish Catholic puritan lady of about fifty, told them exactly where they could go if they expected to remove any of "her books." The gold dust twins backed down.

The worst was yet to come. Remember, this was only a few years after we "lost" China. Anyone was automatically suspect who had been posted in China before we were booted out and the two countries proceeded to spend nearly twenty-five years trying each to pretend the other didn't exist. One of these was Harry Smith. Harry Smith?! Yes, Harry Smith, down-the-line rightist, unreconstructed southerner, enthusiastic proponent of and substantial investor in the capitalist system, Harry Smith.

In Spring 1954 Harry was called to Washington for "consultation." Read grilling. He was still there, and Laura and the boys still fretting in Athens, when I got there on temporary duty in summer. Needless to say I and everyone else in the Embassy had been minutely questioned about Harry and every remembered contact and conversation we had had with him. When I saw him in Washington I was delighted to see he was still the cool, collected, understating man I knew. He finally was let go and went back to Athens, where he finished his tour of duty. But that was his last one. He resigned on their return to the States, and set up his investment business.

Also during that brief tour of duty, I had a message waiting for me one evening when I got back to my hotel. I should immediately call no. such-and-such, no name or agency. Which I did, and got a twanging male voice that sounded about eighteen years old. "They" wanted to know about so-and-so. I had never heard of so-and-so; who was she? They couldn't say, but she was posted in Athens. Was she at the Embassy or at MSA?, I asked. I didn't know all the American employees of MSA by name; if she was a clerical person I probably wouldn't. I might know her by sight but not by name; in other words, I might know her but not know that I knew her. How long had she been in Athens? Three weeks, he replied. Good heavens, I said, I've been in the States myself for two weeks. It's highly unlikely I would have met her in her first week there unless she was an Embassy officer, and I'm the only female Embassy officer there! Surely if she were an Embassy or MSA employee, however lowly, they would have run a security check on her and have other and better informants than I! "Yes, but she was in China!" Well, I have heard other non sequiturs in my time.

I wonder how many genuine subversives, hidden by all the dust being raised, were able to continue their work indefinitely. And I remain convinced that real subversives in this country had no better friend than Sen. Joseph McCarthy.

And what, meanwhile, were our leaders -- the Secretary of State, the highest ranks of the Foreign Service, for that matter the President himself -- doing to defend the Service? Nothing for quite some time, in the case of the President. The Secretary of State and his minions seemed actually to delight in the attack. The rest, it seemed to me, just figuratively lay down on their backs and asked to be kicked again.

In late 1953 I enrolled for a correspondence course in investment banking. Harry Smith had suggested I do so when I expressed an interest in "stocks and bonds" to him. It was a good course in corporate finance, using Graham and Dodd as a text and therefore stressing the "value" orientation toward securities evaluation. Harry kindly lent me some of his voluminous material on individual companies, and I also called on Mama for help in getting me copies of annual reports and so on so I could make the required analyses. After finishing this course I took one in brokerage procedure; these two courses made me eligible for licensing as a registered representative of the New York Stock Exchange. I was trying to add strings to my bow.

I've been trying to work on French and the investment banking course, not going out a whole lot, but just seem to get caught up in so many trivial but essential things. (December 4, 1953)

Things are so much better in the office. It is hard to describe the internal politics of an office, but as you know I've been most dissatisfied in Athens. Now, personnel is leveling off to a reasonable number; I have lots to do and carry a bit of weight.... I simply hate it when I just have to sit around waiting for the pay check. However, I am quite serious about looking around when I get home. (December 22, 1953)

I also tried to get support for the idea of my being sent to Harvard or elsewhere for a year's specialized training in business and finance. I was not especially interested in specializing in any particular field of Foreign Service work, but this would get me back to the States and in a

position to survey the terrain, and I knew from observation that if I did stay in the Service such specialized training would not necessarily mean I would be forever stuck in it. But there were hurdles. One was the new Ambassador, Cavendish Cannon, a longtime veteran of the career Foreign Service who had replaced John Peurifoy when Peurifoy was transferred. Mama was much impressed; it turned out that Cannon was of an old and rich Utah family and that Mama had known him slightly when she was a student at the University of Utah, "although he was much older than I." Charles Yost, the Minister-Counselor, had also been replaced, by Charles Mann.

The Counselor, who will still recommend me for Harvard training, is leaving, and Ambassador Cannon isn't too thrilled about people always going to school -- especially at Govt expense -- believes one learns more on the job. So do I, but I've not hesitated to point out to him that it was not Uncle Sam who educated me so far. But when it comes right down to it [my] idea of Harvard or any State-side assignment is to build up contacts and so on. So maybe instead of that I'll try to get a transfer without leave, if I can get Paris or London, where things really do go on. Greece is lovely but one is really off in a corner. (December 22, 1953)

Then came the Foreign Service inspector's visit. These inspections were primarily concerned not with "security," but with the effectiveness of the Embassy's organization and operations and the quality of its personnel and their suitability for the work assigned to them.

I've been quite frank with the inspector, because they won't fire me for being as unhappy with the service as most people are, if for different reasons.... Fortunately it turns out the inspector and his wife have two girls, 18 and 21, and are in process of starting them out of careers so are very interested in the whole angle of women in careers, are going to Korea, on which I worked in the Dept., are interested in archeology, mathematics, music and a lot of things I'm interested in, so we have a good deal in common and have spent perhaps more time together than we would, my being a junior officer, under other circumstances. The Ambassador has changed his mind about advanced training for me; thinks my work justifies it and the Service needs highly trained economic and financial specialists, so will recommend me for school. So the application is all in and now it is up to the Department. This of course is a big hurdle but at least some people, including the Economic officer for Near East and African Affairs are for it there, too. (8 April 1954).

Had some rather illuminating discussions with the inspector. On the school business he asked if I would feel an obligation to stay in the Service if the Department gave me the year's training. I said yes, definitely, but that if after having given me all that, the Dept. sent me off to clip newspapers in Dacca, I would naturally wonder. I am sure he and the Ambassador talked about this application so apparently they see that neither my own interests nor those of the Foreign Service have been well served by this two-year sitting marathon I've been forced into (19 April 1954)

But in the end, all for naught. The application was never acted upon one way or the other. And the inspector's report noted only that in his opinion I needed "more supervision." Dear heaven! Who had tried so hard to get Harry to exercise some supervision of the Economic Section?

The final straw came in Spring 1954. About nine o'clock one morning I was sitting in my office when Andreas Apostolides called. He had never called me at the office before. He asked me if I could possibly run out to Psychiko to his house; he would rather talk to me in person than on the phone.

Having no particular business I took off. When I got there he said, "I wanted you to have this information because it may do you credit with your people. Markezinis and Papagos had a big quarrel late last night and Markezinis believes Papagos impugned his honor, so Markezinis resigned and the whole Government is in confusion. No one knows about this yet, but it will be announced on the radio at noon. I thought your Embassy would rather not be surprised."

Indeed they would rather not. For all practical purposes the U.S. had put that Government together. It was the first since the War to last more than a few months. Prime Minister Papagos was a war hero, now verging on senility but nonetheless an icon to all except the most leftist Greeks. Markezinis, for whom a new office, Minister of Coordination, had been invented, was a brilliant politician, competent in governance, ideologically correct. He was the real Government, and the mainstay for American policy in Greece. His resignation in heat portended all sorts of difficulties, but best at least not be caught unawares. (I had known, vaguely, that Andreas, bedridden though he was, was still in close touch with leading figures in Greek politics, but, as I have said, he and I had rarely discussed such things).

I rushed back to the Embassy. Harry Turkel was out of his office. The Ambassador was out of town; the Minister Counselor could not be disturbed, even on urgent request, by a junior officer in the economic section. Nor could I see any of the other three middling-to-senior political officers. Finally I did see Phil Axelrod, the junior officer in the political section, who held the same rank as I.

I told Phil what Andreas had told me, and the source. Phil simply didn't believe it. Apostolides had been out of the Government for months, he said; how would he find out such things so soon? At best it was one of those rumors that were constantly being manufactured in Greek circles. Forget it.

And so, at noon, came the announcement on the radio, and the Embassy caught with its pants down.

A day or so later our senior security man marched into my office, eyes narrowed, looking as if he had caught the spy of the century. "How come you know Apostolides so well? Are you sleeping with him? What have you been telling him about the Embassy's business?" and so on.

I was indignant, but managed to control my temper. I said I had met Apostolides at Yost's several months before; that he had invited me to a semi-official function and I had returned his invitation by inviting him to dinner with the Turkel's and some others of appropriate rank and a Greek couple we knew in common; that shortly after that he became ill and resigned his Ministry, that after his return from treatment in Switzerland I had called on him and since then had done so every week or two, sometimes alone and sometimes in company with my son or one or two American friends; that he had been very kind to me and my son and that I regarded him as a

personal friend. As for sleeping with him, I would put that insult aside and simply ask if my interrogator thought a sixty-two-year-old man bedridden with thrombosis phlebitis would likely be up to such activity. I said that though Apostolides and I seldom discussed Greek politics and never American policy in Greece, I was not surprised that he had learned of the Markezinis resignation shortly after it took place. He had long been a major player in Greek politics and naturally was very well acquainted with high Greek political figures, and I thought he still entertained hopes of recovering his health and reassuming an active role in Greek politics. Apostolides had expressed disappointment that his American official friends, except myself, had to a man dropped him when he resigned his post; among other reasons for seeing him I wanted if possible to leave an opening for the old friends, or new ones, should he in fact again take up a Ministry. Furthermore, I said, I had made no secret of our friendship, although I had seen no reason to name-drop in this connection.

The "rather extraordinary social position among the rest of the diplomatic corps, the Palace, and that group in Greek society which isn't notorious for running after foreigners," that I had boasted about to Mama had had, it seemed to me, no effect for good or ill on my position in the Embassy. It had yielded me no great advantage for my own work, for these people rarely talked shop, most were not seriously interested economic affairs other than, presumably, their private ones, and in any case, had they wanted something from the Americans, junior as I was I could have been of little interested use to them. Nor had I heard any remarks around the Embassy, for good or ill, about these associations of mine. Except once, possibly, when a middle-ranking officer in the political section had casually remarked on his curiosity about my links with the Palace staff, and I had responded that some of them were kind enough to help me in my attempts to learn and appreciate Greek drama and literature. At the time I had not taken this as an unfriendly query.

How wrong I was! Those invitations to the king's birthday balls were a black mark. They and my other Greek and non-American diplomatic associations had become a source of real resentment in the Political Section. I found there was also curiosity as to how I "came to be so thick with the Papandreous" and Leslie Kemp. I have described the Kemp association above. I was not "thick" with the Papandreous. They did seem to enjoy chatting with me, as I with them, at Embassy and other functions. Being elderly and not in the best of health they did not themselves entertain much. The only time I had visited their house was at dinner where I was the only guest (and aside from enjoying myself very much learned the great pleasure of fresh figs in heavy cream).

From a career point of view I would have done much better to have lived almost exclusively in the circle of available Americans, as did most of my junior and some of my senior colleagues, limiting my social associations with Greeks and other foreigners to the formal amenities of official life, but of course being careful to invite at least one to parties so I could collect on my representation (entertainment) allowance. How different from Bombay! but that didn't help. But there was nothing I could do about it now, in fact, nothing, except possibly the birthday-ball invitations (those balls I could have dispensed with), that I could regret. Life is short.

Of course I never mentioned or hinted at any of this to Andreas or the other friends in question, or for that matter to almost anyone else. One does not broadcast one's disgust with and shame for one's colleagues or a family member. I did tell Harry Turkel about it (Harry Smith was then

in Washington being grilled himself); if I was a liability he had a right to know it, if he didn't already. He didn't, and he seemed almost as pained as I was.

But I was indignant, and given the other frustrations of the past two years decided that I had better find another career. Given the example of the last year and a half, any demagogue, of either party, who came looking for something to attack had a ready-made target in the Foreign Service. Given the supine reactions of high officers of the Service, and of the Administration as a whole, how could one hope to accomplish anything of real worth for American policy or American interests?

I had already made some tentative inquiries, and now intensified them. I wrote to various corporate and banking people I had helped in India and Greece. But the business world, except for fashions and such in which I had neither interests nor training, and except where the woman had family or other connections with the business, seemed closed to women above the clerical level.

Not without a battle, I managed to wangle myself a four-week duty in Washington, as Embassy Athens officer to accompany a group of Greek officials who are coming to the US to study export controls and related problems.... Unfortunately I can't take Robin, but he is going to be well looked after [by] our French teacher [and her family]. (June 6, 1954).

Export controls had to do with the U.S. policy of prohibiting export of strategic materials and technologies to the Soviet Union and its satellites. If this policy was to be effective, other countries -- our allies and clients -- would also have to prevent export or transshipment of such materials. It was a long list, for "strategic" covered many items of primarily economic rather than military use. Military might rests on economic capacity.

I had been working with the various relevant Greek ministries and other agencies on this subject for several months, since Phillips was transferred. Four Greek officials, senior civil-service people in some of these Greek agencies, had been invited to the U.S. to study ways and means of making export controls effective. None of them spoke more than a few words of English, though all had some reading knowledge of it. I had worked with all of them on the export-control item. In our dealings we had usually dispensed with an interpreter until close reading of final texts was in question. My work had occasioned some mildly congratulatory comments from U.S. offices in Washington.

The assignment was apparently considered something of a plum. "The battle" had to do with whether or not I was a suitable person to accompany the Greek officials (all male). I first learned of this when Chet Yowell, a newly minted FSO-6 on his first post who had been in Athens for two or three months and was assigned to the economic section, and with whom I was on the same friendly terms in the office as I had been with Joe Donner and Jim Hewes, told me that Thomas Mann, the Minister-Counselor, had asked him rhetorically what he thought of the idea of sending a young woman as Embassy officer accompanying these people. At least, Mann thought, the accompanying officer should be male (a "real Foreign Service Officer").

Much as I hated to bother Harry Turkel with details like this, given his detestation of battles other than his own with his MSA counterparts, I did go to him. Who, I suggested, should go in my stead? Harry Smith might have been a good possibility, but he was already in Washington, his time being absorbed by endless exploration of his career in China. Only Yowell -- nice and potentially competent but still utterly wet behind the ears and knowing nothing about export controls -- and I were left in the Economic Section.

Should an officer from the political section be sent? All of them no doubt knew the general outlines of our export control policy, but none of them had worked directly on it. If they had met any of the four officials in question it would have been brief contacts at official functions. None of the political officers knew more than enough Greek to hail a taxicab.

To his credit Harry went to bat for me with the ambassador, and the matter was closed. My own primary interest wasn't the prestige of going to the U.S. on this mission. I would be able to have a much-needed free weekend in Paris en route, some time in New York to explore possibilities in the securities business, and could arrange four or five days' leave in New York after the Greeks' visit was over. I might even have some opportunity to visit people I knew in Washington and possibly find ways and means of getting posted there soon, or a direct transfer out of Athens. I wanted to get out of that Athens mess!

And off I went. The Paris weekend started badly. I got there in mid-evening and went to the hotel our administrative people had put me up in. Its costs was within our minimal travel allowance standards. It was also, as I learned immediately, filthy, and, as I learned after an hour or so, a house of assignation of some sort. I spent a restless night hoping the skeleton-key-locked door, which looked fragile enough, would protect me. It did, though there were some loud and importunate knocks on it, accompanied by a lot of French most of which I didn't understand but did understand that it was obscene.

I had arranged to meet two IBM men headquartered in Paris, who when I had been of some help to them in Athens had warmly invited me to visit them should I get to Paris, but had not known the hotel's address until immediately before I left Athens. So next day I called one of them. He seemed a bit shocked when I gave him the address, and when he and his colleague came to get me they simply said, "You can't stay here!" So I packed up and they put me up at Rafael's, which was probably the loveliest hotel I have ever stayed at. When I demurred about hotel bills they assured me (I hope they were telling the truth) that it would all go on the expense account. Then they took me to lunch at "Le Coq Hardi," a charming restaurant in the country, then to dinner and of all things the Follies Bergère, just for fun.

Next day, Sunday, lunch in the Bois de Boulogne. I rather wanted to go to the Louvre (this was my fist visit to Paris), but I could tell they wanted to see the races at Auteuil. So I kept quiet about the Louvre. Auteuil itself was great spectacle: magnificent weather, beautifully dressed people in the enclosure, and so on. Despite having a grandfather who had kept racehorses I was entirely ignorant of everything about the sport. I refrained from betting until the last race. Then I placed a small bet on a horse whose jockey's lavender outfit caught my eye, but which otherwise had nothing to recommend it; it was long, long odds. But it came in! I don't remember if it came in first, second or third, but I won what seemed to me pots of money. Naturally I insisted on

standing the three of us to lots of champagne with dinner, and rather felt as if I were being poured onto the plane when they saw me off for New York.

That plane was something I never experienced before or since -- a Pullman plane! It was some time before takeoff, but here was my lower berth, all made up. I made my toilette and climbed in. Then, being slightly sloshed and also in euphoria, I ordered a highball. I had a sip or so of it, put it down "temporarily" on the floor, and conked out.

When I awoke the plane was again stationary; we had landed in New York but there seemed to be no rush about debarking. My first thought was "Horrors! I left that drink, full, on the floor; what a mess it will be!" But when I reached down, not a drop had spilled. How's that for a smooth ride, and a great weekend?

I should say here that I believe my IBM friends were married, but their families were not with them in Paris. This may have been IBM policy at the time. Two more perfect gentlemen I have never met, and few who matched them. They were simply grateful for my help in Athens and perhaps also enjoyed my company. But as I also learned it was also categorical though unspoken IBM policy that no females other than clerical were eligible for employment.

My charges' plane arrived at the airport about an hour after I did. So I bought a Sunday New York Times and settled down at their gate to wait for them. When they debarked and we had finished our greetings I asked them if they would like to see a New York newspaper. One of them said, "But Mrs. Sanderson, you didn't need to buy a paper for each of us!" Newspapers in Athens ran four to eight pages.

There we were also joined by the American project manager, an official from the Department of Commerce, and later, for meetings, by an interpreter (my Greek was not up to simultaneous interpreting), and we took off for Washington, for five days filled with meetings, followed by a long fourth-of-July free weekend and four days' meetings in New York, then back to Washington for two weeks' more meetings. Some of these meetings were ceremonial functions, some were really quite useful, and some, unfortunately, reminded me of lectures in the Foreign Service training class by people who were supposed to tell us about their work and how they did it but never could quite get beyond vague generalities. Some of my notes indicate the negatives of these last: "confusion between license and declaration"; "certificates -- all exports? what is the use of IC where DV is not required?"; "physical inspection: not sufficiently careful"; "overlapping jurisdictions"; "a lot of the discussion and the suggestions are internal, not applicable to Greece; why bother with these?"; "the inscrutable occidental mind." But none of our guests had visited the United States before, and they were no end impressed with New York and Washington, the sheer size of things and our government, and so on. That was probably a plus. And we got on very well. They spent their evenings and other free hours either at their Embassy, in Washington, or their consulate, in New York, and with friends and relatives. I think all Greeks must have friends and relatives all over the U.S.! I spent my time after hours seeing old friends and just resting.

There was some time -- not much -- in Washington for me to visit appropriate offices in the Department of State and make inquiries about my top-priority subject. I found morale at State fully as dismal as it was in Athens, and I made no headway with new post assignments.

On my four days' leave in New York at the end of the official visit I visited the New York School of Finance, from which I had been taking the courses in investment banking and brokerage procedure, and several brokerage and securities firms. Here at last it seemed I had struck pay dirt. Two or three of them were interested, and Goodbody & Co. made me a firm offer. I think they had their head office in mind, but at my request they accepted me for their Charlotte branch. I feared I couldn't make Robin and me a decent living in expensive New York; I thought Charlotte a pleasant place, close to family (my sister had her husband and children) but not so off-the-earth as Boise. The people at Goodbody seemed puzzled by this preference, but they agreed to it.

I got back to Athens at 1:30 a.m. I had some classified documents in my briefcase. Since I had been carrying them around for over twenty-four hours -- a State Department man in New York had given them to me before I left, for delivery to the Embassy -- I could probably just have taken them home with me and brought them to the office next day. But I was uncomfortable with them, and wanted them in my safe as soon as possible. So I had the taxi stop at the Embassy. The Marine Guard knew me, but wouldn't let me in; he had orders not to let anyone in. I said I had some classified documents and wanted to put them in my safe so I could get a good night's sleep at home. No soap. So, for the first and last time, I pulled rank. I had the "assimilated rank" of major and told him he would regret it if I didn't get in to put my documents away. He folded, and I went home. Next day I went to work, collected Robin, and got back to normal.

I sent in my resignation in early August, saying I was leaving the Foreign Service for personal reasons. Then someone -- the security officer? or who? I don't remember -- brought back my letter. I wouldn't be permitted resign for "personal reasons." So I drafted another letter, in which I said that given the current and probable future direction of the Department and the Service, I thought I was not a suitable person to be a Foreign Service Officer any longer. I remember the sad look on Ambassador Cannon's face when he read it. Perhaps he agreed with me.

MURAT WILLIAMS
Consul General
Salonika (1953-1954)

Ambassador Williams was born and raised in Virginia and was educated at the University of Virginia and Oxford University. After serving in the US Navy in World War II, he joined the State Department, serving in Washington, D.C., where he worked with the Refugee Relief Program, and abroad. His foreign posts include San Salvador, Bucharest, Salonika, Bern and Tel Aviv. Mr. Williams served as U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador from 1961 to 1964. Ambassador Williams was interviewed by Melvin Spector in 1990. He died in 1994.

WILLIAMS: I still was hoping to get assigned to the Soviet Union, but when I finished, instead of the Soviet Union I was ordered to be Consul General in Salonika. That was an excellent opportunity and a good post. Of course, in Cold War days you were right up against the frontier. I have just been reading the story of George Polk, which you may or may not have seen.

Our function in Salonika was not only to report what was going on among Greeks, but to reassure the Greeks who had gone through the terrible Greek Civil War against the communists and had stood valiantly with us and with our NATO friends. We had to reassure the Greeks that we were with them. One of the most important things that went on was the frequent visits of American naval vessels. They came to Salonika to show the flag, to remind the Greeks that we were on their side.

Q: We did not have a base there?

WILLIAMS: No, we did not have a naval base. We did have a Voice of America facility for transmitting. We had large ships and amphibious ships which would put on a display on the shore front there at Salonika which I think must have been good for the Greek morale. We also had a very active consulate issuing visas, and protecting American interests. Our country was well regarded by all Greeks because we had a great American institution in Salonika which was the American Farm School.

Q: I didn't know about that.

WILLIAMS: It was originally established by missionaries to try to make Greek villagers not only into good farmers but also into good citizens.

Q: I never knew about that organization.

WILLIAMS: Queen Fredericka, for example, came up to visit us with her husband and went to the Farm School. I will never forget how she said "This school is so great we would like to have one in everyone of our departments of Greece." There were twelve of them.

Q: Was there any relationship between that school and the Marshall Plan?

WILLIAMS: No this school went back to 1903.

Q: So it wasn't getting any funds from the Marshall Plan?

WILLIAMS: No. It was supported with contributions from the States and it tried to show Greeks how they could turn their barren soil that is so abundant in Macedonia and northern Greece into good productive farm land. The Greeks loved it.

Q: As far as you know, is it still in existence?

WILLIAMS: Yes, it is. It has become very popular. Students from many parts of the States are sent there to spend summers learning Greek life. It has been a great point in maintaining good

understanding relations between us and the Greeks.

I don't remember any particular incident that happened during that period. I had a short time in Salonika. Oh, yes, one thing that was very much on the minds of the Greeks at that time was Cyprus. Greeks were demanding that Cyprus be made a part of Greece. It was still a British Crown Colony. There were occasionally demonstrations in Salonika calling on us to use our influence with the British and calling on the British to make sure that Cyprus would be made a part of Greece. On one occasion the demonstration got so out of hand that our USIA office was sacked. All the windows were broken. The Greeks apologized abundantly and came and saw that it was restored in two or three days. But besides the feelings about Cyprus and the visits of American naval vessels, there wasn't a great deal to be said about the short time I was in Salonika.

Q: You were there just a short time?

WILLIAMS: I was there only a year and a month, or so. I got telegraphic orders telling me to return to Washington to take a position in the Refugee Relief program.

Q: Before we leave Greece, may I ask you about your opinion about other parts of the foreign program there – such as the USIA. Did you have any contact with them? How much did they contribute to what you were doing? And perhaps the Marshall Plan if there was any of that left at that point?

WILLIAMS: The USIA was doing a very important job among people in Macedonia – northern Greece that is. It had a very active office, I think if it hadn't been such an active office the student demonstrators wouldn't have sacked it as they did during that demonstration. But we also had a Voice of America facility which meant that there were a number of technicians and specially trained people to handle those transmitters. As far as the Marshall Plan was concerned, economic aid was very important. I attended two or three ceremonies in which economic aid projects were dedicated. Things like electric generators for some of the towns that didn't have generators.

ROYAL D. BISBEE
Public Affairs Officer
Thessaloniki (1956-1958)

Mr. Bisbee was born of Missionary parents in India, where he was raised and schooled. After graduating from the University of Washington, he joined the US Army and spent World War II in Iraq with the Army Intelligence Corps. He entered the Foreign Service in 1947 and served, primarily as Public Affairs Officer, in Bombay, New Delhi, Lucknow, Salonika, Lahore, Freetown, Pretoria and Manila. Mr. Bisbee died in 2010. Mr. Bisbee was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2010.

Q: When were you in Greece?

BISBEE: I was in Greece from 1956 to 1958.

Q: Who was the ambassador at the time?

BISBEE: George Allen, a nice man, but ineffective.

Q: By this time, the civil war was over. There must have been a lot of consequences of the civil war. Wasn't the country in pretty poor shape?

BISBEE: The country was in poor shape, but there was nothing particular in Northern Greece that was of any influence. If there were any problems or matters of any consequence, it was all down around Athens, in the Peloponnesus.

Q: Was there much traffic going up to Yugoslavia at the time?

BISBEE: Only as a matter of personal trade. There was nothing significant, and certainly nothing from the American side.

Q: What were your main responsibilities in Thessaloniki?

BISBEE: Public Relations was the main aspect of it and taking embassy personnel to the great metropolitan... [Mr. Bisbee was searching for a word or place, but I don't think he came up with it.] whenever they wanted. Thessaloniki is on the three fingers of Greece. Up there, you have the monastery, one of the greatest monasteries still in existence. Very little has been said, but the monastery has probably been most helpful in the exchange of information between the monasteries of the Soviet Union and the one that is located there. I took a number of embassy people there.

Q: I went on a church trip through the monasteries. We stayed at various monasteries.

BISBEE: I think I got my first dysentery there. I thought I was dying.

Q: I remember going to one monastery. It was late when we got in. We banged the big door knocker and it opened up. There was a little man with his conical hat and a beard, holding a lantern with a candle in it, saying, "Are any of you guys from Chicago?"

When he found out I was the consul general, I had to talk about social security checks.

BISBEE: You would be very welcome.

Q: What were the political movements in Thessaloniki?

BISBEE: There were no political movements there, per se. The only real political movement was that of the king and Karamanlis. I don't like to say that there were no political movements, because there are always some political movements. The only other political movement was

focused on the newspaper, The Macedonia, a son of a gun that I never trusted.

Q: Was there much tourism at that time?

BISBEE: Tourism was limited. The main focus during the time I was there was the big fair hosted by the Soviets.

MRS. BISBEE: The international fair? It wasn't hosted by the Soviets.

BISBEE: It was as far as we were concerned.

It was hosted and given a great deal of fanfare by the Soviets. One of the things they focused on was fishery material. The aspect that they thought was great was... What was the fish Barb? The name of the fish was spelled incorrectly. It was a carp. It came out on their displays as crap. We were very pleased.

Q: How about relations with Turkey at the time? I guess the Third Greek Army sits up at the border.

BISBEE: There was no particular problem there at all. It was tranquil. That's the best that I can describe it.

MRS. BISBEE: The Cyprus issue was big.

Q: Was this a fairly quiet period when you were there?

BISBEE: For me, it was a quiet period. We had good friends. I had CIA friends and we became very close over time. As a matter of fact, we were assigned similar assignments in Karachi later. Both of them are now dead. He called me up when I was in Lahore and said, "Are you coming to Karachi?"

I said, "No, I'm not coming to Karachi."

He said, "Oh yes you are."

I said, "Do you want to tell me why?"

He said, "No."

So I went and I was translating for President Eisenhower.

Q: While you were in Thessaloniki, did the issue of nuclear weapons come up? Some were stored up in that area.

BISBEE: No, never. Only strawberries.

Q: Did Bulgaria loom at all?

BISBEE: No, Bulgaria never loomed at all. The roadways are bad.

Q: I guess the main highway, the autoroute, hadn't been put through then.

BISBEE: Not at that time. What there was was pretty rotten.

Q: I remember in the early 1960s going down to Skopje, we carried gas with us.

BISBEE: That's correct. You were never quite sure you were going to make it or not.

Q: Did you have any relations with the Greek Army at all?

BISBEE: None whatsoever. If I wanted to go some place, it was a telephone call, and I would go. For instance, I would visit the old capital of Alexander, Pella.

MRS. BISBEE: It was discovered while we were there.

PHILIP W. IRELAND
Consul General
Thessaloniki (1955-1958)

Philip W. Ireland was born in 1902, and raised in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He attended the University of Tennessee and the American University of Beirut, where he met his wife. He received his doctorate from the London School of Economics. Soon after, he went to Baghdad to write a book on Iraq was created. Following five years at Harvard, he was asked to go to the University of Chicago. In only a few short months, received a call from the State Department to head the Near East and Africa Division. He has also served in Egypt, Iraq and Syrian. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 14, 1990.

Q: But then you were consul general in Thessaloniki, is that right?

IRELAND: Yes.

Q: You were there from 1956 to '58.

IRELAND: I went there in 1955.

Q: How did that assignment come about?

IRELAND: There was always a consul there. Also there was the group that was helping it in its economics and I had the final word on it. Altogether we had there a group of 125.

Q: We are talking about our AID program.

IRELAND: Yes, our AID program. We also were fortunate in having good USIA people there. They worked very well with the Greeks who came in to use the library.

Q: Were you still having to deal from the American side the aftermath of the civil war at that time?

IRELAND: No. We didn't. The only time of activity was the first six months that I was there, the period when they wanted to add Cyprus to Greece. I think I was surrounded by police or troops with tanks, five times in the first six months that I was there. But by enlarge we, as Americans, were well received in that period. It was Britain they had antagonism toward. They used to criticize me. "Why, Mr. Ireland, don't you give us (inaudible). Why don't you work for us?" I told them it really wasn't my job. But they, the British consul and his wife, had a terrible time.

Q: How did you feel at the time about the two communist countries that were very close to you -- Bulgaria and Yugoslavia? How did we see them at that time?

IRELAND: The communists had come in during the end of the war but there were not many that ever came under my eye as communist Greeks. So I am not a very good person to ask this question of.

Q: I am wondering though in big terms. Was it a concern to the consul general that there might be an attack from Bulgaria or not at the time?

IRELAND: I didn't feel it. We did not go to Bulgaria. We did go, largely by car, visit down south along the sea, which we enjoyed. My chauffeur, a Greek, found friends among communists, but I know he was not a communist. He comes to see me here every year. One of his daughters is a stewardess of the Greek airline and she provides the transportation and I do what I can for them down here.

Q: Did our consulate get involved in the Macedonian problem?

IRELAND: Not to my knowledge. No one approached me on it. One principle of any country I serve in is to get to know the parish. I went as much as we could with my own driver and our local director for economics at the consulate who had been to college in Greece and taught me a lot. He taught me among other things that the quality of your native staff is what really makes your consulate run. They get the facts and if they have worked with you enough they can add immeasurably to your own knowledge. I think I had better coverage for the economics of Greece than I had for any of the other different consulate I ever had.

Q: How did you get along with our embassy in Athens?

IRELAND: Beautifully. Our ambassador, Cavendish Cannon was good. His wife cared only for two things. For Vienna and Canada. She was extremely polite but I never got pass the tea stage.

Q: Yes, this can happen. What about James Riddleberger? He was there too when you were wasn't he?

IRELAND: Riddleberger was there and he got around a good deal. He was a good ambassador. The next one, George Allen regarded it as a vacation from Washington. That gave an entirely different scope to the U.S. Most of the people who worked in Prentfield [ph], for example, he worked very hard for the operation and good relationship between Greece and the United States. I found him very good on that. That was another aspect I believed in -- the two countries had to get along together and if you can use them for improvement of relationship you really get the essence out of a country politically. Cairo taught me that.

EDWARD W. MULCAHY
Consular Officer
Athens (1956-1959)

Edward W. Mulcahy was influenced to go into foreign service by his father, a Navy radioman who traveled extensively. During his teen years, Mulcahy was an avid orator in the Catholic high school he attended. He received his degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in 1943. Within eight weeks of the Pearl Harbor bombing, he enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve. At the end of the war took the foreign service exam and passed. He has also served in Kenya, West Germany, Ethiopia, Southern Rhodesia, Tunisia, Nigeria and Chad. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 23, 1989.

Q: I want to move on to your time back to Africa. You served in Athens from 1956 to 1959 and, rather than look at that, if you don't mind, shall we move. . .

MULCAHY: Yes, I'll tell you why I went to Athens. I went to Athens because, at that time, I was a Class 4 officer. I was one of a very few who stayed in Class 4 when the Wriston Program came in with eight classes and most people were dropped back to the one below. I apparently had been on the list for promotion to Class 3.

Q: I might add for the record that the Foreign Service had six classes until 1956 and then it moved to eight classes. The cut was at Class 4, where the majority moved to Class 5 and some stayed at Class 4.

MULCAHY: Only 12 of us.

Q: I came in the Foreign Service as an FSO-6, and a year later I found myself as an FSO-7 but I was one grade higher, in a way, than I had been before. It was a confusing time.

MULCAHY: It was confusing, but well worth the discombobulation that we suffered at the time.

It really did.

Q: It made sense, too. Anyway, you were in Athens.

MULCAHY: They offered me a chance of going to Port Elizabeth in South Africa, where I'd spent a few days on my long trip, large Ford plant, large General Motors plant, big American interests there and shipping interests. It was a very important port and railhead. I had been there. It was a two-man consulate and I had already two two-man consulates and I thought that, at my advanced rank, Class 4, it didn't represent any progress. I was also offered the job of opening a consulate at Kampala which I had visited while I was at Mombasa. I knew the town. That would have interested me, too, but again opening a post which I had just done at Asmara, I think that's a job that someone ought to get once in a career. I considered that was no advancement. Athens was, as I say, still in the same Bureau, the NEA Bureau.

Athens intrigued me. I'd visited Athens on my way back from leave in Asmara and had friends at the embassy there, especially close friends and colleagues, so I spent a day or two in Athens. The prospect of serving there, particularly with a pregnant wife -- my wife was pregnant with our third child -- that would be a good move for us instead of going off to some unknown post in Africa. I spent three happy years in Athens. I enjoyed it. I was in the political section and, at one time or another, I served under three different chiefs of the political section, three different ambassadors in those three years. I wound up running the political section for close to a third of the time I was there and I shuffled around so I that I worked in almost all phases of Greek politics -- church politics, the Cyprus question, labor, political, military, etc. -- an embassy man.

Q: It also gave you a sense of how an embassy and a democracy with a multi-party system and all was working and also at a period where it was still recovering from the civil war. We considered it an important post.

MULCAHY: Very true. Well, I'd been nine years in the Foreign Service at that time and I really hadn't, except for a couple of weeks at Addis Ababa, ever served at an embassy. I thought this was a good opportunity. And it was. I enjoyed the post there. It was just the right place to be at that time. I learned modern Greek, which did me no harm later in Africa. You'd be amazed at the number of Greeks there were, especially in the Congo and the area around the lake.

MURAT WILLIAMS
Greek, Turkish, and Iranian Affairs
Washington, DC (1956-1959)

Ambassador Williams was born and raised in Virginia and was educated at the University of Virginia and Oxford University. After serving in the US Navy in World War II, he joined the State Department, serving in Washington, D.C., where he worked with the Refugee Relief Program, and abroad. His foreign posts include San Salvador, Bucharest, Salonika, Bern and Tel Aviv. Mr. Williams served as U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador from 1961 to 1964. Ambassador

Williams was interviewed by Melvin Spector in 1990. He died in 1994.

Q: After the Secretariat, where did you go?

WILLIAMS: I went to the Office of Greek, Turkish and Iranian Affairs. I was sent there mainly because I had had considerable dealing with the problems of Cyprus when I was Consul General in Salonika. I knew pretty well what problems Greece faced. Some people questioned whether our relations with these three countries should have been brought together. It didn't seem that the problems of Greece had anything to do with the problems of Iran, although ancient Greece and ancient Persia had a great deal to do with each other. Somehow those three ex-empires, Greece, Turkey and Iran were engaged in affairs which were of particular interest to us and were different than the affairs of the Arab world. They were neighbors of the Arabs but, themselves, were not Arab. I think Iran had a fair number of Arabs; the Turks had a small number of Arabs, but their problems were really different.

At the time that I was in that Office...

Q: Which is 1956 until 1959?

WILLIAMS: Yes. At the time that I was in that Office more than half of our time, I believe, was devoted to the question of Cyprus because Cyprus was keeping the Greeks and Turks at odds with each other and interfering with their participation in NATO. I, with my colleagues Ben Wood, Bruce Laingen, who were working mostly on Greek matters, developed a proposal for the independence of Cyprus. We pushed it quite a lot. We had colleagues in the European Bureau who thought that might be the best idea. The Greeks, themselves, wanted all of Cyprus; the Turks wanted Cyprus too. They, the Turks, had a large minority of Turks residing in Cyprus. But we were able to take initiatives which later developed, with the help of some of our friends in the European Bureau, into the final solution. I remember very well the Assistant Secretary for the Near East at that time, Bill Rountree, telling us that we should go ahead and work on it, but he didn't believe the question of Cyprus would be solved until a lot of blood had been shed. In the long run we know that there was a good deal of violence and even in recent years there has been trouble in Cyprus. From the standpoint of NATO it was better to put this at least to the side so that it wouldn't interfere with what Greece and Turkey did in their NATO roles.

Turkey wasn't an enormous problem in those days. Turkey was developing and getting along pretty well, as I remember.

But Iran also took a lot of our time and attention. In those days we were, it seemed to me, almost wholeheartedly in support of the Shah. The Shah had a very close relationship to Mr. Henderson when Mr. Henderson was Under Secretary of State. The Shah was very young when he ascended the Peacock Throne and Mr. Henderson had a strong personal influence over him.

Q: Had Mr. Henderson been ambassador to Iran at the time the Shah ascended the throne?

WILLIAMS: I am not sure exactly then, but when the Shah was a very young man.

The Shah cooperated with us in many, many different ways. One of the most significant as we look back was his effort to provide us with all the intelligence that he felt we needed. I am afraid that it was a mistake for us to base our policy so much on the intelligence that the Shah provided. His intelligence service, SAVAK, was a very serious organization. I am not sure we would have condoned all the measures it took to extract information from people. I believe in the long run it was a mistake for us to depend as much as we did on the Shah. We probably underestimated both the importance of nationalistic feelings and the depth of the hostility to the Shah that existed in Iran. We should have, looking back of course, emphasized more our own systems of collecting intelligence; developed our own specialists and not depended on the Shah.

I wasn't very deeply concerned in Iranian affairs during the whole period of time that I was in GTI (Greece, Turkey and Iran). But I did feel that we made a mistake in depending so much on that one man, the Shah. I think that had we not interfered, and if Iranian nationalism had developed from Mossadegh on we would be in a better position than we were when Iran fell into the hands of Khomeini and his people. It may be a lesson to us of the importance of not relying on the intelligence of an interested party even if he is the monarch of a foreign country. If we relied more upon depth of historic knowledge and intimate knowledge of the people of a country, that is much more important than taking as we seem to do most of our intelligence about a country from the intelligence service of that country. I wish I knew more about Iran, but I have not been able to follow it recently. I left that office in 1959.

Q: May I ask you if you can recall in that particular office any broad policies you were trying to follow or implement?

WILLIAMS: Yes, we were trying to strengthen Iran financially, economically and militarily. We extended a good deal of financial and military aid to Iran.

Q: This was true of Greece and Turkey as well, wasn't it?

WILLIAMS: Yes. They were our supports in that part of the world and we felt that Iran was a bastion of support for us with its long border with the Soviet Union and with its influence in the Persian Gulf states.

Q: This was part of our containment policy of the Soviet Union.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

CHARLES W. McCASKILL
Consular Officer
Thessaloniki (1957-1960)

Charles W. McCaskill was born in Camden, South Carolina in 1923. Completing only two years at the Citadel, he later returned and graduated in 1947, after serving in the Army. McCaskill then attended the University of South Carolina,

where he received a graduate degree in history and political science. Joining the Foreign Service in 1950, he has served in Germany, Greece, Cyprus, Iran, and India. The interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on July 7, 1993.

McCASKILL: ...The consulate was relatively small in those days -- although not as small as it has become since then. We lived in the suburb of Aretsou, and it was not long before my boys were in communication with the Greek kids. By the time we left Thessaloniki in 1960, they were bilingual in Greek, completely at home in Greek and in the Greek environment. When they spoke Greek in Cyprus, Cypriots mistook them for mainland Greek kids.

Q: *What were you doing in Thessaloniki?*

McCASKILL: The first year-and-a-half I was doing consular and economic work. When we got a new boss in 1958, I, as the only language man on the staff, began doing more political work, following the minority question in Thrace, for example, and traveling more. The new Consul General felt, and I agreed, that the language officer should get around more.

Q: *Who was the Consul General?*

McCASKILL: Robert S. Folsom, a fine CG and a good friend. My first Consul General was Philip W. Ireland, who was sometimes quite difficult to work for. Under Folsom, I saw a lot of Northern Greece and learned a lot about the area. There were some interesting problems there, such as the Muslim minority in Thrace, which I have mentioned.

Q: *What was the political situation in this period in northern Greece as you saw it?*

McCASKILL: When I first arrived in Greece, Karamanlis had just been elected Prime Minister. When the Prime Minister, General Papagos, died in October, 1955, he was succeeded by Constantine Karamanlis, who had been the Minister of Public Works in the Papagos Government. Karamanlis was "chosen out of turn", so to speak, and there were those who saw "the foreign hand" in his selection. Karamanlis was elected in his own right in February, 1956, and was governing when I arrived in Greece.

For reasons I do not remember, a group of Deputies of Karamanlis's party broke with him in the spring of 1958, he lost his majority in Parliament, and he was forced to call elections, I believe in May, 1958. The Greek Communist Party, known in Greece by the acronym KKE, had been outlawed in Greece since just after World War II. There was an organization, however, the Union of the Democratic Left, known by its acronym EDA, which became the umbrella for all sorts of fellow-travelers, leftists, some old-line communists, etc. Meanwhile, the old Liberal Party, was led jointly by George Papandreou and Sophocles Venizelos, the former the father of Andreas Papandreou, the latter the son of the great Eleftherios Venizelos. The party was known to be weak, but it nonetheless offered a slate throughout the country.

In those elections, Greece and its allies received a tremendous shock when EDA received almost 25% of the popular vote, 24.6 or 24.8%. EDA became the largest opposition party and the principal opposition in the Parliament, the leader of the opposition, though I have forgotten the

number of deputies it elected. The Liberal Party, the old historic party, was practically wiped out, with only three deputies in all of Northern Greece.

Karamanlis formed a government because he had a majority of the 300 deputies in Parliament, but it was a shock to everybody that EDA, a leftist-front organization, could take almost 25% of the popular vote. To give you an idea, the famous composer Mikis Theodorakis was elected on the EDA ticket.

Q: Yes, the man who wrote the music for the movie "Z" and other things.

McCASKILL: That's right. A man who has been all over the political spectrum, most recently in the conservative party of Constantine Mitsotakis. There were elections again but I have forgotten just when since I had left for Cyprus. Karamanlis governed until 1963, when he had his big argument with the Palace and left in a huff for Paris.

I went on home leave in 1959, and learned from Personnel, when I was passing through Washington on my way back to Thessaloniki, that I had been assigned to the new Embassy in Cyprus as Economic/Commercial Officer. The Department was busily engaged in staffing the Embassy in Nicosia, and I was being assigned as the Greek language officer. We left Thessaloniki in July of 1960 on direct transfer to Cyprus.

Q: To go back to Thessaloniki at that time: How were relations between the Consulate General and the Embassy? What was the feeling towards Ambassadors Riddleberger and Briggs would you say?

McCASKILL: Actually we had three Ambassadors while I was in Greece. Ambassador Allen. .

Q: George Allen.

McCASKILL: Ambassador George Allen was there just a short time. I consider him, Ambassador Riddleberger, and Ambassador Briggs three of the finest career ambassadors I had the honor, the privilege, of working for. They were all different, of course.

Ambassador Riddleberger was very senior at the time but was a very warm human being. In those days, when we were in the Embassy, we would drop cards on the Ambassador as a courtesy. Once when I was there and stopped to drop a card in Ambassador Riddleberger's office, his secretary suggested that he might want to see me. She told him on his intercom that I was there, and he asked me to come in. In response to my protestations that I knew he was busy and did not want to interrupt him, he insisted that I come in and "sit down and smoke a cigarette." We talked for 10-15 minutes when he was in fact very busy. I was tremendously impressed that he would give me so much of his time and I have never forgotten it.

Ambassador Briggs was an entirely different type, a very colorful Ambassador. He used to visit Thessaloniki frequently because he was a big duck hunter and there were lots of duck in Northern Greece. As I noted previously, I considered Ambassador Riddleberger and Ambassador Briggs among the best career senior Foreign Service Officers I knew during my career. I seem to

have stronger memories of the two of them than I do of Ambassador Allen who left Greece shortly after I arrived.

Q: While you were in Thessaloniki, how did you and the people around you view George Papandreou? What was the feeling towards him?

McCASKILL: In Thessaloniki, we did not know much about Papandreou and we depended on the Embassy for guidance on such matters. As I indicated earlier, Papandreou's party was in shambles. After the election debacle of 1958, word got around that the Embassy was looking for promising young Liberal Party members to cultivate. Two sons of prominent Liberal Party politicians returned to Greece about that time, i. e. 1959: Andreas Papandreou, George's son, and John Tsouderos, the son of previous Prime Minister Emmanuel Tsouderos.

Q: Andreas Papandreou had been an American citizen?

McCASKILL: Yes, teaching economics at the University of California, a very highly regarded economist, married to an American woman. He returned to Greece in, I believe, 1959. One had to wonder if there was more to his return than met the eye.

Q: As you talked to people in Thessaloniki, were you getting a feeling for the view of the royal family at that time?

McCASKILL: I have no recollection of that.

Q: It shows it was not a major topic.

McCASKILL: It was not. I have absolutely no recollection of ever discussing it there.

Q: What about the local politicians? How did they impress you?

McCASKILL: I knew several of them and they impressed me fairly favorably.

Q: Again going back to this time. Were efforts made by the military, the politicians, etc., to mute the differences with Turkey, to avoid being constantly hit with headlines about the things Turks were doing to Greece etc.?

McCASKILL: No, there was nothing in the media, or almost nothing in the media. There was a conscious effort by the Greek Government to keep the lid on the minorities question. I always felt that the Greek Government went out of the way to conform to the Treaty of Lausanne, which provided for the Muslim minority in Thrace and the Christian minority in Istanbul. I thought, and continue to think, that Turkish claims of harassment of Turks in Thrace are terribly overdrawn. I don't for a minute say there is no discrimination. There is discrimination there as there is everywhere in such situations. But I have never thought there was any real harassment of the Turks in Thrace. Greece has, over the years, gotten the short end of the stick on this one, and the Turks have continued to exaggerate their claims. You have only to look at what happened in Istanbul in September, 1955, when mobs ran rampant against the Greek community in that city

to see that the Greeks have been taken on this one.

Q: And you were monitoring it too.

McCASKILL: We followed it rather closely, though very discreetly since the Government was very sensitive on this issue. A member of the Ministry of Northern Greece made it quite clear to me that his Ministry was under standing instructions not to do anything to complicate the problem for Athens, to give the Turks no grounds for complaint. The Muslims, or Turks, lived very much to themselves in those days. I went into a Turkish village in Thrace on one occasion to pay a claim against the Consulate resulting from an accident and found that the Turk whom I needed to deal with spoke no Greek. The gendarme, who was helping me, spoke a bit of Turkish and interpreted for me.

To repeat what I said a minute ago, I have always thought that Greece has never made its case very well on the minorities question. The Greek community of Istanbul, over 100,000 in 1955, is down to 5-10,000 today. The Muslim or Turkish community in Thrace was about 100,000 in 1955 and is 120-140,000 today. Those figures speak for themselves. Ankara, under the leadership of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has very skillfully stirred up the minorities question against the Greeks from time to time, using it as a diplomatic weapon against Greece. The Turks would take some minor, isolated incident and blow it all out of proportion. The Turks have bullied the Greeks on this one, as they have on other subjects, and Greece has been relatively free from real criticism on this one.

WILLIAM E. RAU
Consular Officer
Thessaloniki (1959-1961)

William E. Rau was born in Michigan in 1929. After receiving a B.A. and M.A. from the University of Montana, he served in the U.S. Army as first lieutenant from 1953 to 1955. His postings abroad have included Thessaloniki, Port Said, Cairo, Pretoria, Izmir, Istanbul, Kabul and Athens. Mr. Rau was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998.

Q: How long were you in NEA/EX?

RAU: Almost two years, but in the meantime, the last part of it, because I really didn't have enough to do, I convinced them to send me over to FSI. And the wife of the Greek instructor at that time agreed to take me on as a part time student. And I started studying Modern Greek with her, Aliko Sapunigis, for two hours a day, from the Department. Then I'd go back and work in NEA. Enough so that you know I could really build on this when I got to Thessaloniki. Because at that time, if you were in Salonika and you didn't speak Greek, you had a very limited circle of friends.

One other thing I did in the department I thought was interesting, too: I've forgotten the award -

it was one of the major awards - but the NEA candidate for that was Ambassador Raymond Hare, and they knew I could write a little bit so they gave me the job of putting together his nomination for the award from the bureau, which meant I got to see his personnel file, going all the way back to 1927 or so - fascinating personnel file - and I wrote this up. He was the NEA candidate, and he did get the award that year. So I was very pleased with that. That was one of the better things I did. But I say, I used that assignment primarily - you know how post management works: you have to take care of the needs of the post whatever they are, try to look at staffing patterns and who should fit into this, give a hand at least to the Bureau on who their candidates should be for different positions.

Q: What was your impression of how NEA was run and all that? I mean, was it sort of a collegial group or was it a cold distant group? Did people know everybody?

RAU: I thought NEA, in terms of collegiality, in terms of comradeship, etc. - was one of the better bureaus because they had a large number of people who had served only in NEA going back and forth between NEA posts for many years and were language people in many cases. In reading back through these histories of Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus: Bruce Laingen was on the Desk then as the Greek Desk officer; Arch Blood was the Cyprus Desk officer. And I got to know them fairly well. I'd go back and forth. The post management part of this was in the old part of the Department that was on 19th Street, right there on 19th and Pennsylvania. This was before they built the New State. Then we would have to truck over there to see the desk officers, etc., when we had to. But I had quite a bit of contact with them, and I really got the impression that NEA was a bureau that took care of its own and really knew what was happening to their people.

Q: When you looked at this, were you staking out for yourself mentally the Greek-Turkish or Cyprus part of it, as opposed to the Arabic side?

RAU: Yes, I was at that point, because without having the Arabic language training, I didn't feel I could really make much of a mark by going into an Arabic post as an outsider. And I wasn't sure yet I wanted to go into Arabic training. And I was only in the training assignment then for two years anyway. But it was good that I got that basic background in Greek, because when I went to Thessaloniki I was able to build on that.

Q: You were in Thessaloniki from when to when?

RAU: '59 to '61.

Q: Incidentally, how did NEA respond to the - I don't know if you'd call it a crisis, but it was when we sent troops into Lebanon and all that? Did that cause a stir or not, or was that a problem for you?

RAU: Well, we all knew all the stories about McClintock and his dog, and all that business,

Q: A poodle.

RAU: Yes. No, it didn't; at least in my level, what I could see, it didn't cause that much of a stir that I could see. It was just that the President made the decision they were going to send troops in and they did. The Marines went in and did what Marines are supposed to do in many places.

Q: In Greece, can you tell me a little about the post in Thessaloniki in '59 when you got there? And then we'll talk about the situation in Greece.

RAU: Yes. The post was small. It was a consulate general. The consul general was a man by the name of Robert Slade Folsom, who is now retired and lives down in Florida, I think. But he had been a professor before he came into the Foreign Service, a political science professor, some eastern University, I can't remember which one it was. The good thing was he had just come out of Personnel in the Department and was very interested in the junior officer training program. So I think there was one other junior officer there. Henry Wexler was the consular officer. Charlie McCaskill was the political officer. John Curry - Jack Curry - was the administrative officer, and then there was a USIS officer, Phil Carroll, and a cultural officer. So it was a fairly good-staffed post for a post that size. This was right after the Greek Civil War, and there were still people on our staff who were covering this that had very strong feelings one way or the other, but usually pro-monarchy. The reason I liked the post was not only that it gave me a chance to really learn Greek and get to see Greece from that (I would have been lost in Athens at that point) but I also had a teacher that became a very good friend, George Mikoulopoulos, who was a *gymnasiarkhes* - 'teacher,' 'principal,' I guess - of a boys' high school. And he kind of took me under his wing. We traveled all over, and he taught me a lot of Greek. We went to Mt. Athos together a couple of times, so that was a real benefit. Secondly, the consul general, Bob Folsom, really gave me a chance to see all parts of the operation, small as it was, in Thessaloniki. First of all, he made me an economic-commercial officer, because he wanted to have some commercial reporting. So, I did some voluntary reporting on the sewing machine industry in northern Greece because for their "proika," you know, for their dowry - they used to give away sewing machines. And the pharmaceutical industry in northern Greece, etc. I had a lot of fun researching those. Then after that, we set up a commercial library in the consulate.

From that I went on to do consular work and did all of it. Fortunately, we had good local employees that saved me in many cases. Otherwise, I'd have been up a creek without a paddle in some instances. We had the one I remember distinctly at that time. There were a lot of young Greeks, especially girls, that were trying to get to the United States one way or another. The quotas were oversubscribed, etc. You know this better than I. We had the old business about certification by the state labor board, if they had a skill that was in short supply that couldn't be met from US resources, that you could give them a special visa for this. Well, what the Greeks discovered at this time was belly dancing. And we had these girls who would come in with contracts from some place in New York City where they had been hired to be a belly dancer, and we had to look into whether they really had that kind of skill or not, reassure ourselves before we could issue them such a visa.

Q: Well, of course, all of the great belly dancers came out of the Greek community in Alexandria. But I don't think they were taking their bellies up to-

RAU: -to northern Greece. I don't think so either. But they managed to wangle these contracts,

and of course, if they got certification from the New York State labor office, who were we to say?

Q: Did you have any problem with protection or welfare and that sort of thing? This was a little before the great mass of Americans started having their "wander-year" in Europe with their marijuana-

RAU: That's right. We had that later, but not in Greece. We had a few seamen occasionally that would turn up there, not very many, but a few, because there were still American vessels that were coming into Thessaloniki. And there were a few problems there, but nothing of any major significance.

Q: What were relations like with your northern neighbor Yugoslavia at that time?

RAU: Yugoslavia had a consulate general there, and they had a very good Yugoslav consul general. Charlie McCaskill was our Greek language officer, trained by the department. That's another story I'll tell you in a minute. But we would go to receptions and the Yugoslav consul general would be there and he'd be chattering away in Greek. He knew Greek very well. They had this free port situation in Thessaloniki for goods that would go up to Yugoslavia, supposedly in bond, but some of it would always slip through one way or another. No, it was a very well run operation from what I could see. It was small, but it was a consulate general.

Q: But there weren't tensions on the border or anything like that?

RAU: No.

Q: Did Macedonia intrude? I'm talking about the name Macedonia.

RAU: There was an Institute of Macedonian studies that was in Thessaloniki, and vicariously [*sic*], I guess, it was in the same building with the Greek Third Army headquarters. They were very interested in that, obviously. And the man that ran it - I can't remember his name now - he was very much a rightist. He was very much a monarchist. And they had long sessions, and I attended a couple of them, when they were talking about Greek Macedonia and the importance of keeping the Red menace out of that part of Greece. Because you know, after the Greek Civil War, a lot of these guerrillas were supplied by Yugoslavia and Macedonia and came down into Greece. And the famous case of taking the children back, you know.

Q: The Greek guerrillas took thousands of children and took them to the Soviet Union. Horrible!

RAU: Yes. So there was still a lot of ill will. Strangely enough, at that point, they didn't look upon Turkey as a menace to them. Their biggest menace was Bulgaria.

Q: Normally the Third Army sort of sits there ready to go at the Turks.

RAU: They do now, that's for sure.

Q: But at that time what was the feeling towards Bulgaria? Did you ever get there?

RAU: That's another interesting story. Yes I did. Again, junior officer doing different kinds of work. We had our first show. When our legation in Sofia opened, we had our first trade fair there, in Plovdiv. And I had been working with the Thessaloniki trade fair as the economic commercial officer. So I convinced the consul general, Bob Folsom. I said, "I'd like to go up and take a look at that to see how we're doing this, since we just opened this legation up there." He said, "Well, if you can get a visa, go ahead." So I went down to Athens, since there wasn't any consulate there, or embassy, and I got a visa through the Bulgarian embassy. I got a visa to go to Bulgaria on Yugoslav Airlines, which flew from Athens via Belgrade to Sofia. Finally, I got to Sofia, and I - what was the name of the officer there in the legation? - Anyway, I can't remember his name. I went to see him, and we had a nice chat. He was doing economic work there in the embassy. And he said, "Well, how are you going to get down to Plovdiv?" And I said, "Well, I'll probably take the train down." And he asked me where I was staying. They had me in the Hotel Moscow, which was a real third-rate fleabag, but the main hotel, which was the Balkan Hotel in Sofia was filled. They didn't have any more vacancies, but I could eat my meals over there. I went over there for my meals. And in the course of one of the meals there, I ran into this group - there was a Brit and an Italian, who was a real wild man, and they both spoke some German. And I realized that if I went down by myself - I didn't have any German; I had Greek but that was about it - I would crash. So I struck up a conversation with them, and the Italian, who was a businessman, said, "Oh, I'm driving down there tomorrow. Why don't you come along with me?" And I said, "Well, fine, I'd love to." So I went with him, and I remember, he knew that part of the world pretty well. He'd traveled around, and he had sacks of these hard candies in the back window of his car. Every time we'd get near some place where there were little kids, he'd give them some candy. So we're getting about half way down to Plovdiv - it wasn't that far - but about half way to Plovdiv, he says, "Hey, I'm running low on gas." Well, at that time there were no petrol stations in Bulgaria, but he looked down the hill where we were stopped, and there was this truck place where they were filling trucks with gasoline from barrels. So he talked to the kids next to him, and they led us down to this place, and they gave us enough gasoline to get to Plovdiv. We got to Plovdiv, and we went through the exhibit. We had a dental exhibit there because this was our first effort, and they had, I think, three or four Bulgarian-speaking US dentists who were manning this exhibit. I went through that. I went with the Italian through the Chinese Communist pavilion. I remember that distinctly. He was into machinery of some kind, and here we were walking through there and he is exclaiming in a loud voice. He said, "Oh, look at that machinery. That's so outdated, antiquated, we had that years ago" or whatever, laughing, etc. I was thinking to myself, this is the wrong place to be talking about things like this. Anyway, yes, I did get up to Bulgaria at that time.

Q: Was it still simmering, the case of the American newsman?

RAU: The Polk case?

Q: The Polk case.

RAU: That was pretty much finished.

Q: In fact, I heard something on the radio just the other day about it; I can't remember what. Could you explain it? It was George Polk, wasn't it? Could you explain what this was, because this kind of was there all the time?

RAU: George Polk.

Q: Could you explain what this was, because this was there all the time?

RAU: Well, this was a throwback to the confrontation between the leftists and the rightists, who were the monarchists in Greece. And George Polk - they still don't know for sure who killed him - was a correspondent who was covering the post-Civil War period in Greece, basically, and was in Thessaloniki, and one day he turned up dead, floating in the harbor. They pulled him out and did all kinds of investigations. As I say, they've never been able to track it down. There were two books written on this recently. One is by the brother of Edmond Keeley on the Salonika Bay murders. The other is by Kati Marton, who is now the wife of Dick Holbrooke and was formerly married to Peter Jennings. She's a Hungarian. And she wrote a rather good book on it too. And both of those books more or less concluded that this was done by the rightists. They felt that Polk was getting too close to things, and they didn't want him poking around in military affairs between the civil war, because he was trying to meet with some of the guerrillas on the other side. When I was there that was almost, what, ten years after the fact.

Q: What about society in Thessaloniki, getting on with the Greeks and all that? How did you find that?

RAU: Well, it was easier for me, and my wife to a certain extent, because we made a real effort to learn Greek. We lived in a suburb then of Thessaloniki, for the first year we were there, called Harilau, and I would drive in to the office, which was about a 20-minute drive, every day. But all of our neighbors were in that area, and we had one small child at that time - the second one was born while we were there. And so we got to know a lot of the community right around us. They lived there. Our landlord we knew fairly well. He lived not in the house with us but close by. It was really a northern provincial town. It was not like it is now today. It was pretty much a backwater. We had a NATO sub-headquarters there in Thessaloniki at the time, and we had couple of officers assigned there. And then there was one military officer, one captain I guess it was, assigned to the Higher Defense College in Greece. He was the Greek language officer and went to that. But the American community was pretty small, except for the farm school and that was even small. That was the American influence, Bruce Lansdale and the farm school up there. There was a YMCA that was run by an American. The others might have been Greek-Americans, but there weren't any native-born Americans, very few. One of the big problems on the consular side, going back there - not just consular but on the political side as well - was the number of Greek-Americans who had come to Thessaloniki to retire, who had worked in steel mills in Pittsburgh or whatever. And they would sit in the cafes all day and talk about how things were so great in Pittsburgh and so terrible in Greece. And we thought, You know, you came back here because you're money goes further, but you're not helping our reputation at all by sitting around talking like this.

Q: Cyprus wasn't a particular problem as far as impact there and our role as...

RAU: That's another story, because after my tour in Thessaloniki, I was supposed to go on to Cyprus. I was assigned, in fact, to Cyprus as consular officer. Charlie McCaskill had already been assigned down there. He had gone on to Cyprus. But Ambassador Briggs - Ellis Briggs, the ambassador - came back on home leave, and there was an officer who had gone through Greek language training in Athens, Ed Ledbetter. I don't know whether you've ever heard of Ed.

Q: I know Ed.

RAU: Well, they had been having trouble finding a place for him, an onward assignment. And so Briggs was saying, "Well, what about Cyprus? He's a good language officer." They said, "Well, we've already assigned Rau there." So he said, "Does he speak Greek?" They said, "Yes, he is very qualified for it." But they decided since they had an investment in Ledbetter, why, they broke my assignment, and there's where the Arabic reared its head, because I had put on one of these April Fool's sheets that I was toying with the idea of going into Arabic language training.

Q: You might explain what an April Fool's sheet is.

RAU: Well, this was a sheet that was due on April 1st.

Q: It was called the "Post Preference Report."

RAU: That's right, in which you indicated which you wanted your next assignment to be and where you were heading, pointing yourself. And I had said on one of those previous ones that somebody read that I might be interested in learning Arabic and going into Arabic training. Since I had been able to qualify in "hard" languages, they thought I might be a likely candidate. But before they would put me into Arabic training, they assigned me as vice-consul to Port Said, in Egypt, which was then the UAR [United Arab Republic].

Q: Before we go there, could you talk about what was your impression of how Charlie McCaskill worked. Because Charlie ended up dealing an awful lot particularly in Greek-Cypriot affairs, I think even in Turkish affairs, too. What was your impression of him?

RAU: Charlie was, as you know, he was a Wristonee. He had made the switch-over and I thought really was making a sterling effort because he was a South Carolina boy who really never had - except for maybe some military experience - but he'd never been outside the country to live, and was really dedicated to this Greek. He really went ahead and learned Greek pretty well. I think he qualified around the 4 level or so. And was very interested and made a lot of friends in northern Greece and introduced me to a lot of people in northern Greece. We went on trips together. He was a political reporting officer and I was doing whatever else there was, commercial-economic. And he had two boys at the time who were sub-teenagers, I guess, 10 or 12 years old, so we got to know them very well. They were good friends. As I say, he left after our first year there and went to Cyprus because his tour was over. And John Owens came to replace him. Do you know John?

Q: I know him, yes.

RAU: He was a good language officer, too, but had a different approach than Charlie did. No, I think Charlie did a very good job in that situation. He later went back, as you know, as political counselor to Athens.

Q: I realize you were at the junior level, but how about George Papandreou and his group? Did that have any reflections in your area at that particular time?

RAU: Only in the sense that my Greek language teacher, George Mikoulopoulos, was an old *phileleftheros*, you know, an old liberal, and he really thought George Papandreou was a wonderful person. He hadn't had much time for Karamanlis, or the government in power at that time. And he used to fill my ears with things and have me try to read things that were done by Kazantzakis and people like that, in Greek, and we had long sessions on things like this. But no, I didn't have any feelings about Papandreou as a person.

Q: The political tides weren't running too heavily, were they? I mean, I mean, just in general in Thessaloniki, were there sharp issues or concerns with the parties that we were aware of there?

RAU: The only thing was that the press there had a couple of papers. The Makedonia paper was very much oriented toward the left side, and they would print scurrilous articles sometimes about the US and about the relations between Greece and the US. But it wasn't anything that really... The Third Army really ran northern Greece. There was no question in anybody's mind at that time. Some of the people that worked for us in the consulate had very good connections with the military, etc., and so we were oriented toward the people who were in power at the time, no question about that.

Q: What about our embassy? Was that just someplace far away?

RAU: No, I made a couple of trips down there. Don Gelber was a friend of mine, was in my class, and he was the one that met us when we first arrived in Athens. And as I say, Briggs was the ambassador and Sam Berger was the DCM, and he was interested in all the junior officer programs, very interested in seeing that junior officers got the right kind of training and that those that showed promise were pushed along, etc. Jack Horner was the political counselor at the time, and all of these people... I don't think Monty Stearns was there at this time. He came shortly after. He was in the process of courting Toni at that time. Sid Jacques was the economic counselor, and I got to know him a little bit after a couple of trips with him because, as you can see, my interests were kind of veering off toward the economic side now more than the political. I would say that the post at that time with Briggs at its head was pretty much devoted to keeping up the relationship with the monarchy and with the Karamanlis government at the time. They didn't ignore the opposition parties, but they did what was supposed to be done, I guess, with the one in power.

VICTOR L. STIER
Information Officer, USIS

Athens (1960-1965)

Victor L. Stier was born in 1919 in Michigan and raised in California. As a Foreign Service Information officer he served in Thailand, Greece, Ceylon, Finland, the Netherlands and in Washington, DC. The interview was conducted by Lewis Schmidt in 1990.

Q: *What did you do? Have home leave and then go to Athens from there? You didn't have an intervening Washington assignment?*

STIER: No.

Q: *You went to Athens. So this would have been probably March or April.*

STIER: Well, Kennedy was just elected while we were there and the Greeks thought that it was their election and it was a kind of Greek victory when Jack Kennedy was elected President of the United States.

Q: *He was elected in November.*

STIER: Yes.

Q: *What was the Greek attitude towards the U.S. at that time?*

STIER: Did you serve in Greece?

Q: *I never served in Greece. I served in Turkey.*

STIER: That's right, I'd forgotten.

Q: *I had a lot of opportunity to observe Greece.*

STIER: Well, I bow to no one in my admiration and affection for the people of Greece for their skills, abilities and virtues, but the Greeks have a little anti-almost everything built into them. They will also have positive passions built into them. They're a passionate people, often very critical of American policies. We had an enormous -- it would down while we were there -- but we had an enormous AID program in Greece which clearly benefited Greece, but as I say, it was winding down, and they were critical for our doing that.

Q: *For winding it down?*

STIER: Yes, and very forgetful of what we had done in many ways starting from Mr. Truman on. A large part of our program was to remind the Greeks of what the U.S. had done. We did a lot of work with the Greek press. We put out pamphlets and held press conferences and took them on tours both in and out of Greece. One of the things we did with the press was take them on NATO tours around Europe. I once took four or five Greek journalists out to the aircraft

carrier Enterprise while it was cruising the Med. They saw night flying operations, which are terrifying I must say....

The big problem when we were there, I guess they're still there, Cyprus was just -- there was no way to get anywhere with the Cyprus problem. Archbishop Makarios was very difficult for the United States, a very intelligent but a very vain man and you couldn't really -- American officials had a tough time dealing with him, but there was also the fact of Turkey as there still is a question of Turkey. I mean we had to maintain good relations with both countries, and it was hard slogging. For those five years that I was there the Cyprus problem made Greek-U.S. relations extremely difficult. In Turkey, too. If the U.S. pleased Turks, the Greeks were upset, and vice versa. Working in USIS in Greece was a very delicate, vexing, but also very exciting job....

As we left, George Papandreou had been elected to succeed Constantine Karamanlis. I liked George Papandreou, although the Greeks -- a lot of Greeks at the time, and not just the right wingers, but the liberal ones -- said something I think was true. He was a successful leader in opposition, but as a prime minister not so effective. That time was also the end of the royalty in Greece, King Paul and Queen Frederika, as well as their son. We were there during the time that King Constantine was married to his beautiful Danish princess. The S.S. Savannah, the world's first nuclear powered vessel, came to Greece when we were there, and we escorted the Princesses and Queen Frederika around it....

Jacqueline Kennedy made a trip to Greece when we were there.

Q: I've forgotten when she married Onassis. Was she already Mrs. Onassis?

STIER: No, when we were there she came as the wife of the President.

Q: Oh, before the assassination.

STIER: Yes. And a charming USIA officer by the name of John Mowinckel was the USIS officer who as a guest in her entourage helped us in USIS a great deal. I never did talk with Mrs. Kennedy myself. I maintained close contact with John and I had a wonderful working relationship with a very charming and intelligent woman by the name of Tish Baldrige, who was Mrs. Kennedy's Press Secretary. Tish has gone on to make a wonderful career of her own in journalism and public affairs, a splendid woman.

Q: Mowinckel at that time must have been the PAO in Paris.

STIER: I think so.

Q: And he probably was assigned to her for that trip, because she speaks French and he, of course, is absolutely bilingual in French.

STIER: Yes, but perhaps more importantly because he was a personal friend of hers.

Q: *And loved the French culture and so did she.*

STIER: That's right. John's French was exquisite. I don't think Jackie's was in that class.

Q: *No, her French was not in his class.*

STIER: But they had John and they also on that -- was that the same trip? No, but John also came down to help us when we had the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Greece. John came for that also, and he handled the French press there and Bill Clark came from London I guess to handle the --

Q: *PAO in London.*

STIER: Yes, to handle the British press. But those were great days to be in Greece.

Q: *How did you feel that your personal contacts were in Athens and in Greece? Did you have a lot of influential personal contacts there that you could utilize?*

STIER: I think so. For one thing I think it takes five years to become a reasonably effective USIS officer, at least on the information side. I was seasoned, I suppose. I had good contacts both with Greek working journalists, and their editors, and also with parliamentarians, and even a couple of ministers. Yes, I think we did have good contacts there. We worked on it, always spent all of our representational allowance and much more. My wife had become what is loosely called a gourmet cook these days, but she was and is a wonderful cook. I think Audine and I did some good work for USIA in Greece. It's not easy to bowl over a Greek with American foreign policy positions. As I have said, the Turkish situation was always bad, so was Cyprus and we -- oh, I could write a book about that. The Brits had their position. They were always a little laid back. You had to worry so about Turkey because of it's -- Turkey was always much more responsive to NATO policy and American policy and so terribly important to us and the Greeks didn't want to accept that.

Q: *Yes, the Turks have the biggest Army outside of the Soviet Union and the U.S. While their equipment wasn't always that good, they're rough tough fighters.*

STIER: Look at Korea. The Turk was as good a fighter as there was in Korea.

Q: *Of course, I got it all on the other end because I was in Turkey. I think I overlapped you by a year.*

STIER: Yes.

Q: *I went there in 1964.*

STIER: Yes.

Q: *To '66. Well, do you have any further comments that you want to make?*

STIER: Well, we still have a few to go. Greece was just beginning, as I said, to enter the Papandreou era and as such a decidedly less favorable position for the United States in Greece. In Karamanlis, who was no walkover or patsy for the United States, we at least had a very reasonable guy who I think understood the problem of Eastern Europe much better than George Papandreou or his son Andreas ever did. Of course, Andreas was a real left-winger, or at least he played that political game. It was at that time that, let's see, Al Harkness was the PAO when I got there, and then he was followed by Vincent Joyce....

We were renegotiating a Voice of America transmitter station's agreement with the Greeks at the time and Vince was called in to discuss this with Andreas Papandreou whose father was Prime Minister. Andreas was a member of the cabinet himself and in the course of that interview about the VOA, Vince, working under instructions from Washington, and Andreas got into a warm discussion, following which Andreas claimed to have been insulted by Vince. I don't believe that Vince did that. Vince was an ardent negotiator and debater who had a bit of an Irish temper, but he would never have insulted Andreas Papandreou. And indeed, in those days we were on good personal relations -- I knew Andreas and Margaret Papandreou for years, and we were good friends. We were on a first name basis, even after he became Minister. You'd call him Minister in front of other people, but privately and informally we were first namers, and so was Vince. Of course, Vince was married to a Turkish lady at the time which didn't help, which had already made the Greek press.

Q: A lovely looking girl at that time. I haven't seen them for years.

STIER: Yes, Sevim was a beautiful woman. That situation was stacked a little bit against the Joyces. In retrospect, it was not a fortuitous assignment to send a PAO with a Turkish wife to Greece, given the Cyprus situation. At any rate, the Greek government informed us that Mr. Joyce, who had then gone off on home leave, would not be welcomed back and that if we returned him to Athens, they would declare him persona non grata.

We also had that wonderful and crusty American Ambassador, Ellis O. Briggs as our boss when I got there.

Q: He was my ambassador in Brazil

STIER: And God help you if you had to interrupt him at home with something, as sometimes the Information Officer or the PAO did. If you survived those, you felt you'd had a pretty good day. Briggs was a fascinating man to observe at work and a wonderful writer. He was followed by Henry Labouisse, whose charming and pleasant wife we got to know very well, Eve Curie Labouisse. That was the year USIA sent out that film on the Kennedys, "Years of Lightning, Day of Drums" which the Greeks liked very much. I must say, I did too. As a film, after you've seen it about ten times it began to wear a bit thin, but the first viewing was just wonderful. The royals graced its inaugural showing in Athens. I see that its maker, Bruce Herschenshorn, is still very active in Los Angeles.

JOHN P. OWENS
Consul
Thessaloniki (1960-1962)

Political Officer
Athens (1962-1966)

Greek Desk
Washington, DC (1966-1968)

John P. Owens was born in the District of Columbia in 1927. As a Foreign Service officer he served in Italy, Venezuela, Greece, Finland, Sweden, Bermuda and Washington. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

OWENS: Because I'd got to know the people, the Deputy Chief of Mission and the Political Councilor in Caracas at the time, I was supposed to move to the Political Section of the Embassy. But when I came back on home leave, I found that I'd been detailed to Greek training.

Q: *That was a major focus of your career?*

OWENS: That's right, Greece did. And I would say, even today, that was the high point of my career in the Foreign Service.

Q: *Was this Greek training out of the blue?*

OWENS: No, I think I had, in the April Fool's list, as we used to call it, the April 1st's preference, you were asked to put down posts. I knew very little about Greece, but I'd read a number of accounts of the Greek civil war, which rather fascinated me. And I saw a Greek film at one of the oil companies in Venezuela while I was serving there, of modern Greece, and it looked to me to be a rather fascinating blending of east and west, at least what seemed to me then of east and west. So I became rather interested, and put down that as a preference. To my great surprise, because I came back, my effects were packed when I left Maracaibo for transshipment to Caracas. When I got back in Washington, I was told no, that assignment was canceled and I was going into Greek training.

Q: *For your first job, you went to Thessaloniki, is that right?*

OWENS: Yes. Now I went through two years. At that time, they were having Greek language and area training. The second year, my predecessor had decided that, rather than go off to a university, which was the program, he would like to stay and work in INR and on the desk, and get a year's experience as a trainee, rather than go on to a university. That happened for me as well. It seemed at the time and in retrospect, a lot of time spent in training, two years. Particularly since you didn't have, in my view, the advantage of a university year which would have been a change. But spending two years in Washington as a trainee seemed a long time. As a result, though, my Greek was quite good when I went to Greece, because the advantage of the

second year was that you were, half time, still a student at FSI. I was very pleased with the training program at FSI.

Q: Were there many others taking it with you, or just a couple?

OWENS: I think I was the only FSO. There were a couple of people from the Agency who were going to either Cyprus or Greece. At that time, it was a very small program. They were training really one FSO a year. I replaced someone in Thessaloniki who had moved on to Athens. The job was called Deputy Principal Officer and Political Officer. It was a fairly large Consulate General. Actually, it wasn't fairly large, it was five officers. Compared to Maracaibo, it seemed large.

Q: What was the situation in Thessaloniki? You were there from '60 to '62. What was the situation there?

OWENS: Well, at that time, it was the conservative government of Constantine Caramanlis that was in power. I would say it was a relatively, from a political point of view, for the first year or so, was a rather tranquil time. Greece was moving ahead economically. One could see the beginnings of prosperity compared to what I had understood to be the situation in Greece in the '50s and late part of the '40s. However, in October of 1961, there were elections which again were won by the conservative party, the ERE party. But the opposition which was led by George Papandreou charged that it was won by fraud and violence. That undermined the stability of Greek life, because the opposition refused to accept the validity of the elections, and they boycotted the...

Q: What was the official American impression of the elections?

OWENS: I think the official American impression was that there was no more fraud and violence than there had been in most Greek elections, in fact probably less. And even to this day, it's hard to say to what degree. I think actually, whatever the validity of the opposition's claim by hammering away at this theme for the next year and a half, they were able to undermine the stability of the government and its credibility. George Papandreou was a very determined man, very eager to become Prime Minister again before time ran out on him. He was in his late sixties at that time. I attended many of the rallies that were held in Thessaloniki and in northern Greece at the time, and there was no evidence then of any coercion. The opposition political leaders were able to move freely and to speak out against the government, and there were enthusiastic crowds. I think the general feeling in the Embassy and shared by us in the Consulate General was that the elections were a fair reflection of the feeling of the Greek public. As it turned out, the Conservatives got, I don't remember the exact figures, close to 50% of the vote and the opposition got 35%, which was an improvement over the 1955 elections, and the Communists, the EDA party got 15%. That seemed to us to be a fairly accurate reflection.

Q: The killing that resulted in the movie "Z", I don't remember the man's name, had that happened at that time?

OWENS: No. That happened when I went to Athens. That was Gregory Lambrakis.

Q: *Yes, Lambrakis. Was northern Greece different than southern Greece, either politically or in their attitude...?*

OWENS: I would say it was more conservative. The rural influence was heavier. It was also influenced by the number of Greeks who had fled from Turkey in 1922.

Q: *The Smyrna exodus.*

OWENS: Yes, that's right. They were pretty well integrated into Greek society, but it took a long time, and World War II, really, to do that. I would say, in general, it was more conservative than the rest of the country, except in the cities, such as Thessaloniki which did have a liberal opposition mayor. The governor of northern Greece who was appointed by the Athens government reflected the conservative party. It was a very interesting assignment. I was occupied pretty much full time with political work for the first time. I didn't do any consular work there, although the Consul General at the time went on home leave and then was assigned to selection board and was gone six months.

Q: *Who was the Consul General?*

OWENS: Robert Folsom was his name. So I enjoyed the assignment.

Q: *What was the attitude towards the neighbors? You had Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and of course Turkey there.*

OWENS: Yes. Well, at the point that I arrived, the Cyprus crisis was in one of those periodic quiet periods that it would go through for a year or two years. So the thrust was towards the north and the fear of the Slavs, particularly the Bulgars, who were ... And usually the Bulgarians would be mentioned as the greater potential threat as the enemy then. It was felt very strongly by the people in northern Greece, more so than by the people of the south because of the two Balkan wars and the legacy of World War II, when the Bulgarians were allied with the axis powers and had occupied parts of northern Greece. So there were feelings stronger against the Bulgarians than they were towards the Germans by this period in history.

Q: *Was there any feeling there...I say this because in 1992 now we're having a flare-up of the so called Macedonian problem which is always around. Was there a feeling about Macedonia? I'm talking about the area that was under Yugoslav rule.*

OWENS: I would say not. The border was very calm. That was 11 years after the end of the civil war in Greece and of course during that period the incursions from Yugoslavia before Marshal Tito closed the border had been quite serious. The communists in 1947 had used that as a sanctuary to move freely between Greece and Yugoslavia. But I believe it was 1948 that Marshal Tito closed the border and as a result the communist guerillas moved into Bulgaria rather than Yugoslavia. So relations with Yugoslavia itself were good. There was this fear as I mentioned of the Bulgarians, but any kind of Yugoslav Macedonian minority was not an issue at the time.

Q: *I often wondered whether this was almost a trumped up...this pan-Macedonian feeling, or*

whatever you want to call it, sort of trumped up from Athens, to keep the pot boiling rather than a local issue?

OWENS: Perhaps, a little paranoia on the part of the Greek government. Not being there today, it's hard to understand this excitement, and the refusal of the Greek government to accept that a state could have the name of Macedonia since there is a part of Greece called Macedonia. To me, it certainly seems like overreaction, as it does to the members of the European community, and the NATO alliance. How much of it is trumped up, how much of it is, what I would call, the Greek paranoia which can be strong at times, I don't know. I suspect it is a mixture of both. But it was not really an issue at that time.

Q: Something was (doubling) away there?

OWENS: No. It was not. There were complaints from the Turkish minority from time to time that they were discriminated against in Thrace rather than Macedonia, in the area closest to the Turkish border.

Q: Well then you moved to Athens, where you were from '62 to '66?

OWENS: Right. I replaced Monty Stearns who had been in the political section. I had done a lot of political reporting, as I mentioned, in Thessaloniki, and I got to know the people in Athens. So when that opening came up, they asked me if I would be interested, and I was, so I moved down there. Dan Zachary, whom you know, who had been in the economic section came up to replace me. And so for the next four years I was in Greece doing...

Q: During a very interesting time.

OWENS: During a very exciting time. I might mention generally that of course it was a wonderful time to be an American diplomat in Greece. The degree of our influence was great. The prestige of being an American diplomat was great. There was almost no or very little violence of any type in Greek political life, and certainly very little in the social life as well of the people. The occasional shootings by family members over land or over love affairs, but very little crime. Greece itself was prospering, and it was a good time to be there.

Q: You had two Ambassadors when you were there. First Henry Labouisse from '61 to '65.

OWENS: Yes. Actually, when I was in Thessaloniki, it was Ellis Briggs who was the Ambassador, whom I knew only slightly. I had gone to the Yugoslav border to meet him when he was coming back to his country of assignment. I visited him a couple of times in Athens, but it was Henry Labouisse and Phillips Talbot during the period that I was in Athens.

Q: Could you describe their style of operation, that you observed?

OWENS: Yes. Henry Labouisse was of course a high powered executive who was very interesting to work for, very intense person. His wife was the daughter of Marie Curie, a French scientist. She had been very active in the French resistance during World War II. A very

impressive, very handsome woman. Henry Labouisse, though, had a style, I think he was from Louisiana originally, somewhat deceptive laid back southern style because he could be very tough and very sharp, and he was. I became eventually his interpreter when he would call on George Papandreou, who during our time there became Prime Minister. It was a good time to be there. One of the advantages, as you know of when you're a younger officer, often in an Embassy, the younger officers in the political session work on the opposition. For instance, I never got to know Caramanlis, I never was included in anything. And of course often the conservatives, the party in power, speak English and so the senior Embassy officers move with ease with them. When the opposition came into power, as it did during my time there, George Papandreou, we, particularly the Greek speakers, were at a premium. But more than that, the fact that we cultivated the opposition, and they were very eager when they were in the opposition to have contacts with the American Embassy, we really came into our own, because we had known them when they were out of power. I think that's true generally for Foreign Service Officers. I would say that's a rule applicable to most.

Q: When did George Papandreou come into power?

OWENS: Well, in the elections of '63, I believe it was either October or November of '63, he won a plurality, but not a majority. Somewhere in my files I have all of this, but he had a slightly greater number of votes in the Parliament. The Parliament was three hundred, and he had a slightly greater number of votes than did the conservative party. However he did not have enough to operate a government unless he accepted the support of the communist party. And he did a very clever thing, he insisted that first he should receive the mandate, since he had the most number of votes, and secondly that, although he should receive the mandate, that he wanted elections within sixty or ninety days because he felt that he didn't have a sufficient majority. So he received the mandate and at the same time his demand for elections was accepted, so he ran the country for let's say a hundred days, and he did a good job. It was generally said that one of the things he did was to approve the purchase of a new plane, airplane, for the royal family, which Caramanlis, for budgetary reasons had refused to approve when he was Prime Minister. Caramanlis, after the King agreed to give the mandate to Papandreou, left the country and went to sulk in Paris.

Q: Where he stayed until 1970?

OWENS: That's right. He came back to lead the conservative party, ERE's election in April of 1964, which Papandreou and his Center Union Party won with a true majority over 50% of the vote.

Q: What was the Embassy impression of Labouisse and the reflections you get of George Papandreou, because he became a very important figure in later events?

OWENS: I think there was a scepticism about him. He had, I would say, before, even more than Ambassador Labouisse, the No. 2, Tapley Bennett viewed Papandreou with great scepticism. I do think that the management of the Embassy accepted too literally the evaluations which were coming from the upper levels of the conservative party, the evaluations of the political scene. I think they accepted the concept of Papandreou as being an excellent speaker, a great orator, but

of no substance, a blowhard as a number of them referred to him. And it was clear to those of us who were doing the reporting that people at the top in the Embassy, and I don't mean only the Ambassador, were very strongly hoping that the conservatives would be returned, and had difficulty adjusting to the idea that the opposition was going to win, and did win. We even found that our reports which began to give a more favorable impression of the Center Union, or the likelihood that the opposition would win tended to be toned down to make it less likely than we, the drafting officers thought probable.

Q: Greece is an interesting example. I served there as Consul General from '70 to '74. At that time, I felt that there was really a pernicious influence, and that was of the US military, particularly the Greek Americans who were in the US military, and of the CIA, of having a very close to the conservative military side of things. Did you find that this was so?

OWENS: It was certainly very true of the military, and I guess I developed certain prejudices about the military, and the military attachés, and the military aid programs from those years, because I saw the ease with which, I felt, they were taken over, our military people, were taken over by the military brass in Greece. The CIA, it was a more complex situation, because, as you mentioned, they were mostly Greek Americans, some of them were conservative, which is more of an agency bias, you might say, but some of them were not. I did feel that it was unhealthy the degree to which the CIA officers were involved in the Greek scene. We used to joke among ourselves, in the political section, that the only difference between us was that we didn't pay for our information. We did have representational allowance and we could take Greek politicians to lunch, and our standing at the time in Greek society was such that it was prestigious to be invited by an American Embassy officer to lunch and to be seen. So we did have some resources. But I used to feel uncomfortable about the fact that my job was, when I went to the Embassy in Athens, to cover domestic political affairs. A colleague of mine, John Day at the time, handled the foreign affairs, Cyprus, relations with Turkey. So I tried to delve as deeply as possible into Greek domestic politics. But I was about to say that going to parliament watching the session at night, which I did most evenings, because usually they would start about six, right after the Embassy closed, and I would go down there and spend a couple of hours, particularly at the more interesting times, as they did become during the time I was there.

Q: It seemed to be in later days, when the Embassies were known as aid Embassies, and other ones were known as oil agents, Embassies, this one was known as a CIA Embassy.

OWENS: I could see that. Now, I do think that the State Department made a very wise decision to develop a number of Greek speakers that it did. That happened after my time. We were still in a vast minority. Also, I would say at that time, that it was not something the most ambitious officers would have sought, to study Greek, and go to Greece. Later on, I think, it did become much more the case. But, again I think, I could say that I am an ethnic American myself, I don't believe it is a very wise policy, perhaps it is a reactionary viewpoint, to go back to your country of origin to work...

Q: It doesn't work too well, there's a dynamic going on there that's not good. We've done this with Ambassadors, we continue to do this for domestic reasons and personal feelings.

OWENS: It seems so natural to Americans. "Oh, you were born in Italy. Well, you should go as an Ambassador to Italy." It seems so natural.

Q: It's considered sort of an insult to the other country. Here's somebody who's left, and then chooses to come back, and there's a tendency to feel they are lording it over the natives. It doesn't work too well. But also there is a tendency to get absorbed by the more conservative, the wealthier people.

OWENS: That's right. And there's a conflict of loyalties there. If you've been raised, let's say, you're Greek, and you're going to Greek Sunday school, and been inculcated with Greek culture, and so you have deep feelings toward your country. Whereas those of us who were not of that nationality were able to view it a little more dispassionately, and to love Greece, but at the same time realize that we were there as representatives of the American government, and our primary, only loyalty, really, was to the United States government.

Q: What was your impression of the role of the Greek press?

OWENS: Very irresponsible. In those days, I used to think of the American press, and to some extent the British press, as being models. I'm not so sure today, but certainly in comparison with the Greek press, with its sensationalism, the lack of reliance on fact, and appealing to some of the worst emotions. And that was one of the criticisms of George Papandreou, that he, and as it was to be even more so I think, of his son, Andreas Papandreou, that it played on the worst emotions of the Greeks. Their nationalistic passions, rather than the more long term constructive values. And I think George Papandreou was not above playing that card from time to time himself, and under the influence of his son. But that gets us into a whole different period of Greek history.

Q: We're talking about when Papandreou was there. Did you feel that there was more of a division in Greek political life, was this causing more of a polarization?

OWENS: Yes, I would have to say so. I should mention, I've written a chapter for a book on modern Greece, I think it was called: "PASOK in Power."

Q: PASOK being the party of...

OWENS: That was the party of Andreas Papandreou. But I did a psychological study of Andreas Papandreou for that book. The reason I mention that is one of my main themes was the entrance of Andreas Papandreou in the spring of 1964 in Greek political life, upped the stakes and intensified the polarization, which had always existed to some degree in Greek political life, in fact which had existed very strongly back in the '30s and '40s and earlier periods, but which had been somewhat dormant during the '50s and '60s. I think Andreas upped the stakes and made it either us or them. It turned it into a zero sum game, so that eventually, I think that by working that issue, he convinced the power structure that it was not possible for Greece to endure an eventual Andreas Papandreou government. George Papandreou always was felt as, well, many consider him superficial, but nevertheless there was a feeling that he was a man of ultimate moderation, that he was a politician of the old stripe, wanted to stay in power, and therefore he was not going to do extremely irresponsible things to upset the applecart.

Q: Now, here was Andreas Papandreou who'd been an American citizen, taught in American schools, etc...served in the American navy. We're trying to go back to the time. You were there when he turned into a Greek again.

OWENS: Yes. Exactly. I knew him well. He lived down the street. I lived on Odos Gizy out in Palio Psychiko, and he lived also on that street. Our children played together. I met him through Monty Stearns when I was still in Thessaloniki because Constantine Caramanlis, the leader of the conservative party, had brought him back in 1959, I believe, to head an economic research center, if I remember well. I think it was to Caramanlis's credit that he recognized the need for a scientific approach to improving the Greek economy, that he brought back the son of the opposition leader, George Papandreou. He brought back Andreas Papandreou. Of course, as you mentioned, Andreas, at that time, had a Ph.D. from Harvard, had served in the US Navy, had become a US citizen, taught at Northwestern University, and later became chairman of the Economics Department at Berkeley. No one knew that he might harbor any political ambitions, and I got to know him quite well when I took up the contact that Monty had had when I came down in '62. We became, I thought, rather good friends. He was an utterly charming man who seemingly understood the American political scene, and also had a scepticism about Greek politics, and indicated that he would not get into it. However, when the situation changed, he didn't enter into the 1963 elections. He was smart enough, although his father had tried to persuade him to join the party, he declined to keep his position. However, after George Papandreou won a plurality, he decided to throw his hat in the ring in 1964. Of course, it was a sure thing because he ran in his father's old constituency of Patras and was elected overwhelmingly to the seat. So he became a member of Parliament, was immediately appointed to a senior position in his father's cabinet. I would say that's when the situation changed.

Q: You know later, in a way, he was the catalyst that caused the April 22, 1967 coup?

OWENS: I would have used that precise word.

Q: But, here was somebody who was basically, from what you're describing, only a couple of years before, a rather benign, disinterested observer. What happened? Again, we're trying to go back to the perspective of how you're perceiving this.

OWENS: In looking back, I think some of us, certainly I began to examine more closely his behavior in the United States, and one noticed that in 1948, rather than supporting Harry S. Truman, he supported Henry Wallace, which suggested a not just liberal politician.

Q: Henry Wallace was the...?

OWENS: Henry Wallace was the so-called progressive party who was identified, although not a communist himself, was considered...Papandreou had supported Henry Wallace, a leader of the then progressive party, who was against the Marshall Plan, aid to Greece and Turkey. Although later Andreas returned to the more traditional democratic fold and supported Adlai Stevenson in '52 and '56 against Dwight Eisenhower, and took an active part in those campaigns. But I think that Andreas's wife, Margaret, in her book which I believe is titled "Democracy at Gun Point,"

describes the fact that Andreas did have a dual personality. On one side, he was a dispassionate American scholar, and on the other hand he became a very emotional Greek, completely subjective, and a believer in the Greek reality. So, there was this war within him, and Andreas, as I mentioned, I'd been personally reasonably close to him, as had a number of other members of the Embassy staff, and shortly after he became a member of his father's government, he began to distance himself from us, so that by the summer of '64, he took an extreme position towards the then head of USIA, a gentleman by the name of Vincent Joyce, and claimed that Vince Joyce, when he had called on him in connection with the American broadcasting in Greece, had pounded on his table and said: "You will do certain things." All of which, we on the Embassy staff, thought to be very dubious. Joyce was in the United States at the time when these charges came out, but although the government of George Papandreou never did declare Vince Joyce persona non grata, they did indicate to us that...the Foreign Minister of the time told us that Vincent Joyce would not be welcome back in Greece. He also had a Turkish wife, and the Cyprus question had erupted again. To make a long story short, he left Greece shortly thereafter, assigned to another post. This was Andreas's first ... He had been accused in the Greek press of being too pro-American. That was the accusations of his enemies, and I mean his enemies not just on the right, but his enemies within his father's party, the Center Union, as it was called at the time.

Q: Was this the time when we began to be concerned about him?

OWENS: Yes, beginning in 1964, that's correct. And not only the United States, but the power forces of Greece, by that I mean the army, the throne, the crown. Greek businessmen began to note that Andreas, more than others, tended to go for broke.

Q: He was very unGreek, in a way, wasn't he? Not the compromising, maneuvering...

OWENS: That's right. He showed a certain stridency, inflexibility, rigidity, and soon divided his father's own party, and we soon learned there was a split which they tried to paper over between father and son. It's one of the modern traumas of Greek life, the split between George and Andreas Papandreou. Because the father felt that Andreas was beginning to undermine his government, and so by the time an actual split in the party did come in the summer of 1965, a large group of the party bolted from George Papandreou.

Q: How were you able to cover this? Here you were dealing with the opposition. George Papandreou who was trying to run backwards to keep away from the Americans.

OWENS: When you say "deal with the opposition", this was actually the government.

Q: Not the opposition, but the split in the ruling party.

OWENS: Well, the Greek were quite willing to talk with us. I knew, for example, George Papandreou's private secretary, a man, and we became very good friends. He disliked Andreas. And then, other members of the government disliked Andreas, so it was easy to get the anti-Andreas line, from within the party, of course. Then there was the opposition, the former conservative party, but they were outside the loop, you might say. Then, we were easily able to

get the Andreas Papandreou line, not from him personally. He tended to avoid identification with the Americans. As I say, I think this is one of the factors that triggered this, the accusation that he was too closely identified, that he was more an American than a Greek. We felt, initially, that this was just an effort on his part to disprove that, but it turned out to be much deeper than that.

Q: What was the feeling about the communist party during this period and what was its influence?

OWENS: Well, the communist party was considered an agent of Moscow, and there was always the extreme right wing fear that there was a link between Andreas and the communists, which was very nebulous. I mentioned earlier that we began to look at Andreas's background, earlier back, when we were trying to understand the reason for his behavior. He had been, as a young law student in Athens before World War II, very active in the campaign against the then dictator Metaxas, at one time, was arrested by the agents of the dictatorship, and reportedly tortured, and informed on a number of his colleagues. It was shortly after that that his father, because of the impending crisis in Europe and then the German invasion, wanted to send him to the United States to continue his education, as many other prominent Greeks did. They sent their children to the United States, particularly their sons for education to keep them out of the war. Andreas was the most prominent among the group that did return to Greece in the '50s and early '60s who had established, became professors, for instance in American universities.

Q: Well, what about the communists? Did we have any dealings with them at the time?

OWENS: We did not. Our policy was to, had been the policy all the time that I had been in Greece and remained that way for a long time, not to have any dealings with the communist party, not to treat them as a legitimate opposition party, and so they were never invited, we were discouraged from having any social contact with them. The only things we would get would be the CIA reports of third party, you would say, that various communist figures said this or that. So that was our knowledge, really of the communist party, that, plus reading the AVGI, which was the communist mouthpiece. But in a sense, that was pretty much left to the agency to follow. We dealt with what was considered the legitimate political parties.

Q: There might be an official feeling, but within the Embassy, within let's say the political section, what was the feeling? Where were the Greek communists. Some of the communist parties are very much a tool of the Soviets and other ones have a real root within their own country?

OWENS: Yes. You have to remember, in the '60s, most of the communist parties of Europe were still under the control of Moscow. The Euro-communist was something that, at least in my experience, didn't really appear until the late '60s or early '70s.

Q: The Italians were always a little bit...

OWENS: The Italians, that is true, and I had never closely followed politics in Italy, but I did know that, whereas as I think in France, they were closely...

Q: ...marching to the exact drumbeat of the...

OWENS: That's right. And I think that was the feeling about the Greek communists. Obviously there were factions within the party, and there were tensions with Moscow, but since we weren't able to follow them, really weren't very aware of those.

Q: Could we talk a bit about the Embassy, because I think the Embassy in Greece has always been a place, Greek politics being such I think they grab people in, and you become partisan one way or the other. Could you talk a bit about some of the personalities within this and how they played, because you were in an interesting position?

OWENS: I know all of the gossip of the time.

Q: Let's talk about it.

OWENS: Alright. You mentioned the attitude of the leadership, the Embassy management I should say towards the political scene. I think we, at the working level, if I may use that term, the middle level reporting officers, felt that our leadership, our Ambassador, the DCM, and even the political Counselor who was H. Daniel Brewster at that time, were much more sympathetic towards the then government in power of Caramanlis, and it got to the point that, when we were reporting on the elections and how things were going, we were constantly doing sort of wrap-ups of, "Well, this week it seems that ..." Greece at that time did not have opinion polls at least not reliable ones. You really had to go out and do your soundings and follow the press, and follow the debates in Parliament, and we would say: "It looks as though Papandreou has momentum." And so you would do a piece, and reporting that, and it might pass through the political counselor, then it would get to the DCM and he would say..."Well, let's say Papandreou used the 'pie in the sky' approach..." And I remember this has stuck in my mind, "seems to be gaining some adherence." "Gee, this isn't an expression I would use." "Well, put that in." Then he'd go through the despatch or telegram and soften the criticism of the government and weaken any suggestion that maybe there were legitimate grievances that Papandreou was (exploiting). So, it was clear, and one of the things that always struck me, particularly on the social level, the Ambassador and the DCM were, so to speak, hobnobbing with the wealthy families in the society who, and almost always, not completely, but usually, were conservative and supported the Caramanlis government, which later became the opposition. Now I say there were some exceptions because some of the liberal families which supported the Center Union party also were quite monied, but they were the exceptions. Generally, the upper income businessmen, executives, top professionals, not all, but generally, also supported the conservatives. These were people who spoke English fluently, who did have the resources to entertain in their homes. Most, and this was interesting, most of the Center Union people tended to be much more likely to have come from humbler origin, either blue collar or rural, and who felt more comfortable with us on the lower level of the Embassy hierarchy as well, since we were not living in the grand houses that Embassy management was living in. But, the Ambassador, I think, felt quite, he became quite...

Q: This was Labouisse?

OWENS: Labouisse. I'm talking now about the period '63 to '65. Henry Labouisse became quite

friendly with Caramanlis. He did become quite friendly with one opposition leader who was not really of the left, and this was Spiros Markezinis, who led the small Progressive Party. And I remember now that we would all get together on election night, and follow the returns, usually at one of our houses, and the Ambassador would come, the Chief of Station would come, the DCM. I remember that Markezinis, when it became clear that night, not only did his party suffer badly that night, but he himself was not going to be reelected, that a wife of one of the officials present made a disparaging remark about Markezinis and the Ambassador stormed out furious. He was just angry that anyone would criticize his good friend. So, I think that there became a sense of personal involvement, which was as important as any ideological involvement. These were their friends, and they did not like to see them defeated.

Q: What about directions from Washington? We're talking about the desk which you later moved to and during this period before George Papandreou came into power? What was your feeling about the desk? You were in the Near-Eastern bureau at the time?

OWENS: We were in the Near Eastern bureau, and it was sort of the stepchild of the Near Eastern bureau. There was very little interest in Greece. Greece had had a certain sex appeal simply because it had been in the front lines of the struggles against communism back in the '40s. That was no longer the case. The US was gradually withdrawing its heavy AID package to Greece. We were still continuing military assistance, but it was felt that Greece had reached the take-off point, and like Taiwan, I guess Singapore at the time, it was felt that these were emerging countries that had passed the development stage.

Q: The take-off point was very much an In thing with Walter Rostow, wasn't it?

OWENS: That's right. Those were the buzz words of the early 1960s, and so that we no longer needed the paternal, the kind of direct economic grant aid that had characterized earlier periods. Greece was not in the forefront of Washington policy thinkers.

Q: So, really, the dynamics were coming, on policy, what there was, was really from the Embassy?

OWENS: Yes, you see, the desk pretty much monitored it, and the desk officers were usually middle level to lower senior level people, so you had much more... The dynamic was right at the Embassy itself, and so the Embassy pretty much set the policy. It was a case also where the State Department was together with the Agency, was running things, because you didn't have a great deal of White House interest, at that time.

Q: Also, I take it that Greece was not looked upon as an absolutely critical ally in a military sense, except for the fact that we had some bases that we wanted to keep.

OWENS: The bases were important, and it was important for the cohesiveness of the NATO alliance. But obviously Turkey always loomed a little larger in our calculation because of its much larger population and hence more significant defense capability. So, I think it was three times larger than that of Greece, as I recall.

Q: I know you've been doing some studies about how the Foreign Service should operate right now in 1992. But you, the dynamic, you're reporting about the more senior officers being sort of co-opted more into the conservative society because they speak English, and the junior officers were more likely to be language officers, being, you might say, more skeptical of conservative forces. This is not at all unique within Embassies, this is one that often goes on, isn't it?

OWENS: Oh yes, I think that's the case. I suspect that it pervades other aspects of American life. Probably your newspaper publisher is going to be more likely to be a golf playing friend of the big corporate executives, whereas the more junior journalist is going to be dealing with the radical... So it's quite a natural division of labor. In a sense, we were left the crumbs from the table, and they were generally the opposition. If we reported on the government in power during the pre-Center Union days, it was usually sort of a second hand from what the political counselor, or the Deputy Chief of Mission would come back from a dinner, and tell us.

Q: As a practical measure, from what you're saying, Washington really did not have a firm policy. This later became very much a point in a conspiracy theory of what we did later on. It sounds as though we're reporting, yes, but we're reporting almost to a vacuum back in Washington.

OWENS: Relatively little interest back in Washington. Greece had to be monitored because it was considered a volatile society, and since it was a member of NATO, something you had to keep your eye on, but it was not by any means on the front burner. It was not causing major problems until 1965, so that I would say for the first five years of my tour there, Greece was relatively tranquil. The State Department had pretty much its own way, and the Embassy in particular set pretty much the policy, essentially not to rock the boat.

Q: Also the Greek-American community was not as mobilized as it became really after 1970 on, in the United States, and its great power in Congress. You didn't feel it as much, did you?

OWENS: Absolutely. We met the AHEPA officials when they came out, but they were not a major focus of the Embassy. In other words, the Ambassador knew that he had to entertain them when the AHEPA, the American Hellenic Society in the United States came. Their leaders were of course given proper respect, but they were not a major force because they were not making themselves felt politically in the United States, to the extent they did later.

Q: There were no particular issue to galvanize them.

OWENS: Many Greeks continue to be split on the Greek political scene, although the Greek-American has been more partial, in general, towards the conservative government, and less partial towards the Papandreous, father and son.

Q: Do we talk now of the after '65 development, the development after the split? What was the George Papandreou party called?

OWENS: It was called the Enosis Kentro, which in English translates Center Union. The two parties were the ERE party of then Panayiotis Kanellopoulos, the successor to Caramanlis,

because Caramanlis had sulked in Paris, and George Papandreou led Enosis Kentro. We want to talk also about the royal family and their role in this.

Q: As we mentioned at the end of the last tape, there are two things that we ought to talk about. One is the political events of 1965 and the other is the role of the monarchy. Which would you like to tackle first?

OWENS: I think you can intertwine them, because it was in '65 that the government of George Papandreou was forced out of office. Essentially it was the King who forced him out.

Q: This would have been ... Which king was this?

OWENS: Constantine. Constantine, was still very much influenced by his mother, Frederika who was the widow of the late King Paul who had died in 1964.

Q: What was the political section's analysis when the King died and the ascent of the new king Constantine who was still relatively young.

OWENS: I think it had been felt that he had been somewhat of a playboy, and he had never buckled down to serious issues, had not finished the university, was most known for his touring around town in a convertible and always with attractive women. However, he settled down after he ascended the throne. I think he was very devoted to his father and was deeply shocked by his death. As often happens in the Embassies, the royal family, while not off limits to those of us in the political section, was pretty much the province of the Ambassador and DCM, certainly not lower than DCM, and perhaps the Chief of Station. But whereas we felt very comfortable with the political figures of the day with whom we had excellent contacts, our knowledge of the royal family was filtered through what we got from the top and what our political contacts told us about the royal family. It was clear that the royal family was displeased with George Papandreou, not so much with George as by the antics of his son, Andreas.

The King was informed by the Minister of Defense, Garoufalias was his name, that there seemed to be a secret organization called "Aspida" within the Greek military, and that it seemed to be loyal only to Andreas Papandreou. That it was a radical, or at least seemingly socialistic type of organization, made up apparently of only a few officers. Nevertheless, it was very disturbing to the royal family which considered itself to have a special relationship with the armed forces, and any tampering with the armed forces would be viewed with great alarm by the monarchy. So, in the summer of 1965, the King called for several private meetings between the King and George Papandreou. Papandreou in the summer of 1965 announced that he was resigning. Then the King attempted to establish a new government. Of course the Center Union had a majority in the Parliament, so there was no way he could get members of the conservative ERE party to form a government, since it wouldn't have enough seats, even if it combined with the communist party, which it would not do in any case.

So what happened was that efforts were made to obtain defectors from the Center Union. It was known that there was a large group within the Center Union which was dissatisfied with the policies of George Papandreou. Again, not so much with George Papandreou as with Andreas,

and this was particularly the Minister of Finance, Constantinos Mitsotakis, who considered himself the heir apparent to George Papandreou, and who had been groomed as the next successor, the next Prime Minister, until Andreas entered the picture with his entry into Greek politics, in 1964. So that made Mitsotakis uncertain about his own future. He and Andreas, during '64 and '65 indulged in a rather public feud as to the future leadership of the party.

In any event, three efforts were made to form a government during the summer of 1965, first by Athanassiadis Novas, who had been speaker of the government and also a member of George Papandreou's party. Then another effort, later in the summer by Elias Tsirimokos, who had been a minister also and in Papandreou's party, and then finally by Stephen Stephanopoulos who was the Vice Premier, the Deputy Prime Minister, and he succeeded in forming a government based... There were some thirty-odd defectors, as they were called from the Center Union party, who formed a government with the support of the conservative ERE party which gave them a bare majority. I think there were 300 seats in the Parliament in those days, and the ERE party had approximately 120. So they were able to get a bare majority of 151, I think. 151 or 152. But the conservative government deputies did not actively participate in the government. So you had a government composed of the thirty-odd defectors of the Center Union and such people as Stephanopoulos, Mitsotakis, Tsirimokos, etc. Of course, Mitsotakis is today the Prime Minister.

It was said at the time that these people who had defected would never be accepted again by any party, that they would be permanently branded with the label of traitor because they had left Papandreou. But they were able to cloak under the guise, legitimate or not, of national salvation, that the country was in a terrible state. Although many of the people who participated in that government are deceased by now, are retired from politics, Mitsotakis is still very much in the picture. During that period of '65, it was a very exciting period for those of us in the Embassy, certainly for me covering the Greek domestic political scene, because Papandreou was determined that the new government would not succeed, so each time that they would have a vote of confidence on these three successive tries over those months...in fact I can't recall what month it was finally voted in, I think it was late September. Each time Papandreou would have his followers outside the Parliament building in downtown Athens, chanting for Papandreou, denouncing the defectors as traitors, putting a lot of pressure on them. There were a number of violent street demonstrations during that time. The political tempers really heated up. I remember going to one rally which got out of hand and the police fired tear gas and I got a whiff of it, which I didn't like very much. So it was an interesting period, we would go back to the Embassy at night, and type up the cables, even if no one was paying much attention in Washington, it was very exciting for us.

Q: Wasn't there a feeling in the Embassy that this might move into civil insurrection?

OWENS: Yes, I think even dictatorship. We knew that the military was uneasy about the course of events. They felt that you were really in uncharted waters now. The king had forced a government out, and created a government that was not really a popularly elected government, even though these people had all on their own been elected, but under the Papandreou banner. Andreas Papandreou, of course, who was never reluctant to indulge in extreme rhetoric went even further and talked about the sinister forces, in which he would include the United States, the crown, the army, and far beyond what his own father wanted. In fact I remember that after the

coup, Andreas Papandreou tells in his own book, that when he first saw his father, after they had both been arrested by the Junta, a couple of days after the coup d'etat, that the father accused him, "You brought this on us by your antics, by your extreme ways."

Q: Had we gotten any information/warning from the military, or the CIA, as it came to you about Andreas and his dealings with Aspida?

OWENS: Actually, very little. Well Aspida was investigated even during the time of the Stephanopoulos government which ruled throughout the rest of '65, and then throughout '66, but nothing conclusive ever came out of it. Even the Junta was unable to really prove these charges. There was something, and this is only a surmise on my part, that it was a loose association of like-minded, shall we say, progressive officers who looked to Andreas Papandreou for a new Greece, more modern type of government. So, it seemed to have been much to do about nothing. But beyond the specifics of Aspida, the king and the conservative establishment generally were disturbed by Andreas. George Papandreou after all was from old cut of typical politicians. Many conservative Greeks thought he was all talk and no action, a blowhard. He was an excellent orator and a very charming person, but certainly one who was not going to endanger the republic, the Kingdom I should say. Andreas Papandreou, though, with his American ways and his militancy which he had developed during the course of being in the civil rights movement and also he supported even within the American political spectrum, was far to the left, he supported Henry Wallace rather than Harry Truman in '48, which suggested that he was quite far to the left.

Q: Looking at the King again, realizing that this was not your contact, but in your reporting, what were you getting from the Ambassador and the DCM, as far as the King and his relations with his mother, on the political side?

OWENS: Well, I think two things. Certainly that the mother was very influential, that she paid a great deal of attention to Greek politics, probably too much, and that the King was somewhat unsure of himself, but had become convinced that the Papandreous were a threat, if not directly to the monarchy, certainly to the Greek conservative traditional establishment, let us say. Andreas, if he were to come to power, because his popularity increased dramatically after this, and there was a feeling that if elections were held that Andreas might...although it would still be led by his father, that the father might step down or in any case might die since he was I think at the time '77 or '78 when he was forced out. There was a general feeling that they could live with George Papandreou and with the rather traditionalist, if slightly more liberal members of the Center Union who were in the George Papandreou government. They could not live with an Andreas Papandreou type of government. I think this is the most important fact, that Andreas represented forces and ideas, possibilities, which the powers that be generally felt that they could not live with. But the monarchy itself...from the Ambassador, first it was Henry Labouisse, then later Phillips Talbot, were getting indications from their meetings with the royal family...and also we did have contacts further down the scale. Norb Anschutz, the deputy chief of mission, used to meet with Major Arnaoutis who was the Chef de Cabinet of the King, then a young army officer, who was a good contact, and Norb probably talked to you about that. So, then I think that Norb had a good feel for...

Q: Norbert Anschutz was the DCM and came there...

OWENS: In '64, I would say end of '64.

Q: You had mentioned Tapley Bennett, that he took a more conservative line. How about with Anschutz, because this was your channel, we're talking about the...

OWENS: That's right. Anschutz was completely open and displayed no biases, we felt in the political section, he was very open and wanted to let the chips fall where they may.

Q: You felt that it was more open?

OWENS: Definitely. He was a very popular DCM, and I certainly admired him. I felt that he had an excellent sense of judgment, and wanted us simply to get the facts, unpleasant and unpalatable as they might be.

Q: You were in Athens into '66? How long were you there?

OWENS: I was there four years, and I'd been two years earlier in Thessaloniki. So I spent a total of 6 years. I was a Deputy Principal Officer up at Thessaloniki and Political Officer.

Q: When did you leave Athens?

OWENS: In July, August of '66.

Q: How did you see things shaking out?

OWENS: I thought they looked very ominous. I did do a paper and I think it was for Elizabeth Bracken. You mentioned Elizabeth Brown, so they've had two women Political Counselors in Athens. I had forgotten that. Anyway, Elizabeth Bracken succeeded Alfred Vigderman who had succeeded Dan Brewster as Political Counselor. I did a paper saying that my contacts...I had got to know a General Saicellariou who was Chief of Staff of the Army. I'd known him over the years because he had been in Thessaloniki while I was there, and he had been Deputy Commander of the 3rd Army. He was speaking rather ominously that he was concerned over the way things were going. My own feeling, and I think it was shared by many in the Embassy, was that there was a danger of a coup, but that it would come from the Generals. This was a belief I had...

Q: This was the standard, everything was predicated on this.

OWENS: That's right. That it would come from the very top of the army and not from the Colonel level which threw everyone off, of course, the agency... I then proceeded, I might say, to the desk, and I was on the desk at the time of the coup.

Q: You were on the desk from '67 to...

OWENS: No, from late '66.

Q: So, when you got to the desk, how did you see the situation shaping up?

OWENS: Very unstable. We were worried about what was going to happen. And indeed, the Stephanopoulos government finally fell. I believe it was in December '66, at which time it was replaced by a minority government headed by Panayiotis Kanellopoulos who had been the Deputy to Caramanlis and who had led the ERE party while Caramanlis sat in Paris. Caramanlis was still in self-imposed exile. And the King promised to take the country to elections, which as you know were scheduled within a month from the time the coup occurred.

Q: The coup was on April 22nd, 1967.

OWENS: That's right.

Q: It was emblazoned all over the hills and everything else.

OWENS: Oh, was it?

Q: Yes.

OWENS: It was April 21st for us, because Greece being six hours ahead. Let's see, that was April. 6 or 7 hours ahead. We got the word at about 8:30, 9 o'clock at night. I remember rushing back.

Q: Before we get to that...You had this peculiar thing of Greece being plunked down to the Near-East within the Washington bureaucracy. It was part of the Near-Eastern Bureau at that time and we've alluded to this before.

OWENS: We were outside the mainstream.

Q: Being in the Near-Eastern Bureau, you were sort of the unruly stepchild?

OWENS: That's correct. I would say that earlier when I came to the desk, it was then the Greek Country Directorate. However, the year before and for the previous many years, it had been an office called the Greece, Turkey, and Iran, the GTI, which also included Cyprus. We tended to be grouped then by a DAS who was in charge...

Q: Deputy Assistant Secretary of State?

OWENS: Deputy Assistant Secretary of State who was Stuart Rockwell, who had served in Iran, and I think also as Ambassador to Morocco. He knew the Islamic world quite well. He was less familiar with Greece, but was nevertheless a very astute individual. We were not in the mainstream.

Q: When you were talking, I assume when you were reporting on this, I don't want to put words in your mouth, but you had interesting stories to tell, but there was no essential rapport there.

OWENS: That's right, and at the big staff meetings, the attention given Greece was minimal. Director H. Daniel Brewster generally attended, but sometimes it fell to me. I handled the political side. Milner Dunn handled the economic side. When I went there, I noticed people would listen patiently and then ask few questions. The word was from Dunn to be brief, because they weren't terribly interested. Now, once, later, when the coup did occur, then interest suddenly peaked. It was quite intense. So you're absolutely correct. We were out of the mainstream and not of great interest to the Near-Eastern Bureau which was headed by Luke Battle, Lucius Battle who was the Assistant Secretary of State. They did what was necessary. If a prominent Greek came to town, the Foreign Minister, they would trot out and attend the luncheon that the Greeks would give. We would usually be able to get the Greek Foreign Minister. I remember going to see the Deputy Secretary who was called the Under Secretary, I think. Nicholas Katzenbach, with the then Foreign Minister. But generally there was minimal interest, a very limited interest in Greece in those days.

Q: You were looking at this coldly from Washington, were you not, with some distance? What was the feeling about... OK, if Andreas Papandreou, under the auspices of his father George, wins the elections, the PASOK, so what?

OWENS: Well, I thought that Andreas was taking an increasingly anti-American line. I did feel it would be inimical, disadvantageous to American interests if Andreas Papandreou were elected. Yes, I did, looking at it coldly from the point of view of US interests. US bases, Greek participation in NATO.

Q: Did you think really this would be at issue. In a way, Greece was in NATO with its bases for one reason and one alone really, and that was for Greek interests to balance off Turkey. If Greece opted out, we just moved in greater numbers to Turkey.

OWENS: Well, I think there were a couple of factors there, through. I agree it was definitely in Greece's interest to be in NATO, and later to be in the EEC. But Andreas, as I considered him a somewhat irresponsible leader, was certainly not beyond doing a disservice to Greek interests as well. I think states often do things that are opposed to their long term interests to satisfy the passions of the moment. But actually, the reason was a little deeper than that. It was the feeling that the Greek democracy was of some fragility and that it would probably not hold together if Andreas came to power, that maybe the right wing might move in a way as we talked earlier of a General's coup, that somehow autocratic forces would come, that you would have instability, and possibly a rightist takeover. So, it was not only the thought that if Andreas came into power, he would take Greece out of NATO. It was clear that the power forces of Greece would not permit that. That before he would succeed, he would probably be overthrown. So we saw that this was leading probably to chaos. So we hoped, if not a conservative moderate victory, at least a stalemate, so that Andreas would not be in power and checked. But I certainly felt that we should not support any extra-legal activities.

Q: Were there any within the State Department who were advocating doing this? This was after the Kennedy administration, but still the Johnson which was a ...

OWENS: At the State Department, no one advocated it, but some went along with it. I think they were persuaded that the ends justified the means. I don't think there was a lot of enthusiasm, but the agency people could be persuasive.

Q: How about the military, how did they feel?

OWENS: They were not involved, to the best of my knowledge.

Q: As a practical measure, I'm sure, knowing how the agency worked in those days, that they would have had a solid number of Greek politicians on the payroll.

OWENS: Yes, that was clear. I felt that all during the time I was there. We used to joke, and I'm sure it was said at other U.S. missions, that they paid for what we were getting free. But somehow, the fact that it would come in as from a confidential source, and you as political officer might get it directly, say from the Prime Minister's secretary or from a leading member of a party, didn't seem to have quite the same mystical appeal that the agency reports would from undisclosed sources.

Q: It's pernicious. I had the same thing when I was in Athens later. How did the coup impact then, what was the reaction as you were seeing it from the Embassy and from other sources?

OWENS: Well, I did a paper about fifteen years ago on the coup and on the perspective of what happened in Washington. I sent it to the Department about five years ago for clearance and it recently came back. Most of the juicy parts, including the exchange of cables with the Embassy during the first days, and so on, were all deleted. Much of this as you know is still classified.

Q: This is an unclassified interview, but what you can say...

OWENS: Well, I would say that the impact was one of shock. I remember being called down to the Op Center. Dan Brewster and I were both called down. I think Stuart Rockwell came in. Later on Luke Battle came wearing a black tie. He had been at a dinner party. So, we had gotten a curt message from the Ambassador saying that he had been unable to get to the Embassy and that there were troops in the street, etc. Later on during the night it was confirmed that there had been a coup. He had been able to talk with several people, several political leaders, and he learned that Kanellopoulos, the conservative prime minister had been arrested. That the colonels had gone out to see the King who had first told them to get lost, but eventually agreed to talk to them. It was a sleepless night in Athens, and also for us back in Washington. Then the question became one of what we should do, some of us advocating a tougher line, not giving any recognition to the junta, others saying the old justification of a dictatorship that at least we won't have Andreas, and things will get done efficiently. We decided on a cool, but correct policy. We drafted the message which was subsequently issued by the Secretary of State.

Q: Can we go back. "We decided on a cool, but correct policy." How was a policy decision like this...

OWENS: Well, it was hammered out. First we would meet, let us say, with Stuart Rockwell who

was the Deputy Assistant Secretary in charge of our area. That is Dan Brewster, Milner Dunn and myself, then we would be joined by the INR people, and then later we would go to further meetings with agency personnel. Then it would sort of leave that level and Rockwell would go up and discuss it with Battle, and it would go up to the Secretary. I think that State had initially the lead on this. Whatever State wanted to do at that time, in the early first couple of days probably would have prevailed.

Q: What was coming in from the Embassy? What role were they playing?

OWENS: Well, a tough role. Now, the King did seek our support, and there was some thought we could maybe even make a landing, bring in the marines to overthrow the junta. This was not formally proposed, but it would have been rejected out of hand. We had after all, the Dominican Republic fiasco, and it was the sense that we didn't want to go down that road again. But it certainly showed that the King initially, in fact throughout this time, disliked the junta, did not support it, and as you know, tried eventually to mount a counter coup in December which failed, and he was forced to flee.

Q: Did you have the feeling that there might be a right wing coup by the generals?

OWENS: Yes, that had been feared. The King and our Ambassador had gone in before the coup, saying that he was hearing these rumblings. We wanted to make it clear that we would not support any kind of forcible overthrow of a democratic government. We weren't thinking that they would overthrow Kanellopoulos, the fear was that maybe just at the time of elections, or as soon as they saw the results, the right wing effort might be undertaken.

Q: Do you think our reaction might have been different, had this been generals rather than these sort of unknown colonels?

OWENS: You mean less strong?

Q: Less strong, yes.

OWENS: No, because I don't think it was that strong, from my own point of view. You know, our "cool, but correct" policy gradually mellowed. Once things were set in place, and it was clear that the junta was in power, then the pressures began to come from the military, and because we halted some shipments of military assistance which was going to go. And of course, the military were saying...

Q: You're talking about our military?

OWENS: Our military. US military shipments to the Greek government. The Department of Defense immediately took the line: "We're only hurting our friends if we do this, (take a tough line towards the junta) Greece will be weakened in NATO, who knows maybe Moscow might make points in Greece if we took a tough line..." The agency took that line too. Unfortunately, our leadership, I felt, was not strong in maintaining a demand for a tougher line. So, as often happens, State gradually caved. We agreed within a few weeks not to intercede with Litton

Industries which was negotiating a major project, an agreement to construct a major project in the Peloponnese, Patras, I think. This was a coup for the Papadopoulos government because it showed that it was gaining respectability. And so gradually, the tough line eroded.

Now I left the desk by the fall. I was pretty disgusted. I felt that in any event, I'd spent seven years on Greece, either in Greece or... Well, really eight years, since I had spent a year studying the language. So I had involved eight years of my career in Greece and it was time to move on. But I was dissatisfied with... I felt, in those very early days, that we, even at the country directorate level, because of our knowledge, we were dealing with a situation where we knew Greece and most of our superiors did not. They were very dependent upon us. People acquired superficial expertise then very quickly in the months that followed. Suddenly there were a lot of instant Greek experts as interest in Greece intensified in the Congress as Papandreou supporters in the general American academic community, and to some extent in the Greek American community which began to get fired up and put pressure on Congress to do something, first of all about Andreas Papandreou, but also about the junta.

Q: Were you able to play the media off, at least as much as you could. This was very unpopular both in Congress and in the media. No matter what it is in the academic world, Greece and democracy go together, it is a Greek word? So this one hit close to home. Also within Europe too, you might say that the whole intellectual academic community and the media...

OWENS: Well, I thought it was a great opportunity lost. We would be on the side of the angels. The tough guys always seem to prevail in this kind of a situation. I went to a number of meetings... (end of side 1 of tape 2)

OWENS: You didn't have to be particularly perceptive to realize that eventually the chickens would come home to roost and we would pay a price for this and that we would be blamed in Greece and I was thinking also, historically, blamed by the world if we supported the junta and therefore we should take a very tough line. They (the apologists for the junta) would answer, "well, the military and the agency have teamed up on this" and they would say: "well, all well and good" the implication was that an anti-junta line was rather polyandrich, that you're dealing in impractical idealistic terms, the point that Greece is a NATO ally, we need it, the Greeks have done it to themselves, it's not up to us to determine the justness of it, and it is in effect the government that's in power, and therefore we should go along with, work with it and we can influence them, supposedly, by working with them, that line... To me it was so clear that we would pay a price and that we had a chance. I feel that a great moment of opportunity was there, had we had strong leadership in the Department, I think it could have prevailed, because I think the top leadership, I mean the government leadership, the US government could have been persuaded to take a tougher line.

Q: You're talking...it sounds like the real decision making was the Department of State, the Pentagon, and the CIA.

OWENS: That's correct.

Q: And it wasn't the Johnson White House weighing in that particularly area.

OWENS: Not particularly. I certainly was not aware of that. There were Greek-Americans who were influential in the Johnson administration, but presumably some of them would have been against the coup as well. I think, generally, the Greek-American community was split, the majority disliking Andreas Papandreou, but with a minority supporting him. But in any case, the junta was not popular, particularly initially. So, I think the one thing that was anticipated, the Johnson administration would not support any enterprise which would involve military intervention. It was never tried, but I remember when this proposal came in, and I thought, "Hey, you know that's an interesting idea." It was shot down immediately by people at a much lower level saying that this would not fly, and we were told to draft a cable telling the Embassy to make sure that the King understands that there is no, repeat no possibility of military intervention, in case he was thinking of it.

Q: There was the experience of the British in 1944 getting caught between both sides.

OWENS: Yes, I'm not saying that there wasn't a valid intellectual argument for not doing that. But in any event, whether we might have done something less than military intervention but a much tougher line, it seems to me we would have protected our long term interest in Greece.

Q: I wonder if you could comment. It seems that there's two roles, there are different roles. One is, the State Department is supposed to look at the long term political implications. The military has a tendency to look at the very short term, and the CIA also tends to look at the short term. Was this your impression?

OWENS: Yes, I would say so. Their fear and perhaps a basic conservative bias on the part of the agency, and particularly the military. I think the dislike of Andreas and what he represented was much stronger there, inside the agency, and certainly among the military because they were getting this from an anti-Andreas line all the time from their counterparts in the Greek military. So, they considered it (the coup) unfortunate, but not that great a tragedy, and probably thought of it as the lesser of two evils that a right wing dictatorship took over.

Q: I arrived there in 1970 and there seemed by that time a rather close marriage with both our military officers, many of whom were of Greek extraction, and of the CIA, with the Papadopoulos regime. It was not a distant relationship. I'd say probably our Embassy was odd person out on that, in a way.

OWENS: That's right. But we had had, as I mentioned, we had excellent contact with the previous government, the Papandreou government, and also with the government of Stephanopoulos, because they had been the outs for so long that many of us had cultivated close relationships with their people, [and who were at the height of power when they were overthrown], whereas we didn't know the military at all. I had no military contacts, except this one general whom I knew, but that was unique.

WILLIAM TAPLEY BENNETT, JR.

**Deputy Chief of Mission
Athens (1961-1964)**

William Tapley Bennett Jr. was born in Georgia in 1917. He served in the Dominican Republic, Austria, Portugal and a variety of assignments in Washington. He was ambassador to both the Dominican Republic and Portugal. The interview was conducted by Horace Torbert in 1988.

BENNETT: So I was thrown into the breach so to speak. And not knowing a word of Greek and being literally language tired at that stage, having spent my time getting Italian under my tongue for a little bit. I had an enormously active and interesting five weeks in Rome with lots of things happening including Congressional visits and an audience with Pope John XXIII. There was the Rome horse show, to be superficial, set amidst the pines of Rome and one of the most beautiful events of its kind in the world. And my first dealings with the South Tyrol, or the Alto Adige problem from the Italian side, having dealt with it from Vienna for four years. And some of the Middle East problems were coming to bear in Rome. In any event, I was getting underway. It was a lovely Embassy in that handsome palace on the Via Veneto -- probably the best office I ever had in the Foreign Service as far as physical splendor and elegance goes. It's rather an over-ornate palace, as a matter of fact, but it looks good. And, the Roman spring is not to be dismissed. But I knew that I would get no sympathy if I complained to personnel about being transferred from Rome to Athens. There was nothing to do but pack up and go.

As it happened, the word came the very day that Margaret arrived. We were being given our opening reception by Outerbridge Horsey, who was in charge. The word came just as we were closing up to go home to this reception. I got home and Margaret was in the tub, getting ready for the party. I said, it's a good thing you're lying down because I have news for you. We've just been transferred to Athens! And Outer with typical savoir faire had said, well, we'll just go ahead and have the party. We'll say nothing about your transfer, and you will leave next week and no one will ever remember that you were here. Which is exactly what happened. But I'll always remember that brief period in Rome. And I've always insisted on listing it in my experience.

Q: One of your posts. The amount of work you put in on it that qualifies. Well, now let's see. In Athens at the time you went there who was -- Karamanlis.

BENNETT: Karamanlis was Prime Minister. It was a very exciting spring. Mind you, this was May of 1961. It was just the beginning of the Kennedy administration. And the Karamanlis couple, she was a very attractive person, had come over to Washington in March or April. This had been the first visit of the Kennedy Administration. The two couples had taken to each other. That had led to an invitation to Mrs. Kennedy to visit Greece. And so, ten days after I took charge of the embassy, she came on her famous visit which introduced modern Greece to the world and really put it on the map.

I was brand new. But I learned fast. We had to give an after-theater party for her when the Greek theater put on one of the Greek tragedies in the famous amphitheater up on the Acropolis, at the foot of the Acropolis. So we had the top 50 Greeks to a post-theater party. Well, that's how you meet people in a hurry. That was an interesting episode.

Greece at that time of year is absolutely marvelous. I only got three or four hours sleep each night. But you didn't need more. It was so exuberant, the whole atmosphere. You didn't realize until months later that you hadn't had much sleep. Greece is a frenetic place always. Athens was then a city of close to two million. But every Greek expected to be invited to every embassy function. The pace was just electric.

We had real problems with the Greeks, as we always do, on substance. Greece is a principal anchor of NATO in the Mediterranean. And we had a NATO Foreign Ministers meeting while I was there in Athens. It's a place that's just busy all the time. We had some very important installations there, communications for intelligence and that sort of thing. Then the Greek economic situation always needs attention and Andreas Papandreou had just come back from America during that period, the present Papandreou. His father George was very active politically and was elected Prime Minister before I left the country. But Andreas had just come back and had established a macro-economic institute, which was exactly what Greece needed. He was doing fine work. He had, as you know, been head of the Economics Department at the University of California and was very well thought of among American economists, particularly the new economists in the Kennedy Administration. So he had good entrée in Washington. And I remember taking Teddy Kennedy --

Q: Ambassador Bennett, you were just in the middle of a very interesting story about Greece. Can you go on with it?

BENNETT: Yes, I recall that Teddy Kennedy came out that winter. That was the winter of '62, about February of '62. And he was not yet 30. He was waiting to be 30 so he could be elected Senator from Massachusetts, where he still is to this day, as you know, in the Senate. So I took Teddy and introduced him to Andreas Papandreou, the economist. Then Papandreou Père, Old George, became Prime Minister. He was determined to get his son into politics and out of economics with the results that we all know today.

Q: Sometimes to our discomfort.

BENNETT: Yes, it's the chance you take. But I have seen the Prime Minister several times when I was Ambassador to NATO; and he always remembered the summer of '61 when life was simpler and he was working on economics.

As I say, the three top positions of the Embassy were empty when I went there. The Ambassador didn't come back for several months. Had it not been for Ernie Colantonio, who was a very fine Administrative Officer and ran things, I wouldn't have gotten through it. But running a place is not all that difficult if you have good people. It's not knowing the personalities and not knowing the people you're dealing with that makes it difficult. The person who was the most help there and who's gone on to a distinguished career of his own was Monty Stearns, Monteagle Stearns who served, I believe, three times in Greece, including recently as Ambassador. He is probably the best Greek hand that the State Department has had for many years. Well, Monty was very junior at the time, in 1962. He was, I guess, Second Secretary. But he knew the place. His Greek was good. He and his wife, he had just recently married Tony Riddleberger, the daughter of

Jimmy Riddleberger, were enormously helpful.

Q: *Jimmy, yes.*

BENNETT: Who'd also been Ambassador around different places, including Austria. So Monty saw me through the summer. And we had an election going on. And we prevented, were instrumental in preventing, the formation of a popular front between one of the Greek parties, the Venizelos Party and the communists, for which I was denounced on Moscow radio. That was heady stuff at the time, to find yourself on the Moscow broadcast. But we prevented, along with other work that was done, the formation of this popular front with the result that you had a true election there.

And the Karamanlis forces won. They were the most conservative of the two, although they were both pretty conservative, to be frank about it. You didn't have much of a socialist movement in Greece in those days. But anyway, the Karamanlis forces won. And so we continued with a very active political life. Briggs was the Ambassador, Ellis Briggs, at the time I went there. And he again was one of the great figures of our career service.

He was succeeded by Henry Labouisse for the last two years of my stay in Greece. Labouisse was one of the world's great gentlemen with a distinguished career, both in private life and in a succession of government posts. His wife was Eve Curie, the daughter of Madame Curie. And she was a personage in her own right. We had a most happy two years serving as Deputy to the Labouisse.

Time was wearing on, and I came down with a bad case of amoebic dysentery. That was a fairly serious thing at the time. But the doctor said to me at one point, what you need really is a change to another climate, such as a trip to Switzerland; that will kill out these bugs. I sat bolt upright and said, if you mean that, I'm ready to leave tomorrow. Because I love Switzerland anyway. So we did go up midwinter and went to a ski place. Margaret did a little skiing. I sat and watched. I've never had any recurrence. So the doctor was right.

Q: *Right prescription.*

BENNETT: The Greeks were funny about this; they couldn't believe, they weren't willing to admit that anything bad like that could happen in Greece. So they said that the amoebas didn't come from any of us Greeks. They came from these people who'd just come back in the Greek return from Egypt. You remember Nasser was throwing the age-old Greek community out and they were coming home to Greece. So the Greeks all said, well, that only came from those people, not from us.

Then came on the terrible assassination of President Kennedy. We were at a dinner at the Dutch Embassy, a very stiff and starchy place in those days, and I was suddenly called away from the table to the 'phone. Being fairly junior at the dinner I was embarrassed at leaving the table. It was the Embassy calling saying that the President had been shot, but they didn't know any details. I went back to the table and Margaret at the other end of the table looked at me. I, of course, didn't give any sign. Shortly after that I was called away again. The Dutch Ambassador didn't look too

happy, but I got up and went. The caller advised me that the President was dead and asked me to come to the Embassy as soon as possible because books were being opened for people to sign.

We excused ourselves, of course, and went straight to the Embassy. Already people were lining up. They came in streams for three days. President Kennedy was an enormously popular figure and, of course, Mrs. Kennedy's interest in Greece was something that the Greeks were very proud of. There was an official Te Deum at the Cathedral with the King and Queen and all the -- and I just interpolate there to say that Greece was my first experience with royalty. Royalty adds an extra dimension to diplomacy. It's a whole different level of people you have to deal with, and you sometimes feel it doesn't have much to do with the real world. But it's very real in the country in which you're stationed. It takes a lot of your time. It has both pluses and minuses.

It's also productive of some of the best stories that one tells after you leave the place such as the time that I escorted the King and Queen, in fact the whole royal family including the fiancé of Princess Sophia who's presently the King of Spain, Juan Carlos, on their first visit to a nuclear submarine. I won't take up the time here to go through that. But that's quite a story. There were a lot of other things like that.

Lyndon Johnson was now President. Tom Mann was Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America, soon to move up to be Under Secretary for Economic Affairs then the number three post in the Department. In January 1964 I suddenly got a call that the President wanted me to go as Ambassador to the Dominican Republic. In fact, I got a personal telegram from the President. That was very exciting. I left Athens in a hurry and stopped in Spain on the way home for a quick visit with Bob and Ginny Woodward. Bob was then Ambassador in Madrid. Margaret said, as she always does, she pays, packs and follows. She'd rather get me out of the house before she packs up because I like to keep things. And she knows what to throw away.

PETER B. SWIERS
Consular Officer
Athens (1961-1964)

Peter Swiers was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. He graduated from New York University and entered the Foreign Service in 1961. He served in Greece, Germany, the USSR, Malaysia, and Denmark. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1994.

Q: *What was the situation like in Athens at the time?*

SWIERS: This is very interesting. I would like to get into that in some detail. I think a number of us remember in the A-100 course when one gentleman came to talk to us (he was the dean of the Language School) about the importance of languages. His name was Lionel Summer. I have to say that it was sort of funny and it was sad in a way because he was acting Japanese. All of his characteristics and mannerisms were Japanese. I thought he was putting us on at first; then we realized he wasn't. I have to say that at that moment (and a lot of us felt that way) that while we

wanted to learn foreign languages, we wanted to be careful that in the process of learning them we would not acquire the characteristics of another culture because as a Foreign Service officer you still should be seen as and look like an American. I had to throw that in - those little memories that come back. I still can see him to this day.

Q: I think this is true for many of us, particularly coming in in the post World War II period when many of our superiors seemed to speak a language which was what one might now describe as mid-Atlantic, but it was a different accent. It was sort of an upper class Boston or New York accent but it seemed a too little precious to many of us. We didn't come from that society.

SWIERS: I remember the first time I met Wells Stabler, I didn't realize he was an American.

Q: I know it.

SWIERS: My mother was very fussy. Coming from Brooklyn we were always being kidded about it. Well, I'm a New Yorker and you can hear it, but I don't think that I have anything of what people tend to call a Brooklyn accent and neither did she and my father spoke well too. She used to say to people that was just because of Leo Durocher and he's not even from Brooklyn.

Q: What was the situation in Greece? You got there in 1961 and how long were you there?

SWIERS: I was there from December 1961 to December 1963. I arrived just after the October 1961 election when Karamanlis had been reelected with a solid majority and I left just after Karamanlis 's party first loss, October or November of 1963. Karamanlis had already left the country - in July 1963. The Queen had defied his ruling that she shouldn't go there. You may remember the humiliating scene of Queen Fredericka and Princess Irene being chased by the Greek opposition and having to run into somebody's house to get away. Karamanlis resigned and went to Paris. We want to talk about that a bit too. While I wasn't there at that period, I might have some insight that might be of interest. I arrived on December 4, 1961 just after the elections and I would say in a sense it was very interesting. I don't think we realized it at the time but the Greek/American relationship had reached it's height with that election and in retrospect, was already beginning to decline in retrospect. I arrived on a Monday and the following Friday evening and an embassy officer took me along to a dinner in Ecolis which is a suburb of Athens, to the house of an American professor and his wife. The other guests were Andreas Papandreou and his wife Margaret. Papandreou at that time had just returned. He was teaching; he was still very much an American citizen and to this day I would say that his image that evening is exactly the one he portrays even today. A slightly intellectually arrogant man - not very confident frankly. He had served in the Navy in the war and had been naturalized; his wife Margaret was from a famous American socialist family who lived in Minnesota for years. The Papandreou came back and he was obviously already thinking of staying on. Later on he tried to renounce his American citizenship and that's part of the problem with Papandreou. In part because of the colonels who led the government at various times, the Greeks are very conspiratorial people. So Papandreou always had to prove himself to be more Greek than the Greeks and certainly less American than the Americans.

The early 1960s were really a high point in our relationship, when you think of what an assignment to Athens means today in terms of security requirements. The chancery had just been built; it was a symbol of the new era. In retrospect, it probably wasn't the right building for Athens. It was earthquake proof and that was good because we had a few earthquakes when I was in the consulate. I was first assigned for six months to the visa section and then I spent the rest of the time on the passports matters. That's the way it was; we were not rotated out of the consular section; I was never upstairs. I think that was rather important because by a stroke of luck, the apartment that I found was on the top floor at the rear; I had an absolutely spectacular view of the Parthenon.

By the way, I should note that by the time I left Washington I did get a 2+ in French; I did not get a 3. If you had French already, you were okay. But I got in the same class with an older couple who were with AID and some others; their language ability was extremely limited and so it was a very frustrating class. Fortunately about the last three weeks of the class I was alone or with somebody else who knew French and I could really feel the difference. At least I ended up with 2+. But because I had only a 2+, when I got to Athens, all they would give me was 100 hours of Greek. It was actually an excellent course; they used 440 words over 100 hours of training. I had training every night after the embassy closed for an hour and a half each night. It worked well. It would not give you enough to get beyond the S-2 level and certainly you couldn't really read the language. You could read signs and basic things; it was rather frustrating. I then paid on my own for about two or three months more to try and bring my language skill up more - two or three times a week - but I finally had to give it up because the salaries then were quite low - we were all brought in at step 4 of grade 7 which was \$5625.00 a year. We all thought that that was great, although it was only \$100.00 a week. The salary from the class before ours had been only \$5225.00 or something like that. If you think about what people are paid today, it was tight. We lived okay but we really had to watch our pennies. As I mentioned to you, the apartment that I ended in was one that I could afford with my allowance; it was on the second floor (American counting or European first floor). It was occupied by Puniotis Canalopis who at that time was still Karamanlis's uncle by marriage. He was one of the great figures of Greek right of center politics and I guess he was the last prime minister before the colonels staged their coup, if I recall correctly.

Q: I can't remember, I think it was Karamanlis.

SWIERS: My wife and I went back to Greece for our 25th wedding anniversary in 1988. We went past the building we had been in and it was still there. The little restaurant that we used to go to was still there. There was a monument there to Canalopolis. On the fourth floor were the offices of a Greek deputy from the Artili Peninsula. His district ran from Arhos to Nathlean and down to Crinediaon and finally to a little town called Potu Kelley which has a very tragic history from World War II.

Q: This is in the Peloponnesus?

SWIERS: Yes, but it's a peninsula that sticks out - the Epidaurus. He was on the fourth floor with two daughters and I remember that they were very sweet young ladies who went to the American women's high school called Pierce College. On the fifth floor was a family named Sumerose;

they had two sons. The oldest son had just gone into the Army when I was there and the youngest son was about 12 years old at that time. His name was Antonio and he became very briefly the foreign minister of Greece. I was on the sixth floor. The reason I say this is because I was really very much immersed in things. On the first or second night that I was there, Contabroches who spoke French (bad French) came up with another man named John Beltsos who was a Greek working for the Dutch Embassy under a peculiar arrangement which allowed the Dutch and the Greeks to have diplomatic immunity in his own country. Or at least diplomatic privileges if not immunity. There was a Dutch working for the Greek Embassy in Hague who had similar privileges. He was a friend of Contabroches, as was another man whose brother, Fanni Feltsos, was a famous veterinarian in Athens; he was a veterinarian who liked dogs. The Greeks were like many Middle Easterners; I think it's even true today - dogs are not a favorite animal. That's left over from the Turks.

There was a whole little community that revolved around the Americans. Contabroches came up and invited me to his house for the evening. Contabroches was entertained friends, about twice a week. I became part of this group. I was a young American vice consul, unmarried; I don't know whether he hoped ultimately that I might be interested in one of his daughters who were in their teens and very bright girls. I would go out with him regularly to visit his district. I knew that district cold in a way that you can only do when you are with a politician. One time, we were sitting together in Argos where he was being visited by his constituents. It was fascinating. In those days, it was quite something for him to have with him on a visit a young American vice consul. We traveled all over.

Then we would continue from Epidaurus over a rather wild range of mountains to get to Carnedian, which is where Cartenbraches was born. Cartenbraches means "short pants." He was slightly amused by it; he was known by that name, but since he only had girls who would get married and change their names, he decided not to change the name. Then he went on to Porto Kelly right on the water; that was this beautiful town around a bottle shaped harbor. When I was there, it did not have electricity yet. It has a tragic history in that it was from there that once the Germans left the Pelopanneus, the Greek communists entered one night from Spetsa, which was also part on Cartenbraches district, just as dawn was breaking. They focused on certain houses and went up and knocked on the door. When the owner of house, who was usually a leader in the town, answered the door, they shot him. They massacred the people. The reason I mention this is because I has visited Spetsa with Cartenbraches. So I had heard the history. It couldn't have been more than a few months later when I was requested to issue a visa. You may remember that one did post checks of the U.S. visas and we had to report back. We still had a superb liaison with the Greek police and other Greeks. I don't know if Nick Demegos was still at the embassy when you were there or a fellow named Gregory. Nick had an incredible history, too. He was in school when some German soldiers were killed. The Germans came to the school and lined the boys up and picked every fifth boy up to a certain number and then took them out and shot them. Nick was fortunate. When I was in Greece, both the war memories and the civil war memories were very, very fresh and they played a major role in the Greek politics and also in the close relationship with the United States.

Let me tell you just one more anecdote because it's so funny. When I was on my way to Greece on a TWA flight, I ran into a very delightful old Greek American, Mrs. Angelo and we had a

lovely time on the plane. She said that she was coming back to visit her brother and her sister and her husband had been staying with him. Not too long after I met Cartenbraches, he said one night that he wanted to take me over to his family's home. We went over there for a lovely evening and dinner and who was there but the woman that I had met on the plane. That man Angelo was Cartenbraches, brother, but since he had sons, he had changed his name to Angelo from Cartenbraches. By 1963, we were beginning to see the changes in Greece. A certain attitude, it was difficult to describe, but the relationship wasn't quite as easy. It was masked I would say in part because for us by the effectiveness of our embassy. We had Henry Labouisse as the Ambassador with his wife Eve Clarie. We had Tap Lee Bennett as the DCM, we had Dan Brewster. I was a consular officer and I don't think anyone thought of asking about what I might or might not have observed.

Q: A major problem, I think, within a lot of places.

SWIERS: I know that Cartenbraches was in trouble. I could see it. I remember vividly one day visiting a town just outside of Epidaurus - when you go to Epidaurus the road becomes straight and you go through a little village and then you're into the Epidaurus area. It began with an L, it wasn't Lambedian but the name escapes me. He was really getting a hard time from these villagers; Veltzos was there and I asked what's going on and he said "They are really mad at him." I think that he had finally gotten electricity them, but they hadn't had their water and they were furious that the water hadn't come in because they knew that other people were getting the water. So he lost. But, if I remember correctly, Zachary was the one who predicted that Papandreou would win. By that time, George Papandreou had formed a center union and had sort of shifted from the left.

I think that most people thought of George as a bit of a fool. A good speaker. He had a rather good role in the war and right after it became prime minister. You could feel that the momentum was shifting in the direction of the center union in a very brief two years after this splendor October victory. He had formed that center coalition. Andreas came in, in fact to renounce his American citizenship so he could become his father's minister of coordination. He didn't last very long; even his father had to admit that Andreas was not a great coordinator. Then the center union came in and it was just about that time that I left.

Q: We want to concentrate on the time that you were there and your impressions there. Did you have anything to do with Henry Labouisse?

SWIERS: It was a nice embassy in the sense that it included young people. On the other hand, since we were the largest embassy all officers were given diplomatic status, but not everyone was put on the diplomatic list. They cut it off at usually the third secretary's level. Of course if you were not in the political or economics section, then you weren't on the list. So I didn't get invited to a lot of the things that the other officers were. On the other hand, I had my own friends in Greece. There was another friend I had who was an Italian-Greek, Jacques Costelli. One of my colleagues in my Foreign Service class had known of him and had given me his name. The Costelli actually were a very friendly couple. They were subsequently at our wedding in Athens. Young officers like myself felt quite isolated in some ways, although the embassy made sure that we were included in many activities.

But in terms of work, no. My boss was Bob Cartwright. Cartwright was a very special figure because he had been the inspector general of the FBI. He was brought into the State Department by Scott McLeod. After McLeod left, Bob Hill went to Mexico and took Cartwright with him. Cartwright had by then integrated and after Mexico he was assigned to Athens which was his last post. Cartwright was politically quite right wing; he was very well connected. His brother was the pastor of St. Matthews.

Q: Could you tell me a bit about the consular work that you were doing and did the fact that you had one of the original right wingers in the security thing have any effect on how you operated?

SWIERS: No. It was a normal consular operation. Cartwright wanted the laws applied strictly, but fairly. I recall that we had about 30 non-immigrant visa cases a day. I remember that I started on immigrant visa cases which were fairly easy and many of them were inspiring. I remember one man who had gone to the U.S. and worked in some "greasy spoon" for years. He saved up enough money to bring his wife and children over and they came into our office quite proudly. I will tell you that if there is anything that the Foreign Service should do, it is that the first tour officer must do consular work. There is no question about it. You don't know what real life was like and what people really put up with until you have worked in a consular section. What was interesting in my day was that there were still had a lot of people who had been affected by the war, with rickets and tuberculosis. We had a lot of tuberculosis and the public health service still had an office in Athens with a Greek contract doctor. I remember the x-ray technician who became a close friend, Titi Andrapulu, who has since retired. Or left there when they closed the whole thing. The doctor was the man who also ran the psychiatric hospital and I really can't remember his name. I do remember tuberculosis and the rickets and you would see children, who were just pre teen or in their teens and they had these pigeon chests. There was a lot of illness, but there were a lot of inspiring cases. Those went quite smoothly. Arlena Taxu was the great interpreter; she was a Greek who had grown up in Istanbul and had gone to Roberts College and then she and her family fled Turkey. We had a number of those in the embassy. Steven Collegas was still there; he had been imprisoned and tortured by the Italians for having worked for the Americans before the war.

I think it is worthwhile to mention that on the non immigrant side we issued about 30 visas a day. My boss was a woman, Nora Austilan - there were a few women who obviously made it on the political-economics side - Kay Bracken being one of the most famous ones. Marion Mitchell who was probably the one political person that I did see a lot of, although I was friendly with the others. I would say that the way we judged an applicant was to look at the person and ask yourself if that person could make a good immigrant if they applied for permanent resident status when they got to the States. The other thing was that the forms still had a place for the designation of race and ethnic origin; if the applicant filled that it in, we would cross it out. We were very proud when that question was eliminated. I remember striking through race and ethnic origin.

Q: I was there when we had to do this and we were told that whatever they wanted to put, let them put in, but don't pay any attention to it.

SWIERS: We'd cross it out and we would explain to them that we don't have that sort of thing in the United States anymore. A lot of times, the Greek, like good bureaucrats, wanted to keep these records. Later on, with affirmative action, we put race and ethnic origin back in and I think that was a mistake in American domestic politics. I think we should have affirmative action, but not on the basis that one had to stay in his or her racial group or your ethnic group to move forward. It's a terrible mistake. One very good illustration of that was a tall handsome ex-Ebson (elite troops who wore those kilts; they guarded the royal palace). He came in and he started to give me the story that he was going to visit his aunt and that he would stay for a few months and then come back. I cut him off before he got to the point where I would have to apply to 12, 18, and 19; I knew the reason why he was going to the United States. I had lived on Alton Place near Tenley Circle. When you walk up Alton Place to the corner of Wisconsin Avenue, there had been a very good restaurant run by a Greek family. Not more than a week or two weeks before I left, suddenly there was a sign in the door that said "Closed for several days because of death of owner." The uncle who had died and the aunts had obviously called Crete to where the owner had come from and had said: "Send over whatever his name was, (I can't remember now) to take over". He was the applicant. These are prosperous Greek Americans; it was very, very rare that we saw a failure of a Greek immigrant. I think that's important.

In those days the country was still poor and the villagers were particularly poor. The girls would come to town in search of work; they wouldn't get work so they would end up being prostitutes. There was a good community of prostitutes because of the large American community at our air base outside of Athens. We would regularly have marriages because of that. I have to say that maybe I was a little too charitable, or we were. I don't think we all felt that way. We would look at the application and try to make a judgement whether this was a prostitute because she wanted to be a prostitute or was she somebody that got trapped and finally the American came along who could rescue her - knowing how Greeks related in families that hopefully that very brief period of her past would disappear. They came in to get the visas; sadly some of them did get caught in a raid or perhaps their pimp hadn't paid enough and then you have to get the waivers. I remember we had some very tearful things at that time.

Q: Very, very difficult. Often a waiver had to be through Congress which wasn't delighted to do so.

SWIERS: I remember one woman who arrived from a village; it was probably the first time that she had no means of support and she finally had to sell herself; she was caught (we had the police record and therefore could get the information) Somewhere along the line she met this American; he was a very nice air force private and I think it could have been a very happy marriage. We were able to get the waiver, under hardship reasoning and coercion and things of that sort.

Q: How about on the passport side; any problems there?

SWIERS: Very rarely. The big thing was that old Greeks returned to the village from the U.S. and lived very comfortably on their social security. They were the big men in the villages usually. One of my colleagues (one of my best friends to this day) who has since left the Foreign Service, married a British Foreign Service secretary; they both left their services and now they

live in a little village in England. His name is Ralph Esley. He was the first one sent back when the Social Security Administration insisted on finally getting control of the benefit payments. In the early 1960s, we began to have more and more social security payments in Greece. Ralph had to receive special training in that and he actually ended up staying in Athens for another year or two to be the social security person there. I remember very few cases of what I would call fraud when I moved over to the other side of passport. It worked quite smoothly. The major problem was the citizenship status of those who had come back; i.e., whether they were going to lose their citizenship. Usually one could work it out. One problem was the young Greek American men, boys really, who would come to Greece not realizing the Greek rule on military service; they would get snapped up and sometimes their passports would be taken away from them. I think that we would simply issue them a new passport so that they could get to the airport and get out. Greece began to get wise to this when they noticed suddenly one kid after another with a fresh passport; they knew he hadn't lost his passport. I think we had a few of those cases where these young men got caught.

Then we came into the business of the expatriation. We had to go through that whole process. We tried to avoid that. The passport operation worked smoothly. I really don't recall too many problems. In retrospect, when I think of other places I've been, it seems that we didn't have that many lost passports in Greece. I'm not quite sure why; one would expect that to have been the case. We had close coordination with other agencies and a range of issues related to passports.

Q: You left there in December of 1963, this is right after the election?

SWIERS: Right after the election.

Q: Was the Embassy in shock? Did you get any feel for that?

SWIERS: I have to be careful to answer that because, as I told you, we were isolated from the substantive side of the embassy. We weren't really involved and they didn't really want us involved. As I mentioned, I was never once asked about my impressions from traveling over a whole district with a Greek politician. I don't believe that anybody else in the embassy had that type of relationship. What I do remember was that Dan Zachary had gone to Thessalonika and had predicted Papandreou victory. I believe that the embassy on balance (and there you would have to look at the archives) felt that Karamanlis was going to win. I knew that my man was going to lose. I wondered if that was going to be typical.

Q: Were you picking up any emanations from the political section about how they felt about Papandreou at that time?

SWIERS: Oh yes; everybody thought he was a fool. Everybody was dreading his arrival. We had all known Andreas quite well and we knew things would change as they did. I doubt anybody could have imagined how far the change would go and that the country would sort of unravel.

Q: Today is June 10, 1994 and we are continuing an interview with Peter Swiers. Peter, we wanted to go back to deal more with some things while you were in Athens. Could you mention the things you wanted to talk about?

SWIERS: Yes, the four things are: the Jackie Kennedy visit to Greece in 1963 just before the president was assassinated, Richard Nixon's visit in early 1963 which was part of his around-the-world trip, Lyndon Johnson's visit in the fall of 1962, and Mike Mansfield's visit in 1963, I believe it was the late summer or early fall.

Q: Well, let's start with Jackie Kennedy.

SWIERS: Jackie Kennedy was already in Greece when I arrived in 1961. She had visited there sometime during that summer and in the spring of 1962 a good friend of mine, John Beltzos took me to Mekonos which was his family's home on his mother's side. His uncle was then the mayor. Jackie was still very, very visible - on the island his uncle proudly had a picture of Jackie. Then two years later in 1963, as we know after the death of Patrick Kennedy of what is now known as crib syndrome, she came to Greece to get away from things. It couldn't have been more than a few days before she left when we got a call in the consulate section that her sister needed a new passport. I remember the episode very vividly; in fact I just wrote about it in a letter to Senator Kennedy upon Jackie's death. I went out to a villa that they had rented - this would have been Mrs. Kennedy, her sister Lee Radziwil and her husband, Prince Radziwil of Poland. They were out sailing when I arrived and I sat for about 15 minutes talking with Clint Hill who was the secret service agent that we saw weeping on the back of the car (during the Kennedy assassination) and suffered tragically because he always felt guilty. He was clearly devoted to Mrs. Kennedy. The reason why I wanted to mention this is because I remember her when they came up from the boat landing and she was so happy and so cheerful and she nodded very graciously as she went past and then I did the consular business with the sister which was have her sign her passport application for the new passport and then I left. But it comes back later on in 1968 after Bobby was killed; in a sense you could almost say that she fled to the arms of the man for that security that she desperately needed who was back to Greece. I thought it would be worthwhile mentioning it.

Richard Nixon came through Athens in April or May of 1963, with Mrs. Nixon, the two daughters and a former FBI agent, Jack Pryor, and his wife. Nixon had sent out instructions to all of the posts where he was going that he did not wish any high level treatment from the embassies. He was still bitter at the time - quite bitter - and you could see that. On the other hand, having Jack Pryor with him meant that Jack would contact the FBI representative or former FBI representative in the different posts. In Athens' case it was Bob Cartwright whom I mentioned earlier. So Cartwright was the person who was in charge of the visit and I was made the action officer for the visit. I mention this because of what we saw later on. I had first met Richard Nixon in 1958 when he spoke at my university; after he spoke, a small group of us were invited to a little reception with him. I remember how insecure he was in a one-on-one relationship; when you shook his hand. He just felt uncomfortable. He did it, but he was always uncomfortable. In 1962 he was in particularly bad spirits. Cartwright gave a dinner for him, and Ambassador Henry Labouisse came to the dinner at Cartwright's house. I periodically would pick up the Nixons at different occasions. I can't remember if we provided them an embassy car or not; somehow I think when I was along I brought an embassy car with me, but otherwise he almost didn't want a car. Mrs. Nixon and the girls had been out all day and they were going to meet Nixon at the Grand Burton Hotel. I picked up Nixon from the hotel earlier and as we

coming down from the lobby, we met a group of visiting Greek- Americans there who recognized him instantly and called out "Mr. Vice President!" He rushed past them in a desperate effort to get out of the door. I suppose some of my friends who are Democrats would say that that wasn't very good for the Democrats at the time, but I remember that I took him by the arm and said "Mr. Vice President, you can't do that; you have got to go back and talk to them." He went back and I could tell that he was most uncomfortable, but he went and shook hands and said all of the proper things. It was really striking that this gifted man in so many ways had that insecurity that ultimately led to the tragedies that we witnessed - I mean the dirty politics that were played. I might also mention that when we went out and with seeing Mrs. Nixon, you knew who was the strength of family and who held it together and in the final analysis, she was the only person he probably ever trusted. I had enormous admiration for her; she was a very, very nice person. Very little politics were discussed throughout the whole time. He was doing an around the world trip and it was to sort of get away and perhaps that was what refreshed him.

In September of 1962, Lyndon Johnson came through as vice president. I think that he was also on an around-the-world trip. That was when he had stopped in Vietnam. He had gone to Iran, reached Athens and was going to go on to Rome and I frankly can't remember where he was going beyond there. What struck me at the time, immediately when you met him was how he filled whatever area he was in. Yes, he was big; he then used to wear midnight blue tuxedos and he had that very powerful Texan way of doing things. He was a frustrated man; you could sense that right away, in the sense that here he had been Senate majority leader; he was picked to be vice-president because the Kennedys knew that they needed that side of the part. One sensed that he was constantly searching for a role. As a result, he could be very difficult.

The reason that I was involved was the embassy went all out on this and we fortunately put on a very good show for him; the arrangements were quite good. Bill Crockett who was his friend and the Department's under secretary for management was along as the controller of the trip. I was assigned to Crockett as his staff agent for the duration of the trip. Johnson was sort of demanding in a petulant way. One time, late at night, he came around; he saw that the halls were full of people and he said that he wanted everybody off of the halls. I remember that because Crockett had sent me across to my room to pick up some paper that I had; suddenly (this was late at night) here comes Johnson walking down the hall. I just sort of held myself to the doorway wondering whether I was going to get a blast or not. He just sort of looked at me and then marched on to Crockett's room. The reason for his meandering was that he had nothing to do in his room and he wanted to come down to Bill's room where all of the action was. There were people in there and he went in. There was Rufus Youngblood who was the secret service man who was in the car with Johnson just behind Kennedy. Youngblood was a pretty tough customer himself; at the time of the assassination he just hurled Johnson to the floor of the car and threw himself on top of Johnson. I would say that in that circumstance there were not too many people who would challenge Lyndon Johnson, but that happened later on. I was just talking to somebody about this yesterday and the Vietnam period - the fact that you had to summon up too much courage to challenge Johnson and when he was fixed on Vietnam, how hard it was to change his view. We can discuss that later on. The visit went smoothly. It affected my career rather interestingly, probably redirected it once again. I think Crockett liked the work that I did for him and I remember that I had been telling him how Johnson had been very well received. He asked me to prepare a memo, which he slipped into Johnson's morning meeting.

In fact, let me tell one anecdote for the record which occurred on that evening when Johnson came into Crockett's room. He asked for a glass of water and Youngblood poured him a glass from the tap and Johnson looked at the water. Athens' water was good water, but it had a highly mineral content. Johnson held the glass up and he said "Youngblood, are you trying to poison me?" We actually had no bottled water left, so Youngblood went into Crockett's bathroom and we filled up an empty bottle of mineral water with water from the tap and Youngblood came up with a new glass and LBJ took it and drank it. It was an interesting visit which went quite smoothly. At that time Karamanlis was still in power. Frankly as I felt that the Kennedys were just trying to find something for Johnson to do.

There was a terrible earthquake in Iran and Johnson wanted to turn around and go back. He was persuaded away from that with enormous difficulty, but ultimately understood. I forget what the details were. Actually it had to be Washington that told him no. The last thing that one needed was to have a vice president arrive with all of the entourage in what were the aftermath of a terrible earthquake. The reason that it affected my career was because a friend of Crockett's and for that matter a friend of Johnson's was Henry Ford who was one of the old administrative officers, although in those days he was probably younger than I was I think, in his early 50s. He came out the following year with Mike Mansfield and he asked that I be assigned to them as the control officer. Another person who was with Mansfield and Ford was Frank Meloy who was later killed in Lebanon along with the economic counselor. Meloy was a life long bachelor; on the other hand the economic counselor had a wife and a large family and it was a real tragedy. Frank and I and my wife remained very good friends until he was killed. I was probably one of the last people who spoke to him. Again, it was more just one of these trips that Mansfield wanted to go on. Frank Valeo was with them as well, the secretary of the Senate at the time. It was a very easy trip to handle. There's nothing really of great substance. Then we still had fairly decent relations with the Greeks, but it was flag visit. Ford was sufficiently impressed by my performance, that when he was assigned as consul general in Frankfurt, which of course was a major post, (small politically but they used to argue whether Frankfurt or Hong Kong was the largest Foreign Service post in the world), he asked for me to be assigned to Frankfurt. I found out later after I arrived that the reason he asked for me was because he thought that I could be a young bachelor staff aide and do all the sort of things that had to be done. After I had already been assigned, he discovered that I was married and had been married. But he had me come anyway and I was rotated around. Those were the four visits that I wanted to mention as sort of the thing that a young officer could be involved in.

Q: I think it's important to get these stories.

SWIERS: You know what it was for a young officer to have the opportunity to actually have a little memo that you wrote slip directly to the vice president? It was quite exciting and frankly I think it was a useful memo because it demonstrated the popularity he had even in the leftish areas of town.

I might note as well that at the time of the Cuban missile crisis, I believe every post was instructed to set up a crisis center.

Q: I was just north of you in Yugoslavia at the time and I am certain we were following this.

SWIERS: We had the embassy conference room on the third floor which was converted into a “war room” - with maps and other exhibits; it was manned around the clock by officers of the political and economics sections. Consular officers and administrative officers were not invited to join. That is an interesting point of view; we were at least permitted to go up and check periodically to see what had happened. Every embassy did follow crises; even with the crisis being that far away, I think we all understood that something quite serious was going on.

HERBERT DANIEL BREWSTER
Political Counselor
Athens (1961-1965)

Greek Desk
Washington, DC (1966-1969)

Herbert Daniel Brewster was born in Greece of American parents in 1917. A His first posting in Greece was as a clerk at the embassy in Athens from 1940-42. As a Foreign Service officer he served in Athens, Ankara, Beirut, Paris, Berlin, Naples and in the Department of State. His assignments were mainly concerned with Greek affairs. He was interviewed in 1991 and 1992 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: Then you went back to where you were no longer an outsider, but an insider. From '61 to '65 you served in Athens. Did you get your assignment shortened, or did somebody call you?

BREWSTER: No, the Berlin assignment was to be a two year assignment, and it was two years to the day. We didn't extend it one day. By that time, they had done good advanced planning; the Political Counselor in Athens was drawn out to go off as Ambassador to Africa and so they needed a Political Counselor replacement. But they had notice on that. In this case it was amusing because Ellis O. Briggs himself was going as Ambassador, and he came to Berlin to take me down the garden path and find out who this fellow was who knew all about Greece. He just wasn't going to take a pig in a poke. His son was a junior officer in Berlin with four children, the present Ellis Briggs, and so he came to see his son but also made it a point to walk me through the situation, and he accepted me. When we got to Greece we had Ellis Briggs for just five months; he was not very well at the time and he was a great disservice to the relations between Greece and the United States.

Q: He was a man of very strong opinions and got quite a name for himself as being the curmudgeon of the Foreign Service. Here is a personality who in the popular view would strike one as being a person who should really know what diplomacy was all about. Now you saw somebody like that in operation in Greece, could you expand upon that?

BREWSTER: He came with Tapley Bennett as his Deputy Chief of Mission, who had also never

been to Greece. The problem, as most people said, was Ellis Briggs had been in Latin America too long; he was someone who took things over -- I mean you ran things there. The Greeks were saying, "We're not a little Nicaragua. We're the cradle of democracy; we know about democracy and we know about elections. Don't you tell us what to do." That was the biggest problem. He just didn't cotton up to the Greeks; they don't like that type of "well that's all for today, goodbye" type of approach. They want to be served a cup of coffee whether you want to see the guy or not. They expect to be treated as equals. The biggest issue was: they had elections in October 1961, and Ellis Briggs wanted Karamanlis and the right wing ERE to win and he was open about that. The opposition was George Papandreou. Karamanlis had been in office since '56 and in Greece the cycles usually are eight years, but the Center Union thought it was high time for them to get in after five years. So they had the elections and it turned out to be close, quite close, with a lot of the military voting en bloc. A very poor election in the eyes of George Papandreou, so he started up a campaign of *Via Kai Nothia*: meaning rape, or taking over and monkey business -- false returns in effect. They got into a high dudgeon on this and it went to the courts. Ellis Briggs then did something that was unwise for any Ambassador, namely he wrote a Christmas letter to the entire American community which started off saying, "Aren't we all glad that Karamanlis won the elections."

Q: Well here you were, Political Counselor, were you able to step on this, or something like that, or did you know about it?

BREWSTER: I didn't know about the Christmas letter until it appeared.

Q: Oh God, that's such a small community; the Ambassador sneezes and everything is on the front page of the newspaper.

BREWSTER: And this was the wrong time to do it; I don't know who has kept a copy of the letter, but it was not vetted by anyone; it was just his letter. And Tap was a loyal citizen, he had just been brought to wonderful Greece, he wasn't there to go up and say that's crazy, or let me find out whether that's crazy. Anyway Dan Brewster and Monty Stearns had to play the game for three months of trying to educate Ellis Briggs to the fact that some day he would be going on, someday George Papandreou would be in power and we were basically here to be "even Steven," not to let the Greeks find out that we were those rightists that they always thought we were. This went on...Ambassador Briggs was to leave in February and was to give a farewell party and Monty Stearns and I recommended that George Papandreou be invited to the party. Ellis Briggs said, "Never." We said, "Just think of our relationships; he may come or he may not come, but you will have done the right thing." He grunted and groaned but finally did extend the invitation. George Papandreou did not come; George is a proud person, he did not come. At the country team meeting the following day, Ellis Briggs was gracious enough to say, "I've had forty years of political officers and political counsel and this is the worst I've ever had in forty years." The Administrative Counselor, Ernest Colantonio, walked out the door with me after the meeting said, "Dan, I may have my troubles with plumbing etc., but I am certainly glad I am not a Political Counselor.

Q: Oh, Ernie Colantonio. I took his place in Naples.

BREWSTER: He's around, I saw him the other day; he came in for a flu shot.

Q: Tell me, what was this thing between Briggs and Papandreou? Was this a chemistry thing or was this his political outlook or was this reelecting American policy? Why did Briggs take this particular course?

BREWSTER: I think the American policy was that Karamanlis had been doing a good job, much had been done since '56. We had a real scare in the election of '58 when the communists, the left, ran up twenty-four percent. CIA tried to scare the bejesus out of us because of that, and warned us things were going downhill. By and large we were well acquainted with Karamanlis, he was a good person. George Papandreou was considered an excellent orator, the greatest since Demosthenes, and also a great opposition leader. He had no idea of how to run things, or organize things; he wasn't made up that way. He was made up to be able to fire pot shots at things and make a nice speech about it, to say things on Cyprus that were vote getters. I think we just felt that it was a stronger team, but we knew inevitably that this would not last.

Q: In other words, from our point of view and to use a good Greek word, a Papandreou regime was not anathema to us? Politics change.

BREWSTER: There has not been one government, if you go through history, that has lasted more than eight years. I had from Markezinis himself, "Don't tell us to vote for ERE or that ERE is the salvation. I am going to vote for the devil next time. Eight years is more than enough for anyone to be in; then you have got to get another team in and let them get at the trough for awhile." And as we look at it, you chop it off -- seven years for the junta, then Karamanlis came in for seven, then the others came in for eight -- it comes out that way. The first four they give them the chance, and then the second four they see that they are no damn good and it's time to make a change. Others have come and said, "You have a law that doesn't permit a president to have more than two terms, why are you talking to us about stretching terms out here?"

Q: I take it that with Ellis Briggs you were never able to sit down and really talk about the political situation?

BREWSTER: No. He wasn't interested; Tap did all his talking. He came along and he brought Tap along. I don't think Ellis Briggs was very good at accepting a different view on things. He would rather listen to someone who agreed with him. The next part, which is the important part, is with Henry Labouisse and there the relationship was one of intimate counsel and listening to things.

Q: Ellis Briggs left when, and when did Labouisse come in?

BREWSTER: Ellis Briggs left in February '62 and Labouisse came in the summer of '62, so there was a gap there, and Labouisse stayed until '65.

Q: What was Labouisse's background and how did he operate?

BREWSTER: He had been an ECA Mission Chief in France, and that is where he met his wife,

Eve Labouisse (Eve Curie), and they were married there. He had also been head of the Economic Cooperation Administration back in Washington for a very short time. His assignment to Greece, I believe, grew out of some troubles in Washington, some infighting in Washington. He came out and he was just what the Greeks wanted -- a cultured person married to an outstanding personage. She was a tremendous asset to him; just to be able to say that they had had cocktails with Eve Curie was what the Greeks loved; she spoke French. That supplemented Harry. The best thing about Harry Labouisse was that everybody considered him fair and someone ready to listen, not someone shooting from the shoulder with a view; but someone who would listen and learn. He had a wide circle of friends; people were delighted to meet him, he had friends across the board. They were delightful people and he had the southern touch, a relaxed New Orleans touch, and a Princeton education. He by the way went on to be Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the American Farm School for five years and raised \$5 million dollars just before he died.

He loved Greece; they both loved Greece. She learned Greek; she used to mark up the Greek papers for him and call things to his attention. They were a wonderful team. He had Tap Bennett as DCM, but he consulted with the political section -- Monty Stearns and me -- read our things. (Monty left in '64.) Bodosakis, a Greek industrialist, who was there at the time was a close friend of his. Bodosakis's form of entertaining the American Embassy was to have the Ambassador out for a three day cruise once a year in the summertime. He had an 1896 yacht that was barely able to float but he used to invite the Ambassador and his wife, and he invited me each time with my wife Dania. We would just go out to one of the islands.

Q: He was who, the...

BREWSTER: Bodosakis, in his late 70s, was a great industrialist in Greece who owned mines, vineyards, cotton mills and so on. He is a story in himself. Bodosakis gave Athens College about 40 acres of land for their school, for the new grade school. A wealthy man whose wife was not well; a very good friend and knowledgeable about Greece. Harry Labouisse was the best Ambassador I worked with in my 34 years in the Foreign Service.

Q: What about the relationship between Labouisse and Papandreou and the Center Left? You started at a pretty low point -- how did this go?

BREWSTER: By November 1963 Papandreou had come close to winning an election. On February 16, 1964 he won the elections, so the Ambassador's feelings was good towards both Karamanlis and Papandreou. He had a very good idea that Papandreou was going to come into power, and he himself was middle of the road. And the Papandreous were so relieved at having gotten the other man out, well they opened the door to the Americans, and Andreas emerged.

Q: You mean the son, later the Prime Minister?

BREWSTER: Yes. He came to Greece in 1960 but in the first years he was not as active as he was later on. But George Papandreou had no great trust in him. I accompanied Ambassador Labouisse to his villa, which is where he received, and he would talk very openly about things; and once George turned to us and said, "What am I going to do about Andreas, he is causing us

so much trouble?" Sort of "have you got any ideas?"

Q: *What were the problems of Andreas?*

BREWSTER: Power-grabbing; he was already Minister of Coordination. The other politicians didn't like it. Why should this upstart, who was an American married to a Bulgarian, move up so fast? The '64 elections then led on to the junta; the emergence of the junta came out of the fact that the right wing in Greece, the military, did not want to hold the May 1967 elections. They knew Andreas would win.

Q: *Oh, it was Andreas?*

BREWSTER: I shouldn't put it that way. George didn't die until a year later.

Q: *But was Andreas waiting in the wings to step on board?*

BREWSTER: Yes, and they didn't want that. This is later: I came with Harry Labouisse to Washington in '64 when we brought the Turkish Prime Minister and the Greek Prime Minister over to Washington on successive weeks to try to get the Cyprus problem solved once and for all. The Greeks shot the plan down, because Makarios would not accept the solution proposed. The Turks were ready to accept it, but it would have taken negotiation.

Q: *In this period of time, from '61 to '65, you have Andreas Papandreou, who was power-grabbing, the son of..., he had been a professor at the University of Minnesota and U.C. Berkeley, and had served in the American Navy and was an American citizen; all of a sudden he comes in and starts free-wheeling, using his father as a platform to go out and alienate people. How about our relationship with him?*

BREWSTER: We solved the relationship well at the Embassy in that my contacts were with the Prime Minister, Karamanlis and so on, and Monty's were with Andreas (Monty Stearns in my office). They got to know each other very well; Andreas was a fair economist, but he was not a politician. He didn't know how to deal with his own colleagues, and he was someone who was rising too fast for the likes of anybody else. Look at most Greek deputies and they are between fifty-five and seventy; you don't get to be a Minister unless you are a deputy. The job is to get your hands on a Ministry so that you can deal out some of the money and the cushy jobs...

Q: *To build your own coterie. Each one is a political ward boss in a way.*

BREWSTER: We have to remember that the entire population of Greece is only a million larger than Chicago, and I think the politics should be compared with those of Chicago. It is small time stuff; it takes thirty thousand votes to get elected. If you are a good gynecologist and deliver a couple of hundred babies you've got yourself the margin to win. Deputies are mostly lawyers and the rest are all gynecologists. But we had a very good relationship. Oh, one other factor that we have to remember is that Karamanlis got in such a fight with the King and Queen over a question of a visit to London that he just bounced out of the country one dark night in late 1963. He went to Paris; just walked away from the government.

Q: *And he stayed there until...*

BREWSTER: I don't know...

Q: *Well he stayed there until 1974, when he came back.*

BREWSTER: That was November 7, 1963, when he walked away, and Kanellopoulos then followed as the Prime Minister.

Q: *How did all at the Embassy and you personally see the role of the King and Queen, particularly Queen Frederika and King Paul?*

BREWSTER: I think the Embassy as a whole, I mean the political side of the Embassy, looked on them as busybodies. It was an odd situation where the Agency did the work with the King and Queen. We didn't in the political section. Undoubtedly the Ambassador knew what was being done but that didn't trickle down. We acknowledged that they would do much better by staying in the background and not trying to get into things. This trip to England -- I would have to look up to try to find out what it was. I think it was the King or the Queen who wanted to make the trip and Karamanlis said, "No." I think it was he who turned her down; that was one of the sort of issues she liked to project herself on. I met her only once, as I remember, up at Anatolia College in 1961; they were coming up to the fair and visited Anatolia College. Everything was set out for them there and I was sent up from Athens to make a little speech on behalf of the Ambassador -- greeting them to the College. I did my speech in Greek, unannounced, and as I started off the faces were sort of glazed, people were not focusing; suddenly, "What, what; is this Greek?" Afterwards I sat next to the Queen at lunch in the President's house; her interest at the time was nuclear affairs, how you make a bomb, what you do. She was deeply into atomic energy and that was her hobby; she had gone down to the atomic energy center and had a full briefing on what happens. She used to go into things like that; suddenly she'd like to become an expert. The son, of course, was quite an expert in sailing. And she ran her daughters too much, she was overbearing.

Q: *One of her daughters is now the Queen of Spain?*

BREWSTER: Yes, she came through all right. The other daughter was the first person I took around the country as an escort officer here in '69 when I was desk officer. She is a pianist and she was visiting a number of schools of music, met Istomin and others. She was a very fine person, someone who was a human being. We sat down at the Lincoln Center and she turned to me and said, "Mr. Brewster if you would like to go to a movie for a couple of hours I'll be right here. You don't have to sit through this music just because you are escorting me." She was that sort of human being.

Q: *How did you see Turkish-Greek relations at that time, between '61 and '65?*

BREWSTER: In 1963 and '64 they were tense. I remember there was a crisis on Christmas Day, because I was called into the office, but I would have to refresh my memory on just what the

issues were at that time. The Cyprus problem has always been one for the Greek government whoever was in power. No one dared go against Makarios and it would take a great deal of courage for either of the parties at that time, whether ERE or Papandreou's party, to make concessions.

Q: ERE being...how do you spell that?

BREWSTER: Capital ERE, its the National Union Party of Karamanlis; by November '63 Karamanlis had left and Kanellopoulos was the Prime Minister. I remember in the summer of '64 it was the central issue; in June of '64 both the Turkish Prime Minister and the Greek Prime Minister were invited to come to Washington to talk to our government about a solution for the Cyprus problem. The Turkish government, I believe, seemed to accept the thesis as a possible means of negotiating with the Greeks. When the Greeks came, Ambassador Labouisse was on board the special Presidential plane, I came along; George Papandreou brought his son along as well (that was Andreas Papandreou) and they turned the proposal down. I would have to check out on what the proposal was.

Q: We can always add this as we go. What was the impression at the Embassy, maybe the difference between Briggs and Labouisse but also within the political section, of Makarios and Cyprus?

BREWSTER: Archbishop Makarios, in the view of the political section certainly, very much the thorn in the side of the whole problem. He just was not ready to give in. And the Greeks were not ready to take a solution which Makarios did not agree to. And that is what happened in that instance, the Greek Prime Minister asked for a few days to think it over; they checked with Cyprus and it was Cyprus that turned it down.

Q: Was it our feeling that eventually Cyprus was going to be part of Greece? Or was our feeling that we liked it the way it was, with better relations but keeping Cyprus not a part of Greece?

BREWSTER: I think it was more the idea of finding some solution of federation in which there was an independent Cyprus. The double union, so called, the Enosis, was much more a posture of people like Grivas, who was a general with the armed forces in Cyprus. I think union with Greece by that time was fading; they were not insisting on that they just didn't like the solution that we proposed as to how to set up a federation. A great deal of time had been spent already during that period at talks in Geneva between the Greeks and the Turks on various aspects of the problem. We were not immediate parties to that but the mood was much better in the sense of progress toward a federated solution, one in which there was Cypriot independence but with all the necessary safety valves for the Turkish community within the Greek area.

Q: What was our impression of Grivas? Was Grivas well-connected within the Greek military? Were we concerned that he was an influential figure in the military, with the possibility of a coup?

BREWSTER: This may have been true with the military. He came to Greece only occasionally; we did not see him on those visits. He went to the Greek Pentagon and I think the relationships

there were good. I think he was looked upon as a radical even by the Greeks. The Greeks have a great love feeling about Cyprus but they also were aware, I think, at the time, that union with Greece was a very long shot and not one that was essential.

Q: You have talked about Karamanlis and Papandreou, now how about Kanellopoulos? He was the Prime Minister after Karamanlis left, wasn't he?

BREWSTER: Yes, Kanellopoulos was the Prime Minister. George Papandreou won the February 1964 election and so he became the leader of the opposition at that point. He had been Prime Minister many times; he was a very modest person in the opinion of the Americans. But he had only a short leadership at that time.

Q: How influential did you find the CIA in the country team meetings and as far as the Ambassadors were concerned? AID had faded out by this time and when I was there from 1970 to 1974 the CIA had a pretty weighty role. They were well plugged in because this was the period of the Papadopoulos dictatorship.

BREWSTER: The CIA took on a great role in keeping in good touch with the King, with the royal family. They had one special person who was out with Constantine almost all the time, teaching him judo, teaching him badminton. He was there on almost a daily basis as a "trainer." They had the close contacts with the King and Queen. On our side it would have been the Ambassador who had those contacts, but we were trying to get them less involved in the Greek political scene and not more involved so we played a very low-keyed role, especially vis-a-vis the Queen.

Q: You are talking about the Queen Mother?

BREWSTER: Yes, the Queen Mother, Frederika. By way of example the whole episode with Constantine, and Karamanlis, the Prime Minister, leaving for Paris, grew out of an internal rivalry between the Royal household and the Prime Minister's office.

Q: Did you feel that the CIA got too enmeshed in this?

BREWSTER: I am not sure...In a sense they were being informed. I think they loved to send in material; we in the political section did not see the material, it was not vetted, it came back to Washington raw; I have not seen it since. But I think it's more the diary type thing. Laughlin Campbell, who was station chief until he left for Paris in November, was very close to the palace and his successor was too. But we in the political section were not privy to what they were up to; they reported to the Ambassador directly.

Q: How about the military bases? I had the feeling that as far as the NATO contribution of Greece was concerned the real military contribution was the fact that they were real estate. Was this your feeling?

BREWSTER: Yes, that Greece was real estate, valuable real estate.

Q: Yes, for bases and all. Did you find that the fact that we had these bases hidden in Greece -- we had units up on the border -- was an inhibitor as far as relations went? If we felt that the Greeks were doing something that we wished they wouldn't, say vis-a-vis Cyprus, we were all of sudden having to worry about "if we take to hard a stand it is going to have an influence on our base rights." Was this a problem?

BREWSTER: No, I don't believe that was a problem. There was much more in it for them than there was for us, or it was mutually convenient; Soudha Bay, was one of the prominent NATO bases...

Q: That's on Crete.

BREWSTER: On Crete...and the Marathon establishment as well, the communications center there, was very useful and it helped the economy, frankly. There wasn't a strident voice of "out with the Americans" or "out with NATO" at that time. They were still in a mode of helping, being ready to help on the military front, and they were benefitting both in terms of military aid and vessels and contributions to the military. No, we never felt the threat of that during the period '61 to '65.

Q: What about the Greek-American influence? I want to put it in two parts. One is the group AHEPA, a sort of lobby in the United States; how effective were they, particularly on things like siding with Greece on matters concerning Cyprus or against Turkey?

BREWSTER: I came into that field more as Country Director from 1966 to 1969 when I was back here.

Q: We will talk about that later, but at this time?

BREWSTER: In the field we didn't see a great deal of their work, or their pressures; their influence was basically back here in Washington.

Q: How about the Greek-Americans who worked for the United States government, in our military, in our various programs? It was my impression, again I am talking about the 1970 to 1974 period, that we had an inordinate number of Greek-Americans, particularly in the military, because of the language ability. These people also had strong emotional ties to the Greek cause rather than just to the American cause. Did you have that impression or not, or wasn't it such a problem when you were there?

BREWSTER: It wasn't a problem as far as our political section was concerned. Our contacts were with the defense attachés in the building, in the Embassy itself and not much with the military missions. I was personally aware of the fact that the CIA, particularly, did have a number of Americans but the ones who were really working and influencing things were probably just a handful, five or six. They had Soviet experts there and others as well, so that is why their mission was large. On the other front we had some Greek-Americans out at the bases, at Hellinikon, an air field outside of Athens, and I think in that case their language was probably useful because you get a much better rapport with your Greek counterparts if you can at least talk

some Greek. On that score, one reason I was so lucky, in part, getting back to Greece was that I was the only blue-eyed American who spoke bilingual Greek and it did come the easy way by virtue of my being there as a child. The political section did not have a Greek-American officer in that slot until the middle '80's. You had Pete Peterson as Consul-General.

Q: Yes, I took his place. And there it was somewhat pernicious, quite frankly, because he had gotten very close to Patakos who was the number two man in the colonel thing. From what I gather he really showed too much support for, or understanding for, this military dictatorship, which obviously had its reflections in Greek society. It is one of those little things that still lingers on.

BREWSTER: I think, if I can be so bold, you were there at a very special time where the relationships with the Greek military were being handled very differently. I think you have put your finger on a point if your Greek background induces you to want to meet people at a high level and keep up close contacts. That would have never happened in Labouisse's day. You were there in a very special day with an Ambassador who had his own ideas about what was the proper way to deal with the colonels.

Q: This was Henry Tasca.

BREWSTER: Yes. I think he was out of step with many, many people.

Q: One last comment on this particular time. The Greek press has always been a very lively organization to say the least and very strongly political -- the truth is not necessarily a major concern. How did you find the Greek press, its importance, and how did we deal with it and how did they deal with us?

BREWSTER: The Greek press back in my time -- I think there were fourteen daily newspapers. The Greek way of living is picking one paper that is his paper and then maybe reading one from the other side just to see what they are saying and how wrong they are. Everybody focuses...politicians and you count them, anybody out there, is just tied to his newspaper. That has created many, many problems that we had to cope with in the political section, because they would get so far off base or so excited about a rumor that appeared in one of the papers be it of the right or of the left. They thrived on it; they brought it in and they thought that we had planted the story, they thought that the CIA had planted the story. Difficult! They feel that they are the navel of the world.

Q: What's the term for that, the...

BREWSTER: The omphalos. To them what is in the press is the Bible, and you have a hell of a time persuading them that you didn't write it yourself. It is most exasperating; I had a couple of very exasperating newspaper men. Fortunately we let the press office in USIA handle it and they were off in the Building...

Q: You are talking about the USIA?

BREWSTER: The USIA, yes. They did it well, but in my period, 1961-65, we had a PAO who had been imported by Ambassador Briggs from Latin America, and with a Turkish wife! Three years later they finally asked him to leave, and we relented but there was a certain amount of tugging and pulling. You don't make personnel choices like that, at least in Greece. It is a very influential medium. Now, of course, there is television and they all have CNN and they are all probably a lot more alert to international events. But at that time the Greek news media were tops.

Q: One name that comes to mind, Helen Vlachos, owner of Kathimerini was very important when I was there, mainly because she represented the closed down opposition paper to the colonels. Were there people who were particularly important that we tried to make see the light at that time?

BREWSTER: Kathimerini is the primary and the other VIMA. Both were papers of very influential persons. We tried to influence them; but they were way above us, they were going to write it as they saw it and it was their view. Eleni Vlashos was particularly sound and represented the center right. Our problems were with individual newsmen who kept pestering us for details. The English language paper, The Athens News, was very difficult. In one period back in 1963 they were getting inside interviews about Greece with the Pentagon back here in Washington, with top generals. American generals who didn't know when to shut up about our nuclear capacity in Greece. They were a bane in our side; we attempted to get the Pentagon to shut down those generals because it was causing a lot of trouble, but no success.

Q: Before we move to your next phase is there anything I may have left out, or any major incident during that time that we may not have covered?

BREWSTER: On the Cyprus issue, although there were more details, the plan was that Cyprus would govern as a federation, and Turkey would have a base, similar to the British base, out on the Karpas point with about 80 square miles. That was going to be it. And that was not accepted because Makarios wanted the whole piece of pie. He was doing it just as a way of showing that "nobody can walk over me." None of the Greeks, the Papandreou side and the other side, were looking long-range in terms of "do we think we can get anything better than this?" The easiest thing for a Greek to do is to say "No." It is less staff work than to work out whether this is a good deal or not a good deal. They don't always staff things out; two or three people make the decision of "no, we don't accept that."

Q: There isn't the feeling that you negotiate and get to a certain point and say, "well let's go back and we'll look at it," and everybody disappears and works out what they can do.

BREWSTER: Because we were working with the Archbishop at arm's length, as if he were the Patriarch and you don't touch him. It was a situation like that. And no Greek can go strongly against the Greek church or the ethnicity of Greece.

Q: You came back to Washington and had about a year in Personnel didn't you -- placing senior officers? The assignment of senior officers is always a major, almost a religious, exercise within the Foreign Service.

Q: You finished Personnel, you were there a year, then for a very significant period of time you were Country Director for Greece, from '66 to '69. Could you give me an idea of where Greece fitted into the scheme of things? You were in Near Eastern Affairs weren't you at that time?

BREWSTER: Yes, it was called Near Eastern Affairs; Greece, Turkey and Iran had been the Office (GTI). With our country directorship we reported to Lucius Battle who was our Assistant Secretary of Near East Affairs, which included Greece, Turkey and Iran, and Stuart Rockwell was his Deputy at that time.

Q: How did you feel at that time, and those around you, about Greece being fitted into the Near East? Did it make more sense as far as dealing with it than having it in Europe, which it became a part of in 1974?

BREWSTER: Because of the amount of aid they were getting, military aid, both Greece and Turkey, they were two very special countries. Greece is much more, I think, a part of the Western picture than Turkey. I think one reason that it was maintained in that area was that the whole question of Congressional relations vis-a-vis the military aid question had been handled for years in that office and the people who were cognizant about it were in NEA. Kissinger reportedly changed it on a trip he took to Europe. He was on his way to Athens and saw a new control officer come on board for him, and a new person to meet, and said, "Why is this, Greece is part of Europe. As soon as we get back remind me to change this around, we'll put Greece and Turkey into EUR." The CIA apparently had had Greece and Turkey in their European division before. That supposedly is the story of when it happened, and as you say it was about 1974.

Q: It was within a couple of months of the Cyprus blowup and that caused a certain amount of confusion. Obviously the situation was rapidly changing while you were there. Could you give me a feel for the difference between Political Counselor in Athens and Greek Desk Officer? Was there a different vantage point, did you have a different view of Greek-American affairs?

BREWSTER: The assignments overseas were all very useful for when I took over on the job. But the lessons learned from being on the desk was how much work is involved which is internal, fighting the Defense Department, doing work with the other agencies here, and how little time is really spent on reading anything like an airgram that came from the posts. We kept up to date on it but the work was over 80% chairing meetings, trying to explain why we were doing things and why State Department wanted to maintain its legal position on Greek matters. What I learned abroad and the experience I had had helped on that sort of thing because the Defense Department, particularly, was very, very stubborn on a number of issues.

Q: What were the major issues on which you were having trouble with the Defense Department?

BREWSTER: I am sort of a year ahead of myself in this sense, that it mainly came to the crunch at the time the junta came in.

Q: Let's talk about before the junta, and then we will come back to that.

BREWSTER: I don't recall any major events with Defense in those first six months. The outstanding thing, my outstanding memory, was going out to Greece on a familiarization tour, the first time I had been there since '65. That was in early February, 1967. There were elections coming up on May 21st and I was there with my notebook going around from politician to politician asking, "Now what do you think the percentages are. Is Papandreou going to be able to maintain his lead and stay in power or will there be a comeback from Kanellopoulos and the others?" And the answer I got, and it was a major surprise, from many politicians was, "What elections? What are you talking election for?"

Q: There was a scheduled election?

BREWSTER: Yes... "That's never going to take place. We are not going to let it take place." The feeling of giving more power, it was bluntly put, to -- as they looked at it -- Andreas Papandreou, the son of George Papandreou (George was getting very old at that time), or letting him win an election was anathema to them. That should have given more of a signal to us as to "What is the alternative?" They'd say, "Something will happen, God will take over. Don't ask." It was a revelation, looked at ex post facto of course, of a coup of some sort. It was true that as of December-January rumors were up that some higher level Greek generals might be tempted to pull a coup rather than have an election.

Q: They were expecting a general's coup and it really ended up as a colonel's coup?

BREWSTER: That was what we went through anticipating, but from our point of view we were not clued into the Papadopoulos scene.

Q: Here you went and you got everybody questioning this...In the first place who was the Ambassador and the Political Counselor when you went back?

BREWSTER: Phil Talbot was the Ambassador at that time; Phillips Talbot had been Assistant Secretary for NEA for a number of years and this was his first post in Greece. The Political Counselor, Kay Bracken, had aspired to the DCM job and didn't get it. Roswell McClelland was the DCM later but he didn't know much about the Greek scene.

Q: It does not sound as if you had an overly experienced Embassy as far as the peculiar problems of Greece were concerned and the storm clouds were gathering. What were the feelings toward Papandreou, from the American point of view? Did we feel that George was going out and Andreas would cause us real trouble or was it just another one of those things we would live with?

BREWSTER: We didn't buy the idea that this was that dangerous, that holding elections would make that much difference at the time. We were ready to work, as we had since 1964, with George Papandreou and with Andreas. But the Greeks on the right were very, very concerned. Going back -- we did have one good expert; the DCM that came on board was Norbert Anschutz and he was there the night of the coup. So there wasn't a big gap in knowledge. Do you want to

hear about the night it happened?

Q: Well first, how did we view the government? As you say the Papandreou government was not an impossible government and its continuation was not an impossible thing.

BREWSTER: So we took it much more calmly. These reports about "it will never take place" seemed far fetched to us because we didn't sense, and hadn't had reporting come through, reflecting this view. They were trying to impress Washington; when the Greek politician gets his chance to talk to the Country Director he feels he is getting right into Washington, rather than having someone at the post perhaps accept it, or perhaps distort it, or not write it up at all. So they were hitting me on this story.

Q: Did you feel that there was a tendency, because you were the expert from out of town coming in, to over-dramatize the situation to make an impression on you?

BREWSTER: Yes, that happens; but I was surprised that there was more than one person. Either this story was out or they were passing it around and beginning to believe it. It came from several sources and I was interested because you wonder why it had not been reported if this was already going around the block.

Q: This was not coming through the reporting?

BREWSTER: This hadn't come through the reporting yet.

Q: Do you know why? Were they more open with you?

BREWSTER: It may have been that they were more open and I was more impressed with it. In any Embassy it is what the political section or the DCM and the Ambassador think is worthy of reporting that goes out. Now on the other hand our confreres, the CIA, may have been sending in this sort of report.

Q: But you were not getting any emanations of this in Washington?

BREWSTER: Not at that time.

Q: How about from the military, from the Department of Defense people? They were supposedly the Defense Intelligence Agency, the attachés, and would have been closer to the military, and if the military was as unhappy as all hell that should have been coming through.

BREWSTER: We hadn't gotten it from that source; and now that you point it up, the rapport between Defense and State wasn't one that included trading information of that sort on reports. It could have been better, I suppose.

Q: Greece is a world of its own. I wonder if you could describe how, as this is going to be rather important when we get up to the coup and how it is received. What was your impression of how the Ambassador operated and understood the scene, and how he was accepted by the Greeks and

the Greek staff?

BREWSTER: My only impression is from the visit I took in February, trying to get a feeling about it there. Phillips Talbot was a good working Ambassador but he didn't fit in with the Greek type of mentality, but this was perhaps too short a time to make a judgment of that sort in terms of the operation. Then he soon moved into the junta period.

Q: You came back here then, you had been out there in February. The rumors were going around that the Generals weren't going to allow this, and the big surprise was that the wrong people "couped." (This, of course, is the people talking about this after the coup had happened.) You were sitting in Washington and getting closer to April 21, 1967; were you then beginning to hear talk about "the generals may do something?"

BREWSTER: Yes, that had gotten through. But people felt, I think, that they knew the generals well enough that they would find out about it, or they couldn't get away with it or could be talked out of it.

Q: We were getting wind of this, we stand for democratic ideals; were we making any effort within the State Department to pass the word on through our Ambassador, through the Secretary of State, and the Department of Defense through their attaché system, telling these military people "don't do it -- we don't go along with this"?

BREWSTER: Oh yes, that was being done; that was being done by the Ambassador on instructions from us.

Q: We were saying "don't coup"?

BREWSTER: Yes, oh yes.

Q: How about your relations with the Department of Defense? Sometimes the Ambassador can say something but if all the military equipment is coming from the Department of Defense, and that is a good portion of what concerns any military man in a country dependent upon us for supplies, and if they get a wink or a shoulder shrug from our military establishment in Greece they aren't going to do anything. Do you feel the Department of Defense was on board with our policy, making it known?

BREWSTER: Yes. I think a distinction for that period, and this may have been because of the way the situation worked, is that we had good close relations with the Defense Attaché, the Air Attaché, the people who were in our own building. We did not have as good contacts with CIA, and they as much as said "we are letting the Ambassador know whatever we pick up, and that's what the book says." All of us were much more worried about what went on at that level than on the DIA side. So we didn't have occasion to question them as to whether they were getting more information on that front.

Q: You were in NEA; NEA spends most of its time worrying about the Israelis and the Arabs and when it is not doing that it is worried about the Indians and the Pakistanis. Greece must be

pretty far down as far as sustained interest, particularly in those days, wasn't it?

BREWSTER: Yes, that was the case. At that time all the people picked up countries and there were Country Directors for Iran, Iraq, etc., and you had a lot of new people on board as a result. You have a point, and that is what I am saying about Phil Talbot. His knowledge had been so broad that probably only 5% of his time was devoted to Greece before he went out to Greece. It was one of these appointments that was being made for presidential reasons and so he went less well equipped than others might have; but he was a pro and a good person.

Q: At the eve of the coup, could you describe what your attitude was, how things went, reactions and whatever you have to say.

BREWSTER: I have gone over this with a number of Greek visitors and parliamentarians, and others, because we were accused of having pulled the coup ourselves. They would say, "the CIA maybe did it too but you were responsible, you knew better; if you can't keep control over your CIA you are not doing a very good job." I describe to them the situation that night. I was out at a dinner party and got the call from upstairs, SS, that there was trouble, come right on in. So I went in, and I called in my two assistants at that time, and they both came in; we set up a three person task force right away in our own office. The one message that we had was a telegram from Ambassador Phillips Talbot saying, "I have just seen the nephew of Prime Minister Kanellopoulos who wants me to come urgently to his apartment. Am proceeding." Then he went to see Kanellopoulos there and stayed about an hour and a half; this was two o'clock in the morning their time. When I got on the desk and had that message, I wondered whether the other people had heard or whether their phones had all been cut off, because the first thing people do is cut communications around town and sure enough they had. So there was difficulty in communicating but we were able to call Norbert Anschutz, the DCM, Jack Maury, the CIA Director there, and a couple of other officers who then made their way into the Embassy at 3:00 in the morning. George Papadopoulos was not a name known to the desk; the CIA had known him but this emerged later.

The first day was devoted largely to the moving of troops about and utilizing the control of the radio and the TV for their messages and announcements. One thing that was significant was that by afternoon, when the Greek populace understood that this was a coup on the right and not on the left, there was a considerable sigh of relief. The business sector particularly. We were in touch with them and they got the message back in and on the following morning I went up to see Secretary Dean Rusk to report on the events. He asked me, as I entered, to wait a few minutes, and when I began my presentation he interrupted me and said, "Mr. Brewster, don't get so excited; this is my ninety-first coup." I said, "This is different, the cradle of democracy." That didn't impress particularly. The rest of the day was spent primarily working immediately with the Defense Department on a position that would cut off 90% of the military aid shipments. And that was achieved; the military went along even though we had a hard time getting 90% as against the 50% they wanted to stick with. Actually shipments in the pipeline take a long time to go out so it is not something one senses immediately but at least it was something that could be used on the radio and Voice of America, etc. But the cut off of international news, I think, was considerable, was pretty watertight; the Greek people didn't hear very much. Certainly many people that I have seen since that time were unaware that any of this had happened because the colonels weren't

going to put it out. If it did go out it was on BBC or something that was in passing which certainly never reached the Greek press or the Greek people. So that was the scenery for that particular time.

Q: Were you getting any feeling from the military or the CIA that "thank God, these are people we can work with"?

BREWSTER: No, that didn't come out very fast, not at the beginning. Our biggest job was catching hell from Congressmen, the press; inquiries as to what was going on, why hadn't we done things. It was questions from our own public arena as the days went on. You know they took Andreas in and locked him up and we spent more time on trying to get Andreas out of jail than we did on policy. It was the detailed events that we had. That 90% figure stuck until the fall of 1968 when the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia.

Q: So it was about a year and a half?

BREWSTER: It was a year and a half. Then the Defense Department went to 50% on the aid.

Q: This coup particularly stirred the liberal element in the United States. It was very popular to be against the coup. How did this impact on what you were doing?

BREWSTER: The three of us, and we didn't increase the staff, had a lot of detailed work to do. This is my first impression of it: we didn't have time to sit down and write policy papers about it, we were putting out fires all the time. Very loud protests and others that were coming also from the Greek politicians who thought we had a hand in it.

Q: You are talking about the politicians in Greece?

BREWSTER: Yes. The one thing that many people want to do is to get the monkey off their back and on to somebody else's back. More people came in with ideas such as "why didn't you take that Sixth Fleet ship that was down in the harbor, turn it around, and just shoot and hit the Greek Pentagon in Athens," and other ideas equally silly. And the press like Helene Vlachos, and other papers, were all viciously against us for not having done something about it. Most of them were closed down I think...

Q: Some of them got away to London and other places.

BREWSTER: Yes. Helene Vlachos went to London.

Q: There were a considerable number of Congressmen and politicians in local areas and influential people who had Greek roots. Probably next to those with Jewish roots the Greeks may be the next in terms of political influence. How did they respond?

BREWSTER: You make a good point on that. Most of them are liberal and they were among the loudest voices, the so-called Greek lobby people; but there were also many, many professors all around the country who had been following these political events before they happened and who

also got on the bandwagon of "what can we do?" "how can we get them out?" and so on. The year and a half spent with that government was one of being attacked constantly as to "you're not doing enough to get this situation changed."

Q: Again, I have to speak from my experience in Greece. As you were saying the Greeks have a very, very strong tendency to blame others for whatever problems they have and to feel that no matter what happens it is never their fault; it has to be an outside influence and invariably it is the United States in present politics. But did you see anything that could have been done to change things around, anything that the United States considered or could have done that it didn't do that might have changed things at any point along the way?

BREWSTER: No, because we were trying to keep hands off on the political scene, not run elections or get involved on this. We were ready to take George Papandreou if he won the elections or Kanellopoulos if his side won in the elections. We were playing a passive role; they were a good member of NATO, the bases were valuable. I don't think they were affected much after the first few weeks in terms of their ability to carry out missions. It was more the human rights aspect of it, the democratic rights that were at issue that we were coping with primarily. No I wouldn't say there was anything; we knew that the generals might have come up, we used all our influence in terms of telling them "no, this is not the answer; coups are not the way to go, you are a member of NATO" etc., etc. I presume that they took heed of it but along came this undercover upstart type and he just ran the ball.

Q: Did the White House play any role in this, or were they too absorbed in Vietnam?

BREWSTER: No, they didn't. It ended up with the Secretary, and I think that on that day, if my memory is correct, Dean Rusk was going off to Brussels anyway, so we didn't have much time. We were going to see him a week later for the next time.

Q: I gather that despite all the criticism the Secretary never got terribly engaged in this?

BREWSTER: No, he didn't. He left things to Luke Battle, who was the Assistant Secretary; it was handled that way.

Q: Of course we were the one country with bases, but did you find that you were taking a lot of heat from the other countries in Europe? The British, French, and Germans were sort of playing holier than thou on this relationship. Did you find that a problem?

BREWSTER: No. Back here, frankly, we didn't have much contact with the Embassies on these things. In the field I am sure they were sorting things out, but no one was about to go to war over trying to get these fellows out. Business resumed pretty fast so it wasn't the world's greatest crisis. But so many Greeks have come away from Greece to get away from what they consider a government that is too monolithic or too tight; many of them are liberals, many of them are professors or others that read a great deal about Greece and who also read Greek newspapers and keep up with things that way. It's a free country, you can call in and get the desk officer or the country director, we don't care who it is. We consulted a great deal during that whole period with...I'll try to remember his name -- one of the professors who was here at American

University for a long time. Theodore Kouloumbis who has written a good book on Greece and NATO, it was published just about that time, 1967 or so.

If I can move on, here is a bit on the question of Andreas, because people ask us sometimes, "What is it that makes you or the world so unhappy about Andreas Papandreou as he has come along?" Andreas Papandreou was captured and locked up in jail. Much time and effort was devoted to obtaining his release. Even though that took some eight months, everything was done to permit Margaret Papandreou, his wife and an American citizen, to see him, to deliver his meals, to pay visits to him. In other words we did as much as possible at the Embassy level in terms of dealing with the humanitarian side of his jail sentence. However, when Andreas Papandreou was released to go to Canada as a professor, in late 1968, and paid a visit to Washington, he visited with the Assistant Secretary of State Luke Battle; he was very, very bitter at the lack of Embassy action in pressing for his prompt release. There was no concept of a word of thank you. You know -- "I'm back; I'm out." This is very typical of Andreas, he is in there for himself and he does not think of how other people view him at times. This has been very much the base of his position and his wife's position that has led strident anti-American campaigns which built him up as champion of the Greek left-of-center PASOK. This stand continued in the 1970's, after the fall of the junta, and throughout the 1980's.

In 1969 I was assigned as political advisor to Admiral Rivero in Naples. Admiral Horacio Rivero had been Vice- Chief of the Navy Staff before that assignment and was really a brilliant strategist. One of my tasks on the assignment was to try to keep the military presence in Greece and the military visits to Greece at a minimum so that the junta would not make use of these visits and exploit them to the extent possible. He was broad-minded enough to understand that theme and to go along with it. This didn't mean that Washington generals and others didn't creep in, but he was very astute and played the game. We took three trips to Greece in the twenty-four months I was assigned there. It was sad in one sense to see the reaction of the politicians whom I had known well, who in that situation deliberately moved over to the other side of the street in order not to be seen with me, or to shake my hand or greet me. I may have taken that more personally than I should have, but it was a reflection of how even some of the more sensible people still thought that we were to blame, and who have to keep up that image that the U.S. bears the responsibility of this event. It would have been counter to their thesis that we were playing with the colonels. The most difficult thing, was when I was still Country Director, was the decision of Agnew, former Vice-President Agnew, to visit Greece.

Q: This was in the '70's.

BREWSTER: Was this in the '70's? When you were there?

Q: He visited there; I had lunch with him with the rest of the Embassy. This was about '71 or something like that.

BREWSTER: Your dates would be right on it. But I remember that there was a fight I lost with the White House, with his Staff Assistant who was counting on making the trip too. Any memoranda of protest did nothing to change his mind; he wasn't going to change it. There was a very visible person, the Vice President was worth six or eight generals, at any time; and he was

exploited.

Q: And later a decision was made, around '72 or '73, for recruiting purposes of the navy to home port a carrier group in Greece. It was practically the whole Embassy waving the fleet away, "Don't come here!" And they did, and there was trouble, and eventually it never happened.

BREWSTER: They never got in.

Q: But the colonels were delighted to have them. While you were dealing with this, and also as POLAD in Naples which covered Greece, how well did you feel that the Embassy was keeping people abreast of what was happening, and connected? The Papadopoulos regime was not easy to approach and we didn't want to get close to them, and being shunned by the Greek politicians for their own internal purposes must have left the Embassy somewhat isolated.

BREWSTER: It is interesting that you raise that point because I don't remember seeing messages from Greece, from the Embassy, much during that period. I'd heard by word of mouth what Ambassador Tasca's stance was on relationships with the junta. We may have seen some messages, but not many. That was Admiral Rivero's only comment I shall always remember. He had a photographic memory, could read all his messages, so he wanted no summaries, which made my job quite easy. He'd take the whole take and let me read it, and then read it over himself. And he did read a lot of messages, particularly from Moscow. At times he would sign off over on page six of a long Moscow message saying, "Don't tell me they really believe this stuff, Dan." Which was an indication of how congenial you can be in Moscow, or hopeful about things. It was a reflection of Admiral Rivero that was sort of a dig -- "You softies, hasn't anybody got any guts?", something like that. One trip he did not take me on, was to Madrid where he engaged himself to be the next Ambassador to Madrid. He talked to El Caudillo, eyeball to eyeball and in their own language, and Franco got in touch with the President and said I want him as my next Ambassador. And he went out. He was the class of 1932 at the Naval Academy, the first Puerto Rican, and number one in his class of 204. A remarkable guy. Apparently the first year he had the flu at Christmas time and wasn't able to take an exam with all the rest; the others took it and they were ranked. Then he took the test and came out ahead of the number one. So they put him down as "Mr. One-half." He was remembered as Mr. One-half. He stood five foot four. A great person.

DAN Z. ZACHARY
Economic Officer
Athens (1961-1962)

Consul
Thessaloniki (1962-1965)

Economic Officer
Athens (1969-1973)

**Consul General
Thessaloniki (1977-1981)**

Dan Z. Zachary was born in Illinois in 1923. In the Foreign Service, he was posted to Germany, Denmark, Greece, Ethiopia, Zaire and France. He also served in Washington. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: You had two areas of concentration: Africa and Greece. Your next assignment was to Thessaloniki. How did you get that assignment?

ZACHARY: I started intensive Greek language training in 1960 with the idea of becoming an economic officer in Athens. I was assigned to Athens for one year (1961-62), doing economic reporting. The number two job in Thessaloniki opened up in 1962 when John Owens came from there to join the Embassy's political section. I replaced him in Thessaloniki as Deputy Principal Officer and Post Political Officer. I spent three years in Thessaloniki, from 1962-1965.

Q: Did you have any Greek before you went into intensive language training? Did your family have a Greek connection?

ZACHARY: No, although the Greeks claimed me. Everybody claims me. Because of my hair color, the Danes thought I was one of them. When I was in Paris, the French thought I was Jewish because I have two Old Testament names: Dan and Zachary (Zacharia). In my case, my grandparents were German speaking Catholics coming from Austria. I don't know how they got the name. Their friends and relatives were Schmidts and Meyers, etc., all Austrian Catholics. They came to the States in the 1890s. So I never had any Greek background. At least, no one ever approached me in Greece and claimed to be a relative. I had never been to Greece and never thought much about it. But it was an extension of my interest in Europe both through my studies here and in France and my tours in Germany and Denmark. So I was greatly attracted to Greece.

Q: What was the situation in Greece during the period from 1961 to 1965?

ZACHARY: These were the last years of Karamanlis, the conservative party leader. The most interesting thing that happened to me during my one year in Athens was meeting Andreas Papandreou. One of my Stanford professors had been a colleague of his and was spending a year in Athens under an exchange program. He invited me to have dinner with himself and Papandreou with our wives. So there were just six of us. Five days before the dinner there had been elections -- October 1961. Papandreou's father, George, accused the government of "Via K Nothia" (violence and fraud). Indeed there had been more than the usual hanky-panky. George rode to victory two years later on this slogan, "violence and fraud." So five days after the elections that George might have won, we attended this dinner. We discussed economics for twenty to thirty minutes before dinner, while the ladies were talking to each other. At the dinner table, Andreas started to talk about the elections. Although he had been brought back to Greece by Karamanlis to set up an economic research center after twenty years in the U.S., he quickly became absorbed in Greek politics. and was obviously a complete political animal. Of course, his father was the leader of the opposition party at that time. It was clear that his heart was in politics and not in economics. He discoursed for four or five hours until midnight just talking about the

violence, the fraud that had been perpetuated. It was fascinating. I thought that this man was incredibly powerful and passionate but also a fanatic or zealot. He was convincing. He was speaking on behalf of democracy or so it seemed. Not that I was converted by any means, but it was an eye opening experience to be with such a political animal.

Q: Did you get a feel for his attitude toward the United States?

ZACHARY: He blamed the CIA particularly. He already accused us of dominating Greece, theme that he developed further later on. We had more or less perverted Greek history by not allowing democratic forces to act freely, starting with the guerrilla forces followed by the periods during which the right dominated the Greek political scene. He kind of muffled his attacks on the U.S., but he made it clear that the U.S. was partners to this fraud. It may have been that he hadn't reached the point to make an outright attack on the U.S.

Q: What was his attitude towards the extreme left -- the Communists who were illegal at that time?

ZACHARY: He did not seem particularly sympathetic toward them at that point. He still uses the Communists as a whipping boy, but certainly he is not all that critical of them. His father was kind of a traditional bourgeois politician although he represented the liberal forces. His party was called "Liberal" and became the "Center Union" made up mainly of middle-class -- the same kind of people who were in the Conservative party, but with a slightly different view of the system and of democracy. You could compare George's party with our Democratic Party while Andreas' party is a socialist one. But in 1961, he pretty much stayed in line politically with his father's center-liberal thinking. No one really defended or supported the Communists in those days. One had no reason to be too concerned since it traditionally won only 10-12 percent of the votes. These people were members of a crypto-communist party since Communists themselves did not become legal until 1974.

Q: You were in the Embassy during 1961-1962 when Ellis Briggs was Ambassador. How did he run the Embassy? What was his view of the Greek political scene?

ZACHARY: He was an old fashioned autocrat and rather gruff, blunt -- A very senior diplomat and very sure of himself. He found the Greeks a little hard to stomach with their total changeability and unsteadiness of course. They were constantly changing positions when you were dealing with them. I don't remember all that much of the Ambassador's relations with the Greeks. We at that time felt that we should do our best to keep Greece on the conservative track. We tacitly supported the Conservative Party. Karamanlis was our man. He had been elected in the mid-1950s, and we probably felt that he was the best man that Greece had to offer. A change in leadership could result, we felt, in Greece returning to a squabbling coalition-type politics with a much weaker central government. We were in control in the late 1940s and early 1950s because of the civil war -- General Van Fleet was directing military operations. Then we gave massive economic aid. We were so concerned with incompetence in the Greek ministries that we put our own people in them. We literally ran the ministries to a great extent whenever it involved our funds. In 1961, we were just getting out of this frame of mind -- the pro-consular role -- that had governed our thinking well into the 1950s. I think this attitude still prevailed somewhat when

I was there. Karamanlis, however, was getting more and more independent minded. He kept us at bay, but he was making basically good decisions as far as we could see. We had a shocker in 1958 -- I think that was when it was. In Greece, the first and second parties in an election receive extra vote distribution based on their support. The center parties had split apart and the crypto-communists received the second highest vote total. They ended up with 25 percent of the seats in Parliament. This created great concern.

Q: There are countries that are known from the American point of view as "AID countries" where aid has predominance in contrast to others where everything revolves around the American military presence. Some countries are known as "CIA countries" where CIA has an inordinate influence within the host government -- not necessarily covert influence, but just the right contacts. Greece was one of those countries. Was that your impression when you were there in the early 1960s?

ZACHARY: Yes, that was certainly the feeling that I and other Foreign Service officers had, although in the late forties and fifties, AID officials wielded considerable influence. Certainly the military was influential as well as State since we were so involved in high-level dealings with the Government. But CIA seemed to run away with the prize, at least at that time. They had the contacts and they were involved in the organization of the Greek intelligence services. Generally, they used a lot of Greek-Americans who developed life-long relationships with some of the Greek officials. They were involved in manipulating elections. It is no secret that they tried to bring about a major change in the leadership of the labor unions. Before that, there was a communist labor movement and a non-communist one. They supported a third candidate, but ultimately the results were a three-way split. We had the feeling that CIA was extremely influential, with large staff and funds to match.

Q: How about the American military in light of the bases which have been a perennial bone of contention?

ZACHARY: The bases were not a bone of contention in the early 1960s. First of all, although we had a large presence in Greece and were in the process of adding an important new naval communication facility at Nea Makri, near Athens. It seemed to me therefore that although we had a large presence -- the four large bases plus five small units in Northern Greece and a number of communication sites in Western Greece -- we were doing a lot of training in support of the Greek military and therefore had their enthusiastic support for our efforts to build up modern Greek forces. Greece was concerned about Bulgaria and, later, about Turkey. The Greek military very much appreciated the large amount of training and equipment. They were our interlocutors with the civilian side. The conservative governments of course supported a strong Greek military and NATO. Greece was a small power and could not think of a better protector than the United States. The Greeks have maintained a pro-American attitude longer than most countries, many of which have gotten sick of us and our presence. They still felt that we were very much needed for their own well-being. They had a very positive attitude towards our presence.

Q: When you transferred to Thessaloniki as the number two man, who was the Consul General?

ZACHARY: That was Robert Folsom, who had been Chargé in Haiti and had a number of other Foreign Service assignments. He was not Greek specialist. He didn't know any Greek and had no experience in the area.

Q: What were your interests in Thessaloniki?

ZACHARY: They were roughly the same as they had been in Athens. We followed a few special issues like the Macedonian issue and Bulgaria and Yugoslav border issues. Also, the Yugoslavs had rights in the port of Thessaloniki for the transport of cargoes. The border was quite close -- an hour and half from Bulgaria and the same to the Yugoslav border. We had an American Protestant supported religious sect (in Katerini) that caused us problems. We had the major Turkish ethnic group in area -- in Western Thrace -- kept there under the 1923 Lausanne treaty. One hundred and twenty thousand Greeks were allowed to stay in Istanbul as the result of the Greek-Turkish war of the 1920's.

It was always my feeling that in time of crisis, the Consulate was able to obtain information more readily and successfully than the Embassy in Athens. This was for several reasons: the winds of controversy blow so vigorously in Athens that it is hard to sort out the trends. In Thessaloniki, you tend to get ground-swells indicating basic changes in mood. We did call the elections of 1963 and 1964 when Karamanlis was put out of power for the first time in seven years and when George Papandreou was elected. We believed that there was a massive movement, but the Embassy didn't see it. You see things more clearly in the country-side, you feel the ground-swells. In Athens, there are just too many currents to appreciate the long-term trends.

In the Junta years (1967-74), people like Walter De Silva were able to produce fine reports because people in Thessaloniki would talk and open up to us, even though they knew that police were everywhere. Nevertheless, they couldn't resist getting to us to give us their views. In Athens, the control was much tighter. When PASOK came in -- I was there in 1981 when they were gathering their strength that would lead to their victory -- Papandreou gave orders at one point not to talk to Embassy or Consulate people. The Embassy people had great trouble, but the people in the North tended to disregard Papandreou's directive and talked to us anyhow. This is a little pluf for the Consulate because the Department keeps trying to close it.

Q: If you called the elections right from a constituent post, how was this received in the embassy?

ZACHARY: Great consternation! It was nice for me. The Ambassador offered me a job in Athens. He was pleased that at least the Consulate had called it right. He took the big view. The people at the working level were not so delighted. We could see it clearly in Thessaloniki by talking to people, to conservatives, for example. The latter admitted that they were losing faith. Then there the rallies down the street from the Consulates. It just seemed clear that there was a major change taking place.

Q: Let me pursue that process a little bit more. How as a political officer in Thessaloniki do you get information that you put together for a report?

ZACHARY: You simply call on your contacts. You do your traditional morning press readings - - we spent thirty-forty minutes reviewing the newspapers -- and then would ask our senior local employees for their interpretation of the stories. Maybe there would be a couple of Deputies from Athens in town and we would call on them. People were incredibly accessible. Practically no one would turn you down. We would first select the subject we wanted to explore in depth and then we would talk to people about that. If the Consul General was going to lunch with the Mayor, for example, we would ask him to raise the subject we were interested in. I would try to see other Consulate officers, such as the USIA representative and his excellent local employee, who was well plugged in. In those days, we had great local employees. With Greeks I knew quite well, I would just call on the phone. We would keep checking it out to make sure that the various pieces fit and that the rough spots were smoothed, that you had the story right and were not fooling yourself.

Q: Did you ever encounter any Greek who would refuse to talk to an American?

ZACHARY: They enjoyed talking. They were overjoyed that they would be listened to. It is part of the Mediterranean temperament. They simply enjoy communicating. They can't keep secrets. It is an open, garrulous society. Of course, one could try the communists now and then. The most taciturn group that I found over the years were the military. A lot of subjects were tied to the military -- the Turkish threat and Bulgarian activities. Whenever we wanted information that the Greek government preferred to keep to itself, the military was pretty up-tight about it and did not reveal much. It was very hard -- even from those you knew for a long time -- to get information. There were exceptions. The Greeks had the bulk of their forces around Thessaloniki. Once upon a time they faced North. Now they face East toward Turkey. During my first tour in Greece, the number one hated enemies were the Bulgarians and it is with them the Greeks have had their most bitter struggles in the 20th century. But since 1974, the number one enemy is Turkey. There was one General in charge of C-Corps -- extremely charming man -- who would talk and openly give his opinion. He was extremely competent and confident. He went on to greater things. But he was the exception.

Q: How important during the 1967-1974 period were our military interests in Greece?

ZACHARY: Our military of course were riding high since the Junta was bending backwards to please them. They got homeporting privileges for the navy, which meant the presence of an additional number of Americans -- thousands in the Athens-Piraeus area. It was certainly an achievement of the military to obtain this concession from the Junta. Of course this was the time, in 1968, of the Czech crisis and tense international relations, which probably helped in obtaining homeporting. The US military liked what they saw. They got full cooperation. The Greek military got better pay and housing, thanks to the Junta. It was a pretty cozy relationship. We kind of fell into that great love feast, because the Junta encouraged it. They definitely felt they could win silence or concession from us by treating our military well. Homeporting was the most obvious successful manifestation of that policy.

Q: Home porting never really got off the ground. I don't think we actually ever put a carrier

group in there.

ZACHARY: We moved families in. But the 1974 coup pretty much put an end to homeporting. But it was a good symbol of the friendly relations that the Colonels tried to create -- giving us things that we wanted so that we would continue our aid and support. We had a much cozier attitude than the Europeans. They were more correctly distancing themselves from the Colonels.

Q: We have discussed our political and military interests in Greece. You were the commercial officer in our Embassy. How much influence did our economic-commercial interests have on our policy?

ZACHARY: It was not a major factor. The biggest commercial event at that time was the invitation to Litton Industries to invest in Greece. The Colonels made the offer; Litton of course saw a chance. They promised the Colonels that they would bring in one billion dollars in new investments, with particular emphasis on the development of the western part of the Peloponnisos. They brought in a huge staff to attract foreign investment. The first and perhaps only successful venture was to bring the Heineker Brewery to Crete. It came in and went up very fast. It was the first foreign beers to be produced in Greece. Before that, there was only "Fix." I know that Bill McGrew, a former Foreign Service Officer, was stationed in Patras to assist in the drafting of a development plan that was targeted on bringing industry into that part of Greece, which was underdeveloped. This was an interesting project for Greece's future. It was unfortunate that the Colonels were the ones to do it. They used it to show their dynamic attitude towards the economy. The number three guy in the Junta, Makarezos, was a pretty good economist and probably the best administrator in the Greek Government. He was the one we dealt with on economic issues.

Our total trade figures with Greece were not that impressive, but investment did rise massively because of the Tom Pappas refinery and chemical plant. We thought investment would tend to grow, but it has not developed even today in the way it was anticipated. Assets were sold off or abandoned. Our total trade figures with Greece have, if anything declined over the years. As a result, investment and trade never developed the way we were anticipating back in the 1960s and 1970s. The most interesting thing I did in that commercial job was to put up a U.S. Pavilion in the Thessaloniki Fair. Ambassador Tasca told us to do it, even though he knew that Washington would not finance any part of the costs. He insisted it be put up. With USIA help and with a fee of \$ 1,000 per a certain number of square feet from each exhibitor, we raised approximately \$ 40,000 that we used in part for a nice centerpiece. We had a piece of moon rock and one of our astronauts, Colonel Stafford, was sent. It was a big success. The following year, we got a little bit of money from Washington -- USIA and Commerce. It was because of Tasca's insistence that we put up a pretty respectable pavilion. Here again, he wanted to impress the Junta with our interest in Greece and the close connection between the two countries. At the time, one wondered whether that was the appropriate moment to go into the fair. We had not participated for a number of years, but the Ambassador insisted and so it was done.

Q: My impression at the time was that the Junta did not seem to operate very effectively, at least in areas such as housing, roads or other infrastructures. They would get a fancy idea and then proceed in different directions which was not a feasible way to accomplish anything. In a

parliamentary system, these problems are sorted out. In a dictatorship, decrees are issued and then it is discovered that it doesn't work. From the economic point of view, how did you find the administration of the country?

ZACHARY: As bad as ever. I don't think it could have gotten much worse. On the contrary, when the Colonels came to power, they wanted the railroads to run on time, a la Mussolini. With their military background -- meeting deadlines, etc. -- they announced that no one would have to wait if an appointment had been made. Their stress was on orderliness and timeliness. It fell by the wayside through the vagaries of the Greek character. They did give business a free hand. In addition to Litton, there were other entrepreneurs -- Greeks and Greek-Americans -- running around, talking about hotels, for example, for tourist expansion. They were told that red-tape would be cut. It was clear that the Junta wanted to succeed to improve its image. It was trying to impress, as with home-porting, and to make a mark by bringing in investment, by having a more open climate for investment and business, by letting the Americans get what they wanted. They were obviously trying to win friends.

Q: Weren't they also trying to attract businesses which dealt with the Middle East and which previously had headquartered in Beirut?

ZACHARY: Yes. There was a law which permitted the establishment of a headquarters' office to deal with the Middle East without paying local taxes. It allowed duty-free import of automobiles and other duty-free privileges. I don't think the Junta introduced it. It was enacted before. However, the Junta promoted it and strongly encouraged it. Even at that time, Beirut was becoming less attractive, although it was still a pretty good town. The Junta was bending over backwards to be seen as "nice guys." They were trying to win friends one way or another.

They reintroduced into the schools "Katharevousa" -- a version of ancient language from the third century. This decision messed up a lot of students. Katharevousa is a very formal language which diverged markedly from the Greek developed during the ensuing sixteen centuries. They were out to purify the language as well as the people!

Q: Did you find that because the European democracies were shying away from Greece while we were getting closer to the Junta, American businesses were doing better than European ones?

ZACHARY: We obtained the Litton contract, which was not given to a French or British concern. That was a major item. I don't recall any American businessmen complaining. I know that we went down to the wire on a big military jet contract, that had two American and one French company competing. There was a lot of wheeling and dealing. I didn't get the feeling that the Greeks were necessarily throwing it our way. The French competed strongly with the French Ambassador being a full-time commercial attaché. That was his principal task. The French maintained good relations. But I don't think European business was hurt by the Junta. They had a bigger volume of business than we did. Certainly the Germans, the French and the Italians were doing well. The Italians put on a big show every year at the Thessaloniki fair. They had a huge pavilion selling all sorts of goods. They didn't let their views of the Junta deter them from seeking commercial opportunities.

Q: You left Greece in 1973. You served in Paris 1973-74, then you went to Washington in the African Bureau and the Board of Examiners. In 1977, you returned as Consul General in Thessaloniki until 1981. You have gone through three of the four major post-war periods in Greece, missing only the Civil War. You were there in the early 1960s when the country was in a turmoil. Then you were there during the Junta period and later in the post-Junta period.

ZACHARY: I missed Andreas Papandreou. My first tour included the time when George Papandreou was Prime Minister.

Q: When you were assigned as Consul General, were you given any marching orders by the Department?

ZACHARY: There were no particular marching orders. The dominant theme in our relationships with the Greek in 1977 was the Cyprus problem. The tensions resulting from the Turkish invasion of July 1974 were receding. Ironically, the invasion restored democracy in Greece. They can thank the Turks for that. The invasion caused intense anti-Americanism. In addition, as the Greeks looked back, they tended to blame the Junta period on us. We had to live with that legacy after 1974. People kept commenting throughout this period on how difficult it was to be in Greece in the 1974-76 period. There were huge demonstrations about Cyprus. I guess that on the 17th of November every year, on the anniversary of the Greek tanks killing some students at the Athens Politechnion, the horrors of the Junta period would be recalled and relived. The memories apparently got worse rather than better with the passage of time. A lot of people did suffer, but by and large the people who were not involved politically did relatively well.

So when I got there in 1977, there was a solid residue of anti-Americanism. Of course, I had known a lot of people in Thessaloniki for over ten years. Since they knew me and liked me, they treated me politely much of the time, but would nevertheless lecture me about how the U.S. did wrong -- the usual Greek tendency to blame someone else for their problems.

Q: I found that feature to be one of the least endearing aspects of the Greeks. Maybe it is the small power attitude.

ZACHARY: Yes, it is. They are not their own people. I served in Denmark, a country half the size of Greece right after they coming out of their World War II recovery. They were, however, already "walking in the sun with pride." If they didn't agree with us, they would tell us. The Greeks still have this dependency feeling. Strangely enough, the West Germans still have it. You can compare the Greeks and Germans on this. In a way, it has been nice for Americans because it has created a long love feast. At the same time, when the going gets rough, it becomes violent and nasty. The Greeks are coming out of this dependency feeling. Maybe that is a plus for Papandreou; he is making Greeks a little prouder by twisting our tail and saying that Greeks don't need us. But in 1977, there was total dismay that we would allow the Turks to invade. In 1963, President Lyndon Johnson had sent a nasty letter that stopped an invasion then. There would be fairly frequent demonstrations in 1977. When you get a demonstration passing that little old Consulate in Thessaloniki, on the water-front with people packed in and some falling in

the water, it gets pretty impressive because of the long-line moving ever so slowly. You close your shutters and peek out. There were only 40 police out in front and you realize that the demonstrators could break into the building. A Greek crowd can go crazy. It was different from anything I had seen before. I had seen demonstrations in the 1960s when George Papandreou was trying to get into power. But they were never that big or that threatening. This time, the Communists had their contingents. The Red of the Communists mixed with the Green of Papandreou's PASOK.

There had been a change. The mood had changed. I blame it on Cyprus and, for the more liberal part of the political spectrum, we were the villains because they thought we had propped up the Junta and kept it in power. They believed that we knew about the take-over in 1967, that we engineered it and that we were involved. The CIA didn't have a clue even though the Colonels had very close contacts with its staff. The Colonels were paranoid enough and smart enough not to let anybody in on their coup.

Q: Which is one reason why in Europe there are so few coups that work. The circle of "insiders" gets too broad. What did you feel were your main tasks as Consul General?

ZACHARY: As Consul General, I thought my main task was representing the United States -- building friendly relations, our need to improve them, especially after 1974 Cyprus invasion and the Junta period. We were very concerned about Greece's future, about our relationship and we tried to dispel the notion that we were enthusiastic about the Junta or that we had brought into being. I worked closely with the United States Information Agency (USIA). It was fairly easy to get certain American groups to Thessaloniki, such as college students as well as our two or three "Arts America" shows and Fulbright Program participants. We had a very active program generated by some very good Public Affairs Officers (PAO). That outreach program plus my travels to provincial cities attempted to create good will. I also tried to back-stop the reporting officer -- by that time we only had one reporting officer. I tried to fill in and do my share of reporting. I also of course had to manage the Consulate with a shrinking staff. Consulates take a bigger share of personnel cuts than Embassies.

Q: You mentioned before that during your first tour in Thessaloniki in the 1960s, you could report better on ground-swells than the people in the Embassy could, because Athens was always in such a turmoil. I think this is true in Italy and other places as well where there is a tendency to get sucked into the domestic political squabbling so that your vision becomes clouded by the dust surrounding you. Were you seeing anything in Northern Greece that was different than our people in Athens were seeing?

ZACHARY: Yes. We saw the increasing strength of Papandreou. In 1977, there were elections. My political officer, Tom Coony, as I had seventeen years earlier, called the election correctly. He won the Embassy "pool." He hit PASOK's totals right on the head; no one else got near it. In 1981, as I was leaving Thessaloniki, my political officer was John Hamilton -- a Latin American specialist. He thought the most interesting reporting was on PASOK and its increasing strength and development. He was fascinated by Papandreou's efforts to put a party together. One of the best and longest reports I have ever seen was done by Hamilton on PASOK, its structure, its doctrinaire outlook. PASOK included some very far-left thinkers in the inner circle and planning

group. Because of that report, he got to know a lot of the Thessalonikian PASOK people. They were good contacts. I left ten days before the 1981 elections, but I have a vague recollection of Hamilton being right on that vote as well. I would say that we in Thessaloniki had a good handle on the PASOK ground-swell. Then, it was something like 1963 when the Conservatives -- in both cases that was Karamanlis- were waning in popularity. People were ready for another change. In the meantime, people had been radicalized during the Junta period. The high school students were now in their twenties and voting. They were turning Greek politics around. So in 1981, we had another ground-swell that was noticed in Thessaloniki.

Q: Who was the Ambassador in the 1977-81 period?

ZACHARY: Bob McCloskey, who had been Kissinger's spokesman. He came directly from Holland where he had been Ambassador. He had also worked on Cyprus.

Q: Did you feel any pressure from the Embassy to do things differently or were left pretty much to your own devices?

ZACHARY: We were pretty much left alone. Reporting on PASOK and its gains didn't cause as much consternation as the reporting we did on George Papandreou fifteen years earlier, 1963-64. Then the Embassy officers were restricted. In the 1977-81 period, the Embassy's political reporting was not censored much. There was a different attitude. McCloskey was basically a newspaper man and therefore had strong feelings against censorship. The DCM -- Mills first and Kovner later -- also did not believe in censorship.

Q: What about the "desk"? Did you have much contact with the Greek "desk" in the Department? Did you have any feeling on how they were viewing the situation?

ZACHARY: The Washington people came out periodically and I would always go down to Athens when an important visitor came through. One of the important issues was the base agreement, which was the last one, expiring in December 1988. There is still not a new one. But we are operating as usual. That was our major concern.

There has always been great animosity against Andreas Papandreou. When his father won in 1963, he told the DCM when he went to the American Embassy that it now had an American in the Prime Minister's office and the U.S. should take advantage of it. After that, it was all downhill. Three months later, he declared the PAO "persona-non-grata," although we prevented the Greeks from kicking him out by transferring him before they could act. He turned immediately when he became Chief of Staff for his father. He began to play games and use his anti-American card. He discovered then how useful it was to do so and how popular it made him, particularly with the left-wing of his father's party. He became the darling of the left with his unpredictable and unfair attacks on us. Over the years, as Andreas appeared and reappeared and even when he was overseas, he was hard to deal with and was bad news. Beginning in 1977, as the possibility of his becoming Prime Minister became greater and greater, he caused considerable uneasiness among American officials because his track record was well known. It was obviously time to leave Greece alone after all the years of CIA involvement. We let nature take its course in the late 1970s on the assumption that things would be kept together one way or another and that

Greece would stay in NATO; it joined the Common Market in June 1978. Karamanlis' greatest dream was to make Greece an integral part of Europe with its adherence to NATO, to the Common Market and to the European Parliament. Our policy therefore became very much one of "hands-off" even though there were some developments that looked somewhat ominous.

Q: Did you find a difference in Embassy attitude because the CIA was not playing the same role as it did before?

ZACHARY: I think the feeling was in CIA that times had changed and that it no longer had the clout and could no longer get deeply involved.

Q: In the pre-Papandreou days, were you monitoring the Greek military that was stationed on the border to see whether they might move against the popular government or Turkey?

ZACHARY: We kept an eye on them. They were not too forthcoming. We were interested in what they were doing because their attitude about Turkey -- that it had to be taught a lesson since it had overrun Cyprus. Turkey was threatening the Greek Islands. The principal Greek obsession is with the loss of the islands. The theory is that if the Turks wished, they could take an island or two. That probably could not be stopped. During this time, the Greeks were arming the islands in contravention of the Lausanne agreements. I traveled those islands and I would see Greek forces and air-fields being built. This is where the Greek Army was moving at that time in preparation for a Turkish invasion.

The Greeks felt they could do little about Cyprus. It is a problem that won't go away. But the loss on any of the islands is something they could not tolerate and that was something they could do something about. They would fight to the last Greek. I was always looking for comments about how active the Greeks were on this new Turkish problem. They broke up the C-Corps (the Third Army) and set up a Fourth Corps in Komotini -- about two-thirds of the way to the Turkish border or 60 miles back from the border. They redeployed their forces which was somewhat suicidal because it is that very thin neck of land between the Aegean and Bulgaria. The Bulgarians also have a Turkish problem. The military tended to be very close-mouthed about issues. Sometimes they would be forthcoming but rarely.

Q: Did I miss any other points about your time in Thessaloniki?

ZACHARY: I can't think of any at the moment.

Q: You retired in 1982. In looking over your career, what gave you the greatest satisfaction?

ZACHARY: Probably becoming a specialist in Greece -- learning the language, the history and current events. That was by far the most satisfying thing that I have done. I had a strong desire to become an area specialist.

Q: Does the Department now use your expertise at all?

ZACHARY: Yes. I keep in touch with the desk. One of the most interesting things I have done

since I retired was when I acted as the full-time Greek-Cyprus expert for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) for three months and then for another four months. I worked part-time keeping up with the material to try to write at least one article each week for INR. This was in 1987. They paid me to read the traffic from Athens and Nicosia! That was great fun. I got involved in the "near war" with Turkey in March, 1987, when I was working full-time in INR. At that time, the Greeks carried out a partial mobilization and moved their forces forward because they had announced that they would explore in the Aegean Sea near Thasos which is considerably removed from the Turkish border. Nevertheless, the Turks announced they intended to prevent it by sending out destroyers. Everyone went on alert. This was a big, big flap and I wrote some of it as spot items as the situation developed. So I got involved in a major crisis.

Q: How did that one play out?

ZACHARY: A few months later, Papandreou met Turgut Ozal, the Turkish Prime Minister, in Davos, Switzerland and they created the "spirit of Davos" which in essence does not amount to much. They both agreed that something had to be done about the situation and the problems had to be resolved. I think Ozal has been more forthcoming. Papandreou has played games -- he was the great "war-monger" in 1987. In 1988, he began to become the great "peace-maker" and made some gestures to the Turks. There has been some improvement in Greek-Turkish relations in the commercial and cultural areas. The Mayor of Istanbul went to Athens and Parliamentary Deputies have had exchanges. Because of that, Denktash, the leader of the Turkish Cypriots and Vassiliou, who is the President of Cyprus, have had some meetings. Because of that near confrontation in the Aegean in March 1987, there has been some improvement in relations and I think the rhetoric has calmed down a little bit as well. All of that is an example of a situation in which my Greek experience has been used since my retirement.

RONALD D. FLACK
Administrative, Economic and Consular Officer
Athens (1963-1965)

Ronald D. Flack was born in Minnesota in 1934. After receiving his bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota he served in the US Army from 1957-1960. His career has included positions in Athens, Manila, Abidjan, Paris, Algiers, Geneva, and Copenhagen. Mr. Flack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 7, 1998.

Q: You arrived there when in 1963?

FLACK: It was in the spring. I think March. The ambassador was Henry Labouisse and the prime minister was Karamanlis. I was immediately assigned to the Administrative Section for a month or two. Then I was assigned to the economic section. One of the officers was going on home leave and so I was there several months. And, then, of course, I did the rest of my tour, eighteen months or so, in the consular section as vice consul on visas.

Q: You are now a full-fledged Foreign Service officer. How did you see the political situation in Greece at that time?

FLACK: Being a junior officer and not being involved, except very rarely, in what was going on at the ambassadorial or even counselor of embassy level, I felt perhaps a little bit left out. I think the Service does a much better job now including junior officers, for example, on a rotational basis at staff meetings and things like that. That wasn't done back then and you really felt like you were a junior officer not having any contact with the upper levels of the embassy.

I had Greek language training and we got an apartment right in the town center where the politicians and professionals lived - a wonderful place to live but most Americans didn't want to live there, they lived out in the suburbs. My wife and I have always been city people and wanted to live in town. Because of where we lived we became very close to a lot of Greeks, not necessarily people from the foreign office, but our neighbors and people we met through our neighbors. They were all very influential Greeks in professional positions. They were older than we were, but nevertheless were very interested and flattered to have an American embassy person at their parties, etc. So, somehow we got involved in a social circuit that other Americans at the embassy were not involved in. From that point of view I think I had a different view of Greek politics and what was going on in the country that frankly was never called upon. I was never involved in any way in policy discussions. Greek politics to me at that time were new, but some things never change. There is the constant Turkish question. While I was in Athens, Kennedy was assassinated and a few months later King Paul died. So, there were two periods of mourning and two traumatic experiences. The Greeks, by the way, were far more traumatized and showed far more grief about Kennedy's death than they did about their own king.

Q: I was in Yugoslavia and the whole country went into mourning.

FLACK: Yes, it was absolutely extraordinary. Of course, King Paul was old and sick and it was expected while Kennedy's was sudden and dramatic. Nevertheless I was struck by the fact they were more affected by Kennedy's death than King Paul's. Constantine became king while we were there. I had seen him a couple of times because when he was Crown Prince Constantine he used to go out to the base and play handball. He was a kind of man about town. He had a little Mercedes convertible.

The prime minister, I think, was very effective. Constantine Karamanlis, who I had met on a couple of occasions was extraordinarily capable. I had certain opinions about Ambassador Labouisse's capabilities but being a junior officer without much experience I doubted them. Frankly I didn't think he was very effective.

Q: I think these impressions are important. What was there about him and his work that made you think this?

FLACK: He did not give the impression of being forceful or effective in dealings with the Greeks from my point of view, which as I said probably was not very informed. He was not particularly well treated or respected in the press. He was simply the American ambassador. There had been a story going around, that he had been the head of AID and had screwed it up so

badly they had to get him out of town, so Kennedy sent him to Greece. This is what was in the Greek press and I don't know if it was true or not. So, his credibility was not all that great. Although they loved his wife. They thought she was wonderful. She was more prominent in many ways than he was. My view at that point was not terribly favorable but as I said, and I still believe this, I was not really in a position to judge what was going on.

Q: Did you feel a tendency of the Greeks to place greater prominence to the role of the United States in what was happening in Greece than an American would? I was there during a very difficult time, from 1970-74. If there was an earthquake it was the Americans' responsibility. Did you sense this?

FLACK: Absolutely, there was an enormous American presence in Greece. There were the bases, an AID program, and a military assistance program. Given the state of Greece after World War II and the fact that Harry Truman really saved the country economically, so to speak, there was an enormous American presence, and I would say the Greeks did not really exaggerate our importance in the country. We did have an enormous amount of power and influence. I think they have never really gotten over that. I think we have far less now than we had then, but the Greeks continue to believe that we are running their country. But, this is a kind of syndrome that I see all over the world. All over the world where I have served, the locals believe that the United States is far more powerful than we really are.

Q: I think it was quadrupled in Greece. While you were enjoying coffee with your Greek friends in the local cafes did George Papandreou's name come up much?

FLACK: Yes. Andreas was around also. I mentioned being in the Economic Section while an officer was on home leave. I remember, the first day I sat down I looked down and under the glass top she had cards from various people she knew and one of them was Andreas Papandreou when he was in Berkeley. I remember thinking he was probably the son of George and asking about him.

George Papandreou was the major opposition force, extraordinarily active and, of course, he was the man to watch. He was the person the political section was totally obsessed with and was trying to follow. I think one of the reasons we had such bad relations with PASOK over the years was from the very beginning with George Papandreou was that the CIA was so involved in trying to watch and influence the political scene and minimize his power.

Q: My impression when I was in Greece was that we had in a way, because of the difficulty of the language, far too many Greek Americans in the military and in the CIA who tended to be 110 percent American and 110 percent conservative and they helped sort of influence our whole attitude towards the left there which George Papandreou led. I found that the Greek-speaking establishment in the CIA and in our military came from small towns up in the hills.

FLACK: I agree with you on that. You know at that time the Department of State had this rule where if you or your wife were from the country or had close ties there, you were not assigned there because they felt there would be undue pressures and properly so, especially in Greece. And, yet, the other agencies in the government felt the opposite, that they would take advantage

of the language abilities in assignments. The Department has changed over the years about that.

Q: Then you went into the consular section.

FLACK: Yes, doing visas for the last eighteen months. That was an extraordinary experience also because at that time we had a waiting list of people to immigrate to the United States. I think there were 150,000 people on the waiting list. Because of that there were an enormous number of people coming in trying to get visitor visas who were not real visitors. So, my refusal rate was about 35 percent. It was kind of difficult because you were making very serious decisions about people's lives every day. On the busiest day I ever had I think I had a hundred interviews. So, it was very busy, very fast moving and you had to be very decisive and make decisions quickly. Of course, some of the decisions came back to haunt you because either you made the wrong decision and gave them the visa and then in six months or a year later INS reports would come back saying they had changed status, etc. Or, you refused a visa and the uncle in Chicago writes to his congressman and you get the letter from the congressman saying, "Why did you refuse a visa to Miss so-and-so?" The ambassador had a rule through the consul general on congressionals consisting of a standard form letter to be sent back that I signed on the first request. If the congressman wrote a second time, the consul general would write back again saying no. If a third congressional came in the ambassador said to just give the visa. Of course, nobody knew that. We didn't want to tell the congressmen that if they wrote three times they would get a visa, but basically that was what happened.

Q: What was your impression of the clientele who were coming in? Were they city folk or town folk?

FLACK: The people I were refusing were the classic refusal cases of unmarried young people from the countryside with no work and no money who were going to visit their uncle in Chicago who just happened to have a restaurant, etc. Maybe their marriage was already arranged, or they were going to work, who knows what it was going to be, but the rules are they have to show a good reason to return to Greece and if they didn't have family ties or property or money or some reason to return, we would refuse the visa.

Q: Were seamen a problem? The Greeks had these huge tanker fleets.

FLACK: Of course we did crew list visas but we did have a lot of problems because these people would jump ship, or on an individual basis occasionally they would want to have visas. I remember the captain of a ship that was coming in who tried to get a visa for his new wife who was a young woman. In researching this I found out that she was already married. He didn't know this and I had to tell him. I showed him the documents and said, "You didn't mention that your wife was previously married?" He looked at me and I continued, "As far as I can see she still is?" He looked at the documents, turned white and left the office. His wife had two husbands at that time.

Q: You left Greece then in 1965.

ROBERT J. WOZNIAK
Assistant Cultural Officer, USIS
Athens (1963-1969)

Mr. Wozniak was born in Michigan and educated at the University of Chicago, William College and the University of Indiana. After service in the U.S. Navy in WWII, he joined the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1963. His service included several assignments at USIA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. as well postings abroad as Public Affairs Officer (or Deputy) in Athens, Nicosia, Damascus, and Rabat. Mr. Wozniak was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 2001.

Q: Why don't you talk a little bit about what you found at the post when you first arrived and what kind of responsibilities you were given? Were you strictly a trainee or were you given sort of a rotation of assignments, or how did it all work initially?

WOZNIAK: My first PAO (Public Affairs Officer), the guy who was sort of a legend in his own time, Vincent Joyce, devised a wonderful ten or twelve month long training program for me. I said, "You didn't do this just for me. You did it to impress the people back in Washington didn't you?" He said, "That was right," but it was an excellent program. He had me rotating through all the offices in the mission at the conclusion of which he asked me to stay on at the post as the assistant cultural affairs officer, which I did for the next four years. The reason for that being that Vince had run afoul of the Prime Minister's son who was assistant to the prime minister I think at the time but later was the prime minister of Greece for many years. They had a falling out over a Voice of America issue. VOA had transmitted in Greece as you probably know, and at the time, 1963, there was tension between Greece and Turkey. The Greeks were unhappy about the fact that we were broadcasting in Greek to Greeks from Greek soil. When Vince went off on home leave a few days later, the Greeks let it be known that they would welcome his not returning. So the next PAO who came was Don Taylor. He was succeeded by Abe Sirkin. Each time I went through a new PAO they would say you ought to be out of here, but you are my best Greek speaker, will you stay another year? And as I hadn't been planning a career, and I was having a great time in Greece, I agreed and wound up staying six years in Greece on my first assignment. It was probably almost a record, because I wasn't planning a career, and because I thought I was doing something good for the post. I was, I think, the best Greek speaker on the staff. I didn't mind. It turned out not to have been injurious to my career in the end because again, I had the good fortune to be swept up in the work of the post. You can't call it an old boy's net, because I wasn't an old boy yet. But I found favor with our boss in Washington who took me under his wing and moved me along, and ultimately convinced me that I should make a career of the Foreign Service.

Q: Now how did you come to be the best Greek speaker among the USIA officers at the post? You only had four or five months of Greek.

WOZNIAK: About five months. But I threw myself into it. I guess the reason I was assigned to Greek speaking in the first place is I had a high MLAT score.

Q: MLAT. Modern language aptitude test.

WOZNIAK: Yes, I had a pretty high score in that. I guess they considered Greek a hard language. I am not sure it is really, not modern spoken Greek. If you wanted to be a really proficient Greek speaker then it gets hard because you need to master forms of formal Greek and approximations to classic Greek forms. But modern Greek is not that difficult. Well that is an aside. The point is I was thought to have the aptitude. I loved the idea of Greek and Greece, and I threw myself into it. I studied it assiduously, and I continued while I was at post.

Q: Did you take classes at post?

WOZNIAK: Sure, I had daily instruction as many of the younger officers in the embassy did. We had a large language teaching staff at the embassy in those days. But among my assignments as assistant cultural attaché was as youth affairs officer. While many of the university students and young political activists that I attempted to cultivate in those years spoke English, not all did, and so through some pretty intensive involvement with them, I had a chance to polish my Greek. It got to be pretty good. Ultimately they said about a 4-4 level (4 in speaking/4 in reading; 4 is professional level of proficiency). I don't know if that was true.

Q: Well, it is certainly very good. I don't know about 1963 but surely in the later years, Greek was still considered a hard language, and the standard course to bring somebody to a three level or professional level of competence was considered to be about nine months. You only had five months, and you really must have worked hard and took full advantage.

WOZNIAK: I must admit, I worked very hard at it.

Q: Were there other JOTs (Junior Officer Trainees) in Athens at that time?

WOZNIAK: Lots of them in the embassy, most of them rotating through the consular section. Some of them remained in the service as career officers. Some remain friends to this day. Other junior officers at USIA were there, not at the same time as I, but followed me, at least two or three more during my next five years as ACAO (Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer), I helped shepherd along a number of USIA junior officers.

Q: Well let's talk a little bit about the general situation in Greece at the time, the atmospherics, or should we talk about either the embassy or the USIS component first. Which would you prefer?

WOZNIAK: Well, in all candor, so much time has elapsed since the period we are talking about, my memory being a sieve, I am not sure that I can throw a lot of useful light on this, besides which so much has been written about the period publicly and so much recorded in this oral history program by people who are much better positioned than I to tell you about the political relations in Greece, U.S. Greece, and Turkey, the Cyprus involvement in the 60s. I don't know that I can shed a lot of light about that.

Q: Why don't we talk a little bit more specifically about the public affairs aspect of U.S.-Greek

relations at the time and the cultural areas as well that you were involved with? You did mention that one of your responsibilities was to cultivate, get to know, promising young potential political leaders. How did you figure out who to try to cultivate, or was it sort of a matter of targets of opportunity so to speak?

WOZNIAK: Yes, I think a lot of that characterization is not inaccurate. Again I am not sure I remember well, but I know one of the mechanisms we used early on was the international visitor program and the youth leader component of that. We had a large program at that time in Greece. The Greek student union was a natural target. So I went to them, sought them out, and over the next few years we would invite for brief visits to the United States, presidents and key officers in Greek student unions. Some of them went on to the kinds of careers that you had hoped for, as I found out many years later when I returned to Greece in the 80s as Public Affairs Officer. That was one way, and through them of course expanding the network of contacts. But it was mostly university students I was dealing with. A lot of it too were teenagers interested in American popular culture who were occasional visitors to the joint cultural center where I spent a lot of time. We had a large English speaking teaching program, a very active and good library, and a pretty active program of cultural events. That would draw them.

Q: Were you involved in programming cultural presentations?

WOZNIAK: Sure, very much so. I went through two CAO's in my tenure there. One was a professional musician, Dale Dayton who was the musical guru of USIA. The other was a quite different kind of guy, very brainy kind of guy, Ted Wertheim who was basically a scientist. Their interests were pre-focused. They asked me or expected me to carry all the other weight in the cultural section which I guess I did all right. It wasn't my preference you know, when Vince asked me to be the ACAO, I was disappointed because I had hoped the assistant information officer job would open up at the same time and would have fallen to me. He said, "I am sorry Bob, you are too young for that job." I was I think 28 or 29 at the time. I came into the service rather late. But it turned out to be a very happy assignment.

Q: You probably thought because of your background in journalism that working with the press and the other media was...

WOZNIAK: Otherwise as you undoubtedly know from your time, watching Greek affairs in Washington and as ambassador in Cyprus, you probably know how irresponsible and maddening the Greek media can be. But even so.

Q: Now this is before the colonels took over, or I guess you were actually there when that happened.

WOZNIAK: I was there when that happened.

Q: We will talk about that in a few minutes. But in the period before that, did you feel that you had a real uphill fight to make America better known, better appreciated or was there a lot of receptivity to it?

WOZNIAK: The audience that I was supposed to be responsible for, primarily the youths there was a lot of unhappiness. Remember we were in the Vietnam struggle at the time. The leftist media and I must say the university students themselves seemed to be on the left which is supposed to be the case with young people I guess. Yes, it was a struggle. That and the Kennedy assassination which really tarred us, made it difficult the first few years. Even more so after the colonels came into power because of our ill advised approach to dealing with that problem.

Q: How about in the period before that. Were we seen as pro Turkish?

WOZNIAK: I think they saw us that way yes. Greeks have a propensity to look at the world in black and white terms. Either you love me or you hate me. If you don't love me, you must love my enemy. And we were pursuing an evenhanded policy in Turkish matters that was unsatisfactory. I suppose to the other side on the other side of the Aegean as well but certainly unsatisfactory to the Greeks.

Q: Did you spend most of your time in this early period in Athens or did you have a country wide mandate?

WOZNIAK: No, My training in my first year in that post included a month in Thessaloniki but at the time believe it or not, USIA had a three officer post in Thessaloniki. It no longer exists. We even had an office and a library and a Foreign Service national in Petros and one in Piraeus. No, my brief did not go beyond Athens.

Q: About how large was USIS in Athens?

WOZNIAK: Gee I guess it must have been about ten officers. It was very large and well funded. We had a lot of money for cultural programs. Those years it didn't come out of our pocket, it came out of the old cultural affairs budget. We would host at the Athens festival the New York Philharmonic, presentations of that caliber, and that size and that expense. There was money, and we had an effective program.

Q: Did you find those large and expensive cultural presentations were effective, well received?

WOZNIAK: Oh yes absolutely. There is a propensity among Greeks looking for some justification for feeling superior to the United States, they would denigrate our culture. Greeks also have a very haughty attitude towards Greek Americans, at least during my time in any case. Sure, quality presentations of that kind did a lot to offset the stereotypical notions about what our culture and our offerings to the world might be.

Q: Were you involved in the Fulbright program or academic exchanges as well?

WOZNIAK: Peripherally. I wasn't directly involved. The Fulbright offices were next door to mine in the suite of offices in downtown Athens, but no I wasn't directly involved with the program. USIS was also very large.

Q: USIS was downtown, not in the embassy chancery. Was the chancery the same as it is now or

did that come later?

WOZNIAK: Yes, but it was a beautiful chancery then. If you look at it today it is a quite unappetizing fortress for self explanatory reasons. Was the architect I.F. Stone? I don't recall but I think it was. He had in mind a monument expressing the openness and vigor of American society and it is a beautiful structure. It was completely open without fences or any kind of barriers. It was just a wonderful symbol of a free society. It still stands there today, but it is hard to see from any angle. USIS uses downtown wisely, a block from the parliament, a block from the university and very near most of the newspaper offices, the right place to be.

Q: I think it was Edward Durell Stone and the marble in his mind at least was the Parthenon...

WOZNIAK: That was part of the influence.

Q: Anything else we should say about the very early period before the colonels took over in 1967 about your time in Athens that you would want to recall?

WOZNIAK: I guess not really Ray, only that Greece prior to and Greece after the colonels were two very different places. Of course in the prior period there was a lot of political turmoil as you probably know. Public attention was focused on the disarray in the parliament and the conflict between the King and Andreas Papandreu. It was a sad time watching a democracy unravel. But it became very different post April, 1967, when democracy had unraveled. I didn't know Phillips Talbot who was the ambassador, very well. We were physically separated and certainly I was low down on the totem pole in his embassy, in his large machine as I could be. But I must say I was very impressed by one of his early cables, one of the first cables he sent after the colonels' coup d'etat. He said, "there are tanks in the streets of Athens and we should weep for the demise of democracy in Greece." I guess Talbot too had been criticized as being less than vigorous in trying to fend off the coup in Greece, but no one expected it to come from the quarters it did come from, from these unknown colonels. In any case, in the post coup period, Greece was a very different place. A dismal place. Greek intellectuals in certain circles were being harassed by the fact that they now looked, as they readily said, indistinguishable from a banana republic run by illiterate, semi-literate and very ignorant fascistic colonels. The fact that we did not deal with the problem much more vigorously than we did, but in fact got in the Greek eyes, in bed with the colonels, made Greece a very different place. When I left two years later, I was much less reluctant to leave than would have been the case had there not been a coup d'etat. It was not a happy country.

Q: In the period before the coup d'etat there was certainly political turmoil as you say. Was this disarray in parliament and so on, were those conditions directly impacting on you and your work. I am partly asking did you anticipate there was about to be a coup?

WOZNIAK: Well it was widespread belief at least prior to the actual event that there was a coup brewing, and that it was going to be conducted by a cabal of generals, and that many were allegedly involved in the planning or at least aware of the planning. The colonels pre-empted that. Nobody that I know of knew these colonels or knew of their plans or knew of the possibility that such a thing was going to happen. There has been some speculation that lower level Greek

American CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) operatives may have been aware of it and failed to inform U.S. authorities because for one or another reason they wished to see such a development occur or for whatever reason. That is only speculation. On the day of the coup, people had trouble getting to the chancery because most of us lived in the northern suburbs, at that time only a five or ten minute drive from the center or the embassy, but when you approached the chancery, you ran into one of the many roadblocks that the putschists had put up. I was driving in that morning alone, as I did most days, knowing that the Greeks in organizational terms are not the most efficient people in the world. They are brilliant individuals and very talented, very creative, but self admittedly they will tell you that organizationally they may lack something in terms of working as teams. I suspected that the roadblock wasn't impermeable, so I just went around the block, and I drove into the embassy.

Q: Without any further obstruction.

WOZNIAK: Without any further obstruction. There were no obstacles on any streets except the main arteries. Well, I got all the way down to Sinbad and Constitution Square to our offices, and of course there was nothing going on there. A couple of generals wandering in asking if we knew anything about what was going on. One or more of them asking for political asylum. I quickly got bored down there. The then junior officer trainee at USIA and I walked up to the chancery to see what was going on there.

Q: About a 20 minute walk or so?

WOZNIAK: Something like that, 20 maybe 25. And when we got up to the third floor, the ambassador's floor, at the far end of the corridor, who do I see but our then chief of station in a military uniform. In my naiveté I went nuts. I said, "My god, is a KGB chauffeur the real head of our mission," and here is our CIA station chief in his military uniform. Well I was quickly disabused of that supposition. But he was also stopped at the roadblock, but he didn't speak Greek and he wasn't perhaps as innovative as I was. He went home, I am told, that's when he got into the uniform. The Greek CIA, KYP, advised him to don a uniform and get to town that way. I don't know how he did it. It was a crazy experience.

Q: Why don't you talk a little bit more about the day of the coup and what else happened to you? Was it pretty quiet after that?

WOZNIAK: Yes. The Greeks hunkered down. They were either embarrassed or frightened. They were concerned; they were in the dark. They didn't know what was going on. That situation continued for a few days, and then it developed into what I will call a psychological malaise. The country was in a deep funk.

Q: And you described it previously as...

WOZNIAK: Dismal, in a word. And of course our Greek friends were very unhappy with us. Some of them cut us off, would have nothing to do with us. Once it became clear that we weren't as alleged, privy to the colonels' plans, it became clear that at the very minimum we were not prepared to squeeze them and get them to move more quickly to democracy than in fact

happened.

Q: Earlier you talked about the ill advised support as perceived by...

WOZNIAK: As I recall. Again we are going back 35 years, is that right, 30 years. I am not sure I remember correctly, but I think a principal impetus for our failure to be tougher with the colonels was Admiral Zumwalt's argument that we needed Piraeus as a port for the Sixth Fleet. As far as I know the State Department or no one else stood up to that contention and agreed to try to negotiate such an agreement with the Greeks. I think it was negotiated but was never implemented. I don't think it ever became the home port.

But if Greece was important for that reason, and the Sixth Fleet of course was such a component of our Cold War strategies, in any case, that is one reason or maybe the principal reason why we didn't get tougher with the colonels than we did.

Q: The other thing that happened in 1967 was a Middle East war. To what extent do you think that was a factor in the perceived importance of Greece?

WOZNIAK: I expect that is also the case.

Q: Well in terms of your work as assistant CAO, were you kind of encouraged to kind of keep it up doing the same things or did it become virtually impossible to do very much in terms of contacts with youth leaders, sending visitors to the United States.

WOZNIAK: I think I covered it. It didn't get a lot tougher, but it was a lot less satisfying. I don't know why but your question just triggered a memory I hadn't had in years. I think it must have been in the summer of '67, possibly '68 that the New York Philharmonic was coming to the Athens Festival. The Greeks were not buying tickets. They were boycotting. I think it was '67. I can remember having to go with the cultural affairs officer to the head of the Athens Festival and telling him that we didn't want to be embarrassed, and they didn't want to be embarrassed by an empty house, and would they pay for the house. That is how shameful things were for awhile in any case.

Q: So the orchestra came?

WOZNIAK: The orchestra came, the house was papered with freebies that the Athens Festival handed out to all their friends.

Q: To what extent were critics of U.S. policy in Washington, there were some members of Congress who spoke out against this support for the colonels, for the junta. There were certainly divisions within the Greek-American community about U.S. policy at the time. Some people had been very unhappy with the political turmoil or the influence of what they saw as leftists in the Greek political world, and this had restored order and that would allow time to create better conditions. To what extent did all of that affect anything you were doing in terms of visitors or otherwise?

WOZNIAK: I don't think it affected USIA work, but you raise a good point. I think that may have been one more element in why the U.S. adopted the approach to the colonels that it did. Greek-Americans tend to be a rather conservative community. You may recall our vice president at the time was Spiro Agnew (January 1969 – October 1973) who actually visited his family's birthplace sometime after I left Greece. I suppose the perceived support or at least lack of unhappiness with the elements in Greece among the Greek-American community may have contributed to State Department thinking about how we should deal with the colonels. I think that may well have been the case. Again I am surmising.

Q: Did you feel at the time, say from April of '67 until you left in December of '69 that U.S. policy toward Greece was ill advised or not, and if you did feel that way, did that really make a difference for you to do your job, to defend U.S. policy, to interpret it, to explain it to your contacts?

WOZNIAK: You want to stop the machine for a minute. Can you repeat what you asked?

Q: Well I guess the question is if you and perhaps others in the mission were uncomfortable with elements of U.S. policy towards Greece privately or perhaps in conversation with each other. What difference did that make in terms of doing your work, doing your job, carrying out your responsibilities as far as Greeks were concerned?

WOZNIAK: Well it certainly complicated them. I have to say in all candor that although we were all enjoined, sworn to defend and support and articulate U.S. foreign policy positions, that none of those officers at the embassy or USIA who I esteemed, and that was most of them, were supportive of the U.S. foreign policy towards Greece in those years, or thought that it was supportable. We also thought that it was ill advised. Inevitably our best Greek friends knew what we really felt. The fact that we would work with or support or encourage private sector American activities that were intended to offset some of the debilitating effects of a fascist coup -- for example the Ford Foundation got very active in Greece in those years to augment and in fact supplant some of the work that USIA normally would have been doing there. So the signals to the Greeks was not one that the administration would have been pleased to know on the part of the embassy staff, but certainly Greek democrats, and that included most of the country, were led to understand that the embassy was not a monolith. It was taking instructions from the White House of course, but on the part of many of us it was a bitter pill.

Q: As I think you have already indicated, this was a period where the Johnson administration, Vietnam was a major preoccupation. The Cold War was there. We had interest in the Middle East. Human rights in specific countries whether they were Greece or anywhere else in the world, were not perhaps as high a priority as they had been at other periods in our recent history.

WOZNIAK: Well, we didn't have a human rights policy at the time. As a matter of fact my last PAO in Greece, Abe Sirkin, leaving Athens several years after I did, worked in the department in INR I guess, policy planning. I am not sure where, but he did a lot of the seminal work that led to the human rights policy that we finally adopted. No, there wasn't such a formal U.S. position at

the time. [Editor: The State Department established the Coordinator for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs in April 1975 and began the annual Human Rights Report in 1977.]

Q: Let me ask you to step back for a second. To what extent did you have contact with Andreas Papandreou during this period?

WOZNIAK: None at all. I didn't know the man. On my later assignment I got to know his sons. One of them the current foreign minister quite well, but I never knew him.

Q: Now one of the things that happened the last year you were there was the United States' 1968 presidential election. I am wondering to what extent you were involved in things related to that in Greece? Was that used as sort of a way to hold up our attachment to democracy?

WOZNIAK: Absolutely. As always at president election time, the USIS post did set up a large election center on the grounds of the Grande Bretagne Hotel as I recall. I am almost certain it was there. The intention of course, was to signal that we were persuaded there was no other system other than democracy for ourselves or for Greece. I don't recall that it was a very well attended function.

Q: Let's see, anything else about this initial first assignment to Athens that we should talk about?

WOZNIAK: Ray, let me look at my OERs (Officer Efficiency Reports).

NORBERT L. ANSCHUTZ
Deputy Chief of Mission
Athens (1964-1967)

Norbert L. Anschutz was born in Kansas in 1915. A Foreign Service officer he served in Greece, Thailand, Egypt and France as well as in the Department of State. He had two tours in Greece as well as serving on the Greek Desk. He was interviewed in 1992 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: Well, then you went to Athens in 1964. Henry Labouisse had asked for you to be his Deputy Chief of Mission. You served there during a very interesting period, 1964-68. What was the situation when you arrived in Athens?

ANSCHUTZ: I think the political situation had been deteriorating for several years in a modest sort of way. George Papandreou and the so-called Center Union had just won a very impressive political victory. Karamanlis had left. The American position in the Karamanlis days had strongly supported Karamanlis, rather openly, to the dismay of some of the elements in the Greek party politic. So there was a change in position.

There were tensions within the so-called Center Union, Papandreou's party and at one point there a significant number of the members of the Center Union abandoned the Center Union party.

This led to a very delicate situation in Athens, in the political cosmos, as it was called. About this time George Papandreou's son, Andreas, returned from the United States with his American wife and began to be active politically in a way that caused tensions within the Center Union. So elements of the Center Union, who had been playing the politics of the situation for a number of years, were very much dismayed to find Andreas coming in with rather obvious intent of seizing the leadership role when his father stepped aside.

As a result of all this, a group of the Center Union, including the current Prime Minister, Constantine Mitsotakis, and others, withdrew their support of the Center Union and in effect entered into a sort of unspoken collaboration with the conservative party, ERE it was called.

At this time there were allegedly certain plots within the military, both in Greece and later down in Cyprus. These issues became extremely delicate politically. There was something called the Aspida trial which was supposed to have involved certain officers down in Cyprus who were allegedly working with Grivas, who had been one of the leaders of the Greek Cypriot...

Q: Grivas was a colonel.

ANSCHUTZ: Yes, he was. The issue of enosis, the union of Cyprus and Greece, was one of the political problems which was being bandied about in those days. What that would have involved would have been the incorporation of Cyprus into Greece with the attendant collision that would have imposed with the Turks. One of the key figures in all of this, of course, was Archbishop Makarios, who was the senior political personality in Cyprus. It was believed by some of us that Makarios, himself, had visions of not only enosis, but as a result of enosis of perhaps achieving political control in Greece.

Q: I have heard people who knew him say that he was too big a political leader to be stuck on that little island.

ANSCHUTZ: Well, that was his view, I am sure. Makarios and Andreas apparently had reasonably good relationships. This was a cause of tension.

Then there were allegedly another officers organization which was known as Pericles, which again was allegedly sponsoring leftist, liberal other similar groups. And there were trials of these officers conducted. As a result of these trials the issues of the control of the armed forces became very important in the political context. The Palace had always tried to maintain very close and direct relations with the armed forces.

Q: This was King Constantine and his mother, Queen Frederika.

ANSCHUTZ: That is right. These issues all tended to complicate the situation and at one point as a result of all these issues the question arose as to whether or not the Prime Minister could or would discharge the Minister of Defense. This was much opposed by the Palace and the relationships between the conservatives and the Palace on the one hand and the Center Union on the other hand became quite venomous.

I am not getting the sequence of this in a very orderly fashion, I regret to say.

Q: With all of this going on...we had bases there and this was certainly a time of real confrontation with the Soviet Union, we had the Berlin Wall, Khrushchev was talking very tough, the missile crisis, all these things were going on...it was a period of high cold war. Greece was considered to be a key element. What were we doing in the Embassy while all this was going on? Where did we feel our interests were? Were we making our wishes known? Was the CIA messing around?

ANSCHUTZ: As you are well aware, because of our post World War II active interest in Greece and the considerable volume of aid that had been provided to Greece as a result of the Truman Doctrine, the American position in Greece was extremely important and strong. We, in the Embassy, tried very hard to prevent ruptures within the parliamentary system. Some of us had reservations as to whether it was wise to push on the part of the conservative ERE party and the Palace to push too hard on the military. At the same time, the left wing of the Center Union, which was controlled by Andreas, was campaigning very hard against the Palace and against certain elements of the military, so that the tensions built up very considerably.

Our view was, in the Embassy, that the talk of a coup should be discouraged, because we felt that that type of a solution was not tenable over a longer period. Plus the fact, for all the reasons you mentioned, we weren't eager to see this type of ferment in Greece.

At one point, a modus vivendi was developed between George Papandreou and the Palace, and to a certain extent the so-called conservative opposition. This was not accepted by Andreas, who with his more leftist associates was campaigning very hard on an anti-Palace and, to a degree, anti-American thesis.

At one point, as a result of the compromise, a caretaker government was established...a compromise between Papandreou and the Palace and ERE...and one of the Center Union politicians, a man by the name of Stephanopoulos was put in as the Prime Minister. He governed with the support of part of the Center Union, which had pulled away from George Papandreou and the Center Union, itself, and another small party called the Progressives which was led by a politician by the name of Markezinis.

At one point another caretaker government was put in led by Kanellopoulos, who was an ERE minister, which was established with the support of the moderate group of the Center Union and his own party, ERE, on the premise that elections would be held in May, 1967. As this date approached it is fair to say that the Center Union of not only George Papandreou, but taken with the faction led by his son, Andreas, would probably win those elections. Andreas was campaigning against the Palace and against the Americans, in a very vigorous and brutal way. This produced tensions, not only in the country where tensions ran very high, but also anxieties in the military forces, and therefore in the Palace. There had been talk of a military coup led by certain senior generals who were well seen by the Palace. The position of the Embassy was that a coup was not the proper solution to the problem. Nevertheless, on April 22, 1967, a coup did take place. It was led by three relatively junior officers. In other words it was a coup which anticipated a coup which might have taken place by the senior officers. These were

Papadopoulos, Pattakos, and Makarezos.

Q: Before we move into the coup period, what was our analysis and efforts to try to do something with Andreas Papandreou to try to tone him down?

ANSCHUTZ: We had, I think it is fair to say, numerous contacts with Andreas. I think the ambassador saw him from time to time.

Q: The ambassador was by this time...?

ANSCHUTZ: By the time of the coup it was Phillips Talbot. I had seen him over the years on a more or less continuing basis.

Q: Was Bob Keeley a friend of his at that time?

ANSCHUTZ: He may have been. Bob came later and was very sympathetic to Andreas, I think. Wait a minute, I take that back. I don't know that Bob was sympathetic to him. I don't remember that he saw him, he may have, but I don't remember that. John Owens knew him and Bob McCoy, who was the economic counselor, saw him. Andreas was at one time the so-called Minister of Coordination and therefore had frequent contacts with the Embassy in the economics sphere.

Andreas was not an easy man to deal with. There were occasions when there was, at least on my part and maybe on others, rather blunt talk with Andreas. One of the things that I tried to do was to try to build bridges or a bridge between Andreas and the Palace, but I was unsuccessful.

Q: What were you thinking of when you say a bridge?

ANSCHUTZ: My thesis was that a coup was not in the interests of Greece or the United States, and if there could be a dialogue on a personal basis between the King and Andreas there might be some hope of reducing tensions. Neither party was eager to be compromised by seeing the other. Each felt it would be a loss of face. So my efforts in those regards were unsuccessful.

Q: Was the CIA...Greece in that period and sometime after was known as kind of a CIA country. Certainly the time I was there, 1970-74, the CIA was in bed with the Colonels. Did you have the feeling that things were going on with the CIA that you weren't completely aware of?

ANSCHUTZ: Yes. Strangely enough I had during my career a very good relationship with the CIA and their representatives. But I was fully aware that the dynamics of the situation I could not always accurately assess. It is also true that on the basis of a long historical connection, the Palace and particularly Queen Frederika, had always felt that while relationships with the Embassy were quite good, that the real route to the Oval Office was through the CIA. So these connections were very assiduously cultivated. It was much less easy for the Embassy to have a continuing dialogue with the Palace, in my opinion.

Now, I was not the ambassador. I was the DCM and Chargé. But I think it is fair to say that our

relations with the Palace, although they were quite cordial, were not as close as the relations with the CIA. I don't know to this day how much the CIA knew about the Colonels' coup. I do know, as everyone else knows, that Papadopoulos had worked as an intelligence officer of some kind and had long and continuing contacts with the CIA. And in many cases the situation was such that if you wanted to deliver a message you delivered it through the CIA. I am not saying that they didn't accurately and faithfully transmit the message, but there was a feeling that their contacts were frequently better than ours were.

Q: This was my impression when I was there in the post coup period. This was during the Lyndon Johnson administration. Were you getting much interest in the State Department and White House on developments that led up to the coup, or was Vietnam pushing it to the back?

ANSCHUTZ: Yes, there was interest. One of the factors in this, not so much the State Department...but because Andreas had connections, associations, with some of the senior economic personalities in Washington, we frequently had reactions which were transmitted through those channels. Because Andreas and Margaret, his wife, had lived a long time in the United States, they had a number of sources and connections which they used for political purposes in the United States. The Embassy, as such, was taken completely by surprise and perhaps the Agency was taken by surprise too, except that they had had ongoing relationships with some of the members of the coup, particularly Papadopoulos. And, of course, as in every large mission where you have a large economic mission, a large military mission, a large Agency mission, etc., everybody gets into the act. So we have intelligence reports which would emanate down at the airfield and come through the Air Attaché, or maybe the air section of the military aid mission. All of these various sources recording part of the political tremors in the period before the coup and each one of the various sources have his own solution as to what a course of action should be.

In any event, the Embassy proper was certainly taken by surprise. We were looking at some of the senior generals but we were not looking closely at the colonels at that time. I think the reaction of the Embassy was that we didn't want to completely upset the domestic situation, so the reaction was one of great reserve and the expression of hope that the constitutional government would be promptly restored. I think Jack Maury, when he heard about the coup, was alleged to have put on his reserve officer uniform and gone down to the Embassy. One could conclude from that that he didn't really expect this at that time.

Q: Who was Jack Maury?

ANSCHUTZ: He was the Chief of Station at the time.

Q: How did you find out about the coup? I assume the Embassy assembled and tried to figure out what to do.

ANSCHUTZ: It was not as orderly as that. If I remember correctly, Kanellopoulos, the leader of the ERE party, was, I believe, arrested. Some how or other the word got to Phil Talbot, the ambassador, and he saw Kanellopoulos. I don't remember whether he went...Kanellopoulos lived not too far from the Residence...over there or whether Kanapolis came to the Residence. But

that was the first intimation that we had, as far as I am aware. I think Phil Talbot telephoned Washington. Dan Brewster, who had been the political counselor in Athens was then on the Desk in Washington. I first heard about it when he called me. There was a blackout of communications and the way that he was able to reach me was to go through the airfield at Ellinikon for telephone service and they in turn were able to get up to me. I dutifully jumped into my track shoes and went down to the Embassy. There was a curfew and all transit was forbidden, but I managed to go by back streets...

Q: You walked over?

ANSCHUTZ: No, I went by car. There were only a few people who managed to penetrate the curfew. I think soon thereafter Phil Talbot saw the King and told him that we felt a military coup was not the solution. The King said, "Well, this wasn't our solution." I think it was pretty clear that they had been talking with some of the senior military officers about the possibility. But they were pre-empted by the Colonels who took the ball away from them.

There was obviously a great hue and cry at the time and the position, I think, taken by Washington and the Embassy that this was not the proper solution and that every effort should be made to restore constitutional government as soon as possible. By the same token, we had to be restrained because we didn't want to take a series of action that would catapult Andreas and the left into power by permitting them to play on American displeasure and concern.

If I remember correctly the King went up to northern Greece shortly thereafter where there were several of these more senior loyalist officers. The King had, I think, gone to the Greek military headquarters the night of the coup and tried to discourage these activities.

Q: I know later there was the King's attempted coup which came somewhat later. He went up to Larisa. But that was later. The main thing is in the Embassy did we have any feel for these guys...Papadopoulos, Pattakos and Makarezos?

ANSCHUTZ: Well, we got feels quickly. As I say, Papadopoulos had been known to the Agency for a period of time. I think some of the people in the military aid mission knew Pattakos.

Q: I think Pete Peterson was a friend of his too. He was the chief of the consular section.

ANSCHUTZ: Yes, that is correct. I have forgotten who knew Makarezos. Anyway, early on, one of the first reactions was to stop providing military assistance. At one point consistent with the policy of very, cool, reserve to the new government, Talbot and his family went on leave. He went back to the United States. This also afforded him an opportunity for consultation.

I was called on at my residence by all three, if I remember correctly. I regurgitated the Embassy/State Department position that we had to get back to a constitutional government at the earliest possible moment. I remember one of them saying, "I know, but the constitution has to be revised. We can't use it in this form." I said, "Well, if the constitution has to be revised, let's get about it. You ought to be able to do that in a week or two." "Oh, no, this is going to take months in order for us to do that." Well I was not very sympathetic to that because I felt that whatever changes had to be made in their view could very promptly be made. So my lack of sympathy for

that was very clear.

Then they insisted that I join them for dinner. I did and it was very pleasant, polite and civil, but the gap in the positions was very wide. Of course nothing occurs in Greece that isn't known all through the country within a few hours, as you are well aware. So the fact that I had met with these people was interpreted by their...they chose to interpret that as a sign of implicit endorsement, or something of the sort.

Q: What was your impression of these men? From accounts that one hears, they belonged to a group which really weren't very sophisticated. They had been regular officers and had dealt very little with anything beyond the horizon of a serving officer and saw things in rather simplistic terms.

ANSCHUTZ: I think that is very true. I think they were sincerely concerned about the consequences if Andreas and the leftists took over in Greece, both economically and particularly to the military. I have little doubt that within their framework they thought they were acting at least patriotically.

It was ironic...my own antipathy to the group was quickly deciphered and as a result of that I was invited by the Mayor of Athens down to his headquarters and I had an honorary citizenship of Athens conferred upon me, which was, of course, intended to be a kick in the teeth to the junta. I don't think it would have happened under other circumstances.

Q: The coup happened. We obviously had our instructions that you don't recognize until a decision is made at the top. I assume this is part of them coming to your house, the coup leaders.

ANSCHUTZ: Part of it. I think the initial position had been stated by Talbot and ratified by the State Department shortly after the coup and before his departure on leave. So the broad outlines of the American position were promptly established. Of course the meat on those bones were very slow in presenting themselves.

Q: The position was what essentially?

ANSCHUTZ: That this was undesirable and that prompt, firm steps should be taken to restore constitutional, parliamentary government. Obviously it was not happening and the confusion continued. At a later time...was it December when the King actually went up to Larisa?

Q: I think it was around then when the King made an attempt to rally the army.

ANSCHUTZ: Well, it was not well done. In a sense it was perhaps too late. My own view was that...there was talk among some people including a few people in the Embassy, that we should bring in the Marines and the Sixth Fleet, etc...which I thought would be folly. But I did think that if the King had at that time gone up to northern Greece and put himself aside the established loyalist senior commanders up there, a negotiation could have taken a much different and more favorable turn. But that didn't happen until almost six months later.

Q: After they had already consolidated themselves.

ANSCHUTZ: Then the reports began to come in, particularly from our military, since all the junta was military. They would say, "We know old Pattakos is really very pro-American," And then you get the same thing about Makarezos. Everybody has his three cents to throw in. I have to say that I didn't feel that the military assessment about some of these things was particularly helpful.

Q: My impression, I am talking about a slightly later period, was that our military was heavily loaded with Greek-American officers there, for one thing, who were very happy, many of whom settled down later on to stay. But the point being that they were an extremely conservative bunch and felt at home there. They were not really representing what I would say were mainline American interests. Did you have any of that feeling?

ANSCHUTZ: I think there may be some of that. Yes, there were a number of Greek-Americans, both in the military and in the Agency. Like most of us they were willing to be persuaded that what their friends and acquaintances were doing was in the common good. We had an amusing incident. There was a Greek journalist who has lived in Washington for many years since the coup, by the name of Elias Dimitricopoulos. He at one time had been very close to Andreas and took a very liberal view. He arranged, somehow, for one of the senators from Indiana and a prominent economic journalist to visit. Now, visits to Greece during this period by Americans were discouraged and particularly by prominent or distinguished men. Elias and the senator came to call in my office. They said they wanted to call on Papadopoulos, who was the acting Prime Minister, and they wanted me to escort them. I said that I don't think it was appropriate and didn't see any reason for the senator to call on Mr. Papadopoulos. At any rate, they insisted. I went over to the Hilton Hotel and the senator and Elias were there coming down the stairs. We all piled into my car. All the time I was arguing against this call, which in my view was completely inappropriate. Our policy at that time was trying not give status to this group. You may remember that you come out of the Hilton and had to turn right and there was a divider between the highway and you turned right and went down towards the Palace. I argued all the way down in the elevator, in the car, etc. I was making no headway at all. So when the car stopped to make a U turn to turn down Queen Sofia, I just got out of the car and said, "I am sorry, if you feel that you have to make this call it will have to be your privilege, but I will not escort you." I walked off.

I just sent a very brief message to the department and said that I had declined to escort a senator. It was as though I had dropped a rock in the water. There was no reply from Washington. So they made the call.

Q: I am a little surprised at Dimitricopoulos, because he was such a foe of the regime, being on Andreas' side. Why was he trying to screw up this?

ANSCHUTZ: Well, it was only afterward that he became anti-Andreas and particularly in later years.

Q: He was a real thorn in the side of the Embassy for many years being opposed to the junta and

going after our policy all the time, and had quite a following here in Washington.

ANSCHUTZ: Oh yes. He is a very good publicist. He is really completely devoted to his work. He has worked ceaselessly in his PR activities.

Q: *Why was he trying to establish contact with that group at that time?*

ANSCHUTZ: What they wanted to do was to embarrass the government. The senator was going to presumably be critical of the action they had taken. This was a pro-Andreas call. That didn't give it any particular luster in my eyes either.

Q: *What about Andreas? Right after the coup he was in prison and it looked like he was going to be shot, or something. What did the Embassy do? Here was a guy who had been an American citizen and served in the American Navy and had been a professor at Stanford and a few other places and had been spending most of his time out on the hustings attacking the United States so he obviously wasn't over popular. Yet his life was being threatened.*

ANSCHUTZ: Of course as an American citizen we were opposed to any summarily action against Andreas. There was also an organized effort in the United States to free Andreas, led by a very good economist from Minnesota who was, I think, the head of the Council of Economic Advisors or something. His name escapes me too. So this had wide international publicity. I think it is fair to say that we may have well saved Andreas' life. I think he might have been executed.

Q: *Were we making representations?*

ANSCHUTZ: Oh, yes. I think by that time Phil Talbot was back and I think he made representations too, pointing out that any such action on the part of the government would certainly compromise the already delicate relations we had with the government. Our relations with the government was a very brittle, tenuous thing. But we did in effect have relations of a sort. So Andreas may well have owed his life to American intervention.

Q: *During this period...you left when?*

ANSCHUTZ: I left in June, 1967.

Q: *So at the time you left...it was only April to June...we were being very distant?*

ANSCHUTZ: Yes, we were.

Q: *Did you retire shortly thereafter?*

ANSCHUTZ: I came back here and was assigned to the Senior Seminar. Then I had met George Moore, who was chairman of City Bank, both in Cairo years ago and actually spent a weekend with him on Nasser's yacht. When I was in the Senior Seminar...I remember I was down in New Orleans, I believe, and my wife called and said, "Onassis wants you to call him." I did call him

and he said, "Get in touch with George Moore, he wants to give you a job." I was just 50 and I could retire under our regulations. I had been very fortunate in the Service. You will recall there was another regulation which said that if you were a Class 1 officer for more than ten years you were vulnerable to being retired. I was a Class 1 officer at 40.

Q: *You were promoted early.*

ANSCHUTZ: I was promoted early. But I had to hang around and wait for something to happen or take the offer. So with a great deal of regret I left the Service in 1968.

Q: *When you came back to Washington, this was still during the Johnson administration, did you find the Desk with Dan Brewster and others, fairly firm that we were going to keep our distance from this Greek government?*

ANSCHUTZ: I think it is fair to say that. We were in a delicate position. We strongly disapproved of this government. But the trick was to divest ourselves of this government without toppling the whole situation into the hands of Andreas and his friends. So this was why basically the maneuver was so delicate. Instead of pushing too hard and thereby making sure we lost the game, we thought we could, by gentle persuasion, ease out. Well, it didn't work out that way.

Q: *Then the next administration came in which tried to have a much more positive approach.*

ANSCHUTZ: Well, we had Henry Tasca so there was some love making at that time. Again, I am sure it was in the hope that we could convert them.

Q: *I think this is behind it, but also again it represented the cold war and these were anti-Communists and so our friends.*

ANSCHUTZ: That is right.

HARRY I. ODELL
Economic Officer
Athens (1964-1968)

Harry Odell graduated from Brown University and later attended graduate school at the Fletcher School of International Affairs at Tufts University. Prior to attending Brown University, however, Mr. Odell had served in the US Army Air Corps during World War II. His Foreign Service career began in 1950 and it took him to places such as Germany, Israel, Sri Lanka, Greece, Jordan, and Switzerland. In addition, Mr. Odell has held several positions within the Department of State. He was interviewed by Peter Moffat in April 2000.

ODELL: I got to Athens in 1964, which was at the end of the really great time to be in Greece if you were an official American. Things were still cheap. Greece had been discovered by the

tourists, but that was just really beginning to build up. So, it was still possible to enjoy the many things that are possible to enjoy in Greece. The dollar was still \$35 to an ounce of gold. The drachma was cheap. Things were available and servants were available. The countryside was not cluttered up. Athens, which was beginning to get cluttered up, still wasn't. If you got to downtown Athens early in the morning, you could actually see sheep being driven through the streets. It was a great place to be from the personal point of view.

There were just people all over the embassy. We had officially discontinued our economic aid mission. A great deal of my time was spent trying to tie up loose ends left over from the AID mission project.

Q: Your title was what?

ODELL: I was an economic officer. In the Economic Section, my boss, Bob McCoy, had been director of the last AID mission in Ceylon. He had the title also of economic counselor. They abolished the AID mission officially and he stayed on as economic counselor. I was number two to him. Then we had a commercial attaché who also reported to him over there. Then we had about four other officers in the Economic Section and also local employees. McCoy was a very sharp man. He had worked directly for Labouisse in AID. He was one of Labouisse's boys. After Labouisse left, Bob didn't rank quite so high. Of course, his perks had been taken away from him after he lost the AID mission. He no longer had a car and driver. He no longer had all these things. He wasn't terribly happy. He was a very active guy. So, he got an offer from Esso to go to work for them and he left the government to work for them as head of the Government Relations Department or something like that.

He was replaced by Frank Butler. He had come in originally under the Manpower Act proceedings. He was my boss until I left. He was a totally different guy than Bob McCoy. McCoy was very active.

I enjoyed Athens, except I got a little frustrated towards the end. There wasn't a great deal of activity. But we personally found it very pleasant there.

Of course, I was there when the Colonels' coup took place. That was another thing. That was, again, in terms of U.S. government policy... I don't know if you're familiar with the history of that. The Greek government in World War II had gone into exile in Cairo. It was headed by Prime Minister George Papandreou. When the war ended, he came back and was reinstated by the British as prime minister. Of course, the civil war in Greece broke out after World War II ended. They had a civil war for almost four years in Greece. Consequently, Greece got a very late start into the post-World War II recovery. We had this big military support operation there. But then various changes... Papandreou went out of power and a man named Karamanlis was in power. He had a big famous falling out with Queen Frederica. He went into exile in Paris, where he lived. He was sort of like the Bonny Prince Charlie of Greece. He was off there. Everybody talked about how wonderful it was when Karamanlis was in power. George Papandreou had a son, Andreas Papandreou, who had gone to the United States as a young lad and become an American citizen. He was briefly in the United States Navy and had studied economics. I think he taught in Minnesota, where he acquired his wife, Margaret, who had previously been married

to somebody else. I think it was a bit of a scandal in the University of Minnesota faculty over that one. But Andreas went to California and became a full professor in the Economics Department at Berkeley. Apparently, his resume listed him as having been chairman of the department, which he was, except I found out that that is not quite what it means. California had a practice, I believe, of rotating the deanship or chairmanship of the department among the senior professors. In other words, if there were four, one would have it for a year or two years and then they would rotate. But he had an international reputation as an economist. He decided to go back to Greece, first to head a special economic study foundation project that had been established - I think with some American money in it - and then he went into politics and became very controversial in that capacity. Many of our people just couldn't stand him.

When I got there, he was not in office, but then he became the minister of coordination, which meant that he was the one who dealt with foreign governments in terms of any aid programs in Greece, which meant us. I met him several times. He was in my home. He was quite senior, of course, but he and his wife did come to my home. And we were in their home. He was a good looking guy. Women thought he looked very, very attractive, which he was. He spoke English beautifully. He was a little bit erratic. Greek politics were very convoluted and tangled and very difficult to put your finger on. But what happened was that there was a series of caretaker governments and then under their constitution, general elections were programmed for May of 1967. It was I thought - and most observers objectively thought - that probably the party to which Andreas and his father belonged would come back into power and that Andreas might very well become the prime minister. His father was getting pretty old at that time. It was at that point in April 1967 that this coup took place. Again, I don't think there was any doubt that the coup plotters thought that this would be something that we would be terribly upset about, but I don't believe we were involved. The day of the coup, I saw Jack Morrie at the embassy and I never saw such a shaken man in my life. He didn't really know that this was going to take place. Of course, if the CIA in a given country has any great value, this is the sort of thing they ought to be on, but they didn't. The people who pulled the coup, three colonels and a brigadier general, were pretty well unknown. It was a magnificently handled affair. What they took was the big NATO plan, that if the balloon went up and the Communist Bloc attacked NATO, Greece was a member of NATO, as was Turkey, and the plans had been laid and it was assumed that the attack would come down through Bulgaria and so forth. The contingency plan of what would happen in Greece if that happened provided for certain people on a given list - a few thousand people - to be arrested and interned. Certain strategic points would be occupied immediately. Marshall law would be declared, etc. They simply took this plan, which was already thoroughly worked out, and applied it with a few twists - like arresting the leaders of the government and so forth. I think only one person was killed during the coup and that was a woman that was hit by a stray warning shot that had been fired.

I had been in the United States. My mother died and I went home for her funeral. I had only been back a couple of days. It was morning. I was getting ready to go to the embassy. My wife came in and said, "Malcolm Thompson is at the door." He was a Foreign Service officer in the Political Section. He lived not far from me. That was very unusual for him to come to the door at that hour of the morning. I went and Mac said, "Harry, something has happened. The phones aren't working and there are soldiers all over the place." So, I turned on the radio and all you could hear was marshall music being played. So, Mac and I decided that we would go to the

assistant military attaché's house, who was also there, and see whether he knew anything. He didn't know any more than we did. We decided we would get in his car and see if we could go down to the embassy. We started encountering roadblocks and were turned away. But we finally worked our way around through back streets and go to the embassy. There was Jack Morrie, the CIA station chief, in his World War II Marine colonel uniform. He figured that it would be easier to get through in a uniform, which was true. The problem with Jack was that the uniform no longer fitted him very well. He was semi-ridiculous in appearance. Anyhow, everything had stopped. The airports were closed, as was everything else. The first two or three days, we were kept off the street. Then things sort of started moving. Our policy was totally without any direction at that point. We had no guidance from Washington except to keep our distance from these people. Well, this isn't practical in some respects. I mean, what do you do?

Things went bumping along. I wasn't privy to what was going on up at the top, but I did know that there was a lot of heat generated because among the guys that had been arrested was Papandreou. He was their prize capture. He had a lot of contacts in the United States. Lyndon Johnson subsequently said that "I'm never so tired of hearing anything as hearing about that damned economics teacher they got over there in Greece." The academic world from Galbraith and everybody all kind of rallied and started to put the heat on.

Eventually, they did let him go. He left the country and went to live in Sweden for a while. He subsequently, of course, became prime minister of Greece. His son is now the foreign minister of Greece, George (named for his grandfather).

Our life went on, but the problem was what do you do? Do you continue dealing with the civil servants and stuff that you had been dealing with? We did have programs. We had a big ongoing PL-480 supported food program. We had set up a school lunch program that reached virtually every schoolchild in Greece. It was a very good, valuable program. At that time, an awful lot of people in rural sections of Greece were very, very poor. The kids simply didn't have the meals. What do you do? Do you continue these programs? So, we kind of bumped along.

Of course, in June of 1967, the Arab-Israeli War erupted. The Department in its wisdom decided that the Americans evacuated from the Middle East should go to Greece. You can't have umpteen thousand or whatever it was Americans coming into Greece without some contact with the local government. I don't remember the argument being made that they shouldn't come to Greece, that they should go to Germany, where there were all kinds of Army hotels and facilities. So, we in the Economic Section were instructed to go down and talk to the civil aviation authorities and we were to talk to the central bank and we were to do this and do that. The upshot of it was that contacts started being resumed. I don't think there was ever any official decision, but we just started doing it.

To talk about my personal role in this, I still retained a pretty good working knowledge of German at that time. It turned out that one of these colonels, Makarezos, had been their military attaché in Bonn and spoke pretty good German. He had become the minister of coordination. So, when Ambassador Talbot went down to see him specifically because they had discontinued the school lunch feeding program, and argued that this program, which was certainly non-political from our point of view, was a good thing, they had decided that anything that foreigners were

doing was to be stopped. So, we went down and we were kicking this around for a while with an interpreter. Then I asked Makarezos directly if he spoke German. He said he did. So, we were able to communicate directly. Talbot promptly said, "Well, would you mind if Mr. Odell came back and saw you about the details of this?" So, from that point of view, my background in Germany was again useful in Greece. We never became buddies, but we were able to talk directly without an intermediary and that made things a lot simpler. I suggested to him simply that he go out himself into the country. Like so many of the Greek officers at that time, they had come from rural backgrounds. We said, "Just go out into your hometown and see this program" and he did. He agreed that we should continue it.

Otherwise, things settled down. Gradually, as revolutions do, the classic pathology, they started quarreling among themselves. The one colonel, Papadopoulos, had become the leader. He began really insisting on the perks of office. There was internal tension. But they were still in power when I left for Amman. Subsequently (I don't remember the exact dates of this.), they trouble started with the students at Athens University. Somebody got pretty heavy-handed and sent the troops into the university and the troops refused to fire on the students. It is a conscript army in Greece and most of these (It was then a very small country.) were from closely knit families. The vast majority of these soldiers were very young conscripts and were not about to start shooting students and so forth. I think that was the thing that pushed it over the edge. Karamanlis, I think, came back from Paris. Last I heard from Bob Keeley, who was there at the time as a junior political officer (He and I knew each other quite well then. Henry Tasca became the ambassador. He was quite friendly with the colonels. I never knew him.) that one of the triumvirate, I believe, has died. The others are still in prison, although it is quite a commodious prison life. No government has yet decided to amnesty them.

Q: How would you characterize the colonels' coup and our attitude towards it?

ODELL: I would say that we kind of drifted into more conventional relations with them. As they stayed in power, at least for a period, I think some of the more egregious aspects of it began to kind of drift away. Parliament was not in session, but troops were progressively withdrawn from things. The banks got opened and civil aviation began functioning. Things were getting along. My impression (I saw him, but never met him.) was that the brigadier general, Stephanopoulos, was just a pure, blunt soldier-type. Makarezos, a lieutenant colonel who had been military attaché in Bonn, I think was a more subtle character and was probably more intelligent. I thought he was personally an honest man. The other one, Papadopoulos, who was the leader, was shifty-eyed and he relished the perks of power. He was eventually in a palace coup of his own.

The young king's role in this was that he attempted a very feeble counter-coup and then had to leave the country. Subsequently, many years later, there was a referendum in Greece and he was invited not to come back. He was a bit of a tragic figure. They used him. He was king and he stayed king until he attempted this counter-coup, which had no chance whatsoever of succeeding.

He went off to Rome. The Greeks, I don't think they missed their monarchy very much. It was not of Greek origin originally.

The king was a squash player. Malcolm Thompson and I used to (There were squash courts at

the Athens Tennis Club.) play squash. One day, we were told that we were going to have to vacate our court because His Majesty wanted to play. We said, "Well, yes, of course. We'd be glad to give way to His Majesty." Who should His Majesty show up with, but with his brother-in-law Juan Carlos of Spain. He had married Constantine's sister. She was a Greek princess. That caused a bit of a controversy because they were Greek Orthodox, of course, and Juan Carlos was Catholic. The two royals came down the corridor and we discreetly gave way to them.

He was a very attractive young man with a pretty Danish wife, of course, and so on. He didn't have a political stature. The general feeling was that he did what his mother told him to do. She was not terribly well liked. She was modern day German. She had been the German princess. Most everybody of any significance lived not far from anybody else in Athens. There were certain sections where you were supposed to live and you did.

That's about it for Greece.

AUGUST VELLETRI
Political Officer
Athens (1964-1969)

August Velletri was born in Ithaca, New York, but after his father's death when he was just two years old, his family moved back to Italy. At age 16, his family returned to the States, where he finished high school and began studies at Cornell. Because of finances, he transferred to Rice University in Houston, Texas. It was during his graduate work at Ohio State that someone offered him a position at the State Department. He has also served in Italy, Pakistan and various other positions in Washington.

Q: *You went to Greece when?*

VELLETRI: In 1964.

Q: What were you doing in Greece at that time?

VELLETRI: I was again in the political section and dealing with the government on UN affairs. Whenever there was a problem in the UN and we sought the support of Greece, I was there to go to the Foreign Office and explain what the situation was. I also handled labor and the church.

Q: *You were in Athens from 1964 to 1969.*

VELLETRI: Yes.

Q: *You were there during a critical period in Greek affairs.*

VELLETRI: Yes. There was a coup and a counter coup by the King which failed. We settled in for a long period with the Colonels.

Q: When you arrived in 1964, who was the Ambassador?

VELLETRI: The Ambassador was Henry Labouisse who was replaced by Phillips Talbot in 1965.

Q: What was your impression of Phillips Talbot who was there most of the time you were there? I am talking about how he ran the Embassy and how he did things. This is important to get a feel for the time.

VELLETRI: He was not a very forceful administrator or a forceful ambassador. Apart from that, I don't know. I made a few trips with him outside the Embassy and these contacts made me think that a different Ambassador could have done more to prevent the Colonels from taking over.

Q: What was the political situation at this time? The coup took place on April 21, 1967. You got there in mid-64. What was the situation before the coup?

VELLETRI: Greece was governed by the senior Papandreou, an experienced and, I believe, a not too radical politician. Ejections were to take place in 1967 and the U.S. was very much interested in the results of these elections. Since the young Papandreou (Andreas) was conducting what appeared to be a very successful political campaign, with definite anti-American nuances, the Embassy had a particular interest in the elections.

Q: This was George Papandreou.

VELLETRI: Yes, the father of Andreas. There was a strong possibility that George Papandreou might be elected, and that his son, Andreas may play a prominent role in any future Government. The prospect of a Papandreou Government pushed the Colonels to take over.

Q: Well, there was concern about Andreas Papandreou particularly. I think George was beginning to fail.

VELLETRI: I believe so.

Q: How did you find your relations with the Greek government regarding UN and Church affairs, etc.

VELLETRI: The Greeks were very supportive even under the George Papandreou government. It was not George who was feared but his son, Andreas and his anti-Americanism, etc., which, I think was just a policy ploy to get elected. Before the Colonels, the Foreign Office had been very supportive of us. I never had any problems with it.

Q: What about the Church, the Orthodox Church? Did you find it quite a different Church to deal with than the Catholic Church?

VELLETRI: Yes, indeed.

Q: Could you tell me why?

VELLETRI: The Orthodox Church in Greece was not as sophisticated as the Catholic Church. They had problems getting good clergymen. In general, the priests and monks were not well educated. Most of the vocations came from rural areas. Urban areas such as Athens and Thessaloniki, however, had their share of well rounded Papas.

Q: The Papas being the father.

VELLETRI: Yes. As I said the Papas left something to be desired. I found this also in Mt. Athos, which I visited for a few days. A shortage of monks was restricting the activities of the various monasteries. One could see that the monasteries were deteriorating.

I think the Orthodox Church took the position that it had nothing to fear because its position in the community was very well established. After all, it had survived 400 years of Turkish occupation. Despite all its problems the Church still exercises a good deal of influence.

Q: Then moving back to the political scene, did you find the political section, just before the coup, somewhat at odds with the Ambassador?

VELLETRI: I don't remember that there was any debate going on between the senior officers and the more junior officers in the political section. I think they were pretty much on target during the campaign preceding the elections. The coup, however, came as a big surprise to all of us. Even the CIA was not prepared by this turn of events. Some of the officers didn't even know who this "fellow Papadopoulos" was.

Q: What were you doing and what were you doing immediately after the coup?

VELLETRI: I just carried on as usual although my job was not affected by the dictatorship and my relationship with the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Labor or the trade unions did not change. But I think we should have made known to them that we didn't like their way of doing things. We didn't like their government, yet we tolerated them too much. I remember periodically we went before Congress and told them that elections in Greece were coming soon. We could see the light of democracy at the end of the tunnel, so to speak. We did for a hell of a long time. What I was doing with the Foreign Office, nothing changed. Nothing changed with my relationship with the Foreign Office. I still kept in touch with the Ministry of Labor and the various trade unions (of course, there was very little trade unionism in Greece -- the AFL-CIO and what few organizations existed, were kept alive by donations that usually ended up in the pockets of the so-called trade unionists).

After the coup it was Ambassador Talbot who asked me to "take over the Church and see what is going on." Well, the Church went along with the coup.

Q: *It was the conservative Colonels who were very religious in a conservative sense.*

VELLETRI: So I believe.

STUART W. ROCKWELL
Deputy Assistant Secretary, Near East Affairs
Washington, DC (1965-1970)

Stuart Wesson Rockwell was born in New York in 1917. In the Foreign Service he served in Panama, Palestine, Spain, France, Iran and as ambassador to Morocco. He was interviewed in 1988 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: *Then we move from 1965. You came back to Washington and you served in NEA as the Deputy Assistant Secretary in NEA, which stands for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs. What were your responsibilities?*

ROCKWELL: Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, and Iran.

Q: *So you moved away from the Palestinian side of things.*

ROCKWELL: Yes.

Q: *Greece and Turkey later were moved into European affairs. How was the situation at the time? This is under the Johnson Administration for part of this period, and then into the early Nixon period, too. What was our interest in Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus at that time, '65 to '70?*

ROCKWELL: Greece and Turkey were NATO members. We all know the strategic position of Turkey and the Straits, the Greek connection with air bases. Also, the Greek-American community is an influential one here. Turkey has one of the largest, if not the largest, number of people under arms in NATO. Turkey had taken part very honorably in the Korean War. I think that our interests were the traditional ones in that strategic part of the world.

Q: *If I recall now, this is the time of the Cyprus problem. Was that at a particular boil during this time? It goes up and down from time to time.*

ROCKWELL: I'm sort of unclear about the exact timing. Of course, when I was there in that position, the Greek Government tried to overthrow Makarios and to bring about enosis between Cyprus and Greece.

Q: *Enosis is the word for "union."*

ROCKWELL: Yes. So that was a big crisis, and that resulted in the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. So that was a boiling point.

Q: *The Turkish invasion came in '74, didn't it?*

ROCKWELL: I don't remember the exact date.

Q: *Cyprus is always a problem. Did you have much of a lobbying effort on the part, say, of the Greek-American lobby?*

ROCKWELL: Yes, there were a great many people who were opposed to the Greek colonels, and there were people like Tom Pappas, who were very favorable to the Greek colonels.

Q: *Tom Pappas was a Greek-American citizen who was head of Esso Petroleum, I think.*

ROCKWELL: Yes, he was a businessman and he was, as I recall it, very much in favor of the colonel.

Q: *Also, he was very influential in Republican politics. I know because as an aftermath of the Watergate business, I had to serve a subpoena on him because he was on the Republican Finance Committee and was part of the investigation. I had to subpoena him when he was in Athens, when I was consul general there.*

What was the attitude of the Johnson and then the Nixon Administration toward Greece and Turkey, sort of a plague on both your houses? Did they try to leave it to the professionals, or did they get very much involved?

ROCKWELL: I think they left it more to the professionals. There was a general feeling that the Greeks and the Turks were constantly asking for too much money, and that we should give them as what was needed in order to achieve our interests there, but that we'd been helping there for many, many years and that it was time to taper off. I think there was not a tremendous amount of interest, especially in Turkey, more in Greece than in Turkey.

Q: *And in Greece it was really more because it was an unpopular regime.*

ROCKWELL: Yes. However, the Nixon Administration, especially under Henry Kissinger, didn't feel very uncomfortable with the Greek regime.

Q: *Just for the record, there was an overthrow of a democratic government in 1967 in Greece led by Colonel Papadopoulos, and that regime lasted until 1974.*

The National Security Council was run by Henry Kissinger during part of that time when you were there, from '69 to '70. Did you feel the National Security Council was very interested in the area, or was Vietnam absorbing most of their efforts?

ROCKWELL: What period are you talking about?

Q: *You were in from 1965 to '70. You were the deputy assistant secretary for NEA. Nixon came in in 1969. So you would have had 1969 and part of 1970 before you went to Rabat.*

ROCKWELL: Yes. I don't recall that the NSC got very much involved.

Q: That really answers the question. There were other things to do done.

JAMES C. WARREN, JR.
Manager of Esso-Papas
Athens, Greece (1965-1974)

Mr. Warren was born in New Jersey and raised there and in New York City. After service in the U.S. Army Air Corps in World War II and graduating from Princeton, University he joined the Marshall Plan in 1950 and was sent to Greece, where he worked in its Finance and Program Division until 1954. After returning to the US, Mr. Warren entered the private business sector, working first with the American Overseas Finance Corporation, and later with the Standard Vacuum Oil Company (Exxon and Mobil) in New York City and in Athens, Greece. Mr. Warren was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: What was the situation as you saw it from a businessman's point of view when you got there?

WARREN: It was a hot new market. There was a booming economy. It was a fevered atmosphere politically, but I don't think that slowed anybody down in terms of developing these projects and making investments and making new plans. Fevered politically and a very hot little corner in terms of economic growth prospects.

Q: What was your role with Esso-Papas?

WARREN: I came in as an economic and planning walla and rather quickly became assistant manager of the marketing enterprise called Esso Standard Elas. Then in '68, I became General Manager of that.

Q: It was named after Esso Papas' brothers?

WARREN: Greece was Shell and Mobil country. BP had a modest role. Fina, the Belgian company, had a smaller role. Caltex was awfully small. Basically, Shell and Mobil country. Standard Oil of New Jersey (ESSO) had for years been trying to get into Greece. Never could. Never could develop the government relations that were essential to the issuance of the permits that were required. Finally, it succeeded in finding a way. One of the directors of Standard Oil of New Jersey, whose name was Bill Stott, turned out to have an old friend in Boston named Tom Pappas, a Greek-American, who was on the Republican side of the ledger. His brother, the judge, John Pappas was the Democrat. They covered both sides of the street. Tom was a charming and tough and unscrupulous entrepreneur in the Boston area. He had become friends with Bill Stott, who said, "You're going to get us into Greece" and he did. They made a deal with the Karamanlis government. The principal negotiator on the deal from the government side was

Papaligouras, Minister of Coordination. But the government did not just roll over and play dead. They said, "If you want to come in here, you've got to build an oil refinery and a chemical plant and a fertilizer plant, etc., and they've got to be in Salonika." That was Karamanlis speaking.

Q: His strength was up in...

WARREN: He came from Serres. That's where his heart was. So, they said, "You're going to build an industry sized refinery and supply all of the marketers who come to you asking for product. And you're going to do it in Salonika." That was the deal. Along with the refining company, however, there was the associated marketing company and the chemical company. Tom Pappas was the *meson*, the inside fixer. Meanwhile, he had equity interest in this new enterprise called Esso Pappas. He was in due course bought out of that by the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey. He had a parallel interest in shipping and in tomato paste plants and other things, such as Coca Cola. It was a hell of a difficult matter, this partnership between a huge corporation with policies and procedures and calendars of regular reviews, the whole thing. Somebody would come in and say, "You've got to pay these bills," and he'd tear the bill in half, put half of the bill in the bottom drawer, and tell his accountant to pay half of the bill. So, here was Exxon, this gigantic enterprise, married as it were with this single individual. It was not easy. A lot of people have made their careers in Exxon subsequently denouncing this deal.

Q: How did you survive in this?

WARREN: Happily, I got along well with Tom, who was a difficult person. You often didn't know whether he was pushing or pulling you. Of course, he acquired a terrible name during the period of the junta.

Q: The colonels took over on April 21, 1967.

WARREN: On April 21, Tom had not a clue as to who was in the junta. By April 28, he was on a first name basis with them. People would come into his office and say, "Tom, what's this I hear about you being associated with the CIA?" He would say, "Son, there are a lot of things in this world that one is simply not allowed to talk about." Off they'd go, utterly convinced. To this day, you will find that most historians and commentators and writers presumably of some astuteness refer to Tom as being in bed with the junta citing all the "benefits" that they granted to him. They granted me no benefits. Period.

Q: He was playing the political card quite heavily in the United States.

WARREN: Yes. He was the Republican part of the brotherhood. I dare say that the reports that he secured junta money which came across the Atlantic and was invested in the Nixon political campaign. Those reports are perhaps based in fact.

Q: He was involved with the Committee to Reelect the President, which is known as CRP. This was the '72 election. I was consul general there. I was told to deliver a subpoena to Tom Pappas. There was an investigation. I talked to our ambassador, Henry Tasca, who said, "Oh, God." Then he arranged it so I went over to the Hilton Hotel. He had a suite there. I handed him this,

smiled, and shook hands. I backed out of the room and left it at that.

WARREN: Tom was a difficult person, he really was.

Q: Was he just difficult to deal with or was he interfering? Sometimes the interference is the worst part if you're trying to run a business.

WARREN: Happily, I had very little, though some, interference from him, but not very much. Other parts of the business had a much more difficult time. In most of those years Exxon on had already bought him out of the oil business side of the operation, he still had offices two floors up above me. But he didn't come and pester me and insist on things in my area that I would have had to reject.

Q: I would have thought you would have had problems dealing with the group that is known as the shipowners, which is within its own organization. Did they intrude at all?

WARREN: The Greek shipowners are a very special part of the Greek economy. They're just not really a part of the Greek economy. We solicited Greek shipowners' on a worldwide basis, but the deliveries might have been in Dar Es Salaam or Singapore or Buenos Aires or almost anywhere. We might have had to go to a Greek judge to get a ruling for impoundment on some bill that had been refused in Montevideo or something like that. That Greek shipowning community loved to exhibit their wealth and presumed power in the Athens-Piraeus community, but they were not really a part of the Greek economy. They were offshore.

Q: A lot of the ships ended up with Liberian or Panamanian flags.

WARREN: They were under all kinds of different flags. The Greek government periodically would make the mistake of imposing upon them various nationalistic laws, which did absolutely no good at all because the shippowners could easily slip the noose as they conducted a genuinely international trade.

Q: This brings a case to mind. I learned a great lesson in the time I was in Greece. You think of a military government being an effective government. I think the colonels was the most ineffective government I've ever run across. They'd keep making decrees and they didn't have the balancing of a legislature saying, "Hey, if you do this, such and such will happen." So, Papakos, who was Vice Prime Minister or something, would say that every foreigner had to pay a yacht tax" which had been in existence since the '20s but had never been enforced. He said, "Here, we'll just announce that everyone has to do it." Well, all the yachtmen went off to Turkey. Screw you. There were other things. How did you find operating in that atmosphere?

WARREN: They were a disaster. They were dumb cops, that's all. They weren't much worse than dumb cops. They certainly weren't any better. Again, if anecdotal material is useful to you...

Three incidents involving the junta in my operation. The first came six weeks after the coup d'etat. The colonels came to power April 21, 1967. In about the second week of June, maybe the

first week, the Arab-Israeli War broke out. The new government in Greece was very nervous, having just consolidated power. All of a sudden, there is a hell of a conflict just across the water. So, they were twice as nervous. Exactly at that moment when my crew at the Athens airport was working 24 hours a day getting ready some new installations, I got a telephone call at 4:00 am from my aviation manager. He said, "Boss, we're in serious trouble. All of my men at the airport are in jail. They are being accused of treason and sabotage and they're up against the wall. They may well be shot." I said, "What the hell is going on?" He said, "An hour and a half ago, a bulldozer that was working on our excavations to put in the new tanks at the airport went through the central communications cable at the Athens airport." I said, "Dimitri, meet me at the office of our principal engineer downtown at 7:00." I went down and there was my aviation manager and the chief engineer. I said, "Get me all the permit documents." In Greece, you have to have a permit to do anything. The permit process is very elaborate and complicated. You can be sure that everything is there. We were looking and looking and finally found the documents, the topographical map with all the permits and signatures and stamps, etc. I saw what I was after. I grabbed that and put it in a cardboard tube and jumped in my car and roared out to the airport to the office of Major Farmakoris, who was the new commandant of the Athens airport. He was not a member of the inside circle of the junta, but he was not far from the outer edge of that circle because you don't put somebody in charge of the Athens airport who does not have your confidence. He kept me waiting for an hour and a half. He knew who was out there, the general manager of Esso-Standard. Finally, I was admitted to his office. There he was, at his desk at the end of the room. He continued to go over his papers. Finally, he looked up and saw me and pressed his mad angry button and jumped up out of his chair and started to scream at me, "Sabotage! Treason! Esso is a company filled with communists!" He goes on further. I could only let him run his course. Finally, he finished his little theatrical performance. I said, "Excuse me, Mr. Director General, but is this your signature?" I handed him the documents. It was. He went white, threw me out of the office, released my men, and forever after was my enemy. That was my introduction to the junta.

Another junta story: We had a guy who worked for me who did not have a desk. He was our fixer, our expeditor. Every morning, he would appear in the office. He had a little mailbox. We'd tell him which were the priority permit applications to push. So, he would then go around to the Ministry of Communications and the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Health. He'd make the rounds all day long. He'd come back and leave a report for each of these. His job was to push and pull. He was also the guy who would get me in and out of the country without having to have my car and house sealed, things like that. In the month of May, he didn't have anything to do. All the permit applications came back, acted on, in the mail. In the month of June, some of those applications came back and he had something to do to go push the others. In the month of July, none of them came back in the mail and he had to go push all of them. This is the civil service of Greece responding to the directions of the colonels. In July, a visitor came to my office in civilian clothes. My secretary brought him in and introduced him to me and gave me his card. It was Major So and So. He told me that he had been assigned to the Ministry of Commerce and that his particular competency, the area of responsibility, would be petroleum products and the distribution thereof. He wanted to meet me and introduce himself. Toward the end of the conversation, he said, "And, by the way, my nephew has a tank truck which is not under contract at this moment." It took from April 21st until mid-August and we were back to the old system.

One final anecdote. Because we held the contract of the U.S. Defense Department at the Athens airport, we were looked to by the Greek government to assist them when it came to the annual NATO exercises in August. Every year, we would ask the Hellenic Air Force what were the NATO plans for the exercises and we would be told, "Those are cosmic and you're not cosmic, so you can't have them." Then I would get a hold of Gus Frances, who was our NATO liaison officer at the time. I'd say, "Gus, it's time for you and me to have lunch." We would go and have lunch and I'd say, "Gus, you don't want the exercises to fail, do you?" "No" "You know, they represent probably a tenfold increase in the daily demand for jet fuel. This is interplane service, not just bulk delivery. So, we need to know something about the flight patterns." So out would come a napkin provided by whatever restaurant it was, and we would write down the necessary data for us to do our planning. Of course, we'd get all set up and go for it. This particular exercise was concentrated at Nika, the airport up in Salonika. It meant that we would have to borrow the Hellenic Air Force's tankage at the airport with their pumping facilities and put our product into their tanks, which we did. This was jet fuel. Then the Belgians and the English and French and everybody else's planes would come roaring in and we'd refuel them. Just at that moment, Congress in a fit of pique, cut off some element of the military aid to Greece because of the misbehavior of the colonels. I think it may have been military spare parts. Papadopoulos was so mad that he was going to fix those bastards, namely Washington and NATO. At the very last minute, at about two days before the NATO exercise was to start, an order came down from him to take away those tanks that were going to be used in the NATO exercise! He was going to sabotage the NATO exercise. What he didn't realize is that the guys working for me were Greek. When you tell a Greek, "Dimitri, I know this is impossible, but by Saturday night, we have to..." he rises to the occasion. He does the impossible. And we did. There were two or three examples of our dealings with the junta.

Q: Did you feel the pressure from the U.S. through your home offices? The colonels, deservedly so, did not smell very good. Particularly having an autocratic regime in Greece of all places, where democracy came from, were you getting pressure from stockholders, the home office, saying you had to do something and make gestures?

WARREN: If there were any such pressures, they were choked off in Rockefeller Center. I never heard anything like that. I recall that on one of those occasions, in one of those junta years, we were under very powerful pressure from the junta itself to contribute something to a 150th anniversary of the 1821 revolution (Greece's War of Independence). There was to be a big junta push on all companies of any magnitude. Each company was supposed to do something in the name of this 150th anniversary. I got a hold of the advertising agency and we produced a phonograph record which was the readings in Greek from the works of General Makriyannis, an illiterate hero of the Greek revolution in 1921 who later learned Greek formally so that he could write his memoirs, which are absolutely wonderful. It's a kind of peasant poetry. It's read by Monos Katrakis, who was a terrific actor with a great voice and with a background of the most famous santouri player in Greece, Aristides Moskos. We produced this record and gave it away at our service stations. If you filled up your tank, you got a record of this 1821 thing.

Q: Were there present political implications regarding the 150 year independence?

WARREN: It was a terrific record.

JAMES H. MORTON
Head of Consular Section
Thessaloniki (1966-1968)

James H. Morton was raised in Illinois and graduated from Monmouth College and the University of Chicago. He joined the Foreign Service in 1964. His career included positions in Luxembourg, Greece, Switzerland, New Zealand, and Washington, DC. Mr. Morton was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.

MORTON: I had asked to go to Africa and ended up in Luxembourg. I asked to go to Africa again, I had not lost this sense of things. By this time all these posts were turning over again in Africa and I thought I had a good chance again. Lo and behold I got a telegram one day, or perhaps Joan Clark called me down and said, "Jim, you are going to Togo." I was ecstatic. A couple of days later she called me down and said, "You are going to Tehran." I said, "Okay." In those days you didn't question the personnel system. So after they had shipped my car to Tehran, she called me in and said, "Jim, you are going to Thessaloniki." So it was Togo, Tehran and Thessaloniki. I call it my three T experience. The reason that was given to me was that there was a very difficult consul general at Thessaloniki...

Q: Who was it?

MORTON: A guy named William Hamilton. He was before your time, although his legend lives on. ...and the person I would be replacing, was a guy named David Rowe who was a bachelor, and they wanted somebody who was married as I was, and they somehow looked at my reports and thought I was this kind of person ...perhaps the corridor knew of the difficulty in Luxembourg, that I was capable of dealing with difficult people.

Q: The curse of a corridor reputation.

MORTON: So lo and behold the car went to Tehran, but I went to Thessaloniki. And that is when I ran the consular section there. In those days everyone did a consular tour and often times it was the second tour. So I ran the consular section there for two years and also did some political reporting there as well because the coup happened during that time.

Q: Before we get to the 1967 coup, you say Bill Hamilton was difficult. How did you deal with him?

MORTON: I think I can say without reservation that he was the most difficult man to work for I had ever run into at that time and then the rest of my career. I have never had a problem like Bill Hamilton. And I still don't know why we didn't hit it off. We were the people sent there to hit it off and we didn't. I had a deputy principal officer named Walter Silva who was a wonderful

person. He helped, as I think people in this position are often required to do and he did a good job of it, of buffering the differences that we had. Hamilton was simply an old curmudgeon who had run out to the end of his tour. He was very bitter about many things and Thessaloniki was seen at that time as a post where elephants go to die and it certainly seemed to be the case of consul generals around there. He just seemed to have an ax to grind and I simply was not capable at that time of playing the game and I did have some pretty heated discussions with him about many, many things. He asked me to issue some visas that I refused to do and this did not go over well. They were for some big general's daughters and you know that doesn't go over well.

Personally, as I look back at it I could have done more to try and ameliorate that situation, but it was a very bad situation.

Q: How did this impact on your family?

MORTON: Well, another part of the problem was that his wife and my wife did not hit it off. I can't say that we cared much about it. We didn't see him socially at all. We kind of went out and made friends in the community. It was a large international community there because there were a lot of tobacco buyers and that sort of thing, plus the American school. We got very friendly with a lot of the teachers. And there were even people there who took care of British battle graves, took care of Gallipoli and things like that, traveled into Turkey.

So by in large, as opposed to Luxembourg, I was rarely invited to social events there, only when he couldn't avoid it.

Q: Let's talk about the political situation before and after and how you felt Thessaloniki was different from Athens.

MORTON: First of all Thessaloniki had been the birth place of the Greek Communist Party because it had industry as Athens didn't at that time. So it was a hot bed of political activity and as opposed to Luxembourg there were interesting things to report. Also it was a post where you had to learn Greek. You could not get along in English as you often could in Athens. I know some of my counterparts in Athens never got beyond a 2/2 in Greek, if that. Up there it was total immersion, you just had to learn. I went to post without any Greek because I was switched at the last minute. The political situation was, to say the least, turbulent. There was the Lambrakis trial.

Q: Will you explain the Lambrakis trial? This is the movie Z.

MORTON: The movie Z. It had all happened before I got there but it involved this character Lambrakis and it was perceived to be a fixed trial. It was by in large a situation that was extremely potential for demonstrations, and political rallies. The Greek is one of the most political animals I have ever seen. He lives and breathes politics. The Greeks tended to blame everything on the Americans, more specifically the CIA down to family divorces and that is only a slight exaggeration. So there was a lot of anti-Americanism during this time. There were farmer strikes because of the government's policies toward agriculture. It was just a whole boiling pot of political issues and a lot of political chaos.

Q: The overall government was very unstable at that time.

MORTON: Very unstable.

Q: You had Papandreou, Sr., with his son Andreas, who was just last week reelected...

MORTON: Unbelievable.

Q: ...stirring up the pot and we were unhappy about this. But the government was not very strong.

MORTON: Not very strong at all, and one expected it to fall any moment and another one to come along.

Q: They were waiting for a coup. How did you find northern Greece? The army was concentrated up there. Did that make a difference?

MORTON: Well, obviously the army was there for two reasons. One, it was close to Turkey, where they thought the danger was in their view, despite being NATO allies. Also the army was up there certainly to keep an eye on the leftist activism that was so numerous and active in northern Greece. Northern Greece is Macedonia and different from the islands or Athens. It is the Balkans and it is Macedonia. You know Macedonia, it takes a while to live there. But there was very little in common between the two parts of the country. But, yes, the army was on constant maneuvers, on the roads, etc. as a show of force so that the leftists didn't get out of hand.

Q: This is pre-coup. How did you go about your political work? One of the things we are trying to go out of these interviews is to help new political officers and many do get this part time assignment. Did anybody tell you how to do it?

MORTON: No. We did it often over the objections or without the knowledge of the consul general, who was totally disinterested. He did not feel that that post had a political reporting responsibility. I had my own agenda. I was trying to do some political reporting because that was my line and I was hopeful that somewhere in my report it would show up that I had taken some time to do this and maybe even that I had written some worthwhile reports. This was done at the encouragement of the deputy principal officer, Walter Silva, who was, himself, kind of a political animal. He thought there were some things that ought to be reported. So he and I would conspire and I would go off some time after hours...the real work of a political officer in my view was making contacts, developing those contacts and then using those contacts to gather information. One particularly rich vein in Thessaloniki was the university where a lot of this leftist agitation was going on. I use "leftist" advisedly and in a positive sense because it was just that these were people left of the spectrum in Greece. As I tell my people in classes about the life of a diplomat, it is essential that you go out and develop contacts if you are going to be a good reporting officer, or any kind of officer for that matter. A strange thing can happen along the way, you can even make friends. Some of your best sources can become friends that last a lifetime. And that is the best kind because you can sit over a beer and this trust has been built up. You know by that time

what you can use and what you can't use. This is bringing one of these contacts to ultimate fruition, when you establish trust and to be effective you can call that person up and get a piece of information on the phone rather than spending three hours to go out and ferret it out.

Q: Stay with the students. One, you are an American, and two, you are with the Consulate General, which obviously meant you must be CIA. And you were messing around with the university. How did this go over?

MORTON: Some times not too good. Everything you did was viewed with great suspicion. Besides just the battle of building contacts and trust you had this overlay of CIA wherever you went. Every American was CIA and when out on the street was up to some nefarious goal. So it was tough. But I think in the end that, as with Walt, I was relatively successful in establishing good contacts and getting beyond this CIA factor and producing worthwhile information.

Q: What sort of information were you getting?

MORTON: Well, we were getting information that indeed there could be a coup. There could be a move from the right. That there was this group of army officers who were very displeased with the government and that they were about ready to take things into their own hands. We, of course, were up where the army officers were, so we had good contacts in the army there and they were telling us, "You know we are good Greeks and this would be a rape of democracy, but we can't stand around and let this happen. Some of our colleagues may make a move." We reported some of these things.

Q: Jim, let's talk a little about the CIA. I came a little after you, I started in Greece in 1970. Obviously this is an unclassified interview but also we are talking about 1993. Over a period of time I became to feel that the CIA had a pernicious role in our embassy. It was too close to the wrong people. It seemed to have too much influence over the Ambassador, etc. Did you get any feel about the CIA? I am not talking about the Greek view of the CIA, but within our own mission.

MORTON: Yeah, I have to say that I had the same feeling, but it was kind of at a distance. I would go down to Athens, we would carry the pouch down and go to staff meetings and that sort of thing. I would see some of the traffic and yeah, I think my view was that the CIA had kind of undue influence during the time. I didn't have a hell of a lot at that time to judge it by. First of all it seemed to me like they were doing a lot that the ambassador may or may not have been approving or have knowledge of.

Q: Who was ambassador at that particular time?

MORTON: Phillips Talbot and of course dare we mention the name of the station chief, Clair George. We know what has happened since that time. I only mention the name because the general perception was that they were extremely active. Our guy in Thessaloniki was all over the place. He was a Greek-American and seemed terribly effective, I must say, but just all over the place.

Q: Again speaking of this and one can read it in whatever context one might have, I found that because of the language business we had particularly in the CIA and in the military an undue number of Greek-Americans who wanted to come back and who tended to be very super-patriotic Americans, which meant that they didn't like anything that smacked of the left. I do not feel this served us terribly well there.

MORTON: Well I have a problem often times with ethnic Americans going back and serving in their countries. I know that theoretically on paper the Department has the same kind of problem, but nonetheless it seems to happen a lot.

Q: And in Greece particularly.

MORTON: Because of so many. You know the old saying, there are at least 6 to 7 million Greek Americans. And I have to say this, I worked, of course, three years in Washington when we were trying to lift the Turkish arms embargo and I was seen as the traitor at the Greek Embassy because I was working toward an American policy interest. I am jumping ahead, but the point I am trying to make is that in Thessaloniki and my days in Washington as someone who was deeply involved in Greek affairs, it was the rare Greek American I found who was totally objective. Greeks, more than most, maintain an allegiance to the old country, even three generations out. One of the guys, by the way, and you mentioned his name, one of the few Greek Americans that I found in official service now was Nick Veliotes.

Q: Nick Veliotes is...

MORTON: He was almost the other way and I loved him for it.

Q: You know, I found the same problem. It's another one that we have had for a long time with Jewish-Americans too, because when you have both a state and a religion which are closely identified with each other, it gets passed on from generation to generation. I found it was not helpful. Okay, let's talk about the coup. The word was there was going to be a coup and some generals were going to take over in the name of the king and it wasn't. How did the coup hit you all?

MORTON: Well, I will tell you my couple of days with the coup. It so happened that I was in charge of the post that day and the coup was carried out in Salonika. The odd thing is our consul general was out of the country boar hunting in Bulgaria without permission. He had not informed anyone that he was going. Silva was on the way to Athens carrying the pouch. And suddenly there was a coup.

The way I knew it was I got up in the morning, I lived in a neighborhood of army officers in a little suburb of Thessaloniki, and we got to the end of the street, I drove in with a neighbor, and we thought something was wrong when we saw a machine gun nest at the intersection where we always hung a right. We went back to our house and before they cut the phones off I was able to touch the Embassy and indeed got one of the local employees who said there was a coup and there were military movements all over town. We decided we had to get in and rammed the

machine gun nest and luckily we were not shot. We held out our diplomatic passports and made it down to the Consulate.

The word then became that a coup had occurred but that elements of the army that were loyal to the government were going to march on Thessaloniki and were going to start shelling the town if the coup forces didn't surrender. So throughout the night, jets were buzzing overhead and there was sporadic gun fire, although it was almost a bloodless coup, the Embassy kept calling and asking for Bill Hamilton. We tried to protect him by saying he was not available. We new Walt was on the way, he got caught in a road blocker or something. So what we did was kind of report what was happening in Salonika and we were doing it by one-time pad type of arrangement which was very laborious and slow. But we got the word out that we had seen the king and that he was on his way out. We were the first ones who reported that the king was leaving Greece. And also that the forces who that morning said they were going to oppose the elements of the army that carried out the coup had decided not to and had more or less backed down. The next morning things returned to normal and we had our colonels. And that was it.

Q: How did the colonels impact on Thessaloniki?

MORTON: Well, I have to say, and I used to get into great arguments with people, that people judged the colonels from the outside as the rapers of democracy, that they were these awful people. For the most part the coup was welcomed in Thessaloniki, amongst the Greeks, but no one ever liked to admit this for a couple of reasons. They were restoring order. People were tired of the disorder and the uncertainty. And secondly, the colonels either shrewdly or inadvertently, I am not sure which, took some acts like forgiving agricultural debts and things like that that were very popular throughout the countryside. So for a long time, it wore off eventually, the coup was basically seen in favorable terms in the northern part of Greece.

Q: You were there until when?

MORTON: I was there from 1966 to August, 1968.

Q: First there is a little more to the story. How did Hamilton, the Consul General, deal with this when he came back?

MORTON: This was interesting. We finally, in the morning, because they closed the borders and he got locked in Bulgaria...

Q: I know, my wife and I were up in Belgrade planning to take a vacation and we had to wait three days after the coup due to the closed border.

MORTON: I think the borders opened after two days. He was locked out and there was no way he could hide it. We know that there was a communication between the Ambassador and Hamilton that was not a terribly favorable one. And there was also, from the Ambassador, an accolade to me for the reporting that had been done in very difficult circumstances. And I think they realized that I had tried to protect Hamilton's ass and there was even some good regard for

that. The funny thing was you don't rat on your superior. As much as we were at odds the whole time this was not what I was going to do. I tried to cover his ass all night long.

He got back and he was worse than ever towards me because I think he knew he was wrong and maybe he thought I ratted on him, I don't know. So things went downhill from there. He was even nastier and vindictive after that. And to project this ahead, when I went back to Washington after I left, we were still in the days of the secret part of the efficiency report, he tore me apart on that thing. Now here is the Ambassador in Greece giving me...and nothing was ever mentioned about my reporting on the coup but that is how it was in the old days. When the boards met I was told by the career adviser, "Don't worry, everybody knows what Bill Hamilton is like. This won't hurt you." But later on I didn't get promoted and probably I should have. There was probably something negative in the file.

Q: People might know at the time, but later they don't know the circumstances.

MORTON: Yeah.

Q: Well, how did you do your reporting? Coups usually tell everyone to stay where they are and cut off the telephone. How did you find out the king was going?

MORTON: This was probably 10 in the evening by the time and someone came into the Consulate and we heard reports that the king was at such and such a location. I didn't go because at that time I thought I was in charge of the post. We were even dusting off the evacuation plan because I thought I might have to make a decision if they started shelling the city that we might have to start pulling the Americans out.

Q: There were a lot of Americans there.

MORTON: Exactly. And Americans were streaming into the Consulate. They were trying to make their way through the streets and gun fire. It scared the hell out of me quite honestly. I was saying, "Jesus, I wish Walt was here to do this."

The head of the VOA relay station there volunteered to go out and kind of try to track down the king. We never saw the king but found people who had seen him and finally we were told that he had gotten on a plane and left. A couple of our army contacts dropped by voluntarily to tell us this information. I never knew quite what side they were on, very honestly. Other than that, we were describing atmospherics. The planes were dropping leaflets that the people should remain calm and that they should not oppose a coup, there could be dire repercussions if that happened. We tried to give them a flavor of what was happening there. I guess the biggest piece of news was we finally heard that there would be no assault on the troops that participated in the coup by people who were loyal to the opposition forces.

Q: Okay, then after the coup the colonels were in power. Did you find a difference as far as your contacts with the military, universities, etc. were concerned?

MORTON: No, not really. If anything, more people seemed to be willing to talk, particularly in the universities. They opposed the coup from the beginning and got more vociferous, although in

a very private way and in hushed conversations. The army officers got a little more aloof and we didn't have as good contact. They were busy governing the country by this time. But there was not any kind of noticeable change.

Q: I was wondering whether there were people going around accusing the Americans of running the thing at that time, or did that come later?

MORTON: No, almost immediately, but it was kind of whispered. I did not feel it personally affected my job. Now that was perhaps testimony to the fact that I had established these relationships and they didn't seem to back off. The army officers did because I think they were busy. But most of the contacts continued.

Q: What were you getting from the embassy, because we were going through a very cool period I hear with this? Were they telling you to be cool with the authorities?

MORTON: Well, yeah, there were some general guidelines as I recall. It is a little fuzzy in my mind. But, yes, there was an official policy where we would not have normal contact for a while, as I recall, with members of the army. But I think most of that was carried out in Athens. We were kind of a backwater city up there. It was just that the coup had happened there and quickly the action shifted to Athens.

ROBERT V. KEELEY
Political Officer
Athens (1966-1970)

Ambassador Robert V. Keeley was born in 1929 in Lebanon of American parents, his father was a Foreign Service officer. As a Foreign Service officer he was posted to Jordan, Mali, Greece, Uganda, Cambodia, and was ambassador to Mauritius, Zimbabwe and Greece. The interview was done by Thomas Stern in 1991.

Q: That brings us to mid-66. You were then assigned to Athens. I think you mentioned earlier that Athens was on your list of "desired posts." So undoubtedly by mistake they assigned you to a post which was on your list of preferences.

KEELEY: It wasn't by mistake. It was the result, as often is the case, of good luck. The officer in Personnel responsible for my onward assignment was Robert Houghton, the late husband of my current executive assistant at the Middle East Institute, Lois Houghton. Bob Houghton had worked for my father in Damascus. My father had had a very fine staff there, made up mostly of younger officers; his DCM was Rodger Davies (later assassinated in Cyprus); others were Harry Symmes, Deane Hinton, Jim Leonard, Bob Houghton, etc. All went on to have distinguished careers, mostly in the Arab world. His CIA station chief was Miles Copeland.

So I knew Bob, though not well; at the time of my assignment availability, he was looking for a

candidate for a political officer position in Athens. The incumbent was an officer who had been there for five years, following two years in Salonika -- seven years in a row in Greece. Orme Wilson, who had served in Athens, was the Greek desk officer. Both he and Bob thought it would be a good idea to inject a little new blood into the Embassy. There had built up a "clique" of Greek-language officers who had studied the language, mostly at FSI, who all seemed to think alike, who all knew each other. A "revolving door" had in effect been established with the same people moving in and out of the Athens Embassy. I did not fit that mold, but when the files were searched for a Greek-speaking officer, my name came up. In those days, you had to fill out a form periodically in which you mentioned any languages that you had ever spoken and stated to what degree of fluency. I had not studied Greek, nor had I been in Greece for twenty years, since 1946, although I guess I had visited briefly on a couple of occasions. In any case, Bob called me and asked me how my Greek was. I said that it was somewhat rusty, but that it used to be very good when I was younger. He asked whether I would have any trouble brushing up on it on my own. I said that I didn't think so. I then inquired whether there was an opening in Greece, since I had wanted to be assigned there for years. Houghton said: "Oh, you've asked for Greece?" I asked whether he had looked at my April Fool card. He said he hadn't and that his interest had only been stimulated by my Greek language knowledge. He then asked whether I would be interested in Athens. I said I could be on my way the following day or as soon as the orders had been cut. Of course I still had several months to go at Stanford, which gave me time to hire a Greek tutor and improve my spoken Greek. And so that is how I got to Athens, as a member of the Political Section of the Embassy in Athens.

That section had five officers. The Ambassador was Phillips Talbot, formerly Assistant Secretary for the Near East and South Asia. His DCM was Norbert Anschutz; the Political Counselor was Katherine (Kay) Bracken, formerly Director of the Greece, Turkey, Iran Affairs Office (GTI); the next ranking officer in the Political Section was Malcolm Thompson, a Turkish specialist who was doing an out-of-country tour in Greece (he did the politico-military work); and he was replaced by George Warren in 1967; we had a labor officer by the name of August (Gus) Velletri, who was an expert in Italian affairs; and then there were two other Greek-speaking political officers, one -- John Owens -- working on domestic Greek affairs, whom I replaced, and John Day, who was working on Greek external affairs, i.e., Cyprus, Greek-Turkish relations, NATO, Balkans -- everything but domestic political affairs.

As I said, I was to replace Owens, but when I arrived at the Embassy, I found a rather unfortunate situation: Day had been switched to the internal affairs desk and I was assigned to the external affairs one. I didn't think that this was particularly to my benefit since it meant becoming almost exclusively involved in the Cyprus problem. I was a bit disappointed because my interest was far greater in the Greek political scene. On the other hand, I thought that since I knew very little about Greek domestic politics or Cyprus, it was probably wise to spend a year learning. After that year of apprenticeship I would be better able to fill either position and I certainly hoped to get a crack at the more important one, namely the internal affairs one. However, Day extended his tour, which was the custom of Greek language officers in those days and which was one of the reasons that Owens had been left in Greece for seven years. So John Day stayed two years longer; since I had a four year tour, I spent the first two on external matters and the last two on internal affairs. Actually I ended up as the acting Political Counselor because there was an extended vacancy. Bracken was replaced by Arch Blood, who stayed only briefly

because he was assigned to Dacca, East Pakistan, as Consul General. So in the last six months of my tour, under Ambassador Tasca, I was the acting Political Counselor, and sort of his right hand man, because by that time I was the only officer in the Embassy whom he had known from previous assignments, from when he had worked in the Bureau of African Affairs.

As I have said, during the first two years in Athens, I was not responsible for internal affairs. I injected myself into them because I didn't like the policies we were following at the time, during and after the coup of 1967. I argued that, while we were not responsible for the coup, it could have been averted and should have been averted. When it did occur, we should not have accepted it; that is, we should have tried to overturn it or reverse it. I felt that we could have done that successfully, although that was never tested. Had we done so, the situation would have been quite different and would have changed our relations with Greece from that day forward. We had a difficult policy issue to face -- the 1967 coup, its beginnings and its aftermath -- in which different elements of the Embassy took differing positions. There developed at least three camps, maybe more; in the end, it was probably more like one and a half when you sorted out all the differing aspects. There were those who, although not welcoming the coup, found it a more favorable development than any other alternative that they could conceive. There were those who were disappointed that it had taken place; didn't welcome it, but thought that the best course was to accept the coup and make the best of it. That group wanted to recognize the government and work with it and hoped to change its means and manner of governing to a more constitutional and democratic process which would protect human rights. And then there were a few of us -- two and a half people, really (Mac Thompson, myself, and one other partly) -- who thought we should reject the coup and refuse to accept it and try to reverse it.

I said that I thought that the coup could have been averted. Briefly -- and it is a very complex story leading up to the coup -- there was first a Generals' coup developing (in contrast to the Colonels' coup that did take place). We were quite aware of the Generals' plot down to its last detail -- its code names, its means of operation, who was in charge, its purposes, etc. The Generals were intent on preventing an upcoming election, which was to be held on May 28, or if unable to achieve that end, to overturn the results. The election had become in effect a plebiscite on the monarchy, namely a fight between King Constantine and George Papandreou, the head of the Center Union party. Papandreou had been driven from office in the summer of 1965 in a dispute over his son Andreas and over who could appoint the Defense Minister. There had also been defections from his party; it is a well known, but complex story. His departure from office didn't resolve the political conflict. Papandreou was replaced by what was known as an "apostate" government made up of defectors from his Center Union party which lasted until the beginning of 1967. There were about 45 "apostate" Ministers supported by the Conservative ERE party in Parliament; it was a government of ex-centrists existing on the support of conservatives.

The political situation was obviously very unstable and complex. It could only be resolved by elections. Such an election, if won by Papandreou, would have challenged not only the power, but even the existence of the monarchy, because the 1965 crisis and aftermath had placed the King and Papandreou in direct conflict with each other. The Generals were very pro-monarchy, as the military had always been in the post World War II years, although in earlier years a split had developed between the Royalists and the Venizelists in the military.

In any case, the Embassy was fully aware of the Generals' purposes and activities. The King had asked Ambassador Talbot how the United States would react to a coup. The Greeks tend to use euphemisms in their politics; in this case, the possible action was described as an "extra-parliamentary" or an "extra-constitutional" solution -- a coup by other names. The government would consist of the Generals with the King's blessing. Talbot responded, even though he had no instructions (he didn't receive any real guidance even after the conversation with the King), that "it would depend on the circumstances."

That is what set me off. When I read the cable, I began to consider what "circumstances" might justify a coup. My analysis was that such an event would only be a temporary solution; a coup couldn't last and would probably make matters worse, because eventually the Greek population would insist on democracy in one way or another and the end result would be even more damaging to the monarchy, the military, and the Greek relationship to the U.S. and NATO. So we had an opportunity to tell the King that a coup would not be an acceptable outcome. I think the Generals would not have proceeded if we had said "No." They were after all operating on behalf of the King and in his name; he may not have known all the details, but he knew all about the Generals' strategy and objectives. I can't guarantee that the King would not have proceeded against our wishes, but since he asked for our views, as did the Generals in a less direct fashion, one can make an argument that he would not have proceeded.

After all, we played such a prominent role in Greece that our advice did not need to be sought so directly; we were in constant contact with the King, the government, the military, etc., so that our views could have been conveyed in many different ways. They would have listened; whether they would have accepted our advice, I cannot of course say. I should add that I am not saying that Talbot could have given a negative answer on his own; that would have required Washington instructions. But what upset me was that the answer given was so vague that I don't think the King understood it or that it was at all helpful to him. It just left him in a quandary. Partly as a consequence of this murkiness that we created, the Generals' coup never took place. It was preempted by a group of Colonels acting secretly. They stopped communicating with anybody -- our intelligence service and anyone else. They went underground as of January, 1967. But they also went into action that resulted in their coup of April 21, 1967.

In retrospect, when you look back on the sequence of events, as I did, it is very interesting. Everything was cut off. My guess, which I couldn't prove without access to intelligence archives, is that the Colonels went into an "operational" mode and cut all contacts. They stopped talking to people, particularly those who might thwart them. They were after all not only plotting a coup; they were also preempting a coup that had royal approval, that was being conceived by their own superior officers, and that was apparently not opposed by the Americans. The Colonels were running tremendous risks; if they had been caught, they would have been in serious trouble. They probably would have been tried for treason, as they of course eventually were.

I didn't see the Colonels' coup coming. I saw the Generals' coup developing. My feeling was that this effort would not solve the political problem in Greece; in fact, it would exacerbate it. I thought that we owed it to the King, for whom I did not have any particular attachment, to give him appropriate advice as clearly and as straight-forwardly as possible. We, in fact, "copped

out." To say "it depends on the circumstances" was not very helpful to anyone. The circumstances in Greece at the time were dire. The forthcoming election had developed into a referendum on the monarchy and the whole constitutional system. We were caught in the middle because we had become, from the point of view of the center, the allies of the conservative party. The Center Union had begun to boycott us. Its members wouldn't attend our receptions; they would not deal with us. It was even very difficult to find any who would talk to us. I knew some personally, through family and other connections, but even I had difficulty and I was not the officer in the Embassy responsible for internal political issues. During this period, Ambassador Talbot had exactly two meetings with George Papandreou, who was the head of one of the two democratic parties in Greece. He was the probable winner of the upcoming elections; he would be the future Prime Minister, and we saw him just twice in a period of five or six months. That is a clear indication that something was amiss in our relationships with the Greek political spectrum. The American Embassy was being identified with the likely electoral losers and with those who were plotting with the King and the military leadership to prevent the election.

I think that Talbot may have tried to see Papandreou more often, but he and we were not welcomed by the center group because Papandreou really blamed us for what had happened in 1965. He thought that his demise at that time was a CIA operation and that we had bought off the parliamentary deputies who voted him out of office. When a government is created out of defectors -- "apostates" from one party who gain power with the support of another party -- tensions are severely increased and relationships tend to become nasty. It was much nastier than even if a rigged election were held. The shifts of allegiances are matters that impinge on personal relationships and create all sorts of accusations of bad faith. Greece has a very personalized political system in any case. The members of a party are viewed as "my members;" the deputies are chosen personally by the head of the party; they are elected together, so that defections are felt as personal betrayals far beyond just political or ideological shifts. They are "traitors and turncoats." The emotional level was extremely heated during this period in Greece.

I really had no portfolio to become involved in these issues. I was responsible for external matters such as Cyprus, which I was covering, although in general external problems were pretty much under control. When I read about the Ambassador's exchange with the King, I thought I should do something about that. I consulted a close friend, Bruce Lansdale, with whom I had grown up in Salonika, who had lived most of his life in Greece and understood the Greek mentality. He was the Director of the American Farm School in Salonika at this time. He happened to be in Athens for a day; he didn't have much time for a discussion because he had a lot of appointments with government officials. But he did come to the Embassy and I offered to drive him to the airport so that I could talk to him. I would also have a few minutes while he waited for his flight. I told him point blank that I thought there would be a military coup and that it would happen sooner than anyone was expecting. He said that he had the same feeling. Then we pursued the idea and I found that his views and mine were so close that I was amazed. He was not working in the Embassy. He was sitting in Northern Greece with students and peasants and farmers, but, as I said, he had a great understanding of the Greek mentality.

So after this discussion, I went back to my office and wrote a long memorandum to my boss. It was about twelve double-spaced typed pages which was entitled something like "Our current dilemma" or "The present political situation." I started out by saying that I thought there would

be a coup sooner than anticipated. Then I discussed a) the probability of a coup by some Generals, which I thought was not only possible but probable; b) the timing -- and here I thought I was making a contribution, because although there was noticeable tension in the air, people were also relaxed because no one thought that something unexpected would occur prior to the scheduled election. But the logic of the situation, i.e., the reason for the coup, was to avoid the election. It didn't make any sense to assume that the coup might happen after the election, although that was the existing conventional wisdom. I didn't think that the Generals would permit the election of Papandreou and then have to step in to remove him. That scenario didn't make much sense to me; if the Generals didn't want a particular electoral outcome, they would prevent the election from taking place. Therefore, I predicted that the coup would take place well before May 28. I suggested that we would wake up one morning three weeks hence, say, and find a military government in power. And c) I discussed the possible consequences of a coup.

If Ambassador Talbot had read my memorandum immediately -- it didn't get to him for several days -- he would have been very annoyed because I criticized the view that the U.S. attitude toward a coup would "depend on the circumstances." We knew what the circumstances were; we knew who was involved and why. That brought me to the question of the consequences, and I thought it would make matters worse rather than better. I finished this memorandum at around 8 p.m. on April 20. I then locked it in my safe and went home to pick up my wife to go to a shipowner's apartment in Kolonaki Square for a cocktail party. At the function there was the usual talk about Andreas Papandreou and how awful he was. He had just given a speech in which it was reported he had said that Greece didn't need a King to swear in a government and that if his party won the election, they would swear themselves in; he was accused of challenging the entire constitutional system; he had in effect made the King the enemy in his electoral campaign and had the Center Union running against the King and not the conservative party. He had described all of the opposition as "one kettle of fish" and used his usual diatribes, according to the talk at the cocktail party.

My wife and I then went out to eat in a restaurant called "Vladimiros," run by a Greek named Elias, who was probably an intelligence operative, or some service's agent. He pretended to be an ex-communist guerrilla who had fought in the mountains in the Civil War. He was a funny guy, but he was very well connected with the left wing party -- what we used to call the crypto-communist party -- the EDA, which stands for the United Democratic Left. I wanted to find out from this restaurant owner, who was probably my best source from that part of the Greek political spectrum, what the Left intended to do. It was critical to know whether the Left would support Andreas Papandreou and his slate of deputies in order to try to defeat the Right and the King, or whether the Left would support its own candidates. This was known as the "subsidy" factor for the upcoming elections. I did not get a very good answer that night; Elias claimed that the Left would support its own candidates. We went home about 1 a.m., went to bed, and the Colonels' coup happened that night. When I woke up in the morning, the tanks were in the streets. My son told me that I didn't have to go to work because the buses were not running and schools were closed. That was a clear indication that something terrible had occurred.

Colonel George Papadopoulos and his gang took advantage of the situation and all of the turmoil and the planning for the Generals' coup by simply preempting it. These Colonels had been plotting for years and years in the Army. They were fascists; they fitted the classic definition of

fascism, as represented by Mussolini in the 1920s: a corporate state, uniting industry and unions, no parliament, trains running on time, heavy discipline and censorship, extreme nationalism, xenophobia, religion, regimentation; everyone was organized in some kind of group -- youth, professional association, syndicates. There was no particular anti-Semitic component, because Jews were not a factor in Greece. In other words, it was not what we associate with Nazism; the national socialism part was adopted essentially from Mussolini's original program, not from Hitler -- it was almost a classic fascist ideal.

Several weeks later, to the annoyance of some people, I sent around a memo with a short encyclopedia definition of fascism, pointing out that it was practically *verbatim* the program of the new government. I am talking about real original "fascism," not the kind that developed historically in Italy or Spain or Germany, for example. The Colonels were students of General Metaxas, who had led a pro-German dictatorship from 1936 to 1940. It disappeared with the Italian invasion and he died shortly thereafter. That is the model that the Colonels, who were young men in the late 1930s, just in or recently graduated from the military academy, were trying to emulate. They were true believers.

I thought that the coup could be over-turned. The King was very unhappy with it; it was not led by his Generals; he didn't know any of the Colonels. They had monitored his movements; they had beaten up his military aide, Major Arnaoutis, which was humiliating to him, and they had in effect presented him with a *fait accompli* and had told him that "This is it. Take it or leave." The King didn't have much choice. We couldn't help him; it was the majority view that there wasn't much we could do. I thought that we could have worked with the King and with the Generals and reversed the situation. We didn't try; my advice wasn't accepted and was not even welcomed; it was probably considered much too radical and dangerous. I did give my April 20 memorandum to Kay Bracken the morning of the coup, but she probably didn't look at it for several days. I told her, when I gave it to her, that my thoughts had been overtaken by events, but that I thought the analysis still had relevance to the then current situation. It was obviously not the Generals' coup, but an entirely different one, but it was a coup nevertheless, which the United States had to confront. The King was asking for advice and help; he didn't know what to do. Mrs. Bracken returned my April 20 memo to me with a notation at the top that he had "noted" it. That was quite a put-down, as it meant that she thought it was entirely irrelevant.

The coup took place on a Friday. On the following Wednesday, John Day had been sent to Washington to try to find out what U.S. policy was or was going to be. We were not getting any inkling whatsoever; we had a lot of questions and no answers. It was one of those very difficult situations with no useful communications coming out of Washington, which seemed paralyzed by unexpected events. We in the field felt at the end of a very long cable line -- kind of helpless. The Embassy was feeding Washington all the information it could; we were working over-time trying to figure out who the Colonels were; no one knew them. We had no bio-data on them; they didn't speak English; they were not part of our military circles. Only one had been trained in the United States -- Brigadier General Pattakos -- he even spoke some English. The other coup leaders had not been in the U.S.

I argued, as I mentioned, that we could reverse the coup. There is no evidence whether I was correct; we never tried, but I did have some evidence that some counter-action on our part might

have succeeded. It was my view that we could turn events around because the Colonels were so shaky, but we would have had to work with the King. There would probably not have been much opposition and the reversal might have been bloodless. But who knows? There were no guarantees. I'll explain what I based my argument on.

I went with Ambassador Talbot to see the new Prime Minister. I was the note-taker because John Day, who would normally have filled that role, was in Washington. The Colonels had installed a civilian, a Supreme Court judge named Kollias, as the front man. All the decisions were being made by Papadopoulos and his military colleagues, but they wanted a civilian *facade*; the King might have more or less insisted on it. He had agreed, two or three days after the coup, to swear them in as a new cabinet. The principal Colonels held the key positions and while the King didn't exactly bless the new government, he did have his picture taken with them. That was published in the newspapers and therefore at that point almost everyone had given up and had decided that they would have to live with this new regime.

Talbot's meeting with Kollias was the first official American contact with the new government. Talbot was concerned with the usual issues: safety of U.S. citizens and security of our military facilities, which were important to us. He was not of course really overly concerned with these issues because as far as we could tell, the Colonels were not anti-American. They appeared to be pro-NATO and pro-American, violently anti-communist. They were not really a concern in terms of our East-West confrontation; to the contrary, the problem was really whether they could manage the situation. I went to the Ambassador's meeting with Kollias as the note-taker because I knew Greek, although there was an official interpreter present as well as our own, who was not used at all. The Prime Minister started out by saying: "Mr. Ambassador, thank you very much for calling on me. I wonder whether you could do something for me? There is a rumor circulating in town that the Sixth Fleet is on its way to Phaleron Bay [this is where it used to anchor near Piraeus and when it arrives, it will demand the resignation of my government. Have you heard that rumor?" Talbot, an experienced diplomat, thought quickly and said that he had not heard it and that it sounded rather preposterous to him. Kollias said that he was happy to hear that, and he then requested that the Embassy issue a statement refuting the rumor. Talbot very quickly and shrewdly responded: "No, Mr. Prime Minister. There are a lot of rumors floating around this city and especially at the moment. I have heard some, but surely not all. If I start denying one rumor, then the one that I haven't heard and therefore haven't denied will gain credence. Heaven only knows what that might lead to. So I think denying one rumor is a losing proposition."

The Prime Minister said he understood Talbot's position, but he said that crowds were gathering at Phaleron Bay with binoculars waiting to welcome the Fleet ashore and to show the Marines which way to advance. I could barely suppress laughter at this juncture; the P.M.s' hands were literally shaking. So then the Prime Minister asked whether he could put out a statement, to which Talbot responded: "It is not up to me to tell you what you may or may not say, but you should not quote me." So the government did put out some kind of statement without reference to Talbot or the American Embassy. Of course, as is always the case, when a rumor is denied, people tend to think it is true and you get the opposite effect from what was intended. So word went around Athens that the Sixth Fleet was on its way to replace the Colonels with the Generals because we wanted the Generals and not the Colonels.

This conversation with Kollias led me to write another memorandum, or rather a whole series of memos, which in essence became the basis for a memoir that I wrote later on covering this period. In the memo I said to the Ambassador that the Prime Minister's performance (which we described in detail to Washington in a cable and which should have shocked the Department because it suggested that Greece had a very unstable government), which was so lacking in confidence and so worried, indicated to me that the coup could be reversed with "a flick of the finger" (as I put it none too graciously) if we just told the government that it was not acceptable to us. My note so energized the Ambassador that he called me in to ask me where I got that idea from. His secretary, whom I knew well, and who like all good secretaries read all the papers that went to the Ambassador and therefore knew what was going on, told the Ambassador that there was a certain amount of dissent within the Embassy and that there were people who disagreed with current policy, which was essentially a "hands-off, let's see what happens" position. These staff members, she told the Ambassador, were in favor of a much more activist policy which would have called on the U.S. to do something. So the Ambassador called me in and asked for a further elaboration of my views; he asked for all of my recent memoranda, which he took home over the weekend; he read them and then sent them back to me without comment a week later, by which time the coup was a permanent fact.

Q: This was the first time you encountered a policy issue which divided the Embassy. What comments might you offer on the perception of the local people to a divided Embassy?

KEELEY: You are assuming that the Greeks were getting mixed signals from the Embassy. I don't think that was the case. That had something to do with Foreign Service discipline. Foreign Service people, if under good discipline, generally do not take policy differences outside the compound. The differences are confined to internal discussions. Although I had a lot of friends in the Greek political world, particularly in what became known as "the opposition" for the next three years, and undoubtedly some may have had a general feeling that I had some doubts about existing policy, they didn't have any great details and not right at the beginning. As far as I know, none of the U.S. government employees, including the military, discussed the intra-Embassy debate with Greeks. If you are looking for hints and signs, maybe one could have concluded something when the U.S. Armed Forces Radio Network began to broadcast "rock and roll" music exclusively -- no news, no talk shows. That was viewed as a precaution; under the circumstances, all officialdom tends to go into a shell and to stay out of things. If a bulletin is read over the radio, people are afraid that it will be misinterpreted that the U.S. was up to this or that. I don't think that even the Embassy's local employees were conscious of the internal debates; there is a tendency to keep one consistent public face while vigorous debate may be going on inside the Embassy walls.

In any case, the dissent was limited to very few people who were trying to influence their superiors; we were not trying to influence the Greeks, or any element thereof, to behave in a different way. Eventually, undoubtedly some of the debate seeped out and it became known that different Embassy officers had different attitudes. It depends in part on whom you see and whom you talk to and the kinds of discussion you have. You would be careful not to criticize your superiors or the policy, but you can't help expressing an attitude or point of view; that is just part of normal behavior. My wife and I tried to help a number of families whom we knew who had relatives and friends in prison. They were political prisoners and our actions certainly showed

some sympathy for their point of view; the Embassy's and the U.S. government's attitude was entirely "hands off"- it was an internal matter. We didn't in those days -- the mid '60s -- have a major investment in a human rights policy as we have now and have had more recently.

In any case, our government's policy was clear; whatever differences there were, were on an individual basis. Some of this dissent has come out over the years because after all I have been dealing with Greece for many years and by now there are a good many people who know.

Q: Did you reach any conclusions about our intelligence capabilities in light of the surprises that arose in Greece during your tour?

KEELEY: That is an interesting question. I tried to analyze that problem in the memoir I wrote just as a point of interest. First of all, successful coups are often the ones that are not predicted. The unsuccessful ones obviously are the ones that become exposed and are therefore thwarted. So stealth is certainly a key ingredient in a successful coup and that is what happened in Greece. CIA has been blamed for engineering that 1967 coup or for fomenting it or for supporting it or for organizing it. I don't believe that for a minute. I have tried to examine it from a logical point of view. I know that the "station chief" and his deputy were not knowledgeable; they had run into the same military road-block as I had the morning of the coup as we were all trying to get to the Embassy. They were completely unaware of the coup and when we met at the Embassy, they had nothing to tell us; as I said, neither CIA nor we -- nor our military attachés! -- knew who these Colonels were. I have to believe that Washington headquarters was also in the dark. There is a possibility that one or more lower level people, particularly some Greek-Americans who worked in the intelligence services, both military and civilian, knew about it in advance, because they were very sympathetic to the Colonels and their approach. These staffers were very conservative, very anti-communist, fearful of the Papandreous regaining power; one might say even anti-democratic in some respects. It is possible that they knew about the Colonels' plot and failed to report it either because they were cut off from their sources or because they colluded with the Colonels by not passing on information which would have enabled us to predict the coup.

On the other hand, careers in intelligence services are often made by being the sole source of very important information and developments. You can become a hero by being the person who predicted an event when no one else had. In the Greek case, someone could have made a real career-enhancing move by predicting the Colonels' coup when everyone else was watching the Generals. That would have been particularly true if the agent or case officer could also have added that he knew the plotters and all their plans. So an intelligence agent would be motivated to tell all in the kind of situation we had in Athens. The question then becomes whether some of the agents were more strongly motivated by their own political leanings or by their career ambitions. I don't have the answer and I don't think it could be answered one way or another without access to their reporting, that is, to CIA's archives. Even then one couldn't tell if someone had deliberately not reported what he knew.

I believe that I do know that the reporting stopped in January of that year; there had been reports on these Colonels for many years, but they stopped in January, 1967. The State Department's intelligence analyst for Greece -- Charilaos Lagoudakis -- noticed that fact; he was very skillful and was the Department's institutional memory on Greek affairs. He was the kind of person the

Department should have for each country in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research; he or she would be the one whose experience would go back so many years that everything would be known and remembered. When you have turn-over in those analysts' positions, it is an absolute waste and it creates an absolute bureaucratic nightmare. He or she would be the single person who would notice such events as the stoppage of reports because they had been coming in for years and all of a sudden, in January, there is nothing. That stoppage would be accentuated by the knowledge that rumors of and even reports on a Generals' coup were rife. The analyst would then have to ask why he was not seeing reports any longer on the Colonels. What are they up to? Are they part of the Generals' coup?

In early 1967, the INR analyst (Lagoudakis) did make some inquiries; he didn't get any answers and the coup took place. Then he had some big questions; they also were never answered. Did reporting exist which wasn't disseminated? My guess is that there was no reporting on the Colonels after January, but I don't know why. I don't know whether anyone has ever investigated that set of circumstances. I would have thought that someone might have wished to pursue this apparent coincidence. The reports on the Colonels had been intermittent; it could well have been that four months could have passed without contact, but because of the timing, my guess is that Papadopoulos and his group, which was about twelve to fifteen people -- small enough to keep good security -- went into an operational mode and cut off communications with all outsiders. Then they put the final touches on their plans and waited for the "go" signal from Papadopoulos. In the meantime, the Colonels were instructed to go about their business as usual. Most, if not all, of the Colonels were part of the Greek intelligence service, all of which was part of the military -- their CIA, for example, was a military organization. They were not troop commanders, which was one of the reasons that we didn't know much about them. They had been principally in staff positions in personnel and intelligence; that was deliberate. They got themselves assigned to those areas because they provided the best base for plotting.

They did a very clever thing. General Spandidakis, who was the Chief of the General Staff -- the senior military officer under the Commander in Chief, the King -- called a meeting in Athens on Wednesday -- two days before the coup. This I found out by doing some research on the events of that week because it interested me. He had all of his senior commanders present; most came from the North because that was where most of the Army was located -- according to NATO plans that called for massing on the Albanian and Yugoslav and Bulgarian borders (and to some extent, the Turkish border). This meeting was a regular session that occurred every couple of months. There was an important promotion list coming up, so they had a number of issues to discuss. My guess is that Spandidakis also told his commanders that everything was in place for the Generals' coup, but that the time to pull it off had not yet been reached.

On Thursday, the Generals returned to their units. The following day, Friday, they receive orders to execute their coup. The field commanders obviously concluded that the Chief of the General Staff had changed his mind since Wednesday; something had happened -- the King had given his approval or the Americans or someone had said "Go." Also, George Papandreou was going to Salonika on Saturday to launch his electoral campaign. There would be a tremendous crowd; the atmosphere would be politically super-charged; there would be demonstrations and possibly riots. So some of the field commanders undoubtedly assumed that the leaders of the Generals' coup wanted to pre-empt the Salonika event; in any case there were a number of plausible

explanations for the Friday order. So they executed it. They didn't know of course who had signed it in Athens; they didn't know it was a Colonel (Papadopoulos). So it was extremely cleverly done and I guess that is what the Colonels were planning to do all along. The Colonels may also have been even a little premature; they probably were waiting for the Chief of the General Staff to call for the coup and then they would pre-empt it. So they may have moved a little sooner than they may have originally planned, but they certainly did pre-empt the Generals, using the latter's plans. The Generals were caught flat-footed.

The worst episode from an intelligence failure point of view happened on December 13, 1967. The King tried to throw out the Colonels. That is known as the King's coup. All of this has been covered in other writings, so I will just be brief. Having failed in my efforts to motivate people to reverse the Colonels' coup, I returned to my regular duties, except that some ex-politicians kept contacting me, some directly and some through mutual friends. At one point, in mid-November, I was asked whether I was willing to meet with George Mavros, who had inherited the leadership of the Center Union party -- George Papandreou having been jailed, as was his son (father under house arrest and son actually in prison). The government had threatened to try the son, but not the father. George Mavros was free and the nominal head of the party, although as a stand-in for George Papandreou. I said I would be glad to meet with him. I had always assumed that my responsibilities included reporting on what the ex-politicians were up to. They were no longer active -- couldn't be. We should have been interested in what they were doing and thinking.

When I met with Mavros, a meeting arranged by mutual friends, he laid out a plan for the King's coup and actually gave me the date (December 13); it was an extraordinary meeting. He said the plan had been discussed with George Papandreou, and with Kanellopoulos, the head of the conservative party, who had both agreed and in fact had encouraged the King to proceed. The King said that he would appoint a kind of "service" government, which would be partly military and partly civilian. It would run the country for a year or eighteen months and try to calm the political waters. It would have been along the Turkish model, where the military usually steps in to restore democracy when the civilians get out of hand and become undemocratic and tyrannical and behave in anti-Ataturk ways. It is an entirely different approach from that of the Greek Colonels; the Turkish military are the protectors of the Constitution, the Ataturk revolution and democracy. When the situation is stabilized and the Constitution has been amended and fair elections have been held, the military retreat to their barracks. That is what the Greeks wanted to do with the King's coup; the King and the leading politicians had all agreed. A new Constitution was being drafted. The King would fly to Salonika with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court; he would accept the resignation of the Colonels' government; declare amnesty and so on. The Generals -- loyal to the King -- were still in many commanding positions. It was all planned.

I went back to the Embassy and immediately wrote my report and sent it to the Ambassador through the hierarchy. They duly noted it and filed it; they paid absolutely no attention to it. It was truly amazing. But I must add that I had some doubts about the reliability of Mavros' comments because if this plan had been approved by all of the politicians and was a matter of common discussion and knowledge -- after all, I had been informed -- how was it that the Colonels, as professional intelligence officers who must have tapped everybody's phones, could not possibly know about these plans? It appeared to all of us as "pie in the sky." I can't blame anyone else for not taking it more seriously than I did, although, as I said, I thought that the King

needed some help, some sound advice.

On the night of December 12, our Ambassador saw the King at some public function. They couldn't really talk, but the King took him aside and asked the Ambassador to come to see him in the morning; the phrase was "early morning." In response to the Ambassador's question as to the meaning of "early," the King said: "How about 6:30?" When asked where, the King suggested his palace out at Tatoi, which was north of Athens. There was an airstrip there which was the original Athens airport. Talbot said that he would be there. He arrived the next morning at the palace at 6:30. He was met by the King, who announced that he was flying to Salonika with Mr. Kollias and a new Constitution. He said that he would accept the forced resignation of Colonel Papadopoulos and his entire government, proclaim the new Constitution and appoint a new cabinet -- it was exactly the same scenario that had been reported to me by George Mavros the month before. Then the King gave Talbot a tape that he requested be played on the Voice of America, and then he handed over another tape that he hoped would be played on the BBC. These tapes carried an address from the King to his Greek subjects about what was transpiring.

The Ambassador wished the King good luck, got back into his car and drove back to the Embassy. The King's coup was launched. I found out about it when I arrived for work. We had a big staff meeting. All internal Greek communications were cut. The King landed somewhere in Larissa where the First Army was headquartered. He tried to broadcast from there, but the station was so weak that no one heard it. It was a total fiasco. Our biggest problem was trying to find out what was going on. We couldn't get through to our Consul General in Salonika, even over voice radio. There were rumors that the King was in Kavala. We sat around all day long, way into the evening. We had a military officer in the attaché office who was close to the King -- he played squash with him often. We thought of sending him out to try to find the King, but the majority opinion was that he was so well known, that he wouldn't ever get out of Athens. I volunteered to go. I had an old Volkswagen beetle without diplomatic license plates; it was very useful for meeting with people under the conditions of surveillance then existing. It also enabled me to park on sidewalks, which, although a violation, was customary in Athens.

So I went home to get some sleep; I was going to start early in the morning heading north. The next morning I stopped at the Embassy first, only to find out that the coup was all over. The King had flown off to Rome with his family -- the Queen was pregnant, so that her obstetrician went along. The King's mother and twenty-eight trunks were also aboard. The Royal Family went into exile and the coup was a flop. I saw Ambassador Talbot later in the day and he asked whether I remembered the memo I had sent him a month earlier on the King's coup. He noted that the date of December 13 had been precisely correct; so it was obvious that the plotters -- that is, the Colonels -- knew exactly when all these events would transpire. I said: "Of course. Mavros was undoubtedly involved in the planning. If he knew the date, and told it to us, then many others must have known as well, and that is why the coup failed. Everybody must have known the date!" We agreed that the coup was bound to fail.

The next day or so, Ambassador Talbot had a very embarrassing moment. He was called down to see Colonel Papadopoulos. And there was no way he could avoid going. The Colonel wanted to know what the American Ambassador was doing at the Royal Palace at 6:30 in the morning. Talbot said that the King had asked to see him to tell him what he intended to do. You can

imagine what the rest of the conversation was like. In fact, the Colonels had had the King taped - his phone had been tapped; they may well have bugged some of the rooms. The Colonels were willing to play their tapes, which they did, trying to paint the King as a terrible plotter, which seemed very silly to me since it was the "pot calling the kettle black."

Q: We had nothing to do with the King's escape?

KEELEY: No. The whole coup was a surprise to us. We had a lot of advance information on it, as I've explained, but the first we knew that he was actually going to do that was on the morning of December 13.

Q: But he must have known earlier that at least he should be prepared for that eventuality. Otherwise he would not have been so well prepared.

KEELEY: That is right, although I can't say that for sure. I think his intention, since he had control over military aircraft of various types with loyal pilots, was probably to be ready to send his family out because he might have been afraid that there could have been some bloodshed. There could have been some fighting; there were troops that were loyal to the Colonels. There could have been some conflict, so that he might well have been prepared to send his family to safety, particularly his wife, who as I said was pregnant and close to delivery time. No one could tell how the day's events would unfold. But the King was supremely confident. Many of the Generals who had been involved in their own coup planning were still in command positions; some had been retired, but not all by any means. Not all could be retired; there weren't enough senior officers to take their places. Papadopoulos was extremely clever; his people were clever. When the King launched his coup, his Generals' first mission was to arrest the Colonels' representatives in each military unit. The Colonels had placed at least one of their own men in each major unit as a watch dog to keep an eye on things. It was typical of that kind of military establishment. I am sure it is true today in Iraq, Libya, Syria -- any place that has a military or quasi-military regime. They all have a system of human watch dogs. The King's Generals didn't impress us with their acumen. They immediately arrested the Colonels' men; these officers immediately professed loyalty to the King and the Army leadership and to all that the King was doing, whereupon they were all released. They returned to their barracks, collected a few officers and troops and proceeded to arrest the Generals. That was the end of the King's coup. All the Generals, except one perhaps, were immobilized within hours and were not functioning soon after the King's announcement.

These four years in Athens were the most difficult assignment for me personally in my career. I had a lot of troubles. I mentioned the memoir that I wrote about that period, that experience. It is a very sensitive document, although I read from it from time to time if I have to speak about Greek affairs. It deals in part with the personalities in the Embassy, not always in a kind or generous manner because we had serious policy disagreements. I don't like to personalize issues, but often people take things personally. I have outlined my views here and assume that some day my whole paper will be available for public perusal. I have only let about five or six people read it in total, mostly relatives of mine, because of the personal nature of some of my observations. When I lecture on Greek matters, I might just read certain portions, concentrating on the less sensitive parts. I don't consider it classified in the usual sense of the word although others might

characterize it that way. I did not use official files, but used my own files. Much of the paper is based on internal memoranda, which were never sent to Washington, and by this time have probably been destroyed. I have referred in a very few places to official messages, but I was working from memory when I wrote about them. The paper has never been cleared with the State Department because I didn't use official material; I haven't tried to publish it nor do I have any intention to do so for the present. Eventually, I hope it will become public when some of its sensitivity has abated. I didn't write it to criticize or attack people; I tried to describe events as honestly as I could.

If the memoir were published today and translated into Greek, it would surprise many people who had no idea that there was a debate within the Embassy. They tend to view the U.S. government, embassies and other instrumentalities, as monolithic. That is their bias and they would be amazed. Some of them would think that my writings are fiction; that it was all made up to make an interesting story or that it is an attempt by the Americans to show that they are not monolithic and that they do have different views of the Greeks and Greece.

At the end of my tour in Athens in 1970, I had another sabbatical which I spent at Princeton. I was supposed to go to the Naval War College at Newport, R.I. I wasn't really attracted by that idea; had it been the National War College in Washington, followed by a Washington assignment, I would have been happier because my kids would not have had to change schools so often. Furthermore, I would have welcomed a Washington assignment. But as projected, we would have had to move from Athens to Newport for a year and then either to Washington or to another overseas assignment. We had already gone through so many moves -- by the end we had moved in and out of our Washington house nine times in ten years. So I called a friend -- George Lambrakis -- in the Department, which is the way things are done, unfortunately. I had gone to Princeton with him. He used to give me poetry to be published in a literary magazine of which I was more or less the publisher at the time. George was responsible for training assignments. He said that he had arranged the Newport assignment. I told him that it involved just too many moves and asked whether he didn't have any other opportunities in the Washington area. He said that he didn't and didn't see any possibilities of any openings.

In any case, I told him that I didn't want to spend my next nine months arguing about the Vietnam war with my military colleagues; I asked whether he didn't have an opening at a university because I still felt deprived in my education; there were more things I needed to learn about. He said that he had two slots at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School -- we sent two mid-career officers there every year. They had not yet been chosen. He asked whether I would be interested in that. I jumped at the opportunity because I could return to Princeton to study all the things I hadn't studied as an undergraduate, but should have to be a proficient Foreign Service officer. George said he would propose my name. He did so and called me to say that the selection committee thought I was nuts since I already had had a year at a university, and I was refusing a military college assignment which was supposed to be prestigious. He said he had told the committee that I was forty years old and if I didn't by that time know what I was doing, I never would, and that I should be given the benefit of the doubt. Furthermore, he told them that I had some specific things I wanted to study; so they approved the assignment.

ARNOLD DENYS
Consular Officer
Athens, Greece (1967)

Arnold Denys was born in West Flanders, Belgium on March 6, 1931. He emigrated to the U.S. during the Cold War. He attended Gonzaga University in Washington and the School of Foreign Service in Georgetown University. Mr. Denys served in Panama City, Alexandria, Athens, London, Hermosillo, Halifax, Antwerp, Tijuana, and Washington, DC. He retired in July, 1984. This is an excerpt from his memoirs.

DENYS: On board the *SS Carina*, a ship traveling from Alexandria to Greece, were 580 American evacuees from Egypt, including US Ambassador Richard Nolte. It was a tiring four day journey, the ship was overloaded and one could only breathe fresh air on deck. In one of his talks with us the Ambassador advised us to take some rest in Athens and to enjoy the sites in Greece.

My future, and that of many in the Foreign Service, was uncertain. In Athens, I stayed at the Hotel Electra, within walking distance to the US Embassy. As Consular Officer I was assigned to the evacuation center. I thought about what would happen next. Officially, US Consular relations with the UAR had not been suspended, but there were rumors that the State Department might want to send some Consular officers back to Egypt to maintain essential consular services. My main job at the Embassy in Athens was to revalidate US passports for Americans returning to the Near East.

Some of the employees of the Phillips Petroleum Company of Oklahoma had flown back to Egypt. At the Embassy we received a cable telling us that the day after we had left Alexandria another mob had returned to our Consulate General and burned it nearly to the ground (85% destroyed). Although the US had taken a neutral stance in this conflict, the Egyptian press and radio released anti-American statements and stated that we had supported Israel. The Voice of America and BBC tried to dispel these inaccuracies.

Although the Six Days War ended in a cease fire, the diplomatic war continued in the Middle East and would continue for years. Since that time, there have been other attacks on embassies and foreign service personnel.

On June 21, 1967, the American staff in Egypt, having evacuated to Greece, came together for drinks at the Grand Chalet Hotel to say goodbye to Consul General David Fritzman. He said that we all came out of this crisis with flying colors and that he was proud of us! The State Department later bestowed a Superior Honor award to him and the entire staff of the Consulate General.

Chances of returning to Alexandria were becoming slimmer every day in view of political developments in the UAR and that country's alignment with the USSR against Israel. Some of the USIS Cultural and Public Affairs personnel, such as librarians, were reassigned to

Washington. It became obvious to me that, with the burning of the Jefferson Library in Alexandria, and others in the area, our cultural and educational projects would be seriously curtailed.

Forty percent of foreign service personnel were still stranded in Athens without onward assignment. I was one of them. David Ness had been appointed as Chargé d'Affaires of our US interests section in the UAR. My friend, Dick Weitzel, was one of four American officers left behind in Cairo to supervise pending administrative matters, including shipments of household effects. The Otwells had been reassigned to Washington, and Chuck Skoda and his wife were sent to Dacca, Pakistan. Consul Jack Bowie, with whom I shared a cabin on the *SS Carina*, was reassigned to the Munitions Section of the Department. The Egyptian Foreign Office in Cairo had requested, through the Spanish Embassy, permission to send ten administrative personnel to the Embassy to take care of urgent business, such as caretaking of buildings and shipment of personal effects of evacuees. A departmental decision on the future of our consulates in Alexandria and Port Said had been deferred. Although I harbored some desire to return to Egypt, this appeared unlikely, so I sent a cable to Washington to be considered for a vacant consular position in Athens.

Some mail from Egypt reached me via diplomatic pouch. The Arab people were profoundly wounded because of the outcome of the Six Days War. The UAR Armies suffered severe losses. Their national pride hurt. The late June summit meeting between President Johnson and the Premier of the Soviet Union, Alexsei Kosygin, at Glassboro, New Jersey, was a step in the right direction. The US and the Soviet Union were the two powers directly responsible for maintaining peace in the Near East. Much needed to be done to alleviate the misery of Arab refugees and Palestinians. My diplomatic colleagues and I felt that the Palestinian problem had been neglected for years. We hoped that both the Israeli and Arab governments would solve these issues at the peace table and that a halt to the arms race in the Middle East would diminish tensions. However, it would take another quarter of a century, and another conflict in 1973, before serious talks were possible to solve the Palestinian problem. Much violence and the deaths of thousands of innocent people would be the price to pay for eventual cooperation between Jews and Arabs. I felt a special tie with the Egyptian people, and those of the Middle East.

Within a week or so, some Americans were returning to the Middle East. In early July, I spoke with my friend, Bob Adams, of Phillips Petroleum, in Alexandria. He gave me an update on the situation there. He described it as relatively calm and said that some of his employees were going back, even though some of their dependents chose to remain in Athens. Since the Department's travel ban to Lebanon had been lifted, many Americans were returning there. Bob felt less sanguine about American officials returning to Alexandria. He described our Consulate General as a total loss. A few of our local Foreign Service nationals were now working in an office of the Spanish Consulate General. My Administrative Assistant in Alexandria, Lewis Afram, had put our household goods in storage for eventual forwarding to the next post.

The Greek political system was fluid. The recent military coup d'état had put the future of the Greek monarchy in doubt. The personal popularity of the Greek royal family remained intact. But average Greek citizens were going about their business and it was not noticeable on their faces that their government had undergone a radical change. It was at this time that former Vice

President Richard Nixon had lunch with King Constantine (now in exile in Great Britain) and Queen Mother Frederika of Greece.

There was time to visit Greek artifacts at the National Benaki Museum, and to explore the Agora and the Parthenon. Some of our friends went to the Greek Isles. Maité and Rebecca had now returned from France to Athens, and life became somewhat normal again.

June 29, 1967 was a special, beautiful day in Athens. I was in the crowd in front of the Cathedral, waiting for the arrival of the royal family. The royal christening of Crown Prince Paul was to take place inside the orthodox church. In the file of official cars I saw Greek Prime Minister and Mrs. Kollias. They were followed in an open car by King Constantine and Queen Sophia. Between them sat their first born daughter, Princess Alexia. The watching crowd cheered "Constantinus!" More royal horses followed, and the car of Princess Irene. Then came the limousine of Queen Mother Frederika, holding Crown Prince Paul. They were greeted by government and Orthodox church dignitaries. Many Greeks had objected to the overthrow of their government in April, but the people who witnessed the royal ceremony did not show disapproval of the Kollias government that day. (Many vocal leaders opposing this military coup -- as well as actress Melina Mercouri -- went into exile.)

Besides taking care of evacuation problems caused by the Six Day War, I also had duties in the passport section of the American Embassy in Athens, working on "loss of American citizenship" cases. In May of 1967, the US Supreme Court, in its historic Afroyim vs. Rusk decision, had ruled that all American citizens who had voted in a foreign election, and had thereby lost their American citizenship under section 349 of the Immigration and Naturalization law, could regain their US citizenship if they wanted to because the Supreme Court held it to be unconstitutional for an American citizen to lose citizenship solely on the basis of voting in a foreign election. It was my duty to notify expatriated Americans living in Greece, who had previously voted abroad, that they could regain their US nationality if they applied at our Embassy. Many Americans came to the Embassy to be interviewed during my tenure. It created a huge backlog of work.

Our Embassy in Athens was one of the busiest in Europe. In 1967 there were about 14,000 Greeks who drew social security checks in Greece because of previous employment in the US. There was a social security agent stationed at our embassy to deal with the implementation of a special treaty between Greece and the US covering social security benefits. One of the benefits of the treaty was that the ten years residence requirement in the US, for Greeks who had worked in the US before they could receive social security checks in their native Greece, did not apply to Greeks.

July 25, I received a cable from the State Department assigning me to the Consulate General in Hermosillo, Sonora. In hindsight it was destiny to be assigned to Mexico, for it was the beginning of a permanent friendship with Mexico and its people.

A few days later I received a confirmation letter from Barney Taylor, Consul General in Hermosillo, informing me that we would have an air conditioned, one story house to stay in, but that we would have to furnish it ourselves. It has been State Department policy to provide its employees with some housing allowance if no government quarters are available. For young

aspiring candidates as American diplomats, it is worth noting that the US housing allowance abroad (because Foreign Service employees stationed in Washington are not entitled to a housing allowance) is, of course, equivalent to free rent.

In Athens I got to know Dick and Ilsa Higgins. Dick served as Vice Consul in Athens while I worked there. He took me under his umbrella and we were also invited to their home for dinner. Following an evacuation, a dinner invitation at the home of a foreign service colleague provides a feeling of family security.

In early August we left Athens for Pittsburgh, where I took an eight day rest with my parents. I also began an intensive Spanish language course at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI). I had different teachers from Latin America and was exposed to native speakers of Colombia, Cuba, Peru and Spain. It was useful for me to be exposed to different Latin American accents. As my experience with Spanish grew, I was able to discover which country's Spanish came closest to the original Spanish in Spain.

The Spanish classes at FSI were most interesting. I had a Cuban teacher by the name of Solis, and some days, Mr. Vilches, a native of Peru. Solis had been a lawyer in Havana before Fidel Castro took over. He was one of 15 Spanish teachers. There were also South American linguists at the FSI who, besides teaching Spanish, knew the evolutionary and technical aspects of the language and had degrees in linguistics. They visited the classes daily and made up progress reports on students. In early October, I finished eight weeks of Spanish language training, which is the minimum time needed to be able to speak in Spanish on the job. Some of my colleagues received twelve to sixteen weeks. Dr. and Mrs. Montgomery were assigned to Bogota, and Mr. and Mrs. Harry Iceland were sent to USIS in Caracas. One of my friends, Morris Rothenberg, was nominated to go to our Embassy in Mexico City. At the occasion of our graduation, Morris and his wife had us over for dinner.

I received this nice letter from Consul General David Fritzlan: "I was very happy to have you on the staff at Alexandria and I shall always remember vividly those last frightful days and the fine work performed by yourself and other staff members. I trust all goes well with you and your family and that you will enjoy Hermosillo."

A few days before leaving for Mexico I had lunch with Lois Rork, Senior Visa Officer in Hermosillo. She became a dear friend of mine. Lois had extensive Consular experience in Hong Kong, Copenhagen, La Paz and Havana, and she shared this with me.

On October 11 we flew to Tucson. As soon as we arrived at the airport I was impressed by the warm desert climate of the Southwest. The palm trees and flowering bougainvillea decorated the streets to the Desert Inn Motel, where we rested before we started the long ride to Hermosillo. There is beauty in the Arizona desert. We enjoyed being surrounded by so many cacti and other desert plants.

State Department employees who go to border posts are required to drive their cars to the post. Since our car had been burned in Egypt we bought another secondhand station wagon to drive to Hermosillo. On October 14 we drove the two and a half hours from Tucson to Nogales through

breathtaking scenery of the Arizona canyons. We were met at the Nogales border by US Consul and friend, Virgil Prichard. Virgil had taken care of immigration and customs papers to permit the importation of our car into the Mexican Republic. Mexican officials were meticulous with that type of paperwork, but cooperative.

On this, my first experience with the US-Mexican border, I became aware of how many Americans travel to Mexico for business and pleasure. I was less conscious of the fact of how many Mexicans cross into the US seeking economic opportunities. Nogales was still a small but important border town in the late 1960s.

It was good to see Virgil and Charlotte Prichard again. We had a nice visit and lunch in their home overlooking the Nogales hills. Rebecca was happy to play with their son, Lito, in the flowered garden.

Virgil had wide experience in Mexican border posts. He often spoke of his tour of duty at Piedras Negras. When we set out for Hermosillo through the Sonoran desert we did not realize it would take about seven hours to drive along a winding and hazardous country road. We made a brief stop in Magdalena where Father Eusebio Kino is buried. He was an Italian Jesuit missionary and an explorer in the American Southwest. Father Kino also worked with the Indians in Sonora. There were only one or two small gasoline stations, and we arrived in Hermosillo after 7 p.m., when it had already turned dark.

LUCIUS D. BATTLE
Assistant Secretary, Near East Affairs
Washington, DC (1967-1968)

Ambassador Lucius D. Battle was born in Georgia in 1918. He served in Denmark, France, as ambassador to Egypt and as Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs. He was interviewed by Dayton Mak in 1990.

BATTLE: I would now like to turn to the major crises that occurred while I was Assistant Secretary. The first was the crises in Yemen, which was not a lengthy one or in historical perspective, a very important one. The second one was the Greek coup which was followed by the third one -- the Six Day War which was very important and the fourth one was the Cyprus crisis of 1967. Earlier I mentioned my last telegram from Cairo, written on the morning of my departure, I had voiced the opinion that Egypt was in real trouble and that Nasser would try one of three tracks because he was cornered, economically and politically. I had mentioned that one of his options was to stir up trouble in Yemen, in an effort to increase Saudi payments to Egypt. They were not being as generous as he felt they should be. I returned to Washington and was sworn in during the first week in April. Shortly thereafter, the Yemen crisis began. I don't remember all the details, but suffice it to say that three Americans were arrested; one was quickly released (and the others eventually). They were charged with blowing up an ammunition dump. In fact, which I only discovered later, the demolition work was done by the British. The perpetrators ran through the American compound and were followed by some dogs that chased

them. That was how the Americans became suspect. The three Americans that were arrested were put in 17th. Century jails. It was very unpleasant. I had expected an increase in tensions and for a few days the arrest loomed as a major problem.

At the time, I was preoccupied in a coup in Greece which was the first one which occurred during my years as Assistant Secretary, That started just a few days after I was sworn in. What interested me about this particular one was that Andreas Papandreou was captured and put into a very comfortable villa, under house arrest, where he was treated very well. The American academic community rose wildly in support of him, taking out ads in the newspapers in which it claimed that State Department was sitting on its hands and not trying to get their colleague released. At the same time, the Americans captured in Yemen, who were government officials and were held in very primitive conditions and not at all comparable to the luxuries that Papandreou was enjoying, had no domestic support at all. There was no anxiety expressed for them -- no letters, no calls, no newspaper ads. At the beginning, the Yemen story got about as much publicity as the Greek coup did. During this period, I went to Harvard to give a speech to a faculty group. I told them that I had been very interested in their reactions to the Yemen and Greek situations. I felt that the issues were comparable in the two situations. In both cases, people were being held without due process of law; the charges were that of spying; no trial had been held in either case. But, I noted, that I had heard loudly and often from the Harvard faculty on the Greek situation but not a peep on Yemen. I asked them where they stood. If it was a matter of principle, why wasn't it being applied to both situations? In essence, the answer was that Papandreou was "one of ours". They said that they knew him when he taught at Wisconsin and Minnesota; he never paid his bar bill. There were other comments of that kind, but they felt nevertheless that he was of their own, whereas the two held in Yemen, although also Americans, did not generate the same response. Some thought that the two may have been CIA agents. But I found very interesting the different responses of the Harvard faculty and others to what I perceived to be the same essential human rights violations.

So the Greek and Yemen crises ran parallel for a little while. The Yemen problem was finally resolved; we sent Dick Parker from Cairo to try to settle matters. It did not turn out to be Nasser's way of extracting greater financial support from the Saudis, although it looked like it for the first few days. The Greek coup was not one that the U.S. had planned, despite all the rumors that were circulating the world press. I have thought about this possibility at length. It is conceivable that some of our military attachés or perhaps even some other Embassy staff members, knew about the plot and made no effort to discourage it. It was clear that the coup was not planned or instigated by us, but that some Americans knew well the middle grade officers who were the backbone of the coup. It is therefore conceivable that the Greek officers may have heard something from their American contacts that gave them the idea that the U.S. would bless the coup, which was just not true. Strangely enough, the coup did not raise much interest in Congress. We had many calls and questions -- some even outlandish -- but essentially, Congress accepted the coup as a development of history or in a few cases even as "a good thing". The group that took control of Greece was right wing and military which was more acceptable to most Congressmen and their constituents than if it had been a socialist group led by for example Andreas Papandreou. Many Congressmen were happy with the coup and didn't bother us very much. a few did, but it was not a major uproar. We did the best we could by taking such steps as were available to us -- showing disapproval of the coup. We did not sever relations with Greece.

The coup dragged on and in time, long after my tenure as Assistant Secretary, an elected government was restored.

DOUGLAS WATSON
Consular/Political Officer
Athens (1967-1968)

Mr. Watson was born and raised in the Washington, D.C. area and was educated at California State University at Los Angeles and Harvard University. Entering the Foreign Service in 1966, he served in a variety of posts throughout the world, including Cairo, Athens, Madrid, Saigon, Quito, Islamabad and Port au-Prince, Haiti, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. He also served in the State Department in Washington, on Capitol Hill in the Pearson program and was a member of the US delegation to the United Nations General Assembly in 1991. Mr. Watson was interviewed by Thomas J. Dunnigan in 2000.

WATSON: I certainly did, but I didn't think about it. I was so dispensable compared with others who had a deeper investment, more value, there. So, when I was asked by Jean Farr, the then personnel officer at the Athens embassy, what my assignment druthers were, Athens or elsewhere, not much understanding how the personnel system worked back in Washington, I said, "I'd like to go to Mexico, Bolivia or Spain." August (Gus) Velletri, who was the Labor attaché in Athens, took me aside and said, "Son, here you are in Athens. How many chances do you think you'll have during your checkered career to go to a place like Athens? If I were you and they offered me the option to stay here, I'd grab it." Taking his counsel, I told Jean Farr we would be happy to stay. So, they decided that what they would do is keep me there in the Consular Section for about six months, which along with the three months in Cairo would total my first nine months, and then for the latter nine months I would rotate to the Political Section. And indeed that is what happened. At the end of the Athens tour, I returned to Washington for some further training and an onward assignment. The Athens tour was a very good one. I had a chance to work with Peter (Pete) G. Peterson, who was the Consul General, a wonderful guy. He spoke Greek like a native, being of Greek ethnicity. I also worked for Lois Day, an excellent supervisor – fair and helpful, who headed up the NIV section, and then for Bartlett Wells in the IV section. I worked with some phenomenal Foreign Service National personnel. The atmosphere in Greece was so friendly compared with what we had found during our brief stint in Cairo.

On the downside, I remember one American consular officer who had been in consular work for years. While I was with the IV section, this officer once came into my office fanning the air after a Greek family of modest means (from the Peloponnesus, in the south of Greece) had left my office after the full interview process. They had perhaps not been as "fragrant" as this officer would have liked, but the officer came in waving papers as if fanning the odor from the room, and then came back in with a can of air spray and made some disparaging remarks about that class of people. A rude awakening for me. Foreign Service folks were just another slice of America.

I then had a chance to work in the Political Section. That was when King Constantine attempted a countercoup against the Greek military government.

Q: I might add that the coup was against Papadopoulos and his junta, which had seized power.

WATSON: Yes.

Q: By the way, what were our relations with Papadopoulos? We didn't particularly like him, but...

WATSON: No, we didn't much like him. He had overthrown democratic rule. There was some division in the embassy about recognition of and dealing with a his now illegitimate government. There were some outstanding officers in the Political Section. There were views and ideas at play, ethics, biases. I gained an appreciation of what went into political work.

I remember, at one point, I had the privilege, not really recognizing how important it was, of being the control officer for my first CODEL. A congressman from Chicago, Roman Pucinski. He arrived in Greece with a couple of colleagues from the Chicago area Greek-American community. I shepherded them around doing this and that for the better part of a day. Then that evening, they became just a tad loose at a wedding festival, and unfortunately they were due to leave the next morning on a 6:00 am flight for Nicosia, Cyprus to meet with Archbishop Makarios and other notables. FSO Tom Boyatt was the control officer in Nicosia. To make a long story short, following the wedding evening festivities, I was able to get them to the Athens Hilton for a brief sleep, but rousting these gentleman out of their beds and getting them into the embassy car and then to the airport for the 6 am flight was a difficult task. So difficult that when we reached the departing gate, the aircraft had departed, but had not yet left the terminal for Nicosia. I tried my best to stop the departure but couldn't. Had I been the ambassador, or the political counselor, I might have known how to do pull this off, but I wasn't able to do that. The CODEL didn't seem to mind not going to Cyprus. They were happy to go back to the hotel, and to bed. I called Tom Boyatt from the embassy. He took the mishap with great grace and dealt with events on his end, I presume successfully. I caught no flack from the Athens embassy for this missed flight.

The political section work was very interesting. And the consular work equally so. Greece was a most marvelous country. As my wife and I look back, we think of Greece in very positive terms. We were able to visit several of the islands. We were able to get up to Meteora in the north. We developed a marvelous friendship with a Foreign Service National there, Alekos Tzinieris, and his family. He later died of cancer. All in all our tour was a positive experience. My daughters did well enough in their schools. My wife was finding and learning her way in the Foreign Service.

Ross McClelland was our DCM there, a very decent man, and his wife a very decent woman. He opened our eyes to a number of things. I was tasked with a couple of other challenges. He had me take the lead on the "BALPA" budget reduction exercise, and on another study. At this distant remove today, I can't remember all that I did or didn't do, but I have the sense that I did

some decent work, not excellent but decent.

Then back we went to the States for training to prepare for our next assignment.

Q: Before we leave Athens, you mentioned that there were differences within the embassy as to how to deal with the Papadopoulos junta. Were the embassy and the Department in accord? Did they see eye to eye on this or were there differences of opinion there?

WATSON: There I was, as far “down” in the Political Section as you can get. As a matter of fact, Kay Bracken was initially our political counselor there, a woman, which for those times was undoubtedly quite unusual. She was succeeded by Arch Blood. I only worked with Kay a brief time. I worked with Arch for a longer period. Bob Keeley was another outstanding political officer, who some years later served as our ambassador to Greece. What was really possible in dealing with the Greek government at that time, which was a military government, as opposed to our prior dealings with the democratic body politic? I don’t honestly know what the view was in the Department, but I do know that there were strong views within the embassy Political Section. I recall one officer who took the position which was more towards developing further and strengthening contacts with the democratic sector and isolating, if you will, the military government. That individual strongly took a position which was not unanimously agreed to at all within the Embassy. It was difficult for him. I respected very much his having taken that stand. I was inclined to side with him, but after all, it was the government of Greece and you had to deal with it somehow. That was reality. My appreciation of the political situation and nuances there was not near so developed as that of those regular political officers assigned to the section.

ABRAHAM M. SIRKIN
Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Athens (1967-1972)

Mr. Sirkin was born in 1914 in Barre, Vermont, and attended Columbia College, graduating in 1935. He was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1941. After he left the Army he served at number of posts with USIA and USIS, including England, India, and Greece. Mr. Sirkin was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.

SIRKIN: I got there just a few months after the junta came in.

Q: April 22, 1967.

SIRKIN: I came in July almost on the same plane as the new DCM.

Q: This new junta had taken over. Did USIA or State tell you what we ought to be doing?

SIRKIN: No, nobody gave me any instruction on that basis. When I was taking the language course there was also a cultural course alongside it for orientation and toward the end this whole

thing was happening and we were just given the latest information that they had about what was going on. I didn't even realize until I got there the extent to which most of the people, opposition people especially, opposition to the junta assumed that the U.S. had made the coup. That was one of the things that plagued my whole five years there, trying to get out from under that accusation. That conspiracy theory.

Q: Did you find that the Greeks sort of subscribe to conspiracy theories. They seem to always think somebody is picking on them, don't they?

SIRKIN: I think that's probably true all through the Balkans wherever the Turks were in charge, and especially with the Greeks. Their main enemy is Turkey for everything, including the live issue with Cyprus, but it was also the whole history of antagonism to people that took over their country in 1400 something and didn't leave until they had several regional revolutions and got rid of them in the 19th century. A lot of it had to do with Dulles' policy of trying to develop CENTO, which included tying up Turkey and Pakistan. So we were thought to be pro-Turkish. It still rankles that somebody who says nice things about Turkey doesn't agree the Turks committed genocide against the Armenians. It is anti-Greek to say something good about Islam or the Turkish century or whatever.

Q: Did you find the Embassy when you arrived in '67 at all divided about what to do about the junta? I didn't arrive until 1970, but one does have the feeling that this was an issue in which not everybody in the American Embassy saw eye to eye.

SIRKIN: I sure didn't. I wasn't in Delhi so I don't know about the Embassy, but I was in the Consulate in Madras. The CIA guys had all kinds of differences of opinion and differences of memory and recollection about who did what at the time of the junta coming in a few months before I got there. But, by the time I got there, the CIA and the Defense, the MAAG Chief and people like that had made peace with the junta. The CIA people were in bed with the junta intelligence people as were some of the people in the Political Section of the Embassy. When I got there the Political Counselor was Miss Bracken. Most of the Political Section was very much anti junta whereas the CIA people and some of the military were very close to the junta. I had no instructions one way or the other, but just on the basis I guess of my own ideological preferences I believed my job was to be on the side of democracy, human rights and all those things. Anyway, all my customers, the USIA/USIS customers, were by the very nature of the people involved, students, intellectuals, academic people, writers, artists, the press, journalists, so most of my contacts were, of course, very ambivalent.

But the U.S. Government in Washington was so ambivalent I assume the people in the Embassy were, too. They must have had the same ambivalence as in the Consulate. The staff meetings at certain stages, especially toward the end of my time, often amounted to a tug of war between the Political Section and me on one side and the CIA and the military on the other side. At one point it came to a point that I reported at a staff meeting about some student riot against the junta and I was told to draft a message. I drafted it and wanted it to go out as a telegram. We got it from our student contacts. The message had to be cleared through the CIA Station Chief, at one point there was a little session between the Political Counselor, (I don't know if the DCM was involved or not) and myself and the Station Chief and he said "If we send this thing off as a telegram that

will just get them upset in Washington. It didn't amount to much, you know." What he decided was an air gram that was going to one desk in State. He said, "It's not that important." To me that was the extreme shocker, that the organization that is supposed to keep the government informed had such an ideological set that they did not want to send unpleasant news to Washington for fear of getting them upset.

Q: Certainly speaks to what the reporting must have been like.

SIRKIN: When I got back, I had a lot of contacts in the press not just at the reporter level who covered the Embassy and Consulate, but I made it my business, as I think previous predecessors of mine had done, to keep in touch with the publishers. Every six months or so I'd take some of the publishers who spoke enough English and I would pick up a certain amount of information from them. I went also to a couple of newspapers, which were very pro junta, and they would sort of badger me about our policy. Why is the U.S. saying nasty things about the junta in Washington, and I would try to defend it and on the other hand ask them when they thought the junta was going to relax and move out and restore democracy. They kept saying they would. Some of these people provided information, including one publisher who was very close to the military and also to the King and to Karamanlis, the former Prime Minister, who was also a conservative and royalist I guess. When I would come to visit him every few months he would give me his understanding of what the gossip was in the military circles that he was close to and I would come back to the Embassy and report this. The military itself was divided, because the coup involved the second or third level of Colonels kicking out the Generals and this guy was close to some of the General level. So he would tell me about all kinds of ruckus going on within the military and I would come back and report it at the meetings with the CIA and the military guys. One of the military people was anti junta because he was close to the Generals, and he actually came back later and testified in Congress in a sense against the junta. There was this division and as I say many times the meetings would degenerate into a tug of war between the pro junta guys and the Political Section and myself on the other side. But, when I came back I was told by a Desk Officer that he never got very much good information about what was going on in Greece except from me. Because the CIA wasn't reporting the things they didn't like and I reported what I picked up during my visits to these publishers, including this publisher of a *Vrathini*, a paper. About two or three years after I left the publisher was killed in the street presumably by some of the people he had antagonized in the junta days.

Q: When you arrived there who was the Ambassador?

SIRKIN: Talbot

Q: Did you figure out where he was coming from, or how did he manage the Embassy on this divisive issue?

SIRKIN: He was obviously personally anti-junta. This was '67. During that whole period it was fairly straight we were generally against the junta, although some maybe in the early days even the CIA may have been telling what was going on. It was only later that they became very close to them.

Q: I'm just wondering was Talbot riding herd on his reporting now?

SIRKIN: He was very clearly anti junta. Of course, by the time we got there people were in opposition and the junta people were so at odds that the Embassy was accused by the anti-junta people of not doing enough, especially a lady who was the publisher of the most popular newspaper in the country. She was still around and she wanted Talbot, I'm not sure exactly what she wanted him to do, but she was unhappy that he was not anti junta enough. Maybe in connection with her own case trying to get out of the country before they got after her.

On the whole it was pretty clear that he was anti junta. His term was coming to a close and there was a lot of agitation, especially in Washington, that the U.S. should not send a replacement for him. A fellow in Washington who used to be a newspaper man in Greece, who was there the first month that I was there, managed to get out of the country by saying he was going to attend a journalist meeting in Copenhagen or something. He arrived here and decided he was the chief of the Greek opposition in Washington, Elias Dimitricopoulos.

But his main point in that first year was to agitate I think that they should not have an Ambassador to these military traitors in Athens and he was ready to shoot at whoever was going to be named Ambassador. The person who was nominated was Henry Tasca, who was a close friend of Averill Harriman, and had been involved in the Marshall Plan and generally thought of himself as a liberal. I think he was told or at least I understand he was told not to arrive and start immediately to blast the junta but see what he could do in terms of talking to them or hearing them, pushing them to do as they had promised that they were there only temporarily. He immediately became the target of all the people opposed to the junta just for taking the job really. And, as Dimitricopoulos later said to somebody, he wasn't anti Tasca he was just anti-Ambassador to Greece and he found every possible argument why there shouldn't be an Ambassador. When Tasca arrived he didn't immediately get in touch with the opposition, and that was held against him by Dimitricopoulos' favorite outlet, the newspapers. This was kind of a reversal of roles. Evans and Novak had column after column about Tasca not meeting with the opposition and making good friends with the Colonels and so on. Tasca felt very much defensive. At that time one of the people in the opposition was a leading conservative politician, Averoff, who later was Defense Minister.

He would call me over to his office to harangue me about these Colonels who would try to move the whole country to the right and were terrible people. The whole country would become anti-American if you don't watch out, and I should get that message to the Ambassador. I would dutifully report these things. That happened with the campaign against Tasca by Evans and Novak, when both of them that first year or two of the junta showed up in Athens; they'd been writing so much garbage on the basis of the Dimitricopoulos connection. Evans and his wife showed up and I immediately invited them to come along with me to a party given by one of the most popular artists in Greece, who gave an annual party at his place on the island of Evia. Since he was an artist most of the people there were opposition people. So I got an invitation for Mr. and Mrs. Evans to join me and I took them up there just to show them that at least I and one or two other Embassy Officers who were there were very much in touch with the opposition. This was a thoroughly opposition party, politicians as well as intellectuals.

Shortly thereafter Novak showed up; I had never met him before, and I didn't hear from him. I knew he was in town but he made his own appointments. At one point my secretary came in and said "Mr. Novak wants to see you right away, this minute." So I stopped what I was doing, got off the phone or whatever, and he comes in huffing and puffing. He had just had an interview with the number two guy in the junta, General Patakos, sort of a rude kind of guy, and he says "This has never happened to me before in my life." I say, "What happened?" "I just talked to Patakos, and do you know what he said? He called me a Communist." Evans and Novak, who are as far to the right columnists as we probably have in the United States! I'm afraid I used this a couple of years ago when correspondents in Washington were giving a roast and I had a neighbor, journalist Jack Germond, who told me he was going to the party, so I told him this story that he could use on Novak, that he had been called a Communist one time in his life.

Q: Did you find that the press was receptive to what the United States had to say about matters?

SIRKIN: We put out our daily bulletin, which carried statements by the U.S., especially anytime anybody said something about Greece. Of course, it was a censored press, practically self censored, but also really censored. There were several liberal papers still publishing and I was in pretty good touch with them, and there were a few pro junta papers and I was in touch with all of them. The liberal anti junta papers went as far as they thought they could go, but it wasn't free so they couldn't print what ever they wanted to. I had especially interesting sessions with the paper, which had just started, and was called, Eleftherios Kosmos, the Free World. They used all these phrases of the liberal vocabulary to describe their system and I knew that the Editor of that was close to the junta and we had long, long sessions in which I tried to explain why the U.S. still pushes for democracy and turned to elections and so forth and they would give me their arguments but I trust that these were things that got back to the junta people.

Twice during my time there in the course of my five years, I was told by Ambassador Tasca that the Prime Minister asked him to send me home. He didn't say he was going to PNG me. I was doing my job. I would have parties. As a matter of fact, a couple of times in order to entertain all our contacts I had to have two parties. One with the opposition people who refused to attend anything where the junta people were going to be present and one where I'd have Government people and professors and so forth who mixed and a few of the anti-junta people who were sort of moderate, like Mr. Averoff among others. There was also at that time a Greek fellow, one of the people who had been snatched by the Communists in Northern Greece at one time and taken when he was a child and grew up in a sense under the Communists and became something of a media type broadcaster and for a while was broadcasting Communist stuff against Greece in those days. He showed up in Egypt and became anti-communist and came back to Greece and became a propagandist for the junta. I got to know him, he would invite me over to his house along with other Press Attaches and present would be the wife of the Prime Minister, Mrs. Papadopoulos, an ex-nightclub lady, and other junta types like the head of the military police. An interesting episode in one of those parties was that, well let me finish first about our own party. At one of these parties was Mr. Averoff, although when we first arrived he was in jail for having more than five people at his house. It was very tight at the beginning. It was against the law to have a meeting of more than four people at a party. This broadcaster was at the party and he spied Mr. Averoff at the other end of the room and he said, "I would like to meet Mr. Averoff, would you introduce me, I've never met him." So I went over to Averoff and said, " Mr. x (I

forget the guy's name), wants to meet you." He said, "I won't shake his hand; he attacked Greece way, way back when we were in trouble and I wouldn't have anything to do with him." He looked to his wife and got his hat and coat and wanted to leave the party. The other guy saw he was about to leave and managed to move over to him and sort of grab his hand and saw the sour look on his face and he disappeared. Years later I came to visit Greece and looked up a few of my contacts. One was a reporter for one of the conservative papers and also a radio or TV figure at the time. He said, "I'm glad to see you; I mentioned you the other night on my program." "Why I haven't been here for some years, why me?" He says, "I was talking about Mr. Averoff and I was at that party and I saw that whole little episode so I said at one of Mr. Sirkin's parties Mr. Averoff went to great lengths to avoid shaking my hand." In other words it was a piece about Averoff to describe he was pro Averoff who wanted to be Prime Minister. He later ended up as Defense Minister and that's about all. This still stuck in his mind about ten years later as an example of Averoff's patriotism; even at that late stage he wouldn't shake the hand of this denouncer of the Greek nation.

Q: You mentioned you went to another party, not yours.

SIRKIN: The party of this same broadcaster where he had Mrs. Papadopoulos and he introduced Mrs. Papadopoulos to me. He said "This is Mr. Sirkin of the American Embassy, he is not a friend of ours." She said, "Oh, I don't care, this a party tonight." She went around trying to behave in a nightclub fashion.

At that party I had a chance to use the Greek I studied at FSI more than at any other time because there was this General Ioannidis. At one point toward the end of the junta he kicked out Papadopoulos so for a few months he was the Prime Minister or whatever he called himself. But before then, when I was at this party, Ioannidis had been involved in hauling off one of the people who worked for the Embassy. She worked for the Exchange of Persons Department in our Cultural Office and had some liaison with one of the Greek Generals who had been exiled by the junta. She was also a friend of the U.S. Military Attaché. Anyway she was sent off to internal exile on an island somewhere and I used the occasion to try and argue with Ioannidis that she should be let go because she was not a leftist, if anything she was pro-royalist. Ioannidis started haranguing me about the Communists. I said, "She is not a Communist." I said, "She's not a Communist, if anything she a rightist." That didn't bother him. It was later that I discovered that the house the party was in belonged to that woman. It had been requisitioned by the military and this was in the military complex and this was her house and I had been arguing with Mr. Ioannidis about letting her go.

Q: You say there was sort of an increasing closeness between the CIA and junta as time went on? What was your feeling about why this happened?

SIRKIN: All I knew was the contacts I had with various CIA elements in different countries. In some countries I found their people very knowledgeable, very useful obviously to the U.S. Government, and in some situations we had to do some coordination; Greece was a peculiar situation. In the first place, I gather the CIA's headquarters for the Middle East was there. Secondly, a whole bunch of CIA people either were Greek Americans themselves or were Americans married to Greek wives and they were very much into the community. The CIA's job

was to ferret out information and this I gather they'd done in a few other countries. In the first place they at one point helped to set up the Secret Service of Greece; I think this is true in South Korea and a few other places. The result was that they had very close touch with the Greek CIA; Colonel Papadopoulos came from that element of the military so they were in very close contact with him even though the CIA itself and the CIA's Station Chief at the beginning when the junta came in was very close to the monarchy, the Queen, I gather. People would tell me your CIA Chief, Mr. Maury, would actually push the Queen's shopping cart in the U.S. commissary.

There was so many of them and I guess some of them weren't working on Greece but on stuff in the Middle East. They were so open that everybody knew who was a CIA person because when I came there some of the Greek newspapermen said, "Don't you know him? He's a CIA man." They had a big outfit and that lets some light on the later incident when some Greek shot and killed the CIA Station Chief in front of his house. Apparently everybody knew that this was the CIA Station Chief's house. Not everybody, but at least the people interested in politics, the press people, political people. I had an unfortunate problem, which I gather exists in France also, that the Greek word for intelligence and information is the same. They don't have a separate word for intelligence. They use the same word. I remember sitting at a dinner party at a Greek professor's house next to Mr. Zoloto, who was the head of the Bank of Greece and a big wheel in the International Monetary Fund and I told him who I was so he started asking me if I knew so and so and I said I don't know those people. He thought I was CIA. He didn't know much about USIA. I explained to him but I'm not sure he believed me that I'm not in that organization, I don't know those people.

Q: Did you see a change in the Political Section in the time you were there?

SIRKIN: No, the Political Section was all the time I was there very much on the side of what they were getting from the State Department. I think an important point that should emerge from my oral history is a little bit of light on what seemed to happen at least in some places, certainly in Greece. During those days Henry Kissinger was in the White House and the State Department was run by Rogers, who didn't cut apparently too much ice in the White House. The Assistant Secretary for the Near East (at that time Greece was in the Near East Bureau before it was later pulled into Europe in the State Department's regional set up), was a very articulate person. The CIA Station Chief and I were leaving Athens at almost the same time and there were parties for him, parties for me, joint parties at certain times. Ambassador Tasca complained to me a number of times, that he was getting one message from the Assistant Secretary in the State Department and then the Station Chief would come and tell him of a back channel from the White House with Kissinger saying almost the opposite. He was sort of the yo-yo between the State Department's policy and Kissinger's policy.

Q: It seems like Greece appealed to you might say the darker side of both Nixon and Kissinger. They could be very good on some points, but they were anti communist.

SIRKIN: At a certain point when I was in Greece my top boss in USIA was a fellow named Frank Shakespeare and he was 100%-150% anti-communist. He was a very loyal, Jesuit-trained Catholic. Somebody told me he used to think of Pope John XXIII as a communist for changing Mass procedures. He became my boss in Washington and he was a great admirer of the Greek

junta because they were anti-communist so I had little backing for the policy I was trying to follow. I was trying to carry out policy from the State Department, which was to some extent critical of the junta. At one point my boss said he was going to show up in Athens and wanted an appointment with the Prime Minister. I think he had a couple of weeks off as a Reserve Officer in the Navy. He was doing something on a boat on the Near East Fleet and he wanted to take advantage of being nearby to get the thinking of Colonel Papadopoulos about the whole Near East situation. I had to set it up and I went along. I had to take notes and send a long telegram back about the whole conversation. It was at some points very difficult to keep from laughing but I had to do what I was told.

We had a thing called the Hellenic American Union, and wanted it to be a place where opposition people could be comfortable and not feel this was a junta place. So my big job was to keep the junta out of the Hellenic American Union, the HAU, and my most difficult time came when we were offered to have a showing of a moon rock, a little piece of the moon that they sent around the world to show off our expertise in space. In most countries we set up a big thing with the Government, the Prime Minister and I said "damned if I'm going to do that in Greece. I'm going to get rid of that moon rock and give it to the Greeks or give it to the University and have Papadopoulos come to the University." The logical place would have been at the HAU and I made damn sure this wouldn't be a place where the Prime Minister showed up. I was very conscious of pictures, just as we still are with the President of China or whoever, and I succeeded in getting that whole moon rock thing done. We had an astronaut who came along and we did the whole thing at the University of Athens in the Physics Department or whatever and I rode with Papadopoulos. They had their pictures taken at the University, but I wasn't going to have it at the HAU.

Q: How about Turkey? In many ways Greece had some interesting real estate that we needed for communications and all, but it was really military wise, it was sort of a back water as opposed to Turkey which was much more important as far as our Southern flank in NATO. Was this a problem for you?

SIRKIN: It never really surfaced. There were people that knew about it, knew about the U.S. involvement at some kind of military installation. I myself probably didn't know to what extent we had anything in Greek bases. We had a listening station out at Marathon a Navy listening station. Some installations up North. There were people who wanted to get American bases out of Greece.

One of the problems I had which again is something that Officers in the field have to be aware of is the so-called misuse of the term White House. When I was there the Vice President of the United States for a while was a Greek American, Spiro Agnew, and he came from some village out in the West of the Peloponnesus, a very small town. I got word the White House, I discovered later it was Agnew or some guy working for Agnew, wants to set up a scholarship to be named Anagnostopoulos (his Greek name before he became Agnew), in Agnew's father's name and it should be for a student from this village to get a Fulbright to the United States to an American college. I was horrified to use the Fulbright money for this kind of a personal thing especially from the White House so I got on the phone and said, "You can't do this, who's doing this?" I called my own people, my own Assistant Director for the Middle East at that time and

said, "This would be terrible, if this gets out, this would be a shocker." They said the White House wants it. So for a while I didn't do anything about it and then I was nagged by the Embassy saying, "We are getting complaints from the White House that you're not doing what they asked you to do about setting up a Fulbright in the name of Mr. Anagnostopoulos for a Greek guy from this village." So I said, "I think it is a horrible thing to do and if it becomes public it would be a disaster, but let me go and at least look into the details." I sent out one of our Greek Cultural Officers, a lady who went to that village. She said it was a tiny town, where nobody speaks a word of English. It's impossible that anybody from this town could ever even get to the point where he would be acceptable. None of them go to any university, they hardly finish high school. So I started sending that kind of message back; but people say the White House, the White House, the White House.. So if Mr. Agnew wants to do something for someone from his village maybe we can get them to go to school and get to Athens University. Or at least some decent high school. So for a while I didn't hear much except for some grumbling that I wasn't doing what the White House wanted me to do, but finally we got a message that the Hellenic American something or other from Chicago was going to finance a scholarship for a kid from that village to go to Athens University. The people at least who work in Washington ought to know how many people use the word "White House". This wasn't the President, it was the Vice President, and I don't know how much it was the Vice President or some guy who used to work for USIA who became the Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Vice President and probably told him, "Oh, I can get you a Fulbright." There was an Anagnostopoulos scholarship and we found a kid, I think he lasted one year at Athens University, and the thing just got smoothed over and nobody ever heard about it but that would have been a terrible scandal if we had followed just because this was the White House saying, "Do this, do that". Some people thought I was a fool and others thought I was a hero in bucking this thing. I didn't make any friends in my office back in Washington for digging in my heels on this one.

BARRINGTON KING
Political Officer
Athens (1967-1972)

Barrington King was born in Tennessee in 1930. In the Foreign Service he was posted to Egypt, Tanzania, Cyprus, Greece, Tunisia, Pakistan and as ambassador to Brunei. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

Q: Well, you were moving over to the scribblers with a pen. You didn't really move out of the firing line, at least it was certainly an active time. You went to Athens in 1967.

KING: '67.

Q: Before or after April 22, '67, the time of the colonels attempted coup?

KING: After.

Q: Could you describe the situation in Greece at the time you went there? This is 1967.

KING: I think a polarization of opinion both in...well, within the Embassy for one thing, and also I think you had it in the U.S. government. The usual kind of polarization you have. One side seeing a great threat in Andreas Papandreu in the left; and the other side, quite naturally being very much opposed to this imposed dictatorship of the right. And as you know, through the five years that I was there, there was some internal division within the Embassy about what American policy should be.

Q: I wonder if you could describe, when you first arrived there, Phillips Talbot was the Ambassador, and how the Embassy viewed things? You were doing what there?

KING: I was in the economic section.

Q: How did you see the Embassy's internal view of this situation?

KING: I think Phil Talbot was basically quite unhappy with the situation that he had to deal with. But I think that he felt that he had to work with what was there, as best he could, and try to move the situation back to a more democratic regime. I don't think, in fact, there was an awful lot that we were going to be able to do about it until it just played itself out. In fact, that's pretty much the way it was.

Q: Did we have fairly open relations with people? Did you feel we were holding back as an Embassy, being somewhat standoffish?

KING: To whom?

Q: To the Greek government.

KING: A bit standoffish, yes. There was a factor then that was soon out of the picture, and that was the King. And I think we tried to make use of this third factor, to try to bring about a better situation. But once the King made his attempt, and that failed and he was exiled, and eventually, of course, the royal family was finished in Greece, then you had a polarization in Greek politics between the left and the right. The regime tried to make it very difficult for us to have anything to do with the left. They had some success with the U.S. government. I think in particular the best support they were getting was from Spiro Agnew.

Q: The Nixon administration came in in '69, and we had a new Ambassador there, Henry Tasca, who is a controversial figure. How did you see him? When you were there you saw both sides of two different Ambassadors.

KING: I think there was a definite change, and I think there was much closer contact with the regime than there had been under Phil Talbot. I think relations with the opposition were a good bit inhibited under Tasca. Tasca saw a lot of Papadopoulos, and his chief lieutenants. I occasionally served as an interpreter and went with him to dinner parties at Papadopoulos's house, and this kind of thing. So I saw a good bit of that, although I was not in the political section at that time. Eventually I did switch over to the political section. I was in Greece, as I

said, for five years which was awfully long.

Q: Long, long. Particularly coming out of the Cyprus pressure cooker.

KING: As far as I know, I've probably had a longer continuous tour in the Greek-speaking world than anybody in the U.S. Foreign Service in our time.

Q: I would imagine so, yes. What was your impression of Tasca's operating style? I mean how did this Papadopoulos- Tasca chemistry work?

KING: I think Tasca was a more secretive kind of person. He was more inclined to concentrate on what he could do personally, without letting other people know too much about what was going on; as compared with Talbot who I think was more open, and led more of a team effort. I don't think people felt very much under Tasca that they were part of a team in which they could influence his views on things. I think a lot of people felt his mind had been made up before he ever got there.

Q: How did you feel...the potpourri, and the influences...I'm thinking of three different areas that I think were important: one would be our political section, then there would be the CIA, and then there would be the American military; all of whom had a role. Could you describe how you felt about these people coming out, and what they were doing in our Embassy? We're talking about the Tasca period.

KING: I would say we were being pretty supportive with the exception of some people in the political section of the Embassy. I think we were being pretty supportive.

Q: I was Consul General there for four years at this time, and my impression was that the CIA, for its own reasons, was playing almost a pernicious role. Again, I was coming as a political reporter, but they seemed to discount country team meetings. Sort of a nasty business was going on in the Papandreou regime.

KING: That's right. I share that opinion.

Q: And I also felt that our military had too many Greek Americans in it, because of the language and they wanted to come back, it tended to be 110 percent super patriot, and thought this was fine, which was not a very good mix at this time.

KING: That's true, and on top of that, whereas the other parts of the mission that were interested in the politics of Greece, whatever you may think of their opinions, were competent and knew what they were doing. It was my opinion that the American military never really understood what was going on. They had emotional reactions to things.

Q: It was not, obviously, where we were sending our top grade people.

KING: But that's generally true. The Defense Attaché assignment is a dead end. I mean it's well known it's very rare for anyone who goes as a colonel as a Defense Attaché to ever get anything

else much after that. No, they don't send their best people. You know you get ahead by commanding troops in the U.S. military, and that's not commanding troops. And they've got this long standing prejudice, so you're not going to get very good quality with personnel policies like that.

Q: Was there sort of an unrest would you say within the Embassy because of at least on the part of the Ambassador, and the CIA, and to a certain extent, at least a tacit, acceptance by the military of our increasingly close relations with the colonels?

KING: Yes. I think there was, and I think at times it got rather bitter.

Q: Can you think of any times?

KING: All the time. There were ups and downs. It depended on what was happening. Something would happen that some people in the Embassy would see as an outrage, and others would, as you said, try to excuse. This happened all the time.

Q: How about from Washington? Were we getting any particular direction?

KING: You see, even though by then I was beginning to get up in rank a little, and even though I was the number two person in the political section, that doesn't mean by any means I was being cut in on a lot of what was going on; particularly since my sympathy for some of it was suspect. I guess my feeling was that Henry Kissinger, whose main concern was that we do nothing to alienate Turkey -- you know, sacrifice the colonels if necessary. The next consideration was, we wanted stability in Greece, which we allegedly had under the colonels. It proved to be not as stable as people thought it was. And also, Andreas Papandreou turned out to be not as big a threat as many thought. He finally did get into power, which was seen as just a terrible thing to happen; and now he's got himself out of power again by his own corrupt behavior.

Q: At the time though he was considered to be a very dangerous person.

KING: Oh, a tool of the Soviets, and all of that, and without passing judgement on that, he just didn't prove equal to doing anything to a drastic degree.

Q: Greek politics, as usual.

KING: As far as I can see. Of course, I was gone by then.

Q: Were we feeling at all the pressure of the Greek- American lobby? Did you feel that in the political section?

KING: Yes, I guess so. We felt it in both directions though. We got a lot of people whose families felt they were being persecuted by the colonels, who were talking to their Congressmen. And you also had some who would support any Greek government as long as it was Greek, and therefore we mustn't do anything to it.

Q: *Granted, Tasca particularly was sort of cutting people out, but did you get any feel about how we were sharing and working as American policy toward this volatile area with our Embassy in Ankara? Or were we just doing our thing, and they were doing their thing?*

KING: I think Tasca had a sort of antagonistic view towards the Turks, and our Embassy in Turkey, just from a purely personal point of view. If he'd been in Ankara, he would have had the same feeling towards the Greeks.

Q: *So you left there in 1972, and things really blew up in '74.*

KING: Yes.

ARCHER K. BLOOD
Political Officer
Athens (1968-1970)

Archer K. Blood was born in Illinois in 1923. As a Foreign Service officer he served in Greece, Germany, Algeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan and in Washington. He had three tours of duty in Greece. He was interviewed in 1989 by Henry Precht.

BLOOD: Then Bill Hall, who had been the deputy chief of mission in Pakistan when I was in Dacca the first time, was assigned as ambassador to Ethiopia. And he wanted Chris Van Holland as his DCM, but Chris was in Turkey, I think, and they wouldn't let him go. And so he asked me if I wanted to go. And I said yes. I thought, "Gee, DCM in Addis is a chance to break into Africa, you know. I think if you want to get an embassy there, if you had been DCM in Addis, you might get an African embassy might be possible there." And I very much admired Bill Hall and Jane, his wife, and would love to work with them.

And then I suddenly got word that I had been transferred to Athens as political counselor. Subsequently, Bill Hall told me he thought I preferred Athens. And I said, "No, I never. If I'd had any choice, I would have jumped at Addis." Because the troubles that Mike Crosby -- I don't know if you remember Mike Crosby. He was serving as DCM in some African post. He had been in Greece when I had earlier. He was supposed to go as political counselor to Athens, but his ambassador was brought back as deputy secretary so he couldn't go. So the job was open. Since I was in NEA, they threw me into the breach.

But if I had gone to Addis, I think it would have been a completely different career because one reason I went to Dacca is because I was very unhappy in Athens.

Q: *You really didn't want to get back into the Greek region again?*

BLOOD: No, I didn't. And they asked me to -- well, Phil Talbot was the ambassador. Phil Talbot had been assistant secretary in NEA after Rountree so I had worked with him and liked him. But

when I got there, I realized in terms of rank, I would be about the fourth person in the embassy. I had been DCM and chargé in Afghanistan for a long period of time.

Also, the junta was in charge. The CIA was very supportive of the junta. CIA people had very close contacts with the junta. The political section, we were anti-junta.

Q: *Why were you anti-junta?*

BLOOD: Well --

Q: *Because of your democratic values?*

BLOOD: In part. I think in part because most of us in the political section had served in Greece before. We had known the Greek politicians. The military would serve the king. We were very fond of them. We didn't accept the argument that these people were baddies. Everybody that we had known before were bitterly opposed to the junta because they were political people.

I've never been in a post that was so divided.

Q: *Well, what was the CIA rationale for support of the junta?*

BLOOD: Well, a very good one really. Because the leadership of the junta had come out what the Greeks call the CIA which was the Greek military intelligence. And so they had been the normal working contacts of the CIA before the coup. Suddenly the people that they knew, their working contacts, were now the rulers of the country. So this was obviously advantageous to them, and they like them and worked with them.

Q: *But you said the embassy was quite divided?*

BLOOD: Well divided, yes. Well, primarily the military -- and there were many, many Greek-Americans in the CIA and among the attachés. We had also a large MAG mission. They were without exception, the Greek-Americans, 200 per cent for the junta. The people who were opposed were in the political section. Bob Keeley was my deputy there for a while and bitterly opposed. And the USIA, I would say most of them were pretty unhappy with the junta. The economic section was sort of neutral.

Q: *The DCM was McClelland?*

BLOOD: DCM was Ross McClelland. Phil Talbot left in January after the election which brought in Mr. Nixon. And for the next year, over a year, there was no ambassador. And Ross was the DCM. I mean, Ross was the chargé.

Q: *Why didn't we have an ambassador appointed?*

BLOOD: Well, I think in part there was a feeling that you didn't want to show too much enthusiasm about the junta. I mean, there was many, many Greeks opposed to it. And they didn't

get around to it until they appointed Henry Tasca, who didn't get there until, I think, January in 1970. And so most of my period was working with Ross as the DCM.

And he was in the very difficult position of running a divided embassy. It was really a bitterly fought struggle. The staff meetings were hostile. I've never been in a place where you couldn't, you know, as American officials speak frankly about the local government. But if you said anything mistaken as critical about members of the junta, the CIA would explode in anger.

Q: Would they relay it to the junta members?

BLOOD: I hope not. I doubt that. And then if they would, you know, started in staff meetings charges about political leaders that they were no damn good or can't be trusted, then I would rise to their defense. And there was much, much friction. And a lot of our military there felt that this regime was very popular. And our argument was "Well, if they are that popular, why don't they expose themselves to an election?"

"You don't need an election in a democracy, you know. They are popular. You can see that just by talking to people. That is our feeling."

I admit it must have been very difficult for Ross McClelland at that time. Because Greece is a country in which if you have ever served there, you do get emotionally involved. Most people there were emotionally involved in that issue.

Q: But Washington was surely aware of the problem in the embassy. Did Washington not give guidance or take --

BLOOD: No. I think perhaps they wanted both views coming out. And then I heard that Tasca was coming as ambassador. And, actually, a friend of mine in the Foreign Service, Bill Crawford, who had served as Tasca's DCM in Rabat, wrote to me and said that, "I know both of you. I know you and he will not get along." He didn't have a very high regard for Tasca. And I guessed that when Tasca came, he would opt for a particular position in support of the junta. And I was right in that.

Then the issue involved primarily then was the sale of military equipment to Greece: tanks, aircraft, artillery. The position that I took and the leader of the political section took was that, "Okay, we didn't mind selling it to the Greeks for NATO purposes but not on the justification that the rest of the CIA was using that this would bring them back to democracy. These people will never bring back Greece to democracy. And this is a lie. We will sell it to them only for purely security purposes and tell them that, but don't operate on the delusion that you are doing this as a way of encouraging democracy because that is just false." Anyhow, then when Tasca came, he did say let's give them . . .

So that's when they, NEA, knowing that I wanted out, said there is this opening in Dacca. And they knew I had served there before. Would I be interested in going?

Q: This is 19 --

BLOOD: '70. I guess the assignment was really firmed up at the end of -- no, about the end of '69, the first part of '70. I left Athens in March '70 to go to Dacca. Actually, I was chargé because Ross went on home leave for a couple months. When Tasca arrived, I had been chargé for a month or so. It was I who greeted him when he came to Greece.

Q: *When you left Athens in March --*

BLOOD: This was direct transfer, yes.

Q: *Direct. Did you have a feeling that the junta was there to stay indefinitely?*

BLOOD: Oh, no.

Q: *How do you think the issue between Greek opposition to the junta and its authoritarian policies were going to be resolved?*

BLOOD: I didn't know. I didn't foresee that the junta would make such a stupid mistake over Cyprus that they would bring about their own downfall which was what happened. But I just felt that it was an anomaly that the Greeks wanted a democracy, that this was an abnormal situation, that sooner or later would fail. That was my feeling, but I didn't know when it would take place or how it would take place. I was rather pessimistic at the time seeing that they were in for a long haul, and Agnew had gone over right after I left to visit them. It looked like the United States was moving from a rather cool position to a warmer embrace of the junta.

Q: *Did you think that whatever opposition there was the body politic would work against us in the future?*

BLOOD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, that's what we kept telling Washington that we are going to pay a price for supporting a non-popular government here, that the Greeks are going to remember this and hold it against us.

Q: *But there was no reaction from Washington? Did you get any resonance from Washington to those arguments?*

BLOOD: I think they -- no, no, I can't remember any. But Washington was divided too. I mean, there was no, you know, great enthusiasm for the junta certainly. And as I say, it took us well over a year before we moved into a warmer relationship with them. And even then, I think they were still uneasy about it because the rest of the NATO countries were damning them and were unhappy with them. It wasn't, you know, a close embrace ever.

Q: *In this division of American official opinion over the junta, where did the White House figure? Where did they come down? The Johnson Administration at least.*

BLOOD: Well, my feeling is that they took sort of hands off approach; wait and see what would happen. And it was actually during the Nixon Administration that we moved toward a closer

position.

Q: I see. But they were not activists in one way or another trying to encourage any kind of evolution of --

BLOOD: Oh, yes, we were always talking about we encourage a return to democracy, yes. The question was did you trust the junta to bring it about.

Q: I see.

BLOOD: And I didn't, and all of us didn't. Or did you think that well maybe like some people thought we would have nice law and order in a country, remember, was solidly behind us in NATO, cooperating with us militarily and every way they could. Maybe, you know, why worry about it? That was the thing in the short run, but we were arguing the long run that we are going to pay for this because the Greek people are not happy.

Q: Did you personally have much contact with the junta leadership?

BLOOD: No, and they didn't like -- they liked their contacts with the people who were fully supportive, and they knew that we weren't.

Q: So if the State Department sent you an instruction to see someone at a high level, then you either had had to have somebody else do it from CIA or you went to see somebody else --

BLOOD: Well, I don't think I ever got an such instruction. I don't think Ross did. I think the pattern was the CIA did it. But we had a fellow named -- what was his name -- [Peter Peterson] he was the consul general, who was a Greek-American, and he was very close to Patakos [ph], who was number two in the junta. He often was used for this.

Q: All right. Any last minute thoughts on Athens before we move again?

BLOOD: No, except I think it was probably the most painful experience I had in the Foreign Service.

Q: Had you gotten a reputation by that time as a "troublemaker," if I can ask a direct question?

BLOOD: I don't think so, no.

Q: No.

BLOOD: I think Ross probably felt that I was difficult at times. Of course, you know, I would argue with him about -- sometimes I was trying to protect Bob Keeley who was much, much, much more vehement than I was in his views, but he was working for me, and I was trying to protect him against, you know -- Ross felt he went too far in his reactions to the junta.

A. DAVID FRITZLAN
Consul General
Thessaloniki (1970-1971)

A. David Fritzlan was born in India in 1914. He moved to the United States in 1932, and received a B.A. degree at Northwest Nazarene College in 1934 and an M.A. degree in at the University of Kentucky in 1936. He joined the Foreign Service in 1938, serving in Italy, Iraq, Iran, Morocco, Jordan, Spain, and Greece in addition to Egypt. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

FRITZLAN: That's right. So then I was told that I was going to be assigned to Salonika, Consul General, but that before going I should take a six month course in modern Greek. I tell you it was one of the most excruciating things I've endeavored to do. It was total immersion. The group consisted of a chap who was young enough to be my son, and myself. He was a new Foreign Service Officer, he was going to Athens, I was going to Salonika. But it was a challenge, I worked darned hard on that but it almost drove me around the bend. I gained a considerable degree of proficiency, I must say. Reading a newspaper was hard but I could get the gist of it though. Spoken language is one thing, written language another in many ways is quite different, grammar and all that.

We got to Salonika in March of '70, and left in July of '71. I had a problem with the Ambassador.

Q: *Henry J. Tasca?*

FRITZLAN: Yes. He arrived in Athens just a month, if that, before I arrived in Salonika. My wife and I decided to try to get to Greece by sea. What happened was, I discovered that there were Yugoslav counterpart funds, and that we could travel on the Italian Line to Naples though the Department threw every obstacle in my path that they could think of--the NEA Bureau. Someone told me, "Look, talk to the transportation people." I did, and they said, "Sure you can do that. You write a letter to the Embassy in Belgrade and they'll release counterpart funds to pay for the ticket." We traveled on the "Christoforo Columbo" to Naples, and then went overland through Italy, Yugoslavia to Salonika.

Well, my difficulty with the Ambassador, in a nutshell, related to my reporting. Before I left Washington the desk officer in the Department said to me, "We regard Salonika as an important listening post, and we get political reports from Salonika that on the whole are more interesting than what we get from the Embassy. So please write your despatches direct to the Department with a copy to the Embassy." So, okay. When I got there, pretty soon it became plain that the Ambassador was in total support of Papadopoulos, the head of the military junta that ran Greece, and ran it in a very dictatorial arbitrary way, and human rights were out of the window. I was reporting my observations, and conversations with people--many of whom, of course, were opposed to the regime--who gave me instances of torture and severe punishment without trial, and this sort of thing. Tasca didn't like some of these reports, so he sent through his Political Counselor, who was a new arrival...

Q: *Elizabeth Brown.*

FRITZLAN: Precisely. She called me one day and said, "Oh, I've got to tell you that the Ambassador wants you from now on to send your political reporting to the Embassy for forwarding to the Department." I said, "I've got to think about that." So I sat down and thought about it, and I remembered what the desk officer had told me. I got out the Foreign Service Manual that said, in effect, that constituent consular posts should report political and economic matters directly to the Department by despatch with copies to the Embassy concerned, except in unusual exceptional circumstances. So I wrote to the Ambassador and said, in effect, I have had your message through Elizabeth Brown, and I've thought about the matter. I must tell you that the desk officer told me the following before I left...(I didn't tell him that he got more interesting reports from us than from the Embassy), but I told him in general what he said in regard to my mode of reporting. I said, "Furthermore, the Foreign Service Manual says the following..." So quite frankly I hesitate to change my method of reporting unless you, after consulting the Department, instruct me to do so." Now, I was due for retirement. I knew I was on my last assignment and I wouldn't have wanted another one. I was ready to retire. I'd had 33 years of service, my pension was at the top, just about, of what I might expect. I knew I was never going to get along with Tasca, and I did not intend to compromise myself in any way. I knew that by writing such a letter I was virtually at the point where I might consider packing my bags, and that's more or less what happened in the course of the next six months. I retired then on July 1, 1971, exactly almost to the day 33 years since I entered the Service.

Q: *I was in charge of the Consular Section in Athens at this time and I can say I would have Americans, or Greek Americans, who would come in and tell about torture, etc., and at the Country Team meeting, and the CIA station chief would immediately say, "That's not true. We hear from our sources..." Their sources being the people who were doing the torturing. It was not a grand period in American diplomacy.*

FRITZLAN: It was not a glorious period in our relations with Greece. I know, I had a fall out with Jim Potts, the CIA station chief, and he and I...we were having a drink in his home, and somehow we got on to the matter of our policy in Greece, and we had a most violent disagreement. I'll never forget. Funnily enough, Jim Potts called me a couple of months ago, and I wasn't sure who he was until he told me we'd met in Athens. He didn't say anything about his CIA connection, and he said he wanted to meet me and would I have lunch with him because he had something to talk about that related to Morocco. I said, "Sure." So we met, and I enjoyed a very good lunch talking about events in Morocco when I was there. We didn't get on to the Greek subject at all, and it's just as well. He was then very amiable.

Q: *He was a man who always would cut me down when I would speak about the problems that came through the...I wasn't a political reporter but through the normal dealings with Greek Americans.*

FRITZLAN: I could never have got on with him.

DOUGLAS G. HARTLEY
Economic Officer
Athens (1970-1972)

Douglas G. Hartley was born in England to American parents and was educated at Eton and Harvard University. After entering the Foreign Service in 1956, his assignments abroad have included Copenhagen, Salzburg, Belgrade, Milan, Athens, Rome, London and Brazil. Mr. Hartley was interviewed in 1998 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: Could you explain the political situation as you saw it when you arrived in 1970?

HARTLEY: Well, I think that I was three years into the period of the Colonels and Greece was being run by Papadopoulos and his two buddies, Pattakos and Makarezos. These were three guys who had come from the army, were all colonels, I believe, at the time that they mounted the revolution, so called, and came to power in April, 1967- it was a dictatorship. However, it was not, I didn't think, as hard line a dictatorship as it might have been when it started or as it had been portrayed in the press. I think that in the two years that I was there, if you think in terms of people who, as long as they stayed out of politics, were left alone, then I would say that was more or less the situation in Greece at the time. You didn't hear of too many people being hassled. On the other hand, I had no previous knowledge of Greece nor did I have much time to read up on it before departure. Furthermore the Department in its wisdom declined to allow me language lessons, I had those on arrival but it would have been a good time for total immersion. Those who had known Greece before found the time of the colonels stultifying to political, cultural and creative life. Educated Greeks, especially in and around the major cities, and the diaspora who had left Turkey in the between-war period, looked upon the colonels as a bunch of country bumpkins. It was indeed hard to meet anybody who much sympathized with them. However, many Greeks, I believe, were secretly relieved to have a measure of political stability after the chaos of the Papandreou years. It was a mild dictatorship, but since it was perceived by our liberal press as being fascist, they could do no right, and, as bad as they may have been, they were portrayed as even worse. Dusko Doder, who was a Belgrade correspondent for The New York Times when I served there, told me that he had written an article for The Washington Post in which he had been asked to compare the Ceausescu regime in Romania with the Papadopoulos junta in Greece. He had written an article in which he said almost uniformly that everything was worse in Romania than it was in Greece - human rights, government interference freedom of speech and the press, etc. It was a worse government and it was a much worse dictatorship. When The Post editors received his piece, that they called him and said, "We really can't print this. This is not printable in its present form." He said "Well, why not?" They said "It is not in tune with our editorial policy. We can't say that the Romanian regime is worse than the Greek regime. The Greek regime is well known to be a group of fascist thugs. So you can't say this." Eventually the story was run, but it was very much altered from what he had submitted.

Q: For the record here, I was consul general in Athens '70 to '74, and you're absolutely right. It was a rather inept dictatorship.

HARTLEY: They were laughed at as much as anything. Pattakos had this great cleanliness thing.

Greeks are by no means dirty. They are fairly clean. But he carried it to extremes. There are stories of him rushing out of his car, stopping his huge car. All of us remember these cars because they had these black window shades in the back. They looked very sinister. Pattakos would rush out, and if he caught someone throwing a cigarette butt on the sidewalk, he would rush out, pick up the butt, and remonstrate against it. So after a while, the paparazzi would come by waiting for these opportunities to watch this guy Pattakos making an idiot of himself.

From a job point of view, I was the economic officer, so I was really basically doing what I should do, which was charting the economic situation in Greece, which was pretty good. They had a fairly low inflation rate and there was a steady economic growth. I was also doing all the economic reporting. I did quite a number of field trips. I was working with Milner Dunn, who was the economic counselor and a good boss. We had a house up in Kokinara, up north of Kifisia. Living was pretty nice. There were a few little problems there. I remember at the time we had three cats--I can't remember--and two dogs. They were all being shipped in from the States. As usual, I went ahead to set up the housing and everything. Then my wife and kids came afterward. On this particular occasion, my oldest daughter, Virginia, came with me. We were in temporary quarters until we moved into our house in Kokinara. Anyway, while I was there, I removed my car from the parking lot. The parking lot was right next to the embassy. In those days, there was no control. Anybody could actually park in the parking lot. I moved my car and went to the airport and picked up the animals. When I got back, there was wild confusion. It was that time, about 15 minutes later a terrorist had pulled in to the lot, removed a bomb from the car, and the bomb had exploded in their hands--blown up that whole side of the embassy. Were you there at that time?

Q: Yes, I was there. It was a Cypriot Greek and an Italian leftist woman. Our people were rather upset because I think one of their heads ended up right in the lawn right next to the consular section.

HARTLEY: Well, you were intimately involved in this thing! Well, the ambassador was Henry Tasca. You were with him, too. I got to know him fairly well because Mrs. Tasca, I heard later, took a shine to me as well as to a very golden-haired air attache! This must explain why we kept on being invited to the Residence and to many, very boring parties, including one in which they invited the entire Greek cabinet, not a very animated lot, I can tell you. Most of them (not, however the three stooges as we called the Number One Trio) even showed up, which says something about our importance to them, to see an interminable film entitled, *How the West Was Won*. I remember that they were all practically, to a man, fast asleep when the thing stopped. Tasca was, as you know, for one reason or another, tarred with the brush of being favorable to the regime. He certainly was--I think he had pretty close relationships with them, whether they were beyond the bounds, I don't know.

Q: My gut feeling was that he was reflecting the Kissinger-Nixon theory that this was an anti-communist dictatorship and this is a better to have them than some of these left wing socialists. You had the Papandreous. I mean, I think he was reflecting the administration.

HARTLEY: Yes, I think he was. I think one problem was that Mrs. Tasca, who was a very opinionated Italian lady, and her family, during Mussolini's era, had the garbage collecting

monopoly in Rome which would make them, well, quite fascist. They were, I guess, pretty fascist, or at least that was what I had heard. What with Mrs. Tasca, who I'm sure opined this on many occasions and made her views known. And Henry was not exactly your original liberal himself. The word got around that they were cozying up to the regime. And of course Tom Pappas was very much involved in this. Tom Pappas was a prominent Greek American from Boston who had a refinery in Thessaloniki, among other things. He was very much involved with the regime, and also involved with the Tascas. But I never had any problems with Tasca. The only problem I ever had with him was that he asked me to play squash with him. So I would regularly play squash with him. And go out to the squash courts at the Air Force base there. It had a tin roof and it got very hot. He was pretty good. Normally he beat me, but one day I beat him. I got a call later in the afternoon from his secretary, Gwen something or other. She said "Doug, did you beat the ambassador in squash today?" I said, "Yes, I did." She said, "Well, please don't do it again. He's in a foul mood." It taught me an elementary lesson. I guess I should have known it before.

Q: Did you find in your connections that the Greeks looked upon the American embassy and the ambassador as almost a proconsul. I mean, that everything that happened in Greece was the American responsibility?

HARTLEY: Yes. I think that clearly they thought that. They had a love-hate complex. They loved to blame us for anything that was going wrong. I didn't really get involved in the Cyprus issue, particularly, but I think the Greeks felt that we were tilting toward the Turks. This was before the partition of Cyprus. There was a crisis. Bishop Makarios, I think, was involved in this. Yes, definitely, it was as if we were proconsuls. A lot of the traditional embassy contacts, especially the older Greek hands, were the opposition people. And a few of the older hands, like Dan Zachary, who had been posted to Greece during the old days of democracy, kept in touch with them, but in a very low-key way. However, I was encouraged to make some contacts with actual regime people. I remember I did make contact and got to know one rather spooky-looking guy. He was a junior cabinet member. But this was quite unusual, looking back on it. Even though we had this reputation for being pro-regime in terms of our associations with people at the sub-cabinet levels--on any sort of social basis - I don't think there were that many contacts except for the Tascas. But on the other hand, I wasn't in the political section and, as an embassy, there wasn't much communication between the various sections.

Q: I can't recall really meeting any of the top regime people at all.

HARTLEY: I met them. Aside from the movies at the residence, I attended a number of functions where they showed up. I do remember watching Papadopoulos. He was a very sinister looking little man but he had a certain personal magnetism. He was also extremely ugly, which was like Onassis. I met him during the trial flight of a DC-10 hosted by McDonnell-Douglas, where I also met Danny Kaye and lunched with Donald Nixon. He was there because his son, Alexander, was for a time at the controls of the aircraft. Of course, he was later killed in an air crash.

Q: Yes. I got very much involved in that.

HARTLEY: Onassis was one of those physically ugly Greeks with tremendous magnetism. But he was the kind of person that you knew immediately that he was a presence there. He had very strong features and a very powerful voice. Like Papadopoulos, he seemed to have almost yellow eyes, like a tiger's eyes. I remember in this party, Papadopoulos was huddled with a bunch of his guys and it was like a football huddle. You could see them all sort of gesticulating like this, and this guy flashing these yellow eyes. It was like some primeval - like some science fiction thing, one creature, you know, made up of all these people. Definitely, there was a dynamism about this man. You could see that he was not the village idiot, as he was portrayed, the way most people like to portray him.

Anyway, I had two pleasant years. I had a boat, which I kept out above Glyfada. It as a powerful, if erratic, outboard, and we used to go out water skiing, go on picnics. I had the four children, so we couldn't do as much touring of the islands as I would have liked. We did go to Kos once for a long weekend, which was just wonderful. It was on the Turkish coast. At that time I had the four children. When we left the States in 1970, my daughter was doing very well in the Washington School of Ballet, so we checked and saw that there weren't really any good schools of ballet in Athens. So we reluctantly decided that she should go to England to Tring, which is a school of ballet, a very fine school. She was accepted on Mary Day's recommendation. Then when I got to Athens, I wanted to put my child, Sandra, aged 11, into the Catholic school, the Ursuline Academy, but there were no vacancies. I had heard some pretty bad things about the American Community School in Athens, whether rightly or not, I don't know. We decided, rightly or wrongly, that Sandra should go to a boarding school in England and be with her sister, though not the same school. So that meant we just had the two younger kids with us, and the two older ones in school in England. It was a painful decision. I'm not sure it was the right one, but anyway. We left with the two younger kids. We did a lot of outdoor stuff in Athens, went camping with the kids. It was just wonderful in those days. That was before the Germans had taken over all the beaches with their trailers, before all the building and construction and smog. Even within a couple of hours of Athens there were wonderful places to go. So it was actually a very happy tour in many respects. In some personal respects, it didn't end up very well because that was on the eve of marital problems that had surfaced. Also, in the summer of 1971, I got a disagreeable letter from State telling me that I had been low-ranked - presumably because of Rome and then the economics course. I was shocked and for awhile looked around for some other employment. However, following a favorable inspection shortly before I left post, I was in fact, promoted the next year.

Well, anyway, I was direct-transferred to Belgrade in the middle of what I had hoped was a four year tour in Athens. I was replaced by Lynn Lambert.

Q: Did you have any feel for the almost division within the embassy over how we were dealing with the Greek regime? Dan Zachary took, I know, a very dubious view of what we were doing there. We were too cozy, and all that. Did you have any feel for any divisions within the embassy on this?

HARTLEY: Well, I mean, I think that the apparatus within the embassy was pretty solidly with Tasca. Elizabeth Brown, who was the political counselor, certainly didn't seem to have any ideas, I didn't think, nor any ideological ideas, which would have been against Tasca, nor did our

DCM. But Dan kept up our contacts, which I'm sure proved invaluable to us in restoring relationships following the ouster of the colonels in 1973.

Q: Bob Brandin.

HARTLEY: Bob Brandin really seemed to have little impact on the post. Tasca was definitely in charge and he was perceived as having good contacts with the administration. I know that the regime was rough on the opposition, there was a lot of bad things going on behind the scenes, but I would say that we at the embassy were probably--at least among the senior divisions--pretty much behind Tasca when it came to that. The CIA was certainly extremely suspect for its connections to the regime and to the police and indeed we had some pretty suspicious characters in the CIA staff at that time. What was your opinion?

Q: Well, I only saw some of the differences because I would bring reports in about people who would come into the consular section and talk about having trouble with the regime, including some being beaten up and that sort of thing - not much of it, but some. And the CIA chief, whose name I can't remember now, would always discount it because his resources said it didn't happen. His resources happened to be the guys who beat up people. The other one that bothered me there and has bothered me elsewhere was that there seemed to be far too many Greek Americans in the CIA and in our own military, who tend, as most immigrant groups do the first generation, to be 110 percent very conservative. So they seem to be more comfortable with what I thought was a difficult situation. I wasn't sure where it came out.

HARTLEY: I think that's very true. The people who would come there--every year you had the Sons of Aleppa Protective Association. They were so elbows-out American and almost liked to rub it in the nose, here we are. The women were always bedecked with jewelry, the guys were always big with quite an attitude (as they would say today) hey, we made it, and we made it and you guys didn't. They were intensely conservative and I think something of an embarrassment to the Greeks. But then, alas, there are all too many immigrant groups like that - take the Irish, the Italians, even the Danes, as examples.

LYNNE LAMBERT
Consular Officer
Athens (1970-1973)

Lynne Lambert was born in Ohio in 1943. After receiving her bachelor's degree from Smith College in 1965, she received her master's degree from Johns Hopkins in 1967. Her career has included positions in Athens, Teheran, Paris, London, and Budapest. Ms. Lambert was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in January 2002.

Q: You were in Athens from when to when?

LAMBERT: I went in February '71 and left in summer '73.

Q: What had you been hearing? For the record, I was consul general in Athens from '70-'74 (your first boss). The Greek government was a topic of some concern. It was a dictatorship in the middle of Europe.

LAMBERT: The junta had taken over. When we were there, George Papadopolous, who was the colonel who had led the coup, was the PM.

Q: How had Greece been viewed by those who were looking at Europe? They had been in since April 22, 1967.

LAMBERT: The phoenix rising from the ashes of the...

Q: We all know that date because you couldn't get around it. What were you getting from SAIS and your reading about Greece?

LAMBERT: Next to nothing. As a student, I remember the junta takeover, and there was press about Greece joining Europe. Greece joined the European Community (as it was then called) much after this period, although they were in an affiliate status even under the junta, and membership was on the table. When we were there, Greece was working towards membership, although it took the return of democracy to get them in. Nonetheless, this was an economic goal and one that was being realized by EU-conforming legislation.

Actually, I don't remember Greece being talked about very much or considered very important except as one of the dictatorships in Europe, as were Spain and Portugal, which were somewhat more important to European studies academics.

But when I was preparing to come to Greece, the U.S. government was beginning to look at it as a home port for the Sixth Fleet. We were trying to find reasons to promote Greece and promote our, and to some degree Europe's, relationship with Greece. In addition, Greece was undergoing something of an economic miracle. At least this was the way it was perceived in some quarters. The economy was performing quite well, and there was a fair bit of U.S. direct investment there, increasing as the situation in Lebanon worsened. The economy generally and U.S. investment specifically provided a foothold for the U.S. to find good things about Greece. From the time I got there, I think that we were beginning to take a more pro-Athens stand. VP Agnew was the first western official of stature to visit. And, of course, he was a Greek American, although he did not appear particularly tuned into Greek customs or the language. He visited for about five days, in October 1971. It was a major event. The Greeks turned out the whole country and basically paved all the roads and readied themselves for this state visit, which was the way it was treated. I remember everybody in the embassy had little roles to play in the visit, as we do now, and I was the gifts officer. This involved traveling with the entourage, following behind the Vice President, and accepting gifts for him. And there were many gifts – ranging from a vase from the Archaeological Museum, the Greek Government's gift, to gifts from Greeks on the streets. Many people on the streets wanted to give him something, because they were proud that a Greek rose to the Vice Presidency of the United States. Most of the gifts were modest, like little hand crocheted doilies or homemade honey. They would stand on the streets and hold them out.

Q: That was very touching.

LAMBERT: It was.

Q: When you arrived there, there was a rotational program?

LAMBERT: Yes.

Q: Your first job was in the consular section?

LAMBERT: Yes. I spent some time interviewing for and processing immigrant visas and then moved to the non-immigrant. I never did American citizen services except when you gave special projects, visiting prisoners mostly, to junior officers. I think it was a little less than a year that I spent in the consular section.

Q: What was your impression of the Greek immigrants that you were seeing?

LAMBERT: That was a little bit depressing. The non-immigrants that we were refusing visas to were often quite educated, spoke English, were on the ball, whereas the immigrants usually came from villages. They certainly didn't speak English; I never met one that did. I thought they had less preparation to contribute in America, or even to make it, than the non-immigrant applicants. This said, I realize that Greek immigrants never went on welfare, that they always had large families who took care of them and who had businesses where they didn't need to speak English. I know the first generation worked very hard and had a difficult life, often working several jobs and living in crowded conditions. But they immigrated for a better life for their children, and more often than not, the second generation went to university and took on a white collar profession. But from my vantage in the consular section in Athens, it looked as though we were sending the wrong people.

Q: I had the same impression. This was the most unpromising group of people that we were sending and yet you know at the other end within a generation, it would be "My son, the orthopedist." They went for the two things that immigrants do: property and education.

LAMBERT: That's right.

Q: They had the hive right on the ball. It was the damndest thing. You look at those Greek villages where it was rocky soil and the men sat around and drank coffee and the women worked.

LAMBERT: Yes. We had one case that disturbed me especially, and we appealed it to INS and lost. The consuls who supervised me, George Phillips and Dick Kowtski, were supportive. The applicants were a retarded, illiterate husband and wife who had a retarded daughter and an infant who presumably would be retarded. At that time, immigrants were excluded for a number of factors, including illiteracy and retardation. It was an appalling situation. Apparently I made them so nervous that the man lost control of his bladder in my office. They had relatives who were sponsoring them. It was a P-5, or brother case. But the brother living in the U.S. sent a petition in pretty illiterate English and didn't have much of a job. We challenged this, but INS

approved the whole family on the basis that they would all derive status from the infant, who we could not prove was disqualified. That was the worst case I saw, but I saw others that were kind of in this ilk. It was just amazing to me what successes they made.

Q: The Greeks certainly end up as entrepreneurs and they weren't entrepreneurs when they were in Greece.

LAMBERT: I know. They were anything but.

Q: Anything but. It was something. How did you find the Greek nationals?

LAMBERT: I thought they were excellent. The Greek employees in the consular section were mostly people who had been with the embassy since the war and probably all retired at about the same time. After the war, working for the embassy was one of the high status jobs in Greece. By the time we got there, it wasn't. But we had attracted a pool of very well educated, dedicated people. They were terrific to me. They invited me everywhere outside of work. When they had a country home, they'd invite me there. But on the job they were interested in educating me from their perspective, especially when they thought non-immigrant applicants were not telling the truth. They were a fabulous group of people, especially Tasoula and Laila who helped me with non-immigrant visas..

Q: That was a very powerful team. They ran that.

LAMBERT: They certainly did. They certainly thought that every non-immigrant applicant was a potential immigrant. They thought very few of these people, except for the shipowners, should even get visas. Tasoula would say, "He's a peesant. Why would you give him a visa?" They were really hardline. But they were so much fun.

Q: Did you get to any prisons?

LAMBERT: Oh, yes. We had a number of Americans serving time in Greek jails. I was allowed to do jail visits every once in a while, sometimes on weekends, sometimes during work. I really enjoyed the opportunity to travel to different parts of Greece, see the conditions in jails, and hear what the prisoners had to say. We had a number of young Americans arrested, mostly for drug charges. The major detainees were older and had been involved in a plane that was shot down with a full cargo of dope.

Q: It was a two engine plane. It was forced down in Crete. This was big stuff.

LAMBERT: This was big time. I visited those guys.

Q: I went to that trial. The plane was just loaded with bales of hashish from Lebanon. Not one of the people aboard, though I think there were three or four crew, had seen anyone put it on board.

LAMBERT: Or so they said. I took them a bunch of newspapers, magazines, and books. They

basically said, “Well, if it’s yesterday’s news, it’s yesterday’s news. We’re not interested in that.” I think we took peanut butter and crossword puzzles, too. I paid for them myself. I remember them. Didn’t they get off with fairly light sentences?

Q: Somebody paid somebody somewhere. I was astounded. These were big time...

LAMBERT: They had high-priced defense.

Q: Yes, and they knew how to push the right buttons in Greece.

LAMBERT: But some of the younger ones had much stiffer sentences for just marijuana. I remember one kid who was sent to Europe to recover from his depression, got arrested for marijuana, and eventually committed suicide in jail. I visited him several times, and his situation was just shattering. We and his family worked for an early release, although he had been detained a while. He was on his way home. He jumped off the top of a hotel.

Q: He climbed up the outside balconies. Somebody was bringing him to us.

I’ve always felt guilty about that. I think all of us didn’t know, but he was coming to us. I think we sent a car or something. His friend was going to bring him to us. All of a sudden, he broke away from the friend and climbed up the outside of an apartment building or something using awnings and balconies to climb up to the top and then jumped off. It’s just awful.

LAMBERT: I remember visiting him quite a bit and being very disturbed about his situation. In the beginning, he didn’t want us to contact his parents. He was certainly under 21, which was a minor then.

Q: This was a period of time when Greece was right on the circuit. Many people during this particular time were doing their Wanderjahr. Many were getting caught in minor drug things. The Greeks weren’t very sympathetic to this.

LAMBERT: Yes.

Q: You moved from the consular section. What was your impression of consular work after that?

LAMBERT: I was very discouraged by the immigration system. I realize that it succeeds, but I did find it discouraging when I was there. I thought that the American Citizens Services provided very good services to American citizens. Of course, you saw the people that were in trouble, and whatever we did, it was never enough.

You’d buy things for the prisoners out of your own money and give some time and thought to the purchases. But it was never good enough. Whatever they wanted, you just couldn’t deliver... If they wanted a doctor, you’d have to get them a list. We didn’t recommend individual doctors, but our customers wanted to know the best. I found this a little bit hard to deal with, but I think the service was good. I think the people that did it then and do it now should take quite a lot of satisfaction in the service they provide.

Q: Then you went to the economic section?

LAMBERT: Yes, I had three jobs in the economic section.

Q: What were you doing?

LAMBERT: In the beginning, I was doing industry reporting. We did a lot more reporting in those days. My job was abolished, and I moved to be the assistant commercial attaché. Then the person assigned to do the macroeconomic job was more interested in commercial work, so he became the assistant commercial attaché and I became the economic officer. I did economic trends reporting, balance of payments and budget analysis. I had contact with American businessmen interested in the economic climate, with Greek bankers, and with a number of people in the foreign and finance ministries – even though I was a kid of 27.

Q: You were talking about Greece doing quite well economically. One of my basic impressions was how inept the military government was. They would pass laws that sounded good but didn't make sense. They didn't seem to be taking hold of things that you would think an efficient military government might. On the economic side, was it a different matter?

LAMBERT: Well, they had some things going for them, which were partly of their own creation. There were two quite advanced at that point foreign investment laws. One allowed regional headquarters to operate out of Athens, and it included numerous advantages, for example, these companies enjoyed tax-free status. The other, which gave even more advantages, was for companies making an industrial investment in Greece. So, we had quite a lot of interest and a number of American firms coming to Athens then. Apparently, they got along very well with the government. Their reports were almost uniformly very positive. In addition, the wealthy Greek groups, the shipowners and other wealthy Greeks, were investing in Greece and seemed to view the government positively, at least the economic climate it created. So, with that much investment, you got pretty good technology transfer, a lot of employment, and well paid employment. Greece was able both to grow and to keep the inflation somewhat under control during this period. Balance of payments with the inflow of foreign investment was pretty good. Businessmen certainly considered the atmosphere was considered pro-business.

Q: Did you get any feel within the embassy as a junior officer... We had an ambassador, Henry Tasca, who became quite controversial. He was considered quite close to President Nixon. As a matter of fact, his daughter came and spent Christmas one time with us there. Was the embassy divided between those that felt we were too close to this junta and those that were kind of content with how we were working?

LAMBERT: Yes. There were a number of people who felt that the new policy of rapprochement with the junta for the sake of home porting was not a winning proposition. I think they felt that the freedom of the press, human rights, democracy issues, were certainly not as advanced as they should be for us to entertain such a close relationship.

Q: To say the least.

LAMBERT: Well, this was a little before our consciousness on these areas. But that we were basically embracing the junta in ways that we should not have done. We could have had the home porting and some leverage at the same time. I think that this was a view that was held by a number of people, certainly most of the younger people. I didn't know what the more senior people in the embassy thought. In those days, the political counselor was "Miss Brown" and the DCM was "Mr. Brandon." You weren't even on a first name basis with them. These were things that you did not debate with your superiors, but we hotly debated it with everybody under that. One or two American officers thought the discipline the junta provided was necessary and that Greece had failed in its democratic efforts.

Q: On practical grounds, I was one of the screamers about "Let's not have home porting." I thought that bringing the Navy and the Greeks... Bringing 3,000 men into the area was not going to be a happy mix.

LAMBERT: Well, that was another point of view. I think my own was more that the home porting was at more sacrifice than it should have been in a policy way. I think we paid for it later.

Q: I think we did, too. Of course, what was driving it was that the Navy was having a hard time retaining its crews. It wasn't political; it was a manpower decision. They thought that if we got home porting and put families in Greece, they would have more people reup and just stay on the carriers of the Sixth Fleet.

LAMBERT: Absolutely.

Q: How long were you in the economic section?

LAMBERT: From fall 1971 until I left in the summer of '73.

Q: You didn't go to the political section, did you?

LAMBERT: No. In those days, your rotation was in two sections – consular and one other.

Q: On the personal side, you got married. I recall your wedding.

LAMBERT: Yes. I married a Foreign Service officer who worked in USIA and became a tandem. I got married in the economic counselor's garden.

Q: I ended up giving two people away while I was there, one a Czech escapee who met her husband to be. They arranged for her to take a tour of Greece and she peeled off, so we got her married so she could get back. The other one was in the courtyard of the embassy. All of a sudden, I found myself giving away the bride in a Jewish ceremony.

LAMBERT: My understanding was, at least the way we got married, that Greek law required a religious ceremony. You basically had a civil signing of papers and then you had to have a religious ceremony as part of it.

Q: What was your feeling in '72? Was this what you wanted to do?

LAMBERT: Oh, yes. I had probably joined thinking I'd do one tour or two and see the world. But I thoroughly enjoyed the work. I thought and still do think that the collegial atmosphere, the people you met and the people you serve with, especially overseas, offer the greatest bonds of friendship imaginable. Certainly at that time it was true, and it's been true since. I was married into it, so in a sense, we were both pretty committed.

Q: Was this your husband's first tour?

LAMBERT: Yes.

Q: Some people say that the Foreign Service is a pretty good club. They're interesting people. The Athens crew is one that sticks in my mind more than others as a particularly solid group of people.

LAMBERT: I've known terrific people at all my posts. I invariably liked my fellow officers, and we had a lot in common. Fellow FSOs have proved some of the most energetic, intelligent and provocative people I've known. We did things together. We saw the country together. We shared in life experiences. We were far from home and supported each other when things went wrong. And we became a community, certainly. I think the Foreign Service offers such a rich community overseas that even when we return to Washington, it's still kind of our family. But I also think that they were very intelligent people working very hard and trying to do the right thing. I felt so all through my career. It's been very gratifying to know people like that.

DIANE DILLARD
Junior Officer
Athens (1970-1973)

Diane Dillard was and raised in Dallas, Texas. Although she has made two trips to Europe that whetted her appetite for foreign travel, it was not until she met someone in the Foreign Service that she realized she wanted to work overseas as well. She has also served in Mexico, London and Lebanon. She was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 7, 1990.

DILLARD: ...It was a mill. Athens was, of course, my first tour as a consular officer. You may recall that at that time the consular course was an intense period of trying to memorize the FAMS, as they're called, our manuals of operation. That meant studying well into the night, or falling asleep and getting up at 2:00 a.m. and studying.

So when I got to post, naturally, I didn't really know a lot about the work. I hadn't had hands-on training at FSI. In Athens I had two very difficult colleagues who tended to abuse the applicants, and I sat in with them on immigrant visa interviews, and I thought, "I can't do this work if this is

the way you have to do it. I cannot treat people like this if this." But then the chief of the visa section came along and did some interviews with me and was certainly a professional, and I thought, "I can do this."

It was a very good training program. I gained experience in both non-immigrant visas and immigrant visas. We had an excellent supervisor for training junior officers. She required that we make extensive notes, which were reviewed, and if she had questions, they were discussed with us. So we learned to do it right.

Q: *Who was the supervisor?*

DILLARD: It was Lois Day. She was just superb. The immigrant visa work was -- as I said, two of my colleagues were kind of hard on people, so if they got me, the applicants were most grateful and kissing the hem of my garment. They'd say, "Go for the little one!" [Laughter]

Q: *I might remark that as we sit here, Diane does not tower over me. [Laughter]*

DILLARD: So then those two people left and more ordinary people came in. I trained the new ones, and the applicants really didn't have the respect for me that they had had before. They'd come in very nonchalantly. So I realized that I wasn't wonderful; just by comparison I was wonderful. I got to learn a little bit about citizenship and welfare and whereabouts, and I had a brief stint as the personnel officer. There wasn't a rotation program, per se, in the embassy at that point. It was a very good training, because when I got to Monterrey, I had to just step right into the work. It was just an incredible situation.

CHARLES STUART KENNEDY
Consul General
Athens (1970-1974)

Charles Stuart Kennedy was born in Illinois in 1928. He served in Germany, Saudi Arabia, Yugoslavia, Vietnam, Greece, South Korea and Italy as well as in the Department of State. These are extracts taken from a private memoir and from an interview by Victor Wolf, Jr. on July 24, 1986.

KENNEDY: An example of the weaknesses of a dictatorship or government by decree was the matter of the port tax. Greece is a wonderful country for yachtsmen, full of quaint little harbors, hundreds of islands, usually good weather and a pleasant ambience where yachts people can sit in the little square by the dock, drink ouzo and watch the world go by in a relaxed way. Now the best thing about yachts or ships or boats is that they are always needing repairs. The saying that a "boat is a hole in the water into which you pour money" had real validity. This has meant that a country such as Greece benefits greatly from all these yachts people, most of them being retired and living on modest vessels and having to pay the ships chandlers, the shipyard owners for repairs, the diesel fuel people, the grocers, the ouzo dispensers and so on for their goods and services. It is a nice system and Greece had been doing well by it for years. Enter the colonels

and it nearly was destroyed. A delegation of angry American boat owners came to see me. The same scene was being duplicated in the British, French, German and other embassies. It seems that there had been a stiff port tax decreed back in the 1950s that had, for good reason, been ignored for years because it only drove away the lucrative boat trade. Someone in the Greek government came across this tax and thought he found a great way to raise revenue from all those rich foreigners lounging about on their palatial yachts. Of course the only really rich people on palatial yachts were Greek shipowners who were practically exempt from taxes because of their influence. Most foreigners had modest boats and modest pensions. Without checking with those who understood the situation, the military officer who was now a cabinet member declared that not only that the port tax would be collected from now on, but all such taxes dating back to the 1950s would also be collected. Had there been a parliament the deputies from the port cities would have hot footed it over to the Ministry of Finance and educated them on the nuances of revenue destroying measures.

The main fact about boats is that they can leave; they are not like houses stuck in a particular local. The American boat owners wanted me to do something as they really did not want to leave Greece, but were quite prepared to weigh anchor and head for the ports of Turkey, which was the nearest alternative. Technically there was nothing I could or should do as a tax was a tax and any government could levy one and demand payment on delinquent ones. In this case I did feel it was worth a try to nicely let the Ministry of Finance understand that it was being stupid and would be ruining a nice profitable trade for its port people, and to discreetly point out that the only people to profit from this action would be the Turks - anathema (another nice Greek word)! The other consuls did the same and reason eventually prevailed, no retroactive taxes were collected, a modest port tax went into effect and most of the foreign boat people settled back on their deck chairs, except for a few who had already fled to Turkish waters and stayed there.

During the port tax fiasco I ran across a phenomenon that kept cropping up in various ways and that was the use of the "flags of convenience" by Greek-Americans. The wealthier Greeks traveled all over the place, but mainly to New York, London and Paris. Greek hospitals being what they were and Greek politics also being what they were, a Greek with money would often have his wife go to the United States to have a baby. That gave the child U.S. citizenship which was handy if the always volatile Greek political situation got out of hand and also for various tax purposes the child's citizenship could be used as a gimmick. In the port tax business I found that a good number of upstanding Greeks had registered boats in the names of the infant American citizen children so that they could benefit by a special tax exemption on liquor and cigarettes for foreign boat owners. Some of our American citizen boat owners, it seems, were consuming five cartons of cigarettes and six bottles of Scotch a months, even if they were under five years of age. I found it difficult to get exercised on the behalf of this crew. Again and again I found that some of those Greek-Americans who were permanently settled in Greece were constantly trying to use their Americaness as a tax shelter. My great joy was to tell one of these people who came in to have me get some tax law changed or get around some Greek regulation was that I agreed with them wholeheartedly, that it was awful that they had to pay those taxes or obey those regulations, and that luckily I had a solution. With eyes beaming in triumph they would ask me just what the solution was? Then I would look very earnest and say "Go home, go back to America and forget all the business about living in Greece". Of course these were people who wanted the best of both worlds, American protection and Greek ease of living and had no

intention of going to the United States. I should not have gotten so much pleasure out of tweaking the noses of these people, but they were not an admirable crew and you have to take your fun where you can find it. I have to add that the great majority of Greek-Americans who had resettled in their native land were honest, simple people with no messing around with the tax laws, it was just this one group of opportunists who tried my patience.

The problem for us embassy folk was that many of the Greeks opposed to the colonels' regime blamed the United States for it and believed that our most normal activities were in some way designed to shore up the dictatorship and perhaps in some obscure way to help the Turks to the detriment of the Greeks. Naturally it was forbidden to attack the government in the newspapers, but, within bounds, it was all right to go after the Americans. Hence every activity of the American ambassador was reported with speculation as to what that activity meant in terms of Greece. While the opposition to the dictatorship used the United States as a whipping boy, the colonels were not cozy or comfortable with us either. These men had not come from the ranks of the upper class sophisticated or the well-educated intelligentsia, they did not speak English as did many in the two aforementioned groups but belonged to a regimented and narrow part of the Greek military that had few contacts with anyone outside that circle. Their origin was rather humble and they identified more with the xenophobic peasants in villages rather than with the city folk, of whom they were distrustful.

The American news media pretty well reflected some of the prejudices of the Greek opposition in that American policy was portrayed as being far more supportive of the Greek regime than I felt was justified by the facts, but the Nixon administration was in power and the American news people pretty well assumed the worst, that we had not only been the willing sponsors of the 1967 coup (during President Johnson's tenure) but were hand in glove with the colonels from then on. It made a good story and was easier to portray than the efforts of an American administration that was not happy about developments in Greece but did not see how sitting to one side in a pout would do any good at all, and we did have what we considered vital security interests in the area.

We were sort of stuck with Greece no matter what government was there because of its position in the Mediterranean. We had three major military facilities there, a logistics airbase attached to Athens airport which was useful for transit flights from the Middle East to Europe as well as a major repair point for our transport aircraft. We had an Air Force Security Service outfit on Crete (my old *alma mater*) which apparently was in a good position to monitor certain transmissions in that area. We also had a firing range for our various military aircraft on one part of Crete. This was used by the pilots of all the NATO countries. Our navy had a big communications base near Marathon, about twenty-five miles from Athens. Then we had a few U. S. Army artillery outfits scattered about the north of Greece with nuclear weapons. Now Greece was a part of NATO and all the members of the alliance were supposed to be concerned with preventing the Soviet Bloc from taking over further territory in Europe or the Middle East. The Greeks, however, viewed NATO in its own peculiar way. By snuggling under the blanket of NATO it could indeed protect itself from the communists, who were detested by most of the population after what they had done to Greeks during the 1945-48 civil war. But the real purpose of being in NATO was to counter the Turks, who were also members. This joining an alliance with those whom you consider to be your mortal enemies is a bit Kafkaesque, but such is the way things were in that part

of the world. The Greeks did profit from this arrangement in that they did get quite a bit of armament and other military equipment from us to be ready to fight along the Bulgarian and Yugoslav borders, but their forces were concentrated more towards the Turkish one. Everything up in Northern Greece area is crowded together, but obviously the potential enemy was expected to be Turkey, not Bulgaria. The Greeks knew that if they were not in NATO we would be arming the Turks anyway as the Turks did have major concerns about the intentions of the Soviets. As it was we had to balance everything so that the Turks and Greeks were getting roughly similar equipment at the same time.

While I enjoyed most of my four year tour in Greece because it was a nice place for the family, I loved the house, and my job was both interesting and one of considerable responsibility, I was really glad to leave when our tour was up, mainly because of constantly having to deal with what was almost a national paranoia regarding Turkey and the feeling the United States was to blame for all that was bad in Greece, including their homegrown dictatorship. The Greeks never seemed able to acknowledge that they were responsible for some of their own troubles, it was always the other guy's (the United States') fault.

During the four years I was in Athens our embassy's country team consisted of pretty much the same players. Our ambassador was Henry Tasca, a former ambassador to Morocco; he was an economist with excellent ties to President Nixon. The story was that while Tasca was ambassador in Morocco Nixon came on a tour shortly after he had been defeated in a bid for the governorship of California which followed in turn his defeat by Kennedy in the 1960 presidential campaign. At that point Nixon was pretty well written off as a has-been and so treated, but while visiting Morocco, Tasca rolled out the red carpet and Nixon was duly grateful. Whatever his past services, I'm not sure the gift of the embassy in Athens was such a prize as the poor man was constantly under fire from the news media in the United States; the American side accusing him of being too cozy with the colonels and the Greek side looking for some indication that he was doing something underhanded against Greece. Listening to the man and observing his actions during my time in Greece, 1970-74, my impression was that he was doing his best in an almost impossible situation, but trying through persuasion to make the colonels mend their ways and make Greece more palatable to the outside world, especially the American public, by easing up on the various restrictive measures it had instituted against its opposition. He made little progress, but I doubt if anyone could have turned these men from their repressive course, but no one was willing to give Henry Tasca credit for trying, including many of his embassy officers. Part of the problem was that Tasca was conspiratorial by nature, and no one knew just what he was doing or thinking. The media does tend to give no benefit of the doubt and to always assume the worst. I suppose this makes their product more commercial. Ambassador Tasca was also catching fire on the home front. Mrs. Tasca was a difficult person, putting unreasonable demands on the embassy staff. She came from a wealthy Italian family (the wealth was rumored to have derived from her father getting the Roman garbage collection franchise under Mussolini) and she tended to treat the Americans and Greeks working for the embassy as her personal servants. We naturally avoided her like the plague. The Greeks that were hired as servants for the ambassador's residence did not take to her at all and let her know. Out of a staff of about five or six, over one hundred occupied these jobs during the Tascas time in Greece, due to her firing people or their quitting after she started screaming at them. There was one story that after one such tirade the ambassador's Greek chauffeur drew himself up and said, "Madam, you might

treat Italians like this, but we Greeks will not stand for it" and quit then and there.

The country team met about once a week and we would hash over the problems of the Greek scene. I found that I was often presenting a different perspective to the ambassador about the actions of the Greek government against the dissidents. Because there were so many Greek-Americans living in Greece or long-time American residents there it was inevitable that we consular officers would hear quite a few specific stories as to how Greeks in opposition to the government were treated, especially by the Greek military police. In a word they were treated badly. This was at variance with the picture presented by our CIA station chief whose sources of information were too closely tied to the regime, albeit an anti-communist one, to look at the matter objectively. Our military attachés were also by necessity close to the Greek military. The situation regarding getting reliable intelligence about internal conditions inside Greece was also warped because of the Greek language. It is a hard one, coming just a bit lower down the scale of difficulty than Finnish or Hungarian, and not easy to master. It seemed to me that we had a disproportionate number of Greek-American officers in our military and intelligence services assigned to Greece and they were used extensively to shore up our contacts with the Greeks in like capacities. I realize I am generalizing, but my observation was that many Greek-Americans were not only excessively patriotic towards the United States, but also tended to be patriotic in the conservative, right wing mold, which made them sympathetic to the colonels' regime, which was authoritarian and anti-communist. They tended to accept the word of their official Greek counterparts. At this particular post at this particular time I think it was helpful for the ambassador to hear the stories of possible torture that were passed on to him from his consul general.

In Greece I was faced with the dilemma that consuls have around the world, how to maintain our integrity in dealing with a system that moves in part by corruption. I would have the parents of young Americans caught with narcotics come to me to ask my advice regarding the payment of bribes to judicial officials. These payments would be suggested by their Greek lawyers, and the Americans would want to know what to do. I was under strict instructions, as are all U. S. consular officers, to reject out of hand any suggestion that a bribe be paid for anything. That is a fine standard but often does not deal with the real world where a young stupid kid might spend several more years in jail than he would have if his lawyer greased a few palms at a modest rate. I could only tell the Americans that it was our government's policy not to recommend or encourage the payments of kind that were not legal. Then I would say that I really did not know if such payments would be effective and they might be counterproductive, but the parents should use their own judgement. They often financed the lawyer to make the overtures to someone in the justice system hoping that the sentences could be lighter, but it was an iffy proposition. What this did point out was that for all the great pronouncements from the colonels about cleaning out the Aegean stables of corruption in Greek society, nothing had really changed from past practices.

There was another prison case that I worked on extensively while I was in Greece. An American named Roger Ranney was serving a double life sentence in the prison on the island of Aegina near Athens. His crime was to have supposedly killed two Greek sailors back in about 1960. He had originally been sentenced to death, but the execution was changed to the life sentences. I visited him in jail and found him almost impossible to deal with as he accused me of being an

FBI agent and after my first visit would have nothing to do with me. We had large files on his case and I poured over these. There was also a FSO, Dan Zachary, the embassy's commercial officer, who as a junior officer had attended Ranney's trial ten or more years ago. Dan was a good source to understanding the circumstances around the trial.

The facts were that Ranney had posed as a wealthy American, he hired a medium sized fishing boat crewed by two Greek seamen. They set sail and touched several islands. There was a storm and the boat was found sunk off an island with no sign of the crewmen; their bodies were never found. Ranney, however, was caught at the Athens airport some days later getting ready to leave the country. He had not reported the sinking and gave no adequate explanation of his actions or what happened to the sailors.

There was a big trial with the Greek papers proclaiming Ranney as a Chicago gangster, he did have a minor record of having an illegal gun in the United States at one time. From the Greek papers and from Dan Zachary's account, the trial was a circus with the lost seamen's wives wailing and trying to claw Ranney as he came into court. No real motive was ever established except that Chicago gangsters just naturally kill Greek seamen. If I were to hazard a guess I suspect that there may have been a quarrel between Ranney and the two seamen over some smuggling deal in which they all were obviously involved and they tried to kill him, but he won out. This is only speculation, but makes more sense than other scenarios. Anyway the man was convicted on flimsy evidence, there was no proof he had killed anyone, the sailors may have just skipped off somewhere or been lost at sea, although I lean to the 'thieves falling out' theory.

I was concerned that Ranney was apparently getting more and more removed from reality and that if anything was to be done about him, time was running out. His mother was still alive and could help. At first the ambassador was reluctant to get involved or to have the embassy approach the Greek government on behalf of this not at all loveable character, but he kept an open mind. I suggested that he have a panel of officers look at the file and to make a recommendation; he agreed to this proposal and the deputy chief of mission, Bob Brandon, political counselor, Elizabeth Brown, and the economic counselor, Milner Dunn, all read the file. They agreed that the case against the man was hazy and that it made sense to try to get him out now rather than later when he would be basket case. The ambassador gave me the go-ahead and I went to the Minister of Justice to make my plea. He heard me out and promised to have the case reviewed. It was and there was absolutely no give on the part of the Greeks. I tried again several years later with a new minister, but again with no success. As far as I know Ranney is still in prison.

Besides attending regular trials, I also had to deal with a highly publicized political case involving Americans, it was the Lady Fleming caper. Lady Fleming was the widow of the British discoverer of penicillin, Sir Arthur Fleming. She was Greek and while she had the British title which gave an extra media appeal to her actions, she really was principally interested in things Greek. She took up the cause of the man who tried to blow up the prime minister (ex-colonel Papadopoulos). The would-be-assassin was a man named Panagoulis who had been serving some very difficult years in a Greek military prison. As I recall it Panagoulis had actually escaped at one point but was caught and put under much more stringent guard. Now I held no brief for the colonels and their leader, Papadopoulos, but assassinations are not the way go about bringing

change (with the great exception of Adolf Hitler). From what I gather about Panagoulis was that he was a real fanatic and danger to more than just dictators. There is no doubt he was a courageous man. An Italian writer, Oriana Fallaci, wrote a sort of a novel about him in the late 1970's called *A Man*.

Panagoulis became sort of a symbol to Greeks and others opposed to the colonels of the continuing resistance to their dictatorial rule. Lady Fleming organized an escape plot to get him out prison and out of the country. This was all well and good but she recruited two Americans to help her. One was a theological student sent by, I believe, the Presbyterian Church to study the Greek Orthodox religion. This young man was to be the "wheel man", i.e. to drive the getaway car. The other was a woman in her late 30s, born in Greece, married an American, went to the United States and then either divorced or separated, and returned to Greece. The theological student was obviously way over his head in a political situation which he only understood dimly, caught up in the glamour of being recruited by a someone holding a title, such that it was, and also coming from a generation that expected political activism from the clergy. The woman was much more committed to the cause, but I believe that the principle form of recruitment for her was in the bed of Panagoulis's brother who was in Italy and who worked his wiles on her.

The plot never really got off the ground and all the parties were arrested and a court martial was called to hear their case. Prior to the trial I went to the military police detention facility where my clients were being kept to see how they were doing and to keep the Greek MPs from roughing them up. The young theological student was bewildered and scared, but all right. The woman was not in the best of shape, but there were no signs of beatings and she made no complaints; of course, there was a guard with us. I really don't know the full story of how she was treated as she never talked about it later. My impression is that the brutal guards, and the Greek military police were that, tended to be even more brutal towards women than with men, getting some sort of perverse sexual kick out of being given almost *carte blanche* to treat a female as they will. Certainly this was true in Korea and I suspect that she had a very difficult time, perhaps not so much with beating up as with other forms of indignities.

I had some difficulty at the military facility which was under the control of a man whose name I mercifully forget. He tried to give me a lecture on how we poor Americans had no idea of the communist menace and that the present government of Greece was upholding the true values of the West, etc., etc. I took some pleasure in pointing out that we certainly did understand the Communists that I had fought (a significant exaggeration) as a soldier in the Korean War against the evil Red Forces, and that I had just returned from Saigon where I had helped in our attempt to stop the Communist menace there. I found that having these fairly solid anti-Communist credentials were helpful in dealing with the right-wing police-type people and was not shy about displaying them when it would be helpful.

Naturally there was a great deal of interest in this case by the international news media, mainly because of the involvement of Lady Fleming, whose title and the name of her diseased husband (she was his second wife) had lots of sex appeal in the public area. The U. S. embassy and ambassador felt quite a bit heat from this matter, not only because of the two Americans involved, but because everything that the then Greek government did that was at all controversial, and prosecuting some one with the title of Lady seemed to be somehow not

sporting and was damned good press copy. We were not helped by the fact that our embassy was only about 200 yards from the Greek military police headquarters where prisoners were kept and often mistreated. A lot of newspaper articles would lead off with something like "At Greek military police headquarters, next to the American embassy, prisoners were tortured, etc." the inference being that our propinquity somehow meant our approval of their methods.

The court martial dragged on for hours with little dramatic happening despite the press people crowded in the courtroom thirsting for a major confrontation. A British consular officer and I also attended the trial. The American theological student was shown to be a rather naive victim of the other plotters and was given a suspended sentence and deported from Greece. Lady Fleming and the Greek-American woman received sentences of several years, but because of political pressure from the United Kingdom Lady Fleming was expelled from the country after a few months leaving my poor charge holding the bag for about a year or so before she in turn was expelled. This case pointed to one of the unfortunate facts of political life, and that is that if a person is prominent enough he or she can get away with less punishment than is given the ordinary slob who breaks the law.

My experience with the Greek military was not a happy one. The military police had only contempt for the democratic process and were the power behind the throne in the Papadopoulos regime so were not susceptible to pressure from the embassy re the treatment of not only the few Americans who fell in their grasp, but also would not pay any attention to the warnings that our ambassador, as well as other NATO ambassadors gave that unless Greece showed a more tolerant and democratic face to the world its support as an ally was jeopardized. As it was Greece's main military importance was its geographic position and not its armed forces.

My job as consul general entailed a good bit of representational work, i.e. diplomatic receptions, having dinner parties or going to them. Then there were the Greek-American societies. There were two of these in Athens, one was AHEPA (American-Hellenic Protective Association) and the other's name I forget, but they were at odds with each other with personality clashes at the top, so I had to be careful to give equal attention to each since both watched me with eagle eyes. Naturally the rest of the embassy was happy to delegate to the chief of the consular section all representational activity with these organizations. They had next to no value to the embassy since they were mainly composed of elderly Greeks who had lived in the United States and then returned to their homeland. They were nice people with little interest in politics, either in Greece or in America, who just wanted to keep a tie to the United States while living in Greece. I would go to two Thanksgiving banquets, two New Years ones and other such parties around the year. I recall dozing through some introductory speeches at a Thanksgiving dinner when without warning the formidable lady in charge of the festivities said "And now our beloved consul general will explain the story of Thanksgiving to all of us" and thrust the microphone in my face.

At one New Year's celebration I was sitting next to the dance floor at the table of honor. Right next to me was a Greek bishop in his full regalia. He spoke no English and my Greek never got past the rudimentary stage so we spent a great deal of time nodding and forced smiling at each other. The entertainment came as a surprise; it was a Greek girl of magnificent proportions who did a belly dance and most of the time was about a foot from the bishop and me. I don't know if he had any problem but it was quite an act of will for me to keep a dignified face while all this

young lady's equipment was being shaken in every direction possible, and in some cases almost not possible, within a few inches of my face. It seems that the best belly dancers in the Middle East were traditionally Greek from the large Greek colony in Alexandria, Egypt, and the tradition had been maintained. Belly dancing was considered, and rightly so, an art so even bishops could enjoy it, provided they kept poker faces.

Q: Then from Saigon, you went to Athens, where you were consul general from 1970 to 1974. Of course, this was right at the height of the colonels, the fairly repressive regime. I gather by the time you got there, the King had already fled. In what way did consular work and movement of peoples relate to the general problem of Greek-American relations at that time?

KENNEDY: Oddly enough, very little. We had a great deal of trouble with Americans, particularly Greek-Americans, who came back and would demonstrate against the colonel's regime, Papadopoulos and company. They had a referendum in which the King was deposed. But the Greeks left Greece for economic reasons, and these were almost always the poorer classes. Many of the wealthier Greeks had taken precautions over the years to be sure that they had a safe haven, and they still continue to do it. If they had any claim, they would get themselves a green card and go to the United States as an immigrant, but then often would return to Greece -- these are people with money -- to continue their business, but just in case trouble came, they could keep the resident alien card in their hip pocket and be able to leave in a hurry.

As far as any feeling that the Greeks were leaving the country because of political reasons, no. There might have been a few. Some of the better known exiles and all would leave for France or England, and some to the United States would stay as non-immigrants and carry on anti-colonel regime activities.

Excerpts from Victor Wolf, Jr. interview on July 24, 1986.

Q: All right, Stu. We concluded with your service as consul general in Vietnam, '69 to '70, and we're going to talk now about your work in Athens as consul general there from 1970 to 1974. You started off in Frankfurt, then you went to Dhahran, and then to Belgrade, and then to Saigon. How come Athens?

KENNEDY: It was a fairly big consular job, and you know how you belong to a bureau of one type or another, and I belonged not to a geographical bureau, but to a functional bureau. My rank and experience was appropriate to the job. Also, I think, at least from the consular side, it was, okay, this guy has been in Saigon during the war, and he's done his duty and Athens is a just reward. As we'll get into it, Athens was more difficult in many ways than Saigon because of the political situation there.

Q: Can I pause a moment, because you make an interesting point. Do you conclude that the skills you acquire in your specialized field of consular work are pretty much equally translatable to any portion of the globe at any particular time?

KENNEDY: Frankly, yes. There's always the language problem. But as you know, Brandon, it's difficult to combine technical skills and language ability. Greek is a very difficult language, it ranks pretty far up the line as do Vietnamese, Japanese, and others. So in the best of all worlds you'd have a Greek speaker in the job. But, irrespective of that, basically in the functional bureaus, I only know the consular bureau, but one's reputation, and reputation is built one's work, is a major factor in assignment. If you goof up too much, if you cause too many problems you will be kept away from supervisory jobs. In consular work, the Bureau expects a certain knowledge of consular matters, but also of ability to manage and to work within a foreign situation. I think this is how the consular bureau functions. If somebody is a Spanish speaker, if they're a Spanish speaker with consular expertise they're thrown into what I would term the black hole of Latin America, and never emerge again. This is being unfair, but it's sort of the reputation it had, but other than a Latin American specialist, as a consular officer you're somewhat transferable around the globe.

Q: By the time you were sent to Athens as consul general, you'd been in the Foreign Service for 15 years. Do you think the training you received in the consular function was adequate to your needs and professional development at that point in your career?

KENNEDY: Well, training is the wrong word, experience.

Q: I was talking about formal training at the Foreign Service Institute.

KENNEDY: The only formal training I'd had since I left the A-100 course, other than the languages, was one week in what they called the mid-career course, which I found very good. I can't remember when I took it, I think it must have been just before I went to Saigon. That course exposed me to the thinking of people in other specialties, particularly those in the political cone. As a consular officer I was used to dealing with problems, and we were given problems to discuss and solve in the mid-career course. Most consular problems have to be taken care of right away. You can't mull it over and write about it. You say yes or no and do what you have to do. I found that the problems that were presented by the mid-career course were mostly ones dealing with people. The political officers didn't seem to make the decisions very quickly or easily. I mean they would see all sides. Most of the problems were, do you fire somebody?, do you get rid of them?, or do you do something of that nature? I may have been a bit blithe about our theoretical firing. This is the consular approach, rather than see all sides and then wait. In a way this training for me was very helpful because I realized, maybe the consular outlook was somewhat different than that of Foreign Service officers in other specialties.

Q: So what you're saying, Stu, 15 years in the Foreign Service, you had the basic training for junior officers, the A-100 course, and then a one week mid-career course, and no specialized training in the functions of consular work.

KENNEDY: That's exactly right. I think we've gotten much more sensitive over the years and there are many more courses, such as how to negotiate, how to work in the Washington bureaucracy. We rely too much on our officers picking up what they need to know on the job.

Q: Let's get on to the political situation in Athens, and your experiences there as the senior person in consular affairs. How would you describe that situation? What were your biggest problems? But first of all, who was the ambassador at the time you began your tour in Athens?

KENNEDY: Henry Tasca had a mixed reputation. He was known as a hard taskmaster. He had befriended Richard Nixon when Richard Nixon was out in the wilderness when Tasca was ambassador to Morocco, and this was in a way his reward. Colleagues told me, "Oh boy, you've got a real problem going out there." Frankly I didn't. I found Henry Tasca, from my perspective, a good boss. He left me alone. I had one spot of trouble, and he backed me up...which we can get to at another point. He had a difficult wife, an Italian wife who was very demanding, and went through, I think, over 100 servants at the residency and this caused all sorts of turmoil. Her being Italian, and trying to treat the Greeks like real servants, and the Greeks don't take kindly to the Italians. "We beat the hell out of you during the war, and don't try that on me." It wasn't a good mix.

I might mention the political situation. The political situation was really difficult, and it had very strong reverberations in the consular side. On April 22, 1967 a group of colonels had a coup, led by a man named Papadopoulos, his number two was a colonel named Patakos. These colonels were anathema, using a good Greek word, to the academic, the liberal community in the United States, as they should have been. I make no bones about it. Greeks are a difficult people. They might have invented democracy, but they're not very good at it. The real problem was for us was, do you play ball with these people, or do you put them at arm's length? Most of the European countries, Germany, France and England, kept them pretty much at arm's length. We didn't, but, of course, the other countries had the luxury of they didn't have much stake. We did because Greece is a key player in NATO, against the Soviets. It's really more their real estate than their army. We had a major communications center near Athens, and also on Crete. There was a NATO bombing range we used, and we had a home porting. The fleet used to come in there quite a bit, and we had artillery outfits armed with nuclear weapons up along the border. So we had a real stake in it, so we could not afford to throw them into the outer darkness. The other European countries could posture about how they would not have much to do with the colonels while they depended on us to keep Greece from becoming a loose cannon.

Q: Tell me about, to the extent that you are comfortable doing so, about the role of our intelligence agencies in Athens. By all accounts this was a particularly deep involvement on the part of both the CIA representatives, and DIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency.

KENNEDY: This was my only solid exposure to this. I wasn't reading most of the political reporting done by the embassy and the CIA. In the consular section, we would have people coming in off the streets, Greek-Americans, and we would be picking up stories about the Greek military police beating up people. It wasn't awful, I mean really awful compared to most other totalitarian countries, but it wasn't good. This was not a benign dictatorship. I would report what I'd heard at country team meetings. Our CIA station chief would immediately chime in and say, "Well, that's not quite the report we get and we know this didn't happen." Well, the problem was the CIA station chief was in bed with the guys who were beating up the Greeks, and sometimes Greek-Americans. To my mind it was too close a relationship. On the Defense Intelligence Agency you had the same problem where we had a superfluity, in my belief, of Greek-American

military officers, they spoke Greek. But the problem is, as with most immigrant groups, and I think the Greek-Americans tend to be very conservative. They're 110% American, but at the same time they're also 110% Greek, and much more comfortable with the right than the left. Most come out of peasant stock and from the countryside when they were in Greece, or their parents were. So they were comfortable with the military, and power, and they can talk the language, and the military was running the country. I think this was a danger.

My predecessor, as consul general there, was a man named Pete Peterson, whose family name probably was Patropolos. He spoke fluent Greek. By chance he had been a neighbor of Patakos, who was number two in the regime. So he was the principal contact there. This was one of those fortuitous things, but at the same time Pete Peterson was a very strong supporter of the colonels, they promoted themselves to generals thereafter. I found that local politics was even translating into visa matters. It was a very complicated political situation in Greece after the war. The communists were mean sons of bitches, and they would come into a village and you either joined them or they'd shoot you, and they kidnapped thousands of children and sent them off to the east bloc as hostages to be trained there. So people up in these little villages were really under the gun, what do you do? Do you stand up and get shot, lose your kids, or join up. There was a lot of collusion. This was during the Greek civil war, from about 1944 up to 1950 or so.

But anyway, when it came time to issue visas to these people in the 1960s and 70s, many of them had to say, or it turned out, yes, they were somewhat very marginally involved with the Greek communist movement in their villages. Well, we'd had advisory opinions from the visa office, and you could make allowances for this. But Pete Peterson would make no allowances. This was very much the hard nosed, first generation Greek American. Much more rigid, and much more less understanding. "My family didn't do this, so why should they?" So I found myself sort of getting us in line with what I consider practical thinking as far as whom we would exclude because of communist activities, and whom we would not. It was a real wrench changing this around. This is how this political relationship intruded into normal consular operations.

Q: Tell me about the spot of trouble you referred to earlier. What was that?

KENNEDY: I have to tell a little story. My wife has always been interested in French, and French culture, and the Comedie Francaise was coming to Piraeus, the port city of Athens. She said she would love to see that. And I said, "That's fine dear, maybe you can find somebody to go with you." So she went with a couple in the consular section who spoke fluent French, and were also great Francophiles. She parked the car outside a hotel in Piraeus near the auditorium. It had a license plate on it, it was a Chevy, which identified it as an American embassy car, a diplomatic plate. After the performance when my wife got in the car she put the key in the engine and turned it on when a bomb went off. It was a little bomb, but it was not a little-little bomb. It had been placed on top of a tire of the rear wheel, so when the bomb went off it was in an enclosed place and it blew open the wheel well, and spewed parts into the trunk. The woman who was with Ellen happened to be on the side of the car and got a little nick on her ankle.

Q: Was your wife injured?

KENNEDY: No, my wife wasn't injured. It was outside a hotel, and they called the police. My wife called me and immediately said, "Oh, darling something happened, but I want to tell you I'm all right, there was a bomb in the car." Well, my normal instinct as a good male was, okay, my wife's talking and I wanted to find out what the hell happened to the car. But my brother's wife had been hit by a trolley car one time, and he made the mistake of asking about the car before he asked about her. And I had learned from this experience, so I said, "Are you all right darling?" "Oh, yes, I'm fine." And then, "How about the car?" Anyway, the car was all right except for the hole in it.

I might as well finish off the story. The police came and they were looking around, and the police said, "We think it's all right now. You can drive the car." To show her it was all right they tried to turn on the engine. Well, they weren't used to an American car, and they tried and tried, and made everybody stand back, and finally my wife said, "Let me do it." So all the police stood around while she turned the key on, and it started.

The police eventually found the person who had put the bomb in the car; it was a pediatrician who had gone to Harvard Medical School. In true, from my biased point of view, Greek fashion, to protest, he didn't pick on the Greeks allied to the colonels, he picked on the Americans. I found the Greeks difficult because they tend to blame everything on another person.

Q: Did they blame all this on Harvard?

KENNEDY: Well, the Greek pediatrician, Harvard trained...he set the bomb off in an American car. The pediatrician, by the way, treated American children. This was his odd way of protesting.

Q: What was his motive?

KENNEDY: Raise general hell, and show the Americans the Greeks didn't like what we were doing in Greece in support of the colonels, I think.

Q: Do you think he intended to kill anyone?

KENNEDY: No, I don't think so. But it was dangerous, it could have hurt somebody if they'd been in the wrong place, or it had fallen off, something could have happened. Anyway, they found him and put him in jail and some Americans came to see me, and were protesting the putting in jail of this man. They had no idea why he was put in jail. So I explained to them he was not an American citizen, these were some people from Harvard, or from Cambridge, Massachusetts. I explained the situation and they were going on about how awful it was. And I said, "I have a personal interest in this. The son of a bitch put a bomb in my car when my wife was using it." But they still went on at great length paying no attention to what I said; they were talking about appeals, and somehow or another at some point I said, "You've got to remember that Greek justice is basically Balkan justice, and it's a little different than it is in the United States." There was an article that appeared in the Christian Science Monitor a week or two later, saying the U.S. consul defends regime. And "He said Greek justice is Balkan justice." Well, they didn't give a damn what else had been said, but concentrated on the fact I had linked Greece to the Balkans. It was in the headlines. "We're not Balkans," was in all the Greek papers. In a way

they were able to get out the story against the colonels through my words. I spent a couple of bad days while the Greeks were fulminating over this particular phrase. And Henry Tasca stood by me, and it went away. So I give him credit for this, he didn't run scared.

KENNEDY: Turning to Greece, yes we had immigration, but again, it was pretty standard stuff. Those people who were in opposition and wanted to get out, many of them had money, and got out anyway. They often had green cards. They would be eligible for visitor visas and all. The ones who caused a little more trouble than that, were the seaman. Many Greek seamen would go on ships the first time, and then jump ship. They would get jobs such as painting the Statue of Liberty, all the illegal aliens. Many Greek restaurants in the United States were staffed with illegal immigrants, mostly Greek. Then, sometimes they would try to marry an American girl. There were a lot of adjustment problems with them. So, the immigration program didn't show the desertion from Greece of people who were unhappy with the dictatorship. Where we had a real problem was the Greek Americans, or just plain Americans who came over to demonstrate against the Colonel's regime.

We had one case I remember where there were two Americans. One was a Greek American and the other was a plain American. He was a theological student. A man named Alexander Panagoulis, I think was his name, tried to assassinate the prime minister of Greece, Colonel Papadopoulos by setting a bomb off. It didn't work. He was arrested and was kept in jail. There was an attempt to free him with the widow of Lord Fleming, the man who was one of the co-discoverers of penicillin. His widow, his second wife, I think, was Lady Fleming, who was Greek. She came back and she put together a plot to free Panagoulis. It didn't work. But, they were all caught. This theological student, who I think was from a Presbyterian or Lutheran seminary, had gone over to study Orthodoxy, had been enlisted in this hairbrain scheme to be the wheel man, the driver of the car. I think he was overwrought by the fact that Lady Fleming was there.

There was another woman, who was a Greek American, who had come over. She was involved in it much more deeply than the young man. They were all arrested. I went to the court martial and heard the testimony. Lady Fleming got out of it. They expelled her, because the British made a big protest, but leaving some smaller fish to be trapped. The military police were running it. I had a hard time getting in to see these people. The military headquarters of the military police was just a block away from the embassy. That is where they did a lot of the nasty stuff. I was finally able to get over and to see the Greek American woman and the theological student. He wasn't much bother. She had been, if not beaten up, given a very difficult time. The military police weren't very nice. So, our idea was to mainly get to see them and to at least keep tabs on them so that the police were aware that there would be repercussions and protests and all that. I think the upshot was that the theological student was given a suspended sentence and kicked out. The Greek American woman was kept in jail, I think, for about six months, and then suspended. We had some others who would come over. It always seemed that it was on the weekend when I would get a call from the police. Sometimes it would be treated in a light way. There was a vote, yes or no, on a new Constitution. Of course, everybody was supposed to vote "yes" on the Constitution. An American was over there with a billboard in Constitution Square with a sign in

Greek, saying, "Vote oxi," which means "no." It was on Labor Day or something like that, and I had to go down and tell the police I would get them on the next plane, and send them out.

There was another American girl who somehow got involved with a Greek activist who was plotting the overthrow of the Greek government, but in a very amateurish way. Remember that this was during the 1960s, or the early 1970s. There were a lot of students from the United States. She came in with something called the *Guerilla's Cookbook*, or something like that. It was put out by the same people who did the Whole Earth Catalogue or something of that nature. But, the cookbook told you how to make Molotov cocktails and all this stuff. It sold like hotcakes at Berkeley and other places like that. It was a how to do it thing, but she came in with this damn thing and the police got her. They arrested her boyfriend. He was a deserter from the military anyway. There she was...

Q: Their military or our military?

KENNEDY: Their military. So, I got called in. My wife was overjoyed when suddenly I arrived with this guerilla girl. The police said, "Okay, instead of putting her in jail, which you would rather not, if you will take her and see that she gets on the plane tomorrow." I thought, "Okay." I arrived home with this young lady, complete with lice in her hair, from the little time in the jail. It's an interesting life for a wife of a Foreign Service officer, particularly a consular officer. This was the type of thing we would get very much involved in.

Greece was sort of at a meeting point between the Near East and Europe. It was the time of American, you might say, more affluence than perhaps there is now. We had an awful lot of young people who were taking either the summer or often a year or so off to find themselves. They would drift all over Europe with their knack sacks and America's express checks and guitars. Those that didn't have support from home would get it from their friends, who were getting support from home. Many of them would congregate in Athens, particularly on the islands, Crete, Corfu, and other islands. The colonels did not take a very tolerant view of dealing in drugs. Drugs in those days was hashish, which is a stronger form of marijuana that is grown in Turkey and other parts of the Near East. If they were caught, even with a small amount, they would usually end up in jail for a year or so. We always had 10 to 20 in jail. Now, I understand they bring them all and put them in jail in Athens. But, in those days, they were jailed pretty much where they were caught, which was usually on the islands. In a way, it was sort of fun to get out of the office. But it also got to be a pain in the neck, because it is not always easy, particularly during the winter, to get to those islands. But, we made a point of going to every trial and sitting through these trials and showing the American embassy's interest and support. Usually, what would happen is they would get a year or two. After maybe eight or ten months, they would be released. There were several interesting cases. One was an airplane, two passenger-type plane, which was tracked from Lebanon, where they caught it loading hashish. It took right off. There was a search all over the Mediterranean for it. They landed for gas on Crete, where the plane was seized. There was a crew of five and all of them claimed at the trial that none of them noticed that in the back something like 1,000 kilos of hashish had been loaded on board the plane. Somehow, they all happened to be looking the other way. There was a long criminal trial. The way the Greeks would do the trial was that it would start in the afternoon, and continue until it was over. I think we got out of there at 3:00 in the morning. Everyone was

exhausted from this. It was difficult for us because as an embassy representative, we were supposed to be doing what we could to interdict the supply of drugs. At the same time, as a consular officer, I had the responsibility for protecting Americans when they got into trouble. As a matter of fact, I caused a bit of a stir, just because I was the consular officer. The ambassador said, "Well, Stu, why don't you also be the drug representative?" The idea was to stop the flow of drugs. I told him that I couldn't do this because this was wearing two hats. I couldn't very well go out to the Greeks and say, "Look, you have to be tougher on drugs." At the same time, run around and say, "Please help these poor Americans who are caught up." I avoided it. It was given to, I believe, somebody in the economic section. In many places, the consular officer wore both hats, which I think was a very bad mistake.

This particular crew in the airport ended up in jail but they didn't spend very long in jail. As a matter of fact, they spent a pretty short time. I think they were there for about four or five months before they got out. I can't prove it, but there was obviously a payoff somewhere.

Q: Maybe you would rather not know.

KENNEDY: Probably not, no. As a matter of fact, this would happen to me sometimes. A father or mother would come and say, "My son is in jail. I'm sorry for what he has done but I want to get him out. I understand you can pay off people here." I would say, "You have to understand my position. I can tell you very honestly that I don't know whether it will work or not." In other words, I was telling them that I won't say that it positively won't work. At the same time, it's conceivable it might be counterproductive. I told them I couldn't tell whether it would work or not. I would say, "Just don't tell me what you are doing," which I found much better than trying to figure out how it worked out.

The Greek colonels came in to clean up the stables and all that. It probably was better for us than it had been before. I was very disillusioned with a dictatorship, having watched the Greek colonels in practice. It really is rather an inefficient way to try things. It sounds great, because here are people and they only want to strengthen their country, leaving aside their strict moral code, which isn't my moral code. With some of the other things, you think it might be somewhat effective, but it isn't effective. It really doesn't work because somebody gets an idea, they do it, but they don't understand all the ramifications. They do it anyway, but by the time they have done it, they discovered it doesn't work. To give you an idea, they found that there was a port tax levied on foreign ships that came in. Well, Greece has a lot of harbors and a lot of people with money. Boats come in and put in, and cruise around the islands and all. Apparently, this tax had been promulgated in the 1920s or something like this. Nobody bothered collecting it. So, they decided to collect all the back taxes. There were screams and yells and everybody headed for the Turkish ports. Eventually, they came up with collecting a modest tax, but no back taxes. But, it was that type of thing. In other words, they didn't do it in a rational manner. It scared the hell out of everybody by making some stupid move.

Q: Was Henry Tasca your ambassador then?

KENNEDY: Yes, he was the ambassador the whole time I was there.

Q: Because he was our ambassador in Morocco. My husband always thought he was a very creative man, a very agile thinker. But, he didn't exactly call things right on the colonels, or what happened exactly?

KENNEDY: I can't tell you. I was not privy to all the things that were going on. I was on the country team with him for four years. In the first place, they put him in to represent a new positive policy from President Nixon toward the colonels. It was not embraced completely by any means, but we go through this backwards and forwards. We are going through this with South Africa today: (1) Do you cut off ties and sit in the corner and suck your thumb and say I'm not going to talk to you or, (2) Do you try to moderate the system? He was sent there to try to bring the colonels around to a more democratic form of government. We weren't unhappy as our policy went with an authoritarian government in a NATO country, as opposed to one which we were afraid might be open too much to the left. The left has always been rather strong in Greece. Rightly, or wrongly, probably wrongly, but I'm not exactly sure what we could have done, he tried to deal with the colonels in a positive way. In other words, to nudge them toward more democratic government. It didn't work very well. These things usually don't. It's hard sitting on the sidelines saying, "Why don't you do this and why don't you do that. This would make good sense." The colonels have their own agenda. Suggestions of the United States aren't very high up on their list of priorities. There were other things that perhaps one could do. That is the equivalent of sanctions. Nobody else was really doing much. We were under the sheets in bed with them whereas the Brits and the French were in the bed with them, but lying on top of the blankets and partially they were opposed to the regime but did business with it. There was a deliberate attempt by the United States to influence events in Greece.

Q: Did Tasca go along with that approach or was he just, there again, carrying out policy?

KENNEDY: He was there carrying out policy. I think he was probably of a fairly conservative nature, but he didn't like what was going on there. I know that at country meetings, we would tell him what we were seeing. For example, because of my position, I would see people who were in opposition to the government. I wasn't deliberately going out to do this, but people were getting into trouble, so I was bringing back reports to the jail. People were being beaten up and all this. With the CIA and the military, my feeling was that their influence wasn't very good with the ambassador because they tended to see this government as a positive thing because they were getting what they at least felt was a good plug into the Greek intelligence apparatus, which is always a pleasant thing to have. I think we have some of the same problems with the Israeli intelligence. When you develop this relationship, it's fine, but this means you are tied a little too closely for the government. In some cases, particularly in the Greek case, this was bad. So, the CIA tended to "poo poo" the bad side of the frugal treatment of the military police. Our military had somewhat the same impression. Things were going fine for them. The military was basically happy. They were promoting the officers because they were strong anticommunist and all that. Our political people were trying to meet other people. It wasn't as though we were living in isolation. The Greeks are very talkative. We were talking to people in the opposition and keeping as much tabs on them as one can. It wasn't very difficult. I give Tasca full credit for working hard in a very difficult situation. Another ambassador might have been protesting back and forth, I think with little resolution, except to make him feel good about himself. But, he was calling things as they were. I will give Henry Tasca full credit for supporting me at a difficult time, my

only brush with the press.

There had been some bombings around, anti-Colonel bombings. They caught a couple people who had set off a bomb in some cars. One of them was a Greek doctor who had been a pediatrician in Harvard, or at least taught there. People came from Harvard to see if they could help him. They came to see me. I wasn't the best person to be seen at the time. I didn't come across very well. The problem was that one of the bombs had gone off in my car, just as my wife was getting into it. It was a small kind device. My wife and another officer and his wife went to see the Comédie-Française in Piraeus. I decided to stay home and read. When they came out, just as my wife got into the car and put the key in, the bomb went off. It was a small bomb put on the tire, in the rear tire wall. It wasn't inconsequential, but it didn't do much damage. Nevertheless, it ruptured the tire well, and blew parts into the trunk. It actually took a nick out of the leg of Jenny Kautsky, another consul's wife. Anyway, the police came. Actually, Ellen drove the car home, but they had put this bomb into an American embassy car as a protest. The thing I found rather despicable about the Greeks was that they were all blaming other people. But, if they wanted to bomb somebody, they would bomb foreigners, rather than their own. If you want to do it, bomb your own bloody military. But, they wouldn't do that. We were targets. These people from Boston came to hear about this poor pediatrician who was unjustly put in jail. I did mention the fact that, after all, I'm not as sympathetic as you might think. He had bombed my car. If it had been bigger, my wife could have been seriously injured. But, that didn't penetrate these people, because they had a different agenda. Anyway, I made a remark about Balkan justice is not exactly the same as Anglo-Saxon justice. I was saying Balkan justice, because I had served five years in Yugoslavia. That got into the Christian Science Monitor, page 23, "High Embassy Official Calls Greek System Corrupt," or something. It mentioned that term "Balkan justice." The Greek corruption thing didn't bother them a bit, but the Balkan justice thing was in the Greek paper. There was an editorial that said, "We are not Balkan." I told Tasca what happened. He wasn't too happy, and wished I had kept my mouth shut, but he gave me good solid support. I think more highly of Henry Tasca than many people do. He was sort of a conservative and a hard charger, but he had a difficult job. He also had a very difficult wife, too. He went through more than 100 servants, some of them several times, during the four years they were there.

Q: Did she spend much time in Greece? She was really often absent in Morocco.

KENNEDY: She was back in Italy most of the time. When she was there, there was always servant trouble, having the house redecorated and all that. She wasn't very popular, but she wasn't as awful as some of the well-known stories of the Foreign Service ambassadors wives. She really didn't mess around too much with the wives. She would stay out of their affairs and was a phenomenon. You could watch from the sidelines, without tanking. She was pleasant to me. She would have preferred to be doing something else.

Q: That was so long ago that I was layered. As you say, I could watch her objectively because it was the heads of the sections who were having to cope with her. I have always wondered about... There must be something that makes a woman react that way. Whether it is insecurity, or whether she didn't want to do the job. She had a profession, didn't she?

KENNEDY: Yes, she was a professional architect. I know you are doing this study of the wives.

I was thinking about this before, and I've talked about this many times. I should really use the term "spouses" to be completely accurate, but most of the time we have been in the service, it is wives. I'm not sure whether they are a plus or a minus in the business.

Q: You mean, wives per say?

KENNEDY: Wives in the Foreign Service. There is a real problem.

Q: But, we exist.

KENNEDY: No, no. Without going into all the details, the women are put into a very difficult position, being there, and having to be subservient to their husband's career for a long time. Some wives have been superb in their support. I can name a good number of cases where if you talk about so and so to people, they will respond, "Oh, yes, I know his wife." The wife is far more important to a post than a husband, but also, going back to what I was saying before, so many wives, particularly when they have power, ambassadors' wives, particularly, can absorb so much of the energy of the embassy and meeting their demands of redecorating, getting the right servants, and all of this. All of which I feel is wasted effort.

Q: You feel it is wasted effort?

KENNEDY: A lot of this. It's nice to have the place looking nice and all this, but to redo this... You wonder, is this frustrated ambition? I feel sorry for people thrown in a situation. At the lower level, think of watching this, how many men that you know find the administrative problem of keeping the families happy and all that, overseas. They devote how much of the effort of a mission to the administrative tale, which is keeping the wife happy, the kids happy, making sure the house is all right?

Q: It's the administrative tail in the Foreign Service that is wagging the mission dog. It really is. That I have some doubts about.

KENNEDY: Absolutely. Well, I mean, the conflict there. Rather than, "Go to your office, and do your job. If the lights don't work, you worry about that. Get the lights fixed, and then get on with your job." Of course, much of our business is entertaining, but entertaining, I have always felt that it could be done at restaurants or somewhere else. I don't know. I have a mixed feeling about it. It is not going to go away. I think things have changed a bit, and that you are having more and more people in for a shorter time. Again, it is more mixed, male and female officers are coming in, who aren't making a career of it, and aren't married, or the husband or wife is not following. They are entertaining elsewhere. I'm not sure that it makes that much difference, but it is not going to go away. It never went away, and we did not have the system the British used to have, where basically, you didn't get married until your late forties. Then, you married, usually a woman much younger who was so overwrought by being put into this position, that she was docile, until she had been around long enough to create the same trouble our ambassadors' wives started to create. It is a mixed bag.

Q: In my interviews of the older women, I find no questions of their role. By and large, they were

happy. It was an adventure. Now, whether this was the background they came from, they had a tendency to have come out of private schools. They were brought up in, perhaps, a sophisticated family. It isn't until you get to my generation that you get the rumblings, because of course, they paid their dues. Then, 1972 came along and cut everything out from under them. We were made independent individuals, but in a sense, what happened to us was that we were just cast adrift.

KENNEDY: Once you question it... Looking at it, from a practical point of view of the tremendous effort, not just effort, but the tangible administrative effort wasn't that great, but the efforts the husband had of keeping their family happy while they were trying to do their job and all this. As time went on, at least there was a time when you could expect the wife to be a good soldier. This is a bad term these days, but I think in many ways, there was more contentment on both sides. Do your own thing, this meant often sniping at their husbands and being unhappy.

Q: What do you think of the situation at our last post where I was working at the CLO, and the consul general's wife was in the Visa section? The administrative officer's wife was running the commissary. The political officer's wife was the nurse. The DCM's wife was on the switchboard. She alternated the switchboard with the communicator's board. There were times when we had 100 percent spouse employment and there was no one out in the community to do the volunteer work. I worked half a day. I had mornings in the office and afternoons out at teas and doing the traditional role. Did that breed happiness or are we...

KENNEDY: But, you know, you are really talking about something that I'm finding today, here in Washington, as you are, most of the husbands and wives are working. Everybody is working now. Conditions of life have not improved, I don't think. There is very little entertaining. People don't get together. I know my wife comes home from teaching, and she is working with papers until 11:00 at night. She is exhausted. This is what she gathers from colleagues. This is very much the case.

Q: The quality of life.

KENNEDY: The quality of life has changed. It requires everybody to work. There was something about the homemaker taking care of the children was very important, but also making a pleasant place to come home to, where we both could enjoy. That's gone.

Q: How much of this is the mindset of the times? How much of it is actual financial need because of foreign service sellers? I have my opinions on that, too. I would like yours.

KENNEDY: The thing is, if I see the phenomenon is not at all restricted to the Foreign Service. It takes more money to raise a family and two incomes are needed.

Q: Yes, it does.

KENNEDY: So, whether it is the mindset, but the problem is that just to have a house, which was sort of the middle-class dream, just takes a lot of work.

Q: It was an achievable goal.

KENNEDY: It is a middle-class reality. It requires both people to be working.

Q: You think it does now?

KENNEDY: Maybe not, but the cost of housing and all has gone up proportionately, I think, much more than the other thing. The cost of college for kids, but not having as many kids. There are some things. Some of it is mindset, too. In other words, can you settle for less? Overall, I would say that the quality of life has gone down. It has gone down, obviously, in the Foreign Service. It reflects families elsewhere, too. As far as the volunteer work, there is not as much time for it.

Q: There is a pattern that is beginning to develop as I interview the older women. The really older women, like Mrs. Arthur Bliss Lane, Mrs. Elbrick, Mrs. Spaid, they all live in and pal around Dupont Circle, in that area, because that was the social place to live when they were young and going into the Foreign Service. The next age group lives in Georgetown. There is quite a little colony of people in their early seventies in Georgetown, because at that time, they had been in the service long enough to buy houses over there, when houses over there were \$18,000 and \$20,000. The next group gets out to Bethesda and Chevy Chase. From then on, it's the suburbs.

KENNEDY: Yes, I'm sure it is the suburbs. I feel somewhat, I won't say bitter, but I expected at this stage that I would have a house in Chevy Chase, an ability to take fairly extensive vacations or trips to Europe, and my wife would not be working. That just isn't the case. This is true of most of my colleagues.

Q: Is this the Foreign Service? Is it that our salaries are not high enough, or is it just society in general? Everybody has the same housing problem. Well, no they don't have the same problem we do. We have friends who are leaving Alcoa at Alcoa's request. He is coming down to take a job here in Washington. Alcoa is just paving the way for them to buy a house here and relocate. The Foreign Service doesn't do that.

KENNEDY: No, it doesn't. For our 35th reunion, which I didn't go to... I graduated from Williams in 1950. They sent a questionnaire around asking what your salary was, among other things. In my class, they had something like \$147,000. In the first place, the people who answered something like this are the people who have done well. I took a look at that thing and said, "My God!" At that time, I was getting about \$70,000, which is the absolute top of the State Department pay grade. No stock options, or anything like this. I can't plead poor mouth, but I'm just not living the way I thought I would be living. I look to my parents type generation, and I thought I would be leading a genteel life when I got out, and I ain't. But, I don't want to overemphasize this. It's happening to most Americans. You can look at some of the people. I don't know what happens when they leave Alcoa, whether they will have a good pension or not, but the great majority of people, husbands and wives are having to work. So, the State Department is only following the trend of most middle-class, upper middle-class. I'm using the financial, rather than the social sense.

Q: What are we going to do about, and can we do anything about our mobile lifestyle, which makes it virtually impossible for a woman to develop a career and really have the financial input into the family that her peer who stays here have? Are we going to lose good people that way? I have a young friend who is a career development officer for the junior officers. He says really the attrition rate is not all that bad, contrary to popular opinion. Once in, people have a tendency to stay in.

KENNEDY: It's hard to get jobs. There was a time when the world was your oyster, I think, during the 1960s and early to mid-1970s or something. There was a feeling that one could pop back and forth. But, now, because of economic conditions, it's harder and harder for college graduates to get a job. The economic imperatives are keeping people more onto the job. I think what you are going to see are more and more people keeping one eye open for opportunities elsewhere. I expect they are not going to find them. It's not very easy to move from the Foreign Service, into something else. There used to be a time when elite universities and the business were interested in getting, but this isn't the case anymore. There was something in the Foreign Service Journal just the other day. It was an editorial on this fact. A few people can parlay an ambassadorial type of assignment, but a normal Foreign Service officer, no matter how well they have done, I have found that nobody gives a damn about the Foreign Service. I haven't made strenuous efforts, but I from time to time would try to seek outside employment and found that nobody is really very interested. At least the people to whom I have talked.

Q: Is this because we have spent so much of our lives abroad, out of the mainstream here?

KENNEDY: We are government workers, and we haven't been involved in business. Unless you are going to be with something tied completely to the government where you are bringing expertise, they want people with proven business ability, whether it is in sales or financial management and all that. If you are in the universities, the universities' salaries aren't that high. Universities pay professors about the GS-13 level. So, the universities are not going after our people, because they have their own. People have used Fulbrights or have traveled. Their professors go abroad every summer and they probably get around and do as much as we can do. Business people shy away from hiring people from the government. We don't have the same training. We are not very employable, unless you come in for four or five years, and then drop out very quickly, and make your move somewhere else. But, back to your main question of what do you do about the Foreign Service families? I don't see any real solution except split tours, and more divorces. I didn't like being in Saigon for only 18 months, apart. That doesn't work very well.

Q: I imagine that you and your wife were a team, and worked as a team for years and years and years.

KENNEDY: Oh, yes! That makes it much stronger. We were fortunate because we were both a team. When we got married, my wife was seven years younger, we had three children, bam, bam, bam. There was no question about her working and all this, but the bill came due some years later because my wife went on, got her degree, got her masters degree. She had not graduated from college when we got married, so she went to the University while I was in Vietnam, and raised three kids. Then, she started working on a teaching career, which was fortunate because

you can carry it around. She taught in Greece and she taught in Korea. But, again, at a very, very low salary. Overseas schools don't pay much. Then, she came back here, got her Masters degree, and is now teaching in Fairfax County schools, but at a great cost, to try to put this together.

It has been working until now. There is sort of the new morality. I know in Korea, you had a good number of unmarried young officers who had live-in girlfriends. They would move to a new place, and new girlfriend. In a way, there are security problems. But, at least it served to at least keep the troops pacified. I know there are some cases where female officers have the same arrangement. This meant they were unmarried but getting some of the delights of home. Basically, it's that little montage, but if we are going to get a little tougher on the moral side of things, it is no longer accepted that you can have a girlfriend in the house, or a boyfriend in the house. It's going to make it more difficult. I don't see how career people both can travel and serve abroad. You have to make sure you marry people who both are able to pass a very stiff, very selective exam. The odds are terrible on that unless you make sure you marry within that group for the survival of a marriage.

Q: Then, they go to the larger, more attractive posts, because that is where you would find a slot for both of them. Or they have to be separated, and one goes one way and one goes the other.

KENNEDY: I think it is going to split a lot. It's not a very satisfactory situation.

ELIZABETH ANN BROWN
Political Counselor
Athens (1970-1975)

Elizabeth Ann Brown received a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in international relations and political science from Reed College. Following World War II, she worked on the War Labor Board. When the War Labor Board ended, Ms. Brown transferred to the Department of State. Her career included positions in Germany, Greece, and the Netherlands. She was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan on May 30, 1995.

Q: Then you received an assignment to Athens, Greece, as Political Counselor in July, 1970.

BROWN: That's correct. It was sort of strange. I was initially assigned to Ankara, Turkey, in the same position. I was asked to go over to NEA [Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs] and told that the Ambassador in Athens had requested me for assignment there. I could choose whether to go to Athens or to Ankara. I had never been to Ankara. I had talked to my predecessor in Ankara about the smog in winter. I had visited Athens very briefly on my way home from a conference in Istanbul. After a lot of consideration, I said that I would go wherever NEA wanted me to go. However, I have never known why Ambassador Henry Tasca [in Athens] asked for me.

Q: Your reputation obviously preceded you.

BROWN: I don't know. I had known him slightly when he was a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs, but that was a very peripheral acquaintanceship. I was clearing various messages with him and working on some of the UN issues at that time.

Q: *Were you given any training in the Greek language before you went?*

BROWN: About a month of very quick training, which didn't do me much good, although I continued to study the Greek language in Athens.

Q: *Those were difficult days in our relations with Greece. Those were the days of the Papadopoulos "junta."*

BROWN: That's right--the days of "the colonels." It was really my first experience with a dictatorship with which we were on extremely good terms because it related to [then National Security Adviser] Kissinger's approach to international politics. It was very difficult because we had heard that the U. S. had worked very closely with some of the old political leaders of Greece associated with the governments prior to the establishment of the dictatorship. We bent over backwards to get along with "the colonels." For example, there was a visit to Athens by Vice President Agnew, which was badly received in democratic circles in Greece.

This was my very first experience with that kind of regime. "The colonels" themselves did not want to be seen as negotiating with the U. S. or appearing at U. S. Embassy functions -- although occasionally they did on something like July 4. The political section of the Embassy was permitted to deal with former political leaders. When I held receptions, I would invite former members of Parliament. Greek police used to stand outside the gate and would be denounced by crowds standing outside. Barry King and I would stand watch and look out for former Foreign Minister Averoff. We would sit outside, and Greek police would stand behind some trees somewhere. We certainly couldn't have them over to dinner. The Ambassador and the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] did not have any contacts with these people, but I was sort of their "channel." So I went to call on the former Prime Minister. Before I arrived, there would be a policeman sitting there who had come for the purpose. Anyway, it was a different kind of situation and an interesting one.

When I think back about Greece, I sort of wonder how "the colonels" lasted as long as they did. There were two other things about Greece that were very different from anything else in my Foreign Service experience. One of them was the role of the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] in Greece, which has been pretty well described. The other was the Cyprus issue, which I had dealt with in the UN and which really was practically the focal point of everything that happened. Certainly, the situation in Cyprus became tougher and tougher. When Archbishop Makarios died in Cyprus, the whole issue blew up, and "the colonels" sort of left over night. It was the most chaotic situation I had ever seen.

Q: *That was in 1974.*

BROWN: That's right. I had been told by some of my Greek friends -- Averoff, for example, had been coming to my house nearly every night. He had been telling me that at any moment the

whole situation was going to blow up in the faces of "the colonels." Papadopoulos was going to be pushed out. I never expected things to happen as fast as they did.

Q: How large was your political section [in Athens]?

BROWN: I had a total of six officers, two of whom were nominally "mine" but also worked for CIA. Then I had three other people who were foreign nationals.

Q: Were any of them Greek speaking?

BROWN: Two of them were. One of them worked for CIA and one for a political officer. The language was not a great problem, because most of the Greek diplomats and most of the Greek political people spoke fluent English.

Q: Were you there when a bomb exploded in a parking lot and killed two people in the Embassy?

BROWN: Yes, I didn't think too much about it. I had just had two visitors from the United States who had gone off sightseeing. I had told them what a calm and polite place Athens was. They came back to the Embassy in the late afternoon, joining up with me to drive back to my residence. They couldn't get anywhere near the Embassy because the bomb had gone off. Everyone said that the dead were a man and a woman. She had dropped the bomb at the crucial moment and blew up both of them.

Q: Did the Papadopoulos government have much or any popular support, in your view?

BROWN: I think that it had some popular support because the economy was reasonably good. There had been a difficult time previously, but if you talked to any of the better-educated Greeks, they were very upset about "the colonels." We had a visit from Secretary of State William Rogers when I was there and, as I said before, from Vice President Agnew. They showed that the United States was with "the colonels."

Q: Were there differences within the Embassy regarding our relations with the Papadopoulos government?

BROWN: There were certainly differences between the Foreign Service, if I can put it that way, and the CIA Station.

Q: How about the American military?

BROWN: While we still had a Military Assistance Mission there, they thought that the Greeks were an asset to us. They equated that with stability, which they thought "the colonels" brought. On the other hand they were quick to react when the situation started falling apart. And it fell apart fast.

Q: Then you had a visit in 1971 from Jim Lowenstein and Dick Moose, who wrote a report for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee which was quite critical of the Embassy's attitude in this whole situation [in Greece].

BROWN: First of all, those were the days when we were supposed to be extremely nice to "the colonels."

Q: Even though we'd had an embargo on shipping weapons to them? This was rather confusing.

BROWN: It was very confusing. I never thought that I would get into such a mixed-up situation.

Q: We talked about view within the Embassy. Were there differences between the way the Embassy viewed the situation and the way Washington viewed it?

BROWN: Certainly, I think that the Ambassador and Washington were together on the policy line of maintaining a stable Greece with this dictatorship [in power]. At the same time, I think that the Embassy thought--I certainly did--that it was desirable to avoid totally discouraging the figures in the former political world, because everybody believed that, sooner or later, "the colonels" were going to vanish from the scene.

Q: In 1972 you began something called the "Home Port Negotiations." Could you explain that a bit?

BROWN: I think that that was one of the mistakes made by the United States Navy under Admiral Zumwalt [then Chief of Naval Operations]. He visited Athens and felt that it was a lovely place to live. He felt that it had a very equable climate. He thought that he could "home port" a large proportion of the U. S. Navy [Sixth Fleet] there, bring the families over to this very lovely, Mediterranean environment, and everybody would be happy because they had their families with them. It turned out that the Navy, which brought in some part of the normal infrastructure to support the "home porting," found that it didn't work at all. Of course, those who were against "the colonels" were absolutely appalled. So we thought--I should say, the Navy thought--that we needed a bigger naval presence in the Mediterranean. It certainly did not work [in terms of "home porting" in Athens].

Q: The families never came?

BROWN: A few families came. The Navy set up a medical facility there. The Navy unfortunately picked a small community to put these young wives in, who had to deal with a foreign language and a foreign culture. Naturally, it didn't work out very well.

Q: During this period was there any anti-American feeling in Greece which you sensed?

BROWN: There was some. But there had been such a long, family type relationship [between Americans and Greeks] that, even the Greeks opposed to "the colonels" thought that, in the long run, the U. S. would turn out to be helpful to Greece.

Q: *Were you invited to go around and speak in various places? Was that common in Greece?*

BROWN: No. There are no organizations in Greece which do that kind of thing.

Q: *During the later years that you were there, there was a good deal of student unrest and protests.*

BROWN: That's right. The student unrest was related to the Cyprus crisis, as I recall. This crisis led to the demise of the Papadopoulos government. At the time the student unrest was described by CIA as inspired by leftists and provocateurs. In the event this turned out not to be the case.

Q: *It was a genuine feeling.*

BROWN: It was genuine concern over the prevailing political atmosphere.

Q: *But they did away with the monarchy, so King Constantine couldn't come back.*

BROWN: Well, the monarchy had been done away with before I arrived in Greece.

Q: *I see. But they proclaimed a republic. Is that right?*

BROWN: Yes. But that all happened in the late 1960's. At this point the issue was strictly the government of "the colonels."

Q: *Particularly "the colonels." Did Greece have a republican government at that time?*

BROWN: Yes, it was a republic.

Q: *Then Papadopoulos was elected president and was later thrown out of office.*

BROWN: Yes. He was tossed out by his own colleagues. The situation became very dicey. I had Greek friends who told me that, "any day now, 'the colonels' will be gone." And, in point of fact, they did go--almost overnight. Certainly, we never expected it to happen as fast as it did. And the night when Karamanlis came back to Greece was pretty wild. In the meantime, before he came back, the Army had had the tanks out in the streets. There was a curfew. It was a very difficult time.

Q: *Did you feel that you were ever in any physical danger at that time?*

BROWN: Well, I don't know. We took different routes to get to the Embassy to avoid the tanks and so forth. Athens is a city where you can cut off the center with no difficulty and with a very light force. We all lived in the suburbs, so it was not a problem.

Q: *That must have been an extremely busy period for the political section of the Embassy.*

BROWN: It was a very busy period.

Q: *Did the Ambassador agree fully with what you were reporting?*

BROWN: I think that the Ambassador agreed with us. We were reporting cautiously, I think. I don't know whether we could have done more than we did, although I don't think so.

Q: *Then came the problems on Cyprus, to add to all this, with the Turks moving [into northern Cyprus] in 1974.*

BROWN: That brought an end to the government of "the colonels."

Q: *And then the Greeks withdrew from NATO.*

BROWN: They did briefly. Everything happened so fast. I've been over this period with various people. Each time I think it through, I just can't imagine that things happened as fast as they did.

Q: *I remember that that was the time when Ambassador Rodger Davies was killed in Cyprus.*

BROWN: He was killed before then.

Q: *Was he killed in 1974?*

BROWN: No, I think that he was killed in 1972 or early 1973.

Q: *I remember that I was at the Embassy in Copenhagen when it happened. But that all added to the mix of events.*

BROWN: It all added to the mix.

Q: *Then you had a change of ambassadors.*

BROWN: Yes, we did. It happened very quickly. This account may have to be reconsidered or edited out. As the fighting increased between the Greeks and the Turks, the situation became so dicey that the Ambassador, acting on his own responsibility, sent some very overblown messages to such people as our Ambassador to NATO and to the commanding general of NATO, asking for NATO intervention. When those cables--which neither the DCM nor I knew about--hit Washington, Secretary of State Kissinger became very irate. Early one morning, about 2:00 AM, when I was the Acting DCM, the communications people called me up and said that they had received a cable for the Ambassador and would I come into the office. So I went to the Embassy at around 4:00 AM and took this cable to Ambassador Henry Tasca. He opened it up, read it, and threw it at me. The cable recalled him as Ambassador to Greece.

Q: *I have seen speculation that his recall followed a visit by Assistant Secretary Joe Sisco.*

BROWN: Well, I don't think...Joe had come to Athens in the hope that we could prevent hostilities from taking place. He had left Athens before hostilities had actually broken out. His visit really had nothing to do with Ambassador Henry Tasca's departure.

Q: I gather not, from your story. Was there any increase at that time of anti-American sentiment in Greece, or did that play...

BROWN: No, there really wasn't any anti-American sentiment. Everything happened very quickly. "The colonels" were there one day, and the next day, they were gone. Karamanlis came back. The people we had been dealing with came back into power. Averoff, for example, became the Minister of Defense.

Whatever was uncertain about the turn that events had taken, Secretary of State Kissinger was certain about one thing. He wanted a stable Greece. He wanted to have a stable Greece and to avoid an outbreak of hostilities between Greece and Turkey. The Embassy's role was cut away back.

Q: Did that include the CIA role, too?

BROWN: That included the Agency's role, as well. I have to go back a bit on what was said. You see, there was a period of roughly two months after democracy had returned to Greece, so to speak. We were dealing with the former Greek political world. Ambassador Tasca was meeting with Karamanlis--usually in the late afternoons and sometimes in the evenings. Sometimes I went with him, sometimes I didn't. The Greeks were appealing for help because they thought that the Turks were going to attack them. I think that this is what led Ambassador Tasca to send those rather extreme messages. It was a very complicated period, and a whole lot of things were going on at the same time. There were people in the State Department who thought that the Embassy in Athens could have done more than it did.

Q: In what way?

BROWN: Well, that we could have persuaded the Greeks to keep out of Cyprus. I don't think that this was realistic. However, there were so many irons in the fire at this time, including Washington, Nicosia, Ankara, and Athens. There was an unstable situation in Greece. Anything could have happened, and maybe the way it turned out was all for the better. [To replace Ambassador Tasca], we got an Ambassador, Jack Kubisch, who had never had anything to do with Greece before. Fortunately, the DCM was an old Greek hand. By then I was ready to leave Athens anyway, as my tour was over.

Q: You had five, action-filled years [in Athens].

BROWN: Four and one-half years. That was long enough.

Q: You had plenty of action in that regard. Did you become involved in the bases talks we had with the Greeks?

BROWN: We had a military affairs, POL-MIL [Political and Military Affairs] officer. We worked together, though not to any great extent.

Q: Those things are usually handled by a combination of military and political people, anyhow. Were you there when Richard Welch [the CIA Chief of Station] was killed?

BROWN: No. The Chief of Station while I was there was Jim Potts, who had a close relationship with "the colonels." One of the first social events I went to in Athens was at his home. Three of "the colonels" were fellow guests. Ambassador Tasca came and subsequently read the riot act to Potts. He told him that he was not to invite such people. He was succeeded by Stacy Hulse, who came very briefly toward the end [of my time in Athens]. Richard Welch came subsequently.

LEONARDO M. WILLIAMS
Assistant Cultural Officer/Director, Bi-National Center
Athens (1971-1975)

Mr. Williams was born in Alabama. He was raised in Alabama, Washington, D.C and Minnesota and was educated at St. John's College (MN), University of Wisconsin and Georgetown University. After joining the Foreign Service in 1968, he served as USIA Public Affairs and Information Officer in India, Pakistan, Czechoslovakia, Greece and Yugoslavia. His Washington assignments dealt primarily with operations of USIA. Mr. Williams was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Q: Was Greece on your list or was it just a different place?

WILLIAMS: It wasn't on my list. I just wanted out. There were no lists in those days. Personnel had a list, but nobody ever knew what was on it unless they called you. It was fortuitous and again reflective of how the personnel system worked in those days. What had happened was, the guy that I worked for as a summer intern in '66 was already in Athens as a cultural affairs officer.

Q: Who was that?

WILLIAMS: Theodore Wertime. He was back in Washington because his assistant cultural affairs officer was going to be leaving in a year's time and he was looking for someone. Personnel said, "Well, all we've got is this malcontent in Karachi named Leonardo Williams" and he was kind enough to say that he would like me to come and work for him. So, Personnel made that work.

Q: What was the situation in Athens?

WILLIAMS: As you recall, the Greeks who were opposed to the junta held us responsible, first of all, for getting it in and then certainly sustaining it once it was in. So, everything that we had

to say to them had that as a backdrop. Those were the people that we wanted most to talk to because they were the most negative toward us. That affected everything. We were very sensitive to what might draw the ire of the foreign ministry and that type of thing in terms of our program and yet try to come up with programming that would be meaningful to the audiences we wanted to address.

Q: The dictatorship of the colonels was not an intellectual one to say the least. It was really a turning back of the times to a more fundamentalist nature, which made it very uncomfortable for most Americans there.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

Q: I guess the people you were after, which would be the youth and the intellectuals, were just the ones who were opposed to the colonels.

WILLIAMS: Yes, definitely.

Q: How did you all deal with that?

WILLIAMS: We just tried to come up with activities that we felt would engage them but wouldn't necessarily be provocative to the authorities and tried to make our case in that context, that we were an open society, that we supported democracy, and that we valued Greece as a partner in this community of nations, and tried to explain to them that we didn't necessarily approve of everything... We didn't show specifically in Greece but by showing things we do support indicated that we were a reliable partner and one that would support democracy. They didn't have a lot in the way of specifics either in terms of their complaints other than the junta was there and that the United States should decide it should go away. We pointed out that we weren't in the business of bringing down governments, that this was a legitimate government that we had recognized, and any changes would have to be brought about by the Greeks themselves.

Q: I noticed when I was there that I've never been in a place where the people, the Greeks, tended to blame somebody else for everything.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

Q: It wasn't their fault. It was that somebody else did it to them.

WILLIAMS: Right.

Q: There was a feeling of persecution. Was there a problem of getting people to come, guest lecturers and all this? Greece was on the intellectual black list.

WILLIAMS: The speakers that would come out were recruited in Washington. I don't recall... Maybe there were some at the time who said, "I don't want to go there." But I don't recall that that ever came up in discussion.

Q: So you were getting people.

WILLIAMS: Yes. We got a writer, David Wagoner, that came out; and some guy from the New York Film School; Edward Keller; Daniel Borsten.

Q: It was the Nixon administration. They weren't going after the left-wing of the American intellectual community at that time anyway.

WILLIAMS: Right.

Q: What was your impression of the Greek intellectual community?

WILLIAMS: I knew that a lot of them were highly critical of U.S. policy. But I think most of them realized that Greece's future really lay with the West. Some of the leftist intellectuals kept their distance from the embassy. One we had invited to go to the U.S. and had turned us down a couple of times, a writer. But he eventually accepted. He was probably at that time the foremost... He was the one that eventually came the closest. He would at least come to our programs and acknowledge our existence and come to social events. He came to the States. I think it was an Iowa writers program. He came back and one of the things he said was, "You know this debate about U.S. and Soviet power? I went to New York and was in Chicago and looked around and they're toying with the Soviets." He had been to Russia too, and had been quoted by them.

Q: One of our big policy problems while you were there was the home porting of the American Sixth Fleet there. Was somebody saying, "Okay, fellows, go out there and sell our program?"

WILLIAMS: I don't think we did a single program on home porting at least in my bailiwick. I was an assistant cultural officer for two years. My focus was the cultural center. We had a big English teaching program and did exhibits of theater, lectures halls, etc. But I don't recall that that was one of the issues that we as a cultural... I think that was more a press issue for the information section. They were working with the military.

Q: Did you have an active English teaching program there?

WILLIAMS: Yes. The binational center was a joint U.S. government and Greek private institution. It was actually registered as a private institution, but the U.S. government funded it and helped staff it. We paid for the director and the assistant director. But it was expected to be basically self-supporting financially. It was down in the center of Athens in a six story building, prime real estate. The major source of income for the program was English teaching. During the time I was there, we had about 1,000 students. It was considered a prestige program. There were a number of other English teaching institutions in Athens. It was a big business. But ours, because we had only native speakers as teacher and it was affiliated with the American embassy, had quite a bit of prestige. One of the interesting sidelights of that operation was that the Greek government would count enrollment in the Hellenic-American Union and the Union's English teaching program as evidence if someone was a genuine student. We had a large percentage of

our students were from the Mid East. They weren't just Greeks. They would come into Greece to do whatever, perhaps work, and then maybe go to university. But they would enroll in the American Union English teaching course so they could get their student visas.

Q: Did you find that we ever got into difficulty with the government? It was a very touchy government. There were religious problems and political problems. It was not a government that was taking it easy.

WILLIAMS: Right. We never got into any trouble with them that I can recall. Certainly during my tenure as director I know we didn't. There were a couple of times I wondered if we would because we showed a film one time that had music from Mikis Theodorakis. It was a film that we had gotten from Washington. It was called "Youth and Film," the program. We got like 50 short films. No one had noted that Theodorakis had done this.

Q: He was a left-wing musician of international fame.

WILLIAMS: Right. His music was banned in Greece at the time. I wasn't even there when we ran the film. I was down in my office. One of my colleagues who worked in the Hellenic American Union came running downstairs and said, "Did you know that there's music by Theodorakis in the film?" I said, "No." He said, "Yeah, the students are going wild up there." I thought, if anything, that would get us some attention. I don't know if no one noticed. But the government was always said to have informants around, so I can't imagine that they didn't know it. But by then it passed unnoticed, wasn't considered worthy of following up. But that was about the only time we ever did anything that might...

Q: Did you have a library connected to this?

WILLIAMS: Yes. It had been in the building but was eventually moved to a different site. But it was part of the USIS operation in Athens.

Q: Was this part of your responsibility?

WILLIAMS: No. The library was under the regional librarian, and she reported directly to the cultural affairs officer.

Q: You didn't have to worry about the books and all that.

WILLIAMS: No. We were their landlord for a while, but they needed more space, so they moved out and we converted that space to English teaching. Everything was converted to English teaching.

Q: Where did you get your teachers?

WILLIAMS: They were a mix of Greeks who were either born in the States or had lived in the States a long time to the point where they were bilingual, or Americans who were Greek-American, born there. And then there were other Americans who were passing through and

wanted a job for the summer or a year or whatever. It was a pretty eclectic mixture.

Q: How did you find the students? Were they pretty serious?

WILLIAMS: I used to go and observe the classes on occasion. The ones who wanted to... The ones who came to class... They said some students enrolled just to be able to show proof of enrollment in an educational institution.

Q: These are usually Middle Easterners or something like that.

WILLIAMS: Yes, as a group, that was the largest group. But the people who attended there, because they were paying a premium for going to our school - we weren't the cheapest in town - generally tended to be serious.

Q: There was a coup against the colonels in 1973. During '74, there was an ill-fated, as far as the coup makers were concerned, on Cyprus and brought about democracy. Did these things have any effect on you all?

WILLIAMS: The one in '73 where the military turned on itself and threw out Papadopoulos, I was out of the country. I had gone on home leave. But coming back, it didn't seem to affect our operation. Our audiences were still pretty much the same. We still considered the same sensitivities to be in place that had been there before. I don't recall that it made a particularly remarkable difference. Our enrollment stayed the same. That was prominent Greeks and on the American side mostly businessmen.

Then in '74 with the coup attempt in Cyprus, the fact that it led to the downfall of the junta diminished the issue of our support for the junta at the time. The Greek people's anti-junta's energies became more focused on reestablishing democracy, cultivating it, warding off fears that the junta was going to stage a comeback afterwards. There was always an ongoing undercurrent of critical reporting in the press about the U.S. role behind the scenes, but as an issue that dominated our discussions in my line of work, it receded quite a bit.

Q: Did the November 17th suppression of a student demonstration in '73 that later became quite a rallying point for particularly the left-wing have much of an effect on you?

WILLIAMS: No, not in the time that I was there. I don't even recall that there was any movement until after the assassinations started. One of the concerns in those years before the fall of the junta was the bombings that were carried out against Americans. I recall being wakened up in the middle of the night because I left my car door open and the security police in doing their patrols and checks had found it and wanted me to come out and lock it. So, there was that security. But the most tension I ever felt was during the Arab-Israeli war in '73. There was, aside from what was going on in our bilateral relationship with the Greeks, Athens was one of the areas of conflict for the Arabs and Israelis. There were an ongoing series of incidents during the time that I was there. That did cause... Because of the number of Middle Eastern students that we had, we felt a fair amount of tension from that. But November 17th didn't really coalesce until after I had gone.

Q: How about the communists? One always thinks of Lina Melkuri and the Paraist left-wing groups. Were you at all a center for demonstrations?

WILLIAMS: Not the Hellenic-American Union. The demonstrations tended to be directed toward the embassy. Although we were downtown, which was closest to the university, we weren't really targeted. We occasionally got bomb threats, but we were never really sure if they were from the Greeks or from other elements that wanted to intimidate us. The most visible symbol.

Q: Did you ever run across a problem with Greek parents trying to work on grades and that sort of thing? Greeks can be pretty heavy on trying to make sure their kids get the best marks and that sort of thing.

WILLIAMS: No, never had a disgruntled student trying to raise a grade. They just worked on the teachers. There was a layer of authority.

Q: How did you find the board worked, prominent Greeks and prominent Americans? Did you have problems during these difficult times?

WILLIAMS: No. Probably after '74, the board's influence base diminished, changed. I was director of the Binational Center from '73 to '75. In those first two years that I was in Athens, first observing what was going on up there, the board members were very well connected politically. When any issue came up, usually related to our personnel policies or our funding practices, the board was able to head off any parliamentary debate. After that, we lost some of those partners, wherever they were. But at the same time, we were under a lot less pressure because of other events in the country. Internally, it seemed to work rather well. First of all, these were all very busy people. This may account for our lack of friction with the government, since they had some say in our programming or at least they had an interest in it. We would share our programs with them in advance and they would be aware of anything that they felt might be sensitive for the most part. But I don't recall having any strife. The real problems for the board was a teacher's strike while I was there. That was probably the most traumatic thing that happened.

Q: Did you settle that one?

WILLIAMS: Yes. That was an interesting experience. That was my real introduction to cultural differences. They wanted a pay raise and felt that there was more money being hidden in the bookkeeping of the Hellenic-American Union. So, they were convinced that we could afford that and that even, if necessary, the U.S. government could step in to end the strike to save itself from embarrassment. The fact was that the money wasn't there. The board did everything possible to make our finances as transparent to the point where we posted the monthly budget in the teachers room for them to see. But they were just absolutely convinced that transparency was not to be believed. It came to my attention that they were concerned that we were going to sell off our English teaching operation, contract it out to a Greek organization, Pierce College, an American college in Athens. So, after hours of meeting with the teachers, I finally decided, "If they don't

believe what's in front of them, then the only thing they'll believe is what's hidden and I'll hide something." So, I had my secretary call Pierce College and make an appointment with the guy who was the head of their academic programs. I went up there and talked to him about the possibility of taking over the contract for the English teaching at the Hellenic-American Union. He said, "Oh, yes, that's very interesting." I said, "But please don't share this information with anyone because it's not a done deal." I actually had no intention of turning over the program. I went back to my office and within half an hour, there was a delegation of teachers there asking me if it was true that I was going to turn the English teaching program over to Pierce College and I said, "Of course not." But they didn't believe me, so they broke the strike. In that context, being completely open about it was not the way to communicate.

Q: So many countries really much prefer conspiracies.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

Q: The Greeks always thought that President Nixon stayed up at night thinking what he could do to the Greeks.

WILLIAMS: There is kind of an ethnocentrism there, too, that "we are so important."

FRANK ATHANASON
Chief, Army Section, Military Assistance Group
Athens (1972-1974)

Liaison Office, NATO Headquarters
Athens (1974-1977)

Colonel Athanason was born in Georgia and raised in Georgia, Florida and South Carolina. He was educated at the University of Washington the, Army War College and the Army Command and Staff College. After being commissioned Artillery Officer in the US Army, he was stationed during his career at several posts in Germany, where he experienced captivity by the East Germans in bizarre and frightening circumstances. Colonel Athanason served in both the Vietnam and Korean Wars. He also was posted in Athens, Greece at the time of military coups in both Greece and Cyprus. Colonel Athanason was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: You were in Greece from when to when?

ATHANASON: That was summer of 1972 until summer of 1977 which was unusual because it's a two and a half year assignment. I stayed five years because at the end of my two and a half years, this chief of the army section, a MAG, we were home packing to come back to the States and the Cyprus situation happened.

Q: This was July of 1974.

ATHANASON: 1974. There was another colonel position at the Greek headquarters who was the liaison officer from NATO. That position was changing at the same time. The incumbent had already left and they were waiting for the replacement to come in. The Greeks refused to let him come in the country because Greece pulled out of NATO temporarily. That left that office open which got NATO very upset. I was contacted to see if I would be willing to go over and sit in that office since I was leaving any way, until they could straighten the matter out. I went over there and stayed in that job for two and a half years.

Q: Let's talk about the first two and a half years. What was your job?

ATHANASON: Mainly we were advising the, first of all, our mission over there was to get equipment for the Greek armed forces. We were giving them surplus equipment on the grant aid program which they didn't pay for. It was usually used, outdated equipment that the United States didn't want anymore like destroyers, tanks, artillery pieces. When the junta came to us, especially the chief of the air force in the junta, they said, "From now on we don't want hand me downs. We want modern equipment and we're going to pay for it." So then we went from grant aid to military sales. The United States government assisted them by guaranteeing the debt.

They started ordering new equipment, which takes a long time to start coming in. That was our main job: to help them order the equipment, what equipment to order, send their people to the States to get trained like the F-15, in those days, the A-7s. We would send people to all U.S. schools. I would go out and visit military units and try to talk with the high command about what I saw and how they could improve them. I tried to get a better curriculum in their military academy, more academic than military. I tried to introduce some women into the military because they didn't have any. I tried to get them to give civilians some more authority that worked for the military like GS 12. That was foreign to them. They had civilians who had been working for them for years and he had absolutely no authority and no recognition. Those were the kinds of things that we had to do.

Q: What was your impression of the Greek military at the time?

ATHANASON: The first two and a half years, I dealt with the army mostly. Of course, my counterparts in the air force and navy, we would talk among ourselves... The army was about 250,000 strong. I would go visit the units. Some of them were first class with the best equipment they could get. Some of them were very mediocre because they didn't have the equipment for them. They had them in a less dangerous spot like way over on the west coast against the Albanians for example, or sitting on the Island of Crete versus sitting up on the Yugoslav border or the Bulgarian frontier or the Turkish frontier. They had their strongest forces on the Turkish border.

I don't know, they had old equipment, they took care of it. The discipline was good. They were still in the early stages of trying to take care of their soldiers. They didn't believe in nice barracks or hot water or any amenities. They paid them like three dollars a month per soldier. They did take care of their equipment real well. I think that with what they were expected to do they

would have fought a good war. They were used to the terrain; they were living on the past glories with what they did against the Italians and with what the ancient Greeks did. They were sort of overblown with their own importance. The air force, whenever they came to the American schools, they did very well. The navy, always had a tradition of working with the British and with the Americans. All in all, I would say that they were better than the Turkish forces, but so much smaller there was no match there.

Q: So this was a branch of NATO, but in reality it was sitting there waiting for the Turks to do something?

ATHANASON: The NATO countries earmarked certain units to NATO and kept certain units under their national control. When I was there, the Greeks had all of their units committed to NATO where the Turks did not. The Turks kept a whole army unit free from NATO poised to try to cross from Cyprus, waiting for somebody to make a mistake. Being that unit was not committed to NATO, it had the worst equipment, shortages, but it was there. It was there. Being able to speak the language, during the junta days, the officers were very, very open to discussing anything, politics or anything. After the junta fell, they tightened up. They wouldn't talk to you much. They had more freedom under the junta because they were all talking about the possibility of Turkey being an adversary. So, they kept an armored division poised on that right flank. They talked about Turkey. The Greek generals talked about Turkey the way I remembered the older generation of Greeks talking about Turkey when I was a kid. There was a deep rooted hatred from way back. I had a lot of experience working with Turks and I never heard that from them. They were ready to fight with them or against them.

Q: Were you giving them instructions or were you keeping an eye on the Greeks or directing their attention to Bulgaria?

ATHANASON: There was no question that they were doing a NATO mission. There was the headquarters in Salonika, it was the NATO headquarters. It acted as a field command post in case of war. There was another headquarters in Izmir, Turkey commanded by a four star U.S. general. He would take the Greek and Turkish forces under his command in case of war. They had Greeks and Turks on all those staffs and they had Turks and Greeks on the staffs in Naples. They all worked as a team. I don't know that they went out for a souvlaki together at night, but...

Q: I've talked to people who served in various places in Naples and they said that the Turks and Greeks officers always made sure they were sitting in the same place and wanted listening to the same things. That they seemed more concerned about what the other guy was doing... Where were you when Cyprus happened in 1974?

ATHANASON: I was still at the MAG in the process of packing. It was June. It was graduation day at the Greek naval academy. We went to that graduation. The cadets were all on the field, lined up and we were in the reviewing stand waiting and the time for the parade arrived and there was nothing happening. They were obviously waiting for someone. Fifteen or twenty minutes later this entourage arrived with motorcycles and sedans and there was General Gizikis who was then the President of Greece. I had met him earlier when he was a corps commander up at the Salonika. He came to the ceremony and they continued past the reviewing stand with his car and

went to the far end of the parade field. He summoned the chiefs of the army, navy, and air force to come down and they had a pow wow. While they were down there talking, someone came and said, "Your office wants you on the phone. Come upstairs." I went there. They said, "Something happened in Cyprus. You've got to come back to the office."

So that's when we first heard about it. I talked to those three chiefs later and I said, "What did you guys go down there and talk about?" They said that General Gizikis told us there was a coup in Cyprus. The chief of the navy said that it caught [him] by complete surprise. The chief of the air force said that it was the first he'd ever heard of it. The army told me the same thing. Not the three together, they were separate conversations. All three denied that they knew anything about the coup in Cyprus until that very moment. I found out later that the army guy was lying, he knew about it. But, the other two still stuck with their stories. So, then there was a lot of excitement.

Since there was no representative of NATO, he'd already left the country, (they hadn't even talked about me holding down his seat yet), but I was asked to come over to the embassy. We were all standing out talking about what was going to happen and the ambassador was talking on the phone to Kissinger. You could hear him almost all the way down the hall, talking loudly. Then they called me in and said, "Get on the phone. You know those guys over there. Get on the phone and get the General Bonanos, who was head of the armed forces, (similar to our joint chiefs), to agree to declare Athens an open city. If the Turks will declare Izmir an open city...." Izmir was the only one they could have done any damage to. They had Ambassador Sisco flying back and forth. He needed time to negotiate. So, I told them I didn't think I was competent to do that over the telephone. I wasn't that well versed with the technical Greek language to talk about something as delicate as that. So he said, "Just go on over there and talk to him." So I went over and I sat in this general's office for several hours. My mission was to keep him from giving the go ahead to strike back. It was touch-and-go there.

Q: Did you get anywhere on the open cities?

ATHANASON: No. They wouldn't agree to that. He'd say, "What would you do?" I couldn't give him any advice. The only thing the Greeks could have done to bloody the Turks' nose right there would have been a surprise strike on Izmir. And then hope to hell we stopped the retaliation. But, they couldn't strike in Cyprus; they didn't have the means to go all the way there. I did find out later that the Greek navy chief ordered U.S. Ford diesel submarines to head for Cyprus and they were turned back half way there. They were very close to doing something, at least that was the impression of the Greek armed forces. The Greek officer corps I dealt with, even when I was a colonel they treated me as more than a colonel because I was the only guy they had to talk to. I got to know a lot of the Greek generals. There were two kinds of Greek generals: the ones who had trained in the United States and most of them spoke English of course. Then, you had the ones that didn't speak English at all and there was a certain animosity between those two groups. Unfortunately, the chief of the armed forces was one in the group that didn't speak English at all. He was a real villager. He was a hard-headed type. When he gave me a response, when I tried to tell him the consequences of starting any action, what the Turks could do... He answered me by saying that I didn't really understand the Greeks. He said that they were 'willing to burn their house down to get rid of the bed bugs,' meaning that he didn't care

what happened. He was ready to go.

Q: Did you get any feel Papadopoulos junta had been overthrown in November, 1973, I believe, around Thanksgiving time.

ATHANASON: It was four or five months before. I don't know exactly.

Q: I remember because I was off in Olympus. Had that changed the colonels' (who had taken over in 1967) were thrown out and a group of generals came in, did that make much of a difference?

ATHANASON: What generals took over? Ioannidis took over, but he kept most of the people in place. Papadopoulos was the only one who lost favor, but the rest sort of stayed in place.

Q: So there wasn't a real change.

ATHANASON: No.

Q: Was there concern about Ioannidis? He was sort of a mystery man.

ATHANASON: Frankly, Stu, I really don't believe our embassy or the CIA really knew what the hell was going on.

Q: I can't contradict you.

ATHANASON: I don't think they really knew what was going on.

Q: My impression was the CIA had been co-opted by the Greek Intelligence Service.

ATHANASON: There was a tendency in the embassy to kick names around as if you knew somebody and you were on the in with the Greeks. And, the same must have happened with the CIA. But, I had talked to a CIA official after this happened and we knew that there was some problem with Cyprus before it happened and it involved the bishop, Makarios getting upset with the Greeks having too much to do with controlling his national guard. The junta, mainly Ioannidis was upset with him for even questioning it.

They had him come to Athens to talk and just about that time, where the CIA really should have found out what the hell was going on, they really didn't find out. But, apparently they must have given him an ultimatum to knock it off. He wanted Greek (there was an agreement that there was only a certain amount of Greek forces that were supposed to have been in Cyprus, a battalion size), but they had infiltrated other people in there. I guess that's why Makarios wanted them out. They had too much influence. They gave him an ultimatum and I guess he didn't buy it. That's why a couple of weeks later the coup occurred. This CIA man said that they had wind that there were some problems. Someone was sent to talk to Ioannidis saying that the last thing we wanted was turmoil in that part of the Mediterranean because we had Watergate going on.

We heard that this problem was developing and we warned them to cool it down and he answered, "Do you think I'm crazy? Of course, I'm not going to cause any trouble." So, they seemed to have been satisfied that it was diffused. They caught them by surprise when it happened. The chief of the navy spoke English well, he was a graduate of the war college in Rhode Island and even though I was army, I was a very good friend of his. I had gone to his house and he had come to my house. I had gone to his cottage out in the mountains. We had more of a friendly relationship than I had with the army people really. The army people were more crude.

He told me three years ago when I saw him (I hadn't seen him since I left Greece) that he smelled something happening, going on. He called Ioannidis in to his office and of course this guy was a three star admiral and Ioannidis was a brigadier general. He said Ioannidis came in with proper military courtesy and saluted and stood at attention. The admiral told him, "I hear some rumbling going on. We don't want any trouble. Tell me what's going on." He said at that point Ioannidis told him to go to hell, slammed stuff off his desk, threatened him, and turned around and walked out. He said it shocked him, he thought, 'he comes in here with proper demeanor and finally he goes out.' He also said, "by the way, you know, he was the man behind Papadopoulos from the beginning." That was the first time I'd ever heard that. His position was that Ioannidis was always the leader, but he never came out front until he got rid of Papadopoulos.

Q: He was military police, right?

ATHANASON: Yes.

Q: I tried to see him a couple of times about draft questions and I never could get in to see him.

ATHANASON: I had never heard that he was the chief from the beginning. I knew that he took over, but it's plausible.

Q: What happened? What were you observing when the Turks landed and things started to go bad for the Greeks?

ATHANASON: There was nothing we could do about it because I think President Ford was only in office like four days. When the new ambassador came over later, he said that (he got us all together and talked to us) the United States came closest to having a military coup than at any part of our history. I don't know what he meant by that, maybe figuratively speaking. Washington was pretty much paralyzed; they weren't going to take any action. Our action was for Sisco to go back and forth to try to prevent a war from starting. And the Turks, I think, may be thought they had accomplished their mission by landing in Kyrenia and probably were willing to stop there. I'm just guessing, speculating.

If things were going well in negotiations, but then there was a dead time where the colonels disappeared, there was no government in Greece, there was a vacuum there. Sisco couldn't talk to anybody. The ambassador didn't have anybody to talk to. And finally this chief of navy stood up and said, "I'll be Greece, you speak with me." He became the government of Greece because

he was the only guy with the balls to speak up.

Then they brought back Adamyalee, they brought Bavrous out of the moth balls and they sent him to Geneva. The Greeks started dinking around and the Turks were getting impatient. They didn't see they were making any progress and that's when they moved out and took the other thirty-five percent of the land. Some quick diplomacy at that point... maybe they would have stopped at Kyrenia. I don't know. I think they were just trying to make a point.

Q: Basically, Ioannidis and company lost complete support of the people.

ATHANASON: I joke with people and say that at that time Greece had a twenty million population, ten million that supported Ioannidis until he screwed up and then there were ten million against him the next day. If he would have succeeded, I think if Makarios could have been killed and they weren't stupid to put this guy Samson there and they would have put in a decent government right away, I think that Greece could have had embassies with Cyprus. If there had been some way to keep the Turks off their backs and Ioannidis would have been a hero. But, he failed. He became the villain. Greeks always want to be able to blame somebody else. And he took all the blame.

Q: The next two and a half years, how different were the armed forces?

ATHANASON: Because of the promotion system of Greeks, especially in the general officer ranks, you can never serve over somebody that you used to rank. So, the new government got busy promoting people down the line and cleansing the junta oriented people out of their armed services. If they went down the major general's list to promote somebody to three star and got to number eleven and promoted him, the other ten had to retire the next day. So that way you cleanse your political opponents. There was a period there where they brought people back from retirement. The head of the armed forces then became a guy that had been retired by the junta. Those that had been kicked out became popular again and were brought back. The ones that had tried to pull a coup in the navy were brought back. So there was this turmoil of changing the hierarchy of the armed forces. I don't know if that affected the troops any. At the top level, big shifts were made.

Q: Did you feel any change in the attitude towards us and towards Turkey?

ATHANASON: Well there was no big change against Turkey; they hated them to begin with. There was no big change there. This new group that came in was not gung ho, ready to go, and burn the tent to get rid of the bed bugs, they were a little bit more somber, but they got cool toward us. We were blamed for the junta, we were blamed for the Cyprus situation, and we were blamed for not stopping it. Like I said, none of the army officers I'd go visit were willing to have a political discussion with you. They were very careful. The attaches of all countries, it became more and more difficult for them to visit different areas of Greece. They became tighter. My counterpart that went to MAG, he couldn't visit the way I used to visit. There was a tightening up. Our embassy had all their eggs in one basket, Karamanlis. They thought that no one else could do the job but him. So they had to one 100 percent back him, behind him. These are my own opinions. I could be flat wrong. But, they wanted to be very politically correct. They didn't

want any more criticism. Anything that happened, they would just swallow it. They allowed Karamanlis to use that opportunity to let anti-Americanism spread for his own benefit. As I said, the example I always use with Greeks is if Karamanlis was brought back from France and he had to swim across a river to get to Athens and the river was full of sharks then the Greeks threw a piece of meat down at the far end of the river for all the sharks to go down there, and he swam across. That piece of meat was the United States. Some Greeks agree with that, some get in an argument with me.

Q: There were lots of demonstrations against our embassy during this period.

ATHANASON: But see that's easy to stir up in any country, especially in the youth, in the universities. Just like here in the United States during the Vietnam War. Anti-Americanism spread. It may have been there before, but during the junta they didn't dare express it. The junta treated us very, very well and very carefully because they needed us. This certainly kept us in high esteem even though we weren't very nice to them. We were cool.

Q: How about was the November 17th movement a problem when you were there?

ATHANASON: No they had the polytechnic uprising, that's where they took the name. They weren't in existence yet. I was well aware of the polytechnic problem where the students barred themselves into the university. Anarchy sort of prevailed. The Greek police lost complete control. They asked for the army to help them. I did talk with the chief of the army at the time (I was still in MAG at that time). I knew him very well. He agonized over sending these troops down there, he didn't want to. But, they had no choice. The troops went down there and according to the best I could find out; the tanks got down there and smashed the front gate down. Most of the students ran out the back end and they took control of the university. The left wing spin machine called it a massacre and I understand every year they have a celebration about the massacre of the students. I don't know if anybody could come up with any names of anybody that was killed during that so-called massacre. But, the Greeks like these myths about conspiracies. You'll hear it from educated Greeks and down the street think that thousands of kids were killed there, or hundreds. It depends on who's talking to you how many numbers.

RICHARD L. JACKSON
Deputy, Consulate General
Thessaloniki (1972-1975)

Commercial Attaché
Athens, Greece (1975-1977)

Jackson was born in New York in 1939. He received his Bachelor's Degree from Princeton University in 1962 and his Master's Degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1964. His career has included assignments in Mogadiscio, Tripoli, Thessaloniki, Athens, Rabat and Casablanca. Mr. Jackson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 17, 1998.

JACKSON: I was there from 1972 to '77. I was the Deputy in the Consulate General in Thessaloniki from 1972-'75, then I moved to Athens for the second two years; first as Assistant Commercial Attaché, and for the second year as Attaché.

Q: As you saw it, what was the situation in Greece when you went out there in 1972?

JACKSON: I found myself, of course, in a relatively small consulate. I had read of the indignation and outrage of Greeks with the Junta in books such as Eleni Vlashos' "House Arrest." I have to say in those early years, looking around Thessaloniki, the indignation was not always apparent. I was a regular member of the Thessaloniki Rotary Club which was not a bad cross-section of professional opinion about political events, as well as a means to progress in Greek. I have to say many of those members were clearly benefiting from economic conditions at that time in their professions and were, at least to surface appearances, probably supporters. The press was controlled, but one has to say there was little visible criticism. I recall that at the time Papadopoulos was overthrown, the editor of the conservative "Ellinikos Vorras," one Elias Kyrou, a controversial figure in press circles at that time who had been an out-and-out supporter of the Junta, wrote in banner headlines that Papadopoulos had been the Trujillo of Greece. That was typical of the about-face of a number of Greeks in and out of Rotary.

But it is also true that Greeks you knew well, once they trusted you, would vent their frustrations about the Junta in no uncertain terms. I particularly admired the then- Director of the American Farm School, Bruce Lansdale, and he sometimes included my wife and me in gatherings of Greeks who tended to be very strongly opposed to both the military regime and what they perceived to be U.S. policy. This was, don't forget, at the time of Vice President Spiro Agnew's triumphal tour of Greece and return to villages in the Peloponnesus, from which his ancestors had come. The sarcasm among well- educated Greeks was palpable at that time, when U.S. aircraft carriers were visibly on the horizon in Piraeus Harbor and where they were home-ported and were seen as a prop in U.S. support for the Junta. I thought then, and still do, that people like Lansdale and institutions like the American Farm School, or for that matter Anatolia, do much to offset the vicissitudes of international policies. U.S. ambassadors and policies, often misguided, come and go, but such institutions are in it for the longer run and tend to forge more lasting common values and ties.

Q: How much did you feel there was bitterness about Agnew and company because, basically, they represented peasant stock from the wilds of the Peloponnesus? I mean, usually immigrants of any country, when they come back, are not looked upon very benevolently by the leadership who stayed within the country. Was there any of that?

JACKSON: Well, there is always resentment of the person who comes back in the big car and brags of his success, and Agnew was probably prone to that. On the other hand, looking beyond that, the ties between the U.S. and Greece are very tightly interwoven. I remember, for example, visiting villages near Thessaloniki on Mount Hortiatis which had known the ravages of World War II and, even more so, of the Greek Civil War, and for which the Truman Plan, the Marshall Plan, and the assistance that we rendered were still, even then, very fresh memories. The hospitality that one would receive from the most modest Greek farmers, to share their feta cheese

or their olives, and the evident pride in being able to offer something to an American was, in those years, still very strong and touching. It was a place that tugged at your heart strings in that respect. But the passions politically against the U.S. were extremely strong in the Junta years. I can tell you that, living as we did above the flag in the consulate general at Thessaloniki. The building was on the main coast road of Paralia and was named Vasileos Constantinou after King Constantine. Each of the three families in the Consulate lived on different floors above the offices, and at the time of the 1974 Cyprus crisis there were massive crowds of demonstrators - 80-100,000 - in front of the consulate, as well as reports of troublemakers with molotov cocktails. With two young children, we lived for much of that year at a house at the American Farm School, which proved to be a window on a different dimension of Greece.

Q: Who were the Consul Generals when you were there?

JACKSON: I had one Consul General--an absolutely marvelous man--Ed Brennan. He had originally come in through the courier service, had converted to Foreign Service, and had been DCM in the Central African Republic, or perhaps it was then an empire. This was his last post before retirement and he was, at the time, not talking about it, but courageously battling cancer. He was a generous and encouraging Consul General. His predilection was administration, and he very much encouraged me to spread my wings in the commercial and political areas. We had a partnership that I very much appreciated.

Q: Were there differences that you found between, say, the view of the Consulate General and our embassy during the 1972-75 time, particularly the early years?

JACKSON: That's an interesting question, a question with a background, that you have in mind in asking it, from other oral histories, I'm sure. The previous Consul General before Ed Brennan, Robert Fritzlan, had been at loggerheads and was probably eased out as a result. Ed Brennan did not have that kind of conflict, to my knowledge, with the embassy. He was, perhaps, chosen because of his strong administrative bent and background. The embassy in Athens was, it was very clear to me although I rarely got down there, extremely divided and in turmoil. Henry Tasca had, by all indications, abdicated contacts with the military regime and turned them over almost exclusively to the CIA station, many of whom were of Greek origin and close to the colonels. That was resented bitterly by the political officers. It was not a happy place, and I was fortunate not to be part of it. Doing political and economic reporting as a junior to middle-grade officer at the consulate, I probably was not at a level of contacts or policy that would get me crosswise. In fact, the embassy seemed to be totally frozen out of most contacts with the Greeks, so far as I could see. So they were very welcoming of such factual reporting as I was able to produce. The large bulk of the Greek military was then and has traditionally been stationed in Macedonia, which was headquarters for the major Army Corps from which the Greek military leadership has frequently come. So the head of the Army there, General Phaedon Gizikis, for example, subsequently became the head of the Greek Armed Forces and briefly President at the end of the Junta.

I also put particular emphasis on commercial promotion. There were a lot of opportunities and scope for getting at them that just, for whatever reason, was not happening in Athens. So, we produced a steady stream of trade opportunities, and I had a wonderful staff of Greek FSNs who

worked with me. One of them, George Georgiadis, subsequently went on to a career in the Greek service in the VOA here in Washington. So, those were, in sum, very productive years and a unique window on Greece. The reverse of starting in Athens and then going to Thessaloniki would probably have been very anticlimactic, but to approach it this way, to hone the Greek language, and then go to the big city was exactly the right progression. It was my observation that classmates from the Greek class who went directly to Athens really didn't have a similar opportunity to use their Greek and, in some cases, lost it. In Thessaloniki, you were forced to use it nonstop.

Q: Somebody who came from Thessaloniki who was in Athens part of the time was Dan Zachary. Was he there?

JACKSON: Well, Dan was the Commercial Attaché in Athens. So I, in a sense, worked for and with him as his person in the north. We got along very well. He was immensely encouraging. We cooperated closely on the annual Greek trade fair that was held in Thessaloniki. Dan had a wide acquaintance in Thessaloniki and had served there before. He served there again later as Consul General. But in those years, he was not in a policy job. He was the Commercial Attaché, and a good one.

Q: Were you at all reporting on opposition and dissident groups within your consular district?

JACKSON: Sure. We were reporting on everything we could get our hands on. It was a vast district. We were a very small Consulate. I was the only reporting officer. I was trying to follow the status of the Turkish minority in Thrace and would go to the Turkish areas in cities like Xanthi and Komotini. I was trying to follow the opposition parties, which were very fragmented at that time. I had contact with a number of very vocal members from the former Center Union Party of George Mavros.

Q: In the political spectrum there, was George Papandreou and later Andreas, but did they have much backing in Thessaloniki prior to the Colonels' taking over?

JACKSON: Andreas Papandreou was gaining steam with his fiery campaign rhetoric towards the end of the period that I was in Thessaloniki. I remember attending a rally that he addressed from a balcony at the Electra Palace Hotel and his charisma was apparent from the thunderous applause.

Q: This was after the Colonels were overthrown in July '74?

JACKSON: Yes. It was in that year, 1974-'75, my last year there, when he was starting to organize PASOK and make himself known. He was very charismatic to see across a square full of enthusiastic Greeks, tasting for the first time in many years this kind of rhetoric.

Q: What about relations during the Junta with Turkey. Were there any times when the Army, I think it was the third Army, when relations were tense? Did you have the feeling you were on a difficult border?

JACKSON: Very definitely. There was a constant press war between the Greek and Turkish papers. There were periodic incidents of firing across the Evros River that runs close along the border. There was great tension over the discovery of limited oil in those years off Thasos Island and the commencement of off-shore drilling there at the Prinos One and Two sites. There were also periodic crises over seismic exploration by vessels on the contested continental shelf. It's extremely complicated because of the geography and the overlapping claims of both countries. So, yes, there were periodic tensions that both countries exploited for their own domestic political reasons.

Q: How about Americans going through? This was a time of considerable smuggling of hashish by young students and all who are coming out of the Middle East--Afghanistan, Iran and all that. Turkey particularly. Did that impact on you at all?

JACKSON: It certainly existed. We had a busy consular section. We had a full-time Consul, Roger Long - a very good colleague, no longer living, I'm afraid - and before him, John Peters. They were certainly involved with a number of such cases. On the other hand, the problem was by no means overwhelming, as it was next door in Turkey.

Q: In July of 1974, were you in Thessaloniki at the time?

JACKSON: In 1974, at the time of the Cyprus crisis, I was on home leave in Maine. I was in regular contact with the Consulate but missed the action altogether.

Q: When you came back in September, '74, or something, was it a different world?

JACKSON: It was a different situation. Things were beginning to open up. It was exciting. I was then preparing to go down to Athens. I had been assigned there, with a one-year overlap with the departing Commercial Attaché, on the agreement that I would then be the Attaché. The Commerce Department was not particularly pleased with that, but in the end, Monty Stearns, the DCM, a superb Foreign Service officer and one of the few who I would think of as a mentor in my career, prevailed, and I did go down there. Feelings of resentment against the United States after the changes occurred were widespread and, among the elite and the political class, a good deal of time was required to rebuild contacts frozen during the Junta. So, I think I benefited by being on the Commercial side in those years, because that was more acceptable to Greeks. People were more than happy to do business. They wanted to expand commercially with the United States. Commercial work was new to me since I was basically a political officer and I stayed close to colleagues in the Political Section--Townie Friedman, Peter De Vos, and others. By comparison, I had the impression that my access to Greeks was simply earlier by virtue of being on the commercial side.

The major event that impacted on me in Athens was the collapse of Lebanon. Those were the worst years in terms of the situation there, and resulted in the complete exodus from Lebanon of U.S. regional companies, some 300 of which settled in Athens, at least temporarily. It was absorbing to assist in their resettlement and to work with the Greek government to devise a legal status for regional companies based in Athens and operating in the Middle East. We did manage ultimately to assist in preparation of Law 89, which gave them a status, and many of those

companies stayed on for awhile to do regional business from there. Frankly, it didn't really work because they were outside of the Middle East and it was a long way to go, nor were the Greek infrastructure and incentives that attractive. So, over the years, most companies drifted away to Cyprus or London or back to the Middle East. But in those years, the situation, for example in Cairo, was so bad that the companies simply couldn't operate there. There wasn't the infrastructure. The few companies that did go there periodically came up to Athens to place phone calls because they couldn't call headquarters from Cairo. Now of course, Cairo has a modern telephone system and things have changed.

The influx of U.S. companies provided a wonderful hunting ground to recruit for and expand the U.S. Pavilion in the annual Greek Trade Fair. We doubled the pavilion size for a year or so. I believe we got up to 60 or 65 exhibitors, and displayed some airplanes in front of it one year. This line of work was largely operational and quite satisfying since you could see results, unlike sending reports to faceless bureaucrats in Washington. One story from that time which amuses me occurred during the Watergate period. I was probably still in Thessaloniki and went to inspect the Pavilion just before an opening reception with the Ambassador and many dignitaries. The theme for the Pavilion that year was waste materials and waste treatment. I looked up and, as you came in the Pavilion, there was a large photograph of President Nixon, by then no longer in office, and under it in large letters, "Recycling Waste Materials." I switched things around in time, but it always amused me.

Q: Speaking of Watergate, I was Consul General during that time, 1970-'74, in Athens, and I have the distinction of issuing a subpoena to Tom Pappas, who was a Greek- American businessman who ran Esso Petroleum. He was involved with the Committee to Reelect the President. Anyway, he was part of the Watergate process. Did Tom Pappas' outfit figure in your work?

JACKSON: I knew Tom very well from the Thessaloniki period. He was Mr. Esso Pappas, and the refinery along with the Republic (Hellenic) Steel plant represented a major U.S. investment in the area. I was never involved in the kind of difficulties you mentioned, although I knew how politically active he was in Republican circles. I got along quite well with Mr. Pappas and always found him supportive on matters of the trade fair or contributions to community activities. I believe he was unfairly made a scapegoat in the aftermath of the Junta.

Q: Who was our ambassador while you were there, from 1975 to '77?

JACKSON: The ambassador was Jack Kubisch, a very decent career ambassador. It was his last post. He'd been ambassador before in Central America. Greece was new to him, and he wasn't a particular hellenophile, but a measured, moderate presence; probably just the right choice for that period of quiet restoration, not flashy, somewhat distant. I, of course, plugged in more directly to Monty Stearns, who was tremendous fun to work with and took a real interest in the junior and mid-level officers in his charge. It was a period marked by tragedy. I happened to live just around the corner from the CIA Station Chief who became a good friend.

Q: You're saying you'd known Dick Welch?

JACKSON: I had known Dick Welch slightly in Washington before going to Greece - I think when he was in Cyprus and had talked with him about his hopes of eventually getting to Greece. He was an immensely educated, interesting person. We were together, with most of the embassy staff, at the Ambassador's Christmas party, on the night he was killed. Dick left, and I was also the duty officer for the embassy at that time, and minutes after we got home, got a call that he had been assassinated at the gate of his house just around the corner. That was a very sad thing, for which they have never caught the culprits, although the so-called 17 November group took credit for that and subsequent killings. As a sidebar to that, I was later provided information through a relative of someone who had been in a prison who had heard another inmate discussing Welch's assassination. I passed the details and names involved to the embassy security officer. He turned them over to the Greek authorities and my source soon disappeared. I felt that was poorly handled.

Q: I often had the feeling, even under the Colonels, the Greeks really didn't pursue terrorists. There were Palestinian terrorists and internal terrorists. For the most part, they seemed to want to get them out of the country. The fact that they haven't been able, even up to now, to do something about this November 17 movement that was responsible for a number of assassinations of Americans, struck me as being Greek policy as opposed to ineptitude.

JACKSON: Well, I think that the November 17 group could have been much more aggressively tracked down.

Q: What was your impression because you would have been part of the country team when they were involved in this? My impression when I was there was that the CIA had a major influence in the embassy at that time, vis a vis the Greek Government, which always struck me as being pernicious. And our military seemed to have an inordinate number of Greek-American military officers who tended to side with the Greek Colonels and all of that. But you were there from 1975 to '77. It was a different ballgame. You had a Karamanlis government coming in. How did you find the embassy at that time?

JACKSON: I share your view of the earlier period when the station appeared to be managing the relationship with the military regime, and the embassy was quite bitter and divided. I think, after the restoration of democracy, there was a totally new cast of characters. Towards the end, as Tasca was leaving, Monty Stearns was sent out to sweep with a new broom. With the moderate, calm presence of Jack Kubisch it was a very different country team. The relationship with the station became more collegial. All of the earlier individuals shifted. Dick Welch was clearly hand-picked as somebody of judgment and deep background in Greek culture and language. When he was killed, they brought in Claire George from Lebanon. Claire, leaving aside his later problems with the Congress, was someone of courage and wry humor.

Q: George was caught up in Central America and the Iraq conflict?

JACKSON: It was Iran-Contra. He was accused of not providing full testimony, and that dragged on for many years. But in Greece, Claire was a consummate professional, very much a team

player in that country team. He and Monty Stearns seemed to have a good professional relationship and were also friends. So far as I could see, that team set the situation right. That's not to say that there weren't periodic crises and surprises. That's the fun of working in Greece.

Q: Did you find that with your Greek colleagues, albeit you were doing the commercial work, which, you know, commerce and Greeks are synonymous, did you find that you were being continually berated for being an American with the embassy and all that?

JACKSON: No, I did not. With some, I would have very heated and long arguments. They tended, though, not to be the business types. They were the lawyers, the doctors, the professionals that one encountered in Athens. With them, yes, lots of angry debate, but few that you couldn't, in those years, bridge by friendship. I didn't feel, in the job I was in, that I was shunned by anyone that I was conscious of. On the other hand, the business people were something else again. They were strictly business and interested in enlarging their share of the pie. Greeks are consummate businessmen and traders. The different segments of the Greek business community were very interesting to see. Some were worlds of their own. I'm thinking particularly of shipping.

Q: Niarchos and Onassis and all that.

JACKSON: I, of course, did not know those people, but I knew some of their top lieutenants. Not having done full time commercial work before, it was fascinating to see the Hellenic Shipyards, for example, with computerized laser cutouts simultaneously doing the hulls of four vessels coming down the line. It seemed to me a world-class operation, although the bubble later burst in the shipping industry.

Q: Did you run across a problem I ran across, in minor terms in doing consular work, of Greeks who had a claim to American citizenship hoisting the Greek flag or American flag for commercial benefit? I mean, was this a bit hard to handle sometimes?

JACKSON: In a country like Greece, a crossroads country, there were every manner of middlemen and con artists that one had to be very careful about - American, Greek, third country, the works. In that respect, commercial and consular work are not unlike, I'm sure.

Q: What about the Greek government? I recall, for example, how inept the Colonel's government was in dealing with commercial matters. For example, they decided to collect port duties on all foreign ships. That was pretty much it for the yachting trade, which relocated to Turkey. Things of this nature. I mean, they just would make these laws without really understanding the consequences. How friendly was the Karamanlis government?

JACKSON: I think they were overwhelmed by the job of setting right so many years of total mismanagement by the military, but I think that they, from the vantage point that I had, were immensely talented, many of them. The overall economic czar at that time and a strong person was Minister of Coordination Papaligouras. He was a real intellect, a fascinating, driven man, with a great deal of humor, working and smoking himself, clearly, to death. They had a former naval officer, whom I had slightly known through the Farm School, as Minister of Merchant

Marine, Papadongonas, who had been imprisoned and probably tortured throughout the Junta period.

In retrospect, the mismanagement of the Junta period was near total. I had a friend from the Thessaloniki years, a Greek Colonel, who had been stationed in Kozani, where much of the tank force in that part of the country was located. He noticed that cadmium batteries had not been replaced after their expiration and the night vision sights on tanks were inoperable. He began to fulminate with his superiors and to poke around, realizing that the problem was general and that tanks everywhere would be vulnerable if attacked at night. If memory serves, he went to higher and higher levels, eventually reaching Patakos, who didn't want to hear about it and put him in jail. Simply because of corruption, they didn't want to hear these kinds of problems. It shows you, at the core, how rotten it was.

Q: The thing that struck me was you think a military dictatorship should be somewhat efficient. It just wasn't. I mean, it was awful! Were you sensing concern about Andreas Papandreu at the embassy at that time? Was this an embassy concern or were we just carrying on and watching?

JACKSON: These were Democratia years, although PASOK was there and growing. Frankly, my only exposure to Papandreu was the rally I observed in Thessaloniki. I was on the commercial side. It wasn't my beat, and I had my hands full with the commercial companies.

DEAN DIZIKES
Consul General
Athens (1973-1975)

Dean Dizikes was born in Utah, but raised in Southern California. He received a B.A. in history from the University of California at Santa Barbara. He served in the Army for two years. He entered the foreign service in 1970. He has also served in the Visa Office. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 16, 1990.

Q: Dean, could you describe the situation and what happened? I was intimately involved. I sent you off on a task in 1973. Could you describe what happened as a consular officer?

DIZIKES: It was the Yom Kippur War, October of '73, and we were in Athens. We got a message from the Department, I think that indicated that about 450 Americans had been stranded in Egypt, in Cairo, when the war began. These were tourists in various parts of Egypt. They had been brought to Cairo and collected there, and they needed to be evacuated. We were told to send a consular officer and to find a ship to evacuate them. So the administrative section found a Greek ship. Being October, it turned out to be difficult to find one. You don't just go down to the harbor in Piraeus and say, "Give me a ship which can carry 500 people." They had all gone to the Caribbean, as I remember it, by that point. The cruise season was over. So the admin section located a Greek ship that was filled with Greek tourists, primarily, and as I remember it, it was coming to Cyprus or in the vicinity of Cyprus, so I was told to fly to Nicosia.

At this point in the war, I think the cease-fire had gone into effect. Sharon had crossed the canal and cut off the Egyptian 3rd Army or 6th Army.

Q: *Third Army.*

DIZIKES: The 3rd Army. The 6th Army was Stalingrad. [Laughter] So there was a cease-fire, but the Americans were still stranded there. So we literally chartered this ship out from under the people who were on it. As I remember it now, some of this may be somewhat embellished, but as I remember it, the Department, typically, said, "First of all, send a consular officer." In fact, several would have been the right thing to do, but we could only send one. The second thing was that the Department told the admin officer, "Find a ship. We don't care how much it costs." So he located this ship and said what he needed it for, and the shipowner said it was going to cost \$500,000. When he notified the Department of this, they said, "That's too expensive," after having said, "We don't care how much it costs. Find a ship." Then when he told them that it was the only ship available and he thought he could get it for less -- I think he got it for \$450,000 or something -- so we chartered it. This was for about two days.

Q: *I want to add one other thing. I remember the problem was that some of this was being done over a weekend, and you had to get insurance.*

DIZIKES: Yes.

Q: *You went to Lloyd's of London, but Lloyd's of London is British, and nobody was home.*

DIZIKES: They were all in the country.

Q: *They were all in the countryside over the weekend. It was incredible. You couldn't find anybody to pay this insurance money to.*

DIZIKES: Exactly. That's right. Finally, someone was called out on the wicket or wherever. [Laughter] That's right. So I was told then to fly to Nicosia because the ship was going to be diverted from wherever it was cruising and was coming into Limassol Port in Cyprus. So I flew to Nicosia. I remember, too, I took a bottle of Johnny Walker, which Stu Kennedy told me would probably come in handy for talking to some of the Americans, and it did.

So I got to Nicosia and then went by car to Limassol, and the ship had come in, and the Greek passengers had all been told they were just going to have to find their way back to wherever they way, the shipowner having taken his \$450,000. Then we were supposed to leave immediately from Limassol to go down to Alexandria. The Americans were going to be brought up from Cairo to Alexandria on buses or on the train, and they would meet us.

A couple of things. Of course, the Israelis and the Syrians and the Egyptians had all declared a zone of hostility, and that's where the insurance got complicated, because we were going to be sailing through a war zone.

Q: That's the reason we couldn't put in airplanes to take them out.

DIZIKES: That's right. As I remember, too, the Syrians and the Egyptians, once we notified them this was what we were doing, they both said, "Yes, that's fine." The Israelis never said it was fine, never said they could guarantee, as I remember. They took note of the fact that we would be going through and said they weren't responsible beyond that, which I thought was pretty interesting.

Then the problem was getting the Greek crew to agree to go down there, because apparently the shipowner hadn't calculated that a lot of the crewmen didn't want to do this. So I spent the next, seemed to me, 12 or 15 hours in the hotel with a couple of the executives, waiting while some so-called sort of senior captains from the company went out to talk the crew into going. And by talking them into it, apparently they threatened them with losing their jobs, never getting another sailing job. They also gave them supposedly another month's pay as a bonus. Eventually, enough of the crew agreed to go, but three stewards and one cook went. This is on a 10,000-ton passenger ship. The crew went, the captain, the first officers, and enough engineers and others to run the ship, but three stewards and one cook.

So we left from Limassol in this 10,000-ton empty ship, and by some bizarre thing, aboard the ship along with me was a man who was some senior executive from the Shell Oil Company, the leader of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt, who had been stranded in Cyprus and had talked his way aboard the ship, along with our driver, one of our local employees from the embassy in Cairo, who was a Greek, had been in Greece on vacation or on leave, and he managed to get aboard. So we sailed on down to Alexandria.

I got to be fairly friendly with the crew, a couple of whom who had Greek families from the Greeks in Alexandria, most of whom had left when Nasser tossed them out or made life difficult for them. So one of these fellows, as we approached the harbor in Alexandria, was explaining to me how his father used to tell him about when King Farouk was still king in Egypt, he used to block off the very narrow entrance to the harbor and water ski with one German mistress under each arm, skiing along behind this motorboat, with the entire harbor brought to a standstill so he could sail back and forth. Now, this is coming from a Greek sailor, but it's certainly possibly a believable story.

So we arrived there, as I remember it, at 9:00 or 10:00 in the morning, and the scene was just indescribable. The Americans had been brought up. You have to remember, too, we were the Israelis' great patron, and the Egyptians were not about to make things easy for us.

Q: There was also a story at that time that the United States had actually contributed planes and all this, which we had not.

DIZIKES: Yes. I guess the other thing that I remember is that on the way down there, we were also told that our fleet was informed of our presence and that there would be some sort of generally unmentioned kind of support, which never was clear to me what that meant, but somewhere over the horizon was supposed to be the Sixth Fleet in case we needed them.

On the way down there, as I remember, too, I guess you aren't buzzed by a jet, but a jet flew over extremely low, what appeared to be either a Syrian or Egyptian jet, because it was a Soviet fighter of some sort, saw what we were, and then went on and didn't bother us. The Greek crew at that point, ran up and started painting Greek flags on the deck and hauling out extra Greek flags and stretching them over the lifeboats, so that from the air you could see that this was a Greek ship and not, by any means, an Israeli or American ship.

So off we went, and we got into the harbor in Alexandria and it was the most god-awful thing I've ever seen. The Americans were there, and they were just brought aboard, up a ladder onto the ship, and as they came aboard, I was thinking what I needed to do was collect their passports and start to make up a list, because one of the things the Department and everybody in Washington wanted was a list, obviously, of who these Americans were. The first guy who came aboard, I still remember him, sort of a 40-year-old American executive type, pretty affluent, as I approached him, I said, "I'm from the American Embassy in Athens. Could I collect your passport?"

And he said, "Where are you from?"

I said, "The embassy."

He said, "Is that the US Government?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "I'll keep my passport." And that indicated that these people had, like many Americans, as you probably heard in other contexts, they had, in fact, unreasonable expectations. In the days that they'd been waiting, they had developed a certain amount of resentment and animosity toward the American Government and toward the embassy in Athens. Well, it turned out specifically the embassy in Athens.

Eventually, they all came pouring aboard, and the captain decided we had to clear out of the harbor as fast as possible. There was a Soviet ship next to us, unloading torpedoes, and next to that there was a Libyan passenger ship, which looked like a scene out of *Gungha Din* or *Lord Jim* or something. The people were pouring down the gangway and the baggage was just being tossed off the top of the ship down to people who were waiting on the dock 50 feet below. Half the suitcases, of course, were landing in the water, and others were landing on people who were trying to catch them. [Laughter] I sat there with the Greek crew on the bridge, looking over at this thing, and the captain sort of shook his head, you know, made a couple of real Greek gestures, and said, "We've got to get out of here." [Laughter] So we immediately cast off and started off. The Americans had all poured aboard.

Then we had another 20-some hours before we got back to Piraeus, first to Crete, then to Piraeus. So the idea was, we were going to spend one night aboard this ship. Everybody would have to sleep, and cabins had to be assigned to these people. So the idea was that the purser would assign cabins as these people came aboard. So I had a microphone and announced who I was, that I was from the embassy, and that cabins would be assigned.

About 15 minutes later, the purser came to me and said he was being offered bribes, he was being threatened by people. They all wanted first-class cabins, they all had connections in Washington, and they demanded various things. He said he wasn't going to do it, that the only way it would work would be for me to assign everybody to their cabin.

Again, on the good advice I had gotten from Stu Kennedy in Athens, I tried to divide them into two groups and informed them that we would quickly assign them their cabins, and then we would sit down in two sessions and I would try to explain to them everything that I understood had happened from the beginning. So my perception was that the Americans, a lot of their problems are solved if you can tell them what the hell is going on. Like waiting in a line. If they know why they're waiting in a line, they'll be more patient about it. But these people, of course, had built up a certain amount of resentment.

So it turned out there were six or eight or ten tourist groups among this group of 450. One was the World Affairs Council from Los Angeles, so these were people who were supposed to be sort of sophisticated, interested in foreign affairs, but also very prominent, affluent, and first-class world travelers, sort of. All of these people were having a hard time understanding that this now was not a cruise that they were engaged on; it was an evacuation. So as I started assigning them the cabins, I don't recall precisely, but we realized that out of, say, 450 passengers, 100 of those passengers could get first-class cabins, and then the rest were either tourist class. We also had a small number of people, a few Spaniards, as I recall, because Spain was our protecting power. So we made an agreement they could come out. There were one or two Greeks.

Q: You might point out at this point we did not have official diplomatic relations with the Egyptians, although we had an interest section in Cairo.

DIZIKES: Yes. The other thing which added to the resentment was that a few days before, or a day or so before, the Common Market had chartered a ship and evacuated E.C. citizens, and the Americans had all heard about this. I gather some of the Germans and Brits and others had gone off from the Hilton, sort of saying, "Well, good luck. We're leaving," and off they'd gone. Of course, this ship, as I remember it, that evacuation took place from Benghazi, and the E.C. people went by bus across Egypt to Libya. So even though I found that out later, it would have been nice to have pointed out to the Americans that that wasn't maybe as wonderful as it sounded. But it was earlier, and there's no question that the E.C. was a little quicker. I think that was because they were lucky in some ways. Maybe they had a ship of their own, which we didn't.

We then started assigning the cabins and people all demanded first-class cabins, and fortunately there was also a Canadian -- I remember clearly -- Canadian diplomatic courier's wife, who we had agreed, also, to evacuate because of some bilateral arrangement. She was about eight months pregnant, and she was feeling very ill. So I used her as an example and said there were two first-class suites, as well, and a couple of people had asked why they didn't get the suites. I said I was assigning this lady, who was eight months pregnant, to one of the suites and, in fact, sort of challenged any of the people present to question whether they wanted the suite and she could have the tourist class cabin, or did they all agree that perhaps she should get one of the suites.

So I tried quickly to say, "We'll assign these cabins by sex and age, elderly females getting preference, elderly males second, middle age and . . ." This was interesting, because people then started to identify themselves as elderly or middle aged. [Laughter] Which added a little humor to the thing. Then young single men were last. So quickly -- when I say "quickly," this probably took a couple of hours. They all came by me, literally, and got their key to their cabin, and I told them I was responsible. If they didn't like their cabin, they could complain that I had given them a bad cabin, but it seemed to me that that should be the least of their concerns, since we were now leaving Egypt, and that's what they had all wanted to do.

I also had to explain to them that we were going to charge them for this, and we had this IOU set up, and it was about \$100, as I remember it. Some people complained about that. On the other hand, a lot of people rightly recognized.

Then jumping ahead, we assigned the cabins and I told them we'd have these two sessions. That's where I sat down with them and said, "Let me just tell you from the beginning everything I know. Maybe you'll then see all I'm telling you is what we've done. I'm not apologizing for anything." But getting the ship and the insurance and getting the ship down there and throwing off the 400 Greeks who had been on the ship.

Then I opened it up to questions. Typically, some people said, "Well, I'm glad you've told us this. We understand. It's a lot more complicated than we thought, and thank God we're out of that place." Other people, of course, wanted to know -- a couple I remember specifically said, "Why the hell didn't the Sixth Fleet come down and get us? What are you paying for if you can't send the Sixth Fleet?"

I told them I thought, number one, given the situation, as you mentioned, our relations with the Egyptians and our role, at the same time, which I didn't realize, we were madly resupplying the Israelis, of course. The Egyptians knew all of that. I doubted that they were going to let the Sixth Fleet sail into Alexandria and I doubted that the Sixth Fleet wanted to sail into Alexandria, number one. Number two, I told them that I thought a passenger ship, given that they were going to have to sail back across the Southern Mediterranean toward Crete, did they want to sail on a destroyer and sleep in between decks and sort of on hammocks, or did they want to sleep in a regular passenger ship, it seemed to me. Secondly, they asked why they hadn't been evacuated by air. I think the answer to that was that we couldn't get clearance to do it, and if they thought that we were in a position to fly into Egypt without permission, then I thought they were pretty naive.

So that went on for a while. But in general, I thought that went pretty well. Then I did the same thing with the second group, and people asked what was going to happen when we got to Athens. We tried to anticipate all that.

Then the owner and the crew of the ship were very good, because they provided an enormous amount of booze. And the weather was gorgeous! By the afternoon, we were then out in the middle of the Mediterranean with not a whitecap in sight, and all of these people sitting out on the back, drinking. It turned into a pretty -- then, of course, the stories about what had happened in Egypt. They had seen missiles fired. In fact, most of them got to Cairo after the cease-fire had

been declared, and I suspect that by today some of the stories must be really hair-raising. I mean, God knows what they'd seen. They've seen missiles fired nearby the hotel and Israeli planes strafing downtown Cairo. I haven't read in detail, but I suspect none of that actually happened.

In any case, then we got back into Greek waters and got back to Athens real early in the morning. The other thing that struck me is at that point I just about lost my voice, because I spent most of my time going around talking to people, trying to reassure them. Then I ended up having my picture taken. We'd sit around by the swimming pool and people would come up and have their picture taken with me, because this was going to be a great adventure to tell friends about.

The other thing that was fascinating was human nature. I mean, you see two men, say, a 40-year-old executive, like the one I described, and another 40-year-old executive, one of whom, for no apparent reason, same sort of economic level, same education, same age, and the one fellow is bitching because he doesn't have a first-class cabin, and the other one -- now, what I skipped over a bit is that the great trauma was the meal. As I mentioned earlier, we had three stewards and one cook to serve 450 people. I informed people that they were going to have to volunteer to help if we expected to get any food served and anything orderly done. People would have to chip in and help. Amazingly -- or maybe not amazingly -- a large number of people were willing to volunteer. There were some stewardesses on board, five or six stewardesses, who were terrific about that, and they sort of took charge of that and the people worked for them. But what I encountered was the situation where you'd get the one guy saying, "Why didn't I get a first-class cabin? I'm really resentful of this. I'm going to write to my congressman," and the other guy saying, "You want me to go down and wash dishes and help serve the next round?" That's what you can never sort of explain, how people react in a situation like that. To me, it was really fascinating to see, although it was more fascinating after we got back to Athens.

The other thing, I think, finally, without droning on too long, I thought it was fascinating when we got to Athens at about 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning, there were, as I mentioned, some Canadians, some Spaniards, a couple of dual-national Greeks, and others, so there were representatives, not only our consul general, Stu Kennedy, and some of the people from the consular section in Athens. I remember clearly the Spanish consul general was there. When I looked down from the ship, as we got in there and saw the people getting off and their luggage getting off, Stu Kennedy and American officers from the American Embassy were carrying luggage for these people, and the Spanish consul sort of shaking hands with them and then driving off, saying, "Welcome to Greece," and that was the end of the Spanish role in this. I think that sums up a lot what we try to do and what we see as our role and what a lot of other countries do.

At that point, there was also this fascinating group of interior decorators who were in the group from North Hollywood, California, who tended to be candidly, among the males, rather effeminate in manner, at least, and that was absolutely hysterical to watch these people carrying on.

So it was just an amazing experience.

ROBERT S. DILLON
European Affairs
Washington, DC (1974)

Robert S. Dillon was born in Illinois in 1929 and raised in the Chicago area. He began his college career at Washington and Lee University, but graduated from Duke in 1951. He served in the Army during the Korean War. After considering a military career as too dull, he took the foreign service exam and passed. As a Foreign Service officer, his posts included Turkey, Italy, Venezuela and Washington D.C. He also served as ambassador to Lebanon. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 17, 1990.

Q: Before we pursue your career in Malaysia, I would like to ask about the Cyprus matter. As the issue developed, how did you find the attitude and reporting from our three involved posts: Nicosia, Athens and Ankara?

DILLON: Let me go back to tell a story as background. CIA had reported that Brigadier General Ioannidis (head of the Military Police), who had been part of the coup that had overthrown Papadopoulos the previous November, in a conversation he had had with one of CIA's employees, had stood up, knocked a few things off the table and had sworn that he would rid the world of the Communist, Archbishop Makarios, who was ruining Cyprus. The reporter was a Greek-American who had been a long time employee of CIA. The meeting was dutifully reported through CIA channels. I was called by the branch chief at CIA headquarters asking me whether I had seen this report. I had not. So he said he wanted to come to the Department to discuss it with me. That was very unusual in itself. The CIA official added that he was convinced that the Greeks were prepared to overthrow Makarios. I agreed with his analysis.

I had two colleagues at the time: John Day, in charge of the Greek desk -- a very good officer with a lot of Greek experience -- and Tom Boyatt, who had had a lot of Cyprus experience. We immediately huddled. It was John Day who really understood the Greek situation. He pointed out that Ioannidis had sent us a message, giving us a little of time to see whether we would speak out on the coup. We decided to go to our boss and try to convince him that a message had to be sent back immediately putting the Greeks on notice that the US would not countenance or accept the coup in Cyprus. The people in the European bureau, not having much background in this whole matter, showed a lot of skepticism and raised many questions both about the facts and the assumptions. The leadership of the EUR was very strong; Art Hartman, who is one of the best professionals that I ever met, was the Assistant Secretary. The Deputy Assistant Secretary in charge of our area was Wells Stabler, who was superb officer. Both were very uncertain about what to do. They didn't know us and as I said knew little of the background. So they passed the issue to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Joe Sisco. Joe, who had had some experience with Cyprus, came down and we drafted a cable to the Ambassadors. I wanted our message to be sent back through CIA channels to Ioannidis so that there would be no misunderstanding of our position. People objected. They said that the US government doesn't communicate that way with foreign officials and we don't communicate through low level CIA officials. What a pompous position! It was sacrilege that we would even consider communicating with a one star general!

Of course, the fact that he was the power behind the throne did not seem to impress the EUR people.

Finally, we sent a very general cable to Athens. All the important direct messages were deleted. All it said was that the US Ambassador was to express to the Greek government our view that we were opposed to violence on Cyprus. What news! Could we have taken any other position? We argued that this was not nearly strong enough and that the Greeks would never "get the message". Joe tried to bolster our position by calling Elizabeth Brown, who was then Political Counselor in Athens. He asked her whether she had gotten our cable. She acknowledged receipt and said that she had carried out the Department's instructions. Joe turned to us indicating that the matter had been taken care of. It was quite clear from the conversation, which we could hear over the speaker phone, that Brown, who was a very good officer, did not have the faintest idea what Joe was talking about. She did not indicate that she had understood that the issue was a very serious one that required special attention and care.

John Day, in particular, was the political officer who had the best understanding of the Greek scene. I thought his insights and tactics were absolutely correct. Nevertheless, after this episode, his career did not prosper. It was a great mistake for us not to handle the matter in the way that John had recommended, namely to use the same CIA channel through which we had gotten Ioannidis' original message. The General had to be told directly that the US had received his message and that we were unalterably opposed to any coup on Cyprus.

Immediately after the coup, we were told that Makarios was dead. Shortly thereafter, we discovered that Makarios was not dead, but that he had escaped and that the British had evacuated him to Malta. Initially, the Turks indicated great concern about the coup and expressed themselves as supporting the legitimate government of the Archbishop. Tom Boyatt said at the time -- and he was absolutely right -- that there was only one solution; namely to return Makarios to Cyprus and reinstall him as the legitimate head of the government. A lot of Americans, and I was one of them, didn't like Makarios; he was a hypocrite, full of humbug, very much anti-West, but Boyatt was right. When I was asked whether the Turks would accept the return of Makarios, I said that I thought that if it were done quickly, they would accede. If time passed, then the Turks might well raise objections.

The issue of what we should do next was pushed up to the secretary, Henry Kissinger, who fancied himself an expert on these matters. He immediately developed some grand scheme. He had never liked Makarios and was happy to see him gone. He liked the situation and could only see us as unimaginative bureaucrats at lower levels who could not seize opportunities. He talked about a Clerides solution. (Clerides was the leader of the moderate Greek faction on Cyprus). Boyatt, who knew Cyprus, said that Clerides was a grand man, but he was not the solution. The saga continued and we did nothing to try to get Makarios back. Gradually, the Turkish position hardened and then it became clear that our job was to try to dissuade the Turks from invading the island. Tom Boyatt and I accompanied Joe Sisco on a trip to the area. I think I must have gone for a whole week without ever going to bed, while we shuttled back and forth between Greece and Turkey trying to persuade both to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis. I remember well the night we spent with Ecevit. I was the only one in the American delegation who knew him. I knew what he would do; he loved the opportunity presented him. He couldn't have cared less

about the American position; he was going to invade Cyprus.

Bill Macomber was the Ambassador. He, Sisco, Boyatt and I and a couple of others met with Ecevit. It was after midnight. Turkish troops were already on ships. Ecevit, savoring every minute, said to Sisco that the Turks don't make the same mistake twice. In 1967 (the Vance Mission), the Americans had urged the Turks not to invade Cyprus and they hadn't. It had been a mistake and the Turks would not repeat it again. Bill Macomber made an impassioned plea, saying that Ecevit was known as humanitarian and a lot of other stuff. At about 2 a.m., Ecevit said that he would consult with his Cabinet, although he didn't want to raise our hopes and he would then let us know.

We returned to the Ambassador's house and waited there until about 4 a.m. when Ecevit called. He said that as he spoke, the Turkish troops were landing on Cyprus. We pleaded again although it was obviously useless. We then dashed off to the airport and boarded our airplane. Then we started arguing about where to go. It was now dawn. Should we go to Athens to ask the Greeks to cease and desist? (The Greek government was disintegrating at this point). Should we go to Spain and wait to see what happens next? I didn't have any good ideas except that I was certain that we should leave Ankara. While we were debating back and forth, we got a phone call from Washington, ordering us to Athens. Since we had failed to persuade the Turks not to invade, we were to try to persuade the Greeks not to intervene. Just as we finished the conversation, we were told by the Turkish authorities that we could not take off and that we had to stay put. In a burst of bravado, Joe Sisco turned to the pilot and said: "Take off! We are going to Athens". Even though the Turks had told us that the airport was closed, we ran down the runway and took off. Fortunately, nothing happened and we got to Athens only to find that the Greeks had no government. So we had great difficulties finding anyone to talk to. I don't remember much about the conversations in Athens because, as the Turkish expert in the party, I was kept busy writing up what had happened in Ankara.

Q: It sounds like a serious miscalculation by the Department on Turkish attitudes. Did you ever get a chance to discuss that with Kissinger before the ill fated mission?

DILLON: Yes, once, just before departure. Tom Boyatt, Joe Sisco, myself and some others went to Kissinger's office. Eagleburger, then Kissinger's special assistant, was there. We were there to brief Henry and to discuss what we might do on this special mission. In fact, the meeting consisted of a lecture by Henry Kissinger on history which was totally irrelevant to the issue that we were to address. With a couple of exceptions -- Boyatt and I among them -- most of the other participants kept remarking: "Gee, Mr. Secretary, I never knew the history of the eastern Mediterranean, until I just heard you explain it" and other similar vacuous remarks. That is a slight exaggeration, but that was the tone of the conversation. Then at the end, Kissinger asked whether anyone had any questions. I asked a couple, which went essentially unanswered. I tried to use the questions as a way of showing that what we were about to do was not going to work. I thought that our only chance of getting the Turks' attention would have been to threaten to cut off aid. The Turks were never going to take us seriously unless we threatened to suspend aid immediately. I knew that that was the only language the Turks would understand. I was convinced that the Turks would invade without some very strong US threat or action. Tom Boyatt, having watched my performance and having seen how unsuccessful it had been, just

said: "I disagree with you, Mr. Secretary. This isn't going to work!". Kissinger just looked at him and turned away. Nothing further was said and we all got up and left the office, went to the airport and took off.

Q: I might just note here that when I went to the Senior Seminar shortly after the events that you have described, Tom Boyatt was in the same class and the word was that he had been assigned there by Kissinger just to get him out of the way.

DILLON: That doesn't surprise me. It was a bad show. One of the lessons to be drawn from it is that this was one of those cases in which the area experts knew whereof they spoke and their superiors didn't. John Day was never promoted again, in part because I think he had been right about so many things. As for Boyatt and myself, even though I think our careers were probably damaged by this episode, we both recovered and became Ambassadors. While Boyatt and I were running around with Joe Sisco, John Day was the only one left in Washington who knew anything about the area. So he was in constant controversy with senior officials, who knew far less than he did. I am convinced that it was this that cooked John's career. I thought that everything John said about Greek politics and their reactions and how we should handle them, was absolutely right. When it came to Cyprus, I thought Boyatt was right and I don't think I was totally wrong about my analysis of Turkey and its reactions.

Q: That is very interesting background to a continuing thorn in US foreign relations. As you mentioned, when the Cyprus crisis sprung up in 1974, you were headed to Malaysia as the DCM. How did you get that assignment?

DILLON: I was "GLOPed". You will recall that Henry Kissinger had decided that all area specialists should have out-of-area assignments. As I understood it, he had gone down to Mexico to a big conference and had run into all these Latin American types who had never served anywhere else. He instructed that they be reassigned out of the area. When it was pointed out that his instructions would mean that lot of other reassignments would have to take place, he decided that all Foreign Service personnel would have to have at least one tour out of their area of specialization. So in my case, it meant an assignment to Southeast Asia -- out of the eastern Mediterranean. A friend of mine had told me that the Bureau for East Asian Affairs was looking for a DCM for Malaysia; he said that if I were interested, he would put in a plug for me with the Ambassador, Frank Underhill. Frank had the opposite problem; he had many years of experience in Southeast Asia. He was a wonderful man and an excellent professional. He was on his second tour in Kuala Lumpur; therefore he was under pressure from the Department to choose a DCM who had had no experience in Malaysia or the area. He had gotten a list of seven or eight candidates; why he chose me I don't know, but I am glad he did.

WELLS STABLER
Assistant Secretary
European Affairs (1974)

Wells Stabler was born in Massachusetts in 1919. He served in Palestine, Jordan,

Italy, France and was ambassador to Spain. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

STABLER: That was in April/May/June period of 1974. Then in July of '74 ... to go back a bit, some time in the spring of 1974 Kissinger had decided that he didn't see why when he traveled through NATO areas he had to have sometimes an Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, sometimes the Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs, particularly when he went to Greece and Turkey. Why couldn't all these countries be under one Assistant Secretary? So in May, or perhaps June, of 1974 he decreed that in the future Greece, Turkey and Cyprus would become part of the Bureau of European Affairs. They fell to my lot as countries of Western Europe.

Then in July, 1974, the Greek military undertook a coup against Archbishop Makarios, the President of Cyprus. The Greek colonels, of course, were involved. There was a strong body among the Greek military who thought that there should be a union between Cyprus and Greece, enosis and that Makarios was not furthering this aim and therefore should be deposed. In the morning hours, of whatever day in July it was, the Greek military staged this coup and Makarios was forced to flee.

Normally that would have been something that the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs would have been called upon to go to Kissinger's office and discuss the implications and possible policy steps. It just so happened that on that particular day Arthur Hartman had had a long standing engagement to meet and negotiate with a team from East Germany on the conditions for recognition of East Germany by the United States and the establishment of diplomatic relations. It was not something in which I had been involved and therefore he felt that he absolutely should do that. I, therefore, should be the one to deal with the Cyprus problem and go to see Kissinger. That actually was the first time that I had had any contact with Kissinger. This was the beginning of that long period of dealing with Cyprus, the relationship with Kissinger, and ultimately the appointment to Spain.

Q: I would like to start with the situation that blew up in July of 1974 with Cyprus. European Affairs had just absorbed Greece and Turkey in April and all of a sudden you are faced with a major problem with two NATO allies pointing guns at each other. Could you describe how this hit you and some of the personnel in the Washington area when you heard about this Cyprus business?

STABLER: Yes. It was about in April of 1974 that Secretary Kissinger decided that he didn't see why he had to have two Assistant Secretaries traveling with him when he went to NATO conferences -- Greece and Turkey were under the Near Eastern Affairs. So he made a decision to transfer Greece, Turkey and Cyprus to the jurisdiction of the Bureau of European Affairs. Very few of us at that time in EUR had a great deal of knowledge of what was going on in Greece and Turkey, except as it related to NATO matters. The regional questions were, of course, not dealt with by the Bureau of European Affairs. So this was somewhat of a surprise. Assimilation of the officers handling Greek and Turkish affairs came into EUR and it fell to me as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs who mostly handled Western and Central European Affairs, to take on Greece, Turkey and Cyprus.

It was all relatively calm and no one thought a great deal about problems that might come about as a result of this. Although the reasons for the coup had been bubbling up for a number of years there was no particular crisis at the time. At any event, in July, 1974 the Greek military, with the Colonels in charge in Athens, decided that the time had come to carry out the policy of enosis which was uniting Cyprus with Greece. They mounted a coup in Nicosia which was aimed at Archbishop Makarios. He was forced to flee and a major crisis suddenly presented itself. This was putting the heat on as far as Greek and Turkish relations were concerned.

Normally in a situation of this sort the Assistant Secretary of European Affairs would have handled the matter directly with Kissinger who, of course, was much concerned about this as it related to two important NATO allies. But Arthur Hartman had had a long standing engagement to negotiate with a delegation from East Germany on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and East Germany. This delegation had come especially from East Germany for this. Arthur felt that he had to meet this particular engagement. It was not one that I as his principal deputy could have easily taken over because I had not been involved in the earlier discussions leading up to the negotiations.

So he then asked me to go up and deal with Cyprus with Kissinger, whom I hadn't dealt with before. I went up and from that day forward until I left EUR to get ready to go to Spain, I saw Kissinger many times a day, traveled with him as far as India to be with him to deal with the Cyprus question. He, of course, was very troubled by all of this, recognizing that this was going to upset the Turks and that we would soon have a Turkish reaction...which indeed we did. The Turkish army very shortly thereafter invaded the northern part of Cyprus and annexed that part of Cyprus that had predominantly Turkish population...as well as some areas that had a large Greek population. It was quite clear that this could lead to a very serious confrontation between Greeks and Turks not only on Cyprus but on the mainland as well.

So he set about trying to calm the waters and to restore some semblance of peace in the area. This was not an easy thing to do at all because the animosity between Greeks and Turks was such that it was almost impossible to get any moderation, plus the fact that we had the junta, the Colonels...

Q: Actually I think it was the Generals by that time. The Colonels had been overthrown by their Generals. It was still a pretty inept crew.

STABLER: I guess they were still called the Colonels...

In any event, this was a crisis that started in July and continued with great intensity throughout the summer and into the winter months. A great deal of effort was put in to this business, trying to appeal to the Greeks and then to the Turks to calm the situation down.

Now Secretary Kissinger had, as you remember, taught one time at Harvard and had a seminar for a variety of up and coming political leaders. He felt that this gave him a special bond. Prime Minister Ertugrul [ph] of Turkey had attended his seminar at Cambridge. Thus there was a relatively easy access channel. The Greek situation was really quite different, because it seems to me that sometime in the period from July to the fall, the Generals had been toppled.

Q: Yes, they were. The leader, although he never had the official name, was a man named Ioannidis who was sort of the military policeman -- a very, very difficult character. During the summer, because the coup instigated by the Colonels had brought such a disaster on the Greek cause, the Colonels were put out and Karamanlis came out of exile and formed a government, a democratic government.

STABLER: Yes, I remember that because the access to Etgive was a very easy one, the access to Karamanlis was not an easy one. He didn't speak English and Kissinger had a predilection for calling these people on the telephone. Etgive he could talk with but Karamanlis he really couldn't. [Former King Constantine of Greece became a friend of ours when we were in Rome and he was in exile there. When I was in Spain he was the brother-in-law of King Carlos, whose sister was Queen Sophia. I used to see him there from time to time. He always told me that he felt that Karamanlis had betrayed him. He had talked to Karamanlis when he was in exile in Paris and understood that if Karamanlis was ever restored he would bring about the restoration of the monarchy. He had expected a call from Karamanlis when he got back to Athens, which never came.]

Both the Greeks and Turks were very unbending in this whole thing. The situation was compounded later, after the July landing of the Turks, when the Turks felt threatened again and landed additional troops on Cyprus which then really tore things apart because the Greek lobby in Congress was extremely strong. There was no Turkish lobby but a strong Greek lobby with Paul Sarbanes [ph] of Maryland and John Brademas of New York and a number of others who were very, very active. They then started a campaign in Congress to cut off military aid to Turkey on the grounds that US equipment had been used for other than NATO purposes which would require specific consent of the United States government. The Turks felt that Kissinger had misled them and his relations with Congress over this became very intense.

As a result of all this, you may recall, an arms embargo was placed on Turkey -- this being '74 or early '75 -- and wasn't lift until the fall of 1978. This, of course, seriously hampered our relations with Turkey.

In any event, during this period, I was constantly in Kissinger's office. Of course, Art Hartman and others came into it too. There was Bob McCloskey who was special assistant to Kissinger at that time and was there a great deal of the time. Bill Casey, Under Secretary of Economic Affairs, was in and out.

Q: He later became the head of CIA.

STABLER: There were a number of people involved, but I really basically became the coordinator of the Cyprus situation.

Q: In some other interviews that I have done and am doing -- I am picking up some of the people who were either the Turkish Desk Officer or the Greek Desk Officer or the Cyprus Desk Officer. One of the minor legends of the Foreign Service is the clash between Tom Boyatt, who was a rather junior but a very outspoken officer who was the Cypriot Desk Officer, and Henry

Kissinger. More than just that, I wonder if you could give an idea of Kissinger's reaction to this? Did he see this as an East-West problem that was screwing up the NATO works, or born in Europe did he see this as almost one of those tribal animosities or did he understand...How did he relate to the expertise in the field?

STABLER: I think his main concern at the outset was the fact that it was a clash between two NATO allies, thus disturbing the tranquility of the Eastern Mediterranean at a time when we were still thoroughly engaged in the business of the Soviet Union being our principal enemy. You have the Turks and to a lesser extent the Greeks, looking elsewhere than NATO and this was a concern to him. Basically the context of the East-West relationship became a serious matter. It didn't really have many overtones with respect to his other great interests -- the Middle East. It didn't spill over very much into the Arab-Israel problem. So it really was a question of these people not focusing on their principal responsibility and that was what we had to deal with.

Of course, the British were much involved too because of their own situation in Cyprus. They have a major air base there which was important. Various noises were made by the Greeks of possibly closing that in annoyance over the attitude of the British who were totally opposed to what the Greeks had done.

That is why he spent as much time as he did on it, trying to find a way to bring equilibrium back into the area and get the Greeks and Turks thinking about NATO and their responsibilities rather than fighting each other. This I think was his principal point.

There certainly was a clash with Tom Boyatt, but I honestly can't remember all the details now. Boyatt was ultimately removed. But there were a lot of people involved in the clash. It got to the point where Kissinger believed that Tasca was nothing more than a spokesman for the junta.

Q: Henry Tasca had been Ambassador there from about 1970-1974. He was sent by Nixon to try to work with the junta. He saw a lot of Papadopoulos, Pattakos, Ioannidis, trying to work with them.

STABLER: But this became really something in which Kissinger believed -- that Tasca was in fact not a great deal more than the spokesman for the junta -- to the extent that there really was no communication between the Secretary of State and the Ambassador in Athens. It was done largely with Monty Sterns. When I was sent out to talk with Ecevit in Ankara and the Foreign Minister or some other official in Athens, I stayed with Monty. I knew Tasca, we had been in Rome together, but I didn't see him at that point. He was holed up in the Residence and in effect I was sort of advised not to as he was on his way out Kissinger being determined to get rid of him as quickly as he possibly could and did. He sent Jack Kubisch there as the Ambassador. So Tasca, also, was one of those who fell in this situation.

Bob Dillon was the Turkish Officer and for whom I have the greatest admiration and liking. I worked very closely with Bob. It seems curious that I can't remember now who the Greek Desk Officer was at the time. But I just don't. I'm a little confused now because there was what they used to call Greek-Turkish Affairs...I don't know if there was an office and then separate desk officers or not. Bob Dillon certainly did Turkish Affairs and there must have been somebody else

who did Greek Affairs. Ultimately Bob left and Bill Eagleton came in as the Office Director.

The fact was that I suppose I could say that even though I was Deputy Assistant Secretary, I in effect became the Desk Officers for Greece, Turkey and Cyprus at the time. It was curious. Kissinger had very strong views about all these things. He was apt to decide exactly how he wanted to play something and it often fell to me to put it into words for him, make changes that I thought should be done.

At the very outset, Joe Sisco, Under Secretary for Political Affairs, was dispatched almost immediately to the area as Kissinger's emissary to see what he could do to patch the thing up. He came back basically empty handed. Then in due course other emissaries were sent, including Art Hartman.

Q: I recall in one interview with Bob Dillon saying they sat in the plane in Ankara and they didn't know where to go. Things were falling apart.

STABLER: Yes, I remember that. They weren't really quite sure what came next. That was put together almost immediately so it wasn't really clear what it was they were expected to do except to try to calm the situation down as quickly as possible.

I know that when Arthur Hartman went over on a mission and reported back what he had done, Kissinger went up in smoke because Hartman had apparently not said exactly what Kissinger had told him to say.

I was sent out and remember going one Sunday afternoon to a house on Nebraska Ave that belonged to Wiley Buchanan, who had been Chief of Protocol. He used to lend Kissinger his house in the summer when the Buchanans went up to their house in Newport. I went over there and we went over exactly what I was to say to Ecevit and to the Greeks. I must say on the plane over I carefully noted down exactly what it was that he wanted me to say, which I did. I reported back practically verbatim what I had said, and of course what had been said to me. This made him happy because he felt his instructions had been carried out to the letter.

All of these things really...it was a constant sort of dialogue but with the attitude in Congress, which was really in favor of the Greek situation, and the Turks clearly having no intention of giving up their military occupation of a certain part of Cyprus, nothing really could be achieved. Certainly the government of Karamanlis was more disposed to reason than the junta, but the Turks were in occupation and by this time Makarios had been restored. Treledies [ph], who was the leader of the Greek community in Cyprus and Denktash, the leader of the Turkish community, would have talks. And there were talks in Geneva. There were talks everywhere. But no one could fine any solution beyond basically what has now become the status quo. The Turks, of course, declared the independent Turkish Republic of Cyprus, which no one recognizes, except them.

We had great tragedies there because of the Cypriot population's view that we favor the Turks in some way. There would be demonstrations and you remember the tragic killing of Rodger Davies who was our Ambassador there.

Q: He was killed by Cypriot police, I think.

STABLER: I don't remember now exactly how that happened. It was one of those tragic things where the mob stormed the Embassy shooting and he was unfortunately a victim of it. I would guess that today the situation is largely what it was a number of years ago.

Q: A little of the thinking at the time. You had two mixed populations on the island, the Greeks and the Turks, and things weren't going well. They were shooting at each other and it was all mixed up and the fact that there had been essentially an exchange of population and there was a clear demarcation between what was under Turkish control and what was under Greek control. Was anyone saying, "Well, you know this is a bad spot to get over, but in the long run it is going to be a lot better than having these two people living cheek to jowl and really not being very nice to each other." Were you getting any of that?

STABLER: There was a certain feeling of *fait accompli* because with the Turkish army in northern Cyprus, no one believed that it would be possible to get the Turks to withdraw their army. One tried at the time to get the Turks to at least reduce the number of forces, but I don't think anybody really expected the Turks to give the whole thing up. There was some hope that possibly the communal negotiations between Treledies and Denktash might...this was really after Makarios because he wasn't disposed to be reasonable about anything. Their whole effort was to get the Turks off the island and get back to where they were before, which I think no one really felt was a viable possibility. But at that time, less thought was probably given to how this would evolve in the future. Of course it was not possible for the United States to take a position or appear to take a position which in effect accepted the status quo. That was something you couldn't even think about because with the bad blood between the Greeks and the Turks the effort was to try to find some formula that would in effect reduce the Turkish presence and hopefully through the communal negotiations reach a point with there could be perhaps a restoration of the Republic of Cyprus as before with greater autonomy for the Turkish population.

As you remember prior to the coup there was a Greek President of Cyprus and a Turkish Vice President. The Greeks were clearly in the majority. But there was some hope that somehow through these communal negotiations you could get an improved situation for the Turks and hopefully the Turkish army would go away.

Q: But in your heart of hearts though did you think anything would come of this? Was this something you really had to do but thought.... ?

STABLER: I think probably most of us at the time recognized that in a sense what the Turks had done would probably in the long run ease the situation because you then have a division between these two groups and less possibility in the long run of communal clashes. And that in fact is what has come about. Quite clearly when you are dealing with this sort of a problem you never can take the position...but somehow we have to get fully involved. So, no, I don't think anybody would put down on paper let's let this thing just hang out and take care of itself. The main thrust really of what Kissinger was trying to do was to try to reduce the level of animosity between

Greece and Turkey as much as possible and, as I said before, let them get back to their main task. Although this was very complicated because the whole discussion all the time between the Greeks and Turks was about the air control area and what was Greek and what was Turkish, what islands would

Q: And mineral rights which still is going on today.

STABLER: Yes. President Bush is in Greece at the present moment and is facing violent demonstrations because the Greeks think we are more friends with the Turks than we are towards the Greeks.

Q: Another thing on this issue, I may be overdwelling, but I think this brings so many things together -- how we work. In one interview I did the interviewee spoke with Senator Javits, who was from New York, Jewish and an ardent proponent of Israel, telling him: "You think the Jewish lobby is a problem in the United States, wait until the Greek lobby gets going because the Jewish concentration is in New York, California, and Florida, but there are Greeks spread out throughout the United States and also in positions of considerable political importance. Just wait until this gets aroused." I think this issue sort of proved the value of what had been said prior to this. Did the Greek lobby catch the Department of State by surprise as to how powerful it became? This was the first time it really became organized.

STABLER: I think it was a matter of some surprise to see the lobby as well organized as it was. I had this brought back to me once again when in 1978 after coming back from Spain. I was helping on the Hill in talking to Senators and Congressman about the importance of lifting the arms embargo against Turkey. I went to see the Congressman from Maryland, who died shortly thereafter, and talked to him about the importance of our relations with Turkey. He said, "I absolutely agree with you. I don't think Congress ought to be nickel and diming the State Department on all these things and getting involved in all the nitty gritty of day to day operations. I think the Turkish arms embargo should be lifted, but I intend to vote against it for the very simple reason that my main fund raiser in the State is a Greek-American and therefore there is no way that I can vote in favor of this matter even though I fully agree that it should be done." So again, that showed the power of the lobby even years after the intensity of the thing had died down. As I said earlier there was absolutely no Turkish lobby whatsoever. Consequently the Greek lobby did get Congress to do pretty much what they thought it should do and there was tremendous pressures on the State Department, the Secretary to take a more pro-Greek line.

I think it is to Kissinger's credit that he...although it caused him a lot of trouble because, as I said earlier, there were Members of Congress who believed that he had outright lied to them on the business of the original question of should we not impose arms embargo because all these US arms are going into Cyprus. I think there were many of us who felt that the Turks had enormously complicated our task. It was at least understandable, the first wave of invasion, because there was aggression in protecting their population in Cyprus. That could be argued, if you will, under rubric of self defense. But then when some weeks later they sent in the second wave there was no real justification for so doing. That enormously complicated our task.

Q: Why did they do that?

STABLER: I think they did it because they wanted to consolidate their gains and to make it absolutely clear that they had no intention of giving up. I think this was actually done after the Colonels had been thrown out. I think they were concerned that the Greeks might try to launch some military operation.

Q: Well, there certainly were some noises about the Greek military talking about fighting there and sending in an expedition.

STABLER: They sent naval vessels and there was the famous episode where in the middle of the night...I was down in the Operations Center and there were all sorts of alarms and excursions about the Greek naval force and then the Turks announced with much pride that they had sunk a Greek destroyer. Then it turned out that they had sunk one of their own.

I think it was also part of the domestic problems in Turkey that was responsible for this. Their economic and the political situation was always in turmoil. The Prime Minister of Turkey and the army gained considerable popular support because they were defending the Turkish population in Cyprus.

So I don't think any of us felt that the second invasion was really necessary. They had frankly sent in enough in the first place to defend the population and the second invasion was just a grand stand display which caused us many problems.

In any event, I think from a personal point of view, I found it a fascinating experience being able to work as closely as I did with Kissinger and seeing what a difficult person he could be on these things. I found that those who permitted themselves to be brow beaten and simply accepted it, soon fell by the wayside. Those who stood up to him, but were not right sometimes in their advise, also fell by the wayside. Those who stood up to him and knew their dossier, fared pretty well.

Q: One of the points about Kissinger that is raised again and again is that he tended to do things by himself with foreign leaders and that those working to support him, such as you, often would find themselves dealing without quite knowing what the game was. Was this a problem in this case?

STABLER: I never felt that. I felt that I knew what he was doing because I often did it for him. I often was in the room and sometimes on the telephone listening in when he was talking to these foreign leaders. I wrote most of the messages, obviously not 100 percent, but most of them that he sent these people. And I went to the White House with him on some of these things. So I felt that on the whole I had fairly good knowledge of what he was doing.

Mind you, there were...Arthur Hartman and I had a very good relationship. For example, when I went on a trip with Kissinger to India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran, when we got to Rome where he was going to have talks with the Italians, Arthur Hartman came on board and I was finished, because at that point there wasn't room for both of us. But Arthur pretty much kept me abreast of

what was going on and as the year wore on...I went over to London a few times to talk to the British about the problem... I never felt that Kissinger was trying to exclude me or that he was not keeping the Bureau of European Affairs through Arthur Hartman and myself, pretty much informed of what he was up to. He believed, I think at times erroneously, that his superior intelligence would easily win over some of these people. They just couldn't resist the force of his logic and therefore they would soon see that he was right and they were not. But, I think, at times we ignored some of the realities of the situation. But in each instance it was worth the try. You couldn't go wrong in putting forward your own point of view to these people.

Q: Sort of the other shoe. While this was going, one of our major concerns was that you didn't want to have two NATO allies fighting each other because NATO was the bulwark and here was the southern flank against the Soviet Union. You must have been monitoring very closely what the Soviet Union was doing. Did you get any feel that the Soviets were going to try to take advantage, or were they taking advantage of this?

STABLER: I don't recall any situation where the Soviets seemed to be a threatening factor in all this. Obviously there were Communists in Greece and some of this carried over into Cyprus I am sure, but I don't know that this was necessarily as a result of any Soviet doing. I can't recall now that this particular aspect entered into the equation in any important way. The real concern, of course, was that...and then there were alarms and excursions throughout this period of reports that the Turks were massing to invade Greece or that Greece was reinforcing their forces along the border and there soon would be problems. There were a lot of rumors in those days. I don't recall that there was any serious information at any time that the Turks and Greeks were about to clash.

Q: I remember I had left Greece within a week or two of the coup in Cyprus. At the country team meetings, the military attaché used to say that if the Greeks and Turks were at each other they will have ammunition for about one week and then they will basically run out. Turning away from this particular thing but talking about your role in dealing with Western Europe, were there any major problems that you had to deal with in the 1973-75 period -- West Germany, France?

GEORGE S. VEST
Deputy Assistant Secretary
European Affairs (1974)

George S. Vest was born in 1918 in Virginia. In the Foreign Service he was posted to Bermuda, Ecuador, Canada, Belgium, was ambassador to the European Communities and Director General of the Foreign Service. The interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

Q: During that period, was there any other particular moments or areas of major concern?

VEST: In the earlier stages, we had Greece, Turkey. We had to resume -- this was almost more politics in our country than over there -- we had to resume the sale and delivery of arms to

Turkey. We had stopped it because of the Cyprus situation.

Q: *That was the Cyprus situation in July of '74?*

VEST: Yes. And we went to the Senate. It was approved. I met sort of steadily with Sarbanes and Brademas and the other Greek-American people on the Hill.

Q: *It's interesting how powerful the Greek lobby is. I mean, one always thinks of the Israeli and Jewish lobby, but the Greek is probably, well, second.*

VEST: It's second. I mean, I've had a lot of personal experience with each.

Q: *Each being the congressional...*

VEST: The Jewish-American lobbies -- and without any question, the most powerful lobby in political terms inside our country -- but I think equally there's no question the Greek-American lobby, much, much smaller, much more pointed in its concerns, is the next most effective. They are absolutely fantastically well organized and able.

Q: *Why did we want to resume arms shipments to Turkey?*

VEST: You had the case of a NATO ally who, really, whose armaments were frankly beginning to be out of date, limited. You know, the armed forces were getting to be genuinely in a bad way. And as a NATO ally, you had two things. You were, one, having an increasingly, poorly armed ally; and second, you were creating increasing strains inside a society, which is a rather shallow, western-oriented society where the military represented a major component factor. And so, in NATO terms, there was a very, very strong desire to help, go ahead and modernize the Turkish military.

Q: *Looking at it from both the NATO and the European...*

VEST: It wasn't having any affect on the Cyprus situation.

Q: *Looking at the Greek-Turkish business from the point of view of European affairs -- American view of European affairs -- and NATO, how important did we find Greece in this? Greece, in a way, seems to spend most of its time pointed towards Turkey rather than Bulgaria or something like that. Was Greece something we almost would discount and were more concerned about Turkey from a military support of NATO point of view?*

VEST: You can never discount either one of them. Geographically, they are both in extraordinary...

Q: *You were saying that Greece points at Turkey, and Turkey points at Greece, too.*

VEST: And both are absolutely delicate pieces of real estate in relation to the eastern Mediterranean and the Soviet world, so you constantly have to try to have them do something

that is constructive and to have them point less at each other. And that has been the role of these two countries inside NATO ever since they joined. There's never been any major difference in this kind of approach on their part. And it still is.

Q: How did you deal with this? Was this something that you spent a lot of time on?

VEST: The only thing I can say is I dealt with it by virtue of the fact that I was good friends with the diplomatic people on both sides. And we were constantly negotiating on Cyprus, trying to get the sides to come together in Cyprus and to get the Turks, which were part of it, to work with us, and there never was that opportune moment where the parties involved, all of them, really were ready, because the Greek Cypriots never really wanted to settle, as far as from my point of view.

I had the good fortune that key people in the Greek foreign office were people I had known, and the equivalent of assistant secretary for political military affairs in the Turkish foreign office, one of the most powerful at that time because he was the one the military trusted, he was someone I had known as a junior officer when I started in NATO. He was their most recent ambassador here, Ambassador Elekdag. He and I had known each other since we were very junior officers, so I could always really speak very, very candidly and openly and work with them.

You did your best to soft-pedal the differences, to restrain them, and to remind them that they had this other concern they needed to watch, as well. There are only moments when Greeks and Turks are really ready to do things together, and you have to capitalize on those moments. Now none of those moments honestly came in the four years that I was assistant secretary for European affairs. A little later, when Ozal more recently was made head of the Turkish Government, you hit one of those moments and they've had a much better rapport. Not a rapport, but a relationship, in more recent years. Otherwise, it's very difficult always.

JACK B. KUBISCH
Ambassador
Greece (1974-1977)

Ambassador Jack B. Kubisch was born in Missouri in 1920. Serving in France, Mexico and as ambassador to Greece, Kubisch also served in various positions in the Department of State. He was interviewed by Henry Mattox in 1989.

Q: How did you choose Athens or how did Athens choose you?

KUBISCH: It turned out that in July of 1974, while I was Assistant Secretary, the then Greek military government endeavored to cooperate with Greek Cypriots on the Island of Cyprus, to overthrow the Government of President and Archbishop Makarios on Cyprus, to assassinate him, and for a group of Greek Cypriots to take control of Cyprus and unite Cyprus with Greece. This led to a crisis and a near war between Greece and Turkey. It led to the fall of the military regime in Greece that had been there for seven years, and the reassignment of the American Ambassador in Greece, Ambassador Tasca, who had been so closely associated with the regime of the Greek

colonels. When this happened, and a near war was about to break out, Kissinger and I were talking about it and I informed him that I knew a very prominent, perhaps the most prominent, civilian statesman in modern Greece, a man by the name of Constantine Karamanlis, who had been recalled to Greece in late July in 1974 to reassume the prime ministership of the country after he had been in voluntary exile for ten years in Paris.

Kissinger asked me if I had any interest in going to Greece as ambassador, and I said, "Yes, I would" in line with earlier conversations that we had had. I said, "I would welcome such an assignment." And he said that he would talk to the President about it. The matter dragged on for a couple of weeks because these were the final days and weeks of the Nixon Administration leading to President Nixon's resignation on Friday, August 9, 1974, almost at the height of the crisis between Greece and Turkey. Kissinger called me that day and said he had spoken to President Ford and President Ford was prepared to name me as ambassador to Greece and would I come to the White House. Nixon resigned at Noon on Friday, August 9th and about 5:00 p.m. that afternoon I was at the White House privately with our new President Ford and Secretary Kissinger talking about the Greek-Turkish problem.

President Ford, whom I had known fairly well as a congressman and as Vice President, called me by my first name, "Jack, Henry tells me that you're willing to go to Athens as our ambassador. Is that right?" And I said, "Yes, I would welcome the assignment." He said, "All right, that settles it. You can go."

Kissinger asked me to propose candidates to replace myself as Assistant Secretary of State: two from the Foreign Service, one in the State Department at the time and one abroad, and one not in the State Department or the Foreign Service. These were his requirements, give me three names of who you think your successor should be, which over the coming days I did, and he finally selected one.

But I should tell you that I think I was President Ford's first appointment after he became President because the request for agrément went out to the Greek Government over the weekend. The following Monday evening, I think it was August 12th, I was in the White House at a reception, or maybe it was the 13th, Tuesday the 13th because Ambassador Rodger Davies, our ambassador in Nicosia, Cyprus had been assassinated earlier that day, and there was a tremendous upheaval going on in Greece and in Cyprus, lots of problems. President Ford, very considerately I thought, to both my wife and me, came over and said, "Jack, I heard about Ambassador Davies in Cyprus being murdered earlier today. I know Athens is a very dangerous post. If you have second thoughts about going out there" he said, "I'd be willing to try and find somebody else to take the assignment." I said no and did go in September, 1974.

Q: *You had known Karamanlis?*

KUBISCH: I had known Karamanlis in Paris while he was in exile.

Q: *In what capacity?*

KUBISCH: In a democratic society or country it's very well advised for American officials and

ambassadors and chargés and diplomats to maintain contacts with key leaders of opposition parties who may someday come back to power. So, for example, I used to meet with President, or at that time the head of the Socialist Party, Mitterrand in France, even though Pompidou was President of the country. And in that context, I was under instructions from time to time from Washington to meet with Constantine Karamanlis who had been Prime Minister of Greece and gone into voluntary exile. So from time to time I would send other officers from the embassy to go and discuss world matters with him and explain U.S. policies and just show him some courtesies. That's how I had come to know him.

Q: Take him to lunch?

KUBISCH: I don't think I ever had lunch with him in Paris.

Q: From April through September, 1974 in Greece there were, at least from time to time, mass demonstrations going on. Was that a problem when you arrived on the scene?

KUBISCH: It was a problem, the dimensions of which I cannot exaggerate. I'll tell you why. Actually the military regime in Greece continued until July 22, 1974 and that's when the demonstrations started. Greece and Turkey almost went to war. There was a great humiliation in Greece over what had happened in Cyprus, the fact that the Turks had landed there. There was a widespread feeling in Greece that all of the problems of Greece, the problems that Greece had with Turkey, the problems Greece had on Cyprus, the oppression and repression the people of Greece had suffered for seven years under the colonels, the Greek colonels, the military dictatorship, that the responsible party for all of this was the U.S. Government. And, as a result, they began tremendous demonstrations against the U.S. Embassy and against the United States Government.

It might be interesting to recall why they had this impression. My feeling when I arrived in Greece, as to why they felt this way, was because that for seven years, from 1967 to '74, the Greek Government was kind of a pariah among western democracies. The governments of Western Europe, the democratic governments, had virtually nothing to do with Greece during those seven years. No important leader of any country visited Greece while the colonels were in power during those seven years. But the exception was the United States. The Vice President of the United States, Spiro Agnew, made an official visit to Greece. The Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, made an official visit to Greece. The Secretary of Commerce, Maurice Stans, made an official visit to Greece. Our top NATO commanders and American military commanders repeatedly made important official visits to Greece during this military regime. And whenever they were there, the Greek Government, the military government, exploited these visits as fully as they could with newspapers, with stories, with photographs and everything. There came to be in the minds of the Greek people a feeling that the United States Government was the one friend these military leaders of Greece had and that the U.S. was only interested in Greece because of our military bases there and that the CIA basically was carrying to the Greek military instructions as to what to do. Therefore, the Greek people felt that we were responsible for the disaster on Cyprus, for the Turkish troop landings on Cyprus, and for the major problems the country faced at that time.

On demonstrations I would just say that I've seen many demonstrations in my life. I saw the demonstrations in the 60s in Washington where 50,000 or 100,000 people would demonstrate. I saw them in Brazil in the early 60s when there were 100,000 people in the streets of Sao Paulo and Rio and Brasilia. And even during the Vietnam Peace Accords, our embassy in Paris was attacked several times by 10,000, 20,000 or 30,000 people in the Place de la Concorde. We were well protected by the French authorities, fortunately.

But I had never seen demonstrations of the kind that took place in Athens. There were demonstrations of 200,000, 300,000 or 400,000 people that gathered in the center of town all day long and then marched on the American Embassy, 200 to 300 abreast, marching by, using the worst, most obscene epithets in language, and trying to break into the embassy. They did succeed in breaking into the embassy once, tried to set it on fire and did over \$100,000 worth of damage. It was really a period of great turbulence in Greece and deep, bitter anti-American feelings.

Q: *What year was this that they managed to break into the embassy?*

KUBISCH: They broke into the embassy in late 1974, as I recall. I arrived in September of '74 and we had word that . . .

Q: *That was the first year you were there?*

KUBISCH: It was, yes.

Q: *What protection did Karamanlis offer at that time?*

KUBISCH: To the embassy?

Q: *Yes.*

KUBISCH: Well, the Greek authorities tried to protect the embassy. For example, on the day the mob broke in, or the evening they broke in, we knew there was going to be a big gathering downtown and a march against the embassy. So about 4:00 in the afternoon I sent everybody home, and I left the embassy with the security officer, the American security officer and the Marine guards, and several others. And as the groups came by, they marched by, they got to the embassy at about 8:00 in the evening. By prearrangement they burned an American flag as a signal and then stormed the embassy. There were a couple of hundred Greek police surrounding the embassy as a barricade, and I had given the Marines instructions not to draw a pistol and shoot anyone because they were looking for a martyr, the demonstrators, the leaders of the demonstration, to try and bring on even more anti-American sentiment in the country.

I had told the Marines not to draw their pistols or shoot anyone unless, as we used to say in the Navy in World War II, you were in the last extremity where they had you down, they were about to do you terrible damage, then you could draw your pistol and shoot. And those Marines, we had twelve at the time in the Marine security guard, did a wonderful job. They fought off the people breaking into the embassy with brooms and fire extinguishers and chairs and so on. A lot of people were hurt. There were a lot of broken bones, broken arms, broken clavicles and so on.

A lot of police were badly injured, but no one was killed.

Q: Let's see now, further into the violence at the embassy in Athens in late '74.

KUBISCH: I just wanted to say that I saw then, and this greatly influenced me as I endeavored to fashion U.S. posture and policy in Greece at the time, the terrible price the U.S. Government must pay when it associates itself so intimately, so publicly and so prominently with a repressive regime in another country. The damage to U.S. interests in that period and subsequently, in my view, flowed directly from unnecessary and short-sighted policies and actions during the previous several years.

So I decided that we would have to revamp our CIA station in Greece and its role there and follow a set of policies in the country, both publicly and behind the scenes, that would try and rectify what was a very severe and threatening situation to U.S. interests.

I might say further about that particular damage to the embassy, I was outraged when I saw all the damage that had been done, and I was determined it would never happen again. I didn't think it would happen, and the Greek authorities assured me they would not allow it to happen even once. The Minister of Defense, bless his heart, a man by the name of Averoff, came immediately to the embassy during the evening, this was about 10:00 in the evening, to express, on his behalf and on the part of Greek authorities, his great sadness and sorrow about this attack on our embassy and the damage done to it. And the Foreign Minister, Dimitri Bitsios, called me on the telephone. He has since passed away. He expressed his regret on the phone and said that the Greek Government would pay the expense of repairing the embassy, which they did.

This led, by the way, to a big issue between our embassy and Washington as to what should be done to prevent this in the future because the embassy building had been designed by a famous architect, Gropius. It was built on kind of a small hillside. It was kind of a modern-day building along the style of the Acropolis and the Parthenon on the Acropolis. It was a beautiful building with no fences or anything around it. I decided we were going to have to put a fence around the embassy. I hated to do it, but I decided we would have to put a fence around it. Some of the people in the embassy said, "Oh, the Greek people will never understand this. They'll think that this fence is going to be a barricade and symbolic of problems between Greece and the United States." But we did end up putting a fence around it, a very high fence with spikes on top and putting shrubbery around it to disguise it to make sure that no one was ever injured again by an attack on that embassy.

This was, of course, in '74, long before we had the kinds of security problems that subsequently became so serious to our diplomats and our establishments abroad.

Q: That one instance of the break-in at the embassy, did they get through to the inner sanctum, the code room?

KUBISCH: No, they did not. They broke into the section of the embassy that was closest to the main thoroughfare that went by the embassy and only on the ground floor. That was the consular section. They did a tremendous amount of damage in there, broke windows and furniture and

tried to overturn file cabinets and set fire. They were only in the building for about 30 minutes before they were driven out. But they never got into any important classified area.

Q: The Greek police drove them out?

KUBISCH: The Greek police drove them out and many Greek police were badly injured during this melée.

Q: Were any marines injured?

KUBISCH: No marines were seriously injured, only minor injuries.

Q: At the time, '74 early '75, the anti-American demonstrations continued. Your frame of mind at the time, were you inclined to think that the CIA had played an inappropriate role and was playing an inappropriate role in Greece operating out of the American Embassy?

KUBISCH: Yes, I did. My view on this is not shared, I'm sure, by many key officials in the CIA. But, I think, to understand it one needs to recall there was a terrible bitter civil war in the late 40s. There was an underground in Greece, and the CIA during the 40s, 50s and 60s became active in having close collaboration, intimate collaboration, with many key Greek leaders. The CIA, to some extent, it seemed to me, operated semi-independently from the ambassador and the embassy. I was never really sure at the outset that I knew whom they were seeing and what they were doing. I wanted to bring the CIA station under my control. So I felt, rightly or wrongly, that CIA had never really modernized in Greece to the kind of CIA station that existed in the other countries of Western Europe that I was familiar with, and in the countries of Latin America. They were still sort of operating the way they had operated 15 or 20 years earlier, and this was no longer appropriate. So it was at that time that I felt we would have to change the station and change its activities and to bring it more closely under my control and supervision.

Q: You were not always entirely sure you were seeing everything that was being sent out?

KUBISCH: No, because their instructions were to show me those things which they felt, either in Washington or in the local station, that I needed to see. Now they were constantly reassuring me that I saw everything important and knew everything important they were doing except "sources and methods." Obviously, only those that need to, know who their agents are by name or the methods they used to acquire intelligence. There was no need for me to know the details of that.

Q: You were there for several years, and presumably you brought the agency under control. How did you go about it?

KUBISCH: Well, I made my views known both to the State Department and CIA in Washington by sending messages.

Q: By cable?

KUBISCH: By cable, written messages of what I felt needed to be done. I requested that the then

station chief, who was a very competent officer, be replaced. At my request he was replaced. A man was proposed to me to become station chief in Athens, who had been the CIA station chief in Peru that I had known, a man by the name of Richard Welch. He had been an undergraduate at Harvard, a classics major, spoke Greek, and I knew him to be a very, very fine person that I could work with. So when he was proposed to become my station chief, I accepted him with great pleasure.

Q: He was nominated in November and assassinated on the 23rd of December. At that time he was 46 years old. He was station chief and widely known locally as being CIA, even though he had been there only a short period of time. He was named as an agent in the English language Athens News on November 25th. Six others in the embassy were named. What was your reaction at the time? How did you cope or deal with that? Did you try to do anything about it?

KUBISCH: It was a very serious problem. I was dismayed to learn that he had been identified even before his arrival in Greece. He had been identified also in a circular, I believe, that had been sent around to Greece and elsewhere where they kept track of CIA officers operating abroad in various U.S. embassies.

Q: There was a publication called "Counter Spies" that was being put out by Philip Agee at the time which had named him apparently in January and June of that year.

KUBISCH: I understand that's correct. He had been named. He was not really troubled by this. But I should say that the head of the CIA station in Greece had traditionally lived in a certain U.S. Government-owned residence.

Q: The same is true of other posts.

KUBISCH: Yes. We had in Greece some six or eight Government-owned residences, and the CIA station chief had lived in one. Needless to say, the Greek intelligence services and many Greeks who wanted to find out, and foreign intelligence services were able to identify the CIA station chief in Greece. It's not hard for them to identify him in almost any country of the world, I suppose. The difference in Greece was that it was highly publicized. So when he came to Greece, assigned to the political section ostensibly, my deputy chief of mission, Monty Stearns, and I had made arrangements for him to go into a different residence and to live in a different part of town, to try and help conceal who he was and to give him some cover.

I must say, that neither Welch nor his wife seemed to be at all concerned about this, not at all. After they looked at the house that we had selected for them before their arrival, and looked at other houses that were available, they finally decided to move into the same house that their predecessors had lived in, the CIA house. I reluctantly concurred in this and he moved in. As I recall, he was there for a few months in 1975 before his assassination. Seems to me he may have arrived in the summer of '75. I'm not positive. I don't remember the exact dates. But I know he was one of my tennis buddies, and we played tennis a number of times, while he was there, as partners. I liked him very much.

He cooperated with me in revamping the CIA station and its wide, deep and, in my view,

unnecessary extent of operations in Greece. He cooperated with me in accomplishing this over a period of a few months before his death. I think that was one of the great pities. His death was a great personal, as well as a professional, tragedy for me, even to this day. I'll never overcome it. He was a true friend of Greece, a friend of U.S.-Greece cooperation, and he was cooperating with me in trying to bring about the kinds of CIA operations in Greece that were more appropriate to the modern era, the modern times.

But, to stay with this a moment longer, I invited him to my house, the Ambassador's residence, for a Christmas party. I thought it was December 22nd, it might have been December 23rd. We were having a reception with Greek music, Greek food and Greek dancing and probably had 100 to 200 people there. A number of Greek officials were present and a lot of embassy staff and the children from the embassy and the children of Greek officials whom we knew, including Ministers of the Government, as part of my program to try and establish more cordial and cooperative working relationships between Greek authorities and American officials there.

He and his wife left our residence that evening about 9:00 or 10:00, they got in a car, drove just a few blocks to the house he was living in. His wife told me later that evening that as they drove by their house the lights were out in the driveway and on the front porch. Had they been in Guatemala, she said, where they had once served, they would not have stopped. They would have stepped on the accelerator and kept going if the lights were out until they got to the local police precinct or back to the embassy. But they just didn't think in Athens that there was any real severe threat to them.

They drove into their driveway and stopped. Across the street there was a small car with four people in it. Three of them got out. One came to each side of the Welch's car, made Mrs. Welch and Dick Welch get out. They asked him to put his hands up, in Greek. He spoke Greek. He apparently, as he was putting his hands up, asked them what they wanted. They fired three slugs from a .45 into his chest and killed him. They got in the car and sped off.

Q: Terrible story. I was in Cairo at the time, and we were rather deeply shocked there when we heard it as well. A year later there was a press report that a Greek security police chief was killed in December of 1976, a year later. A ballistic test indicated that the pistol that killed this police chief, former Greek police chief, was the same gun that killed Welch, and that the organization involved was something called the "Revolutionary Organization of 17 November." Do you recall that?

KUBISCH: Yes, I do. I think there have been several other assassinations in Greece that have been traced to that same weapon. It is a political statement, in part, I think. The November 17th group was a group that had been protesting the military regime between '67 and '74, and the military regime reacted very harshly on November 17th. I think it was in 1973. I'm not positive of that date. So they established an organization to retaliate and they used this weapon. This was a political statement by them, murdering the chief of the CIA and other key Greeks and others who, for one reason or another, had been involved in oppressing Greek people or cooperating with American officials.

Q: In 1975, during your period of time there, in April, the U.S. and Greek governments jointly

announced that the Sixth Fleet Base Agreement was going to be ended and that the U.S. air base at Athens Airport was going to be closed. What occasioned all of that?

KUBISCH: Well, when President Karamanlis came back as prime minister in July of '74, he took several steps in an effort to gain wide support among the Greek people. He announced Greece's withdrawal from the military command structure of NATO. Another was an announcement that Greece, the Greek Government, would insist on Americans withdrawing from military facilities in Greece and renegotiating any U.S. presence there. He took a number of steps that had a favorable reaction among the Greek people. So that announcement to which you refer had to do with the closing of American bases and plans to home port an American carrier and its support forces in Greece that had been underway for several years, a home port of a carrier group, battle group, in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Incidentally, Karamanlis told me once when we were talking about this and some of the steps he had taken in Greece, he said that many things had been written about him, Karamanlis, but there was one thing that was written about him of which he was more proud than anything else. And I said, "What was that, Mr. Prime Minister?" And he said, "De Gaulle had written in his memoirs that Constantine Karamanlis was the one man who could govern a nation of people who did not wish to be governed."

I should also mention that Karamanlis did not speak very good English. He spoke a little English. He spoke fair to poor French and, of course, Greek. Obviously, he was fluent in Greek, his native language. I went to Greece rather abruptly before I could really become competent in Greek. I studied it as much as I could before I left and every day with a tutor while I was there, and I began to acquire some facility in the language. But whenever Karamanlis and I were alone, we ended up speaking in all three languages, Greek, English and French as we were communicating with each other. In one way or another he would say, "Now, what you said was this and you meant that" and so on. In fact, at one point, I spent almost a day and a half with him alone, or virtually alone, as we dealt with another crisis in that part of the world which we might discuss at some point if you wish.

Q: Was that the Turkish question?

KUBISCH: Yes. It was a crisis between Greece and Turkey over the Aegean. I'd be glad to say a few words about this, if you wish, because I think it shows a role an ambassador can play in helping to avert a serious conflict and particularly this one, much of which has never been published. I can give you an insight into what really happened.

The fact is that there was a widespread movement in the United States to establish a Greek lobby in order to influence the American Government on policy toward Greece. The Greek Government itself was, of course, deeply involved with the Cyprus crisis, between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots and between Greece and Turkey. Perhaps even more serious, in the view of the Greek Government, were the problems in the Aegean Sea between Greece and Turkey because very basic strategic, economic, military and political interests of the Greek people and the Greek Government were at stake there.

It was, as I recall, in the summer of 1976 that the Turkish Government began a program that the Greek Government and the Greek people thought threatened their vital interests. This almost led to a war between the two countries. The first time had been over Cyprus in '74. This was the second time, the summer of '76.

The issue was basically that the Turkish Government was going to send out a scientific exploration ship to study the bottom of the Aegean Sea for mineral and oil deposits because oil had been discovered in the northern Aegean Sea bed. The Greek people and the Greek Government said they would not allow this to happen. It went to a basic dispute between the two countries over who had the rights to resources in the sea bed in the Aegean.

The Turkish Government took the position that Asia Minor had a continental shelf that went out from Turkey under the Aegean and that the mineral and sea bed rights belonged to Turkey because it was on their continental shelf. The Greek Government took the position that Greece and its 3,000 islands, many of which are in the Aegean, had their own continental shelves, that Greece was an archipelagic state. As a matter of fact, the word archipelago has its origin in the Greek words "above the sea," "islands above the sea."

The Turkish Government said the islands were mere protuberances on the Turkish continental shelf. The Greek Government took the position that the islands had their own continental shelves around them and that if the Turkish Government sent this ship out, it was called the "Seismik", Greek naval vessels would intercept and take it under control and bring it back to a Greek port. The Turkish Government said if the Greek Government did that, they would be fired on and the Turkish Government would send ships out to protect the research vessel.

Over a period of some weeks, the issue got hotter and hotter, and tensions and emotions rose on both sides of the Aegean. When I would ask for instructions from Washington as to what we could do about this, the U.S. position was, well, we call on both parties to restrain their passions, to calm down and let the crisis pass and negotiate a solution -- basically, a hands-off posture. We didn't want to get involved in such a serious dispute between two prized and valued allies.

Q: Two NATO partners.

KUBISCH: Two NATO partners. It was becoming increasingly clear to me that if we didn't do anything, that if somebody didn't do something, the Greek Government had no choice but to send naval vessels to intercept the Turkish Seismik and that there could be gun fire and a conflict between the two countries.

In the meantime, I learned that Prime Minister Karamanlis was getting advice and recommendations from his own subordinates in his foreign ministry and his legal department that Greece's position was a sound, legal position based on the 1958 Law of the Sea Convention which Greece had signed but which Turkey had not.

In looking into it I disagreed. I thought he was getting bad advice, and I told him so. I told him that if he sent Greek naval vessels out to intercept the Seismik, the Turkish ship, that he would not have the support of the world community and Greece would be isolated. I told him that, in

my opinion, he was getting bad advice. I did this without instructions and without authority.

Q: Under what circumstances? Did you call on him?

KUBISCH: I was seeing him on other matters during this period and told him then. To my surprise, one Friday afternoon about 4:00, he called me on the telephone and said, "Ambassador, I've arranged for a small boat to take me out for a little recreation this weekend. I'm leaving tomorrow morning at 11:00, Saturday morning, and I wonder if you and Mrs. Kubisch would care to join me. It will just be us and no one else there to speak of, no other foreign officials and no other government officials. I would like to talk to you." So I said, "Yes."

I went out with him at 11:00 on Saturday morning and we stayed out until late Sunday afternoon. During that time I talked to him at length about why I thought he was getting bad advice. It had to do with whether or not this research vessel would actually "penetrate" the sea bed and drill, or whether it would merely drag a cable and take some "soundings" of the sea bed, which it would be legally all right for it to do from the standpoint of scientific explorations.

As a result of this weekend with him privately, and without the authority of my own government in Washington, I think I changed his mind. I could be wrong. But, in any case, he went back and authorized a press campaign to tell the Greek people that Greece was wrong, that their position was not a sound position legally, and that they would lose the support of the world community if they attacked the Turkish vessel. As long as the Turkish vessel didn't touch the bottom but merely took sonar soundings and so on, this was perfectly all right. And the whole crisis subsided.

Q: During that period the Department distributed to posts abroad a great deal of information on Law of the Sea which, of course, had been hanging around for years, the negotiations. Is that how you managed to inform yourself so closely on this issue?

KUBISCH: Yes, exactly. Just from materials that were available in the embassy, although I may also have requested materials from Washington, copies of documents or interpretations, and so on. I don't remember at the moment.

Q: Did you inform the Department of what you had done?

KUBISCH: Subsequently. And, as I recall, I got a well-done message back from them.

Q: When was that exactly?

KUBISCH: As I recall, it was in about August of 1976.

Q: Well, that was an issue between two allies, valued allies, as you put it. At this time, '76, about a year before you were to leave, was the bases question still the outstanding issue in the U.S., American relations at that time?

KUBISCH: It was one of the major problems. I'll just say one word more before we leave this

problem between Greece and Turkey, and Cyprus, which is this. You may recall during this period, Henry, that the Congress had passed a law placing an embargo on arms shipments from the United States to Turkey until Turkey withdrew its military forces from Cyprus and changed its policy toward Cyprus. The Executive Branch of our Government under President Ford and Secretary Kissinger were, on the other hand, strongly in favor of shipping arms to Turkey. So the two policies were diametrically opposed. The Executive Branch of our Government felt that if we shipped arms to Turkey, we could maintain a cordial relationship with the Turks and could influence them more to moderate their policies on Cyprus.

The Congress, under great pressure from the Greek-American community and the so-called "Greek Lobby" in the United States, legislated the embargo and said that we weren't going to let Turkey have any arms or spare parts until they left Cyprus.

What became apparent to me then was the price we pay at times in our system of government with the separation of powers, which has so many benefits for us as a nation. In this case, for example, the policy being followed and advocated by the Executive Branch might have worked, the cooperation with Turkey and the supplying of arms, if it had gone forward. The policy of the Congress of withholding arms, embargoing arms and putting pressure on Turkey, might also have worked if that policy had been followed. But what was perfectly clear was that both policies could not work simultaneously. As a result, they tended to cancel out each other. They had the effect of paralyzing U.S. influence in the area; and we could not play, as a result, the role that the United States Government could have and should have played in bringing about a settlement of the Cyprus crisis.

Q: Well, without the benefit of hindsight particularly, what would have been your prescription then when you were there close to the scene and pretty well seized with the problem? What would you have suggested would have been the most useful way to work through the crisis at that time?

KUBISCH: The most useful way to work through the crisis would have been, in my view, to do what the Executive Branch generally wanted to do, to cooperate with the Turks -- they, after all, had 600,000 men under arms and had the longest border with the Soviet Union and were a staunch ally -- to work with them and cooperate with them in trying to bring about a more moderate and compromising position on their part to deal with the Greeks.

I think that could have been done, and most of the people I knew who were well informed of the situation at the time felt the same way. But to threaten the Turks the way we did and to publicly pressure them the way we did with Congressional legislation, although it satisfied some emotional concerns of many people, actually helped to thwart the accomplishment of our objectives in the region.

Q: Did you as Ambassador have any contacts with the so-called "Greek lobby"?

KUBISCH: Oh, constantly. They were always sending delegations to Athens. I was meeting with them. They are wonderful people. Archbishop Yakovos, who is the head of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Western Hemisphere and lives in New York, and is still the Archbishop there,

came many times to Greece; and I dealt with him and through him, with others and through the Greek delegations that came. But the feeling on this issue was intense back in the United States among many Greek Americans. In fact, they felt that they helped bring about President Ford's defeat for reelection in 1976 because many of them had been Republicans and supporters of the Republican President and shifted their support to President Carter. They felt they played a major role in the defeat of Ford in 1976.

Q: Well, now on a bilateral problem, bases. It's a rather large subject. It goes on year after year during this period, does it not?

KUBISCH: Yes, it does. It still goes on to this day. I think the negotiations themselves, the bases and facilities they covered, have been well presented in a number of documents that are available to historians and students.

I think I would just like to make one major point about these. Prime Minister Karamanlis told me on a number of private occasions that there was no danger that the bases would ever be closed in Greece, that Greece's "vocation" was with the West and that Greece would remain a part of NATO and allied with the United States. But, he said, it would take time to repair the feelings of the Greek people against the United States. He said he knew how to handle that and to please trust him and work with him on it.

When the negotiations were first to begin concerning the bases, the Greek Government named an ambassador, an official of the Greek foreign ministry with the rank of ambassador, to head their negotiating team. At my recommendation, the U.S. Government named the DCM in our Embassy in Athens, Minister Stearns, as head of our negotiating team. And those negotiations went on for a year or so. Then Stearns was transferred to be our Ambassador to the Ivory Coast just when the negotiations were almost complete. I took them in hand myself for the final months and brought them to a conclusion, following which I left Greece in July, 1977.

I used my imminent departure from Greece as a means of bringing the negotiations to a conclusion. I said to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Defense Minister of Greece, if I leave Greece without these negotiations completed and the documents initialed, you can be sure that my successor will want to reopen the whole thing, and all of this work we've been doing the last year and a half will be down the drain. It worked very well because we got the agreements just a few days before I was to depart and return to the United States, all the documents, the basic agreements, the annexes, the attachments, and many documents initialed.

Then later, as you know, Henry, I also became a Special Negotiator on the Spanish base negotiations. We have important base negotiations not only with Greece and Turkey and Spain, but the Philippines and many other countries. So I've now been in a position of dealing with important base negotiations in the different capacities: when my DCM underneath me headed them, when I did it myself as the Ambassador in the country, and when I went as a Special Negotiator with the rank of Ambassador to another country. And I would just say that I am an unreconstructed advocate of having a Special Negotiator having the rank of Ambassador to head such negotiations. I could give all kinds of reasons for this.

I remember very well in Greece that when the DCM was handling the negotiations and an impasse developed between him and his Greek counterpart and the two delegations, I could go privately to the Minister of Defense in the Greek Government, or to the Prime Minister or the Foreign Minister and, on a first name basis, work out a compromise with them that could then be given back in the form of instructions to the negotiators and the negotiating teams to settle. It was a great channel I had. The moment my DCM left and I became the negotiator in Greece, I was on a par with the Ambassador in the Greek Foreign Ministry who was the head of the negotiating team on the Greek side. And whenever an impasse developed between us, I found that the Minister of Defense or the Foreign Minister or the Prime Minister would call us both into his office, the American Ambassador and the Greek Ambassador in charge of their negotiating team, and sort of knock our heads together, so to speak, until we came up with some kind of settlement or compromise. I had been pushed down in the hierarchy and had lost my private, behind the scenes, highest level channel.

At the same time, when I went to Spain as a Special Negotiator, I found that, coming from Washington, I could be a very effective and hard negotiator, knowing very well the views of all the military services in the United States and the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the State Department and others. I could represent their views vigorously, leaving our Ambassador in Spain at the time to have his private channels available and to be the nice guy while I was the "heavy" leading the team from Washington.

Q: The good cop, bad cop.

KUBISCH: Yes, the good cop, bad cop technique.

Q: Did you find that you had adequate instructions from the Department in, let's say, these two negotiations, the Greek and Spanish base negotiations?

KUBISCH: Oh yes, because being a Special Negotiator, I would go back to Washington, in the case of the Spanish negotiation, meet with all the interested parties and leaders there, and help draft my own instructions which would then be sent out from Washington. Then I and my negotiating team would go to Spain, receive those instructions and carry them out. So it was very, very effective.

I must say that there is one high State Department official who does not share my view about Special Negotiators, or at least didn't a few years ago. That is Lawrence Eagleburger, who at the time came in as Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and has now just been named by Secretary Baker to be the new Deputy Secretary of State. Larry Eagleburger and I have been colleagues for many years and worked very closely together on a number of things, and I have very high regard for him both professionally and personally. But on this matter he and I disagree.

He believes, or believed at least a few years ago, that the resident American Ambassador should conduct these kinds of base negotiations, not a Special Negotiator from Washington. And I have the feeling that he believed that in part because, I think, his only post as Ambassador abroad was in Yugoslavia; and in a country such as Yugoslavia, under Marshal Tito, and in the case of many such regimes, an American Ambassador is very much restricted in what he can do, where he can

go, and how he spends his time. Therefore, he has the time available to do very complicated negotiations. But in a democratic society such as Greece, or Spain, or the Philippines, an American Ambassador is busy morning, noon and night, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. These negotiations are very, very time consuming. They go on day after day after day and back at the embassy at night, writing reports and requesting new instructions by the opening of business the next morning and so on. Therefore, while I think he should oversee them closely and pitch in when needed, I don't think a resident Ambassador in a democratic society should be required personally to conduct negotiations such as these.

Q: Did you privately think, at that time, that the bases were necessary for the NATO defense structure?

KUBISCH: Well, based upon the framework at the time, the responsibilities the U.S. Government had undertaken and the missions we had in the Eastern Mediterranean, they were necessary. I had the feeling they were too large and too over-staffed, and they were certainly creating a number of problems in our bilateral relationships with the Greek Government and the Greek people. They could have been, and were, during my three years as Ambassador in Greece, curtailed somewhat. Whether or not the force structure is required, and the missions are appropriate today, and whether or not we can afford all the bases, and whether or not we should continue with them now, I think those are different questions.

Q: I want to wind up this particular tape, believe it or not with a question that goes back, I have to flip flop back. I have to go back to Greek and Turkish relations again. The last six months or so that you were there, the last few months that you were in Athens, Clark Clifford came out.

KUBISCH: Yes, that's right.

Q: Do you recall any memories of that visit or personal impressions that you can leave with us?

KUBISCH: Yes, I do. Clark Clifford, I came to know him well during the course of that visit and saw him frequently when I was back in Washington later. I have also been his guest on several private occasions. In fact, he recommended me to the President for another very senior position abroad, one that I was not able to accept.

He came as a special emissary from President Carter to Greece to try, I think, to accomplish two things. First, as a kind of a temporizing measure effort on the part of the new Carter Administration in early 1977, to let the people of Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, and the Greek American community in the United States, to let them know that the new administration of President Carter was seized with their problems, and was going to do something about them. Second, for Clifford himself, to try and find some way out of the impasse in which we found ourselves between Greece and Turkey with respect to the Cyprus problem.

So Clark Clifford came and traveled back and forth among the countries concerned. He stayed with me in our residence while he was there. He's a brilliant, charming, wonderful man, and there's no one I have ever seen come as a special emissary from a President, and I've seen a number of them, for whom I would have higher regard.

Q: There is one item you might want to go into in greater detail. Let me see if you had any specific examples in mind when you mentioned crisis management. Was that the riots in Athens, or what exactly were you thinking of when you said that?

KUBISCH: Well, for example, we discussed in an earlier meeting the occupation, for a brief period by demonstrators, of our embassy in Athens. This became a very important event for a short period of time. It happened about 8:00 one evening, and by 9 or 9:30, I had set up a crisis management center in the embassy, brought in key officers to deal with the immediate crisis of protecting the embassy for the balance of the night; to arrange to handle the press inquiries; to arrange to report the matter to Washington; to answer inquiries from concerned friends and relatives about injuries or deaths -- fortunately, there were no deaths, but there were a number of injuries -- to deal with visitors from the Host Government, the Minister of Defense, and others who had come; and with a barrage of telephone calls and journalist inquiries; and so on. We set up a little task force to deal with those kinds of questions. I met with them more or less continuously, giving them guidance on how I thought they should handle various things.

Q: Did you set this up under the DCM?

KUBISCH: The DCM was there, came in, and participated, yes, but I guess in this particular case I ran it myself.

Q: What were your criteria for selecting people to put on this crisis management committee or whatever you want to call it?

KUBISCH: What we did that evening was to get those people who were most qualified to contribute and who were available. Some we couldn't reach or find. But, you know, like the DCM, the Press Attaché, the Security Officer, the Administrative Officer, the Political Counselor, the Non-Commissioned Officer-in-Command of the Marine Security Guard, people like that.

MICHAEL M. MAHONEY
Consular Officer
Athens (1974-1975)

Michael M. Mahoney was born on June 24, 1944 in Massachusetts. He received his BA from Saint Michaels College in 1966. He received his MA from the University of Wyoming in 1969. He served in the Peace Corps from 1968 to 1969. His career included positions in countries including Trinidad, Tobago, Greece, the Dominican Republic, Canada, and Italy. Mr. Mahoney was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on October 17, 1995.

Q: How did you feel about an assignment to Athens?

MAHONEY: The only reason I went to Athens was because I had met this lady in Trinidad who was then also assigned to Greece. Although we didn't get married right away, we were talking about it. So the only reason for my going to Athens was because she was there. It happened to be a consular job, but I wasn't thinking, in any sense, in career terms in those days.

Q: I might add, just for the record, I was consul general in Athens at the time. What were you doing, at least a small part of the time you were there? What did you start doing in Athens?

MAHONEY: I started as the passport officer. And then I had a rather unusual experience. I was the passport officer for two or three months, and then there was a huge crisis that came up because the Greek military stimulated a coup in Cyprus against Archbishop Makarios.

Q: You're talking about July 15, 1974.

MAHONEY: Yes. The Turkish government, after attempting to get the Greek military to, in effect, roll back the coup, landed an expeditionary force in Cyprus. They felt that they had to protect their own people. This led to a monstrous American Services crisis. The Greek government declared a state of national mobilization. They closed the only international airport in Athens, at the height of the tourist season, which meant that Americans then in the country as tourists could not leave, because there were no airplanes out. This led thousands of them, literally thousands, to come to the American Embassy, seeking some sort of assistance. I found this event to be both stupefying and extraordinarily stimulating. I began to see what the possibilities of consular work were, and that it could be tremendously interesting and challenging.

Shortly after that, there was a change of ambassadors. A new ambassador came, and the person who was his special assistant had a personal family crisis back in the United States and had to leave. I was suddenly asked to become the assistant to the ambassador. So I moved upstairs and spent about a year as the ambassador's assistant.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

MAHONEY: Jack Kubisch was his name. He was a career diplomat, who had previously been the deputy chief of mission in Paris and in Mexico City and the assistant secretary of state for Inter-American Affairs. A very interesting guy to work for.

I spent almost a year in very close proximity to this man and to the workings of the embassy at a very high level. This gave me a totally different view of the Foreign Service and what it was all about and what one could do.

But, paradoxically, at the same time, it turned me off of a good deal of what went on, and made me more interested in and amenable to and stimulated by the idea of doing consular work. I think I really decided at this time that I would stay in consular work, although I came to realize that it was very necessary to do some other things as well, both for career purposes and also for mental stimulation.

Q: You had the Cyprus crisis and all these Americans there. How did you all deal with the problem?

MAHONEY: In a helter-skelter way, but, I think, more or less effectively. We got all the consular officers down to the embassy on Saturday morning, which is when the crisis broke, and set up a public-affairs system in the courtyard of the embassy, so that we could go out and talk en masse to people from time to time, and try to give them whatever news and information we had, and reassure them that we were doing everything we could for them. And we began a registration system, so that we could get everybody's name and address and telephone numbers and so forth, telling the people that if there was a further expansion of the crisis or some effort was going to be made by the United States government to evacuate them, we would have a method of getting in contact with them and keeping track of them. We asked, in the local American community, for volunteers to come in and answer the telephones, which were ringing off the hook around the clock. And we wrote up information sheets that we could give to these people, so that, in turn, they could pass information out to the people who were calling. Very quickly, it became clear that what we were really in, in large part, was an informational crisis.

We also set out to do two or three things. One was to stimulate the interest of the embassy management, which I must say had initially almost no interest in this huge group of people, because they were busy dealing with the Greek government in matters at the highest level. And I take the point about what they were doing, but we tried to educate them to the fact that there was this huge mass of people, and that something had to be done, at a minimum, to begin to let them leave the country, which is what they wanted to do. And that meant trying to get the Greeks in some way to open up the airport in Athens to some civilian flights and get these people out. Also, to open the banks so that people could go and get money or just simply convert travelers' checks and get cash on which to live.

Finally, after two or three days of pounding on the doors of the Political Section and the deputy chief of mission, the embassy did begin to make representations to the Greek government. After four or five days, the airport was opened, although the military action on Cyprus went on for several weeks, and people began to be able to leave. From our point of view, after about a week, the crisis disappeared.

But while it went on, it was very intense and hectic, and we were working 18- to 20-hour days, mostly trying to reassure people that we were there and would do everything we could for them, although in tangible ways, there wasn't a lot that we could do. We really had to try to operate in a macro sense to get the Greek government to do certain things, so that the Americans could leave the country.

Q: For the record, Mike and I are consular officers and have almost a bias toward consular work. But I think this does point up a real problem, that as far as the American public and Congress and everybody else is concerned, when there's a crisis, the protection and welfare of Americans comes first. And yet embassies often aren't really ready to accept this. They get involved in their own things and don't understand that these pesky civilians have got to be dealt with.

MAHONEY: One of the things that I remember now very strikingly is that we got very few phone calls, for example, from the United States about these thousands of people. And I mean, literally, we registered 7,000 people in two or three days in Athens when this crisis started. But this was 1974, and communications were not then what they are now, so we did not get very many calls. I don't remember getting any calls from congressional offices in those days, or from relatives in the United States. We did get a huge number of local phone calls from Americans, but not the international thing. And I don't recall any American media play about these stranded citizens. And I don't recall anybody ever telling me that this got on TV back in the United States.

The difference between then and now on all of that is extraordinary, because now communication is instantaneous. I worked, later in my career, on many, many major crises: the Pan Am 103 experience, the evacuation of Americans from China after the Tiananmen Square massacre, and so forth. Nevertheless, even then, in 1974, one could see what this sort of thing might become in the future.

And it certainly was true in those days that the notion that these individual citizens had to be taken care of was alien to more senior officials. I had intense discussions with people in the Political Section of the embassy, who would say to me that going in and making an argument about opening the airport was *going to get in the way of more important matters* that we were taking up with the Greeks. I kept saying, "Look, these people are taxpayers." I also said that I believed that there was going to be trouble later if these people were not taken care of.

In fact, a small number of them, maybe 50 or so, ultimately wrote letters to members of Congress. And this generated an inquiry and an investigation by the General Accounting Office, which sent a team of people to Greece to find out why these people were complaining. The embassy management was extremely happy, at that point, to be able to produce the diplomatic notes that it had finally done (after several days of intense pressure from us) to the Greek government, asking that the airport and the banks be opened and so forth, and trying to make the case that in fact they had done everything they could for their suffering fellow citizens. It was quite a lesson and an education for me.

Q: When you have a mob (mob is the wrong term, but people who are worried and all), were you able to use some of the people from the group, who were obvious leaders, to help explain the situation?

MAHONEY: No, in that particular instance, I don't think we were sophisticated or clever enough to think of that. We did get, as I said, a lot of volunteers from the resident American community to come in and work the telephones at night and weekends and all the rest of it. But the people who were coming to the embassy, no, we did not. I take the point now, but none of us had any experience in this kind of matter before, and we were really just sort of trying to sweep the tide away all the time.

Q: Then you went up to work for the ambassador. Jack Kubisch was a very well-known, active person. How did he operate during the time you worked with him?

MAHONEY: There were two or three things that were distinctive about him that I didn't find afterwards in many Foreign Service officers. One is that he was extraordinarily meticulous about scheduling and time organizing. He had been to Harvard Business School, after World War II, when he'd been in the Navy. He was very intense on the subject of organization -- organizing his own time, his office, who he saw, who he didn't see, that sort of thing.

I do not think of him as having been a significant or forceful figure in the sense of policy analysis or formulation. I didn't think he was very intellectual. He had no prior experience with Greece before being sent there as ambassador. I think that his greatest concern, in general, was to avoid making mistakes. And he didn't make any mistakes. He was very, very careful and clever about that sort of thing. I don't think he had strong interest in any other part of the embassy beyond the Political Section. Perhaps a little bit of the Economic Section. And in that sense, he was virtually no different from every other ambassador I ever encountered. Although he knew how to manage, he was not interested in the details of managing the embassy. He could have if he wanted to, but that wasn't his priority.

He was, in many ways, formal with me, but very nice to me. He organized my onward assignment, unbidden by me; that is, he came to me one day and said, "What do you want to do next?" I gave him some ideas, and he immediately got on the phone and called somebody and got me a job. And in that sense, I think he felt that he fulfilled his part of the contract.

I had to work very long hours for him. He was very suspicious of leaks.

In those days, when Kissinger was the secretary of state, Kissinger and the people who worked with him thought nothing of sending out these flash cables and NIACT immediate cables, at all hours of the day and night, on subjects that didn't require any action. They sent a huge number of cables to the NATO collective.

And so Ambassador Kubisch said to me, "I'm sorry to do this, but I do not trust duty officers or others to read captioned traffic." (That is, NODIS material, EXDIS material.) "If these cables come in the middle of the night, you are going to have to come down and read them and decide whether action needs to be taken and whether I need to be told."

And so, over the course of the year, I would say maybe, on average, two, three, four times a week, I had to get out of bed at three or four o'clock in the morning, because of the time difference with Washington, and go down to the embassy and read traffic that had often nothing to do with Greece, never, even if it had to do with Greece, required any action, but that the ambassador did not want anybody else to see. So that although there was a duty officer, it was not the duty officer who went and read the out-of-hours traffic, it was me.

No one was aware that you could get paid overtime money. I wasn't even interested. I certainly never collected any, never asked for it. But I did this stuff. And although Ambassador Kubisch was not the type to put his arm around you and say, "You've done a wonderful job, my boy," he did, in the end, tell me that he appreciated my efforts, and sent me on my way. I didn't leave with intense, warm feelings toward him, but I had great respect his professionalism, and I thought that basically he was a decent guy.

Q: The former ambassador, who was the ambassador in the four years I was there... And I left just before this Cyprus crisis blew up, within a few days of it.

MAHONEY: Henry Tasca.

Q: Was there the feeling he'd left under a cloud?

MAHONEY: You have to recall the sequence of events here. The Cyprus crisis blew up in July of 1974. Richard Nixon resigned as president in August of 1974. And I believe that the very first appointment that Kissinger pushed through the new president, Ford, was to remove Tasca as ambassador to Greece and assign Kubisch to be there. Although Kubisch did not arrive for about two months, in very short order, a fellow named Monteagle Stearns arrived to be the DCM, and Tasca was removed. Tasca was gone; in a couple of days, Stearns arrived; and then Kubisch came about six weeks later, after getting confirmed and so forth.

But there was no question that Kissinger wanted Tasca out of there.

Tasca had Nixon's backing, supposedly because when he was ambassador to Morocco and Nixon was out of office in the '60s, Nixon had visited Morocco, and Tasca had been nice to him. Nixon remembered those things. He remembered people who were nice to him when he was on his outs, on his uppers, so to speak. And he protected Tasca.

Tasca did not have a great reputation, and he was removed immediately. As soon as Nixon was gone, the next day, so was Tasca.

Q: Did you get any feel about the Greeks' view of the embassy in this period? There was not only the Cyprus thing, but it was a tumultuous period. The generals were overthrown, and a new government came in. How did the Greeks look on the United States?

MAHONEY: I had a very distinct impression. I remember, to this day, the sequence of events about this coup in Cyprus and the development of the Greek interpretation of it. The coup took place on a Sunday or a Monday, and Archbishop Makarios made his escape from the palace in Nicosia.

For the first two or three days after the coup, when it was not yet clear that the Turks were going to intervene, there was jubilation in Greece. There was great happiness, because there was a feeling that finally Cyprus was going to be united with Greece. There was certainly no ill feeling to be seen against the Greek military dictatorship that had fomented this coup. There was no suggestion at the time that the coup was organized by the British or the Americans, or that they had anything to do with it, or any role. This was a triumph for Greece. On the sort of telephone tree that everyone in Greece was on, day and night, talking to all the other Greeks, one might think, creating the collective mythological interpretation of whatever event one wishes to think about, the standard interpretation of this was that it was a good thing and it was going to be wonderful.

Along about Thursday or Friday, it began to become clear that the Turks were going to do something if the Greeks in Cyprus did not back off.

And on Saturday, in fact, the Turks intervened.

Then there was a long pause in the Greek collective interpretation of these events. It was very difficult to get any comment from anybody about what this meant.

The first thing that happened was that the Greek military decided that it could not fight the Turks. And, therefore, their legitimacy completely evaporated. Constantine Karamanlis was called back from exile, and a civilian government was installed, to try to make some sort of deal with the Turks.

There then began to be the interpretation that the Americans could have stopped the Turks. That it was the Americans who somehow had permitted this to happen. And that it was the Americans who were to blame, because they had allegedly put the Greek military government in, in the first place, in 1967, that in 1974 had organized the coup.

In the first two or three days after the coup took place, no one, no Greek newspaper and no Greek that I ever talked to, suggested that it was a bad thing that the military government had organized the coup in Cyprus, because at that time, it looked as if the coup was going to work.

Only when it became a disaster for the Greeks did there then become this collective interpretation that it was the fault of the Americans. I have this image and this sequence of events very firmly fixed in my mind, because afterwards, it became a cornerstone of the general Greek collective mind that this was all the fault of the Americans.

This comes from a very long history, occasionally buttressed by truth, that the Greeks have of believing that whatever happens in their country, especially of a negative nature, is the fault of someone else, that it is done from outside. I do not know whether it is the educational system that sponsors a kind of conspiratorial interpretation of events, or what it is. But it's very prone, at the intellectual level... At the personal, street level, Greeks are extremely fond of Americans, and the relationships are very good. But at the level of national or international events, anything that is a negative is interpreted by a very large number, if not great majority, of Greeks as being the fault of some outside influence. It used to be the fault of the British, when they were the leading power in the world. It now is the fault of the Americans.

The coup in Cyprus and its aftermath, when the Americans did not, as the Greeks wished, stop the Turks from taking so much territory, didn't stand up to them, didn't push them out, even though the coup was run by the Greeks, has become now enshrined in the Greek collective interpretation of international events as an American responsibility.

Q: I found, after four years in Greece, people said, oh, it must have been awful to leave there, and we didn't have the coup. But I found the constant drumbeat of accusations about the United States being responsible for the colonels if things didn't go well, or whatever it was, it was

always the Americans' fault, really got to you after a while. One could leave with a certain amount of relief.

MAHONEY: I felt that way myself. I was only there two years, but I did feel that way. I thought it was a beautiful country, very nice to travel and to go around in. There was no crime. At a personal level, I thought in general that the people were very pleasant and polite to Americans.

But there is something in the interpretation of events, in the unwillingness to accept responsibility for many things that they do politically, that really was very wearing psychologically. Day in and day out, whatever happened on the international level that involved Greece was suffused with conspiracy theory. And it just became very draining.

Q: Were there any major demonstrations against the United States when you were there?

MAHONEY: Oh, yes, there was at least one in which windows were broken at the embassy, and that ultimately led to the construction of a big fence that now goes around the embassy. The CIA station chief, who lived right next door to my lady friend, was murdered about ten days after I left. He was a person I knew well, had played golf with and so forth. So there were definitely anti-American manifestations at work, but again, I think, really, in a sense, at a political level. I'm not aware of an American tourist or anyone like that who was ever set upon or attacked by Greeks. It was really seen as political activity.

Q: What was the feeling, when you were involved in the embassy, towards Greece as part of NATO? Did you get any feel for that?

MAHONEY: That was the overwhelming *raison d'être* of the embassy. There was a huge military aid mission there, run by a two-star general, to oversee the sale and supply of military equipment. The Political Section, the political/military people, and the DCM were almost completely engaged in things having to do with military-base negotiations, which I think go on to this day in a sort of continuing soap opera, but most of the bases remain. The *raison d'être* for American presence in Greece was this NATO military relationship. Everything else in the embassy was there essentially, I think, to support that.

Q: As the ambassador's aide, did you get a feel for the social divide between the Consular Section and the Political and, to some extent, the Economic Sections?

MAHONEY: In the sense that the ambassador and the DCM did business with the Political and Economic Sections, but really the Consular Section might have been a representation of another part of the government. It could have been the Immigration Service, it could have been the Commerce Department, it could have been the Agriculture Department. It had a function, and it was staffed by Foreign Service officers, but the interaction among the people was extremely limited.

It was quite an interesting education for me to see the difference between Trinidad, which had been a very small post with a great deal of social interaction, and Athens, which was a very large post without a great deal of social interaction among people in different sections and units.

I saw the beginning there of what I consider the dramatic social change in the Foreign Service in the last 25 years, which is that Trinidad and Athens were the end of one era, and by the time I went back overseas to the Dominican Republic in 1979, you really saw the beginning of another era, in which wives refused to entertain any more, where the notion of social interaction among people in embassies had declined dramatically, and where, except at small hardship posts where people were thrown together and had to do their socializing internally, a very atomistic situation set in.

But Ambassador Kubisch, to his credit, did have junior officers over for drinks. He made a point to get all newcomers in now and then, and so forth. But it was clear that, in what might be termed matters to be taken seriously and matters to be taken less seriously, the consular side was definitely to be taken less seriously.

I'm not sure that I say that necessarily as a criticism, after 20 years of thinking about it, but that's an observation.

Q: I always like to get the dates. You got to Athens when, and you left when?

MAHONEY: I got there in March of '74, and I left at the end of October of '75, actually about 18 months.

GEORGE M. BARBIS
Political Officer
Athens (1975-1979)

Mr. Barbis was born in California and raised there and in Greece. He graduated from the University of California and served in the US Army in WWII. In 1954 he entered the Foreign Service and was posted to Teheran, Iran as Economic Officer. His other overseas assignments included postings in Thailand, Korea, France, Belgium and Greece, primarily in the Political and Economic fields. Mr. Barbis served on the US Delegation to the United Nations (1973-1975). His Washington assignments involved him in Southeast Asia matters and the US military. Mr. Barbis is a graduate of the National War College. Mr. Barbis was interviewed by Mr. Raymond C. Ewing in 1996.

BARBIS: I arrived in Athens on January 2, 1975.

Q: What was the situation in Greece at that time?

BARBIS: This was some six months after the fall of the junta, after the Cyprus tragedy, as the Greeks saw it and a period of great resentment [against] the United States because we were blamed for allowing what happened to happen. We were blamed for what the Colonels did, that we egged them into it, which was nonsense, but more importantly that the Turks invaded Cyprus

and we didn't stop it. My going to Athens was in a way not an easy decision, especially after the events on Cyprus because of my Greek background. In fact, when Ambassador Kubisch interviewed me for the job, he put that question to me. Will the fact that you have an association with this country affect your performance? I had to tell him very firmly that I was born in this country and always considered myself an American and although I had pride in my parents' heritage and a certain affection for Greece, especially since I had lived there as a boy, certainly that would not be a factor in how I performed as a representative of the US government. And he accepted that.

I also saw by going there under these difficult conditions, because we were aware of the anti-American feeling that resulted from the years of junta rule and the Cyprus situation, as someone who spoke the language, had lived there, who knew the Greek character and what Greeks were like that I could make a contribution that some other officers would not necessarily be able to make. And, although there had been a practice not to assign officers with a family relationship to that country, we were getting over that fortunately. The one drawback in my going to Greece was that in the Greek eyes, a Greek-American was always considered CIA because the CIA did use Greek-Americans and it became known. But, I think I was probably the first substantive Greek-American officer the embassy had had, although the administrative counselor was a Greek-American from Brooklyn when I went to Athens, but I don't think we had had any other Greek-Americans. I think there had been someone right after the war in Thessaloniki and he was too biased towards the Greeks and that gave a bad name to Greek-Americans. This had happened in other countries too, so the Department had an unwritten policy of not sending hyphenated Americans to the country from which their parents or maybe themselves had come initially. As I said we have gotten away from that now and is no longer a factor. In my case I never had the feeling that Ambassador Kubisch or Monty Stearns, the DCM, or any of my colleagues at the embassy saw me as a partisan of the Greeks or as a covert mole or whatever.

In fact, and I will come to this later perhaps, when an editor whose magazine was publishing a story that I was the CIA station chief contacted an American journalist to check that with her, she said that this guy was as American as apple pie, you are out of your mind and stupid if you print that story. This was after the station chief had been assassinated. The Greeks who are very conspiratorial types in any case, it is sort of built into their culture, are always looking for something like that. So, it was a story that was widely believed, but by people who didn't know me. Anybody who knew me I don't think felt that way. But this journalist told this guy she knew me, knew my office and was in it all the time and knew very well I was what I was said to be. So, that was a negative thing, trying to sell that story on the basis I was of Greek descent. But my main point, I guess, is that I felt that I was in a unique position during that difficult time in US-Greek relations to make a positive contribution. And, I did get a superior honor award for that almost four year assignment, which suggested that maybe I did accomplish what I personally had hoped to accomplish.

I will give you another anecdote to show you the climate and my position being Greek-American. I remember at one of the first dinners that my wife and I were invited to at the DCM's house meeting for the first time the minister of commerce of Greece, John Butois, who himself was married to Mary, a Greek-American from Chicago. He quite openly was unhappy with US policy over Cyprus but also attacked Greek-Americans as representing the US government. John

and I became good friends subsequently. But he was very insulting at that first encounter. I think maybe he told all of this to my wife. But on another occasion he said something to Ambassador Kubisch. "Why do you have this Greek-American on your staff?" Kubisch rose to my defense and said, "He is not a Greek-American, he is an American and represents the US government." So, I did have that kind of support. I only mention it to show you that in the minds of many Greeks it was otherwise.

At the same time, many Greeks, especially in the government, accepted me for who I was and treated me that way, although they always preferred to speak to me in Greek. I remember the foreign minister before he became prime minister. [He] had great affection for me for some unknown reason, used to call me the eagle which in Greece is the highest praise you can give a young person. I didn't feel I was that talented but I was accepted in the diplomatic community and in government circles as a sincere, hardworking representative of the American embassy.

Q: But you were to your knowledge probably the first to break this unwritten policy and if that was the case you opened the door for some others who subsequently served not only in Greece but in other places as well.

BARBIS: I don't know if I would go that far, but there is something to that, yes.

Q: You were in Greece during the war and returned to California. To what extent had you visited or kept up, followed things in Greece over the 30 period between the time you left in 1945 and going back in 1975?

BARBIS: The last time I was really intensely involved was as a graduate student when I did a paper on the Greek occupation and liberation in World War II. Subsequently, when I went to the Far East and then Bordeaux and Brussels, I really wasn't involved. The other contact with Greece, other than sporadic correspondence with some cousins, was when Pat and I took a two-week vacation in Greece from Brussels and that was in the early seventies. So, I was aware of the situation there but not in any great detail. I didn't have the time, really, to follow things.

Q: And your Greek language ability was there.

BARBIS: It was there. As my wife's Greek teacher said, "He speaks very good Greek, but it is a Greek of some decades ago." Not ancient, but she could tell I had learned it when they spoke differently. I wasn't up to date, but I did modernize myself in those four years though. It was a great advantage to be able to speak with great fluency. But, fluency doesn't always mean you are a fluent translator or interpreter. I am better as a translator than an interpreter but I remember when we had a dinner at the residence for the foreign minister and his senior officers from the ministry of foreign affairs got up to give a toast and he insisted that I interpret for him because he wanted to give it in Greek. I must say I was very uncomfortable because I didn't think I did a great job. In fact, afterwards, Ambassador Kubisch asked [the foreign minister] how I had done and he said, "Not as well as I thought. I would give him a B-."

Q: That is the trouble when you interpret for somebody who really does have some ability in English. And, you also had some other Greek speakers there.

BARBIS: Well, Monty was still there and he is one of the best we have.

Q: Let's talk a little more before we go on to the political situation in Greece and US-Greek relations, etc., about the structure of the embassy. You have mentioned Ambassador Kubisch and the DCM, Monty Stearns. What kind of staff did you have in the political section?

BARBIS: I had what I guess you would call a medium size political section. Myself, and three officers, a total of four. We divided responsibility the traditional way, I guess. I was in overall charge, and then one of my colleagues followed the domestic political, foreign relations, and labor. Political/military was separate, because we were engaged in base negotiations at the time and there was a one man political/military section directly under the ambassador and DCM. Bob Pugh, and later Mort Dworken, and I became good friends and worked closely together.

Q: Who were some of the officers who worked in the political section?

BARBIS: Initially there was Jack Collins, Peter De Vos, who went on to become ambassador several times and still is, and Towny Friedman. I have been very fortunate the two times I have been political counselor, in Brussels and in Athens, to have at least one extremely talented officer and all the officers who worked for me first rate. But, Towny Friedman stood out in his insights and understanding of the Greeks, his speaking Greek, etc. The political section is a team and when you have a good team it reflects on the leader of the team as much as anybody.

There were a number of other officers in the section while I was there but the three officers I remember best are De Vos, Friedman and Terry Grant. Grant did pretty much the labor work, Towny and Peter did most of the political, domestic and foreign.

We would start the day with the four of us sitting down and going over what we wanted to do and what we had to do. We worked very informally and closely.

Q: You had strong Greek, maybe a little rusty at first, but the others you mentioned had learned their Greek at the Foreign Service Institute. I assume Greek was pretty important in Athens during that period?

BARBIS: Yes, and not only important because of the need to communicate, but also important in establishing a rapport with people who were always pleased to see that you could speak Greek. Both Friedman and De Vos had learned quite good Greek and could use their Greek in their work. Terry less so. Both Peter and Towny had initiative, drive, and went out a lot. Some of the later leaders of the Greek political world were people I met through them. They were younger and the post-junta members of parliament were new politicians, like Milton Ebert, for example. I remember Peter had the first contact with him and...

Q: This is a Foreign Affairs Oral History interview with George M. Barbis. It is December 7, 1996 and I am Raymond Ewing. The interview is being conducted at the Association for

Diplomatic Studies and Training. George, we have been talking about your assignment to Athens, which I think began early 1975. We talked about the staff you had and the circumstances under which you received the assignment. Why don't we start out by talking a little bit more about the ambassador who was in Athens at the time you arrived.

BARBIS: Actually, Ambassador Kubisch was there. I remember the evening we arrived, January 2, he very graciously invited Pat and me to the residence for drinks and I was introduced to my first crisis of my tour in Athens, at that point as an observer since I had hardly been there more than twelve hours. What had happened apparently, as I recall, there had been an incident involving a marine who had harassed a young Greek girl. I think Monty Stearns, the DCM, was there, the security officer, the public affairs officer, etc. So, while I sat with my wife and Mrs. Kubisch on the couch, as we had been visiting before these other members of the staff had arrived, they discussed how they were going to deal with the issue. I won't go into the details because I don't recall them.

I had met Ambassador Kubisch, as I may have mentioned at our last session, in Washington while he was preparing to go to Greece, leaving the post of assistant secretary for Interamerican affairs. While I had been waiting to get my travel orders I had been assigned to the inspectors under Ambassador Little doing people on out-of-department assignments, supplemental evaluations. In any event, that was when I first met Ambassador Kubisch.

I think Monty Stearns had already gone to Athens as DCM and chargé. Monty I had known since my days on the Korean desk when the NEA [Bureau of Near East and South Asia Affairs] public affairs office was across the hall from us. I remember meeting him for the first time back then and subsequently over the years.

I don't think they could have picked two better people to lead the embassy. Monty, of course, had a lot of background. He was a Greek language officer, had served there in the late fifties, early sixties, knew Greece well, had all kinds of contacts, etc. So, he was a good person to go back during this period where, as you recall in 1967 a group of Colonels overthrew the democratic government, the elected government, and established in effect a rule by the Colonels. We took a lot of heat from that since many Greeks, who love to come up with conspiratorial theories, blamed us for what had happened, some even accusing us for having engineered it all, the CIA, etc. We can go into that aspect of US-Greek relations if you think it is of interest.

Jack Kubisch as far as I know had no prior involvement with Greece. I think his last overseas post had been as DCM in Paris. He had been in the Foreign Service and had left the Foreign Service. I think his last post had been as AID mission director in Brazil. He then went into the private sector but had returned a few years previously. But, by temperament, personally, physical appearance, everything else, he was the ideal man to represent us, in my view, at that time. We were very fortunate that we had someone like Ambassador Kubisch.

Q: He did not speak Greek?

BARBIS: He did not speak Greek. And, I don't think he had much background other than the pre-arrival orientation and briefings he had in the Department. His task was, and therefore the

task of all of us, to try and overcome this hostility or disappointment that the Greeks felt towards the United States and US policies, not only as a result of the seven years of rule by the Colonels but also, and more recently and more deeply felt by the Greeks, emotionally and otherwise, the events in Cyprus in July 1974. That was when we had the turnover in leadership of our embassy. Ambassador Tasca, who had been there during this period, had left. Monty had come in as the new DCM/Chargé until Kubisch arrived.

So, the assignment he was given and which the rest of the mission shared was to overcome this hostility, this negative attitude towards us, welcoming the return of democratic government and doing what we could to assist them in their own efforts. Constantine Karamanlis, former prime minister, who had gone to and remained throughout this period of the junta in Paris, France, returned in triumph immediately after the fall of the Colonels and unanimously the country rose in support of Karamanlis to be their leader.

Q: Were elections held?

BARBIS: I believe the elections were held before I got there. When I arrived there was a new parliament in which the New Democracy Party, which Mr. Karamanlis had founded, a conservative party, with overwhelming popular support was governing. He had a difficult task, one of restoring constitutional government and healing the bitterness and animosities resulting from the junta. One of the first political events was to hold a trial of the junta leaders, who were all condemned to prison and were in prison all the time I was there.

Q: Could you talk a little more, George, about the operation of the embassy? Ambassador Kubisch didn't speak Greek so when he would meet with the prime minister would you go with him and interpret or would there be an interpreter from the embassy?

BARBIS: The only time I went as the interpreter was when we had group meetings. When the Secretary of State or Under Secretary of State or some high ranking visitor from Washington came, I was always the note taker in those meetings with the prime minister. The prime minister had an outstanding Greek diplomat as his special assistant, who did a lot of the interpreting. And, of course, Monty Stearns was always also there with the ambassador. Although Karamanlis knew some English, he never used it in official meetings. The ambassador and Monty dealt primarily with the prime minister's office and the president of the republic, largely a ceremonial position. A very respected jurist, Constantine Tsatsos, was the first president after the reestablishment of the republic. My dealings were mostly with the ministry of foreign affairs, and because of my background, [my] language, as I got to know Greek officials, I did have a direct relationship with many ministers other than the minister of foreign affairs. And, actually I didn't have much contact with the first minister of foreign affairs during the period I was there. The ambassador and Monty dealt with him. But, I got to know other ministers, education, culture, commerce, etc.

Q: And I suppose members of parliament?

BARBIS: And members of parliament. Of course it takes time to establish these relationships, but after being there a year or so I did have good contacts with political leaders. I had very

energetic and innovative young officers, Peter De Vos and Towny Friedman, who were very good about introducing me to their younger, lower-level contacts and not always lower-level. For example, I remember at one point dealing with the minister of interior, whom Peter De Vos had first met before he became the minister. We went to see him to discuss [pending] elections that were scheduled. As a result of Peter having known him my having established by then a reputation of having a Greek background, we had a very frank and very informal discussion with the minister who gave us all the time we wanted and answered every question we had. Unfortunately, he died a few years later. He was one of the strong supporters of Prime Minister Karamanlis. Also I was able to establish a good personal relationship with [the man] who had served at the Greek mission to NATO where he had met and become good friends with James Goodby, who was a good friend of mine. I was able to bring greetings from Jim and that facilitated my establishing a good relationship.

And also, because of my family background, the president of the parliament at the time was an elder statesman who came from the same region that my father's family came from. Two of my father's brothers had been active in local politics and knew this gentleman well and he always welcomed me for informal chats and so forth.

And finally, a rising star in the background of Greek politics, a man who had been active with the Liberal Party and with the father of Andreas Papandreou in the early sixties, Constantine Mitsotakis from Crete. He was a pariah in the Greek political world at this time because he was blamed for at least indirectly making it possible for the junta to stage its coup d'etat in 1967. At that time there was an issue between the Papandreou government, Andreas Papandreou, who we will talk about; but his father George Papandreou, the grand old man of Greek politics and of the Liberal world, was prime minister and found himself in a clash with the king over who had control over the armed forces. Mitsotakis, who I believe then was minister of coordination in the Papandreou government, broke with the leadership and voted in effect in support of the assertion by the king that this was his prerogative, had always been, etc. In any event that led to the fall of the government and then the coup by the Colonels and all the rest. So, Mitsotakis fled to Germany and spent all the junta years there because the junta went after him due to his opposition and criticisms of the junta. Basically, Mr. Mitsotakis was a democrat. In exile, he established a close relationship with Karamanlis in Paris and in fact Karamanlis was giving signals that he intended to bring Mitsotakis back with him once democratic government was restored. He would, in effect, become a very prominent person in the conservative party, which didn't exist at the time but which Karamanlis was going to found.

However, when the junta fell and the political world of Greece called on Karamanlis to return to lead the country, the later minister of defense, with a strong anti-junta record during that period, went to Paris to escort Karamanlis back. When he realized that Karamanlis intended to bring Mitsotakis back with him, he rebelled and made it clear that this was not acceptable to the leadership, that Karamanlis had to come alone, which he did. Mitsotakis did not return until later but very quickly was seen as a man who eventually would emerge as a future leader.

Q: And he did.

BARBIS: And he did, as you know. But I established a relationship with Mitsotakis that proved

to be very rewarding to me because we became good friends and he is an impressive person. We would meet once a month or every two months, just the two of us, for lunch at his private apartment across from the Olympic stadium, or near by, and he would fly in from Crete red snappers and we would have a meal of nothing but broiled fish and Greek wine and talk about the political situation. He taught me a lot about the background of the junta and the resistance to the junta primarily from outside the country where Karamanlis was in Paris and Andreas Papandreou who had been imprisoned but released thanks to our intercession. Papandreou had been an economist in the United States. He taught at various universities and ended up in the fifties as head of the economics department at Berkeley. So he knew people like Walter Heller and Kenneth Galbraith, etc. They brought pressure on President Johnson to do what he could to get their colleague and friend out of jail. Johnson did succeed and Papandreou fled to Sweden where he established his Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK).

Q: Let me just clarify some things. Mitsotakis at the time you are talking about had no position either in the government or the parliament?

BARBIS: He was not in the government or the parliament and it took most of the years that I was there for him to be rehabilitated. He first become an independent and then was elected to parliament. He was then brought into the government as minister of coordination, and then minister of foreign affairs, and I guess after I left, as prime minister. I saw him as prime minister when he visited Washington sometime in the early eighties.

Q: I remember him as foreign minister in about 1980.

BARBIS: Well, he had been before because I think George Rallis was foreign minister when I left. But, in any event, it took Mr. Mitsotakis a number of years and he played it very shrewdly by not provoking, because there was an awful lot of animosity and hostility towards him because of his role in the Papandreou government. Although there were others who had participated in that event, people who abandoned their party in order to support the opposition, they were rehabilitated.

One of the first exchanges that the political section had was in support of USIS. We had an excellent PAO and an excellent cultural affairs officer, Al Ball, with whom I worked very well. This helped me a lot because this was how I established many of my contacts with the parliamentary leadership. There was a group of deputies going to the United States to visit Washington and to travel around the country. It became somewhat controversial in that the escort/interpreter for the group was one of my predecessors, Daniel Brewster, who had been the political counselor at the time of the junta and then was the country director for Greece. He was anathema to the anti-junta people and to the more liberal people, those left of center, if you will. A crisis arose almost immediately when it became known in Athens that Dan was the interpreter/escort. I remember talking with Dan and also with the leader of the group we had chosen, who later became president of the parliament, an old time politician who had been with that Mitsotakis group in 1967 but had been rehabilitated. In the middle of the night I talked with the president of the parliament to tell him what had happened, that this had all broken in the Greek press and there was quite a furor over it and we were prepared to do what he wanted us do, if he thought we should replace Dan. I made it clear that our preference was not to replace

Dan because we thought he was unfairly charged.

Dan still has some unfavorable views about him for his supposed role at that time. At the time we did what the law said and cut off military aid as a result of the junta actions. Dan Brewster was country director at the time. It wasn't until several years later that that embargo was lifted. This was never taken into account in discussions about American policy towards the junta. I guess what we suffered from there, as we have in other countries, was the emphasis or priority we always put on stability and order in situations of domestic political turmoil in other countries. This seems to many people to pit us against the forces of liberalism and progress and in support of the more authoritarian, dictatorial forces. This is something we have suffered from and still suffer from around the world in our relations with other governments.

In any event, that was a very fortunate thing and I may have had the idea of inviting a group of parliamentarians. There were three parties on the Greek scene at the time. The New Democracy, headed by Karamanlis, who was prime minister; a moderately liberal party, which was small; and then PASOK, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement, head by Papandreou, which was critical of us even then.

Q: Were there members from PASOK who went on this parliamentary delegation?

BARBIS: I believe we invited them but they didn't go. There were two members from the liberal party who were good friends of mine, but especially close friends of Towner Friedman's, who did go. I believe they are still in the parliament. So, the delegation was four New Democracy and two from the liberal party. I am pretty sure we did invite PASOK, but PASOK sort of gave us the cold shoulder and wasn't welcoming contacts. John Day, who was desk officer for Greece later, had a very good friend who was very close to Papandreou and later became foreign minister in the PASOK government. He had suffered, been tortured and seen his son tortured by the junta and was very bitter towards us. I got to know him and his wife fairly well despite this emotional feeling they had about official Americans, thanks to John Day. I would meet with him on the quiet because he certainly didn't want it known that he had any contact with the political counselor of the American embassy.

Q: PASOK's problem with the American embassy, with the United States in general, was a combination of our failure to prevent or overthrow or undermine the junta leaders during the 1967-74 period plus our failure to stop Turkey from invading Cyprus?

BARBIS: Exactly. There was an anonymous view about our guilt on the Cyprus issue throughout the country.

Q: Before we talk more about that and relations generally with the United States, I would like to talk a little bit more about PASOK. You were at the California University at Berkeley. Was Andreas Papandreou there at the time?

BARBIS: He hadn't come yet. I think he was still in Minnesota or Harvard.

Q: So, you didn't really know him?

BARBIS: I remembered him vaguely because when I went to Greece in the thirties, to Athens College, he was a controversial figure even then. He, of course, was eight to ten years older than I because he was a senior, I think, when he was expelled from Athens College. The accusation against young Andreas Papandreou was that he was a Trotskyite and Greece was under a dictatorship at that time, another colonel called Metaxas. However, because of his father's standing in the Greek political world, through the intercession of political leaders and friends of his father they got Metaxas instead of throwing him in prison, to exile him, and that is how he came to the United States.

Q: After he had been expelled from the college?

BARBIS: Well, I can't remember but I doubt the college would have expelled him unless the government brought charges against him and forced them to do so. Maybe they just arrested him. I don't really remember.

He came to the United States, got his doctorate in economics, joined the navy, and met his wife Margaret. The story is they met in a dentist's waiting room, fell in love and got married, etc. Then Papandreou made his mark in the United States in academic circles as an economist and finally headed the economics department at the University of California.

A little bit of additional background involving Mitsotakis and Karamanlis. When Karamanlis was prime minister in the late fifties, he invited Papandreou, because of his standing in the academic world as an economist, to come back as a consultant to the Greek government.

Q: To set up an Institute of Economic Research and Study?

BARBIS: Exactly, and to advise the government. Although they were political opponents with his father, I think Karamanlis actually discussed it with George Papandreou. This lasted for a short period, two years or something like that, and then Papandreou returned to the United States. Then George Papandreou became prime minister and invited his son to come back and join his cabinet.

Q: This would have been in the early sixties?

BARBIS: Yes, early sixties. There was a rivalry in the beginning but this is when the animosity between Andreas Papandreou and Constantine Mitsotakis arose because Mitsotakis was the economic czar, if you will, the minister of coordination, in the Papandreou government, and yet here was the son advising him on political issues.

Q: To come ahead to the period when you were political counselor. Andreas Papandreou was in Sweden during the junta period. Did he come back immediately after the junta fell?

BARBIS: He came back, like everybody else. He had been active both in exile and otherwise in PASOK, the movement that he had founded in exile, and emerged as a growing challenger to the traditional parties, one headed by Karamanlis and one a liberal party but both basically

conservative, whereas PASOK was definitely based on socialist precepts and principles. The interesting thing about PASOK in that early period of my tour was that they concentrated, and I can't give you numbers, their representation in the parliament was not large, in creating an organizational structure throughout the country, which may have been stimulated by Andreas' American experience. You could go to small towns and even villages and see the green symbol of PASOK. They brought American organizational skills to bear, or so it seemed.

Q: So, even in the early days, after 1974, it was not just an urban, labor based party?

BARBIS: No, they made a tremendous effort to establish a network throughout the country, unlike the traditional parties. And, that is in fact how they emerged as the leading party, having won elections and are in power today.

Q: In this period from 1975-79, did anybody in the embassy see Andreas Papandreou much? Did Monty, the DCM?

BARBIS: The strange thing is as close as the Stearns and the Papandreou couples were, they did not have contact in that initial several years of Monty's return to Greece. I talked about this with Monty and I won't go into that part because I think that belongs to his oral history. I remember Monty telling me how close he and Papandreou were. They were roughly the same age; Monty may have been a little younger. They had known each other when Monty as a young Foreign Service officer had married Ambassador Riddleberger's daughter (he was ambassador to Yugoslavia, Greece and Austria). Margaret and Toni, Mrs. Stearns, became good friends. They remained in touch. I remember Monty telling me of being in correspondence with them when he, Monty, was in Laos. But, when he came back...I would frequently go with Monty to national day receptions, which usually took place around noon at the various embassies. Frequently Papandreou would be there too. He studiously avoided Monty. But I think it was at the Soviet embassy once where Papandreou got caught in a corner and came face-to-face to Monty and had no choice but to acknowledge him and expressed great surprise..."Monty, I didn't know you were here!" I remember about the same time, the Stearns and we lived in a suburb of Athens, and there was an American style supermarket there called Alpha Beta, A&B, Toni ran into Margaret Papandreou at the supermarket and was greeted with the same kind of phony "Gee, I didn't know you were here, Toni, we must get together." Subsequently, of course, they reestablished their relationship, perhaps not on the same basis, but very closely, when Monty was ambassador and Papandreou was prime minister.

But, it was interesting that PASOK had no desire to have contact with us and here their leader had been a very close, confident, almost, with someone like Monty. Well, you will have to read Monty's book to get the full story.

Q: Papandreou had been an American citizen and spent years there.

BARBIS: Yes, but I guess it was Monty and Toni had embarked on their married life when Papandreou came back from Berkeley and Monty met him and dealt with him officially and on a personal basis as well and became fairly close.

Q: Let's talk a little bit more about some of the other opposition parties in Greece at that time. There were, of course, a communist party or two. Did the embassy have any contact with them?

BARBIS: We knew them, of course. I didn't have any direct contact with the KKE leadership. We did have some contact with the other communist party which I can't describe in precise terms. They had an outstanding leader who was respected by Greeks across the political spectrum as a man of honesty and integrity, but a communist. This was still the time of the Cold War and we were a good scapegoat and they weren't shy about blaming us for everything.

Q: But a lot of what they and PASOK were blaming us for was peculiar in a sense to Greece.

BARBIS: Yes, very much so and that is something we should talk about, I think. Again, Monty could talk about it more because he was there in an earlier period as well. The American role in Greece in the post World War II period has been very controversial. The Truman Doctrine was in Greece. Greece was in the middle of a civil war and we talked a little about that in the years of German occupation and immediately after the liberation of Greece when all the political factions reached some kind of an armistice and the communist guerilla ELAS, national liberation army, laid down its arms, although they didn't turn them all in, and the civil war resumed in the late forties when the British withdrew their primary role in Greece and turned it over to us. We jumped in with quite a bit of treasure and assistance and support, political and moral and otherwise, to the extent where General Van Fleet is credited as much as anyone with the defeat of the communist side in this civil war. That reflected in a way a deep involvement of the United States in Greek affairs, which was seen by the Greeks as being even greater than it actually was. But, it was pretty pervasive throughout the country, which depended on us for economic assistance as well as military assistance. After Cyprus, there was a background to which most Greeks could point or recall to justify or confirm that we were the ones behind everything that had happened and it was something that was very hard for us to overcome. And, a lot of us were not proud of some of our actions in the 1947-74 period. I knew we were deeply involved; I followed the Truman Doctrine activities, and had also heard about how the CIA was pretty active and well-known to the Greeks as being involved and active.

Q: Greece joined NATO and US bases were established.

BARBIS: Yes, that is right and they later became a political issue domestically and with us. The point I am trying to make is that one of the things I did when I went back to Greece in 1975 was to try and catch up with events. I didn't go back to the fifties, trying mostly to become more expert in what had happened in the sixties, etc. I was shocked to learn that until the return to democracy under the Karamanlis government, and certainly up to the junta years, I hope not after the junta came into power, we in effect had a veto over who got promoted to be a Greek general. We had a seat on the general promotion panel. Looking back on it now, I am not sure I remember it correctly, but I know it made such an impression on me that I still remember it. Whether I am remembering it in a distorted way, which is possible, but in any event that made me feel even more that I had a role to play, a small one, but still one that could be useful since I understood how Greeks interpreted things like that.

Q: So you could see your role as being very supportive for Greek democracy and for Greek

independence?

BARBIS: Exactly. And, I think others shared this with me, certainly my fellow political officers did, seeking a diminution in American influence, if you will. The Greeks always looked to us and one of the reason why Cyprus was such a traumatic thing for them was they saw...

Q: George, we were just talking about how the Greeks saw what happened in Cyprus in 1974 and the US role or failure to play a role as a betrayal from the country that had given all this support and assistance and had been so involved in Greece in the post-war period.

BARBIS: Exactly. And this was personalized very directly with the Secretary of State. One of the first things we saw in Athens when we got there in January of 1975 were effigies of Kissinger hanging from telephone poles and signs, "Murderer, wanted dead or live." And, to this day, most Greeks have very strong feelings against Mr. Kissinger because they blame him.

The Turkish invasion of Cyprus was not the first time that Greece and Turkey had come close to conflict and they actually did in Cyprus because the Greeks sent some troops there. There were some Greek troops there all ready, but the Greeks also reinforced those troops. So, there were clashes involving Greeks and Turks on Cyprus. But, when this had happened previously, I guess the best example is when President Johnson was president and the Turks were getting ready to attack the Greeks...and I should introduce here that it is not just Cyprus that was an issue between them, perhaps from a self interest point of view even more important was the whole question of the continental shelf and the Aegean, rights thereto and etc., but we can come to that later. But, in this previous occasion when war threatened, we intervened directly and in effect dictated to the Turks, "You better not do it," and they backed off. This time, when the President sent a letter to Prime Minister Ecevit, the Turks in effect said, "We listened to President Johnson, but now we are going to do it our way." And, their way was to send in troops and to divide the island as it remains today. The Greeks have always seen this as a violation of international law, the UN Charter, and have never understood how and why, despite repeated Security Council resolutions, etc. that the world community has allowed the division and the occupation, as they see it, of northern Cyprus by the Turks to continue.

Q: In the early period that you were in Athens, beginning in early 1975, I am sure that Greek political figures, the average Greek person, felt exactly the way you just described it, but how did they feel about what precipitated or prompted the Turkish intervention, namely, the coup against Archbishop Makarios which was clearly supported from Athens and led to the downfall of the junta in Greece?.

BARBIS: Certainly, privately, some Greek friends would acknowledged the culpability, the fact that all of this was provoked, but with the backdrop of their dispute over the Aegean and the continental shelf, etc., with the conviction of many Greeks that Turkey was out to take back territories that the Greeks considered theirs, they wouldn't excuse anything on that basis and they would simply say, "Well, the CIA put the junta up to it." This was widely believed that we were behind the coup, which is illogical, but nonetheless people believed it.

Q: Did they believe that was a factor because of our unhappiness with Makarios, a leader of the

non-aligned movement, partner of the communist party in Cyprus, etc.?

BARBIS: That certainly would support their conspiracy theory and give it some rationale, but the feelings were very strong that we could have prevented it but we didn't. Obviously they didn't leave the junta leaders blameless. But, certainly the blame was on us more than anything. To this day I disagree with my wife on one issue about our years in Greece. She was exposed to this in a more raw way than I ever was dealing with officials, etc. She feels that to this day there is a very strong anti-American feeling in Greece, and there is, but at the same time there is a very great body of Greeks who do recognize the contributions the United States has made to Greece's independence, prosperity and progress. But, undeniably there is this deep seated sense of bitterness and disappointment that we let them down and they would always make that comparison--we stopped it in the sixties, why couldn't we and why didn't we choose to stop it in the seventies. And, they even see in incidents that occur--violations of their airspace, etc.--some American involvement or culpability that we sided with the Turks, etc. And, especially in the context of the Cold War, they recognized and criticized what they saw as preferential treatment we gave Turkey because the role it played in the confrontation between East and West.

Q: I would like to ask you a couple of questions about the Greek perception of Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State in connection with the Cyprus events of 1974. To what extent did the Greeks feel that because Bulent Ecevit, then Turkish prime minister, had actually been a student of Henry Kissinger's at Harvard, there was a personal relationship going back to before they were in position of prominence in their respective government that perhaps that was an element in the lack of communication or the lack of forcefulness on our part or the Turkish unwillingness to listen to us, if, in fact, we sent a letter from the President or tried to dissuade them from moving?

BARBIS: They were just down on Secretary Kissinger no matter what you said about him and if that information was known about the prior relationship of Ecevit to Professor Kissinger, certainly that would only reinforce them. I think they saw him as an evil, Machiavellian, anti-Greek influence who saw Turkey as more valuable as an ally in dealing with the issues of the Cold War and the Soviet Union, and therefore behaved this way. There was nothing anybody could do to convince them otherwise.

Q: The other thing that was happening that July and August of 1974 was the culmination of the Watergate process and the resignation of Richard Nixon as president and the role that Henry Kissinger was playing as a close associate of Nixon's that may have preoccupied him somewhat from whatever else was happening in the world.

BARBIS: But, they certainly would not look for any excuses to explain or excuse what they saw as Kissinger's role in this whole affair. It is something that they believe deeply and there is no logic to it. Perhaps with the passage of time we will have some success. It reminds me of incidents in other countries. Korea, for example, where my friend General John Wickham is still seen as having been involved in events that led to the killing of many students in Kwangju. I participated in getting General Wickham's side of the story out, that he had no control over the Korean forces, etc. that went there. As UN commander there were certain things he could do and certain things where he had no influence. We never have been able to dismiss that conviction of many Koreans that the US bore some of the responsibility for those events. Well, in the case of

Greece, it is even more wide spread and more deep seated and over a longer period of time because of this very close relationship we had as a result of the Truman Doctrine and the circumstances of political developments in Greece, the civil war, etc.

Q: For whatever it is worth, I tend to share your view that there is a reservoir of good feeling and appreciation to the United States for what was done in the Truman Doctrine period and the subsequent period and the role we were seen as playing as the leader of democracy in the world, but also because of the very large number of Greeks who have come to live in the United States over the years that there is a bridge between the two countries that is there at a person to person, family level.

BARBIS: Exactly. There are very strong ties and in any showdown, I think we would stand shoulder to shoulder. Certainly the role of the Greek American community in this country in support of Greek interests as they see them is very strong as we know. The arms embargo against Turkey being the most dramatic example of the influence of the Greek lobby. And, I must admit I believe I am more detached on this than most of my fellow Greek Americans. I do not feel and have not been involved and I'm sure have created some unfavorable impressions on people who are partisans out there. I don't consider myself a warrior for the interests of Greece in the American scene. Whereas the Greek lobby, even somebody as balanced and outstanding as Senator Sarbanes...when two Greek Americans get together they will talk about what the Turks have done lately. Well, that is not where I start my discussions about what is happening in Greece.

Q: In the period when you were political counselor in Athens, 1975-79, and against the background of everything you have just said, it was obviously a rocky, difficult, challenging period for the American embassy, for the United States, dealing with all of these things that had happened. And, you, as kind of the senior Greek American in the embassy, were you seen either by those in Athens or by Greek Americans who would visit, as somebody who could be their advocate or might see things the same way that they did? Was it sometimes sensitive for you?

BARBIS: Surprisingly not. When you had organized Greek groups come like AHEPA (the national Greek American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association), which is a national organization going back to the mid-twenties in this country, their leadership would always come and I would accompany them. When Archbishop Iakovos came I would be the embassy support and liaison for them. Sometimes they embarrassed me. Once the AHEPA was there and I had managed thanks to a friend to get them an appointment with Karamanlis, but before I could give them the confirmation that they had an appointment at such and such a time, on such a date, they had gone off to Crete. My friend said he had to do some fast talking to avoid the wrath of the prime minister.

One thing that I did dread was that I would be put into a difficult position, either from the Greek side or from the American side, and seen as being a partisan, but I think I escaped that. I think I lived up to what I told Ambassador Kubisch when he asked me that question.

Q: Maybe we should move a head a little bit and talk about how the embassy, how you were involved in this period of trying to overcome some of these difficulties and problems. It seems to

me there are three categories and you can pick which ever one you want to start with. One is the whole area of the bases, the defense relationship, Greece's situation in NATO during this period. Second is Cyprus and the third is the continental shelf, the Aegean and other issues relating to Turkey, including in terms of the United States the relationship with Turkey, the arms embargo, and the subsequent decision to ask Congress to appeal that. Are these kind of the three main areas that the embassy and you were seized with throughout your period?

BARBIS: Yes, I think that is a good description of our main challenges across the board throughout that four and a half year period that I was involved. Subsequently, of course, as PASOK emerged as the legitimate government, etc., there was also building bridges with them, which I didn't participate in because it happened after I left. However, I am sure that was an issue when Monty was ambassador there. And, we did establish good working relationship with PASOK despite the many differences we had, especially in the second Papandreou administration, I think. There are still some issues that never got resolved like terrorists that they wouldn't turn over to us and things like that.

We did a number of things which were sort of standard in our business. Contacts was the most important way to try to correct the record, get our views across. All of us had good contacts with members of the press, many of whom were friends, many of whom were critics.

Ambassador Kubisch played a very important role in that he came up with an idea which we discussed in the country team context because it involved certain risks. This was the idea of his meeting regularly on a background basis with Greek journalists. Some of us had some reservations that this might be exploited or distorted or turned into a weapon against us instead of creating better understanding and getting our views across, but he was determined to do it. He did it in a masterful way and it worked out in a very positive manner. It was something the journalists actually looked forward to and if they were excluded they tried to find a way to get included.

Q: How often did he try to do that?

BARBIS: Well, every six weeks, two months. We didn't overdo it in order not to diminish its value. He was quite open with them in discussing issues. This was useful also during the period of base negotiations, of course, to give them without going into the details or classified aspects of it some sense of the cooperative way in which the two sides, despite differences, were approaching this.

Q: On the base negotiations, there was, of course, a political/military officer, who was not a part of your section. I assume he did most of the negotiation together with the ambassador and DCM, and also involving questions about Greece's relationship with NATO?

BARBIS: He would have contacts with people dealing with the negotiations, but Bob Pugh and then Mort Dworken working directly for the DCM and the ambassador would be a member of our negotiation team and the embassy officer carrying documents back and forth and discussing them, etc. I was kept informed, but I don't think I attended one negotiation session. It had been established that way and neither the ambassador or the DCM saw any reason to change it.

Q: Well, why don't we leave that subject aside for the time being. Obviously it was terribly important in terms of our relations with Greece and you kept informed.

BARBIS: And I participated in discussions about our position and what we were trying to do, our strategy. I certainly had an opportunity to make inputs into that. Kubisch always wanted my views of anything because of my special background.

Q: Let's talk about the general context in terms of timing. During the 1975-6 period, I believe, we were involved in intense negotiations with Greece for a base agreement partly because we had already reached one with Turkey, which needed to have the approval of congress to be implemented. Is that more or less the way you remember it?

BARBIS: More or less.

Q: And then Carter was elected in 1976 and one of the first steps he took was to send to Greece, as well as to Turkey and Cyprus, a mission headed by Clark Clifford. Were you involved with the Clifford mission?

BARBIS: I was involved in the sense that Ambassador Kubisch on a Saturday or Sunday morning had a mini country team meeting. The DCM, myself, the economic counselor, the public affairs counselor, the Defense attaché spent several hours with Mr. Clifford and his people briefing him about the Greek perspective, the Greek aspect of this, before they went to Cyprus.

Q: Tell me how the Greeks perceived the Clifford mission. Carter, of course, was seen in his election campaign in some of the statements he made as pro-Greek and the fact that he sent this mission headed by Clark Clifford so soon after he was inaugurated were the Greeks expecting that this would lead to a pro-Athens tilt?

BARBIS: We were taking an active role but it was an even handed one, and I think they were not happy about that. They would have preferred to see a more pro-Greek stance on our part, which we couldn't afford to do, of course.

Q: That was certainly the case during the Ford administration, although maybe then they saw the administration's view as pro-Turkish since it was against the congress enacting the embargo legislation. But there was a feeling when Carter came in that things were going to change. They say that the church bells rang in Greek Cyprus when the election results were announced. And, they were disappointed weren't they?

BARBIS: They were very much disappointed that it didn't turn out that way. It was another case of our letting them down.

Q: They did meet with Clark Clifford?

BARBIS: Yes. I don't know of any case where they refused to meet with any of our special envoys.

Q: Could they have done more to be persuasive?

BARBIS: I would be the note taker in meetings with Karamanlis who would start in a very calm and measured way with the fundamentals, sort of run through the history of Greek-Turkish relations, US-Greek relations and, of course, put the Greek version of it of how they had been treated badly, that the Turks could not be trusted and they were out to undermine Greece's interests. Anybody who came away from such an hour or hour and a half meeting would be impressed with the presentation feeling the Greeks really had a case here. But, then when you would sit down and look at our interests and put the picture together with our relation with Turkey, etc., we kept coming down to even handedness, which made sense to us but didn't to the Greeks, and still doesn't.

Q: You could not undo what had happened in 1974 and the acts of omission that we had done could not be easily undone. It was a matter of dealing with the present and the future. The Clifford mission came in early 1977 and the next major development was in 1978 when President Carter decided to ask congress to lift the embargo on Turkey with the idea of trying to do other things related particularly to Cyprus but also to Greek-Turkish relations. Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary, came to Athens and others too. What do you remember of this period and the role of the embassy and how the Greeks saw that US activity? Were they suspicious or doubtful or did they just basically think we had been doing things wrong for some time and we were still doing things wrong?

BARBIS: You put your finger on it with your last comment. I think throughout this period, and probably through to today, there is that feeling on their part that we are putting our interests first, which we see in a completely different context from their view of our interests or the role we should be playing, and are guided by that. And that is overwhelmingly influenced by the importance we give Turkey in the overall US national security picture of the eastern Mediterranean. And, although they appreciated visits like that and would listen and engage in dialogue, they obviously were not happy with the American approach.

Q: How about Cyprus in particular? Other than Cyprus as an issue, a demonstration of Turkish aggressiveness and unwillingness to withdraw from a position they have taken, did you find in your contacts, both official and others, a lot of interest in the Greeks of Cyprus or is it more a cause, a demonstration of what Turks are capable of that motivated them?

BARBIS: You have put your finger on a very interesting issue. At the same time that Cyprus was sort of a predominant issue [standing alone], it was not an issue, they really didn't give a damn. It was in the context of relations with Turkey that Cyprus had its greatest value to them. Sure, there is a sentimental feeling that these are brothers or cousins but they feel they are a little different, and not necessarily in a favorable way. I guess it is part of how human nature can be contradictory, but Cyprus to them became an issue that only reinforced the Greek fears of what Turkey is really up to. The Greeks feel that the Turks consider some of the Greek islands in the Aegean are Turkish. There is nothing but suspicion that the Turks are up to no good when it comes to Greece. They are out to undermine Greek independence, territorial integrity and every thing else. They confirmed all of this by what they did in Cyprus.

Q: Did you have an opportunity to visit Cyprus during this period?

BARBIS: I did. I visited Cyprus when Bill Crawford was ambassador there and Ed Dillery was the DCM. Ed invited us down. It was an eye opener for us. At that time, this would have been 1976, you could see that the difference between Greek Cyprus and Turkish Cyprus was just stark. Bill took us up to his weekend villa in Kyrenia. We were friends with two marine archeologists who had brought up the items from the sea that are in the museum there and they asked us to go and check the humidity meters and things like that because they were concerned as to whether the Turks were taking good care of it. But the prosperity you saw on the Greek side and the barrenness of the Turkish are in the north, the contrast was so strong.

Q: I haven't been to Cyprus in twelve years and in your case probably it is twenty years. I think we can both imagine that the disparity has grown dramatically and the gap has widened even further. Against what you said before about the Greek interest in Cyprus as a sign of the Turkish threat, demonstration of what Turkey has done and can do, Cyprus, itself, has particular problems. Was there much interest in the foreign ministry or the Greek political front in how to find some way for the two Cypriot communities to live together, to find a means to a settlement? Or, was it more a case of doing nothing unless Turkey would withdraw its invading force and allow the situation to return to something closer to what it had been before?

BARBIS: Despite what I said before, there is a very close relationship between the two governments of Cyprus and Greece and whenever there is a change of Cyprian government the first thing a new Cyprian president does is make a trip to Athens. There are conferences and communiqués of cooperation and solidarity, etc. My conclusion, after my experience there, is that even the more open minded Greeks on this issue see nothing but evil on the Turkish side. The Turks have a hidden agenda and you just can't trust them. So, I don't think there has been an attempt on the Greek and Greek-Cypriot side, unless it has happened in the years since I left, to come up with compromises that would be reasonable to most people that could lead to some kind of a resolution. The feelings are so deep, the unwillingness to compromise so great that it is hard to see any such attempt. I see no evidence of a Greek academic coming up, as we have in this country, with a different point of view or solutions in the papers. The solution there would be that the Turks agree to everything that the Cypriots had denied them.

Q: Against that background, and taking account of what we said earlier about Greek perception of the United States and its role in 1974 and perhaps in 1967 as well and maybe in other period too, any US initiative to advance compromise proposals or reasonable suggestions as far as Cyprus was concerned, was probably doomed to fail even before it was launched. Is that a fair statement to make?

BARBIS: That would be where I would come out.

Q: Well, you recall that I was involved in one such effort in 1978, not long after the congress approved lifting the arms embargo on Turkey. Some proposals were presented in Cyprus, but also in Ankara and Athens as well. Were you there at the time? Do you remember much about the Greek reaction to that initiative?

BARBIS: Was this the Nimitz plan?

Q: Yes, it was.

BARBIS: Many Americans felt that that was a lost opportunity. I think some Greeks felt that also, looking back because there has been no progress really, no movement. And their less emotional frame of mind would agree too that maybe they should have given that a chance. But, at the time, I think people were so fixed in their positions and the conviction that no matter what you proposed the Turks will not live up to it.

Q: And, in a sense, all of that was reinforced by the Carter administration's effort with the congress to get the congress to lift the embargo and the congress finally agreed to do that. So in a sense that just reconfirmed that we were not as even handed as we liked to say we were.

BARBIS: Not the honest broker that we like to think of ourselves as. No, there is too much suspicion and emotion and lack of trust to see any compromise. I think there was some hope when Vassiliou came on the scene. Maybe the hope was more on our side in our governmental circles that he was going to be able to work out a settlement of some kind.

Q: That was in Cyprus and well beyond the time you were there and the time I was involved too. Let's go back a little bit and talk more about the Aegean, the continental shelf issue. Were there some developments there while you were there? I think there was a Turkish ship that did some drilling.

BARBIS: Well, of course, there was the Bill Schaufele episode.

Q: Let's talk about that.

BARBIS: That is where how important this issue is came right out because of an unfortunate choice of words that he made in his confirmation hearings.

Q: That would have been the summer of 1977 and he had been nominated by President Carter to replace Jack Kubisch as ambassador to Greece. Do you remember what happened?

BARBIS: Well, I remember that he was asked about the dispute in the Aegean and he made some reference, and I don't remember the exact words, but whatever it was it implied that he didn't agree with the Greek position but agreed with the Turkish position. As a result the Greeks would not give him agrément, or he withdrew because of all the furor.

Q: I think he eventually withdrew because of all the furor. I think agrément had been granted before he went before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

BARBIS: Oh, okay, I had forgotten that detail.

Q: But it also meant that there was no ambassador. I think Kubisch had already left.

BARBIS: Kubisch had left, Hawk Mills was the chargé for a long time. Then, finally, Bob McCloskey came in 1978.

Q: I think you indicated to me before, not on the tape, that McCloskey was a good choice.

BARBIS: I thought he was a good choice. Of course, I had known him and did what I could to welcome him and support him. In fact, he asked me to extend my tour for a year, for his first year, which I agreed to do and stayed with him.

Q: How had you known McCloskey earlier?

BARBIS: He was in the press office in the fifties when I was on the Korean desk and Korea was an issue that he had to be briefed on. He would come up to the NEA public affairs office and drop by my office frequently too. Over the years we had bumped into each other. But, this was the first time I had served with him.

Q: He had served briefly as ambassador to Cyprus. I say briefly because I think most of the time he was supposed to be in Nicosia he was actually working with Secretary Kissinger, as press spokesman, on that shuttle business in the Middle East. But he did not speak Greek?

BARBIS: No, and I think Bob came there at first with no great sympathy for the Greeks, but changed quite a bit during that year we were together in appreciating their views. I think he read them well and some things he liked and some things he didn't like about them. I think we had a good team under McCloskey as well.

Q: He had certainly a range of experience at very high levels in the US government and was obviously well thought of by the Department and others.

BARBIS: Oh, yes.

Q: You had a number of congressional visits while you were there. I suppose you got quite involved with each of these visits?

BARBIS: I did. The one that I handled myself was when Senator Eagleton came with his assistant, a former FSO, Brian Atwood, who is now our administer of AID. I spent, I think, really three full days escorting the senator and Brian to various calls on Greek officials and politicians, and briefing them. In fact, he was kind enough when he returned to write a letter praising Monty Stearns and my support to his CODEL because we both spent quite a bit of time with them and briefing them. He became a member of the Greek lobby, I guess. He always was very sympathetic to the Greek point of view.

Q: Let me just ask a little bit more about the Greek perception of the Greek lobby or those members of congress who had opposed strongly the junta during the period of 1967-74 and then those who had taken the initiative to get legislation against Turkey after what happened in Cyprus in 1974. You have talked about the general attitude toward the United States and

Secretary Kissinger, but I suppose there was a different attitude towards these people?

BARBIS: There was a different attitude towards those people and certainly whenever Congressman Brademas or Senator Sarbanes visited, they were welcomed as good friends and defenders. And, I think that is how they treated Eagleton, too. There were these discriminations about individuals and certainly it is that impersonal, Kissinger based foreign policy that the Greeks had ...

Q: George, we have been talking quite a bit about your assignment to Athens from 1975-79. I would like to go back towards the beginning a little bit and just talk about the atmosphere for the embassy in terms of anti-American feeling that existed after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, Greece's withdraw from the military side of NATO. Of course, the return of democracy to Greece was a very good sign. But, how was it in terms of threats to the embassy, terrorism, demonstrations, etc.?

BARBIS: I have said some things about the general atmosphere when we arrived in Athens on January 2, 1975, and the general hostile environment, triggered most recently by the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, but with the background of several years of the military junta. US-Greek relations after World War II were very intense and interrelated. Our involvement there was pretty deep. And this on a foundation of very close relations going back to the founding of our republic when it was even proposed in Philadelphia that Greek be the official language of the new country. There was in the revolutionary years a great philhellenistic movement in this country, Jefferson probably being one of the leaders in that. And then through the years this relationship from a distance continued with quite a migration of Greeks to the United States, in the late 19th century and early 20th century, which is when my father came here. Greeks who came here kept up their ties with the old country and especially during World War II and the post-war period made a great contribution in sending money back, in promoting Greek causes here. I remember learning when I came back that my father had been very active in the Greek war relief effort as were Greek communities throughout the United States. And then with the civil war in Greece and the Truman Doctrine and our involvement in supporting the restoration of the legitimate government's position, this is when we really got closely involved and when the dependence of Greece on the United States was considerable.

Q: It was also one of the early battlegrounds of the Cold War.

BARBIS: Exactly. The beginning, in a way, of the active confrontation with the Truman Doctrine when the British, who had had primary influence in the eastern Mediterranean, said they just couldn't afford it any more and President Truman asked congress for us to step in and replace Britain both in respect to Turkey and Greece. At the time, of course, the immediate threat was in Greece where there was an active guerilla movement, or insurgency, and both through our economic aid and our military assistance the government of Greece prevailed in the end and peace was restored. But, even in the subsequent period their dependence upon us was considerable and most Greeks felt that nothing happened in their country unless the Americans approved of it.

So, with this background it is not difficult to see why after the junta years and then the Cyprus

invasion the Greeks felt let down by us, that somehow we were involved in promoting or allowing the Turks to do what they did and even before that that we had allowed the colonels to run the country. And, feelings were wide spread, even among people who basically were still pro-American and who had a lot of respect and affection and even family ties with America. I think it struck my wife even more since she had never encountered anything like that. She had no background about Greece other than through my family. And, even to this day, she comments on the hostile environment that she encountered.

My reaction to this wasn't quite as strong because I could understand why they felt the way they did. But, I think, Pat to this day thinks that there was a very intense anti-American feeling. Certainly this was the impression anyone would get in the public area and the Greek government didn't hesitate to demonstrate its unhappiness, etc. with some of our policies with its withdrawal from the military activities of NATO.

Q: Were there security precautions, threats to you or others in the embassy, in the 1975 period?

BARBIS: There was a constant drum beat in the leftist press against us with negative stories, etc. Every year since (I can't remember the exact year it took place) the uprising of the students at the Polytechnick, the Greek MIT, in protest against the junta, which had led to some student deaths and a lot of bloodshed, the anniversary was fixed in the minds of the leftists, who took the lead in promoting this as an anniversary to be remembered and demonstrate about. There would be a parade through the center of Athens, pass the American embassy and it would disperse some distance from the embassy. The first year we were there, 1975, the demonstration turned violent and the demonstrators actually broke through the [police] lines and did quite a bit of damage to the ground floor of the embassy building, which was primarily occupied by the consular section. This really shook us all up and security started to become a very serious concern. It started an argument between the embassy and the administrative security world of the State Department [which wanted] to put up fences and posts, stringent security controls, etc. Like all embassies by then, 1975, we had marines at the door, people had to check in, be identified, etc. But, this [proposal] was to take it even further by putting up a fence. Most of us felt that this was wrong, and I think this argument [goes on] throughout the world [within] the Department of State. How can an embassy representing the government of the United States turn itself into a fortress? But we had to do that for a good reason. It wasn't something we did lightly or did without some considerable discussion.

Q: The embassy in Athens is on one of the major boulevards of downtown Athens and it was built with a very open feeling of a plaza.

BARBIS: There were a lot of trees and openness with a big courtyard. The word openness is the main argument of those who opposed these more severe security measures. But, in the end we did improve the security there. This anti-American campaign even got personalized. Just before Christmas, December 23, 1975, a senior officer of the embassy was assassinated. We had all left the ambassador's residence where the Kubisches hosted an embassy Christmas party for families and all of us had taken our children. When we got home the phone was ringing and I ran in and answered it. It was Monty Stearns, the DCM, advising me that Dick Welch had been killed as he got out of his car to go to his house. As a senior person, I recall Dick did have a chauffeur, so

they were no doubt waiting for him, ambushed him and he had been taken to a hospital nearby and Monty asked me if I would go there. The kids right away realized something unpleasant had happened and that my wife and I had to go some place, but we pacified them, put them to bed and we took off. Fortunately I knew where this hospital was. It wasn't one of the well known hospitals to the foreign community. As soon as we got there we found out that Mr. Welch was dead. So, Pat took Mrs. Welch in our car and drove her to her home while I stayed behind to assist in talking to the hospital officials, etc. and in keeping the ambassador and the DCM informed because we didn't know whether this was an isolated incident directed only towards Mr. Welch or whether it was something that was directed towards the leadership of the embassy. So, the ambassador and Monty were at the embassy dealing with the Greek government at senior levels and trying to keep people informed, calm, etc.

This was the first of several assassinations of Americans that followed after I left. However, there were other incidents while I was there of threats to Americans, mostly in the form of burning cars of Americans. Our cars were easily identified because we had diplomatic plates and the military had military plates that were easily recognizable.

Q: In addition to the military attaché people in the embassy community there was an air force base.

BARBIS: We had an air force base at the main Athens international airport, part of which was devoted to the US Air Force and from which we had regular flights in the eastern Mediterranean on different kinds of special missions, etc. So, it was a big eye sore to many people.

Q: As a result of the assassination of Dick Welch and these other threats and burning of cars, I assume security was even further stepped up not only at the embassy building but in terms of your personal...

BARBIS: People were told to vary your routes, etc. It wasn't, however, until early summer of 1976, when a Greek leftist publication identified me as the successor of the alleged head of the CIA station in the embassy in Athens that the thing became very personal in my case. The leftists had gotten a hold of that book by the former CIA guy, Agee, which was published in East Germany, which had many foreign service officers listed, primarily any of us who had served in INR. So, I was in that book. Whether that led them to conclude that I was in fact CIA, I don't know. But, anyway they published an article.

Q: Or because it was assumed or known that the Greek Americans assigned to the embassy in Athens often were connected to CIA as opposed to State Department?

BARBIS: I think a combination of all things.

Q: As you said before you were probably the first State Department Foreign Service officer in a political or economic section job.

BARBIS: Well, for whatever reasons or because they just wanted to make mischief, I heard about it before the article was published when an American journalist called me and told me she

had been approached by the editor of this publication and told that he was going to publish this. She tried to argue him out of it, arguing that she knew me and what I did and there was no question but that I was the political counselor. But, they went ahead and published it anyhow. This led naturally to a meeting with the ambassador and the DCM, Monty Stearns, in which they said, "Look, with no effect on your career, you have a choice. If you want to leave and not expose yourself and your family to any threats, you can leave and we will see that you get another assignment. Talk it over with your wife and if you decide to stay we will have to of course increase security for you."

Right after Dick Welch had been assassinated, all the senior officers of the embassy had Greek uniformed policemen posted at the entrance to their homes on a 24 hour basis. This continued for some weeks. The ambassador, of course, had security as most chiefs of mission did around the world, up to and including follow-on cars, etc. What they told me was that I would have to have something similar if my wife and I agreed to stay on, which we did. We had only been there a little over a year and had more or less gotten our feet on the ground and were beginning, we thought, to make some contribution of the US effort of promoting US interests and better US-Greek relations, so we stayed on. This entailed for the rest of my tour not having the freedom of moving about as most people liked, but always having to take into account that I had to be accompanied by a bodyguard. And, other officers around the world have had similar experiences, unfortunately some paid for it with their lives, but it has been a fact of life as the memorial plaque in the lobby of the State Department demonstrates so dramatically. The number has increased considerably in the last three decades or so.

Q: It certainly has been a fact of modern American Foreign Service life throughout the world. It is not easy on a personal, family basis to deal with that because it feels very suffocating and intrusive.

BARBIS: It is very intrusive, invades your privacy, is disconcerting to children who don't understand and it is quite a burden on our spouses, I have to say, it certainly was in the case of our family.

One of our main efforts in those years immediately following the restoration of democracy in Greece, was to improve US-Greek relations. To try and overcome this hostility, this feeling of being betrayed, of having been let down, that the Americans did not live up to the high standards of friendship, support of allies that the Greeks felt was due to them.

Q: I would like to interrupt you there to say it is very important that we cover this side of it and maybe you could also think in terms of the end of your tour in 1979 and to what extent there had been progress in this direction and what were some of the things that had been done or not done.

BARBIS: As I mentioned before this was one of the main objectives of the embassy in our work in Greece, to try and overcome this unfortunate situation which in our eyes was unfair and not accurate. But, it was not easy to do because there was a lot of emotion involved in this and even Greeks who traditionally had always been identified with the United States were often critical. We did have a past of close relations that we were trying to return to. A lot of our effort was trying to explain how the facts didn't justify the charges made against the American

government's performance in the summer of 1967 when the junta overthrew the government and established a dictatorship. But all of this fell on deaf ears. Cyprus was even more difficult to try and explain away. It was just fixed in the minds of the ordinary Greek, fueled by the press, which we considered often irresponsible and not objective in any way, and no doubt exploited by our adversaries in the ideological struggle that was going on around the world.

Q: Let me inject a question at this point. The charges against the United States that were heard in Greece [regarding] 1967 and Cyprus were certainly echoed, if not reinforced by the Greek-American organizations, AHEPA, etc. As a generalization I think one can say that they were somewhat ambivalent or divided about what happened in 1967. Some welcomed the colonels, or at least understood why the military had acted at a time of disarray and confusion and were not as opposed to the Greek military government as some people perhaps in Greece were. But, I think there was a unanimity view in the Greek-American community about what happened in 1974. I am just wondering to what extent those views in the United States were reflected back into Greece and how the embassy could deal with that?

BARBIS: Your analysis is 100 percent correct, Ray, and I think you have expressed it quite accurately and completely. The support the Greek cause was getting from Greek-Americans was very much publicized there. Whenever Congressman Brademas and Senator Sarbanes visited Greece they were lionized. There is no doubt about it. And I now from my own contacts with Greek-Americans here in the United States know that the feeling here was very intense.

Q: Let me ask sort of a variant of my previous question. How would you describe the relations in this period between the embassy in Athens and other embassies in the area, particularly the embassy in Ankara and maybe to a lesser extent, the embassy in Nicosia, and with the Department of State in Washington? In the early part of your period, the Ford administration was perceived in Athens as trying to deal with the problem of Turkey and, perhaps also the problem of Greece, but was certainly a target of criticism by the Greek government and the Greek people. When the Carter administration came in did that change the atmosphere?

BARBIS: Certainly there was a great expectation when Carter came into office that there would be a more pro-Greek stance on the part of the United States government and there was some disillusionment or disappointment when that turned out not to be the case. One problem we faced as [embassy] officers representing the US in Athens, was not to appear to be apologists for the Greeks. So, we tried to be as balanced as we could in our reporting, although inevitably, I guess, any embassy will tend to try to present the views or the positions of its host government in its efforts to promote better relations in as clear and as favorable light as they could. I don't think we went overboard in that respect. Also, in order to maintain our objectivity and our American perspective, we did try to have as many of our officers as possible visit embassy Ankara and embassy Nicosia. This helped a lot both in having our officers get a better understanding and perspective of how the Turks felt and how the Cypriots felt. When I went to Cyprus I didn't meet only with representatives of the government and Greek-Cypriots, but Ed Dillery saw to it that I also had contact with Turkish-Cypriots and that I went into the Turkish occupied part of Cyprus and got an appreciation of the situation there.

Q: Did you have a chance to visit Turkey?

BARBIS: I visited Turkey from Athens at least twice, both Istanbul and Ankara, and spent quite a bit of time in Ankara and had an opportunity later, when I was no longer involved in Greek affairs, to visit both Greece and Turkey as advisor to the chief of staff of the Army.

Q: Right after Carter was elected and inaugurated in early 1977, he sent Clark Clifford on a special mission. I think he stopped first in Athens, as I recall.

BARBIS: He stopped in Athens and it was a weekend as I recall, as many of those visits are. We spent several hours at the ambassador's residence with the country team meeting with Mr. Clifford and his group and giving them our assessment of the situation and how we saw it from Athens. And, of course, they also met with officials of the Greek government. I presume that we took Mr. Clifford to call on Prime Minister Karamanlis, but I can't recall specifically.

Q: Another sort of major event with the Carter administration was a year or so later when the administration decided to go to congress and ask for a lifting of the arms restrictions on Turkey. How was that seen in Athens or by the embassy? As a betrayal or disappointment or let down?

BARBIS: To many Greeks it only confirmed what they had concluded for other reasons already that Turkey was more important to us strategically in the context of the world ideological struggle, and that we were willing to sacrifice our friend, loyal ally, faithful supporter through the years of World War I and World War II, whereas look at the Turks and their behavior in both occasions, because of other interests to forsake our relationship with Greece. One very prominent theory at that time was that Turkey was going to be one of the stalwarts in the Middle East in opposing any expansion of communist influence.

Q: The Turkish government has always had very strong staffs at the Turkish embassy in Athens. Did you have a fair amount of contact with the Turkish embassy in Athens?

BARBIS: Not really, as political counselor, and the embassy as a whole, we had contacts but didn't do anything ostentatious or give any basis for the Greeks to claim we were conspiring with the Turkish embassy, but our relations with the Turkish embassy were certainly cooperative and friendly.

Q: One other thing I don't think we have talked about yet, is the whole question of Greece and Europe. It was after you left, I think, that Greece decided to apply for membership in the European Community, and you, of course, had worked in Brussels previously. Was that a subject of much interest at the time that you were there?

BARBIS: One of Karamanlis' main objectives was to bring Greece into the European Community, as it was known then, and one of his prize accomplishments as prime minister was the successful negotiation of Greece's entry. The Community was not enthusiastic about bringing Greece in for economic reasons, for some of the same reasons they are not terribly enthusiastic about making Turkey a member. And it was strictly the economic imbalance between members of the Community and countries like Greece and Turkey--what would their contribution be in contrast as to what would be their benefits. One of the great benefits Greece

has had from its membership has been in the social area and the assistance and subsidies, or whatever you want to call them, through the social fund which has been a net advantage for Greece. But, what was strongest in support of Greece's admission in the eyes of the Europeans, of course, was the fact that Western civilization started in Greece and there was no way that they could not take Greece in. I think that was the overwhelming pressure for admittance. It still is a controversial question, both from the Greek side and from the Community. There are Greeks, like there are Englishmen, who are anti-Europe, but it is obviously the wave of the future and the young people are very much engaged and involved. I have a cousin who studied in this country and got a doctorate and now works in southern France for a think tank that services the Commission in the computer world the way our beltway bandits do here.

Q: Was it also an element for Karamanlis and perhaps other Greeks that this was a means of anchoring a democratic Greece and that the chances of reverting back to a military regime were much less?

BARBIS: That, more than anything, motivated Karamanlis. The economic benefits, obviously, were important but this was equally important because the junta of 1967 was not the first time the military in Greece had overthrown the legitimate government and established an authoritarian regime. I think I mentioned that in the years that I was in Greece as a boy going to school, that it was a period of dictatorship, 1936 until the out break of World War II.

Q: To what extent were Greece's relations with Turkey a factor? Did Karamanlis feel that if they were part of a European community that was beginning to have a political identity, maybe even thinking in terms of common security foreign policy, that Greece would have firm backing even more than they did as part of NATO, because NATO was looking at the Soviet Union and external targets and not at other members of the alliance?

BARBIS: I believe this was very much a factor. The Greeks recognized the advantage they had over Turkey because of this ideological and cultural heritage aspect and they took advantage of that. This was one of the astute things that Karamanlis did, to exploit that. I think they saw membership in a united Europe very much in their favor and something they could get support from in their dealings with Turkey. If nothing else, in terms of moderating Turkey's views and activities.

Q: I recall from this period, George, that the Greek government was very interested in getting some kind of security guarantee, security assurance from the United States. Something beyond NATO that would be certainly in their eyes useful if there were a future military threat from Turkey. Do you recall that and would you want to add to that?

BARBIS: I think you are right in what you said and I think it was something that always figured in our periodic base negotiations because the Greeks, rightly or wrongly, had a very suspicious attitude towards the Turks. I think in all fairness the Turks said and did a lot of things they didn't have to do in respect to territorial waters and continental shelf and claims on islands, etc., which fed this suspicion. And, what happened in Cyprus demonstrated to the Greeks that there was a scheme in fact, a big plan, to extend Turkish control beyond its territorial limits.

Q: I think we have talked in the past somewhat about Cyprus, but to what extent were the Greeks that you were working with on the political side, both in government and on the outside, interested in Cyprus and the Greek Cypriots as such, or how much of it was seen as a pattern of Turkish aggressiveness threat to Greece, itself?

BARBIS: I think I commented earlier that despite this very strong relationship between Greece and Cyprus, that the Greeks, not only the average Greeks, but the Greeks engaged in international relations, were sort of divided in their views about this or in their attitude towards Cyprus. On the one hand they looked down on them but at the same time anything that would offend the Cypriots by an outsider was an offense against the Greeks. So, whether they wanted it to be or not, Cyprus was an important issue in Greek foreign policy. Whenever you went to the foreign ministry certainly the Cyprus desk officer very much echoed what you would hear from the Nicosia. Cyprus was very dependent on Greek public support and real support as well. So, any new president of Cyprus made his first trip after his inauguration to Athens to see Mr. Karamanlis. I am not sure that they really saw what the Turks did in Cyprus as the first step in a conquest of the Dodecanese and Crete, etc., but certainly it gave strength to their charges that Turkey was aggressive towards Greece and did have claims and intentions that were inimical to Greek territorial and sovereignty questions.

Q: I think you originally had expected to be in Athens for three years or so but wound up being there almost four years and left in 1979. Looking back at the time you left and thinking about what had happened during the period you were there, which was some of the most dramatic, and important developments of the last fifty years in Greece, in terms of US-Greek relations did you feel at the time that you left that things were about the same as when you arrived, a little bit better, a little worse?

BARBIS: My own feeling is that things were a great deal better. It was actually four and a half years. We arrived in January and left in July of 1979. I think the US embassy, first under Ambassador Kubisch's leadership, and then Bob McCloskey's, did have considerable success in bridging the gap that had developed. By no means had we reestablished the intimacy and respect and confidence, and all the rest that had existed in US-Greek relations in prior times. Nor did we overcome the belief of many Greeks that we were somehow responsible for the junta and somehow responsible for Cyprus and for what Turkey has done in Cyprus. There is still disappointment that we are not more forcibly partisans of the Greek cause. There is still the feeling, and in this post-Cold War period even more perhaps, that we view Turkey more important to us strategically and otherwise. But, I came away from my tour there with a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that things were better in July, 1979, in US-Greek relations than they were when I arrived there in January, 1975.

Q: And certainly part of it was what the embassy did through contacts, arranging visits, finding concrete avenues of cooperation.

BARBIS: Exactly. I have said before that Ambassador Kubisch, and he was fortunate to have as his DCM, Monty Stearns, who knew the Greeks so well, whose approach was not one of...and it would have been natural in a way because in our government here in Washington there were a lot of resentment that the Greeks were behaving as they did. They were not being logical, they

were being emotional, etc. But, instead of trying to be the school teacher, scolding misbehaving pupils, the embassy's approach was to deal with it as a sovereign government, as a government who was our ally and equal. There was a resentment on the part of many of us at some of the ways we had behaved in prior years in terms of the influence we had exerted on the Greek government. And, although we were very firm in advancing US interests and supporting the US position, I think we did it in a way that wasn't confrontational or offensive and allowed for a dialogue at the official level that was not always reflected in the media.

JOHN RATIGAN
Greek Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1976-1978)

Mr. Ratigan was born in New York, raised in Minnesota and educated at Dartmouth College and Yale Law School. After service in the Peace Corps and ten years in private law practice, in 1973 he joined the Foreign Service. A specialist in consular matters, and particularly immigration, Mr. Ratigan served as Consul Officer in Teheran, Cairo, Toronto and Seoul and from 1984 to 1985 as immigration specialist and Pearson Fellow on the Senate Immigration Subcommittee. In 1989 he again served on that subcommittee as immigration expert. Mr. Ratigan was interviewed by Ray Ewing in 2007.

RATIGAN: My next assignment was on the Greek desk. Very demanding up there. I worked with you in EUR/SE with Nelson Ledsky as the office director. It was very exciting for me because I got to work in the political side of the department with some very good people. No flattery intended but it was I thought a quality operation we had. Jim Morton was my boss as you know, and we just developed a very good working and personal relationship. So that was just a lot of fun. One of the things I remember best about that was one day when the ambassador in Athens, Robert McCloskey, called up and wanted to be able to reply to a purported U.S. State Department cable that had been printed in one of the Athens papers. We were very suspicious of this cable because for various reasons it didn't seem to have the sound or quite the feel of a state department cable. So while Ambassador McCloskey was waiting on the phone talking with you and others I was madly trying to track down the date and verify the existence of this cable. So as with proving any negative, nothing you ever do is quite enough. Finally I had gone through so many files and looked as hard as I could, and just came to the conclusion that this cable was not one that had been sent from Washington and that it was a forgery. So Ambassador McCloskey was able to denounce it as a forgery, and I think really take the air out of whatever sails had built up over this insult to Greek sovereignty or whatever it was. That gave one a sense of some of the sort of I won't say outright anti Americanism, but certainly there was hostility to the United States. As you know it was shortly after the time of the colonels and Cyprus intervention, so relations were not really so good between the U.S. and Greece at the time.

Q: One of the things that I remember and why you came to be the junior Greek desk officer was the feeling that we have Nelson Ledsky in particular was that it was really a good idea to have people in the office of southern European affairs working on Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus who

had seventh floor experience, who knew how the State Department worked, who had some insight into what the secretary, the deputy secretary, the executive secretary expected, how decisions were made. And even though you didn't speak Greek and had not served in Athens, it was a feeling on our part these other things. The ability to work in Washington was as important and in some ways even more important than knowing what was happening in Greece. I don't remember particularly all of these things in connection with you but this was our general approach and philosophy at that time. The reason we were continually involved with State Department principals on issues on Cyprus, on bases in Greece. There was still an embargo on Turkey which was lifted near the end of your time, or even after you left the office. But there were a lot of issues that involved the seventh floor, and that is partly why we wanted someone like you. You interviewed I think with Nelson or with me or both. That is why you came to be there. Probably not so much with me because I think you started about the same time I did, the summer of '76.

RATIGAN: I don't remember who I interviewed with to tell the truth.

Q: Anything you remember particularly other than this forged cable in Greece that you would want to mention during that period.

RATIGAN: Nothing really. There were ongoing tensions with this November 17th group, so you know I think there was constant concern about physical safety and that sort of thing, One of the things I enjoyed the most really was having a chance to go out to Athens, to Crete and to Thessalonica during my stay on the desk and get a sense of what was really going on. I know you had Nelson asked me to sort of give you an assessment of an officer in Thessalonica who was interested in becoming a desk officer. So all of that was nice. My former colleague in Tehran, Hawk Mills was I think DCM at that time.

Q: Was McCloskey ambassador all during the period you were on the desk?

RATIGAN: Jack Kubisch was there at the beginning.

Q: Jim Morton, a senior Greek desk officer mostly handled relations with the defense department, bases issues?

RATIGAN: He did. I think one of the things which was an eye opener to me was the extent to which Americans of Greek descent were so actively interested in American policy toward Greece. I mean that sounds kind of idiotic to be surprised by something like that, but I think before I went there I didn't really appreciate the extent to which there was interest and active sort of involvement of the Greek Americans in talking to people on the desk, taking Jim to lunch, talking with you and Nelson. Occasionally I would tag along to some of these things. It wasn't the social thing so much as they were simply generally interested in finding out what was going on. The other thing that was really surprising to me was how much they used the telephone and how quickly you could find out what was going on in Greece by simply picking up the phone, or they could rather, and calling friends and relatives back in Greece. So that was one of the things I recall.

Q: The other thing that I would mention is that at that time, this period from '76 to '78, they were pretty united, the Greek American community. They were upset about Turkey and what had happened in Cyprus in 1974. Generally they welcomed the democratic restoration that happened in Greece, whereas in an earlier period some were supporters of the king, some supported the colonels. There was a lot of tension I think politically within the community, but at that particular time they were pretty unified I think even though they were members of different organizations. But overall they had a fairly similar approach to Greece and American relations with Greece.

RATIGAN: Certainly for someone in my kind of worms eye view of the thing it seemed that way to me as well. Of course for those involved in policy, there was also the presence in Congress of powerful Greek American Congressmen who were interested in what was going on and what we were doing and planning on and so forth. That presence in Congress I think doesn't hold quite so much power now as it did then. Key members were in very important positions.

Q: Another thing that was probably new to you was working with the Greek embassy or with any foreign embassy in Washington because you really hadn't done that before. You want to say anything about that? Did that take much of your time?

RATIGAN: Well they were very good. The people that we dealt with at the Greek embassy were diligent. They were active, they were frequently around the office. I am thinking of Lukas Tsilas who some years later became ambassador to the US, and who was then head of the political section, and a man named George Levidis who seemed to take me up, and some of the other young Greek political officers. They were good, cordial. You really felt like they were friends, although obviously they had jobs to do and so did we, but I mean it is a good working relationship with the people of the Greek embassy. Aware as we were that they had their interests of course. I think that Jim probably ended up and you and Nelson doing more socially with the Greek embassy on a number of occasions. That was fun. I enjoyed that.

Q: Anything else you want to say about your time on the Greek desk?

RATIGAN: No.

RONALD D. FLACK
Commercial Attaché
Athens (1978-1980)

Ronald D. Flack was born in Minnesota in 1934. After receiving his bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota he served in the US Army from 1957-1960. His career has included positions in Athens, Manila, Abidjan, Paris, Algiers, Geneva, and Copenhagen. Mr. Flack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 7, 1998.

FLACK: We went back to Athens. I had been wanting to go back for some time. The

commercial attaché's job was becoming available and I wanted that job. Dick Jackson was the assistant commercial attaché and he wanted to move up to become commercial counselor, but he only had one more year to go. Finally what I agreed to was that I would take his job as assistant until he left the following year. So, I was actually sent there as an assistant and did take over the counselor's job when he left.

Q: You were there then from 1976 until 1980. What was the situation in Greece at that time?

FLACK: As you recall I had been there earlier in 1963-65 when Karamanlis was prime minister. I missed the bad years, the junta. When I came in 1976, Karamanlis was again prime minister. I felt very strongly about this aura of junta years that was hanging over the country but I had not experienced the dictatorship personally and here I was back just as if nothing had changed in between. But, obviously things had changed and there were a lot of bitterness about the junta and those bad years. I found the climate to be considerably more anti-American than it had been previously. We were basically blamed for the junta. You had the rising socialist PASOK movement at that point, which was very anti-American, although the government was still Karamanlis and was basically working with us in most areas.

Q: What was the PASOK?

FLACK: It was the Papandreou Socialist Party.

Q: A leftist nationalistic party?

FLACK: Yes, that is right. They were making all sorts of noise on the left and were becoming more and more powerful and disruptive. There were a lot of demonstration when we were there during those years on the various anniversaries of some student that was killed, etc. During the time that I was there, there was not any assassinations of U.S. officials, but just before I arrived there had been.

Q: The station chief was killed in 1974, I believe. And then there was another assassination of a navy captain.

FLACK: Exactly. So, while I was there, there was a great deal of security and a great deal of concern especially on the part of the agency people. I remember the station chief being extremely concerned about her safety. We were all told to be very careful and the security office was very active. That was the time also of package and letter bombs. I can remember one that was received by the embassy and having the Marines set it in the back parking lot to blow it up. They didn't realize how powerful it was and one of them got injured because he was too close. So, it was a time when there was a lot of anti American political activity. We had to put up with quite a bit then.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

FLACK: When I first arrived it was Jack Kubisch and Hawk Mills was just coming in as DCM, who I had known before when I was in Athens. And then Bob McCloskey came in towards the

end of my period.

Q: Was Kubisch involved in commercial affairs?

FLACK: Very little. Neither was McCloskey, although McCloskey at one point upon receiving one of those letters that I referred to earlier from the Secretary saying he was the chief commercial officer in the embassy, sent it to me with an attached note saying he had just taken my job. Neither of them were particularly active or interested except in a general way. They knew it was important and interested in it but they had far more pressing political problems with all that was going on with Cyprus, NATO, Greece, our bases, etc.

Q: Before we turn to the commercial side, what about Cyprus? There had been a coup in Cyprus where the Greeks tried to take over Cyprus in July, 1974. The Turks responded by an invasion and Cyprus of divided, where it remains today. Was this something that was brought up quite often?

FLACK: Constantly. The Greeks blamed the United States, and I must say in my view I agree with them, for the situation in Cyprus then and today, of the divided island. I agree with them in the following way. Had we wanted to stop the Turks we could have. Kissinger once said, when confronted by the question of why didn't he use American military force to stop that invasion - you remember the timing of this, it was in the summer of 1974 - "I was very busy in Washington. We were undergoing the worse constitutional crisis in our history." It was almost like saying, "I had my mind on other things." Joe Sisco, the under secretary for political affairs, was the guy who was making these decisions and I know Joe pretty well and he is kind of defensive about this. Obviously, if he had been able to have the Secretary's and the President's full attention on this, they could have stopped it, but they didn't. The result was the Turkish invasion and the division of the island and the country.

Q: We had stopped a similar Turkish invasion before. In all respect I think one has to point out that the Greeks brought this on themselves.

FLACK: I would agree with that, but only partly.

Q: We were once more supposed to pull their chestnuts out of the fire.

FLACK: I think if we had taken a longer term view of the potential problems resulting from this invasion, we would have seen that we should have stopped it and I think we could have at the time. Whatever the merits on each side of the case, the Greeks obviously had that ax to grind and I don't think I ever had a conversation with any Greek on political affairs where they didn't bring this up saying, "You are fully responsible for the ruin of Cyprus. It is your fault." And then, Americans usually, as you just did, take one step back and say, "Yes, but you were responsible for the problem in the first place." At that point they would argue that as well.

Q: Well, I don't know. I found after my four years in Greece I was a little tired of everything that happened.

FLACK: Yes, everything that went wrong in Greece the Greeks blamed America for and they

always assumed that we had unlimited power in terms of running things. If something went wrong internally in Greece it was our fault. It was CIA's fault because the CIA is really running the country. Of course, that was not really true. That is sort of a generic problem I have seen around the world. Most of the countries we deal with think we can control more than we can.

Q: I think so too, particularly when you move into the smaller countries and the more Middle East ones, which I consider Greece to be. We had base negotiations going on. Kubisch was very much involved with those. It looked like there was a chance we might not have them. This was NATO bases too. Did you find a feeling among your Greek contacts that American should just get out?

FLACK: No, I don't think so. Most of the people I knew were critical of the United States in many ways but they also recognized that without the United States presence there they would be in real trouble, especially with Turkey.

Q: The alternative, of course, was if we had to abandon our bases in Greece, we would have moved our bases to Turkey.

FLACK: Yes, and, of course, that is why we have gotten into this relationship over the years where we have had to balance our relationship with Greece and Turkey with this ratio of seven to ten in terms of military assistance, etc. We have had to do this in order to keep the Greeks in line.

Q: Turning to the commercial side, what was your main emphasis?

FLACK: Well, again, a wide range of the traditional commercial activities. Everything from trade investment promotion to the local trade reports on local business and making the contacts in the business community and the government. I must say I always believed that commercial officers abroad have the potential for having the most complete set of contacts in any given country because we work with government, the private sector and the American business community. The political officers and military officers have their own special areas and don't have this interface with the business community that the commercial officers do. We get a very different view sometimes of what is going on and how people feel. In the case of Greece the business community was conservative and pro-American, far more than the foreign ministry which was center, center-left and much less pro-American. So, I think the commercial officers get a slightly more balanced view of where a country stands than political officers.

Q: There is a large Greek American community in the United States which packs a lot of power politically. Much of this community is in the professions and business. Did you find Greek American interest of concern about commerce in Greece.

FLACK: Very much so. There was a lot of Greek American businessmen who were doing business with Greece and came to Greece regularly. Some of them lived in Greece and had dual nationality. It was not unusual for us to take a call from an American businessman who was coming to Greece and discover he had a Greek name. It was a great advantage for a businessman to come in and be accepted like that because they were really considered to be Greek Americans, and not American Greeks.

Q: What were American commercial opportunities in Greece?

FLACK: Back then it was really across the board. The economy was doing pretty well. The main concern was the entrance or hopeful entrance of Greece into the EC. It was more or less decided upon while I was there and the time tables were set. But, there was a great deal of wondering if this was really the right thing and was it truly possible. I had a Peugeot and people in the gas station would say that it was a real nice car and “when we are in the Common Market I will be able to buy one of these,” meaning that prices will be cheaper because they were more expensive in Greece than they were in France. There were a lot of these misunderstandings that somehow their membership in the Common Market was going to solve all their problems and life would become easy. There was a lot of this unhealthy thinking. So, we did a lot of work trying to look at the Greek market and how it would change as it went into the EC in terms of opportunities for U.S. firms.

Q: How did it look?

FLACK: It looked pretty good. It looked better than it turned out to be in retrospect, as I look at it now. I think I had a little bit of localist while I was there, I spoke Greek, had lots of Greek friends and began to think of Greece as the potential California of Europe. The place had really, really exploded and become a wonderful market. Actually I still believe that is possible, if there were enormous changes in the country, which probably are not possible. But, there is a terrific potential. They have a lot of things going for them, except maybe the entrenched and corrupt bureaucracy.

Q: To me, one of the remarkable things when I ran the consular section would be to see essentially peasants coming in and getting visas. These people seemed to be the most unpromising material just looking at them, and then seeing what their cousins and others have done in the United States in a very short time. One always thinks of the Greek countryside where the men sit around in cafes drinking coffee while their wives are out tilling the fields, and yet when they hit the United States they hit it running. So, there is something buried in the Greek that doesn't seem to come out much in Greece.

FLACK: Another example of that. I remember we had a rich Greek American who was donating a very expensive piece of medical equipment to one of the hospitals and he came to talk to me about it. He was said, “I’m a Greek American, I was born in the United States, but I feel strongly about Greece and want to help these people, but I am wondering why wealthy Greeks are not doing what I am doing.” I couldn’t answer other than it is just not done. A wealthy Greek does not give an expensive piece of equipment as a charity thing to a local hospital. He thinks that is the government’s job. That is why he pays taxes. So, there is something different about the American mentality and when they get over here they think differently and it showed right there.

Q: There really doesn't seem to be much of a public service effort there.

FLACK: No, as there is in many European countries, I must say, where there is a tradition in the last fifty years or a very strong semi-socialist, if not socialist state, these people all say that is

why they pay taxes. I don't need to help the poor, that is what I pay taxes for.

Q: How about the bureaucracy as far as getting things in and people doing business?

FLACK: I don't think I have ever worked where from a business point of view it is more difficult. There you did have to get into paying people off. I never did, but I know businessmen who did it on a regular basis. If you want something to move through the port you go down with a lot of cash and pay the right people and it will get through. Everything is just a question of money. A friend of mine who was a Greek American who inherited a very nice apartment was trying to pay off the taxes on it and they had levied an enormous tax on it which he said was totally unfair. He said his lawyer and the head of the tax office actually came to see him and laid it out on the table explaining what he had to do. He could pay them this much and they will lower it or they will have to pay the full amount. He gasped and said that it was illegal. They said that was the way they did it there. In the end he paid less than the stated taxes but it was a payoff to the lawyer and tax man. I would say, "Well, the press will pick up on something like this." He said, "No, because they know that is the way things are done."

Q: I have never seen so much illegal house building and poor management even when I was there under the colonels. I thought at least they could do something, but no.

FLACK: They don't see a lot of this type of activity and behavior as being corrupt. They think that is the way it has always been done and therefore we are going to continue doing so. It is an enormous problem in Europe. As we all know, Greece right now is the least economically stable member of the Economic Union and is out of the question to belong to the monetary union. It is basically because of this system. They have been unable to reform it and make it a modern, functioning bureaucracy that is not corrupt in our sense.

Q: Were there any events that you would like to talk about that occurred during your tour in Greece?

FLACK: I had a lot of visits from U.S. state trade people. This was during a time when a lot of American states individually developed their own trade promotion offices for export, so we would have the governor of Florida coming with a trade mission of Florida's biggest firms. And, of course there were congressional visits, the CODELs.

Q: Well, Greek money was next to importance to Jewish money at that stage and probably more deeply spread about the States.

FLACK: I must say the CODELs that I was involved in there were very helpful in a sense. The Greeks loved CODELs because they loved to butter them up. They would always start out the opening remarks with, "We are so thankful of what the United States did for us after World War II, USAID, etc." They would go through this long litany of wonderful things to make the congressmen feel real good about being there. Then they would get down to the issues at hand which very often were things that we didn't agree on but the congressmen would feel less inclined to be contentious about it because they had just been buttered up.

Q: How effective did you find the state delegations?

FLACK: Pretty good. They varied of course. I remember ones from Florida, Illinois and New York that were very good. Some of the state operations are very effective in organizing their companies that are interested in exports or doing more exports if already exporting and to promote the state through their own offices. In some cases there were cities or port authorities that had their own exporting promotion offices.

Q: You arrived there and the Carter Administration came in shortly after you arrived. Did you find change of emphasis at all on your kind of work?

FLACK: Well, yes, I think, because the out going administration had been the Republican administration that the Greeks blamed Cyprus for, there was a hope that this would be a breath of fresh air. That American policies would be more friendly to Greece and less friendly to Turkey. I think there was a feeling of an ending of a certain period and the turning of a page and that maybe after this things would get better. I am not so sure that they did, but this was a time when there was a hope that there would be better relations.

Q: Was this a period when the troubles in Lebanon were beginning to shift American business centralized offices to Athens?

FLACK: Yes. One of the big things that we were working on was the arrival of regional offices of U.S. firms from Lebanon to Athens. The Greeks played this up very well. They recognized what was happening and they did their best to facilitate these new firms coming in that had regional offices handling Middle Eastern business. Beirut was going down the drain and Athens was rising. I must say they didn't do a good enough job of it. They could have been really a regional center. Although they did a considerable amount of facilitating for these people, they didn't do enough. Again it was a question of the entrenched and inefficient and corrupt bureaucracy that eventually slowed things down. Other firms were going to Rome, Cairo, Paris and Brussels. The logical place, it seemed to me at the time, was Athens because of its location, but their communications were not quite up to speed and the bureaucratic hassles were considerable. But, they were trying very hard then and a lot of firms did establish regional offices.

Q: Did the taking in of our embassy in Tehran and the hostage situation in Iran have any affect on our operations in Athens?

FLACK: Not directly on operations, but it certainly was a time when it was difficult for everybody in the Foreign Service. I remember it as a very trying time, but I don't recall that it had any specific affect on our relations. Everybody was sympathetic, all of our diplomatic colleagues, of course, and the Greeks, but there was nothing specifically that affected our situation, except in Greek security.

Q: Did you, yourself, feel any problem with terrorism in Athens?

FLACK: I never personally had any problems but we certainly felt it in the sense that we were

constantly being given guidelines to bring home and make sure that nobody accepted packages and you checked your car in the morning to make sure there wasn't a bomb in it and you varied your route to work, the usual things. We were simply more careful than we had been before. Luckily during the period that I was there we did not have any major incidents.

Q: You left Athens in 1980, where did you go?

FLACK: Back here to Washington, to the National Defense University and then on to an assignment to work for the Under Secretary for Management on a very special project.

ROBERT J. MCCLOSKEY
Ambassador
Greece (1978-1981)

Ambassador Robert J. McCloskey was born in Pennsylvania in 1922. He served in Hong Kong, as spokesman for the Department of State, and as ambassador to Cyprus, the Netherlands and Greece. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: Then I would like to move to your assignment as ambassador to Greece. This was in 1978. Having touched the Cyprus issue, why you would want to indulge in masochism by going to Greece, I have a question. How did that come about?

MCCLOSKEY: I had said to a couple of people in Washington who asked me, that I was looking forward to an embassy with larger, heavier responsibilities. And Bill Schauffele, who had been assistant secretary for African affairs was nominated to go to go to Athens. At his hearing some confusion in an exchange with Senator Joe Biden developed, and the Greek press ran this up in a quite distorted fashion. The subject was the Aegean and sovereignty over islands in the Aegean.

I was unaware of all of this, sitting, minding my own business in The Hague. But it got to a point where the Secretary of State, and presumably, the President said to themselves, it would be unfair to have Bill go to Athens. There are other ways to look at this question, as I am sure you would appreciate. In any case, it was off, and I knew nothing about this until I read in the International Herald Tribune that I was going to be nominated to go to Athens.

Q: Such is the instant communications of the Department of State.

MCCLOSKEY: I think it was three days later someone telephoned me and asked me if this was something I would want to do. I said all the right things about it's not the right way to communicate and I would think it over. I ultimately said yes, and then arranged to come to Washington to have a hearing and all of that.

Then something new entered the picture that I again was not aware of. Phil Habib was under doctor's orders to leave the under secretary for political affairs job. Evidently he had

recommended that I, instead of going to Athens, come back into that job. I was unaware of any of this until I reached the United States, when I was in Philadelphia on route, and I was asked to hurry up and get down here. They wanted to talk to me, and I did get here. Before I even saw the Secretary of State I was called by Henry Kissinger who was somewhere, I think, in Mexico. He wanted me to know that he had -- whether he had been asked to make a recommendation or just made his own recommendation, I am not sure that I recall, if I knew.

In any case Cy Vance raised it with me when I saw him. I said, of course, I'll be interested in that, it's a senior position held by a career person. I was asked did I have any ideas as to how it should be run, and what level of influence it should have. I remember, very well, emphasizing that one of the responsibilities it seemed to me that job had, inherently, was to look after the interest of the career Foreign Service.

Then he said that he wanted to talk to me about Greece. It had happened that he had just been there. Because Athens was, I guess, without an ambassador, for something like six or seven months. The Agrément had already been asked for and given, so that was well along and did I have a date for a hearing, and I said, "Yes, I have a date for a hearing." He said, "Well, I want to think all this over." I said, "You better let me know, because I can't change the date of the hearing. In fact, I pushed them to get me on this week." Because at the other end, I had already gotten an appointment to say farewell to the queen. That couldn't be changed.

As it turned out, he wanted to speak with David Newsom, whom he hadn't met. Out of that, the job, then, was offered to Newsom, and I was asked to go to Greece. I gladly went. I had my hearing, but I didn't even stay to be sworn in. I may be the only ambassador who was sworn in by a vice consul. When I learned that could be done under the regulations, I said I'm going to have to hurry back to The Hague. I had a young FSO-6 swear me in, and that was very fun, and so off I went, happily.

Q: When did you go to Greece?

MCCLOSKEY: I arrived in March of 1978.

Q: What were the principal issues that you faced at that time?

MCCLOSKEY: Trying to have Greece re-integrated into NATO was the most critical one. Because it foolishly withdrew itself, earlier on, out of anger, frustration. That was a principal subject. The status of the bases was always there, which, in turn, meant levels of military assistance from the United States was an issue.

It was during this period that the Greeks got themselves worked into this so-called seven-to-ten formula, which orders that Greece should receive seven dollars of military assistance for every ten dollars that Turkey receives. I tried vainly, and without success, to persuade the Greeks that this is foolish and could end up being a disservice to you at some point. You don't persuade Greeks very easily on any number of questions.

There were other matters that, I guess I'd would have to say, I put on the agenda. I felt that too

much of the U.S.-Greece relationship was identified with the military issues. The status of the bases, and the levels of military assistance. While it wasn't a part of it, there was some connection, in many Greek minds, with the U.S. role in Greece historically, which I thought was the heaviest baggage that we all had to carry, and I think is still the case.

There was a time when nothing happened in Greece that the United States didn't either direct or have a hand in. We had American ambassadors there who behaved like viceroys in the country. We had American officers assigned to various government departments in the Greek government. Most Greeks simply accept that nothing happens there that the United States doesn't have the responsibility for, and surely, nothing that they perceive to be negative to their own interest happens that the U.S. doesn't have something to do with.

Opponents of the Junta are quite convinced that it was the United States that brought the Junta to power. They are quite convinced that it was the United States behind the Junta that overthrew Makarios in favor of the Turks on Cyprus. That begets all kinds of dreads and fears that affect the Greek psyche. We have ourselves to blame for it, for this unfortunate earlier period. Now it must be said that without U.S. help, Greece probably may not have gotten off its knees in the late 1940s after World War II, and as a result of its own civil war. I've always felt that we just didn't understand when it was time to let go of the levers of power, and that we were going to have to be more strict with the Greeks in the responsibility for foreign aid, when you still had foreign economic programs there. You don't have them now. And that the time would come when we were going to have to make a virtue of non-interference. I spent many, many hours arguing, I'm afraid, fruitlessly, with many Greeks about what the United States did not do. I had long meetings with Papandreou, who didn't come into power until after I --

Q: *This is Andreas Papandreou.*

MCCLOSKEY: Andreas, but he was the leader of the Pasok.

Q: *Was it the Pan Hellenic Socialist Union?*

MCCLOSKEY: Socialist union.

Q: *Socialist union, yes.*

MCCLOSKEY: When I got to Greece, the American embassy had a policy of having no contact with Papandreou or Pasok, and somehow or another had made virtue of this. I said, "I just don't think this makes a hell of a lot of sense. It's one thing that you disagree with the guy. You may not like him or his party, but it is the principal opposition, and I am going to go and see him."

So that made a number of people uncomfortable, but I did. He used it to his own advantage. I used to have these conversations with him, particularly after he would have said something egregious about the United States and Cyprus. I said to him, "There is nothing about Cyprus in this recent period that I don't know. I was either there or at the other end during the crisis. There are some things I will admit to you that I don't know about the 1967 period and the Junta taking power here. But I assure you I have tried to read everything available so that I can understand it.

But when I tell you something about Cyprus, please take it to be the truth, varnished or unvarnished. I will, at the same time, question everything you say about the Junta period and all of that."

I went out of my way to see him and to establish contact with him where I would see him from time to time. I encouraged my wife to visit his wife as she did. I thought that whatever the issues, there was no reason not to have some civilized discourse with the man. Well, he later became Prime Minister, and he is still Prime Minister. I had the funny sense that we had some peculiar notions about how to conduct our relations with Greece.

Q: *It does.*

MCCLOSKEY: You were there before me.

Q: *Well, I was there before, and it was very much a dog in the manger. We don't talk to this. Somehow I have the feeling that we became almost Greek in our attitude. We had too many old hands. We had too many Greek Americans. My predecessor had been a Greek American, who, as a consul general, wouldn't deal with the communist problem. They were all damned to hell. Well, we had a law which allowed differentiation. He would not make it. This is a problem.*

MCCLOSKEY: It's a serious problem, and I don't know whether I should put this on the record or not -- turn it off for the moment. [Tape recorder turned off]

Q: *What do you think was the motivation behind Papandreou? He had been studied in the United States. Actually, we saved his life at the time of the '67 coup.*

MCCLOSKEY: There is a telegram I have seen that Phil Talbot sent back the day after Papandreou was released from prison. He was imprisoned by the Junta. I'm a little vague on how long, but his wife has written about this, and others have written about it. Various people, I know, raised this high up in the U.S. government as with Lyndon Johnson. A number of imminent Americans intervened. In any case, he was finally released. He saw Talbot, evidently, the day after that. The telegram begins by attributing to Papandreou his, something like, everlasting gratitude.

Yet here is a man who made capital and still does on anti-American issues, more of which are fabricated than real. The current problem he has with embezzlement by a man who came from the United States and took over the bank of Crete and other enterprises. The stories are that the party, if not the Prime Minister, has benefited from all of this. Papandreou has now denounced as an American CIA plot against him, personally, and his party in a period just before elections, which are to occur again this year. You're getting to the heart of a very troubling question here, and it is an anti-Americanism in Greece that is profoundly disturbing to me.

Q: *It's always been there, I think. It used to be anti-British, and when the British pulled out, we took it. This is, at least, my impression.*

MCCLOSKEY: You're not far off, at all. There is still enough of it there, that we ought to be

concerned about. Our diplomats should be very scrupulous about how they conduct themselves in Greece. There is a way to serve American interest very easily and appropriately, and to maintain good relations with Greeks and Greek government while you're doing it. That, I think, makes imminent good sense. I don't know how this latent anti-Americanism is going to be overcome, except that we will simply have to demonstrate that we are not manipulating Greece.

Q: Did Papandreou really believe this, or was this purely a way that he kept in power? Did he talk one way to you, and one way to the outside?

MCCLOSKEY: Yes, parenthesis, yes.

Q: Let me ask a question, again, it's one I asked myself when I was there. How important did you find -- the bases issue was obviously, a major issue -- but talking about dealing with a difficult group with the American military, were you able to get satisfactory answers that these bases, particularly three, the one in Neamakri, which is naval communications, the one at Athens airport, and then the one on Crete, that these were really essential. They are a burr under our saddle, in NATO relations and everything else, particularly with the Greeks.

MCCLOSKEY: You don't get what I would accept as an honest answer. You have to take into account a military mind set that says you've got to have redundancies. If the helicopter doesn't work, then you need to have a back up. It's an ingrained mind-set among military, at least ours, and perhaps all military.

I once came back for consultation, and at the urging and insistence of the desk in the State Department, agreed to go and meet with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This was in 1980 and we were going to resume the base negotiations in September, and I would carry back our first draft to present to the Greek government. I tried to convince the Joint Chiefs, that day, that it would be in our interest to have a study undertaken to answer this very question. Which of these facilities are vital to us any longer, because they are becoming an awful burden to carry. We have incidents of one kind or another directed against U.S. military there. While I was speaking, the Chief of Naval Operations dozed off. I'll leave my ego aside. I just walked out of the room infuriated, knowing that no such thing would ever be done. The Air Force chief, at the time, began to argue against it right in the room. I knew it was a hopeless case. As for the military that are with you on assignment, they justify their own assignment.

Q: You looked at it hard, and you were not convinced that these were as essential as they said?

MCCLOSKEY: Allowing that I don't understand every bit of technical wizardry that is performed at these places. I went to all of them more than once. I would test my own instincts against others of my country team. I was quite convinced that we certainly didn't need all that we had there, and we were simply asking for more trouble.

Indeed, I was hopeful, at one time, of at least having the main entrance to the base moved off the highway. A couple of things had happened. One I remember, the station had given me information that there were photographs being made of the entrance by what I was told were Libyans, who had made their way into Athens. There were always little dust-ups outside that

gate of one kind or another.

Q: *This is the one by the main airport?*

MCCLOSKEY: Yes, and the entrance is right on the main highway. But from a small thing like that, and I had some discussion of that during the negotiation which we finally got to. Which, then, the Greek government suspended because we couldn't, well that's another long story. Perhaps, I should say something about it here?

Q: *Would you please?*

MCCLOSKEY: The negotiation that I undertook in September of 1980 was a continuation of a negotiation that had not been completed in 1976, in which the United States had agreed to take certain steps by way of making an agreement at that time.

The draft text that I took back then to reopen the negotiations in 1980 had written into it efforts to recapture some things that were agreed to be given up in the earlier round, that finished in 1976. I could see that we were heading for trouble right away because the other side, the Greek side, kept reminding me. But these are issues that were already agreed to by your side in the previous negotiation. I knew that, at the center of things, we were not going to be able to satisfy the Greek desire for the kind of military equipment and the amounts of money it wanted under FMS terms.

Q: *FMS being?*

MCCLOSKEY: Foreign military sales. We were not going to be able to reach up to where they were setting their sites, and that would be the heart of the agreement. We were only going to aggravate the thing by trying to recall concessions we had made, for example, the role of the senior American official at the Herakleion air base. Was the senior official at the base the Greek commander or the American commander? We had said in the earlier negotiation that it should be the Greek commander. Suddenly, things like that we were trying to take back. So I think the negotiation was fated to have serious difficulty from the beginning.

In any case, what they were asking for in terms of military equipment and money was out of reach for the United States. I think, however, we did not give it our best shot. I was continually told that I couldn't offer another formulation. That this couldn't be done. This was a period of great austerity, and we were in base negotiations in various places around the world. I didn't have to be reminded of things like that, having done a successful negotiation with Spain just a couple of years before this.

Then it got even a bit tawdry toward the end when I was given a telephone call, and told that I could offer the Greek government X number of F-5 aircraft, and X quantity of spare parts. I found myself running out to the minister of defense's house in the middle of the night with my own handwriting of these items on a slip of paper. All of which was too little, too late, and the negotiation was never taken seriously enough in Washington. So when you hear a Greek, as you often will, say that we're taken for granted, I think there was some of that behind this negotiation

that forecast it was not going to succeed.

Q: Well, my last post abroad was consul general in Naples, and I used to talk to the commander-in-chief of NATO south, who at that time was Admiral.

MCCLOSKEY: Did you go there after, what's his name?

Q: William Crowe.

MCCLOSKEY: William Crowe. Well, I was over there when he was there.

Q: I talked to Admiral Crowe and asked him, because of my Greek experience, what role do Greeks play in NATO. I got a big shrug, and he said I spend most of my time trying to balance the Turks and the Greeks. Where the Turks seem to be willing to give it a try -- they realize they have a potential Soviet enemy. The Greeks seem to use this strictly as a way to get at the Turks. Did you feel that they were really interested in NATO per se, or was this just an instrument? Did they feel there was a Soviet threat?

MCCLOSKEY: Nationally, I would have to say, they really weren't all that interested. Now, if you speak about the military and the government, they were very much interested, provided they could reintegrate into NATO on their terms.

Q: How did that play out while you were there, the reintegration?

MCCLOSKEY: It finally worked. The deed was done. Bernard Rogers succeeded out Haig.

Q: Yes, he was the general in charge of NATO.

MCCLOSKEY: There is a man, I cannot think of, a U.S. Army colonel, who I think was quite instrumental in finding the formula, which is a rather convoluted one, that I am afraid that I can't even repeat from memory here, that assured that Greece would return to the military command.

Q: This type of negotiation ended up more on the military side, rather than the ambassadorial side.

MCCLOSKEY: Yes.

Q: Well, I've kept you a long time, but just a couple of other quick questions. How did you find the embassy staff?

MCCLOSKEY: By and large, first rate, very strong political section, very good economic section. The station under its leadership at that time, quite good, every now and then, I would have to say whoa, not too much. The very large Greek staff was something I had to give a lot of attention and time to. They had many grievances. We did our best with them. There is something in the Greek's psyche, you know: but what will you do for me tomorrow? It wasn't a matter that I felt the ambassador could stay out of, and to meet with them, hear them out, go as far as I felt I

could, and tell them that was as much as we could do. You never satisfied them.

Q: How did the Iranian hostage crisis, you were there, that must have had repercussions on you all, because you were pretty close to the situation?

MCCLOSKEY: Yes, some of the first people who came out, came into Athens, Bill Sullivan's wife came and stayed with us. Then, when the big day came, that is to say, on U.S. inauguration day, 1981, they were all flown into Athens. So I was the first one to have any contact with them after they had left Tehran. We let it be known up and down the line that Athens was ready and able to give any aid and comfort to Americans who had made their way out of Iran. From time to time, people came in, stayed with one or another of the embassy staff, either on their way home or prior to going back into Tehran, before the big kidnaping.

Q: How about terrorism? The Greek government, even into the colonels, had a very ambiguous role. They were just almost acquiesced to terrorist acts, as long as it didn't involve Greeks.

MCCLOSKEY: I try to give them some benefit of the doubt here, to the extent that terrorism is fairly, or unfairly, associated with the Arab world, where hijackings began and so on. Before the European gangs got involved about it, Meinhof, and the people in Italy and so on. The Greeks make much of this historic relationship, they call it, with the Arab world. There is something of a certain schizophrenia, I think, in Greeks, where there is one part of them that says they want to be Western, we're European, there is something else there, that says we are, in effect, part of the Orient. We look a lot like some of these people and all of that, but I don't want to overdo it. But I do in terms of benefit of the doubt, they do lean over backwards where Arab issues are concerned and perhaps even more so in the current government.

They, I think, even until today, have not given full diplomatic recognition to Israel. So the man who is there as my counter part is not recognized as the Israeli ambassador. This is galling, but it was even the case in the conservative government of Karmanlis. I think it has something to do with these earlier antecedents which the Greeks see as more important to them, that is, their relationships in the Arab world. Terrorism, as such, was not a big issue when I was there. True, what's Welch's first name?

Q: I can't remember, he was the station chief killed in 1974.

MCCLOSKEY: He was killed by terrorists, who have never been apprehended, and whether that says something about the effectiveness of Greek police, or the impossibility of laying hand to whoever was responsible. However, since then, we have had at least two other Americans assassinated, military officers, again no one as far as I know apprehended. The Greeks are simply not the Israelis. They probably don't cope with this as well as some others, but then nobody is coping with it all that well. There is no way to guarantee against an assassination or almost any other kind of a terrorist act, provided the terrorists are prepared to wait, and scheme it all out. You can get away with almost anything.

Q: Before leaving this subject, how did you evaluate Clerides as the Greek leader whom you dealt with at the time?

MCCLOSKEY: Someone who has a deserved reputation for leadership and all that the democratic process carries with it, but I'm afraid whose time was passing. Not when he first came back in '74, because you were there, he was hailed. He was the right man at the right time, but looked at hard, politically, he was stifling his own party, by preventing younger blood from coming up into leadership positions. I say that with some affection for the man, but, I think, that's just the plain fact, and the party has not prospered, I think, in part because of that.

Q: You left when?

MCCLOSKEY: In the summer of 1981.

GREGORY L. MATTSON
Political Counselor
Athens (1979-1983)

Mr. Mattson was born in about 1940 and graduated from Georgetown University. He served in numerous posts including Lisbon, Nairobi, Seychelles, Athens and Copenhagen. He was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 2000.

MATTSON: Yes. So we left in August of 1979. I also needed some labor training because I was also going to be doing the labor work in the political section.

Q: And so there you were a political officer, a labor reporting officer. The political section had about four officers.

MATTSON: We had maybe five officers at that time. I was one of the two most junior officers in the section. In addition to labor work I was also doing most of the domestic political reporting, which in a place like Athens is very interesting indeed, because even more than now, there were many parties and many strong personalities within the parties and factions within the parties. The American embassy in Greece during that period had a very high profile. Because Greeks wanted to talk to American diplomats and were very loquacious, you had a field day really in terms of opportunities for political reporting and analysis.

Q: This was only five years or so after democracy returned to Greece and political party life was really active and engaged. The New Democracy party was in power, PASOK, the socialist party, was in opposition. You had contacts with all parties, or did you specialize in one?

MATTSON: I had contacts in all of the parties except for the Communists. Contact with the Greek Communist Party was initiated during my second tour as political counselor in 1986. The Communist Party didn't want to have any dealings with us either. But there was a hard-right party, the National Camp, I believe it was called: Ethniki Parataksi. Then there were the New Democracy and PASOK, and those were the two parties with which we had the greatest contact. There was no difficulty having plenty of contacts on the far right or with New Democracy;

PASOK was more difficult. Again, they were at that point fairly fiercely anti-American. Papandreou throughout the period after the coup and when he was in exile and then leader of PASOK, which, by the way, considered itself as PAK, a liberation movement during that junta period, was quite determinedly anti-American. And since it was a party which was highly disciplined, it was very difficult for PASOK members to have relations with the U.S. embassy and keep their standing within the party.

Q: We'll have to be sure to talk about that a little further, because they did come to power while you were there that first tour, and we need to talk a little bit later about how things changed. I know that they did. But let's just sort of set the scene a little bit further. Who was the political counselor, and who were the ambassador and DCM?

MATTSON: The ambassador was Robert McCloskey, former spokesman of the State Department. The DCM was Hawk Mills. Hawk Mills very briefly for a couple of months because he left toward the end of 1979. The political counselor was Charles McCaskill, who had previously been in Cyprus and also in Greece. He was a true philhellene, very interested in Greece.

Q: Had strong language skills.

MATTSON: He did indeed. He had strong language skills. We had quite a dynamic section. My predecessor was the now deceased Towny (Townsend) Friedman. In fact, the irony was that I replaced him twice in Athens, during my first assignment and then as political counselor for my second assignment. And he was, I must say, a very hard act to follow. He was a very capable officer, a gifted writer. We had a very strong section and we worked quite hard, because that was a period where you could see that New Democracy was beginning to lose its luster and its grip. Karamanlis, who had come back to lead the party in 1974, was no longer prime minister; it was George Rallis. Rallis was an uncharismatic figure, and struck many as a sort of place holder. At the same time we saw surging support for the very charismatic Andreas Papandreou. So you could see that, if it wasn't going to be in the 1981 election that PASOK would come to power, they were on the right path to come into power. New Democracy was basically trying to hold on, but you could sense that their time was about to expire, at least temporarily.

Q: Karamanlis by then had been elected president?

MATTSON: Karamanlis at that point had been elected president. No, let me see. That might have come a little later. Constantine Tsatsos was the first president of the Greek Republic after the abolition of the monarchy in the referendum of 1975, and I'm not sure exactly when his term ended and when Karamanlis' began. There might have been a short interval before Karamanlis became president - I've just forgotten when that was. But, of course, he was moving toward the presidency. George Rallis had been one of his loyal lieutenants over the years; he had been foreign minister. We had had very good relations with him. But, as I say, he was not very charismatic, and charisma counts for a lot in Greek politics.

Q: Why don't you talk a little bit more about relations with the United States. There was another political officer who handled the external dimension in relations with the United States, with

Europe and so on. Why don't you talk a little bit about the work you were doing and how it fit within that framework?

MATTSON: We were, of course, still in a period where there were continuous articles in the newspapers accusing the United States of having been an active supporter of the junta, the colonels' regime, which ruled from '67 to '74. Even more topically and intensely, there was a tremendous amount of criticism of the United States policy during the period of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. So those were two problems that we had in the background in all of our dealings with Greeks, officially and unofficially. U.S.-Greek relations were also very often a function of how Greeks perceived U.S.-Turkish relations. To the extent that our relations with Turkey were seen to be warm, our relations with Greece were correspondingly not very good. All of this revolved, of course, around the issues of Cyprus; but also, after 1974 and the invasion of Cyprus, the Greeks militarized their islands in the eastern Aegean, the Turks formed the Army of the Aegean based in Izmir, and there was a steady tension over rival claims in the Aegean as well. We had a very delicate balance to maintain. Additionally, Greek-Turkish relations within NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) were very strained. So we were basically trying to maintain our access to four major military facilities in Greece. We had Hellenikon Airport in Athens; we had Iraklion, which is a very important communications listening site on Crete; also on Crete we had Souda Bay, which had one of the best deep-water ports in the Mediterranean, and Nea Makri, a naval communication facility near Marathon.

Q: There was a separate officer, I think not part of the political section, that handled political-military relations. Is that correct?

MATTSON: That's correct, yes. And during the time that we were on that first tour Mort Dworkin, who is currently political counselor in London, held the job. But that was a separate section which dealt principally with the department within the foreign ministry that handled relations with the American bases. Those were quite difficult. Also, I guess, in terms of the atmospherics it's worth mentioning that during that period, from '74 and the restoration of democracy in Greece and the invasion of Cyprus until 1979, you had a series of anti-American acts being committed. The first that springs to mind is fire-bombings of American vehicles. These would be perpetrated by various leftist and anti-American groups. In the period from '75 to '79, something like 800 vehicles, a huge number, were firebombed, almost always in the middle of the night. I actually found an unexploded firebomb under my own car. I was the first one, the only one - an interesting little sidebar - to have actually discovered one of these devices before it went off, and that was, by the way, a fluke. That was in 1981 during the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon. We were living in the Athens suburb of Psychico. My two cars were parked on the street. Our kids wanted to go bowling one Sunday night in June, and so we took the car which was behind the other and went down to the bowling alley only to discover that it was closed, and came right back. As we drove behind the parked car which was left there, one of my kids asked, "What's that under the car?" It turned out to be a toaster-sized device that turned out to be a bomb. It was a firebomb set to go off earlier than most; it was set to go off at about 11 PM. In fact, it did go off at 11 PM, and that's really part of the story as well. Because all of the previous fire-bombings had been successful, the next day an article appeared in the newspaper in which a leftist group claimed responsibility for the firebombing of two vehicles of an American diplomat to protest the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Of course, the two cars being parked together

when this fellow put the device down meant that he figured both cars would be destroyed. Anyway, I called the RSO (Regional Security Officer). The Greek bomb squad arrived and removed the car from its place. It was an interesting device. It was, again, toaster sized with a little watch and wires hanging out of it, a very crude device. Before we knew it, the cars having just been moved away, it actually detonated and went into a fireball, the flames reaching probably about 15 or 20 feet in the air and staying at about 10 feet for about 10 minutes. It had a lot of gelatinous flammable material. Unfortunately, they didn't get to learn very much about this device except perhaps how much fire it was able to produce. Of course, November 17, not the fire-bombers, were our major concern since it was a lethal force.

Q: The significance of the date of November 17, I think, was the date of a large demonstration that was put down during the junta period.

MATTSON: Exactly. On November 17, 1973, during a period when the Polytechnic University in Athens had been occupied by students, the junta decided that they had to put down this student uprising and moved into the university area with tanks. The number of casualties is uncertain, perhaps five to eight students killed. It became a significant date in modern Greek history. Less than a year later in the aftermath of the Cyprus invasion, the Greek junta fell. November 17 became an informal day of commemoration throughout the early period after democracy was restored. Even by 1979, November 17, 1979, I remember I was in the embassy and observed a march-by of the embassy by various leftist groups and others who were critical of the U.S. stance vis-à-vis both the junta and Cyprus. The crowd was estimated that year, six years after the event and five years after the restoration of democracy, at 300,000 plus people. It took almost all night for them to pass by.

Q: Just perhaps to correct one date, I think it was 1982, not '81, when at least the massive Israeli invasion of Lebanon took place all the way into Beirut.

MATTSON: Okay, then the bombing would have been in '82, because we were living in that house from '80 to '83, so that could well be the case. It was in June?

Q: Well, it began in June.

MATTSON: So it was June of '82, not '81.

Q: Let's talk just a little bit more about what you're just talking about. To what extent did this very real insecurity that you and all the others in the embassy had to live with, to what extent did that affect your work, your ability to have contacts, your ability to move around freely? Did you have to take all sorts of security precautions that made it very difficult?

MATTSON: I would say, yes, there were some precautions that we took - you know, the usual guidance varying your route and your times and so forth. That constraint actually intensified in the period '86 to '90, both because I was in a higher profile position and because there had been further acts of terrorism by November 17 in the intervening period. I never felt particularly inhibited, however. It was never something that bothered me a great deal. There were so many targets of opportunity for November 17 and their attacks were so infrequent that you just sort of

surmised that the odds of you being the next attack victim were fairly remote. And they sort of shifted around. I remember, for example, during the period that I was there they killed a British man, someone who was a member of the British Council, a UK organization that deals with cultural and educational matters. So you were never quite sure who they were looking for. Of course, they had many targets of opportunity in their minds with respect to the people who were at the American base, and several of the people who were assassinated during the period I was there were enlisted men at Hellenikon Base. But you were vigilant because at that time all of the attacks were carried out by two young men on a motorcycle, both wearing helmets. In Athens, very few wore a helmet when they're on a motorcycle, so if you saw someone with a helmet, you definitely took notice of that.

Q: Let me ask though as a general question, and you can respond in a moment: You arrived in the spring of '79. You talked about the U.S.-Greek relations often being a function, if you will, of the state of the U.S.-Turkish relations. In 1978 the Congress, at the request of President Carter, lifted the embargo restrictions on Turkey, so the bases in Turkey resumed full operation, we were discussing a defense cooperation agreement with Turkey as well as with Greece. Did that change things? Of course, when you arrived, it had taken place six or nine months before, so perhaps it had been absorbed somewhat.

MATTSON: If New Democracy were not being continuously stampeded into positions by PASOK and by the newspapers, probably we would have had very few issues on a day-to-day basis. But Papandreou in all of his public appearances was sharply attacking the U.S., NATO, and the Common Market. The fact that Greece had joined the Common Market under Karamanlis' urging was sufficient reason for Papandreou to be critical. One slogan, for example, that I remember was: "EOK" - which is Greek for 'the Common Market' - "EOK kai NATO, to idio sindicato," which is "The Common Market and NATO, the same syndicate, the same sort of outfit." He tried to associate the Common Market directly with NATO to which Turkey belonged and which was unpopular for not stopping the invasion of Cyprus.

Q: I'd like to talk just a little bit more about sort of the nuts and bolts of the way you went about having contacts with the New Democracy Party then in government. Were you dealing mostly with members of parliament, party officials, ministers? Who were the ones that you were particularly responsible for?

MATTSON: Well, in Athens primarily with members of parliament. I probably at that time had very close contact with eight or 10 MPs (members of parliament) from New Democracy and was acquainted with two dozen others. One way I found that was very useful for widening my group of contacts and also getting some interesting perspective was proposing myself for a trip outside of Athens at every opportunity. So I would call on mayors and nomarchs, or regional governors. Actually, seeing an MP in his own constituency went a long way toward cementing a relationship. After dinner or lunch or some other event with an MP in Thessaloniki or Larisa or somewhere around the country, you could then pursue that relationship much more effectively in Athens. It became a more solid relationship. The fact that I had good Greek and that my wife was a native Greek speaker, of course, did help us in terms of representational work with non-English speaking Greeks. Nowadays it's hard to find a young Greek who doesn't speak good English, but in the '70s it was a different story and probably only a third of our contacts were good English

speakers. So language facility was very useful. I remember vividly trips to western Greece, to towns like Arta, Agrinion and Igoumenitsa. In those places, I would meet the mayor and he would, of course, show you a little bit of what he was proud of in his town. Those were for me the most memorable times of that tour or any tour. In fact, when I was political counselor, and later DCM, I used to encourage officers to do a lot of traveling, as I had been given the opportunity to do, with the comment that they will be hard-pressed in later years to ever remember a single telegram they had read, probably few of the telegrams they wrote or any day having been spent exclusively in the embassy, whereas if they got out and around and especially out of the capital, not only were U.S. Government interests well advanced but they would have an opportunity for personal enrichment as well. So I built up a very good group of contacts during that period, many of whom of course remained in positions of considerable influence or even increased influence during the period when I went back as political counselor after an interval of only three years. Some of the luminaries on the PASOK side we also got to know very well, people like Gerasimos Arsenis, who was defense minister and education minister of the various PASOK governments.

Q: How about Simitis, who's the current prime minister?

MATTSON: I did not personally know him. I don't know why, but I just never met him. But on the New Democracy side I got to know the emerging leadership of the party. My closest contact in the first tour, the closest contact in my second tour, and one of my closest friends today is Miltiadis Evert, who was for a time the leader of New Democracy and was a near prime minister of Greece.

Q: Let's talk a little bit more about the labor reporting responsibility. You mentioned that just now, but how much of your time did that take? How did you try to do it, labor obviously mostly on the left, PASOK, Communist.

MATTSON: Yes, that's right. Labor at that point in a place like Greece was important because of the strong left influence within the trade union movement. There was a general confederation of Greek labor called GSEE, and I would go visit them perhaps a couple of times a month and see what was going on and would visit some of the larger provincial unions if I was out of town. They were receptive to contact. I didn't find labor work per se to be nearly as interesting as mainstream political work, but very often they overlapped with each other so I didn't mind doing it. I spent maybe 20 percent of my time doing pure labor work. There was an annual labor report that we had to do and we did various other spot reporting. But it always had, in the case of Greece, a strong connection with Greek politics. And, as you mentioned, the strong influence on the left made the non-Communist labor movement something that we were pursuing pretty assiduously.

Q: To what extent did you travel? You mentioned that you did extensive travel within the country, which I think is very commendable, and it's good that there were funds available and you were given encouragement and time to do it. Were you able to travel in the region at all? Certainly Cyprus, Turkey had an important impact on what was happening within Greece and between Greece and the United States.

MATTSON: Unfortunately I didn't. At the end of my tour in 1983 as I was leaving my assignment and going to Personnel to do the European assignments, the Department came up with some limited funds for me to travel. So at the very end of my assignment to Greece, I got to go to both Cyprus and to Turkey. Cyprus was a very interesting trip because I got to the north as well, and had a dinner with some Turkish Cypriots. I think it was unfortunate I didn't get to go earlier. I've always been an advocate of regional travel, especially in a place like the eastern Mediterranean where you have so much interaction between Ankara, Nicosia and Athens in terms of reporting. There should be, I think, in the Foreign Service a systematized program for various people at various levels to compare notes directly. DCMs should get together from time to time, and political counselors and people who were working on particular issues, in order to exchange views and to build relationships, because what was reported from Ankara very often has an impact on what's happening in Nicosia and Athens and it's very important for people to have a very thorough understanding of the other person's point of view and interest. It would, I believe, shape their own approach. I also proposed that when I was in Copenhagen as DCM. There were a lot of issues that were common to the Scandinavian capitals, and I offered to host a first meeting of DCMs from Oslo, Stockholm, and Helsinki and regrettably had no takers. But I think that things like that, if they're systematized, really can pay tremendous dividends. You mentioned the cost. In the grand scheme of things, these things really aren't at all costly. I remember, for example, that the trip that I made to Nicosia and Ankara was 400 or 500 dollars. There should be a budget line item for this, I would go so far as to say, for local and regional travel in each bureau's allocation of funds to its various embassies.

Q: I don't know about that specific suggestion. I think it probably makes sense. And I also don't know really about the Scandinavians. What you say certainly does also make sense. But I couldn't agree more about Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, and I've always been a strong advocate of travel in the region and meetings of counterparts and so on. I especially know about the period from, say, '81 to '83, and there were some unique personalities in some of the posts that made it a little bit more difficult, I think, for that kind of regional get-together than perhaps it had been earlier or it turned out to be later. I think the master in Turkey, Robert Strausz-Hupé, was not too keen on that kind of thing, and I think the incoming ambassador in Athens, Monty (Monteagle) Stearns, for other reasons, also resisted it a little bit, or at least that was my perception from Cyprus at about the same time. Why don't we talk just a little bit more about how things did change toward the end of your first tour in Athens with the coming to power of PASOK. I think Ambassador Stearns did arrive in '81 or toward the end of '81.

MATTSON: Actually he arrived in early August 1981. The parliamentary elections were in September of '81. So he was there for about five weeks during the height of the campaign in that watershed election when New Democracy and Rallis lost and Papandreou came in. I was particularly busy given the fact that I was doing domestic politics during that campaign. I mentioned before about travel. I had a unique opportunity throughout that whole campaign and was basically on the road for nearly two months. I went, for example, to campaign stops by Rallis and by Papandreou in the same cities. One would appear and a couple weeks later the other would hold a rally, and it was a very good way to gauge local sentiment. These rallies, for example in a place like Kozani, which is in northern Greece and is a small agricultural center, would occur in the town square. Many of the farmers from the countryside would come to town to participate. So even though the town had perhaps 20,000 inhabitants, you probably had 40,000

present for each of these rallies. You could gauge enthusiasm; you could assess the parties' organizational strengths. I went to about five or six of those same sites, Thessaloniki and Kozani and Halkis come to mind, to watch both of these campaigns in action. Then at the very end of the campaign Papandreou took his campaign to Crete. He called the crowd "laothalassa," literally "a sea of people." It was an amazing thing. Of course, PASOK had always had a strong hold on Crete, they get 70 or 80 percent of the vote there, and wherever Papandreou was - and he made four speeches in three days going across the island - I went. He had just the most enormous crowds and tremendous enthusiasm. When I got back to Athens and there were only three or four days left in the campaign, I was pretty convinced, contrary to the views of virtually all of my colleagues in the embassy, that Papandreou was going to win. I think, frankly, there was a lot of wishful thinking in the embassy, hoping for New Democracy to stay on. I was sort of pinned down at a country team meeting on the Thursday before the Sunday election: "Exactly what is your view on the outcome of this election?" That question followed comments by three or four colleagues who said New Democracy was going to win. I didn't want to be stampeded into that view because I didn't hold it, so I basically said that I thought that, if PASOK was ever going to win, that it was going to win in 1981, that they had all of the ingredients for victory in hand. It was not a popular view with the front office. But we, of course, as a government were not very hopeful about a good relationship with Papandreou. We were hoping that New Democracy, even though it was a spent force, was going to hang on one more time. The results of the election came quickly. I remember on election night they had a form of electronic balloting for the first time, and within probably an hour of the polls closing, the result was known, which was rather shocking.

Q: It was pretty decisive for PASOK. I don't remember the figures.

MATTSON: I don't recall either, but especially the way Greek elections go, where you have these two major parties, each of the elections are usually decided by a percentage point or two. This difference was maybe eight points. With the reinforced proportional system, PASOK had a very large majority of seats. There was some apprehension, I think, about what all of this would mean for our interests, especially given this incessant stream of anti-American, anti-NATO, and anti-Common Market rhetoric from Papandreou. In office, he toned that down to a certain extent. There were sort of two levels of operation. On a government-to-government basis, we had a workable relationship. None of our interests were particularly affected. On the other hand, the atmospherics were terrible. I don't remember exactly when, but he was meeting with all of the people we didn't like, like Ortega, Qadhafi, and various other Third World miscreants. We were very opposed to that from a NATO ally. Of course, the response in Washington vis-à-vis PASOK was very negative because there was a lot of focus, I think, on the rhetoric rather than on what was actually happening on the ground. Papandreou opened the door to the creation of an anti-Greek, anti-PASOK sentiment in Washington because of his inflammatory language.

Q: Particularly in the earlier period.

MATTSON: You mean just after the election.

Q: Just after the election. Did he continue that?

MATTSON: Well, I think what happened basically was because he had such a bad reputation for anti-American attitudes and because the expectations for improvement were so low, Washington developed a visceral negative reaction to almost any circumstances. If Papandreou made an anodyne or even a mildly helpful speech that went on for four pages, and there was the one paragraph where he made some strong statements, presumably to cultivate his left, these comments alone were focused upon. So I think there was a little bit of a disconnect between the perception of Papandreou in Washington as this fire-eating anti-American we can't trust and deal with, and the reality on the ground which was a businesslike relationship.

Q: In terms of dealing with actual issues and practical matters, there were not big problems, were there, about the bases?

MATTSON: No, not during that period. There were some actions that he didn't take. For example, if there would be a labor demonstration at a base that we might have wanted the police to break up or for a court to issue a ruling against, he was reluctant to take those kinds of steps, but the relationship, I think, was not all that bad from '81 to '83.

Q: Ambassador Stearns, of course, had served in Athens twice previously and had known Andreas Papandreou from an earlier, much earlier, period. As I recall, they continued to have a pretty good personal relationship. Is that your understanding?

MATTSON: Yes, I think so. First of all, the relationship that Monty Stearns had with Papandreou was a very interesting one, as you mentioned. Papandreou returned to Greece in the early '60s after 20 or so years in the United States. That occurred during the period when Monty Stearns was in Athens on his first assignment. Papandreou, of course, was married to an American, Margaret, and the Stearns couple got to know the Papandreous very well. In fact, Monty one time mentioned to me that he had kept a journal of various activities and he would occasionally refer back to it. For example, he would say, "Tuesday, August 22nd, dinner with the Papandreous," or, on another date, "a movie with the Papandreous." That sort of thing. They were seeing each other socially all the time during that period. Papandreou was uncertain whether or not his decision to go back to Greece was a good one - he returned to Greece from being head of the Department of Economics at Berkeley; he had a very successful academic career in the U.S. and went back to an uncertain political future in Greece. His advantage naturally was the fact that his father was the prime minister, but still he was uncertain and a bit ambivalent. The Stearns, also young and attractive, perhaps constituted a link for them to their life in America. Just as a parenthesis, Monty Stearns, as I understand it, is now writing a book on Papandreou, which I'm very much looking forward to reading. I don't know if you're aware of that.

Q: I did know that. I don't know exactly what the status is and how soon it will be published.

MATTSON: One thing about all that past association that's interesting - I admired this about Monty Stearns, while he did have a very close personal connection with Papandreou, I found that he handled the relationship with Papandreou as prime minister, with the government, in a very professional way. He never relied on this close personal relationship. He never called particular attention to it. Most importantly, he never sought to exploit it. I think that he fully recognized

that as the American ambassador, with Papandreou as the leader of the Greek government, they had to have a very different, very correct relationship. Not everyone would have viewed it in quite that way, I think.

Q: Yes, that was very professional the way he approached it. On the other hand, it did help that they did have some shared history that was close. Stearns did write and we published in the Mediterranean Quarterly an article a couple years ago about comparing Karamanlis and Papandreou, and a lot of it was from his own experience with the two of them as ambassador. I assume something like that will also be in the book once it's published or when he finishes it. In terms of your work, your political reporting, your contacts, New Democracy was now in opposition. Did you continue to spend much of your time keeping in touch with New Democracy deputies, members of parliament, mayors and so on, or did you shift and spend much more time getting to know PASOK people?

MATTSON: Well, my intention was to shift and to get to know more PASOK officials. It was one of those situations where you spend 90 percent of your time and effort for a 10 percent return. The New Democracy people, I already knew. In opposition they were even more keen to spend some time with me. They had fewer responsibilities and were eager to get their point of view across. So New Democracy was easy. You could spend, as I say, 10 percent of your time and get 90 percent of your reporting, whereas you spent 90 percent of your time getting a 10 percent return from PASOK because you were largely being rebuffed. Most of the parliamentarians were very hesitant still to having any meaningful contact. So I found that a very interesting group to get to know were mayors. PASOK had elected mayors in most of the medium and large towns. They were not under the same restrictions imposed, I think, by the party concerning contact with American diplomats. So I tried to do that as best I could. But I was frustrated, as the others were, by our inability to get as much in the way of meaningful contact with PASOK as we could with New Democracy.

Q: To what extent did you work with or have contact with other embassies in Athens? The degree of American embassy interest in the political system, personalities, and so on was pretty unique, I think, compared with other embassies. How about the European embassies? Greece is now a member of the European Common Market, becoming the European Union. They were much more involved with kind of nuts-and-bolts Common Market issues, or how would you judge other embassies?

MATTSON: In terms of a meaningful sharing of ideas, we spent a lot of time with British colleagues and then, just by reason of personality, the odd Italian, Australian, or Scandinavian, but we didn't spend a lot of time other than socially with other embassies. There was a group of DCMs that would get together from time to time, the NATO DCMs, for example, to exchange ideas, but at my level we had no regularized contact. There were a couple of British diplomats that I was friendly with, several of whom became British ambassadors; as a matter of fact, one is presently in Greece. David Madden was a very strong officer.

Q: Anything else we should say about your first assignment as political officer in Athens?

MATTSON: Again, Greece was one of the more interesting countries politically, certainly in

Western Europe. All our issues were on the front burner. You felt that the political work you were doing was important. There are some places in the world where doing political work would definitely not be quite as urgent, like in Denmark or Sweden. And it was very interesting because the Greeks are a fascinating people and the politicians are just a remarkable group. Politics is really a way of life there. It's been an honored profession for several millennia, and they make it very stimulating. It was obviously very different from running your own show in the Seychelles, but I really enjoyed that first assignment in Greece very much.

Q: Certainly the United States, ever since at least 1947, has been very involved, very interested, in the politics of Greece, and the lack of politics, if you will, during the junta period from '67 to '74 meant that the period when you were there was a very rich period, and then you were there for, as you say, a watershed election in 1981, so it was an exciting and interesting period in which not only Washington but, I think, the United States more generally and the Greek-American community and others who've been involved with Greece over a long time were very interested in what was going on in Greece.

MATTSON: It was an absolutely fascinating period. I went into this before, but when I was still in the Navy I was going to graduate school at NYU (New York University) specializing in modern European history. I took all of my coursework, exams, and so forth. I had to come up with a dissertation topic. I thought if I were going into an academic career that it would be nice to have something to do with Greece, where my wife was from, so I came up with a topic on the Youth Movement of Ioannis Metaxas. Metaxas, of course, was the Greek dictator in the 1930s. He had a youth movement called EON which was very much patterned on the fascist youth of Mussolini and Hitler Youth. Shortly after I was married, in the latter 1960s, I went to Greece several times and interviewed various figures from the 1930s who were then still alive. There was the interior minister, a man called Maniatakis, who was sort of the tough guy in the Metaxas regime, and then there was the head of the EON organization, Alexander Canellopoulos. Even when we got to Greece in 1979 there were still enough throwbacks, let's say, even to the 1930s, to the war period and to the civil war period. The history of modern Greece is so interesting to me, especially the period from 1940 through the end of the civil war. It was great just being in that milieu.

Q: You were there for four years. Did that involve an extension, or was that what your assignment was?

MATTSON: My assignment was three years and I extended for a fourth year.

Q: Did that seem too long, about right?

MATTSON: It didn't seem too long. Of course, the first two years were essentially the New Democracy period. If I had left after one year of PASOK, I would have felt that there were a lot more things that were happening that I wanted to involve myself in, and I had to make that decision about an extension shortly after they had come to power. So to leave after three years, I felt that there were changes coming in Greece, there were things that were happening that were going to be interesting to work on, so the decision to extend was mainly based on what had happened in the election. I just did not want to leave doing domestic politics after less than a year

of PASOK being in power.

Q: Was Charlie McCaskill the political counselor pretty much the whole time you were there?

MATTSON: Our four-year tours coincided.

Q: Anything else we ought to talk about in your first assignment to Athens from '79 to '83?

MATTSON: I can't think of anything. Athens, of course, in 1983 was a much different city than it became even 10 years later. It was far less congested, far less polluted, but that's another story.

CHARLES W. McCASKILL
Political Counselor
Athens (1979-1983)

Charles W. McCaskill was born in Camden, South Carolina in 1923. Completing only two years at the Citadel, he later returned and graduated in 1947, after serving in the Army. McCaskill then attended the University of South Carolina, where he received a graduate degree in history and political science. Joining the Foreign Service in 1950, he has served in Germany, Greece, Cyprus, Iran, and India. The interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on July 7, 1993.

Q: We move now to your last assignment, when somebody threw you back into the briar patch. You went to Athens in 1979 as Political Counselor. The assignment obviously makes since. Did this come as a surprise, or did you ask for the assignment?

McCASKILL: I asked for it, as the result of some fortuitous circumstances. Irv Cheslaw, then the senior assignments man in Personnel, was going from Delhi to Colombo, with a change of planes in Madras. Fortunately for me, as it turned out, he had an unexpected delay of several hours. I met him at the airport, took him to the office and later to the Residence for lunch. During the several hours we spent together, he asked where I would like to go on my next assignment. I mentioned DCM in Athens, which he said would be difficult, since I was a very new OC. He then said that he was looking for a Greek language OC to fill the Political Counselor spot. I replied that I was the original Greek language officer in the Department, and I would have expected my name to come out of the computer. Irv replied that things weren't that easy, but said that he thought he could get that assignment for me.

If Irv had not come through Athens, I might well not have gotten the job. I had been overseas then for over ten years, and was not at all familiar with how the open assignments system worked. Anyway, he put my name in the mill, and I heard in several months that I had gotten the job. We left Madras in June, 1979, and arrived in Athens in August for four years.

I might say here that, in retrospect, I feel that I was overseas far too long. When my four years in Athens ended, I had been overseas fifteen years, 1968 to 1983. While I enjoyed every minute of

it, I think you tend to lose touch with the way things are done in Washington and are at a disadvantage in competing in the open assignments system.

Q: What was the political situation in Greece when you arrived?

McCASKILL: When I arrived in Greece, there were several questions pending, each exciting and interesting. These were: (1) Greece's return to the military wing of NATO from which it had withdrawn after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974; (2) Greece's entry into the European Community after years of preparation; and (3) the possible move to the Presidency by Karamanlis and the election of a new party leader who would lead the government.

The first of these was the most pressing. Greece wanted back in NATO, but Turkey had imposed conditions on Greece's return which Athens found unacceptable. A good many people spent long hours trying to find the right mix, and there were times when it seemed that agreement was near. NATO did most of the detailed work on this, and the Rogers Plan, named for SACEUR Bernard Rogers, in 1981 seemed to offer a solution. The government of Karamanlis's party, New Democracy, seemed to accept, but then Andreas Papandreou was elected in 1981 and rejected the whole thing. It was sort of in limbo when I left and I must confess that I do not know where it is right now.

The second, Greece's accession to the EC, was equally exciting. This was really the fruit of Karamanlis's labor; he apparently concluded long ago that Greece's future was more secure "in Europe" than in alliance with us, that Greece's rightful place was in the EC. Greek membership in the EC may well be Karamanlis's most meaningful monument. Margaret Thatcher once referred to Karamanlis as "The Grand Old Man of Europe", and I go along with that. Greece's road in the EC has been a rocky one from time to time, but nobody can blame Karamanlis for that. Taking them in was a masterful stroke and he deserves full marks for that.

As indicated throughout what I have been saying, Karamanlis was still Prime Minister when I arrived, having been called home from Paris when the coup against Makarios brought on the fall of the military junta in Athens. He had won two elections, I believe, and there was already talk when I got there that he would move up to the Presidency in 1980. Constantine Tsatsos, a faithful friend and follower of Karamanlis, was said to be keeping the seat warm for Karamanlis. It was just assumed that Karamanlis wanted it; it was even said that he had been looking ahead to becoming president when he insisted that the new constitution provide for a strong presidency.

Anyway, the thought of Karamanlis moving up and a new prime minister coming on the scene was very exciting. While we all expected Evangelos Averoff to win leadership of the party, George Rallis, a long-time follower of Karamanlis actually emerged with the prize. I always thought that was a real shame, since Averoff really deserved it; he had given Greece long, long service, and he was well-regarded internationally as well as at home. I thought he would have made a lot better prime minister than Rallis, who was just short of a disaster.

Q: Before Papandreou came into power in 1981, he had been a difficult person for us for a long time. How were we looking upon the possible rise and assumption of power of Andreas Papandreou?

McCASKILL: We were looking on that possibility with some trepidation since he was the antithesis of most of what we supported in Greece. He said publicly on a number of occasions that he would take Greece out of NATO; he said publicly on a number of occasions that he would take Greece out of the EC; he said repeatedly that he would throw the American facilities out of Greece if he were elected. He repeated these things long enough that people -- including us, I think -- believed at least some of them.

Papandreou was a fascinating character himself. I accompanied our ambassador, Bob McCloskey, on a call on Papandreou one time and found the private Papandreou altogether different from the public Papandreou. I've forgotten the point McCloskey wanted to make -- it was on Cyprus as I recall -- and Papandreou accepted what McCloskey said, stating something like "if you tell me that, I accept it."

But when he got up on the stump, the balcony, he was a different person. He was superb on the balcony, if totally unpredictable in what he might say. I went to the final rally before the election of 1981, and there must have been 200 to 300,000 people in Constitution Square. For a Greek political junkie, it was something to see, an unforgettable experience. I had seen his father speaking at Thessaloniki in 1958, but I think the son was better on the balcony than the father. Of course, he did none of the things he said he was going to do, but we kept him at arm's length his first terms in office. For example, it has become traditional that the president of the EC -- it is a rotating presidency on a six-months basis -- be invited to the US. Papandreou was the first president not to be invited. He was shunned and I think it was a mistake in retrospect. I've read that the White House has already invited him, though I know none of the details.

Q: He's just become prime minister again. He must be pretty long in the tooth.

McCASKILL: I think over time we realized that we had to look at what Papandreou did and not at what Papandreou said. He obviously didn't take Greece out of the EC; he obviously did not take Greece out of NATO. And he did not throw the bases out overnight. The British historian from Oxford, Richard Clogg, said the other day in a lecture at the FSI that rather than being socialist, he considered Papandreou more a populist. This may be so. I don't think we worry about him anymore; he is obviously in very bad health and one has to wonder who is governing Greece.

One of the most irritating points about Papandreou's people was the fact that they were not accessible at first. They simply would not see us, and we actually heard that there was a committee in his party, known by the acronym PASOK, that had to clear contacts with foreign diplomats. The Ambassador had access, since he had known Papandreou years ago, but at my level and below it was very difficult to see members of PASOK. There was one member of Parliament in Papandreou's party, a man who had been an American citizen and still might have been, and he simply gave me the runaround. When he finally realized we were only interested in normal diplomatic contacts, we began seeing each other and he and his wife came to our house for dinner more than once.

Q: What about the Embassy people? Were we adopting a bunker mentality? How were we

dealing with it?

McCASKILL: Well, as I indicated, we kept at it. I came to know the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs fairly well, professionally, that is. And even more important, I came to know a man in Papandreou's inner circle very well. He only spoke Greek, and three of us from the Embassy, one Greek and one other American Greek speaker, would get together with him and two other Greeks and talk very frankly. He reached the point where he felt very comfortable with me, and he and his wife had a small going-away party for my wife and me.

Q: How about our military? Were we telling people on our bases to keep their heads down?

McCASKILL: Everybody did keep their heads down, and tried to be less obvious. A bus was bombed, killing one US military man, but that was after I left Athens.

Q: Were there mobs parading in front of the Embassy at any point while you were there?

McCASKILL: Yes. The anniversary of the November 17 student uprising -- which has come to represent the beginning of the end of the military junta -- was always marked by a demonstration with a decided anti-US flavor. The demonstration would end with a march past the Embassy. Margaret Papandreou, herself an American citizen born, led the march several times, which was a bit much for me.

Q: How about terrorism while you were there? There had been killings, which continued.

McCASKILL: A Turkish diplomat and his family were gunned down, but that was Armenian terrorism. Our Ambassador, Monty Stearns, received a threat, as I remember. A prominent conservative small newspaper owner was gunned down, and his killer never found. The Chief of the Naval Section, a Navy captain, was gunned down shortly after I left. Senior officers had guards on their homes, and we took all the usual precautions, so there was considerable awareness of terrorism. Security at the Embassy was tight. It was not the Greece I had known when I was there previously. I liked it more the old way.

Q: Did Cyprus flair up while you were there, or did it remain on a steady course?

McCASKILL: The Greeks and Turks were having troubles, but little of it was related to Cyprus. The questions at issue were the so-called Aegean issues -- overflights, definition of the FIR (Flight Information Reporting zone), command and control in the Aegean, definition of the territorial seas, etc. These were all potentially more explosive than was Cyprus.

When Papandreou first took office, he paid an official visit to Cyprus, the first Greek Prime Minister to have done so. He declared Cyprus "a national issue", which got a big play in Cyprus. The president of Cyprus visited Athens. If the Cyprus Problem were solved, it would have a salutary effect on the Aegean issues. But I thought then, and continue to feel, that the Aegean issues were more important to Greece than Cyprus. I may have mentioned earlier, but it bears repeating here that I have always thought that 1974 established that Greece would not fight for Cyprus. It would fight for any of the Aegean islands, for any of the Greek islands, but Greece

will not fight for Cyprus.

Q: To return to NATO: was Greek departure real? France is not part of NATO and hasn't been since the 1960s, yet France is pretty well included in NATO. How about Greece? Were the Greeks really out of NATO?

McCASKILL: The Greeks were in and they weren't in. They would refuse to participate in military exercises because of the question of remilitarization of Limnos or because of other reasons. Yet they were certainly a part of the North Atlantic Council, the political body of NATO. In some ways they were having their cake and eating it too.

It is interesting now, with the end of the Cold War, that Greece has been disarmed as far as we are concerned, as has Turkey to some extent. Neither is the security factor it was 25 years ago. Neither is vital to the West. This will be difficult for the Greeks -- and the Turks -- to take. I am a bit out-of-touch on this, but I think Turkey is reacting poorly to the fact that the parameters of our relationship have changed.

Q: All of this needs reevaluation.

McCASKILL: A lot of reevaluation. Papandreou will no longer have the bases to hold over us. Instead of threatening to get out of the EC, he will probably be hanging on to his EC membership by his fingernails.

Q: From what I hear, it sounds like the EC would like to get rid of Greece.

McCASKILL: The EC may be unhappy with Greece, but Greece will never leave the EC since it has a veto over the Turkish application for membership. Turkey has wanted for some time to get in, but has not managed to do so.

Q: You were there for almost two years of Papandreou's first term. Were you seeing signs of what was going to happen? Were people pushing him to get out of NATO, out of the EC, or to get rid of the bases?

McCASKILL: It became clear soon after the election that most of his threats were hollow. What we did see was his embrace of Arafat, an almost-Third World kind of foreign policy. I think it was Ted Couloumbis, a Greek academic, who said that Papandreou had one foot in the East and one in the West, or something like that. He was a real renegade and would deviate from NATO or EC policy as it suited him. The EC was desperately striving for unanimity of EC foreign policy, which they called "political cooperation". On such things as the shooting down of the KAL airline, they would be unanimous, except for Greece. I know from some of my EC friends that many members of the EC found this very galling, since Greece was considered a kind of poor, country cousin in the EC.

Q: How did the Reagan Administration react to Greece?

McCASKILL: I think Papandreou drove Washington up the wall. As I may have implied, he was

one of those politicians who can not resist an open microphone and who is not responsible when he gets one in his hands. The fact that he had lived here for so many years and had been a US citizen at one time made his behavior particularly difficult for many Americans.

Q: Was Washington trying to make things difficult for Greece?

McCASKILL: I don't think so. I think we were just trying to live with what we had. I mentioned that we would not invite him to Washington. There may have been other things but I just can not remember them now.

Q: How about Soviet influence on Papandreou during this period?

McCASKILL: While he was fuzzy, even third- worldish in many ways, I would be inclined to discount Soviet influence. Karamanlis himself had started the opening to the east, with a trip to the Soviet Union in 1979, and had developed what he referred to as Greece's multifaceted foreign policy. I would need to refresh my memory but I can't recall that Papandreou's relations with the Soviet Union or the East Bloc were all that significant.

Remember, as I said previously, that Papandreou belonged in the non-aligned camp, philosophically. He was described somewhere by somebody as NATO's only non-aligned member. I did a paper for publication some years ago in which I developed the thesis that Papandreou was really non-aligned in his heart.

Q: How did the Greek Americans look on Papandreou? Did they find this difficult for them?

McCASKILL: Most Greek Americans that I know did not really care for Papandreou, and they realized that his election had weakened Greece's position in Washington to a significant degree. They would still go to bat for Greece on such things as the 10-7 ratio, for example.

Q: But the Greek government and the Greek lobby were not united as they have been in the past?

McCASKILL: There were some efforts to repair relations. Margaret Papandreou came to the US shortly after the elections and snubbed the AHEPA (the American Hellenic Education and Protective Association). AHEPA was upset about it, we heard, and soon sent a high-powered AHEPA delegation to Greece to try to mend fences. I've forgotten whether Papandreou attended their luncheon or whether he sent his wife, but it was generally conceded that they both realized that they needed each other and agreed tacitly to bury the hatchet. As I remember, it was an uneasy relationship after that.

Q: What was your impression of the influence and knowledge of the CIA when you were there?

McCASKILL: I think the Agency's influence -- and its expertise -- was considerably less during this time than it had been. The Station Chief my first two years there was not very impressive, and I met nobody in the entire four years who had the horse power of, say, a Dick Welch. Still, the last Chief of Station was an old pro. In general, I just do not see how you can send a person into that atmosphere with no background in Greek affairs and expect them to be very effective in

intelligence work. I think the high point of Agency effectiveness in Greece had long since passed by 1979, for a number of reasons: lingering belief that we, through the Agency, had been involved in the coup of 1967, the stubborn perception that we were somehow involved in the coup against Makarios in 1974, and on and on.

Q: Greek Americans often had preconceived opinions about what was going on in Greece, and might have been a problem in the Agency.

McCASKILL: I do not recall too many Greek Americans in the Agency my last tour there, though there were many of them in the early years, some of them very good officers. We had some of the same internal problems with the Agency from 1979 to 1983 that we've always had, with cover, for example. You had to watch them or they would be all over the lot.

Q: One last thing: Could you talk about the style of operating of Ambassador McCloskey, and then the style of operating style of Ambassador Stearns.

McCASKILL: Ambassador McCloskey never seemed to enjoy being Ambassador to Greece, for a reason I could never fathom, and he never seemed to take to Greece or the Greeks. He was not very outgoing, certainly around the Embassy. But I think the Greeks respected him. A well-known Greek journalist once told me that if McCloskey told you something, you could believe it, that McCloskey was "a man of his word." As you know, you either like Greece or you don't like Greece, and I was never sure McCloskey liked it.

Monty Stearns was another story, the consummate professional where Greece was concerned. He liked Greece, and spoke excellent Greek. He and Mrs. Stearns (Toni) read two or three newspapers every morning. I used to joke that Monty needed only an Administrative Counselor and a Consul General since he knew so much about Greece and handled so much of the substantive output of the Embassy himself. Monty had years of experience, had always wanted to be Ambassador to Greece, and was an outstanding one.

But working for McCloskey was better in many ways, since he relied on his staff more than Monty did. I know I personally enjoyed working for him more. McCloskey relied on me more on political questions, and I appreciated that. McCloskey would never have Stearns's feel for Greece or Stearns's contacts. But the senior staff had more role to play under McCloskey, if you can understand that. In short, I admired Monty tremendously and considered him the almost perfect choice for the job when he was there, an excellent career ambassador. But I felt more useful with McCloskey, and felt that I was somehow making more contribution to Greek-US affairs under McCloskey. I suppose that sums it up pretty well, and is a good note on which to finish.

WILLIAM E. RAU
Economic Counselor
Athens (1980-1984)

William E. Rau was born in Michigan in 1929. After receiving a B.A. and M.A.

from the University of Montana, he served in the U.S. Army as first lieutenant from 1953 to 1955. His postings abroad have included Thessaloniki, Port Said, Cairo, Pretoria, Izmir, Istanbul, Kabul and Athens. Mr. Rau was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998.

Q: You were going as economic counselor to Athens. How did you feel about this?

RAU: I was happy to be going back. I had done my first assignment in Greece, and now I was going back to Athens. There was a good deal of political turmoil and it turned out economic as well. I mentioned earlier I had hoped to study under Papandreou when I went to Berkeley, so when I got to Athens in 1980, they were having national elections that fall and PASOK was swept into power, under Papandreou.

Q: PASOK was the name of the Panhellenic Socialist Party. You were in Athens from when to when?

RAU: '80 to '84.

Q: Could you give a description of the situation as you saw it, both politically and economically, in Greece when you arrived in 1980?

RAU: What struck me immediately was that the old French saying that *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose* was taking place politically. Karamanlis was still there; he was president now, but he'd been prime minister when I was there about 20 years before. And George Rallis was still a figure and all the old personalities were still there, except for the royal house, of course. And then, on the scene swept this new green wave of PASOK, which was eventually to become the first socialist government in the history of modern Greece. Before the elections, we had a new ambassador come in in the person of Monty Stearns, and before the elections, we all were sent out to different areas to kind of test the pulse, and I know I went to Crete and part of the Peloponnesus to check the pulse, and it was very apparent to most of us that PASOK was going to win, but not by the overwhelming majority that they did win by. We thought it was going to be a much closer election than it was. I guess there was a great deal of ferment among the younger people. They were tired of the way things had been in Greece, for decade after decade, nothing was happening of any great consequence after the reestablishment of democracy, and they thought that some of these people were old and tired and that they should get rid of them. And that's what they did in the election. We always had the hangover after that of the feeling that Papandreou definitely had beaten the American government... He trusted Monty Stearns, or at least he said he did. He had a working relationship with him, but he didn't trust the American government very much. He thought that they were not necessarily friends of Greece, or friends of him anyway. The result was that we never had that kind of close personal relationship with Greek government officials that we had had before. Monty prided himself on the fact that he thought he would have a good working relationship with Papandreou. We were of two minds in the embassy. We in the Economic Section could see what Papandreou was doing was not really in the interests of Greece, and we reported as such in many cases. When he would call for normalization of certain things, it ended up being nationalization of whatever was left in the Greek private sector, which wasn't much because the ship owners had all their wealth and

principal offices out of Greece anyway. He couldn't nationalize Greek shipping because they'd all pick up and go to London or wherever they already were. But some of the others - the cement industry and some of the others - he managed to take under his wing, to nationalize them. So in that sense, in the economic sense, it was experimental on his part, trying to make things work better under a socialist government, and we didn't think it worked too well. I remember taking a Congressional delegation to see the minister for economic affairs, and he was a well trained professorial type economist. And we got on the subject of Greece's membership in the Common Market. He said that "We in PASOK oppose this because we don't think it's in Greece's interest, that Greece is not ready for the Common Market and the Common Market is certainly not ready for Greece." And he said, "Look what it's done to the *Mezzogiorno* in Italy. They haven't progressed since they went into the Common Market." Same thing. And at one point Papandreou also was threatening to take Greece out of NATO. He made a statement at one point that "We don't see NATO as an ally that's going to help us. If there is a Russian or Soviet threat," he said, "You'd do the same thing as if it were Yugoslavia. If the Soviets decided to go into Yugoslavia, they're not members of NATO, but you'd still come to their assistance." He said the same thing would happen here. He said, "We don't get much of a benefit out of NATO."

Q: Well speaking about the NATO thing, this is fine talk, but one of the principal reasons Greece was in NATO, from the Greek point of view, was so that they could balance the Turks off, because if Greece pulled out we would have basically moved our bases over to Turkey.

RAU: That's right, and I think that's why it prevailed, why they didn't do it. And the same thing when you look at the Greek membership in the Common Market. The benefits they have gotten out of the agricultural part of the Common Market have kept Greek governments afloat since they entered. They've always been a major benefactor [sic] of membership rather than a contributor - up to now.

Q: Well, looking at Andreas Papandreou, you had wanted to study under him and all, how much did you find as an economist what he was doing with his country came out of what he had been teaching and what he had been taught and sort of his economic philosophy, or was he going a different course?

RAU: I think he wanted to play both ends against the middle. He saw his role as trying to increase the independence of Greece from either the Soviet side or the US side. And on the economic side, he felt that Greece was too dependent on aid programs from the United States, in which he was right, in a certain sense. Take the case of aluminum. He wanted to give up the bauxite, or he wanted to have a contest with bauxite between the Russians and French and the American interests, and he was willing to let the cards fall where they may to see what he would get in return for that. Would the Soviets offer him some things that would make this more worthwhile? Would the French make that more worthwhile? Etc. So I think that he had a desire to make Greece more independent of entangling alliances, if you will, but it didn't work out for a country like Greece to do that.

Q: In a way, when he wanted to get out of entangling alliances, did you have a feeling that when you stripped it away it was really to get away from America?

RAU: Yes, basically, basically, because he knew America very well. He had lived here, been a citizen of the United States, served in the American navy, and had an American wife at that time. So yes, he knew the United States well, but I think he felt that he didn't want to have the kind of relationship with the United States that previous Greek governments had had, which was abnormally close, let us say. And he wanted to be a more independent-minded representative of his country.

Q: How was Papandreou viewed, you might say, from the embassy as a whole, particularly from the ambassador and then from the Economic Section?

RAU: Well, as I said, I think because of his previous association with Papandreou, Monty knew him better than anybody as a person. We didn't know him in the Economic Section as a person. I had first Anne Berry working for me as a reporting officer, and then I had Basil Scarlis working in her position, and neither one of them had had any experience in Greece before. Basil had some of the language because he was born of Greek parents, but none of us really knew Papandreou as a person, whereas Monty Stearns did, and so he kept, and probably rightly so, any relationship with cabinet level people, and primarily the prime minister, to himself. Other people didn't have that many meetings at the ministerial level with the PASOK government. And we on the economic side tried to follow a course where just reporting the events as we saw them, in terms of what the government was doing, we weren't trying to skew it one way or the other, and let people draw their own conclusions. But many times they were not in accord with the way the political section and particularly the ambassador wanted to go. But I must say, to give him his due, we were allowed to report these things as long as we could support what we said.

Q: Did you feel under any pressure from the Greek lobby. Was this something you had to keep in mind all the time?

RAU: Not on the economic side. I don't know how much money the Political Section had in terms of pressures from the Greek lobby. I don't think it was that great because a lot of the Greek lobby was not in favor of Papandreou. They thought he was a bad influence for Greece. That's talking about the US side.

Q: Did the Greek side of Cyprus come in to your economic scheme at all? Even though it was an independent country, I was just wondering whether the Greeks were doing anything to invest there.

RAU: Not that I was aware of. I don't think there was much Greek investment there. There was some Cypriot investment in Greece, wealthy Cypriots who invested in Greece, but I don't think there was much money flowing the other way.

Q: I would have thought on the economy you would almost have two things: one, you would have the entrepreneurs - and entrepreneur and Greek are almost synonyms - who were off doing their thing and much of it, I suppose, was like the ship owners, doing it under another flag, and it was hard to pin down where the money was and where the action was.

RAU: Oh, that's true.

Q: And then you'd have sort of the rest, which would be basically a sort of a not-very-efficient industrial base which needed government protection.

RAU: Well, you could say that - yes, needed government protection in the sense that they didn't want to be monopolized by one particular firm or one particular person. But when you took going enterprises, and I think of Titan cement, for example, some of those who were actually doing some exporting, too, into Africa, and you, in effect, took them over. I mean the government came in with their policy that they wanted to "regularize" this industry, and so George Tsatsos, in the case of that particular company, was in danger of being in prison, and he left the country. That happened with quite a few of them, who fell into receivership, if you will, by the government; and to a certain extent, we have the same thing with the Hellenic Aeronautical Industry (HAI). They had some very clever and good engineers out there, but to win contracts on anything, you had to be assured that they would be able to operate under the rules that we operate under in a Western country. That didn't take place under Papandreou. It was very difficult.

Q: This was a time of great unrest in Lebanon, particularly in Beirut. Was Athens the site of quite a few companies that had moved from Beirut?

RAU: Yes. They came in before I arrived there under what they called Law 89, which was a law which gave them tax-free status and their ability to set up offices in Athens/Beirut. And a lot of them did that. We had a whole stable of what we called Law 89 companies. In fact, Commerce set up a separate office in Athens to deal with the Law 89 companies and staffed it with - actually, as it turned out (this is just a side comment) - the father of Greg Kinnear, the movie star now, Ed Kinnear, who was the very effective head of that office. He had been in Beirut before and was moved to Athens when the office folded. And he did a very good job in his relationship with those companies.

Q: Did these play any particular role as you were watching the economic development in Greece, or was this just something that was sort of located there but not part of the economic game?

RAU: Well, what they were trying to do was avoid having to pay Greek taxes or fall under the purview of the government. As long as they kept their nose clean and ran an operation which did not infringe on what was happening in Greece - I mean, most of their business was offshore - they just looked at this in a kind of bemused way.

Q: I take it that as far as economic decision were made by the Greeks, we were essentially just bystanders reporting what was going on.

RAU: Yes, except for - well, this is, I guess, economic in a sense - except for military assistance programs, where the old seven-to-ten ratio still played its role. But that wasn't something that the Economic -

Q: That was seven for Greece and ten for everything -

RAU: - for everything that Turkey got. The Congress had laid this down. It had become almost a law. It was not a law, but it had almost become a law. But we in the Economic Section didn't have much of a role to play in that. It was something that was constantly being discussed, and I remember that in staff meetings time and again it was pointed out that the Turks were using this money to purchase American equipment, etc. The Greeks never purchased it. They kind of banked it. They didn't make the purchases with it. And this is when the government was toying with buying French aircraft instead of American aircraft, etc., so as I said, we didn't play a major role in those decisions.

Q: How did we look upon Greece as a member of the European Community at that point?

RAU: We did a couple of long studies in the Economic Section where I could sympathize to a certain extent with some people who were saying that Greece was not anywhere near the standard of the current six - or eight, or whatever else it was at that time when they were bringing in Greece and Portugal - yes, and that it's going to be a while to go and that we are going to have to give up some of our God-given rights, if you will, to be able to produce things here in order to allow in a flow of German goods or whatever else from the Common Market. As it turned out, however, the major recipients of benefits from the Common Market association were Greek farmers. They all ended up with new tractors, seed money - literally - and things that kept them going, and then they voted PASOK when the next election came on, as a result. We know that very well in this country, but this was something new for the Greeks.

Q: What about anti-American demonstrations? Was it November the 17th or November the 18th?

RAU: Yes. That was always a very big thorn in all of our sides, because these demonstrations that commemorated the tanks going into the polytechnic school in Athens always blamed the Americans for not stopping them, or maybe in some cases they felt that we were behind it. And the marches on the Embassy were led by Mrs. Papandreou, and that never sat well with anybody - members of Congress or embassy staff or anybody else. So that was bad. And then what really started happening in Greece - what happened in a lot of other places happened there, too - was this group that started an assassination program. And while we were there, we lost an assistant naval attaché to gunshot wounds, and there were threats made against several others. And I remember distinctly, the house that was assigned to the economic counselor was one of these massive places out in Halandri that the US government got, I guess, just about the time the Truman Doctrine came in, that John Enepekides bought for the US government something like 10 or 12 properties. This was a huge place. We used to call it "Tara on the Aegean." It had a big garden where you could actually do your jogging around the back, all walled in. And my wife was out there jogging one morning, just around breakfast time, when she heard the shots that were just down on the avenue a few blocks from us, and it turned out it was the assistant naval attaché who was killed in his car. So those kinds of things really started to put a damper on any kind of relationships. We had to be very much more careful than we had been.

Q: Greeks seem to be very ineffective in dealing with that sort of thing.

RAU: They never were able to really solve that November 17th group, who were supposedly

right-wing but nobody really knew, and a small cadre of people were doing this.

Q: The Italians were able to take care of the-

RAU: - the Red Brigades-

Q: -Red Brigades and all, but the Greeks - and with the PLO-

RAU: Well, that was another thing. All these groups Papandreou kind of accepted with open arms. They'd set up offices there and have representatives and have other people flying in and out all the time, and our people didn't know who these people were in many cases.

Q: Was there at all a feeling in the embassy that basically we're in a hostile country? I mean it's all very nice and the Greek-Americans are an important political factor, but this is "Indian country." Was there at all that feeling?

RAU: Yes, there was, among a large group of the embassy population, especially because we have this history of a long, close military relationship with Greece which no longer existed. I mean, under Papandreou, the relationship with the Greek military was, at best, correct; and there was never a very intimate relationship on any level that I could see. And then when they started losing people, either to kidnappings or to assassinations like this, it made for a very, very tense situation. A lot of people in the embassy community felt that we'd better just stay close to home and watch what they did, not have too many Greek friends. It was unfortunate.

Q: You were there '80 to '84. I was there '70 to '74, under the Colonels, but one of the thing that disturbed me a bit, and it was a completely different kind of government, was that both our military and the CIA had an extraordinary number of Greek Americans there because they spoke the language, but they tended to come out of the normal first generation immigrant - you know, extreme, basically to the right - and they were really very comfortable with the military régime, and this was really not representative of the United States. It was sort of like the anti-Castro Cubans down in Miami today. Had this period gone?

RAU: That had gone, but I must say, the Agency did what I think was a silly thing, and then they finally corrected it. They put a woman in charge who had not had any overseas experience at all, and she became chief of station. She had her own house, which was a couple of blocks down from where I lived, and she in effect led a completely sheltered life. She had one or two parties where she would invite a very specific number of people to her house, but she went from office to home and home to office. She lived alone; she didn't have a husband. And it was just the wrong person to show the Greeks in that position, because they all knew who it was. And then she was replaced by John Berg, who was a different type altogether. He was a professional - had no experience in Greece, but he was a real professional. John and Peggy got to know more people. They had a nice residence where they gave receptions, etc., and parties, so it changed a bit. But in terms of Greek-Americans, no there weren't any on the staff then, neither in the military nor in the Agency, so it had changed to that degree.

Q: By the time you left there, were there any major events in this '80-84 period?

RAU: Except for PASOK being the government in power, taking over? That was the major one. No, the events, I guess, that we would be following closely were happening in Turkey, not in Greece. Greece became a member of the Common Market, if that's a major event.

Q: Oh, yes.

RAU: I think *the* major event, obviously, was the first socialist government to rule Greece.

Q: Were you noticing an edginess on the part of the Greek business community when PASOK came in?

RAU: Well, a lot of them who could afford it left. They moved to London or someplace else. If they had old money, they kept the family money, most of it out of the country, except for real property and things. But the average Greek businessman - you know as well as I do that Greece does not have any major industrial complex to speak of. Shipyards and shipping is the lifeblood of the community at large, in big terms. They tried to establish an airplane industry to manufacture light airplanes and repair military aircraft, etc., but by and large, no, the business community pretty much tried to exist under a socialist regime. And the PASOK did not try to nationalize down to that level, to the small shop-owners. They knew that would be foolish. But even trying to nationalize the few big ones there were was a mistake, which they later, I think, would admit was a mistake.

Q: We had sort of three major military places. We had the airport with repair facilities and as a transit place at Hellenikon. We had two radio intercept stations. One was at Neomakri, which is out near Marathon, and the other one was on Crete.

RAU: Right.

Q: What was happening with these things? There was talk about getting kicked out of there all the time.

RAU: Yes, there was, and as you know, eventually it did happen. We had to in effect cancel the Sixth Fleet visits because they were not acceptable to most of Greece, and even using the facilities there, that naval air station there on Crete, became very difficult for our fighter aircraft - you know, off of carriers. We couldn't use that very much. They didn't bother Neomakri so much at that time, because it was still there, but it was still operating, doing what it was always doing, in terms of an intelligence base. But eventually people, I think, could see the handwriting on the wall. None of these was going to last; they were all going to go.

Q: And the technology was changing too.

RAU: The technology was changing where they didn't need them as much.

Q: You know, in a way, the more you close down these places, the more cards you are discarding as far as dealing with the United States.

RAU: That's right.

Q: I would have thought that, not maybe from the military side, but from the embassy side there would be a certain amount of enjoyment in seeing some of these places go so you wouldn't have to spend all your time worrying about "What about our bases" and you could deal with this country in a sort of a cold-blooded way.

RAU: Yes, I think that's true, but there was a sort of hangover that existed, as you know, from the old Marshall Plan days, where we had a special relationship with Greece, and a lot of people could not forget that. You know, that relationship was beyond the bounds of military bases, etc. It proved not to be the case.

Q: I have to put my prejudices in these questions. I never felt that. I never warmed up to that. Individual Greeks I liked; Greeks en masse, the Greek government - of course, I was there at a bad time - I just found them not a very mature group of people to deal with.

RAU: I think that's probably pretty close to the way I felt, although individually I had a lot of good friends with some of them. But you know, any conversation we got into, whether it was with somebody from the foreign ministry or whether it was somebody from the business community or an academic person or whatever it was, the whole subject of Greece's relationship and its position in the Mediterranean and Turkey came up. And they had a mind-fixation on this that they couldn't get rid of. I never had that feeling - having had the benefit of serving in Turkey, too - that the Turks paid more than five minutes attention to this, unless there was major explosion that happened, you know.

DAVID T. JONES
Greek Base Negotiations Team, State Department
Washington, DC (1982-1983)

David T. Jones was born in Pennsylvania in 1941. He received a B.A. and an M.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army overseas from 1964-1966. Upon entering the Foreign Service in 1968, his postings abroad included Paris, Brussels, Geneva, and Ottawa. Mr. Jones was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: Today is September 23, 1999. Greek base negotiations. We've talked about the background. Can you talk about what were the issues? What were the particular points that you were having to deal with in '82, and how did you and Bartholomew operate?

JONES: To a certain extent, I'm not as fully prepared for this as I would have liked to have been. I've gone over a certain number of my notes, but I've ended about six months short of the conclusion of the base agreement negotiations themselves. Let me give you more of the material that I have refreshed myself on and give you some of a sense for what was happening.

We had had this longstanding relationship with the Greeks with a basing agreement which, very much in our interests, was tied to the duration of Greek participation within NATO. There was no terminal date for the U.S.-Greek base negotiations agreement. That meant that when we had had previous rounds of negotiations and discussions, if they failed, it was no skin off our teeth. The status quo continued unless the Greeks chose to interrupt their relationship with NATO itself. Well, that wasn't in their interest obviously because NATO was viewed by the Greeks as one of their shields against the Turks. So, they were by and large hung up on how they would get a better agreement with us without having to damage their relationship within NATO. The previous conservative governments had looked at the base negotiations and their longstanding agreement with the United States as also a domestic political problem with Papandreou and his socialists, PASAK, who were involved in constant criticism of the Greek government and the U.S. for these bases and the government for maintaining the relationship.

Q: Talk about PASAK.

JONES: What happened as a consequence was that the Greek conservatives were always at sixes and sevens as to how they would come to any new arrangement with the U.S. For an extended stretch of time, they tried to find an agreement, and there was a set of negotiations in 1980 which ultimately failed. With these negotiations, the conservatives were trying to find a defense support and assistance package that would be large enough for them to say to the population, "Well, we won the negotiations, and now you should reelect us." Well, they were never able to find a package that they considered large and secure enough for them to say that they had won the negotiations and be able to take it to the population and into an election. As a consequence, when they were forced by the parliamentary term running out to hold the elections, they lost. Here we had PASAK and the socialists in power. That was not perceived or expected to be a lot of fun. Papandreou was even more pointedly hostile to us than he was in later years, reflecting the belief that the United States had connived with the colonels to oust the previous Greek government and had particularly been hostile to him while he was in opposition. But, nevertheless, there was renewed pressure for a new set of Greek base negotiations. This led to a requirement for a lead negotiator. Bartholomew, who had been the Special Cyprus Coordinator, was tagged to be the Greek base negotiator. This was no special kudo or special privilege for Bartholomew. In effect, he was given a set of negotiations which were expected to fail. First of all, we didn't think we would be able to come to a successful arrangement with PASAK or an agreement that the Greek socialists would let us have and second, because we didn't give a damn whether they failed or not. If they failed or didn't come to an agreement, the status quo simply continued. But Bartholomew went about the preparations for it in a very sophisticated way. For this I give him a great deal of respect. What he did was start at the very beginning. He pulled out all of the documentation and material that we had available on the previous round and went through these inch-by-inch and line-by-line. He then went and co-opted or at least neutralized perspective Defense Department and Joint Chiefs of Staff concerns. He worked very carefully on this, making it clear at all levels that the State Department wasn't going to negotiate away their bases, which was their implicit thought. They suspected that any time you put State Department officials in a room with foreigners, the State Department will give away the store and just do anything to get an agreement. Well, Bartholomew was probably better placed than a lot of people to counter this kind of problem because he had spent time at Defense. He had been head of the

Political-Military Bureau. He had some very substantial senior level support in the State Department, specifically Larry Eagleburger, who at that time was the Under Secretary for Political Affairs and who was backing Bartholomew in that manner. Bartholomew went around and met with all of the concerned agencies. In this case, it was the NSA, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Department of Defense, to discuss in very substantial detail what they wanted and how they wanted to go about it. One of the little litanies that he constantly reiterated was that, "We want to know what you want because you're going to have to live with this agreement." This preparation and this transition period took much of the fall of 1982.

At that point, Bartholomew was transitioning out of being the Special Cyprus Coordinator, where I was his support person, and transitioning in to being the Greek base negotiator. There were a number of trips to New York to wind up his activities as special Cyprus coordinator and hand these off to Chris Chapman, who previously had been the DCM in Paris and was almost assassinated while there. Chapman's terminal assignment at the Department was as the Special Cyprus Coordinator.

I continued to try to transition out of being the Cyprus desk officer while helping Bartholomew get ready for this Greek base exercise.

There were interesting administrative elements to it. It shows another side to Bartholomew, one that was particularly interested in pomp and ceremony. Instead of just grabbing a room and a desk and a secretary and starting away on it, he spent a substantial amount of time on getting special quarters arranged for him, carpeting, furniture being requisitioned that reflected in his position his status as the U.S.-Greek base negotiator. The hypothesis on this was that he anticipated perhaps having rounds with the Greeks in Washington for these negotiations or meeting senior Greek authorities in these offices. This was the hypothesis behind it. He also worked vigorously to make sure that he had a very extensive and full travel budget and a large representational budget. He really worked much harder than I've seen other Foreign Service officers work to secure these "perks," although I'm sure it's not unique. But he worked very hard on the amenities and the trappings of being this particular individual. Actually, it was the first time that Bartholomew was ranked as an ambassador even though this was a special ambassadorship. But this was the first time that he had the personal rank of ambassador. So, he saw all of these privileges coming along with it and he wanted to be very sure that he had them all. I won't say that he went down an itemized checklist, but he certainly must have had a mental checklist on how this was to be done. I, working as his executive officer, spent a fair amount of time with the EX office in EUR to get this done. What was interesting also was that they gave it to him. That result was, as much as anything, an illustration that Bartholomew really did have seventh floor backing at a level that I wasn't able to appreciate as simply a midlevel officer. He had authority to fly business class or first class on his flights to Europe. He had authority to use military air. That wasn't that hard, but the first class or business class travel was relatively unique almost 20 years ago.

The preparations in Washington included a great deal of detailed review of the previous set of negotiations and obtaining some sense for what was still available in forms of military assistance that could be packaged and offered to the Greek government. It was also when we looked at each of the bases; we reviewed each of the bases as we needed to know in more detail about what

each one of them did. There were four bases. Two were within Athens vicinity proper. One was called Hellenikon, which was the military half of the civilian airfield. Essentially it would be as if the British government had half of National Airport. One was a naval communications in the suburbs called Neamakri, which also had a variety of special communications elements attached to, subordinated to, incorporated within the facility. Then there were two facilities on Crete. One was a gigantic facility at Heraklion. The other was a combined U.S. and NATO facility at Suda Bay. The facility at Heraklion since it's now been dismantled, was really a very sophisticated and extremely useful electronic intercept site. The facility at Suda Bay was a combined facility with NATO, but it had a variety of important supplies prepositioned there. It was a very good harbor and an excellent overall naval facility.

We started this exercise then in our first round of negotiations leaving on October 20, 1982. Demonstrating just how sharp Bartholomew was on this topic instead of going to Athens directly, he went to the major military commands in Europe. We had started in Washington having seen senior people within the Department of Defense. He met with Frank Carlucci, who was then Deputy SecDef. He met with Richard Perle and talked to him extensively. He talked to senior people within the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I believe that he spoke to General Lincoln, who was head of NSA at that time. The NSA was our intelligence intercept and decoding facility. Each one of these organizations pretty much designated a senior, trusted point of contact for Bartholomew with John Monroe at NSA; an Army colonel in the Department of Defense named Jim Hinds; and an Army lieutenant colonel on the Joint Chiefs of Staff who was also a Greek foreign area Army officer named Dwight Beech. Beech had had previous assignments in Athens, was a Greek language officer as well as being the representative from the Joint Chiefs of Staff on our team, he was also an expert on Greeks substantively while none of the rest of us had had any specific experience with Greece *per se*, although Bartholomew and I had worked on Cyprus and you can't work on Cyprus without working on Greece and Turkey.

The preparation effort. We went first to Frankfurt. At that point, we were at UCOM and had discussions with their senior generals. General Patch was the head of that. Bartholomew reviewed all our objectives of reaching an agreement with the Greeks but not an agreement that was unsatisfactory to the defense operations. We then flew back to London and had an extended session with the Chief of U.S. Naval Operations Europe, CINCUSNAVEUR. After that, we flew once again to Germany and had more discussions within Germany and finally flew on to Athens. About October 27, we had what turned out to be really the only full formal negotiation opening with the Greek negotiating team. Here again, to preface the way the negotiations went, there was a very distinct decision on Bartholomew's part to hold a different kind of negotiating. Instead of having full negotiating teams with spinoffs for subgroups, Bartholomew elected to do it alone. He had the DCM in our Athens embassy, Alan Berlind, along with him partially as his note taker and partially as his expert on Greece. But for the many, many meetings that followed this, which were held with the Greek deputy foreign minister Yanis Kapsis, Bartholomew pursued the approaches to the discussions himself.

That approach led to a number of bureaucratic pullings and haulings, particularly within the embassy in Athens. Here again, Bartholomew elected an approach that I can only describe as different. He set up the DECA team as specifically separate from and gated off from the rest of the embassy. We were within the embassy, but we were within a suite of rooms that had been

vacated for our purposes with a gate on them that could be opened only by those of us who had the combination for it. While there was one member of the embassy staff, their political-military officer, Peter Collins, who was part of our group, the rest of the embassy was assiduously excluded. It was a unique circumstance where they were not permitted to see our traffic or read our incoming or outgoing messages. We did not brief anybody other than the DCM and the ambassador, and Ambassador Monteagle Stearns pretty much held himself apart from these. Stearns I think believed that these negotiations would fail and that they would turn to him again to pick up the pieces since the previous ambassador had failed. Stearns wanted to keep clean hands on this exercise, where they would let Bartholomew do his thing until it didn't work out, and then Stearns and the embassy would be able to put up their hand and say, "Your special negotiator from Washington came and did his thing and it didn't work. What that demonstrates is that the resident ambassador should be the negotiator for these kinds of negotiations." This also illustrates again one of the underlying questions of how do you do one of these special negotiations? Do you do it with the embassy team, who is expected to be expert, coherent, well plugged in, but perhaps too close to the government, having other fish to fry, having other points of leverage that can be applied to them implicitly if not explicitly? Or do you do it with a special team from Washington that has nothing to win or lose except the negotiations but presumably lacks the substantive expertise on the intricacies of the Greeks in this case, their history, the issues in play, and perhaps wouldn't be supple enough to recognize ploys being presented by the other side, or perhaps not be able or interested in making the implicit or explicit tradeoffs with other issues that might be in play in the bilateral relationship. That was one of the issues that U.S. foreign policy faced during this period in the early '80s when doing base negotiations and a whole bunch of them that played out in different ways. We had them in Greece first, then subsequently under Bartholomew as ambassador in Spain. We had them in Spain, where he reversed his own position and decided that "where you sit is where you stand," and actually he had a hell of a difficult time as the negotiator for the Spanish base agreement; there are people that feel that he "lost" this time. You had another one for the Azores in which, in effect, we did send something of a special team to negotiate in the Azores. But what we came down to was, how does it seem to be best on each one of the agreements? This also was true of the Turkish effort. We had a different approach. It worked differently in each issue and on each base negotiation, there were different sets of tensions. In this instance by sending the special team from Washington, which was if not a first, at least a first in dealing with the Greeks. We had had one full failed round before and there had been previous abortive efforts to reach agreements with the Greeks which simply didn't work out. But this effort by Bartholomew, in this manner, was designed to try something new.

Q: What was the reading when you got there on Papandreou and PASAK? What did they really want?

JONES: This became one of the ongoing exercises. We certainly knew that PASAK was hardly friendly to the U.S. PASAK and Papandreou were continuing to be cozy with the Libyans at a time when we certainly were far more hostile to Qadhafi and the Libyans than the Greeks were doing. It was the Greeks that were more pointedly difficult with the Turks than we thought was necessary at that time, at a juncture when we thought perhaps there were chances to reach agreements to lessen tensions with the Turks, but this was not on the Greek agenda. This was true bilaterally with the Turks, trilaterally through Cyprus, and multilaterally in NATO, as well

as directly bilaterally with the U.S. As a consequence, there were things that Papandreou wanted from the U.S., things like a presidential invitation to visit, that he never got. But what did they want as an agreement? We thought that they wanted at least some of the bases eliminated. That would be their great victory, that they would remove specific bases from Greece. One of the most obvious ones was Hellenikon. It was a flashpoint at all times for demonstrations. The Greek Communist Party, which stood even further to the left than PASAK, stimulated demonstrations. There were endless labor fights associated with specific individuals and specific elements of the union that operated on Hellenikon. It was a highly visible U.S. presence in a country that wasn't terribly thrilled with us. That led to constant tension, tension that PASAK was quite happy to exacerbate on a regular basis. If they could make us uncomfortable in Hellenikon, if they could push us into a position where we would conclude that we were better off doing what we were doing in Hellenikon someplace else (because we also flew major important missions out of Hellenikon that were fairly obvious kind of flights), we could have been manipulated, nudged, into giving up our position in Hellenikon.

Q: But wasn't the other shoe that we kept saying, "Okay, we understand your problem with us and we're not that happy with you. We have our friends the Turks over here who will probably do better by us." Anything that we do for the Turks is a negative as far as any Greek government is concerned.

JONES: You're right and this was one of our counterstatements. Bartholomew would regularly say, "We don't stay where we're not wanted. We assume that this agreement is beneficial to you" and note the various things that we were doing bilaterally and multilaterally in the way of military support and assistance and the like. Nevertheless, trying to use the Turks against the Greeks has its downsides as well. The more you deal with the Greeks, the more you like the Turks. The more you deal with the Turks, the better the Greeks look. For all of their intensity in being difficult, we also could note that, at the end of the road, we tended to get what we wanted from the Greeks in the way of port calls or overflights. We would be under constant challenge and there would be a constant irritation associated with this. There would be constant arguments and difficulties on it. But in the end, we tended to get what we were specifically seeking.

It was just that getting there was not half the fun. On the other hand, we always had the feeling that the Turks were sort of like us – the bluff, hardy type. But trying to get a Turk to change his mind when he had said "no" was impossible. If you added up the entire column, the Turks really didn't give us as much as we might have thought we were getting from them. We just assumed that we had a better relationship with the Turks because they didn't yell and scream and hissy fit all the time. They just said "no" and didn't go much further beyond that. The Greeks made a great deal of commotion over the entire exercise, leaving us completely exhausted, worn out and unhappy and hardly noticing almost that we had gotten pretty much what we had wanted when we went into these discussions.

I think PASAK in the end wanted and needed something that looked like a victory for them. Otherwise, there was no way that they could rationalize having come to terms with us. We were, after all, their *bete noir*. We were what they had been so critical of for the conservative opposition to be dealing with us. They have to have some strong rationale of their own for reaching an agreement with us at all. Thus this negotiation actually was the long, slow process of

discovering what they wanted, what were their bottom lines, and how they fit into what we could agree to as an acceptable arrangement ourselves. One of the things that the Department of Defense always resisted was a prioritizing of what their most important base was and what their most important activities within these bases were. They were convinced that if they had given us any priorities, we would immediately lop off the bottom line and say, “How fortunate you are that we saved your top three.” So, we never got the Department of Defense to prioritize its activities at least during the process of our negotiations. Perhaps we could have made judgments of our own, but we weren’t doing that. We were trying to instead develop a full appreciation within ourselves as a team for exactly what we were doing in support for the Greek government, what agreements were extant with the Greek government, what could be developed in the way of military assistance and support, and what could be done in the way of special economic cooperation so that it wasn’t just a Defense Cooperation Agreement, it was a Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement. We could provide what would be viewed as more and more available general support for PASAK coming to an agreement with us.

In that first round, which ran until October 16, we went out after this initial meeting with the Greeks on a formal team by team basis to each one of the bases. We flew to each one of them separately and we had extensive discussions with the people on the site in Heraklion and Suda Bay and Neamakri and Hellenikon and got a very good sense of what they were doing, how they were doing it, why it was important – things along this line. Again, this was all preparation for Bartholomew. The bottom line for this would be that Bartholomew was astonishingly well prepared. He was, instead of being the neophyte negotiator in Greece who was going to be chopped up by this canny old journalist expert in Greece, Yannis Kapsis, far better prepared than Kapsis. Kapsis took effort this casually in the way that, “Well, we always assume that as citizens of our country, we know our country and its problems and issues.” While that’s certainly true in a way, that may not be true on very specific sub-elements of it and a very specific set of issues. Bartholomew, by the combination of the prior preparation for readings of the previous material and endless work on the negotiation while he was in Athens and to this degree his support team gets some credit, nevertheless, mastered, internalized, and used extensively a briefing book that at the end was probably about three inches thick. While Kapsis used to refer to it jestingly as “Bartholomew’s brains,” it was a reflection of Bartholomew’s personal preparation and his ability when given one problem, no matter how complex and how difficult, to master it so comprehensively that there truly would have been no one in the world who was better prepared or more able to work at that problem.

One of the other issues that we faced immediately, which was one of the reasons for preventing the rest of the embassy from virtually any access to us, and to the negotiating information, was the thoroughly unprofessional, in Western terms Greek press. The previous negotiations had been plagued with rumors, leaks, misinterpretations, and misinformation to which the embassy and the Greek and U.S. governments had to respond to in one manner, shape, or form. When literally nobody in the U.S. embassy spoke to the press in any manner, shape, or form and nobody in the embassy except the ambassador, DCM, and one individual in the political-military section had any access to our material, we closed down any information that could be attributed to the U.S. government by the Greek press. It didn’t matter to us whether the Greeks made all sorts of statements that were incorrect. If accurate information was in the Greek press, then it would have had to have come from the Greek government and we could task them for having

leaked and why were they leaking this material? As a matter of fact, to give you an illustration of how inaccurate the Greek press could be, they reported the instance in which we flew to Naples to talk to the then head of CINCSOUTH who was Admiral Crowe, who later became our ambassador to the UK. We spoke to him and came back on the same day. The Greek press had us going to Naples on the wrong day in the wrong type of aircraft to meet with the wrong person and coming back at the wrong time. But there was simply nothing that was in the Greek press that could be trusted. We did, however, to keep witting of what was going on in the Greek press, have an individual from USIS, a Greek national, come in on a daily basis and tell us what the Greek press was saying about the negotiations. We simply listened to hear him out and said nothing.

For the first round of negotiations, we only had three people on the U.S. team. It was Lieutenant Colonel Beech, Bartholomew, and myself. This lasted until well into November. We came back and immediately went into the same type of round robin discussions and review that had characterized the exercise prior to going out. Bartholomew briefed the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the “tank” about how things had evolved. We started again a series of working group studies on how the negotiations were evolving. When we went back the next time, which was the second round between the sixth and the 21st of December, we had an expert, Colonel Jim Hinds, from the Defense Department, also accompanying us. The negotiations settled down into this pattern where Bartholomew would go out – oftentimes at what would be relatively late in the evening in U.S. terms – after what would be the end of the normal working day, and spend many hours in discussion with Kapsis, usually accompanied on his side by Alan Berlind. But Bartholomew would then come back and we would debrief. We used the secure facility, the “bubble,” within the embassy constantly.

Q: It's basically a plastic room within a room.

JONES: Yes.

Q: I've spent many hours in there.

JONES: We spent a good deal of time in that facility reviewing. We were concerned about security as one of our sub-element type of problems. We were concerned about security in two directions against terrorism within Athens because the November 17 movement, which remains extant, was certainly very active at that time and every so often, about once a year or once every other year, a U.S. government official was killed. So, as a consequence, we were at least somewhat aware to very aware of this type of problem. We had a Greek bodyguard and an official escort when we traveled. We had secured rooms within the Hilton Hotel. We always used the same rooms. We had them swept periodically for potential electronic eavesdropping. We had one instance, which was never explained, in which someone was seen in Bartholomew's room. We were never able to determine who this individual was, what they were doing there, or anything associated with that, which left people a bit nervous. There was at least for me a curious combination of tension, pressure, and semi-holiday associated with many of the experiences and times there. So we could understand Greece better, we toured. We went to a number of the famous sites – the Oracle at Delphi, Mykonos, Crete, elsewhere within the country from time to time, trying to get both a sense of the country historically. We all read deeply on it, but yet the

curious hours that we were keeping, the night and day exercises in which we were at the embassy early in the morning, late at night, on weekends, on U.S. holidays, and the tensions associated with operating in an area that we considered – if not as hostile as the Soviet Union potentially dangerous in ways that not even the Soviet Union could match – were unique.

Q: You don't worry about assassinations in the Soviet Union.

JONES: You didn't worry about being assassinated or killed by accident in the Soviet Union. If anyone had been killed in the Soviet Union, you would assume that it would have been deliberate. But the November 17 assassins were and have remained very mysterious. Their ability to strike without being able to be tracked down has been one of the enduring mysteries of Greek domestic terrorism. I personally felt that our driver wasn't a terribly smart driver in security terms. He persistently drove down the most crowded street and made a turn to our hotel which hung us up for an extended period of time making that turn. It left me continually feeling that a man on a motorcycle zipping up a side street and turning while we were there could fill our unarmored vehicle full of holes in seconds and continue zipping up what was the main street in Athens and away into the distance without being caught at all. As a consequence, I often walked back from the embassy rather than take the automobile.

Q: You mentioned security and leaks. There are two major lobbies in the United States in foreign affairs. The Israeli lobby is renowned. Anything that comes out of our embassy in Tel Aviv is said to appear on congressmen's desks faster than they can get to the Secretary of State. The Greek lobby is very big. Were you concerned about reporting back to Washington and friends of Greece in Congress particularly or not?

JONES: I don't really feel that this was a specific problem at that time, partly because the Greek government at that point was not the Greek government that was most loved within Congress or even within a lot of the Greek-American community. What they would have wanted was an agreement that benefited Greece and, to the extent possible, disadvantaged Turkey and aided Cyprus. But it was also a low-key negotiation because so little was expected of it. This was a type of negotiation that we anticipated would fail rather than succeed, and it didn't matter to us whether it succeeded. If we had a question relating to the Hill, it was going to be how we would present any agreement that we reached? Would this be a treaty or would it be an executive agreement? In the end, we certainly thought that we were better off with an executive agreement. Trying to get a treaty through Congress was even harder 20 years ago when we had had even less a record of success than we have had in the late '80s and early '90s with a certain number of the arms control agreements and general international agreements which have been presented successfully to Congress as treaties. But it had been very difficult to get anything other than a generalized base agreement in an executive agreement form through. That was what we finally elected to do. So, as we went on and we continued to try to work on some portions of our exercise such as what form this agreement would take, we had a draft agreement that we were working on, we had various preambles that were evolving, and we worked on them and slowly began moving toward an exchange of text and discussions of this nature. All of this was gamed out. One of the things that we were particularly interested in was clandestine reporting on what was happening within the Greek government and how they were viewing it. We worked very closely with a lot of people within the embassy to try to get the best judgments that we could on

what the Greek government was thinking and how it was thinking these thoughts. Indeed, there was one instance where a senior official in the Greek government was reported as saying to another senior official in the Greek government, “Well, suppose we ask them to leave and they won’t?” The reflection somehow was that, if we were anywhere near as powerful as the Greeks and PASAK believed we were, we wouldn’t have had any problems at all. But it was in retrospect this sort of struggle on their part to understand what they could secure from us as much as our effort to understand what they were willing to settle for and what they really wanted out of the agreement that might be interesting in diplomatic historical terms and senses. How does a relatively new socialist government work its way through a relationship with a country that is both overwhelmingly powerful, immensely potentially valuable to it as a counter to its hereditary enemy, and yet not at all in sympathy with its personal ideological objectives? How does this work? PASAK had a circle to square. Our strength in the overall historical aspects, the fact that we did have a theoretical, if not real, Turkish counter to put forward, and our ultimate indifference to whether we got an agreement or not, were very substantial strengths.

Q: We’re going to stop at this point.

Today is September 29, 1999. We’re really working on the ’83-’85 period. We’re beginning to talk about the intermediate range missile problem?

JONES: Not at this point. Let’s just finish the Greek base negotiations. At the beginning of ’83, we were still involved in the base negotiations with Bartholomew as the negotiator and a relatively small team of people as our negotiating backup group. What happened between the early part of 1983 and mid-July was that we went back and forth to Greece four more times, each one of which was about a three to five week segment of time except the very last point when we went back for about four days in mid-July to wrap it up. It remained a very contentious process. Bartholomew continued to meet virtually alone with the deputy foreign minister, Yannis Kapsis. These sessions would often begin very late in the evening for Americans, which put the pressure on us, but which was not so intellectually and physically different for the Greeks. You would start after what we would consider a working day over and sometimes well into the evening and then run for hours, sometimes many hours, of discussions between Bartholomew and Kapsis. We continued to negotiate almost on a basis of implied hostility rather than on anything that would reflect the fact that we were both NATO allies. For example, we never socialized with the Greek negotiators. The money that had been allocated for representational activity was never used. The contacts, although they were ostensibly friendly and social and Bartholomew met with Kapsis, were really just very tough, very difficult negotiations.

Q: Even when we negotiated with the Soviets, there usually was a time when everybody would break and go off and have snacks, tea, or vodka off in little groups and kind of work around the edges. Was this on purpose on the Greek side, on our side, mutually?

JONES: You’re certainly right in how we dealt with the Russians in the INF negotiations in which I was involved. We always had a certain amount of social engagement, and that was one of the areas in which people floated ideas “unofficially” but always officially in reality and tried

to get some indication as to what their thinking was. But this was, in my view, much more a decision on the part of the Greeks not to socialize with us. We had programmed a good deal of representational money that we could have used if they had been more interested in reciprocal parties and socializing and points along that nature. The only light aspect of it during this period was that for part of one round, several of us were able to bring our wives to Athens. Although they didn't socialize with the Greeks either, it was slightly easier because between the period of October and July, about nine months of work, we were out of the country close to half the time, which was not unbearable but, nevertheless, almost all of us had young children or other requirements at home. Being able to bring our wives there once, and that was the case for me and also for Bartholomew, made things just a little easier. It gave them a little better sense of what we were doing and what we were enduring because our negotiations went on despite the fact that they were there. They were perhaps touring or doing things of that nature, and then we would socialize in the evening with wives. But with the Greeks, we didn't socialize at all. Frankly, I have no recollections of any of the individual Greeks involved in their team operations or their support. It's possible that I only met them at the very first introductory meeting.

I also have to say that by the time we got to mid-June, we thought the whole thing had fallen apart. At the end of our sixth round, we didn't think we were going to be able to come to closure. We had exchanged texts and, at a point where we thought we had just about wrapped it up, the Greeks came in with a very extensively revised new text which was completely unexpected and largely unacceptable. So with a substantial amount of regret, we packed up and went home. In the intervening four weeks before we went back in mid-July, there was an effort in part directed by the Department and by Ambassador Stearns to get the Greeks to think more realistically about elements of the proposal and the negotiations that they had been pushing. Stearns had kept himself pretty far out of the negotiations. That was partly out of irritation that he had not been given the responsibility to do the negotiations. It was partly also an effective tactic of having that guy from Washington be the "bad cop," while he was the very knowledgeable and extraordinarily congenial Montegale Stearns who would be able to serve if necessary as the "good cop." In effect, what happened was that there was some additional compromise on each side of the Atlantic. One of the things that had been worked over most extensively was the question of the duration of this agreement. We reached a term of agreement which was for five years. What we had done in the process was largely strip the agreement down to address less in the way of defense support and status of forces. It was much closer to being a bare bones agreement, a much shorter agreement, than previous extensive aspects and extensive agreements on base negotiations. The result was an agreement in which technically we gave the Greeks very little of what we thought we might have to yield. Indeed, Bartholomew had constructed a labyrinth of "withholds" that we would not give the Greeks unless we were pressed or in return for some aspect of the negotiating more attractive language here and a concession there. In the end, he had held onto almost all of these. In theory, the Greeks could have gotten a significantly better agreement for themselves, but they did not. At the same time, we believed that the Greeks did get the kind of agreement that ultimately they wanted, which was one with a time limit associated with it instead of the open-ended agreement that had previously been the case. But as none of the individual bases were affected, that was also sufficiently satisfactory to us. When we went back to Greece, there was the standard flurry of emotional intensity with a good deal of back and forth in the way of telephone calls within the Department to people in the U.S., within the Greek government, and also a session with Papandreou which wound up some of these

elements of aspects of criminal jurisdiction. For example, who would have what authority over American military servicemen who were in Greece? As there had been a couple of incidents involving Americans, and the Greeks handled them in ways that certainly dismayed the U.S. military forces there, we were standing very hard on the continued existence of the current Status of Forces Agreement, which gave us authority over our own people rather than the Greek government having authority over them.

We had a certain amount of fun during this period as well. One of the touches of humor was associated with Bartholomew having broken his commitment to stop smoking. This was at a time when everybody smoked everywhere and this was particularly true in Greece, where Greeks smoked even more heavily than Americans. But Bartholomew would be in the “bubble” and he would have his cigarettes but he would not be able to find matches. As a consequence, the team, even the nonsmokers among them, started carrying matches and when Bartholomew started patting himself for matches, we would start tossing books of matches at him. We ended also at a party back in Washington in which my wife had drawn a large cartoon figure who was actually a European caricature of the American Western hero. This Western cowboy hero was “Lucky Luke.” Lucky Luke was so fast on the draw that he could outshoot his shadow. We had Bartholomew as Lucky Luke, the gun slinger. Kapsis was the shadow who was fully of holes. All around him were stapled and pasted books of matches and it just simply said, “For our matchless negotiator.” So, that was a cute denouement to the exercise.

Q: I'd like to go back to the feeling at the time. There must have been the feeling both with the military and with State of thinking, “Okay, but we've got to figure out how to get the hell out of Greece. Greece just isn't that friendly a place anymore.” This old brothers in arms business was almost dead by then.

JONES: I wouldn't say so at all. This was certainly not the case by anybody in the military. Every single one of them wanted to maintain every base. We did not want to leave. We wanted to be able to stay doing the things that we were doing, particularly both at Hellenikon, Neamakri, and Heraklion. All of those were facilities from which, at that point, we couldn't do what we were doing there in the way of intelligence collection by anything other than extremely expensive alternatives. Now we have satellites that are doing most of our SIGINT and ELINT work, but in 1982 and as far as we could tell into the future, that just wasn't the case. Hellenikon was a very useful transit point when we were headed into the Middle East; it was very useful for our entire military airlift. Neamakri was regarded as one of our primary relay stations for all sorts of diplomatic communications. It really wasn't anything that we wanted to get rid of. Suda Bay was again also regarded not only as an extremely useful NATO base for the Mediterranean but an area which we had prepositioned a certain amount of war material. Although it was the smallest of our bases, we didn't want to give up any of this.

Q: Was there the feeling at any point that the Greeks might just say, “Get out?”

JONES: Again, that was conceivable. At that juncture, before this DECA, we had an agreement that tied our bases to Greek participation in the NATO agreement itself. So, the Greeks really could not leave as in “throw us out” without also leaving NATO. NATO was regarded by them as something of a shield against the Turks. So, they had a variety of complex problems as well.

Also, NATO was a mechanism in which not only could they shield themselves against the Turks, but they could also belabor the Turks and give Ankara a good deal of difficulty so far as getting assistance from NATO, so far as working in great cooperation with NATO. Of course, NATO requires consensus and, if the Greeks were there to prevent consensus, the Turks couldn't get certain things multilaterally that they would if the Greeks had suddenly and totally withdrawn from NATO and evicted U.S. bases. Also, there was certainly a problem for Papandreu because you still had a situation among Greek conservatives, who believed that the American presence was also a shield against communism. If the Americans, who had saved the Greeks from communism, were suddenly evicted by this substantially left of center government there are people within the Greek government that thought that it could stimulate still another coup despite the fact that the Greek military was hardly either in good condition or in good favor within the Greek population. I mentioned to you in the last session that there was this question that we understood and circulated at an intimate, high level meeting of PASAK activists where one of them said something like, "Well, suppose we told the Americans to leave but they wouldn't?" To us, even at the time, we couldn't believe that they could believe that if we were directed to depart we wouldn't depart. Bartholomew as part of his negotiating presentation was saying, "Our assumption is that these bases are as useful to you as they are to us, and we don't stay where we're not wanted," which was a useful negotiating ploy but it was also the truth. As Bartholomew tended to say, it had the Kissingerian virtue of not only being a useful presentational point but also the truth. So, no, we didn't want to leave. If we had been told that we would close down these bases or we had to close this base, we would have done so. We took our bases out of France, and we certainly didn't want to leave France in the mid-'60s either. Probably we wanted to leave France even less than we wanted to leave Greece. But we did. All of our bases in Greece were of substantial military utility at the time. As time has gone on, the things that they were doing became less necessary and less useful. My understanding is we have closed almost all of them, if not all of them, by now.

RICHARD SACKETT THOMPSON
Greek Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1982-1984)

Richard Sackett Thompson was born in 1933 in Pullman, Washington. His father was a college French professor, who later became a Dean at Washington State University. It was on a trip to France with his mother in 1952 that impressed him so much, he resolved to become a member of the foreign service. He graduated from Washington State University in 1955, after taking his junior year at the Institute of Political Studies in Paris. He was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford and obtained his master's degree from Georgetown in 1980. He spent two years in the Army in 1958-60. He has also served in Aruba, Niger, France, Algiers and Vietnam. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on February 25 and August 12, 1994.

Q: *And then back to European Affairs.*

THOMPSON: Yes, I did come back to European Affairs and served as Greek Desk officer for two years.

Q: As an old Greek hand myself, I spent four years in Athens, I can't think of a worse can of worms than Greek affairs. For a small country they work very hard to get us involved. They have a very strong lobby here, etc. What was the situation in Greece at that time and what were the things you were having to deal with?

THOMPSON: It was similar to my earlier tour on Irish affairs, in a way, because again the domestic component was very important, as you say. I was in regular touch with the Greek-American organizations, which was always a pleasure because they are certainly very nice people. Again, a lot of the attention had to be focused on the congressional interest in our relations between Greece and Turkey. One of the biggest events was the renegotiation of our bases agreement with Greece. That was carried out on our side by Reginald Bartholomew, now ambassador to Italy. I don't think he was in the Foreign Service at that time, but he had been involved in diplomatic efforts of various sorts for quite a while under various administrations, and was a very able man. So he carried the burden of these base negotiations with Greece. They had a recently elected prime minister, Andreas Papandreu, who had a 1960s American wife whom he had met while a professor in the United States, who was farther to the left than he was and led the women's movement of the party.

So it was a matter of accommodating. I think Greek basic interests were still to have us there because they didn't want us to lose our ties with Greece completely and go over to the Turkish side. We had a balancing act because Turkey played a very important role in the NATO plans. It was on the southern flank of the Soviet Union and if we could keep a good, strong Turkish military establishment in place as a constant threat to the Soviets, it would at a minimum make it difficult for them to move south and at a maximum conceivably be a beachhead for NATO to attack them from the south. So Turkey was a very important country, also important in Middle Eastern affairs, for the United States, but Turkey didn't have the congressional and political support the Greeks had, so Congress always insisted that our aid to Turkey had to be balanced in a certain ratio with aid to Greece. My main efforts were really bureaucratic, for example, we had some airplanes that were obsolete from our point of view, but still useful to Greece and Turkey. What share of them would each country get? Even though Turkey really needed them more, we had to give some to Greece to keep the Greek lobbyists off our backs. So, again, a lot of what I had to do was dealing with the domestic political pressures rather than with the country, itself.

Q: We have real Greek hands who have been involved for a long time, and Turkish hands. Did you find when you got there it was hard not to absorb the Greek cause within the bureaucratic world or did you have to fight the tendency to see things through Greek eyes?

THOMPSON: This sort of thing does happen and I think the people in our embassy in Athens...I think it is an almost inevitable part of the Foreign Service when you are in a country and constantly bombarded by the country's point of view. Of course, your duty is to convey that point of view to Washington. Now and then in a minority of cases you come to dislike the people rather than adopt their point of view. On the Greek Desk I think we were pretty objective for two reasons. One, I was from the outside and didn't have any prejudices as I came into the job, and

secondly, the old Greek hands were very often old Turkish hands as well. My immediate superior, the deputy director, had served in both Greece and Turkey and spoke both languages. So they had a pretty good overall view. The other area in which these differences constantly were manifesting themselves were in NATO exercises. Presumably they were partners in NATO but Greece and Turkey have very differing views of territorial issues and law of the sea issues within the Aegean Sea between them, so there were constant problems in dealings with NATO maneuvers, etc. What our fleet in the Mediterranean did as part of these maneuvers was the subject of constant disputes between Greece and Turkey and we couldn't help but become involved.

An anecdote. As part of my initial consultations I had a trip to Greece, of course, and I went through Naples to talk with the political advisor to CINCSOUTH, our commander at Naples who commanded our fleet in the Mediterranean. As soon as I got into the POLAD's office I was immediately ushered into the office of the admiral himself, Admiral Crowe. He said that 60 percent of his time was spent on Greek/Turkish issues, so if the Greek Desk Officer from the State Department came through he wanted to talk with him. So we had a good talk.

Q: What was your impression of Andreas Papandreou?

THOMPSON: Well, I think people didn't like him but as diplomats we had to deal with him. I find it hard to say much beyond that. He was in part a product of the 1960s American campuses. His wife more than he. Once the Greek civil war was won by the right, the rightist supporters kept control there for many years and when Papandreou was elected it was a bursting forth of forces that had been penned up for a long time. As time went on I think they became more mature and cooled off, but it was quite an event when he was first elected.

Q: Did you get any feeling that the Reagan administration had any Greek policy or was it just something to deal with?

THOMPSON: Well, when I came in the administration had been in power for some time, so I don't have any feel for differences between one administration from another.

DAVID M. EVANS
Political Advisor to Commander-in-Chief
London, England (1982-1986)

Mr. Evans was born and raised in Philadelphia, PA and was educated at Harvard University and the University of Belgrade Law School. After service in the US Army, he joined the Foreign Service in 1963. As an Economic Specialist, Mr. Evans served in Warsaw, Belgrade, Moscow and London. In addition to his economic assignments, he served in senior level positions dealing with International Security and Counter-Terrorism. He also served as Political Advisor to the Commander-in Chief, US Naval Forces in Europe. Mr. Evans was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

Q: How about the Greek/Turkish dispute? Was that a thorn in your side?

EVANS: That was mostly a NATO issue. For example, when my admiral went there, we went to discuss strictly bilateral American/Greek or American/Turkish issues. When the admiral went there in his NATO hat, he went there with the other POLAD from Naples. Then, they discussed Naples issues. The NATO admiral in his NATO hat forbade himself in his other hat from talking about NATO issues. The Greek/Turkish dispute was one that I had enough of back in PM. I was glad to be out of it. We were aware of the problems which occasionally it made it difficult to deal particularly with the Greeks, on whom we were very dependent for facilities and repair facilities, and basing facilities. The Greeks were very supportive of the PLO, we felt, and lenient toward terrorism in general. They were not reliable partners in that sense. There was unhappiness with that. Turkey was viewed, again, from our national point of view, as a very strong ally. Our military seemed to have a really good relationship with the Turks. But the Greeks were difficult.

JOHN NIX
Political Officer
Athens (1983-1985)

John Nix was born in Alabama in 1938. He attended the U.S. Military Academy and served in the U.S. Army from 1960 to 1971 as a major overseas. Upon entering the Foreign Service in 1971, his assignments abroad have included Nairobi, Moscow, Nicosia, Athens and Berlin. Mr. Nix was interviewed in 1994 by Raymond Ewing.

Q: In 1983, you went to Athens. What did you do there? How long were you in Athens?

NIX: I was there a total of four years. My first two years were taken up primarily in Political Section duties. Very standard political work. I was the number two officer there in the Political Section working for Townsend Friedman. I continued monitoring Cyprus from the Greek standpoint. I still handled anything that came up for the embassy having to deal with Cyprus. I was "in charge" of our reporting on the New Democracy Party, which is the conservative party in Athens.

Q: Was it in opposition?

NIX: It was in opposition at that time. Andreas Papandreou had been elected Prime Minister and Greece had entered what was then called the EC, now the EU. As a matter of fact, the summer I arrived, Greece was just taking up its first presidency of the EC, the rotating presidency. We had an officer in the Political Section who for that six month period was assigned to liaise with the person down in the Greek Foreign Ministry who was handing the Greek EC presidency duties and to handle all of our diplomatic input into that role.

Q: Even at that time, there was sort of an established pattern that we would exchange views with

the country occupying the European Community presidency on all sorts of world issues of interest to us and then receive briefings after there had been discussions in the Council meetings.

NIX: Exactly. To just add a little more perspective, Greece had already shown signs that it would be a thorn in the side of the EC. It was sort of a strange situation. The government had always been vocally opposed to EC membership, to NATO membership, to all of these western-style ideas-

Q: That the party had been against.

NIX: The party when it was out of office. It came into office and it almost seemed as if they were fighting against the institutions from within. At least, I'm sure that's the way it was perceived by certain people in Washington, by certain people in Brussels. We in the embassy in Greece often found ourselves in the role of trying to maintain a certain stability in the relationship when people on both sides were almost, it seemed, operating at a level of relations which couldn't get any worse. There was almost a daily crisis in Greek-American relations through those years. There was a hypersensitivity in certain U. S. quarters to Papandreou. Whatever he said critical of the U.S. and /or NATO tended to be magnified beyond the level that would have been the case with another leader.

We also had the terrible problem of anti-U.S. terrorism in Greece at the time. A few months after I arrived, Colonel Tsantes from the U.S. military mission was killed by the November 17 terrorist group. Attacks continued throughout the decade. The perception in the United States that the Greek government was not doing enough to combat terrorism or was not being cooperative enough with the U.S. government was widespread and deep. I certainly believe that this perception still exists today.

Q: As you said, the main point of contact in the Political Section with the opposition, with the New Democracy Party, which had been the government party until not too long before and was against PASOK and Papandreou - were some of these feelings about the unreliability of Papandreou, PASOK, Greece being sent to you by New Democracy, or were they trying to maybe put things into a longer-term perspective?

NIX: No, they tried to play that game, but I personally didn't buy it. I didn't buy it for a very good reason. The anti-U.S. terrorism actually began in 1976 with the assassination of Richard Welch there. That was during the New Democracy government. The New Democracy government remained in power for another six years. They were either unable or unwilling to do anything about it. This was always my personal argument, that it's not the PASOK government that's the problem here. It's the fact that they don't have a well-developed, modern counterterrorism system within their security establishment.

Q: How about the attitude though toward NATO, toward the European Community, toward the United States aside from the question of terrorism?

NIX: On the surface, they definitely gave lip service to being more cooperative. Of course, we don't want to downgrade the importance of Karamanlis in being the Greek leader who had the

courage to bring Greece into the EC in the first place. This was very important. But on the other hand, that New Democracy government was not able to establish a NATO land headquarters in Greece, for example, which was one of the longstanding objectives of NATO at the time. Because of Greek political realities, the fact that the Greek-Turkish rivalry is so important in Greece, even though they might have wished to be more accommodating to the United States and to the NATO Commanding General, they simply couldn't do it. They could not make that move to be more cooperative. I don't believe they went out of their way to create problems for the relationship, which in fact certain people in the Papandreou government did do during the period when I was there.

Q: When you went to Athens, I think the ambassador was Monty Stearns.

NIX: That's correct. Monty Stearns was the ambassador. Alan Berlind was the DCM. We had an extremely professional and very well-run embassy. Ambassador Stearns was very careful always to maintain cordial relationships with Papandreou. They met regularly. He was very, very assiduous in assuring that, even though the atmospherics were bad sometimes, when we had to talk about truly important things, he always had access to Papandreou and they could talk about what they needed to talk about.

Q: He also, of course, would see people on the New Democracy side as well, former...

NIX: Absolutely. He was very close friends with George Rallis, who had been the Prime Minister between Karamanlis and Papandreou. Then, after the election was lost by New Democracy, Rallis was succeeded by Evangelos Averoff, who was the party leader at the time I arrived. He was also very close to Stearns. My own contacts in the party were very easy. It was a very approachable party. They didn't stand on ceremony. You could virtually go and see almost anyone you wanted. The American embassy had a certain status in town. Gathering information was not hard. The hard part was trying to sift it out and figure out which information was credible and worthwhile.

Q: Who was the President of Greece at this time, 1983?

NIX: Karamanlis was President when I arrived. He served out his term and then Papandreou pushed him out sort of unceremoniously and installed a little known judge, Sartzetakis. The only thing this judge had on his record that would seem to make him an obvious choice was that he was the judge in the famous "Z" case, about which a well-known movie was made.

Q: But when Karamanlis was President after having, as you said before, led Greece back toward NATO, into the European Community, and so on, restored democracy in Greece, had enormous prestige both within the country and internationally, his presence as President, even though he did not have a direct political role, served to temper somewhat the PASOK tendencies and gave people both within the country and outside some confidence that things would go on a somewhat even keel. Was that right?

NIX: That's absolutely correct. As a matter of fact, the Greek constitution had a pretty strong role for the Greek President. In the final analysis, the Greek President had the ability to dissolve

Parliament and call new elections solely on his own authority. In fact, that has not been done. It probably never will be done. But the point is that it was always there. It has been debated in the press and in political circles as a limitation on the power of the Prime Minister.

When we look back, we can see clearly what Papandreou had in mind. He wanted to weaken the role of the Presidency and to strengthen the role of the Prime Minister. In order to do that, he had to get rid of Karamanlis. There was no way that Karamanlis would have allowed this to take place. He unceremoniously dumped him and then he proceeded to do a whole series of audacious things. He installed his own President, a relatively unknown person. In order to install this President, in order to muster the 180 votes which were necessary under the so-called "third ballot" in Parliament (Out of 300, you have to have 180 on the third ballot. Otherwise, Parliament is automatically dissolved and new elections are called.), he had to bring back into Parliament to vote the person that he had appointed as acting President in Karamanlis' place. Once he had his own President placed, he proceeded to introduce changes to the Constitution. He changed the Constitution. The Presidency in Greece today is virtually powerless. It's a figurehead, as compared to what it was before Papandreou did all this. So, Papandreou was bold. He was absolutely single-minded in his purpose. He did outrageous things, but he got away with it.

Q: You didn't have any direct contact with Papandreou while you were there?

NIX: Very seldom. I went along a few times to take notes at meetings.

Q: Who was the succeeding ambassador?

NIX: Robert Keeley.

ROBERT J. WOZNIAK
Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Athens (1983-1988)

Mr. Wozniak was born in Michigan and educated at the University of Chicago, William College and the University of Indiana. After service in the U.S. Navy in WWII, he joined the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1963. His service included several assignments at USIA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. as well postings abroad as Public Affairs Officer (or Deputy) in Athens, Nicosia, Damascus, and Rabat. Mr. Wozniak was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 2001.

Q: Okay, then in the summer of '83 you went back to Athens as public affairs officer. That was an assignment that obviously made a lot of sense, since you had served there before and were fluent in Greek. Was there anything special about how you came about getting that assignment?

WOZNIAK: Well I probably was at the time the best Greek speaker in USIA. I think I had mentioned in an earlier session that I had pretty assiduously thrown myself into the language

during my first assignment there in the 60s. There were two other I think reasons why I got that assignment. In the late summer of 1982, there was a ministerial meeting of NATO in Rome. My wife accompanied me there and after the meeting we went on to AFSOUTH in Naples and then to Athens on holiday. The DCM at the time in Athens had been political section chief at U.S. NATO for the first two years of my assignment there, Alan Berlind. Alan wanted me to come to Athens as PAO, but I didn't know the ambassador, Monteagle Stearns, and so he asked me to come by and let Monty make my acquaintance, so that he could make his own determination whether he wanted me to be his PAO or not. In fact he did. That is the reason why we wound up in Athens in the summer of '83.

Q: He was still ambassador when you got there.

WOZNIAK: Yes, he was, and for the next several years. [editor: Ambassador Stearns served from September 1981 to September 1985] Bob Keeley replaced Stearns in the summer of '85. [editor: Ambassador Keeley served from October 1985 to July 1989] The counselors of the embassy were gathered at the ambassadorial residence waiting for him to be brought in from the airport by the DCM. Bob came up to me and said that he had been looking at the staffing pattern in Washington before coming out and saw that I was due out in something like a year or year and a half. Wasn't that too short a time to work together? We had known each other in our first assignments in Athens together in the 60s. I said, "Charlie Wick just yesterday sent a circular cable out saying that there would be no extensions in non-hardship posts for anyone under any circumstances at any time." So it wasn't on. I couldn't be expected to stay longer than the original assignment. Bob said, "He would look into that." He sent Charlie a cable and Charlie turned it around and said, "Sure." I don't think Wick could ever say no to any ambassador. So I wound up staying five years. Half with Stearns and half of them with Bob Keeley.

Q: Well just for the record to correct Mr. Wick, Director Wick could certainly say no to an ambassador from a small country that had no clout, because he did say no to me when I was in Cyprus at the time when he was the director. And it was on a personnel question. He said no actually twice.

WOZNIAK: I am sorry about that, Ray.

Q: So you were in Greece '83 to '88 with two different ambassadors, Ambassador Stearns and Ambassador Keeley. So you had to deal with the Greek media.

WOZNIAK: Which is its own saga. Yes the Greek media are notoriously unreliable and irresponsible.

Q: Did you have much success would you say?

WOZNIAK: Not really. I don't know that anyone ever has. My first guru in the business was an old newsman, information officer in Athens. He used to say and everyone I know that has passed through the information officer incarnation in Athens would vouch for the fact that it is impossible to deal effectively with most of the Greek media. There are responsible elements of course.

Q: So it was a question of responsibility that you could not really rely on them to be accurate to do what you were saying.

WOZNIAK: Certainly not. But you could rely on them to be outrageous, to exacerbate already bad circumstances, to distort and exaggerate, and to annoy, to go out of their way to annoy. I think I may have mentioned in our first session that we lived in a wonderful house that few people wished to live in because it had been the site of the first assassination of an American by 17 November, the notorious Greek terrorism group, or by an individual. No one knows. In a quarter century of its activities, he has never been identified. Few people wish to live in that house because Richard Welch had been shot there.

Q: 1975.

WOZNIAK: That's right, December, '75. Christmas Eve as I recall. Every year on the occasion of the anniversary of the Welch assassination, a weekly newspaper in Greece would publish a photo of the house and a map directing one to it. So this is the kind of irresponsibility. This did not make me feel very comfortable, or my wife.

Q: Did it inhibit your ability to do your work?

WOZNIAK: No. The whole mission of course, was very security conscious. You never got into a long time parked vehicle without looking underneath and that kind of thing. You kept an eagle eye in the rear view and side view mirrors of the cars you were driving. But no, it didn't.

Q: In terms of dealing with the press, you characterize the Greek press as others have as pretty irresponsible and difficult to deal with. Did you sort of make an effort to try to find a few people that were...

WOZNIAK: Sure. I had good friends in the media. I don't mean to say the entire press corps should be tarred with the kinds of characterization that I have just given you, because there are responsible elements, and very competent journalists as well. Probably many more today than in my time, but there were many more in the 1980s when I was there than in the 1960s. It is an aspect of Greek society that I think is maturing and growing.

Q: Was there much foreign press representation in Athens at that time?

WOZNIAK: Not really, no. The wire services were represented. A few journals had resident stringers, very good people. The Financial Times, the Washington Post, the New York Times, but most major newspapers were not written for spot coverage in their own staff. They would come in on special occasions.

Q: The New York Times based a correspondent there a few years before you were there. That individual had regional responsibility and was based in Athens. That was no longer the case when you were there?

WOZNIAK: I know who you are thinking of. He had left.

Q: Nicholas Gage.

WOZNIAK: He had left. He would come into Greece periodically but he was not resident there any longer.

Q: How big was the post at that point. You talked before about when you were there in the 60s. Had it grown, was it smaller?

WOZNIAK: A lot smaller. In the 60s there were branch posts in Thessaloniki and a reading room in Piraeus. The Piraeus function had long disappeared before I got back in the 80s. The post had gone from 12 or more officers, I don't know how many FSNs, to in my time as PAO I think seven or eight officers and 40 FSNs, something like that. It is much smaller again today. Much smaller.

Q: At the time you were there, was there a library or information center in Athens?

WOZNIAK: Yes. It was located in the bi-national center of the Hellenic American Union on which board I sat. Our library was in their building.

Q: Was it staffed by USIS?

WOZNIAK: USIS FSNs. No Americans were there.

Q: Even though it was in their building.

WOZNIAK: What do you mean?

Q: The Hellenic American...

WOZNIAK: No, the Hellenic American had its own library, mostly Greek titles, some English. The U.S. oriented materials that USIS libraries offer was staffed by our own people USIS officers.

Q: Was that at the same location, the two libraries together?

WOZNIAK: They were in the same building on different floors. In the 60s we had a resident librarian, American, who not only ran the library but a large book translation program. That was all gone in the 80s.

Q: You had the information officer who dealt with the press, and a CAO a cultural affairs officer who did the exchanges. Were there a fair number of cultural presentations that you brought to Greece?

WOZNIAK: A fair number. It was a program that was dying out in that period. Certainly not as

grand as it had been in an earlier period when USIA could fund the travels of major symphonies or ballets. Still, some of that did happen but not nearly the intensity as it had been in the past. Still we had lots of cultural presentations. Some large at the Herodotus summer Athens festival. Some were modest.

Q: Were you aware, conscious that the Soviets were competing with you there, or was that something that was not really so much an issue?

WOZNIAK: No, that was not an issue in Athens in the 80s. There is of course, a Soviet sympathizing element and party in Greece, at the time but it was not another competition. The Soviets had no great appeal for the larger mass of Greeks.

Q: But I guess it was also a period where PASOK, the Greek Socialist Party, was very strong, had won the election before you got there or did that election take place after you...

WOZNIAK: They had won before I got there and were re-elected while I was there.

Q: Did that make it easier for you to do your work, or more difficult?

WOZNIAK: I would say more difficult because the government spokesman was a difficult character and the state controlled media, that is television and radio were difficult to deal with on anything except the placement of very soft cultural materials. But those would be the only limitations I think, other than dealing with the outrage that would appear in the press that was fed to it by one or another PASOK functionary.

Q: Did you have the feeling that you were running after stories like that all the time?

WOZNIAK: A fair amount, yes.

Q: Did you try to set the record straight?

WOZNIAK: Yes, frequently did that, yes. More often than not, that was the task of my information officer and his assistant, but yes that was a major concern.

Q: Did you do a fair amount of public speaking in Greece or did the ambassador?

WOZNIAK: Not at all. Yes, the ambassador would do some speechifying, both Stearns and Keeley would be invited by the equivalent of Rotary clubs or the propeller club or the American chamber of commerce, to give addresses, maybe a couple times a year max.

Q: So those would be fairly major significant events, but they wouldn't happen every week.

WOZNIAK: No, and care was taken to make sure that the opportunity was exploited and get a good message across about the constancy of Greek-American relations. Because these were troubled times, the PASOK period was not an easy time for bilateral relations as you know.

Q: Well, why don't you talk a little bit more about how that manifested, that difficulty. Was it mainly with Greece and NATO, Greece and the United States bilaterally, Greek-Turkish relations, all of the above?

WOZNIAK: All of the above, yes. I am really vague on details, Ray. What I would suggest is we come back to that point in the next session, and I will do some homework.

Q: Well, I think we are really interested in impressions and overall, not necessarily interested in a lot of details. I am interested in sort of how you spent your time and what your kind of priorities were, kind of a general way as opposed to necessarily discussing any of these in detail. Let me ask you coming back to the media again for a second. The private television and radio stations, I think they are pretty prevalent in Greece today, hadn't really started in the mid-80s when you were there?

WOZNIAK: No. It came shortly on the heels of my departure, but no. It was nascent in my time.

Q: They were beginning to talk about it.

WOZNIAK: I don't recall the television was operating at the time. Radio, yes.

Q: Antenna television?

WOZNIAK: No, that came later.

Q: You mentioned I think we talked about your own sort of involvement. You had some involvement with Andreas Papandreou on a personal level in the 60s.

WOZNIAK: No, I never knew the man. I knew his son and the current foreign minister who was not even in politics the last time I was at the embassy.

Q: In the 80s George, Jr., the younger wasn't around.

WOZNIAK: He may have been elected to parliament in my time there, but I think he was, yes, I think he was a deputy.

Q: Not somebody you would see?

WOZNIAK: Only socially. Nice fellow.

Q: Oh, yes. Of course born in the United States and raised here. His English is...

WOZNIAK: Very American, very decent guy.

Q: Okay. Was your office in the chancery or did you have...

WOZNIAK: No, USIS was and again is in an apartment building which is used as an annex right

next to the embassy, across the street from the embassy. Some time after I left there was a budget minded ambassador, I can't remember which one, who tried to, also security minded, who tried to house all of the outlying functions of the embassy within the chancery itself. It didn't work. It was very cramped. I think USIS was in the basement. Not only was it unworkable from a space point of view, but being in the chancery meant that visitors found it almost inaccessible. It is now back where it was in my time.

Q: And the place where you had your offices was accessible to the Greeks.

WOZNIAK: We had security but it was not as heavy handed as at the embassy, and yes visitors were frequent and welcome.

Q: I am always interested in the visitors program and the process of selection. Do you remember anything about what your sort of strategy was at that time in getting people to go to the United States on the international visitor program, and did the Greek government have much influence in the selection?

WOZNIAK: No the government had no influence at all. It was entirely a discretionary matter in the hands of the mission-wide selection committee. Strategy, I don't think there is a strategy for the international visitor programs other than identifying key sectors of the society that one deals with in a bilateral context. Those with potential for rising to the top of their sphere of activity.

Q: And you can only judge that 15 or 20 years afterwards.

WOZNIAK: That's right. It is worth being reminded in this context that Andreas Papandreou was a Fulbright scholar. They identified a real comer.

Q: Who spent years in the United States.

WOZNIAK: That's right. Obviously you are focusing on areas of politics, journalism, academia, economics, labor affairs. Insofar as there is a strategy, that is it.

Q: Your previous assignment, as we have discussed, was at NATO. Greece is a member of NATO, had pretty much come fully back or was fully back into the alliance military side at this point. Did you feel like that should be one of the things that you would stress, trying to remind Greeks that they were part of NATO and the benefits as well as the responsibilities of membership.

WOZNIAK: That was a common theme I am sure.

Q: Greece was also at the time you were there becoming a member of the European Community, or just beginning to move in that direction.

WOZNIAK: Yes, there was negotiating. It came later.

Q: The United States wasn't really taking a position on that one way or the other except that we

thought European integration was a good idea because it linked Greece to the wider community of democracies was good.

WOZNIAK: You said it very well. That is exactly right.

Q: What else should we talk about in terms of your assignment to Athens, '83 to '88? You obviously enjoyed it.

WOZNIAK: Yes. Greeks are a challenge. They are lots of fun. Even when they are your antagonists, they are fun because they are quick. They are bright and it is a test. But it is impossible not to like Greece on its own terms for its physical and natural beauties. But it is also true that it is very easy to become acquainted with Greeks. They are very quickly and easily made friends and good friends. So, yes, we had a good time.

Q: One of the other challenges in Athens for an official American diplomat is that the United States values its bilateral relationship and its alliance relationship with Greece. Greece is important in terms of U.S. military and so on, but we also value our relationship with Turkey. We are not going to choose Greece over Turkey in a war. And we are also unable to solve the Cyprus problem. We have never felt that we alone can do it. Was that difficult sometimes, explaining and defending U.S. policy?

WOZNIAK: That is one of the core difficulties of public affairs in the Greek-American bilateral context. Trying to get Greeks to understand why we had to be even handed.

Q: How would you go about doing that other than just talking about it, explaining it, trying to get them to see things from our point of view?

WOZNIAK: That is all you can do. I am sorry, I am wiped out. I am really getting tired I think.

Q: Okay, well, we can stop here. Let me ask you one more question and we can wrap up on Athens. At the time you were there, the U.S. military were still very present in Greece. It still is but at that time we had an air force base at the international airport or next to it in Athens at Hellenikon. Did issues related to the bases, U.S. military personnel, was that something you had to spend a lot of time working on to the extent problems arose?

WOZNIAK: Sure. None of those things I was going to solve of course. A negotiator would come out to Athens and the talks, we would try to help, but the public aspects, sure. And you know, you used the term base, and that was one of our bete noirs. It wasn't a base. It was never a base. We used the same strip, airstrips that commercial flights out of Hellenikon used. There was an American air station there, and other facilities at Suda Bay and other areas outside of Athens.

Q: But when something happened at that facility or the station, air station. Say, if an airman did something off duty that he or she shouldn't have, got into trouble with the Greek authorities, and it became a matter in the newspapers. Is that something you would work on in terms of setting the record straight, or would the U.S. air force have their own public affairs people that would take care of it?

WOZNIAK: No they would work it through us in developing talking points and the line to use in dealing with whatever the incident was. You can be sure that no matter how minor the incident was the Greek press would distort it and blow it up, and assume the pose of the outraged local denizens who were being maltreated by the jack booted American military.

Q: Now there were negotiations going on that you mentioned about the time you were there, particularly in the earlier period for a new defense agreement relating to our use of facilities in Greece and I think Ambassador Reg Bartholomew was the principal negotiator. You said those were tightly held, and I think they were. But occasionally there would be speculation in the press about issues relating to those. Or the Greek negotiators would let things get into the press as a way of influencing the negotiations. That was not something that you as public affairs officer spent much time on.

WOZNIAK: I don't think so. I have no recollection of it.

Q: Okay. All right, anything else about Greece, or should we stop here?

WOZNIAK: Let's stop here because I am running out of steam.

Q: This is a foreign affairs oral history interview with Robert Wozniak. It is September 29, 2003. Bob I realize it has been more than 18 months since our last conversation. We were talking about your period as public affairs officer in Athens from 1983 to '88, and I think we pretty well finished most of the things we wanted to talk about. I think one thing you mentioned to me though after we finished is that you wanted to say a word or two about some of your staff, particularly I think the cultural affairs officer Harriet Elam. I don't know if there are others that you want to mention.

WOZNIAK: I can't imagine what I had in mind that I wanted to say particularly. Harriet went on to a very illustrious career. No, I don't know what I had in mind when I made that remark other than to say that I felt very well served by both the FSO and the FSN staff at USIS Athens.

Q: Maybe you were thinking that her illustrious career is probably because she got a good start working with you.

WOZNIAK: Well she had a good start before she came to me. I think she had worked for the first ambassador we both worked for in Athens which was Monteaagle Stearns. I think they had worked together in the Cote d'Ivoire if I remember correctly. As a matter of fact he asked for her to come to Athens as his cultural affairs officer. That served me very well. She was excellent in the job. Other than that, I don't know what I had in mind to say.

Q: One of the things that happens in Athens a lot is there are a lot of visitors, Congressional delegations and so on. Did you spend a lot of time taking care of...

WOZNIAK: No, not particularly. We were not burdened with that. The USIS staff was not, no.

DAVID T. JONES
Greek Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1984-1985)

David T. Jones was born in Pennsylvania in 1941. He received a B.A. and an M.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army overseas from 1964-1966. Upon entering the Foreign Service in 1968, his postings abroad included Paris, Brussels, Geneva, and Ottawa. Mr. Jones was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: You were on the Greek desk from early July 1984 until when?

JONES: Only for a little more than a year. I left the Greek desk at the very end of July and started in the PM bureau at the beginning of August 1985.

Q: What were the issues on the Greek desk when you arrived?

JONES: The issues were still Papandreou related issues, trying to build and continue a relationship with the government that we considered to be implicitly hostile, if not actively hostile. There just seemed to be nothing that Papandreou did or would do that was not an irritant to a conservative U.S. administration. Papandreou continued to play footsie with the Libyans, continued to make overtures to the Russians and was invariably obstructive in any relationship with the Turks. So far as his relationship with us was concerned, we just had an absolutely constant, unending set of irritants associated primarily with our military relationship.

Q: At that point, was preserving our military relationship about the only thing we really cared about with Greece?

JONES: On reflection, I can't say yes, but I would also say that the sets of issues associated with the military concerns were the overwhelming set of issues with which I dealt while I was on the desk. These really did run through an almost endless litany of aspects associated with our bases and other military issues. We were trying to develop a new Status of Forces Agreement, a SOFA. We were talking about defense industrial cooperation, another major set of concerns. We had a wide variety of questions associated with military procurement for Greece, surplus U.S. military equipment whether they were F-5s, whether they were F-4s. We had begun to get into the problem of being able to develop an F-16 purchase for the Greeks, an exercise on which I spent, along with PM and DOD, a good portion of the year working on this issue. General Dynamics wanted to be able to develop a sale of F-16s to the Greeks. We had constant problems with nuclear powered warships, whether they would be able to visit Greece, and under what circumstances. We had a number of nuclear storage sites in Greece. We had a very extended set of internal discussions about how we should handle these, whether we should continue to hold nuclear weapons in Greece, whether we should take any of the obsolete nuclear weapons that we

had in Greece out and reposition them someplace else, or have them destroyed as a number of these weapons were there for what seemed to be political rather than military reasons because the systems to which the weapons would be mated were no longer in Greece. But taking the weapons out might have been translated as sending a political signal that we didn't think the Greeks were trustworthy. So, we would go around and around in this type of a circle.

Q: Even in my time there was a concern about the safeguarding of nuclear weapons on Greek soil. This is not a stable country.

JONES: Well, this was another element of the discussion. One side of it would say, "Well, you can only secure them by getting rid of them." The other side would say, "Well, we can certainly secure them better by upgrading the facilities by doing this, that, and the other." One side would say, "That's expensive and unnecessary. The systems themselves aren't necessary any longer. We should withdraw them." Then the other side would return to say, "But the political concern of withdrawing them and perhaps not withdrawing them from Turkey would suggest that we don't trust this government, which would make things worse than leaving them there." We didn't make the judgment that they were really insecure, that they were potentially subject to destruction or to terrorist seizure, and we never felt that they were anywhere near that level of insecurity. Nevertheless, there was always the technical possibility that things might not be as secure as we would desire them to be. So, we had this semi-constant sub theme.

We had, at the time, a couple of significant political events during the year that I was there. Papandreou in effect refused to support the continuation of President Karamanlis as president. That position was a surprise to us, although Karamanlis was a very distinguished conservative politician. We believed that he and Papandreou had created a *modus vivendi* in which Papandreou was provided a certain amount of shelter on the right by keeping this very respected figure in this very senior position. Conservatives felt that as long as Karamanlis was president, he might be able to prevent excesses on the part of Papandreou that otherwise would be a real problem for conservatives in Greece. Well, as a consequence, we thought that he would retain him or at least not argue against him as president. But instead, to our surprise, Papandreou and PASAK said that they would not support Karamanlis' continuation as president. Karamanlis then said he wouldn't run for president. The point was that the presidency in Greece at that time was decided by parliamentary vote rather than a popular vote. If Karamanlis did not have PASAK support, he wouldn't be able to be president. He wouldn't campaign for it because it was beneath his dignity as a former prime minister himself, a man of such a revered, respected position, a man who had, if not created modern Greece, led Greece back from the period of time in which the colonels had been running the country and had refused to cooperate with the colonels when they seized power earlier in the 1960s. But we were wrong.

Then again, as a bit of a surprise, the Greeks moved to hold elections roughly in May. There were people within the embassy that believed that the conservatives would win. Indeed, the ambassador wrote a telegram predicting that the conservatives, the New Democrats, would win. We were puzzled about that. The rest of the embassy sent a telegram predicting that PASAK would continue in power. We thought that perhaps the ambassador didn't really believe that the conservatives would win but felt such a prediction that was what Washington at least wanted to hear and take counsel of this hopeful possibility rather than what most of the rest of us regarded

as the more realistic expectation that, whether we liked him or not, Papandreou was sufficiently popular and the conservatives still sufficiently unpopular that he would win again. And he did. Papandreou did win again. I guess I had the classic desk experience at that point. The election was on a Sunday. By mid-afternoon, the election results were in. I went to the Greek embassy information office and picked up their official statement. I went to the Department to write up a memo for the Secretary in this regard. So, you have an early evening in the Department. I sat down and composed a one page memo to the Secretary telling him the results of the Greek election. Then the office director came in and spent four and a half hours rewriting and retweaking and retwiddling this one page memorandum until, as a consequence, I didn't leave at least until midnight. That was an illustration of the manner in which the office director, Bill Rope, operated. Rope had had no experience at all with Southern Europe before coming to be the office director. He had been a China hand and was very controversial in that capacity. He was an intelligent, dynamic, and exceptionally difficult, controversial, irritating, and vindictive individual. I'm pleased and delighted that he never became an ambassador. He did as much as he could to become an ambassador but he also managed to have the knack for infuriating his superiors as well as alienating his subordinates. Despite a high level of both intelligence and industry, he certainly never got where he wanted to get in the Foreign Service.

This was an illustration of the work that I was doing. It was for the era and the period a classic desk officer's work. I had one subordinate on the desk. For the life of me, it's almost hard for me to remember what he was doing, except, as I told him, "You will do everything I don't want to do." It was not that there wasn't a lot of that to do, but it was more the economic and social aspects of U.S.-Greek bilateral relations. I handled all of the political, political-military issues. This went through an extended day by day struggle with all agencies and within the Department on virtually every minute element of our political-military relationship, trying to get the bases agreement to work effectively, trying to deal with labor problems on our bases, etc. There were specific, very left-wing labor elements whose interest in their jobs was secondary to their interest in creating labor difficulties for us. I don't think there was any way in which we could have handled some of these people, but our inability to meet their demands gave them a constant *caché* with the left-wing Greek press.

By early January 1985, I had been asked to be the deputy director for theater military policy in the PM bureau. I was approached by people within PM. It became clear that I was also the candidate of the negotiator for intermediate nuclear forces, Ambassador Mike Glitman. And there were other people who were joining PM at that point. One of the deputy assistant secretaries, John Hawes. Ultimately, the PM assistant secretary, Allen Holmes also supported me for the job.

All were quite happy to support me for this position. The new office director of TMP was a particularly intelligent and vibrant woman with Civil Service background, Jenonne Walker. Although she had also had CIA background and a certain amount of diplomatic experience, she was not a career Foreign Service officer. I was brought on essentially to be the deputy for nuclear issues and particularly for intermediate nuclear range forces negotiations and their concerns. As a consequence, I, in effect, broke my standard two-year desk assignment in order to take this position, which was of considerably greater interest to me personally.

Q: While you were on the Greek desk, did Cyprus rear its ugly head?

JONES: Cyprus was a standard set of problems and concerns but I can't say that there was anything special going on at that point. At the very end of my time on the Greek desk, I was working on an interagency group paper for how our relationship with Greece should be handled. I worked on that and was the primary drafting officer on that for most of a month. To give you an illustration of the intensity with which we were working on it, I came in on the Fourth of July and worked for 10 hours on it from about 8:15 AM until 6:15 PM before going out to watch the fireworks on the Mall with my family. But I was the primary drafting officer for this exercise of an interagency review on U.S.-Greek relations. To be absolutely frank, I have no idea what happened to it after I left. Another thing I was involved with was a secondary, but still time-consuming, effort to rewrite the Greek Area Handbook that the American University was doing as part of the endless series of area handbooks. The Greek Handbook was much in need of updating. As a result, all of the draft chapters came to the desk for revision. I don't know how many hours I spent on that. What I have from my memory is a virtually totally exhausting experience that only on rare occasion ended at what was official "close of business" (COB). The norm ran an hour, two hours, three hours after COB and almost invariably included work for an extended period on Saturday. While this was the norm in the mid-'80s, it's become even worse now as I gather from my discussions with colleagues on desks.

Q: Did you find yourself on the Greek desk being in the European Bureau but representing "unruly barbarians?" In other words, did the upper command of EUR really care much about Greek relations?

JONES: The upper level of EUR was simply forced to deal with Greek issues. Greece had been part of EUR for about a decade by then, so it was out of NEA. Greece was always considered the more European element of the three countries because Greece was causing problems with Turkey, with whom we had many irons in the fire; within NATO, which was even more important; with the Russians, which was vital; and with the Hill in domestic concerns to make sure that they got at least their fair share of defense assistance and security, which was politically potent. The senior levels of EUR and certainly one deputy assistant secretary was devoted full-time to Southern Europe (SE) affairs, although SE itself was not a huge office by any means. Greece-Turkey-Cyprus issues – Greek issues particularly; Papandreou because of his special personality – got a great deal of U.S. attention.

PARKER W. BORG
Deputy in the Office of Counter Terrorism
Washington, DC (1984-1986)

Ambassador Borg was born and raised in Minnesota and educated at Dartmouth College and Cornell University. In 1965, after a tour with the Peace Corps in the Philippines, he joined the Foreign Service and was posted to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. During his career he served in Vietnam and Zaire, and in the State Department in senior positions concerning Vietnam, West Africa and Counter

Terrorism. He served as US Ambassador to Mali (1981-1984) and to Iceland from 1993 to 1996. Ambassador Borg was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

BORG: When I was dealing with terrorism issues, Greece was probably the most frustrating country in Europe to work with. While Bob and I were in the office, we helped the Bureau of Consular Affairs upgrade their security advisories on what places were dangerous, and one of the places we convinced Consular Affairs to list as a security advisory was Greece in 1985, I believe it was. Boy, did they go absolutely up the wall because it really hurt tourism and there were various cultural groups that canceled out on them. They were absolutely adamant, and we responded by saying, "There are serious problems in Greece, and you are the weakest member of the European Community when it comes to dealing with these problems."

Q: You know, the November 17th group...

BORG: They're still around.

Q: It sounds like they've kind of busted it up, but this was in the last couple of months. That's been going around for 30 years.

BORG: When I say that the Western Europeans got rid of their terrorist groups, I would have made an exception for the Greeks, because that group has been so in the shadows.

ELIZABETH ANN SWIFT
Deputy Consul General
Athens (1984-1986)

Elizabeth Ann Swift was born in 1940 in Washington, DC. Her father worked for the International Red Cross, but died when she was very young. Her grandparents and uncle were all Navy world travelers. Her desire to enter foreign service was sparked by their tales of traveling abroad. She attended Stanford, but graduated from Radcliffe in 1962. She has served in the Philippines, Indonesia, Iran and Jamaica, as well as several other positions within the State Department. She was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on December 16, 1992.

Q: Ann, we're moving now to getting back overseas. We had just finished your time when you were dealing with American citizenship affairs, and now you're going overseas in 1984. Can you tell us something about what assignment you had, and what you were going to be doing?

SWIFT: It was real interesting because I had just, of course, switched into consular. I was talking yesterday to a friend of mine about the cone system. I was still at that point a politically coned officer.

Q: Could you explain what a cone is? This is one of our obscure terms.

SWIFT: Okay. In 1971 or '70 the Foreign Service went to a system where each officer was given a functional responsibility, either political, economic, consular or admin. This was done in particular to try and alleviate what seemed at that point as the inequalities between jobs in the Service. Consular and administrative officers were looked down on by econ and political officers and the idea was to develop very strong professionalism in the consular and admin ranks, and build up their status. As a political officer in the '70s, I thought the cone system was a craziest thing I ever saw. And it was very rigidly held to. If you were a political officer it was very hard to become anything else. If you were a consular officer, it was very hard to become a political officer, and I always thought that was wrong, and still do. Over the years, however, I have changed my mind on the whole system, and really think that it did a very good job of giving consular officers a real feeling of self respect and strength within the Service, and gaining respect for them from the rest of the Service.

At any rate, at the point that I was going to Athens, I was coming back into consular work. I was a political officer. All of my political officer friends thought that, number one, I was crazy to be going into consular, and number two, it would be absolutely easy for me to get into consular. I'm here to tell you it was not easy to get into consular because the consular officers didn't want political officers coming into their cone.

Q: Particularly you were high ranked at this point.

SWIFT: Yes, I was high ranked. At that point I was an FSO-1, just below the senior Foreign Service, and a fairly new one. I was coming in at a high rank, and consular was not happy with this so when I tried to go abroad it then became very difficult, as usual, to get an assignment because this time I was a political officer trying to go out as a consular officer. Everybody would have been quite happy for me to go out doing American citizen services some place, but I didn't want to go out doing American citizen services. I felt I knew American citizen services, after two years working in it, and I wanted to go out doing visa work. They really didn't want to let me go out doing visa work because they felt I didn't have the knowledge of visa work which to a certain extent was true because I hadn't done it for about 15 years. On the other hand, when I got out to the field and started talking to various consular officers, I discovered that many consular officers would go for 10 or 15 years without ever touching a visa, and then would suddenly become a visa officer. But it was so clear with me in my situation that people were very, very hesitant. So, as I was looking for jobs I was getting a great deal of static, and the job I went to in Athens was deputy in the consular section which made me Deputy Consul General, and head of the visa section. It was a job that was at the grade that I was at, and it was under a very experienced Consul General who was very, very good on visa work.

Q: Who was that?

SWIFT: Dick Williams. So they really couldn't stop me, although in the end I had to go to Joan Clark. I finally just gave up and went to Joan Clark and said, "Joan,...

Q: She was the Director General of the Foreign Service then?

SWIFT: No, she was Assistant Secretary of Consular Affairs, and I went to her and said, "Look, I'm trying to get a job. I'm having a terrible hard time getting one. I need your support." And her first reaction, which was a common reaction for anybody in her position, was, "You can't have a job that is out of grade, Ann. It's just too difficult at this point." And I said, "Joan, the job I'm going for is not out of grade, it's at grade, and I think I'm qualified for it, and I think I can do it." And at that point I got the job. It was unfortunately working the system the way the system works.

Q: I know the job well that you went to because I was Consul General in Athens about ten years before, and I was not a visa expert, and luckily I had a very good visa expert who was the number two. One or the other probably should be.

SWIFT: Dick Williams was really, really good at it and he taught me a great deal. He taught me a lot about history. He's a lawyer himself, but basically what he did was to teach me to trust the FAMs...

Q: FAM being the...

SWIFT: The Foreign Affairs Manual, the instructional material that we have for the procedures for issuing visas. I went into Dick's office one day not having looked something up in the FAM first. He reached over behind him, pulled the FAM out, and started looking through it. And I thought, "I could have done that." The next time I went into him I already had all the FAM citations and as he whirled around to look at the FAM, I said, "You're going to look up such and such, and this is what you're going to find, but I'm still confused." And then I felt much better. He taught me to do that, and it was a real help.

I went out as head of the visa section -- it was a small to medium sized visa section. I took the ConGen Rosslyn visa course before I went out. A lot of things had changed in visa law since I had done visas in the '60s, and that course at the Foreign Service Institute runs is absolutely superb. I found when I got out to post that actually my knowledge of visa law was much more current, and much more correct, than some of my colleagues in the section, and certainly the FSNs who had not kept their knowledge up to date. So I found it was very lucky I had taken the course because I came in and everybody was looking at me, here's somebody who obviously doesn't know a thing about consular work. My authority was constantly challenged in my first few months by everybody. They just took me on because they were sure that I didn't know what I was talking about. And having taken the FSI course, I was very easily able to quickly show them that they were wrong when they challenged me which was extremely helpful in gaining the respect of everybody.

Q: This project that we're working on now, although we've been doing career interview, it is focused on the movement of people, i.e., the visa function. Trying to get a feel for the people who were dealing in visas, these are mid-ranking, low-ranking government officials who are making life and death decisions. What was your impression on how the visa function...it changes, but there is a sort of bureaucratic inertia within the system. I mean somebody learns the visa law back in their day, and even though it may change, there's a certain amount of obstinacy in changing with the law. Did you find this?

SWIFT: I think I probably found that more on the American citizen services side where the changes in the law, it was so evident that the Supreme Court had made decisions which the bureaucracy was refusing to carry out with any enthusiasm at all. On the visa side, by the time I got there, the differences in visa law from the early '60s to the early '80s were more changes in categories and details, and in numbers of people we were letting in rather than in attitudes toward how you do visa interviews, and that sort of thing. There was very little change that I could see from my days in Manila, to my days in Athens. The approach toward people who were coming in to get visas was very much the same.

Q: Could you describe a bit about what was the visa situation in Athens? We're talking between '84 and '86.

SWIFT: Athens was a very easy post for visa in terms of visa issuance. The Greeks generally speaking qualified for visas. We had a pretty low refusal rate. I think we ran between 8 to 12 percent refusals which is not very high. I think our refusal rate on Greeks was something like 6 to 8 percent, but then when you threw in the foreigners, which we turned down at a much higher rate -- Indians, Iranians -- then our rate went up a bit. So your basic assumption when you were dealing with a Greek was that the Greek was qualified to go to the United States. It made it a much more positive type of visa function than in the Philippines or in Jamaica where your attitude toward a lot of the people is that they probably are not going to qualify. It was a very pleasant place to work. When you're basically helping people to move back and forth between the United States and Greece, it's a much more positive and much more pleasant way to work than having an attitude that you're going to keep people out.

Q: How did you find the visa officers there?

SWIFT: I didn't have that many visa officers, let's start saying that. My deputy was an experienced visa officer, she had been in the business a long time. Besides that, then we had young, usually first tour officers, that were rotating through on the visa line, and they didn't have a clue what they were doing. Just like me, they'd gone through the ConGen Rosslyn course, and they were sort of making up their interviewing style as they went along. They were good. I had one junior officer that was a bit of a problem.

Q: Without getting into the person, how was he a bit of a problem?

SWIFT: One of the major problems with being a visa officer is, and this is something that we were working in the last couple of years on, is trying to make sure that your visa officers understand that their job is to issue visas. That their job is not to turn everybody down. That their job is to issue visas as pleasantly as possible, and if you're going to turn somebody down, you're going to do that as pleasantly as possible even though the person is lying to you. And you also have to make sure that the visa officer does not abuse his authority. He has absolute complete authority over issuance of visas. And for some of the young officers, this is very hard to deal with. They are highly educated. They consider themselves the cream of the crop because they've passed the Foreign Service, and everything they've been told right up to the time they get on the visa line, is that they're simply superb and wonderful. Then they get on the visa line where their

authority is absolute and it's hard for that power not to go to their head. So you have to really watch it. And this officer that I'm thinking of, the power went to his head. He was nice, but peculiar on the visa line. He wasn't abrasive or anything, but you could see that he was really interested in the power. With most junior officers the problem is that they will become very law enforcement minded because this is the one part of issuing visas that they can really get their teeth into. Saying yes to people over and over again is very nice, but it doesn't give you the feeling that you have enforced the regulations. But if you can find people cheating on you, then it really gives you something to do. You have to keep a balance in all of this. It's hard to do. It's a hard job for young officers coming in to do because they all feel that their intellectual talents are not fully being used, which makes them mad. They feel it's a drudge job which is difficult and makes them dead tired at the end of the day, so they don't really love it. Basically speaking, it's not a joyous job to handle.

Q: How about the Greek staff?

SWIFT: The Greek staff had basically exactly the same problems as the junior officers multiplied. Greeks love authority, and Greeks love to be bossy, and they'll boss their officers around if they can possibly get away with it. They also like to use their authority in dealing with the public, with American, Greek, and foreign. So you had to run the Greek staff with the same firmness that you ran the American staff, because if you weren't careful you would go out on the line and find your Greek staff being totally impolite to the customers as well. We had one very bright guy who we moved up while I was there into a position of authority, and he really liked his authority. And he also had a temper and used to lose his temper on the line, and I told him, "Look, it is totally unacceptable as far as I'm concerned to lose your temper on the line. If you start getting so mad with somebody..." and the Greeks themselves were very, very confrontational on the line. If you tried to turn them down, or if you tried to tell them that they needed another piece of paper, they would argue with you, and they would fight with you, and the tempers would go up and the voices would go up, and there would be a big screaming match because that is the way they handle things in their society. But this was the American embassy, and this was not what you did at the American embassy. So I told this one guy in particular, I said, "Now look, if you start losing your temper, you can lose your temper anywhere you want except on the line. You walk away from the line,"...we had great huge plate glass windows behind us..."if you want to go back and break one of those plate glass windows, fine with me. If you want to go back and kick the door, or kick one of the safes, fine with me, just do it out of sight. But you will not lose your temper on the line." So every now and then I would see him stalk off the line, back into a corner someplace, mumbling to himself, and then walk back. We turned it into a joke.

Q: This, of course, is one of the things of trying to adapt what we would like to have as the American image. I think probably we work at it harder than a lot of organizations do to try to present a benevolent, but firm image of the United States despite other cultures.

SWIFT: Yes, and it's very difficult to do because in Athens the pressures rarely got horrendous unless we got short staffed and that sort of thing, but generally speaking the visa lines were quite manageable. When you put officers under a great deal of pressure, that's when they start reacting in a very bureaucratic or difficult way. Pressures weren't that high but at the same time it's very,

very hard to maintain your cool all the time. And all you have to do is lose it once or twice, and if there's some American sitting around that sees you do it, and he's got a friend back in the States who happens to be a Senator, you're in major troubles.

Q: Although you did not have a high refusal rate, did you have much of a problem with representation from Congress on behalf of people?

SWIFT: Oh, sure. We spent a great deal of our time answering Congressional letters, and inquiries, because anybody you turned down unfailingly, especially on the immigrant visa side, would go to their Congressman. That was the immediate path to try to straighten out whatever problem there was, was to go to their Congressman. You often weren't turning down the person, you were often trying to clarify a point of what their finances were, what their birth documentation was, something like that. And the minute you said, "No, you have to go back and get X, Y & Z, you immediately got a Congressional, or a call from the Congressman. We spent a lot of time answering that sort of stuff.

Q: How did you find this? You answered it, but did it serve a purpose? Or was it just a duty to do?

SWIFT: Oh, no. I think it serves a real purpose. It's a terrible nuisance, but it serves the purpose of educating the people back in the States to what the law is. Usually the Congressional staffs are very nice. Every now and then they'll scream at you, but generally speaking they're very nice. I found dealing with the staffs on the telephones not a problem. I thought that was usually easier, and you could usually work problems out. For somebody to try and call into the office straight, when you've got a fairly high visa load, you can't have every relative back in the States calling in. Therefore you tend to either put them on to telephone answering machines, or something like that. You don't spend a great deal of time with the people themselves, and it's almost better for them to call the staffs, and the staffs to come to you because you do pay attention to them. It does make you very conscious of being very careful in your decisions, because if you know over the top of your head is going to be a Congressman, you're careful.

What I never have liked, is the letter writing stuff. You don't get that many telephone calls because when you're that far away it's expensive to call, and the Congressman's office doesn't like calling because it's expensive for them, and the constituents themselves don't like calling because it's expensive. So what you tend to get is a lot of mail. And in the days of computers you know perfectly well that the Congressman's office has just whipped off a standard thing to you. Often it's just a little buck slip that says, "What's going on in this case?" And then you have all the paper that the constituent sent them. I found that very, very frustrating because the State Department, unlike most other government agencies, is not permitted to go back with a buck slip that says, "The answer to your question is checked below," the way the IRS does. We have to write a formal reply back that is signed by either the visa officer, or the Consul General, or the head of the visa section, and it has to be done up on letterhead. It takes an inordinate amount of time, and it's stupid. It's really stupid. What you want to do is get back to the Congressman a good clear answer, and a good clear answer is often something which is right straight out of the law. You can write a very short paragraph to say what the particular problem is in a case, and then the rest of it is basically quoting the laws. Most of these cases fall into very standard

patterns. And its just infuriating to have to do all of this paper work. Really stupid. At every post I've been at I've tried to simplify it as far as we could within the boundaries we were permitted. But I have yet to get anybody to agree that we can just send a buck slip back. I tried to do that in my last job and was told absolutely not. The Congressman's office demands a fully written letter, even when they're sending you a buck slip.

Q: What was your impression of Greek immigration in this period of the '80s, to the United States? The kind of people who were going, where they were going?

SWIFT: Greek immigration, I think, was fairly slow to the United States. Of course, the whole thing is governed pretty much by what family you have over there, and who can petition for who. The legal limit on immigration from any one country is about 20,000, and at the time I was there we were only issuing about 2,000 visas from Greece which I felt was very, very low. There were a lot of Greeks that would have liked to go and work in the States but had no relatives that they could claim to go with, so they went illegally which was too bad but they did. They usually came back. What the Greeks liked to do, this was a period in the '80s of fairly...and still is I think in Greece, Greece was fairly prosperous, even out in the countryside people were not in bad shape, and the Greeks basically like Greece. Especially in the summertime, the country is just wonderful. So basically what the young Greeks liked to do was go over to the States and work for a year, a couple of years, and come back. What they'd really like to do is go over to the States part of the year and then come back and work in Greece the rest of the year. Our regulations just don't allow that so this was always a bit of a problem. Our refusal rate was generally higher for young Greek people between about 18 and 27. That was our highest refusal rate probably because we knew that these youngsters were going over to work in their uncle's or their cousin's restaurant or construction company, or whatever it was. Greeks are very prosperous, they're very industrious. They certainly weren't going on welfare, you knew that, but you also knew that they had this entire network of families that the minute they got there, they just vanished.

Q: Did you have any problems with the Greek seamen, for example?

SWIFT: Oh, heavens yes. Although not, I think, as much as one used to have in the earlier periods. Again, I think, because Greece was reasonably prosperous. Greeks seamen did jump ship, and you knew that because a lot of the immigrants coming back in to pick up their immigrant visas had originally gotten to the States by jumping ship. Our real problem with seamen though was foreign seamen. If a Greek registry ship came in, and their entire crew list was Greek seamen which was very unusual because most of the Greek ships the officers would be Greek, and the crewmen would be Indians, Pakistanis, Somalis, or whatever, and that was the category that we had major problems with. Those were the guys that we were never sure if the person was indeed a seamen. You usually did give them crew visas because they usually wouldn't jump ship. But often these ships would put hands on board that were basically just working their fare until they could get within sight of the States, and then disappear. Particularly the Indians in Athens had very strong organizations that were moving Indians to the States by using the cruise lines, and it was infuriating, it was very hard to catch. It was very hard to get INS to do anything about it. And there was a lot of fraud. They would change passports, fake identification. We tried our best to stop it, but it was very difficult. They'd invent whole cruise companies. They were usually after the kind of visa that would be to go join a ship. So you'd get

these guys coming in and saying, "I just want to fly to New York to join my ship." And you'd check it out and you would find that the shipping company didn't exist, and the ship didn't exist. But they had all the documentation, and it was just perfect.

Q: While we've got you in Greece, and as an ex-political officer, what was the political situation there?

SWIFT: Papandreou was there so it was a liberal left government. The November 17 terrorist movement was active.

Q: They killed a number of Americans.

SWIFT: They'd killed several Americans and a lot of Greek officials. They were active. The Arab-Palestinian groups were also active. They were usually not targeting Americans, they were targeting other Arabs. But other than that the political scene was pretty stable. About three or four years after I left, Greece had a peaceful turnover to the conservatives. We had good relations with Greeks from all parts of the spectrum, and there wasn't any real unrest. This was a big modern country, and it was chugging along.

Q: Who was the Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission, and what sort of interest did they show in consular affairs?

SWIFT: Monty Stearns was our Ambassador, and I am totally blanking on our deputy. At any rate Stearns was our Ambassador. Stearns had had long experience with Greece, and it was an interesting sort of situation. We had Stearns and then Ambassador Bob Keeley. Keeley had actually helped to save Papandreou's life back in the early '70s, and it was very interesting to watch both of these guys work. Both of them were very liberal.

Q: The coup was on April 22th, 1967.

SWIFT: They got him out of jail, got him out of the country. With both of these ambassadors being very friendly toward Papandreou, they thought that Papandreou would be more friendly toward us, which is a total fallacy. And it was very interesting to watch both of them deal with this. Stearns wasn't particularly popular at the Embassy because there was a very strong feeling that he was sitting on reporting that was critical of Papandreou. And I think that was probably true, and I think it was probably being done for very good reasons. Namely, that you had a very conservative American government with Ronald Reagan in power. And you had Papandreou who was a leftist, and Stearns wanted to continue an even relationship with Greece, and wanted Reagan not to over react against this leftist. So I think that was a great deal of what was going on there.

Q: This is a very important factor. Reporting is maybe objective, but you have to realize it goes back to Washington and gets magnified, blown up, and all of a sudden its counterproductive. Its like reporting on corruption in some places. Yes, its there, but so what?

SWIFT: Of course, what it does, especially the younger people in an embassy, it does terrible

things to morale. So that was a problem. We then got Keeley in who supposedly was going to loosen embassy reporting. I'm not sure he did. And, of course, what happened to Keeley was that he came in thinking that he would have this wonderfully cooperative relationship with Papandreou, and Papandreou had no intention of having a wonderfully cooperative relationship.

Q: Papandreou had made his name although he had been an American citizen, served in the American Navy and he had made his name by being anti-American. That's where his strength came from, so friendship be damned.

SWIFT: That's right. So Keeley found himself in a funny position.

Q: Was there any attention paid to the consular section?

SWIFT: Very little. I mean both of them had the typical ambassadorial view, as long as there isn't a problem, keep it away from me, which is fine to a certain extent. Except that you would wish that they would come down and visit, and march through, and at least know where the thing was. Our DCM, I think, literally didn't know how to get into the consular section. He had never been there.

Q: Henry Tasca was my ambassador, and the one time he came down was after a bomb went off outside, blew the windows, and killed the two people who tried to set the bomb off. But that brought him down to walk through the consular section. That's what it took to get him down there.

SWIFT: The thing about Monty Stearns was, he was at once very aloof, and very ambassadorial, but also very attentive to his people. He had a wonderful memory, he knew everybody by name. He would always greet you when you were walking down the corridor when you ran into him, and he knew the people in the consular section from his previous periods. So people felt he was approachable, even though he was olympian. Stearns was seen as olympian sitting up there making his decisions in the atmosphere, but he gave the embassy the feeling that he cared for them.

Keeley who was supposed to come in and be very much more of an involved type of an ambassador, really wasn't that good at dealing with the embassy itself. He tried, but he wasn't that good at it. He somehow didn't have that reach-out touch. It was interesting to see because he didn't have the same touch that Monty Stearns had had.

Q: How did you feel? You were this sort of retread carpetbagger, or whatever you want to call it, into visa. How did you feel about it. In a way it was a good place to learn, but wasn't what you'd call a challenging post.

SWIFT: It was fine for me. It was a challenging post because it was very challenging on the American services side. And whenever Dick Williams wasn't there I, of course, had that bag so it was a very good place to learn. Also, during the period that I was there, was just after when the Marine barracks had been blown up in Beirut, and we were under heavy terrorist threat. As a matter of fact one of our consular officers got sent home because he was directly threatened.

Q: What was he threatened about?

SWIFT: He was a junior officer, and was rotating through the sections. He'd been working upstairs in the political section and came down to work in the consular section. The Iranians sort of apparently identified him, because of the pattern of his work, as maybe being CIA or something like that. We couldn't tell whether they were mad at him because he had turned down some Iranian visas, or whether it was actually one of these Iranian terrorist groups, which were targeting our embassy. At that period they were targeting embassies throughout the area in order to bomb them again. At one point we had what we figured were revolutionary guards come in and check out the consular section.

Q: The Iranian revolutionary government.

SWIFT: It was a period of high tension. It was one where we were fighting to get better protection for the consular section, and demanding stronger security measures at the front gates and that sort of thing because what the Iranians were doing, we understood from our intelligence, was working with suicide attacks -- strapping explosives onto their bodies, and walking in and blowing themselves up. That was the idea. It was a period of a lot of tension for all of us. I found it reasonably amusing having been a political officer, and having done political work before, and knowing exactly what political work was made up of, to find there was a very distinct, as I had known there would be, we-you attitude from the upper floors of the embassy to those of us who worked down in the consular section. A slight condescension, one would say. The political section did look down on us, made it quite clear, although a lot of the people in the political section were close friends. There was no problem, but there were individuals up there who really thought it was nice that the consular section is down there. The econ section was much more relaxed. It wasn't bad.

Q: You were beginning to get at least the feel for the culture. What sort of protection and welfare problems were there?

SWIFT: You name it, we had it. You had a huge American community that lived in Greece. One of our normal problems was that Americans in order to get cars into the country...I've forgotten exactly how it worked, but they could only bring one car in a period of time, and the Greeks were trying to use American passports to control the entry and exit of cars, and sale of cars.

Q: They'd lose their passports.

SWIFT: So they lost their passports all the time, with every possible excuse. "I put my passport through the washing machine." It was just endless. We, of course, also had a huge tourist community, all of whom liked to ride motor scooters, and were forever killing themselves. We had a smaller group of American hippies that would come and go out to the back islands and would not understand that the Greeks had an extremely tight anti-narcotics laws, and that smoking marijuana would get you into jail for several years, and they would get caught and thrown into jail.

Q: *Where were they going to jail? Was it centralized, or were they in various jails.*

SWIFT: They were put in various jails. I think if they ended up getting a jail sentence they would be put back into one of the big jails. They would usually be caught out on the islands and would be tried out on the islands. So you'd have to go out to the islands. It was a terrible thing to go out to the islands. Just dreadful.

Q: *That's how I got to see Crete, Corfu. There are a good number of islands down there.*

SWIFT: The more isolated, the better. It was good fun.

Q: *As long as you didn't get trapped there.*

SWIFT: Yes, get trapped there and couldn't get back. Just dreadful.

Q: *How did you find the Greek authorities as far as trying to do the usual consular thing, and saying let our poor guy or girl go, and get them out of the country?*

SWIFT: We found them extremely cooperative. There was only one problem that we ever had with them. Basically speaking, the Greeks were very, very smart. They knew that tourism was a major factor in their economy, and therefore they wanted to make tourism as safe, and as pleasant as possible for Americans. So in everything from their health services, Greek hospitals were not up to U.S. standards although they weren't horrendous, but they had very good rescue capability. They had helicopters that they would fly out to the islands. They had evacuation techniques, because they did have a lot of serious injuries with their...

Q: *They did not have it when I was there, so this is a development.*

SWIFT: They would fly helicopters and pick people up and bring them back to the big emergency hospital. They had a big trauma center. So they had that very well organized. They had tourist police type thing, very well organized. They would always notify us the minute anybody got into trouble. If it was just a bunch of kids being stupid, we could usually talk them out of it, with a fine or something. We had one case where some teenagers...they were university kids, they were probably about 20...hailed down a Greek flag. Actually they were meaning to make off with it. This was one night, and they wanted a souvenir, and they got caught at it, and this is a very serious offense in Greece, and that really caused us a great deal of trouble. We finally got them off, but it was touch and go. And then we had some very serious problems with some Christian sects trying to proselytize.

Q: *Item one in the Greek constitution is "thou shalt not proselytize. Orthodoxy is the state religion."*

SWIFT: And its very interesting in a country as modern as Greece how you suddenly find when you get into religious things that the modernity vanishes. Its very startling for Americans to deal with, so when we had a couple of young American Evangelists hurled into jail, and they looked like they were facing sort of a 20 year jail sentence, this became a major issue between Greece

and the United States. It was very touchy. But generally speaking in anything that involved police work, the Greeks were extremely helpful.

Q: One last thing on this. You had the Papandreou government in which he based his whole political thing on being both not a leftist, but also sticking it to the United States in a lot of things. Did that translate itself into anti-Americanism, or was that on the political level, and the people didn't respond?

SWIFT: It was really on the political level. There was very, very little anti-Americanism that I felt certainly while we were there. Even with the bases. We were having base negotiations, and that sort of stuff, and every now and then you'd get a demonstration against the embassy, or against something. We had one big demonstration against the embassy, but I think it was on the anniversary of the kids getting killed down at the university.

Q: November 17, 1973.

SWIFT: Yes, from whence your terrorist movement started, and we had a couple of demonstrations over that. But basically, you didn't feel a strong anti-American feeling at all during the period I was there. It just was not a factor.

Q: Well, then having gone through this solid introduction to running this, you went to the big time.

SWIFT: I went to big time. I went to big time because I lucked out. I think I got promoted on the basis of my emergency center work, for which I had gotten all sorts of commendations, which was nice. And the fact that I had then done well running the visa section in Athens. I got a good report out of that which meant to the people who looked at my file, that not only had I done well in something that was more familiar to me, but I had also made the transfer over into consular stuff. So I got promoted to OC, Senior Foreign Service, which meant that there were two of us at that level in Athens at a time that there was a great push on to drop the level of all of the Consul Generals around the world, and particularly in Europe. So Athens was a target for reducing the level of the Consul General back to O-1, to the top grade below Senior Foreign Service. So there was Dick Williams, who was a senior OC officer, there was me who was a new OC officer, and the two of us in jobs that were undergraded for what we were doing. When Personnel started looking around for somebody -- first Haiti, and then for Jamaica -- they knew that there were the two of us there. Dick and I had called back and said, "Look, this is really silly to have two officers at this level." We had said, "If you've got something that you want filled, just ask us about it. The two of us will sit here because we're not exactly unhappy, but if there's something good you might ask us."

So basically what happened was they started asking Dick first, would he like to go here, and would he like to go to there? And if Dick said no, then I got the next shot at it, which was how I got Jamaica. Basically, Jamaica is known as a very tough post. It's one of our major visa issuance posts. It's a country that has high fraud, high corruption, active narcotics trade, and high crime, and is just known as a very tough consular post.

Q: I was a Personnel officer back in the '60s and I recall having to deal with a Consul General who had to leave there on a stretcher basically because of the violence, and putting somebody else in.

SWIFT: It was a very tough post, and it's one that people tried to avoid. I think it was a terribly bad rap because I found it delightful, but never mind. At any rate, when they offered it to me, I sort of crossed my fingers because Dick was very, very tempted, but he had problems with his kids. He didn't want to move them, one was almost a senior in high school, had one more year to go. He didn't want to wreck her schooling, so he decided to stay in Athens. So therefore it got offered to me, and I said, "I'll go." So off I went.

PERRY W. LINDER
Administrative Officer
Athens (1984-1988)

Perry W. Linder was born and raised in California. He attended San Jose State College and the University of California at Berkeley. He entered the Foreign Service in 1957 and held several positions in Germany, Jamaica, Honduras, France, Benin, Belgium, Jordan, Greece and Spain. He was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 1996.

LINDER: I went to Greece; went out there as the Administrative Officer, Administrative Counselor. It was a four-year assignment, and it was my first big overseas post. I'd been in Brussels, of course, but as Personnel Officer.

Q: And you'd been in Amman, but Amman was not nearly as large as it was later, at the time you were there.

LINDER: That's right, and I'm sure it's still not the size of Athens. Athens was a large post. Not only was it large in itself, but it had regional responsibilities and regional operations running out of there; regional security,...what else did we have?

Q: Was it budget and fiscal?

LINDER: No, we didn't have regional budget and fiscal, although while I was there we took over the budget and fiscal work for Nicosia and Bulgaria.

Q: And several agencies.

LINDER: Yes. We had a lot of agencies there. We had doctors, a nurse, and they had regional responsibilities.

Q: And a consulate in Thessaloniki.

LINDER: Yes, we had a consulate in Thessaloniki, right.

Q: Who was the Ambassador when you went?

LINDER: Monty Stearns was there when I arrived, and about half way through my tour, Bob Keeley became Ambassador.

Q: So you had two Foreign Service career Heads of Mission.

LINDER: That's right, both with previous experience and both language qualified people.

Q: And who were the DCMs?

LINDER: When I first got there, it was Alan Berlin and later Ed Cohen. I'd known Alan Berlin in Brussels, and when he worked in the Law of the Sea. The Law of the Sea at that time was separate from OES.

Q: It was negotiating that treaty?

LINDER: Yes, he was the Deputy in that office, and then he was the DCM in Athens. Alan was part of the reason that I went out there. The Administrative Officer who was out there came down with a fatal illness, a tumor, and had to be taken out, and the position became vacant while I was negotiating for an onward assignment. I had the opportunity to go to Argentina, but Athens looked better to me, so I ended up in Greece. Anyway, it was a fascinating post. For the whole four years, terrorism was a big, big issue. When I first got there, it was like an assassination every other night. It was the Israelis, the Mossad, the Palestinian organizations of various types, the Arabs were very active there, and they were shooting each other. I lived in an area in which there were several embassies and where many diplomats lived. In that area there were bombs and there were shootings, you would have this at night and in the morning, you'd read about it in the paper. And then we had November 17th...

Q: Which was a Greek organization.

LINDER: Which was a Greek organization, that I think, assassinated the Station Chief, I think it was in '74 or '75...

Q: '75. Christmas.

LINDER: That was their first act against Americans. And subsequent to that, they assassinated others, including a military officer just before I got there. And also just before I got there, they'd shot at a military courier. While I was there, they blew up the defense attaché, and they set off bombs...one against a USAF bus moving air crew between the airport and a hotel. There were numerous incidents, so security was a very big issue while I was there.

Q: In the US Air Force, US military had a lot of people in Greece, but in the immediate Athens area, I assume you had to work pretty closely with the...

LINDER: We worked very closely with the USAF. The USAF base is adjacent to the Athens airport. It was part and parcel of the airport.

Q: The international airport.

LINDER: The international airport. The Navy had a base on the other side of the hill at Marathon. We also had an Army military support group; they worked like a MAAG. The head of MAAG, and the Base Commander or his deputy attended our weekly staff meetings. We had a large military presence in Brussels. I was in Madrid, where we had the base at Torrejon, right outside of Madrid, and of course, in Jordan there was a US military presence. But I've never seen daily involvement with military issues as we had in Greece. At every staff meeting we were involved with the military, with the base, with the labor union out at the base. The union politicized, very left wing, and they were always doing something--putting up a barricade or doing this or that, or having a disagreement over wages; there were always issues, and the embassy was involved on a daily basis in the minutiae.

Q: There was a political military officer, but you got very involved yourself.

LINDER: Well, I'm talking about the embassy in general. I was involved, yes, in various ways. I certainly was involved with their security people, and the community people--schools, and in many ways. But, I'm thinking more about the problems caused by the labor unions, the problems between the Greek government and the base. It was a constant concern.

Q: Besides security and the whole military presence in the Athens area, what were some of the other major issues that you had to deal with in your four years there--housing? You talked, I think, before, that you were more a manager in this assignment, less hands-on, so you had a pretty good staff.

LINDER: Yes, I had a large staff. I mean, I had a General Services Officer, and he had a couple deputies, three Americans in the General Services section, we had a couple personnel officers, a couple security officers, three when I left, a budget and fiscal section.

Q: The doctor.

LINDER: We had the doctor, and we had a lab there as well, and a nurse and lab technician, and we had the CLO; that was the first time I'd really been involved with the CLO.

Q: Communications, of course.

LINDER: Yes, a big communications operation. It was a large administrative staff, I didn't have to go out and rent houses, I wasn't involved in preparing the budget, I reviewed and approved it of course. I had the people that did the personnel work. I didn't have to do that sort of thing, it was different in that sense from earlier jobs.

Q: You mentioned the Community Liaison Officer, the CLO, and that that was the first time that you'd worked with such a position, because it was established, I guess, since your last overseas post. Tell me a little bit about how that worked and generally how the morale was in the American community, in the Embassy community.

LINDER: Well, let's start with the CLO. I found the CLO was a marginally useful position. I mean, a lot depended on the person in it. It was useful to me as an Administrative Officer, as a liaison with the community, and let's say eyes and ears into the community. An Administrative Officer has to know what's going on and how people feel, and what they're worried about and what they think is wrong, and so forth. The CLO was a good source of that sort of information, if they were moved to do that and made an effort and were not themselves promoting a particular point of view.

Q: Which happens sometimes.

LINDER: Over and beyond that, they took on some of the chores that had to be done. In a big Embassy, you're going to have a weekly newsletter, they could do that, they provide a place where people could come in and talk, get information about the community, about the school.

Q: Very good with new arrivals.

LINDER: Yes, they were very helpful in orientation, getting it set up, organizing a welcome kit procedure. So in all of these things, they could be useful. But still, somewhat marginal. In Greece we had a large regional communications operation, with regional radio/telecommunications repair, big warehouses and workshops. So we had a lot of people that really weren't Foreign Service in the true sense. I mean, these were people who didn't prepare themselves for a career overseas, they were just interested in doing what they did, and they happened to be assigned overseas, and they probably would rather have been someplace in the US. And this seems to me becoming more and more true of people in all of our diplomatic establishments, at least the large ones. You have a large group of people who are different from those who had opted for a career in the Foreign Service and expected to be overseas, and one assumes takes pleasure in becoming involved in the local culture and what's happening, and learning the language, and taking advantage of all the things that are there. These other people really wanted it otherwise; they wanted it more like home.

Q: Their expectations are different, but their needs are different, too.

LINDER: They're different, too, yes; you can't ignore it, and it's a fact of life. So, an active CLO can be particularly helpful on that side of the fence.

Q: What was your experience with the selection of the Community Liaison Officer, the CLO; was that actively sought after, was there competition to get that position, or was it hard to find anybody to be recruited?

LINDER: It was never hard to find somebody; sometimes the choice was obvious and uncontested, and that was great. Other times, it was contested, and that was a problem. You had

to deal with that; you didn't want to make enemies or create factions, so it could be a problem. It's a tricky business. In Athens I didn't have any particular problems; I did later in Madrid.

Q: You mentioned, I think, before, the school. Was that something you took quite a bit of interest in? You still had a child in school there.

LINDER: Yes, I had a child in high school. There was an American community school in Athens. I was involved to a degree on the Board, and an administrative office is involved in the schools. I always make it a point to go around to all the English-speaking schools and know what's there, as I do medical facilities. But I've always been very sensitive to medical needs, and I've always made it a point to visit the medical facilities, I've always considered it very important that the embassy have a doctor from the local community that it can rely on and talk with and call on.

JOHN NIX
Political/Military Officer
Athens (1985-1987)

John Nix was born in Alabama in 1938. He attended the U.S. Military Academy and served in the U.S. Army from 1960 to 1971 as a major overseas. Upon entering the Foreign Service in 1971, his assignments abroad have included Nairobi, Moscow, Nicosia, Athens and Berlin. Mr. Nix was interviewed in 1994 by Raymond Ewing.

Q: In the summer of 1985, I think you switched jobs. You stayed in Athens, but you became (inaudible).

NIX: I had an opportunity to move and take over my own section. The political/military field in Athens in those days was an extremely interesting place to work. So, the ambassador asked me to take that job and I was glad to do it. At that time, we had in Greece four major bases, all of which the Pentagon considered vital to U.S. military operations in the eastern Mediterranean. So, you can imagine, given what I've said earlier about our relationship with the Papandreou government overall, how difficult this could be at times. Just to briefly summarize the bases so that if we mention them, we'll know what we're talking about, Hellenikon was a major air base near Athens located contiguous to the civilian airport; Nea Makri was a large naval base slightly north of Athens near the town of Marathon on the mainland; then there were two major bases on Crete, Iraklion, which was an air force signals station; and Souda Bay, which is the only remaining one today, and was and is a vital refueling and communications point for the Navy aircraft and ships of the Sixth Fleet and for any other forces that we deploy to the area. Basically, my job when I took over the Political/Military Section, was to maintain U.S. access to the bases. It was that simple. We had a lot of operations going into and out of those bases. Virtually every operation required the acquiescence of the Greek government. They would not give any blanket approval. Every single operation, every flight that took off and landed at any base required the specific approval of the Greek government. There was both a lot of volume plus a lot of

sensitivity to the work at that time.

Q: When you received instructions to seek approval for a particular activity coming up- (end of tape)

You were talking about how you went about getting approval for activities and the role of the base negotiator.

NIX: What I was just going to mention is that the base negotiator (originally Ambassador Bartholemew) when he negotiated the so-called DECA (Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement) with Greece, the negotiators came up with a way to manage the relationship which I had not seen before. It was called the Joint Commission. We had a joint commission which was chaired on our side by the DCM in the embassy, and on the Greek side by the head of the Greek-American Relations Department of the Greek Foreign Ministry. We were in fact entrusted with managing the bases. I was the so-called executive secretary on the American side and a very, very accomplished diplomat named Elias Gounaris, who later became Greek ambassador to London, was my counterpart on the Greek side.

Q: When was the DECA concluded?

NIX: The DECA was concluded in 1981, under the New Democracy government. It was ready for signature, but the election took place before it could be signed and it had to be renegotiated with the PASOK government.

Q: Besides the Joint Commission, was there actually a status of forces arrangement in Greece?

NIX: We used the NATO status of forces agreement.

Q: So it was not bilateral.

NIX: There are some paragraphs in the DECA which appear to conflict with the NATO Status of Forces Agreement and which became huge bones of contention between ourselves and the Greeks. Our own military establishment is certainly unwilling to accept anything less from any NATO ally than is included in the NATO Status of Forces Agreement. The Greeks were unwilling to accept anything less than what was in the DECA itself. But for better or for worse, we usually managed to negotiate some solution.

At any rate, we had a number of crises. We were trying to keep access to these bases so that we could keep up uninterrupted support for a host of critical military activities which we had going on in that part of the world. In the final analysis, the Greek Government almost always agreed to cooperate with us.

Q: They might have been slow sometimes or raised issues or questions, but they never said "No."

NIX: They never said "No."

Q: I suppose they had problems sometimes with last minute requests or requests that didn't give reasonable lead time?

NIX: Last minute requests usually took a high level call. Either the ambassador or the DCM would have to call somebody very senior. Certainly, they don't have the 24 hour machinery there to deal with this sort of thing.

Q: Given the overall atmosphere that you've described, were there greater problems for you in the embassy with the U.S. military that perhaps assumed or didn't understand sometimes that Greece was a little bit different or that there were some issues that they had to be aware of or did you generally have a very good relationship with the Air Force and the Navy and so on?

NIX: I had a good relationship with everyone in the U.S. military, but there were certainly people both in the Pentagon and in Ramstein, which is the European Air Force headquarters, and in Brussels, and the base in Hellenikon, who didn't think the State Department and the Embassy were doing enough to pressure the Greek government to acquiesce in certain things.

Q: Would you want to say something more about the general question of security assistance to Greece during the period in which you were there? What was the extent to which U.S. arms sales were a significant factor? I know that there has been talk in subsequent years about something of an arms race between Greece and Turkey and a level of U.S. security assistance to Greece. Related to that, Turkey has always been an element.

NIX: When the DECA was negotiated, a commitment was made by the U.S. government to take into account the historical political realities of the region when considering levels of security assistance.

Q: Including the military balance.

NIX: Taking into account maintaining the military balance. Those were the magic words. What this meant to the Greeks was that we would forever and ever retain the same balance of aid between Greece and Turkey that we had had up until that time.

Q: Which is a ratio of about 7:10.

NIX: Yes. That means seven dollars to Greece for every 10 dollars that goes to Turkey. The Turkish military establishment is far more complex, of much greater magnitude, was considered a real bulwark of NATO's southeastern flank, whereas Greece at that time was playing almost no role in NATO's defense plan. Maybe a little bit vis a vis Bulgaria. But other than use of the geographic space of Greece, the Greek forces had been pulled out of NATO at the time of the '74 Turkish advance in Cyprus by Karamanlis. They had never been formally reintegrated under NATO command. The maintenance of this 7:10 ratio was an annual political exercise, involving the U.S. Congress, the administration, the Greek government, the embassy, and the Pentagon.

Q: Is there anything else we should say about the second phase of your period in Athens?

NIX: There were a lot of interesting things. We also had an Army artillery group in Greece, which was stationed all over Greece in small detachments. Basically, their job was to maintain Nike and Honest John missiles stationed in Greece as a part of NATO deployment. We also had multiple communications sites. This was still at the beginning of the age where we were only beginning to transfer most of our communications to satellites. We still needed ground relay sights to maintain a reliable NATO communications network. All over Greece, the mountaintops here and there, you found these little U.S. communications sites, the Nike sites, the Honest John missile sites. I would just say that keeping the status of all of these places on an even keel was a real challenge. These guys were isolated. They had very little knowledge of Greek language, knowledge of the local political conditions. Given the particular political situation in Greece, even the smallest incident at one of these sites would immediately become front page news in the Athens media. So, it kept us hopping. As I look back on it, I still think it was one of the most interesting jobs I had in my entire Foreign Service career.

Q: Well, it had to be managed well by the embassy and by the U.S. side, but it's also, I think, remarkable how much cooperation was received from the PASOK government. I think, in a sense, that to me showed that they in their views about Europe and NATO and the United States also recognized that in the Cold War period and with their constant awareness of Turkey it was important to do the right thing, to be a good partner with the United States.

NIX: That's a very valid point. We mentioned the 7:10 ratio, for example, We had pressure to maintain the 7:10 ratio, but the Greek government had a huge degree of political pressure to make sure that this was not disturbed. If a Greek government had been in office at a time when the 7:10 ratio were grossly overturned, that would have been a major failure and could probably have led to the defeat of that government in the next election.

Q: Largely because of the perception of Turkey.

NIX: The fact that they would then have been perceived by the electorate as ineffective in managing this vital relationship with the United States to protect Greek interests.

Q: How would you compare attitudes, perceptions of Turkey, in the period that you were in Athens compared with your experience in Cyprus both before and then after? You did return to Cyprus after you left Greece.

NIX: There are several aspects of Greek attitudes toward Turkey. One is certainly historical and long-term. Another one is what I almost would refer to as day to day. Greek civilization will never forget the 400 years of occupation by the Ottoman Empire. It will take millennia before this is removed from the consciousness. So, we have to begin from that point. We can never expect this relationship to be what we would call normal. But at the same time, there are people in Greece who realize that you cannot change geographic realities and that it is in their best interest to maintain a cordial relationship with Turkey, to have a commercial relationship, to have a certain degree of exchange in business and so forth, tourism, and that sort of thing. In Cyprus, and to a lesser degree in Greece, people feel threatened by Turkey. They hope that the

United States and the European Union will stand with them. At least in the time I was involved, the United States was seen as the best hope to protect them against what they see as the long-term expansionist aspirations of Turkey. The Greek Cypriots feel that Turkey has long-term aspirations to control the entire island. The Greeks feel that Turkey wants to control the Aegean - the islands, the continental shelves on both sides, the air space. They see this as a deadly threat to their own national sovereignty. So, these are two realities that you have to deal with on a daily basis. I frankly never saw much amelioration on this, no matter who was in power.

ROBERT V. KEELEY
Ambassador
Greece (1985-1989)

Ambassador Robert V. Keeley was born in 1929 in Lebanon of American parents, his father was a Foreign Service officer. As a Foreign Service officer he was posted to Jordan, Mali, Greece, Uganda, Cambodia, and was ambassador to Mauritius, Zimbabwe and Greece. The interview was done by Thomas Stern in 1991.

Q: That brings us now to 1984, when you returned to Washington for an assignment to the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs at the Foreign Service Institute. As you discussed earlier, it was during this period that you wrote about your experiences in Uganda. You were at the Center for fifteen months and then you were nominated and confirmed as our Ambassador to Athens. How did that come about?

KEELEY: When I returned from Zimbabwe, I went to see Ron Spiers, who was then the Under Secretary for Management. He and George Vest, the Director General, together pretty much determined the assignments of senior Foreign Service officers. I knew both, but not well; I had not worked directly with either of them. They were primarily experts on European Affairs although Ron had also been in Turkey and Pakistan; George had been in EUR for most of his career. I told them what I was doing and they thought that FSI was a good assignment for me. I talked to them at considerable length about Zimbabwe and about the issues that concerned the Foreign Service. Soon thereafter, Ron told me that he thought I would be the Department's candidate for the Athens ambassadorial position when it would become vacant. He told me that of course the White House might have its own candidate and therefore the assignment could go to someone else. He told me that the Department had just succeeded in extending Monty Stearns for another year, which meant that the position would not become vacant until at least the Summer of 1985. But, although the vacancy would not occur for nine months or a year, he said that unless other matters intervened, the Department would propose me to replace Monty. He did point out that there was an ambassadorial selection committee, chaired by Deputy Secretary Dam, and that the Secretary had the final say, and that therefore he couldn't assure me of anything. But he thought that in light of my background and career, I had a good chance of becoming the Department's candidate. I told him that I would be thrilled if that were the case; it was the job I had been aiming at for all of my career.

I heard nothing more about it throughout 1984. I have never lobbied for any assignment and I wasn't about to change my *modus operandi*, even for Athens. Then, in around February or March of '85, Ron told me that the Department would proceed to send my name to the White House for approval, but that there was no way of knowing whether the White House would go along. There were a lot of rumors, as there are always, that the White House had its own candidate. There was a Greek-American, a Mr. Sotirhos, working in the White House personnel office, who was supposed to be close to George Bush, having worked for him during his campaigns. Sotirhos had been the White House's candidate the previous year, but had been thwarted because Stearns was extended for a year. I kept track of my nomination in a relaxed way, but really didn't think it would be approved. I assumed that the White House would choose its own candidate; I didn't really have much hope.

In fact, I learned from Spiers that my name had been approved by the White House when I phoned him to inform him of a new development affecting my situation. Early in 1985 I was approached by a number of senior Foreign Service officers, with whom I had worked on AFSA (American Foreign Service Association) issues. I had been meeting periodically with this group of senior officers. George High was the organizing officer, but there were also a number of others. They were concerned about what was happening to the senior Foreign Service, in light of the Foreign Service Act of 1980. They were concerned also by the "six year window" and the "threshold" and by the fact that people were being retired prematurely in their view. They felt that there were too many political appointees as ambassadors; the senior Foreign Service was suffering because of it and was being neglected. They also felt that the senior officers were not being well represented by AFSA, which had as its priority the interests of the mid-career officers. That is how I got involved in AFSA.

This group of senior officers decided to run its own slate in the upcoming election of AFSA officers, because the group then running AFSA was reluctant to accommodate the seniors on their official slate. They asked me to run for President of the Association. I thought, "Why not?" It would have been a two-year commitment. I thought that among other things it would permit me to finish my book on Uganda because I could have done that simultaneously. The Presidency is a full-time assignment, but probably not a full-time job. I was drafted to run on a slate that this group had made up. In the final analysis, the senior officers' group and the AFSA slate compromised; I was supported for President and most of the rest of the slate was made up of people who already held the offices for which they were running, but the President was retiring - - that is, going overseas -- and they were looking for a replacement. It was called the "Continuity Slate." The decisions on the slate were made in what would have been called in the old days the "smoke filled room" -- the old "democratic" ways. I had agreed with the rest of the slate on certain key issues and therefore accepted the "draft."

I called Ron Spiers to tell him about these developments. At that point, he told me that I had just been approved by the White House for the ambassadorial post in Athens. I was astounded. I had never really expected to be approved by the White House. Very frankly, sending me to Athens made too much sense, was too logical. The AFSA nominations were closed; I couldn't withdraw and therefore I had to continue to run for the presidency of AFSA even though if my ambassadorial nomination were confirmed by the Senate, I could not have served as President. I found out later from Spiers and Vest that in fact the White House staff had put Sotirhos forward

as their nominee. George Shultz had gone to the White House with a list of five career officer candidates for five different ambassadorial vacancies; the White House had its own list of five, presumably all political appointees. Shultz lost the argument on four; the only one he won was Athens, which, it was said, was given to the Department as a "consolation prize." Shultz was so upset by that experience that he refused to do it any more; he told Dam that from that time on, he would have to deal with the White House on ambassadorial appointments. He felt humiliated in a way. I don't really know whether they approved my appointment as a SOP or whether the Secretary fought for it hard and won. I was told he did make the case that Greece was a difficult post; that Greece was going through a difficult period; elections were coming up; Papandreou was a difficult character. The White House candidate had no experience in diplomacy or foreign affairs and Shultz insisted he needed a career officer in Athens. He said that the Department had a highly qualified candidate. So the White House approved my nomination. Sotirhos was given the ambassadorial job in Jamaica, allegedly so he could gain some experience. After serving there for four years, he was nominated to succeed me in Athens and is now our Ambassador there. In a sense, the play was written and ended as the White House originally wanted. And that is how I got to Greece.

I didn't have any particular difficulty with the Senate confirmation although a number of the statements I made during the hearing were highly publicized in Greece, as I knew they would be. They caused some problems in Athens, but they didn't have any effect on my confirmation. Simultaneously I was elected President of AFSA, running unopposed, which is the easy way. I took office on July 1, 1985. I then had to resign as President of AFSA seventeen days after taking office. The day the Senate approved my nomination, I became part of management and therefore ineligible for AFSA office. In any case, I had to prepare for the Athens assignment.

Q: You had been away from Greek issues for essentially fifteen years. How did it feel to return to them? Had you during that period been able to stay in touch with Greek affairs?

KEELEY: In fact, I had been able to keep in touch because Greece was a country that I knew quite well. I have by now lived there for twelve years altogether, going back to 1936. My brother is very much involved in Greece because he has specialized in translating modern Greek poetry and he writes novels that are set in Greece. He wife was originally Greek, although from Alexandria, Egypt. They met at Oxford. He is bilingual in Greek. I have a home in Greece that I built over a ten year period starting in 1972. It never occurred to me then that I would return in an official capacity. Since I served mostly in Eastern and Southern Africa, our R&R point was usually Athens and we would always end up there during our vacations from Africa. One year, I was inspired to buy a little piece of land on an island that I liked. Eventually, we built the house that was finished in 1982, as I have mentioned. Habitually, we had gone to Greece practically every summer. I had a lot of friends there with whom I maintained contacts throughout the years. So I had managed to stay in touch with Greek affairs -- certainly more than any other country I had served in. I knew the language. In any case, Greece is a place you fall into easily without too much effort.

Q: Do you have any views about the wisdom of sending officers as ambassadors of deputy chiefs of mission to posts where they served as lower ranking officers many years earlier? Do the lessons learned during a first tour color an officer's views during later tours?

KEELEY: I think an assignment to a country in which one has previously served is a good one if otherwise appropriate, particularly if the local language is a difficult one and if the Department has invested time and money in teaching that language to an officer. I would think ideally, unless there is a concern that the officer becomes too closely identified with that country, he or she might well serve in the same country two or three times during a career. That could be as a junior officer when the local language is learned, then during a mid-career assignment, and then as Ambassador. I think Monty Stearns may have been the only officer who did that, at least in Greece -- he served there three times. He was an experiment. Rather than teaching him Greek at FSI, the Department sent him to Greece and told him to learn the language. He was given about a year to live in villages and towns and to wander around the country; he had no work assignment. Then he did a tour in the Embassy. He learned Greek thoroughly; that is the way to learn a language, unless one does it as I did, namely as a child. Stearns later returned to Athens as DCM and still later on as Ambassador. I think that is a good use of talent and experience.

As far as one's views are concerned, you are bound to have your thinking molded by previous experiences. They will influence your thinking. That could be a negative factor, depending on the degree to which the officer can maintain his or her objectivity and open-mindedness, which is really a character question. But there are advantages that outweigh the potential problems. The officer who has been in the country previously has immediate access to a number of people -- some even friends -- whom he or she had met during a previous tour (if that tour had been successful). You know people in government, business, academia, culture, politics, media, etc. For most officers, it takes most of a tour to acquire these assets. For the one returning, that period of contact-building is already done. The returning officer also has a good feeling for the culture and how the people of the country think, which I consider to be vital for good political analysis. You have to know what makes people tick; that is where language knowledge is particularly important because people think in their native language. If you can mentally -- linguistically -- put yourself in their place, it is very helpful. You don't need to spend a lot of time familiarizing yourself with the country; you know its geography. You still have to leave the chancery to talk to people, but there is a certain amount of familiarization work that is already done. A good officer will know a country's history; he or she will just know things.

The downside is what your question alluded to. An officer can develop prejudices, biases, strong feelings about the country and its history and its culture. Sometimes those views are negative. Just because you know a country well does not mean that you love it. You may have negative views about it and its people and their behavior.

Q: That leads me to the question of what major differences you found in Greece between 1970 and 1985?

KEELEY: The major difference from the point of view of the Embassy was that when I left in 1970, the government was run by a military dictatorship with normal politics being suppressed -- no Parliament, an unenforced Constitution, opposition leaders in prison or under house arrest, human rights violations. The government then was very pro- American, pro-NATO (to use shorthand), but was difficult to deal with because of their other problems. That government created U.S. domestic political problems -- there were pro- and anti-government factions in the

U.S. A lot of the internal Embassy turmoil that I described earlier (among Americans and between American and Greek employees) made for a very difficult situation.

By 1985, eleven years after the restoration of democracy in Greece, domestic Greek politics were very active. That was the normal pattern for the Greeks; they love politics. It is almost a national sport and far more intense than in any other country that I know. Everybody is involved in politics; no one is apathetic -- even those who say they are, are really not. They say they are apathetic because they are disgusted with everything and everybody. By 1985 they had an electoral system that was working, a Parliament that was working, politics which were intensely partisan and, I suppose, a much more ambivalent attitude toward the U.S. and its Embassy. That made for an entirely different situation from what existed in 1970.

I have my own theory about Greece. I denied, not always successfully, that there ever was any serious anti-Americanism among Greeks, even though I have heard it constantly and therefore had always to justify my view. The average American believes that there is a lot of hostility towards him or her; I have never sensed that either as an official representative or as a tourist or in any other way. The Greeks are very sophisticated about distinguishing between people, countries, governments and policies. Just because they may not like our policies on Cyprus or because they believe that we are favoring the Turks or because we are doing something they don't like, it is never translated into hostility against individual Americans or against the United States, which to them is still an ideal country. If they can afford it, they will send their children here for higher education; they have immigrated to the U.S.; they have visited the U.S. They look on the United States in a much more idealized way than we look upon ourselves.

At the same time, they can become extremely upset by the actions we take or by the policies we adopt or by attitudes they perceive us having towards them or their country. When they get angry at us, their attitude becomes almost like one of unrequited love. They act as if they have been rejected lovers. They cannot understand why we "love" the Turks. The theory is that we should dislike the Turks if we love the Greeks. Everything is viewed in black or white. It is a national characteristic. So they are periodically disappointed with us when they think we could be friendlier or loving. That is quite different from an attitude of hostility. I can't believe that people are reluctant to go to Greece because they think there is rampant anti-Americanism. They may get "taken" by a Greek taxi-cab driver or by a restaurant waiter, but that is not because he dislikes the Americans, but because he considers them naive and ripe for picking. The Greeks think that all Americans are filthy rich and generous and easily duped, naive people. They have the usual stereotypical views about us, but it is certainly not hostility. I have never sensed that.

Q: Did you have any specific instructions when you went to Athens in 1985?

KEELEY: I received the usual letter from the President which is sent to all ambassadors. It didn't contain any specifics about Greece -- sometimes they do and sometimes they don't. I had some guidance from the State Department's leadership. By the time I reached Athens, a second election had been held which Papandreou had won; so he was still in power. We had had considerable difficulty with him in his first term and even prior to his first term in a whole variety of ways. We obviously wanted a better relationship with that government. We attributed a lot of our problems to Papandreou's leadership of the party and the government. It was therefore a matter

of finding ways to improve the over-all relationship.

I had specific instructions about one important matter: the future of the American bases. We had four major bases in Greece: two outside of Athens and two on Crete. There were also a number of smaller installations -- communications stations, etc. We had had difficulties over the future of those bases, which we had occupied even before the NATO period. Greece joined NATO in 1952. The bases were established when we were helping Greece in its civil war under the Truman Doctrine. We acquired the existing British bases; we expanded and improved them. So they were acquired under a bilateral relationship and only subsequently became part of the NATO complex, although they always remained U.S. bases, not NATO bases. We had agreements that governed the use of these facilities. During the Colonels' regime, the agreements went into limbo, although the Greek government certainly had no objection to our use of the facilities; in fact, during this period we extended our military dependence on Greece. We began a home-porting program with certain ships of the Sixth Fleet at Piraeus. I think home-porting in Greece was a terrible mistake, but I didn't have anything to do with it. It was done in between my two tours.

In any case, in 1985, we had four major bases. After the restoration of democracy in 1974, we had tried to renew our agreements for the use of those bases. Their use had been called in question not only by the old Papandreu regime, but also by the Karamanlis government as well. We had had two sets of negotiations, in 1976-77 and in 1980-81. Neither of those negotiations had resulted in final signed agreements. So the bases were somewhat in limbo. During the first Andreas Papandreu government, an agreement had been negotiated. Reg Bartholomew headed the U.S. team. Monty Stearns was the Ambassador and the agreement was signed in 1983 and was to last for five years, expiring therefore during my tour. By 1985 there was already disagreement over whether this was a termination agreement -- as Papandreu and others had considered it (i.e., a five year extension followed by a close down) -- or whether it could be renewed after the end of the five year term. Deliberately the negotiators had left the phrasing on this issue in Article XII of the agreement somewhat ambiguous. They used different words in the English and Greek versions, which I thought was a great mistake. I think issues of this kind should not be left ambiguous, although it was probably done so as to get any agreement at all. The negotiators may not have had much choice (I am not criticizing those who negotiated, because they may not have had any other choices), but they did leave a major problem.

I did have specific instructions about negotiating a new agreement. I was not to negotiate it, but everyone recognized that this was going to be an issue that would arise between the two governments and that it would have to be addressed sooner rather than later. We did not want to wait until the agreement had nearly expired; we needed to know well in advance what our options were likely to be -- whether the bases could stay and under what terms. We had to start the process so that the Greek government could face the issue that negotiations for a new agreement had to begin.

There had been a paper prepared by the Pentagon which had gone through the usual governmental clearance process and had finally become an official NSC document. State had made its contributions. I read the paper carefully and thoroughly. The conclusion was that all four bases were "must have" bases. The U.S. had to have all four of them; none could be given

up. The theory was that perhaps, under the new agreement, one might be given up by moving its facilities to another; there were a number of options which were essentially a matter of rearrangements, not a ceding of anything. I was told that the new agreement, which would hopefully be for a longer period than five years, was to be negotiated under the most favorable terms possible both for our personnel and in terms of financial commitments. As I said, I was told that all four bases were necessary. The agreement would have to be phrased carefully so that it would not cause us trouble with Turkey, as had been the case in the earlier one -- that is, the previous agreement had not caused us major trouble with Turkey. The Greeks would obviously want to use the negotiations as a means of committing the U.S. to support them in their issues against Turkey -- Cyprus, the Aegean Sea, etc.

I was not going to be the negotiator. I decided that early on and I am sure the Department fully supported that view. I had discussed this issue with one of my predecessors -- Bob McCloskey -- who had been in charge of an earlier negotiation while he was our Ambassador in Athens. It was an issue we had taken up at FSI during a seminar on base agreements negotiations. In response to the question whether it was a good idea for an Ambassador to be the base negotiator, McCloskey said then that when he was in Athens he thought it would be best for the Ambassador to be the base negotiator. Subsequently, he negotiated the Spanish base agreement and then he was not the Ambassador; at that time he thought it was best if the negotiator was not the Ambassador! It was the old adage of "where you stand depends on where you sit."

But as I said, I had decided early on that my being the negotiator would not be a good idea. The Ambassador should remain somewhat removed from the actual negotiations because (1) a lot of the negotiations have to take place in Washington, by the negotiator with our own various bureaucracies, to obtain their support for what is being negotiated with the other country -- that would mean constant trips back and forth to the U.S. to the neglect of the Embassy and all of the other duties that an Ambassador has; (2) it is useful to have the Ambassador somewhat removed from the actual negotiations because he can then be used if an impasse is reached (he can be sent to see the Prime Minister to try to overcome a barrier by using a side channel or by appealing to a higher level to reach a compromise); (3) Ambassadors are congenitally viewed as being too friendly to the host country (that is what happened in the Spanish negotiations, during which Ambassador Terry Todman was unfairly viewed by some as being part of the Spanish negotiating team rather than working with McCloskey). It is usually an unfair charge, but it is not helpful in trying to sell the agreement to the American bureaucracies and constituencies, particularly if the Ambassador is the head negotiator. It will automatically be assumed that he is giving the store away. So in general it is better if the Ambassador is not part of the negotiating team, but is available to support the negotiator when a need arises.

Furthermore, in the Greek case, Monty Stearns had not been the negotiator in 1983, but he made his DCM, Alan Berlind, the deputy negotiator to Reg Bartholomew. I thought that was not a good idea because it would have meant the loss of the DCM for a protracted period; I needed the DCM to help me run the Embassy, which was very large (about 250 Americans and 500 Greek employees) and complex. I decided to make the Politico-Military Counselor -- Angel Rabassa -- the Embassy's man on the negotiating team, who would serve as the liaison with the Embassy and would also be the official left in Athens when the rest of the negotiating team returned to Washington, as it did periodically. He also kept me advised, saving the head negotiator some

time which he needed to devote to a very heavy work-load. The head negotiator was to be Alan Flanigan, with Rabassa being the deputy; then there were three other officers from Washington on our team, including a legal adviser from State and two military officers from the Pentagon.

As I understood the Pentagon paper and my instructions, I was to create a better relationship with the Greek government and to maneuver that government into at least starting the negotiations. When I took over as Ambassador, we faced a Papandreou who stood on his position that the last agreement was the final one and that upon its expiration we would leave all the bases. In the fall of 1985 we were three years away from the termination date and we had not even reached the point of getting agreement from the other party that negotiations should be conducted. So the early part of my tour was primarily focused on the issue of getting Papandreou to agree to start negotiations, thereby accepting the fact that a possibility existed that the bases would stay, which would require a new agreement; we had to get the talks started sufficiently early so that they would not be conducted under a very short deadline. The military were always concerned that they might have to use the bases without legal underpinnings. One scenario could have been that the agreement would have expired, but that the bases could have been used with the blessing of the Greek government. The military don't like that situation for very good reasons: there would be no legal leg to stand on. So our position was to get the negotiations started as soon as possible.

Linked to that was another issue. Everyone believed that Papandreou wanted desperately to be invited to Washington for an official visit to see President Reagan. He wanted it for his own domestic political reasons. His whole history of difficult relationships with the U.S. created the need for some kind of American "seal of approval;" he needed to show his constituency that we worked with him and that we would and could deal with him. But Papandreou was not about to ask for an invitation, for reasons of pride. It was clear to me, even before I got to Athens, that there would be no invitation from Washington without a new base agreement. Reagan could not have invited to the White House a NATO leader who was kicking our military out of his country. That linked the two issues.

Papandreou had been reelected for a new four year term. The Reagan administration might have been very disappointed by that result, because it still didn't like him and still remembered all the statements -- such as on the downing of the Korean Airliner -- he had made about the U.S. both in office and before taking office. But Papandreou had given an interview to a *New York Times* correspondent in which he was quoted as saying that he looked forward to a period of "calmer waters" in his relationship with the U.S. I was told by the correspondent later that he had actually put those words into Papandreou's mouth; they were never really spoken as such. The correspondent used the term "calmer waters" and Papandreou had assented to the idea and the phrasing. Washington took the words at face value and assumed that this was an opening which might have meant a change of view on Papandreou's part. The administration decided that it would try to reciprocate; if Papandreou wanted a better relationship, the U.S. was ready to do its part. When I reviewed the history of Papandreou's record in the U.S.-Greek relationship, it occurred to me that people were still excessively focused on the main planks of the PASOK party's platform of pre-1981. That platform called for such things as "Greece out of NATO," "U.S. bases out of Greece," "Greece not in the Common Market" -- this later amended to say that the terms had to be renegotiated with the EC; in general, it was a Third World neutralist position

which was to keep Greece equidistant from the two super-powers. I observed that during Papandreou's first term all of these positions had been abandoned; the reality was different from the rhetoric. It seemed to me that by 1985 Greece was just as firmly in NATO as ever. I attributed that to the fact that once PASOK was in power, it concluded that a NATO which included Turkey, but not Greece, was not good news because obviously, should a dispute arise, NATO would side with Turkey. That would have been counter-productive.

Papandreou had negotiated a new base agreement, although, as I said earlier, the termination issue was left in limbo. But in effect, he had contradicted his platform by continuing the U.S. bases. Furthermore, he not only did not pull out of the Common Market, he didn't even hold the promised referendum on the question; he just got better terms. He kind of blackmailed the Common Market partners and got massive assistance by saying that Greece was a poor country that could not keep up with the other economies without external assistance. He gave his farmers a lot of subsidies obtained from the Common Market. All of these actions gained him a lot of support, even if they were contrary to the party's platform. As far as foreign policy was concerned, that also turned out to be mostly rhetoric. People thought Papandreou would move very close to Libya, Iraq and Syria; it turned out that that was mostly talk; there were no major changes -- no significant economic agreements, no investment flows. At times Papandreou played on the international stage in a manner viewed as unfriendly in Washington, particularly on nuclear issues. He was very anti-nuclear. He once told me that in Greece his was the "Greens" party -- in fact, green was PASOK's color -- but he meant that they were the environmentalist, anti-nuclear group in Greece -- much more so than the Communists certainly.

Having looked at his track record, I felt that Papandreou did wish to have a better relationship with the United States. I thought he was now more self-confident, having won a second election. I had read a good deal about that election; I had followed it closely, because by that time my nomination had been confirmed. I found that he had not run against the U.S. during that election; in fact, foreign policy had played a very minor role. It was the domestic social and economic issues that were at the core of the campaign, as well as the personality differences with Mr. Mitsotakis. Turkey was not really an issue; Cyprus wasn't. I felt therefore that there was an opportunity. Washington seemed willing to reciprocate.

We started by arranging a series of high level visits to Athens, which had been rare during the previous four years or even in the post-1974 period when Karamanlis had removed Greece from the military structure of NATO as a reaction to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. So the relationship with Greece had been difficult for some time, even with a conservative government in power.

The first high level visitor was Mike Armacost, the State Department's Under Secretary for Political Affairs, followed by Roz Ridgway, the State Department's Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, then John Whitehead, the State Department's Deputy Secretary, and then in March 1986, Secretary of State George Shultz came on a visit. Athens hadn't seen an American Secretary of State for a long time, although it is possible that Haig passed through briefly in 1981 or 1982. The last Presidential visit to Athens had been Eisenhower's; the last Prime Minister of Greece to visit Washington on an official visit had been George Papandreou in 1964; Karamanlis was the first official foreign visitor that Jack Kennedy had received in 1961. The gap between

1964 and 1986 was long one, particularly for a NATO ally. So George Shultz's visit was important and was the apex of our strategy of bringing high level visitors to Athens. We had intended for Armacost and Ridgway to come out first and separately to "feel the waters." Shultz was going to Turkey and his trip had to be balanced by a stop in Athens. This "visitors" strategy was directed at getting the base negotiations started and to prepare the way for a possible Papandreou visit to Washington if those negotiations were successful.

We worked very hard on these visits, particularly the Secretary's. There were a lot of preparations; it was to be a two day visit. There were some trepidations about how it might work out. I was confident that it would come off well -- knowing more by that time about Papandreou and his attitudes. He was very excited by it and hoped for good results, as did Shultz. The preliminary visits had gone very well; everybody was feeling good. When Shultz came, we decided we would face the two major issues frontally. We wanted to pin Papandreou down on starting base negotiations, and secondly, we wanted to work out the Washington visit invitation, which Papandreou of course refused to seek. Both were certain to become press issues because the press had been discussing them for months.

The Secretary and his party and I held a strategy session at breakfast at his hotel; Shultz was very willing to go along with the scenario that we had worked out in advance (Ridgway, who had previously approved our strategy, was with the Secretary). The only objections were raised by Bernie Kalb, the Department's press spokesman; he looked at the issues from the point of view of satisfying the press, while we were more interested in pinning Papandreou down on the two matters; Kalb's interests and ours were two different things. Kalb thought we ought to be as forthcoming as possible with the press. We wanted to obtain a commitment from Papandreou.

We decided on some interesting tactics, which Shultz approved. I had prepared all the necessary documents; I was amazed at how easy it was, except for the Kalb objection about our not being sufficiently forthcoming with the press. We agreed that Shultz would simply say to Papandreou that the base negotiations would have to start; he would give the reasons and the estimated time required, along with some suggestions on procedures to be used. I had of course previously discussed the subject with Papandreou, probably on more than one occasion; I had talked to the Foreign Minister and others. During their visits Ridgway and Armacost had also discussed the issue with Papandreou and others. The ground work had been laid, so that the Greeks would not be surprised.

Shultz was to tell Papandreou, depending on how the conversation had gone to that point, that he was intending to give a press conference immediately after his return to the hotel and that he was sure the first question would concern the base negotiations. The Secretary would then tell Papandreou how he intended to answer it and would ask him whether he had any problem with that answer. A brief text had been prepared for the Secretary, which he would read to the Prime Minister; Shultz's proposed answer to a question on base negotiations would in essence say that the negotiations would be started soon. If Papandreou assented to that answer, that would have been a commitment from Papandreou and a reversal of his previous position. At the actual meeting Papandreou agreed to the Shultz statement. Shultz passed the text over to Papandreou, who gave the paper to his aide, Christos Macheritsas, who looked at it, agreed there wasn't much that could be changed, and furthermore noted that it was an American and not a Greek statement.

So objective one was achieved. The more difficult issue was the Washington visit, because Papandreou had not requested it. Shultz handled it very expertly, as you would expect. He said he had noticed that there had been a lot of press speculation about a Washington visit; he then explained the circumstances and all but said that in the absence of a base agreement, we could not extend an invitation. It was not a threat or a promise. He then put a positive spin on the comment by noting that if there were to be a positive outcome to the negotiations, a visit by the Greek Prime Minister to Washington would certainly be in order. The Secretary said that he would certainly, under the circumstances that he had described, recommend such an invitation to the President; he could not of course commit the President, but he thought that the chances were good that the President would agree. The Greeks weren't very happy about our position, but they couldn't very well object to it because it was our statement.

Then we had a very warm lunch during which the Secretary said a few words in Greek, two words, to be exact. Melina Mercouri had -- during the preparations for the visit -- suggested to me the idea that the Secretary would make a great hit if he said something in Greek. Melina has always been a master of public relations. I asked her what the Secretary could say. She said, "Why not a toast to Greece, at the lunch? Just a couple of words." So while we were riding in the car from the Prime Minister's residence to the hotel for the press conference, I made the suggestion, the Secretary agreed, and I had him practice the toast until he had the pronunciation down perfectly. As the luncheon began, Shultz raised his wine glass and said, "Yassou Elladha," which means "To the health of Greece." Shultz was delighted with his performance, and so was everyone else. I had been scared to death that it would come out wrong, but Shultz hit it right on the head; it was perfect. Everyone was amazed. They knew of course that he didn't speak Greek, but it was a hit. Papandreou said, "Next time we'll hold our talks in Greek!" I decided Melina was a genius.

By the way, that evening my wife and I hosted a dinner-dance at our residence for a couple of hundred guests in honor of Secretary and Mrs. Shultz. We had been told in messages from Washington that Shultz would be delighted to attend a dance, as he loved to dance, and though his wife had a bad leg and couldn't dance she didn't mind if he danced with other partners. The highlight of that dinner-dance was inevitable: the Secretary took to the dance floor with Melina Mercouri and the orchestra played "Never on Sunday" and everyone stopped in their tracks to watch that pair glide around the floor. Fortunately some amateur photographer had a camera handy and got a record of it. (To maintain an informal, friendly atmosphere we had banned official photographers from the event.)

To go back to the press conference, the first question was not about the base negotiations, but probably about how Shultz found the Prime Minister or something safe like that. The second question was also not about the bases and I began to sweat bullets; I had predicted to Shultz that the base issue would be first; if not, certainly second. The right question had to be raised, because we didn't want the Secretary to volunteer his statement; that would have been the worst thing. Finally, the bases did come up; after that the same question came up at least three more times, because the Greek press did not like the American formulation which had been presented by the Secretary in answer to the first question. We had couched the answer in very diplomatic language; the press wanted a clear "Yes" or "No." (Kalb was right that the press wouldn't be

happy with our answer, but the press wasn't the audience we were speaking to.) The press wanted to know: will there be negotiations? When will they start? Who will be doing the negotiating? They kept raising the issue from different angles. Shultz kept reading the same reply over and over again. The third time the question was asked, he said: "I have no different answer from what I have said before. I will repeat it once more." In answer to the fourth question, he said: "I'll give it to you slowly," and then proceeded to read the statement one word by one word. The press finally understood that that was all that Shultz would say and then they gave up.

Then there was the other question, from an Israeli journalist (I remember that specifically, because that is not where I had expected the question to come from). It was about the Prime Minister's visit to Washington. I think the reason the Israeli asked it is because the Greeks did not have full diplomatic relations with Israel at the time -- now they do. They had Embassies, but the situation was somewhere between *de facto* and *de jure*. So the Israelis had an interest in U.S.-Greek relations; Greece was the only member of the Common Market that did not have full relations with Israel. My guess is that the journalist thought that Papandreu would enter into full relations with Israel before a Washington visit to avoid confrontational questions on the subject in the Congress and other places. So the trip was a matter of interest to the Israelis. Shultz gave him the prepared answer, so that that issue also got on the record.

Q: Tell us what, if anything, you saw as the political cost of maintaining American military bases in Greece?

KEELEY: It is a difficult issue and Greece is probably not a good illustration, because the Greeks have a very ambivalent attitude about those bases. When the bases were first established in the late '40s, there was considerable debate in the Greek Parliament, the press and in the body politic (there is a book on the subject). The pro-base side won the debate because Greece was afraid of certain countries -- not Turkey then as much as other Balkan countries; e.g., Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, etc. The view was that if the Americans had their troops stationed on Greek soil, they would defend it if there were any attack on it. The Greeks therefore viewed the bases as a military/security benefit to them. As time went on, the Greeks felt less threatened from the North and concluded, somewhat viscerally, that the U.S. would not take sides in the Greek-Turkish dispute, so the bases lost their attractiveness. Then they had to be justified as a contribution to NATO, even though, as I said, they were bilateral bases and not part of the NATO structure. Nevertheless, they were justified as Greece's contribution to the alliance.

The problems arose not merely from the existence of the bases, which in some ways contributed to the local economy by providing jobs, construction contracts, purchases, etc., but because they might be used in out-of-area disputes; e.g., the Middle East or North Africa. That could have resulted in the United States using bases on Greek soil to support one party to a conflict which may not have had Greek approval. That was where the danger lay. Most countries like to keep control over the use of bases that are on their soil in order to keep some control over facilities that may be used in conflicts which they may like to stay out of, even if they are a U.S. ally (unless it is a NATO conflict).

The utility of the bases for us became very limited because the purpose of having bases in that part of the world is to use them in some action less than a war with the Soviet Union. They could

be used for resupply efforts, for intelligence collection, even if they were not actual staging grounds for force deployment and use. In the end, I think each base has to be viewed in its own geographic situation and one must decide whether it is worth the political cost that will have to be paid -- and there is always a political cost. There are also financial costs, because to almost every country where we have bases we provide substantial military assistance. We did that in Greece. The aid was originally justified because of the civil war, the Communist threat, etc. Over the years, the assistance became a sort of rental payment. In the long run, the aid becomes part of a base agreement; they all tend to have some financial provisions in addition to some guarantees of the kind of equipment the U.S. is willing to supply (a sensitive issue as time went on, and the level of arms sophistication rose year after year). All these considerations have to be weighed against whether that base or complex of bases is important enough to justify the *quid pro quo*. In the Greek case, despite the fact that it is next to impossible for the U.S. to have other base sites in the area (i.e., close to North Africa and the Near East) except in Turkey, which also applied restrictions on the use of the bases on its soil, one wonders how useful it is to have bases which are so tightly restricted as to use in areas where they might have to be used.

But I must add two caveats in the case of Greece. One is that we have the Sixth Fleet operating in the Mediterranean. One of the bases and probably even a second -- Soudha Bay and to a lesser extent Hellinikon -- really support the Sixth Fleet in important ways. When that Fleet cruises in the Eastern Mediterranean, without those bases the supply lines would be very long; the capability of delivering necessities to the ships (including mail) is increased substantially. Furthermore, another one of the bases is a communications base, Nea Makri, for the Navy. It is now obsolete because communications have improved through the use of satellites and other long range unmanned means, so that land-based relay stations are no longer required. But at the time, that base was crucial for the world-wide communications system that a world-wide Navy required. We also needed the Greek bases for intelligence collection. If there are no other means of collection in a certain geographic area, it becomes obviously very important to have a facility. If you have several collection points, then you might be able to do without one or another, although the military people like redundancy -- if one is good, then two must be better, because then you have a back-up should one fail.

That is why we had bases in Greece. Some became less important as time passed because of technological improvements. Of the two that we have retained under the new agreement, both on Crete, one supports the Sixth Fleet and the other is devoted to intelligence collection. Those two functions warrant maintenance of bases and the financial cost is not so great, because presumably we would be providing a certain amount of military aid to Greece in any case, to keep a balance with Turkey at least, and to keep the Greek armed forces at an acceptable level. With the reduction of the Soviet threat, all the rationales come into question, so that today an analysis of the need for and the costs of the bases might be entirely different from what it was just a couple of years ago.

Q: You mentioned arms sales. Tell us how you viewed arms sales as a tool for American diplomacy?

KEELEY: It has been one of our principal tools since World War II. We are in competition with other arms suppliers. There are a number of reasons for arms sales, only some of which are

political. Arms sales help our manufacturers, assist in paying for R&D, boost our exports -- if our businesses did not sell the arms, some competitor would. Sales of weapons, particularly advanced ones, overseas reduces the costs to our own forces because the development and production costs are spread over a larger production. If we sell 80 fighters to Greece and 160 to Turkey, which are added to the "normal" General Dynamics production for the U.S. Air Force, that obviously reduces the cost of each plane.

Arms sales have been repeatedly used to achieve diplomatic objectives. When I was in Greece, a major sale of F-16s was approved. The Greeks bought 40 F-16s and 40 Mirage-2000s in a major purchase. It had been an ongoing matter which the Greeks had been studying for five or six years. It just happened to come to a conclusion while I was there. I had nothing to do with the initiation of the project. I had something to do with the completion of it. The main matter that you have to weigh in using arms sales -- it is weighed very little in our diplomacy -- is whether the sale simply fuels an arms race in a specific geographic area. Often you receive a request from a country, A, for certain arms because it is afraid of a neighbor, B, who may have received arms from somewhere. The U.S. then sells arms to country A to balance what country B had gotten. Then country B receives another, additional arms shipment; then you have to give more to country A.

The problem with dealing with a situation of this kind is that you have to get an agreement among all the arms suppliers. That is not limited to the U.S. and the old U.S.S.R., but it includes a lot of the Western powers. We compete with the French, the British, the Italians and even some neutrals. I went to an arms sales show while in Greece and I was astounded by the equipment being displayed which had been manufactured in Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Switzerland and Norway, for example. There were things there that I had never heard of. All the manufacturers were pushing their wares. Anyone who had the cash could buy any of that stuff, no questions asked. There were no aid agreements, no control over uses, no reporting requirements. Admittedly, the weapons displayed were not the most advanced, like jet aircraft and missiles, but they were certainly very lethal. Unless you get the arms producers to cooperate, you can't get control over the sales problem.

Q: Did we gain any positive political advantage from the sale of the F-16s?

KEELEY: I think it was half positive and half negative. If we had refused to sell them, we would have been in very bad odor. The Greeks would have sought out other manufacturers -- the French, for example. In fact, had they asked for 80 planes from us, we would have sold them. Papandreou made the decision, primarily for political reasons, that Greece would give some of the business to one of its European Common Market partners while reducing Greek dependence on the U.S., which had been the major supplier for all of the Greek forces since World War II. He wanted to spread the "gravy" around. In the end, the Greeks were unhappy with the French planes and much happier with ours. They would have been better off if they had bought just one type of aircraft in terms of maintenance, pilot training, spare parts, etc. The cost certainly would have been less.

Q: Let me turn now to the Papandreous. We talked about the senior Papandreou in an earlier part of the interview. Let me now ask you about the son. I assume you got to know him pretty

well.

KEELEY: We didn't socialize a lot. He didn't socialize with any diplomats. I suppose my wife and I saw him more than any other diplomatic couple, but that wasn't really very much. Our wives were friends going back to our first tour in Athens and they remained friends; they would see each other from time to time. We would occasionally invite her over for a meal or conversation or to meet with somebody. But it was during this mid-to-late-80s period that the Papandreou marriage was breaking up, so that they were not socializing together very much, particularly after 1986. Occasionally we would go to a social function where the Papandreous were also guests; later in our tour, we also met Andreas' new wife, saw her two or three times at social functions. So I didn't have much of an opportunity to observe Papandreou except in our frequent business contacts. I had many one-on-one meetings with him; sometimes there were others present; sometimes we met when I was escorting a visitor. I guess I knew him as well as any diplomat did. I did not make any special effort to cultivate his friendship.

As I said, I had frequent meetings with him; I never had any problem of access; he would always see me whenever I requested a meeting, partly of course because I represented a country that was important to Greece, partly because I knew him from earlier days, and partly because I knew his secretary. I would call her personally; I would never go through the Foreign Ministry. I would tell her how much time I needed. She would usually call me back within a few minutes with an appointment time. That was very useful, because sometimes you need an urgent meeting; for example, we had a Soviet defector whom we wanted to get out of the country clandestinely and in a hurry and I wanted to forewarn Papandreou about that so that he wouldn't be caught unawares and say the wrong thing.

The Foreign Minister did not seem to object to my direct contacts. He understood that there was a special relationship and he couldn't criticize the Prime Minister's judgment on an issue of that kind. What Mr. Papoulias, the Foreign Minister, resented was that often when I would take a visitor to see Papandreou, the Greek note-taker would be the Prime Minister's personal diplomatic advisor, Christos Macheritsas, rather than the Foreign Minister. It was partly a language problem because Papoulias did not speak English and therefore could not participate in the conversation, which was conducted in English. Macheritsas would take notes for the Greek side, I would take notes for the American side. Papandreou would always try to limit the meeting to four people -- two on each side. He didn't like larger meetings unless we made a real case, as I needed to do occasionally. There was a change at a certain point: Macheritsas was fired and there was a general reshuffle in the Prime Minister's personal staff. The next time I saw Papandreou, it was the Foreign Minister who was the second Greek participant. I then realized why the diplomatic advisor had been fired; it had been a power struggle because he was getting between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. The Foreign Minister wanted to be in on the meetings even if he couldn't follow the conversation.

I would not compare my knowledge of Papandreou with that of his Greek colleagues. He did not have that many close friends; in fact, a good many of his friendships have broken up over the years, for one reason or another.

Q: As a general ground rule, what policy should an Ambassador follow in determining how he

makes an appointment with a Prime Minister or a President?

KEELEY: You use any technique you can. It depends on the local system and how you wish to work it. I operated similarly in Zimbabwe, because the Foreign Minister there was not all that friendly to the U.S. Furthermore, his Ministry was quite inefficient. I got in the habit of calling the Prime Minister's private secretary -- a man I got to know in his role as note-taker. He had been with Mugabe throughout the civil war. I would call him directly and got much better results that way. I am sure that the Foreign Ministry didn't like it, but as long as the President or the Prime Minister doesn't object, the bureaucrats are in a difficult position to object. They might resent it, but my job was to see the principal when I had to see him and not to be delayed or blocked by ceremony or protocol.

Sometimes I would see the Foreign Minister and not the Prime Minister deliberately, knowing that the Prime Minister would be briefed. That procedure was used most often for more minor matters for which I didn't wish to take up the Prime Minister's time. You always have to be careful about the danger of wearing out your welcome. You can't seek appointments too often; you certainly can't schedule meetings for frivolous matters. I was always careful to specify how much time I needed so that the Prime Minister knew that I would not spend more time than required just for chit-chat reasons. If it was a ten minute matter, I would say, "I would like to see the P.M. today for ten minutes; if that is not possible, then no later than tomorrow. I promise I won't take more than ten minutes of his time." That approach was appreciated, I think.

Let me give you one example of what doesn't work. I think I knew it wouldn't work at the time I did it, but I tried it anyway. On most of the routine -- and sometimes the not so routine -- bilateral U.S.-Greek issues (matters affecting the bases -- soldiers and airmen who got into trouble, other problems of that kind that used to get escalated into bilateral disputes), I would deal with John Kapsis, who was the Deputy Foreign Minister. He had responsibility for the U.S. portfolio on such matters, including the preliminaries to the base negotiations, assigned to him by the Prime Minister. He had been the base negotiator in 1983; he would not be the new negotiator during my tour for a number of reasons. He was the guy I was supposed to deal with on these relatively minor politico-military issues. He was often quite exasperating and difficult to deal with. He was a very prickly individual; he was neither a diplomat nor a successful politician, but a journalist -- writer and editor -- by profession. I think by the end of my tour, we ended up as friends, but we had many very difficult and drawn-out exchanges, including some critical ones when Greece and Turkey nearly went to war in March 1987.

At one point, I was trying to get an agreement on an issue related to the bases, probably permission for construction projects, and I was getting nowhere with Kapsis. After repeated tries and a good deal of frustration, I told him that I would like to take the issue up with the Prime Minister because the issue needed resolution and it was obviously not being solved at his level. I asked him whether he would have any objection if I did so. He said he did not. I didn't feel it would have been right to go over his head without telling him what I intended to do; that would have caused very hard feelings. I was of course not sure what the outcome would be. I made the appointment with the Prime Minister, using my usual personal channel to his secretary. I went to Papandreou's house and was waiting to be ushered into his office when Kapsis came in. He sat down and we talked. The Prime Minister's secretary came in and asked Kapsis to go into the

P.M.'s office, alone. He stayed in the office for about twenty minutes. I then was called in; Kapsis was there with the P.M. I made my pitch. Papandreou listened politely, smiled, and said, "I'm sure that you and John can work this thing out." End of meeting. I had struck out totally because Kapsis got in first, made his case, recommended that the Prime Minister not give an inch -- probably said something along the lines of, "I've got him where I want him, skewered to the wall." I lost the battle.

On the other hand, my options were very limited. If I had gone to Papandreou secretly, it could have caused a lot of problems for me. I might have won that battle, but Kapsis would have become unbearably intransigent on everything else I had to deal with him on. Obviously, Kapsis had called and had told Papandreou or his secretary that the American Ambassador would want to see him about something and that he would wish to brief the P.M. about the issue beforehand. In a situation of that kind the host government bureaucrats are in the driver's seat.

Q: Greece is one of the countries with which we have relations that has a very strong domestic constituency. Did you deal with the "Greek Lobby" at all while you were Ambassador? Were you pressured at all?

KEELEY: No; I was not pressured. I was of course aware of their existence. Representatives of various Greek-American groups, including their leaders, would visit Athens. They would always ask to see me and I would always see them. Sometimes we entertained them at our residence. We tried to treat them well; we gave them briefings; we helped them set up appointments if they asked -- most often, they had their own contacts and could see whomever they wanted that way. Some had their own channels to the Prime Minister and would see him independently without me being present. There wasn't anything I could do about that since they were not official visitors. As long as Papandreou wanted to work that way, that is the way it was done.

I never really had any major problems with any of these groups. I had one minor problem once. We had a group of U.S. Congressmen visiting -- I think three of them -- who were being escorted by some Greek-American lobbyists, heads of some organizations. The intent was obviously to influence these Congressmen to have views favorable to Greece, particularly on Greek-Turkish issues and Cyprus. As usual, I invited them to the Embassy and gave them a briefing -- an absolutely standard briefing which I must have given hundreds of times. It was a very balanced briefing, giving the Greek point of view, but also the Turkish one, pointing out the differences and the points of contention, like Cyprus, and on Aegean issues. It was absolutely straightforward.

One of the Greek-American sponsors of the visit who attended my briefing returned to the States and told everyone in Washington that I was presenting both sides of the Greek-Turkish issues; he thought that the American Ambassador in Athens should only present the Greek point of view. His complaint was pushed up to higher levels and I got some queries about the briefing. When I explained what I had said, people in Washington understood exactly what I was doing and were satisfied. I heard nothing from the three Congressmen, who were much more interested in a balanced briefing than in propaganda. But that episode created a small problem for me because the one Greek-American thought my briefing was too balanced. After all, he and his fellow lobbyists had paid the Congressmen's way to Athens to hear the Greek point of view, not the

Turkish or Cypriot one.

I gave a couple of informal briefings on the Hill while I was Ambassador. They were not formal committee hearings; they were open to any Member of Congress who might have been interested. I regularly called on some Congressmen and Senators, particularly people like Paul Sarbanes, who as a Greek-American is very interested in U.S.-Greek issues and whom I have known over the years. I did not testify formally.

I should mention that during my period as ambassador Cyprus was not a central issue. We were still living with the aftermath of the 1974 Turkish invasion and occupation. The Department has a Cyprus Coordinator who follows the Cyprus issue. During my time in Athens, that was Jim Wilkinson; now it is Nelson Ledsky; at earlier times it was Matt Nimetz and Richard Haas and Reg Bartholomew. The Coordinator would periodically visit Athens; since in my time he was also the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Southern Europe, he had other business to conduct besides Cyprus. Today the Coordinator is only responsible for Cyprus; someone else handles other Southern European issues. Wilkinson would always visit Cyprus and Turkey as well on his trips. There were some conversations among the interested parties, but not much progress. Some observers thought, perhaps correctly, that the Administration had downgraded its interest in the Cyprus issue because it did not consider that much progress was possible. We did a good deal of reporting on Cyprus and occasionally we would send in a "think piece."

The year before I arrived in Athens, the Embassy had recommended that we think "small" about Greek-Turkish relations; i.e., that we "cool" it and not be too active. A year later, we sent in a message which took the opposite point of view. We recommended that the U.S. become active on the various differences between Turkey and Greece; neither position was very appealing to Washington. With the beginning of the "Davos process," which resulted from a meeting between Ozal of Turkey and Papandreou of Greece in Davos, Switzerland, things became more active, but not our involvement. The two leaders began a series of dialogues and exchanges of letters; they seemed to be talking to each other about Greek-Turkish issues, including Cyprus. We at that stage took a back seat, because we thought that the best way to reach solutions was to let that process percolate without our involvement. So we took a low key posture on Cyprus for the entire time I was in Athens. When George Vassiliou became President of Cyprus, there was a series of talks, by him with Denktash, the Turkish Cypriot leader, which involved the U.N. mediation effort. There was a lot of activity, but not a great amount of work for the Embassy in Athens.

Q: Were there some difficult moments during your tour related to the Greek-Turkish tensions?

KEELEY: Yes, there were. It was almost constant. The relationship seemed to be deteriorating. That struck me particularly, because historically I could go back far enough to remember when Greek-Turkish relations were very good. I refer to the immediate post-World War II period. As I mentioned earlier, the Greeks at that time were more concerned about their Northern borders, not their Eastern. But by the mid-80s, the relationship had deteriorated as a result of Cyprus and other issues, such as the Aegean Sea. We became heavily engaged in the relationship when war between the two seemed possible, if not inevitable. That was in March 1987.

The tension at that time arose over a very dicey issue: the potential nationalization of the foreign petroleum exploration and production consortium in the northern Aegean Sea. The company that was doing the work was primarily Canadian owned, but also had two American investor partners and that made the problem of direct concern to us. This company had a concession near the island of Thasos. At a certain point in time, part of the concession was about to expire if the company didn't proceed to exploit it, and the company announced that it would begin to drill. The area of the concession was in dispute between Greece and Turkey, the continental shelf in that area. The Turks had threatened before that if there were to be any drilling that would be a cause for intervention to stop it. The history of the dispute and the concession is very complex. The Greek government threatened to nationalize the company to prevent the drilling.

We, by necessity, jumped in with both feet, trying to work out a compromise between the petroleum company and the Greek government. That intervention was eventually successful. I played a much greater role in that than anyone has realized because the Minister of Industry, Sakis Peponis, was a friend of mine from my previous tour in Greece and I kind of traded on that friendship (he was the official who had announced the potential nationalization of the company). We realized that the Greeks had arrived at that position because the company was about to act in ways contrary to Greek national interests and that might have started a war between the Turks and the Greeks. So the Greeks wanted to gain enough control over the company to enable them to make the final decision on where and when drilling would begin. From our point of view, the Greek action would have been expropriation, which had roused the ire of stockholders and may have provoked some U.S. sanctions.

After a lot of negotiations with the Minister, we agreed that the issue should be turned over to two mediators. Part of the problem, which went unspoken on my part, was that my friend, the Minister, did not get along at all with the Canadian company representative; they were just oil and water; they could barely speak to each other. So we hoped that if each could have a representative, that might make it easier to reach a resolution. The Greeks appointed George Koumandos, another old friend, who was a constitutional lawyer and a professor at the law school. He was also a friend of the Minister. The Canadian company chose Bill Vanden Heuvel, a former American Ambassador who had at one time headed our mission to the U.N. office in Geneva. He was a New York lawyer. The two mediators met numerous times. I sent Vanden Heuvel innumerable messages through the State Department. The negotiations took many, many months, but eventually they fashioned a compromise which settled the issue. Some additional shares were given to the Greek government; the company got its concession renewed.

But in the middle of all this, a terrible misunderstanding between the Greeks and the Turks arose. It was mostly the fault of John Kapsis, whom I mentioned earlier. As I have said, at one stage during this prolonged period, the company announced that it would begin drilling; the Greeks said "No;" the Turks threatened to take action. The Turks sent a ship carrying sonar equipment called the "Piri Reis" into the Aegean. In an earlier crisis they had used a ship named the "Sismik." The exploration was about to take place in the contested area. Within 48 hours, everyone was frantic; the Greeks put their military on alert and sent their planes to the islands. It looked like war was coming. I immediately engaged myself in the issue, under instructions from the Department, though I didn't need any instructions to do what I did. I raced around town; I talked to Kapsis; I talked to various Ministers; I talked to the Canadian Ambassador about what

the company was doing; I even talked to the Turkish Ambassador.

All of that resulted in my being able to figure out that the tensions had arisen from a complete misunderstanding stemming from a meeting that had taken place between the Turkish Ambassador, Akiman, and Kapsis, the Deputy Foreign Minister. The Turkish Ambassador had reported to Ankara after the meeting that Kapsis had allegedly said that the Greeks would drill where and when they damn pleased and the Turks had nothing to say about it. This was understood in Ankara as a blatant threat by the Greek government to take unilateral action, which led the Turks to believe that the Greek government was ordering the Canadian-led consortium to drill. The facts, of course, were the exact opposite; the Greeks were ordering the company not to drill. But Kapsis, who was notoriously hot-tempered about Turkey (his family had fled from Asia Minor in the 1922 debacle), was blustering and telling off the Turks via their Ambassador in Athens. So there was a complete misunderstanding about the true state of affairs.

At 3 a.m. I was awakened by a call from the State Department, telling me that war was imminent and that I should do something. Somehow, I got Kapsis on the phone; he was actually in his office at that hour. I had earlier reported to Washington what the Turkish Ambassador and Kapsis had separately told me. I told Kapsis, under instructions, what the Turkish Ambassador had reported to Ankara and explained that that was why the Turks were being aggressive. I pointed out that I thought that was not what Kapsis had probably meant to say and that therefore he should call the Turkish Ambassador and straighten things out. He did that and by 6 a.m. the misunderstanding was straightened out. We didn't get a lot of credit for our intervention, but it was a good illustration of the kind of matter you get involved in. Fortunately, Mr. Ozal, the Turkish President, then the Prime Minister, is a very level headed man. He certainly didn't want war; the Greeks considered him bellicose, but I thought he handled that situation very well. He happened to be in London at the time of this particular episode. We were able to contact him there and talk to him. He finally issued a statement on the critical evening that if the Greeks didn't drill, then the Turks would not need to take any action. That statement calmed the situation entirely. The Greeks called down their alert and the relationship returned to its normal level, hostile but at least peaceful.

That was the most critical moment during my tour. The rest of the time the Greek-Turkish relationship was marked by a lot of rhetoric, which seemed to get worse every month, until the "Davos process" started, at which time we really took a back seat.

Q: There was a USSR Ambassador in Athens while you were there. Did you have any relations with him?

KEELEY: They were reasonably good. The first one was a rather dour individual -- not very outgoing -- and rather hard-line. He was not very sympathetic. He was replaced in 1987 by Ambassador Anatoly Slusar, who was an entirely different person. He was a professional diplomat, out-going, spoke excellent English as well as several other languages. He had served a lot in Western Europe. His wife sang opera. They were very sociable and warm. We saw them quite a bit, usually at public occasions -- national days and that kind of occasion. We didn't socialize much together, but we did have some mutual friends who would invite us together because I guess they liked the idea of playing the "middle man." And we always got along well;

he was a very easy going guy.

He topped me significantly one time, for which I give him a lot of credit. We were attending a ceremony in Salonika which was to celebrate a U.S.-USSR agreement on dismantling nuclear missiles. We both attended and gave speeches. There was a lot of ceremony. I didn't have anything from Washington to offer; he had great proclamations from Moscow that he read. But his *coup de grace* came when he handed out small pieces of aluminum from a Soviet missile that had been dismantled. Sort of souvenirs with inscriptions. He gave one piece to me and one to the host and then was handing them out to other guests; I had nothing to hand out. So he scored a real public relations coup. It was a smart move on the part of the Soviets.

Q: Tell us a little about the Communist Party in Greece. How would you characterize a Communist Party in a Western democratic country?

KEELEY: Greece has a complicated system. Originally they had two, or one might even say three, Communist parties. During my time, there were the KKE (the Communist Party of Greece) of the interior and of the exterior. The latter was the party dominated by Moscow; it took its orders from the USSR; it was part of the international communist conspiracy, if you will. It was an entirely outer directed party; it was probably the most conservative Communist party in Europe, the most Stalinist, run by people left over from the civil war which they had lost. They were very hard line, very doctrinaire Marxists-Leninists-Stalinists. It was curious that they had any support whatsoever, but in fact they had the support of 9 to 11 percent of the electorate whenever there were really free elections in Greece. There was one freak election in 1958 when the left in general, including the Communists, won about 25%, but that was a very peculiar situation. The electorate knew well what the Communists stood for; they would have taken Greece into the Communist orbit, like Bulgaria or Romania or East Germany. They were an illegal party until 1974; in the 1960s, during my first tour, they were a completely illegal, subversive, underground party. If you admitted to being a member, you were jailed. They had a front party, called the United Democratic Left, known as EDA (its Greek initials), and that was legitimate, which we characterized as a crypto-communist party because it was a front. Since its start, that party obtained much of its financial support from Moscow.

Then there was the communist party of the interior, led by Leonidas Kyrkos, a well respected lawyer, a leftist. The "interior" meant that it did not take orders from Moscow. The party was communist, but Greek -- much more like the former Italian Communist Party or other communist parties not subservient to Moscow. These two communist parties competed with each other, but they were in agreement that their most hated enemy was Papandreou and the Socialists. That happens often, because all leftist parties are competing for the same votes. By the end of my tour, there emerged a new grouping which is known in shorthand as the "Synaspismos," which means the Coalition of the Left and Progress (that is the literal translation of its name). That included everybody to the left of Papandreou's party, including the two communist parties. That is now splitting up. I can't believe that the "exterior" party has anything to say anymore; its sponsor has disappeared; the Communist empire has collapsed; what can these people now offer to the voters? I can't believe that they will ever get 10% of the vote again.

The other leftist parties may have a future, but they were very small to start with. I think there

will be a reorganization and a re-emergence of the old United Democratic Left which will include communists, ex-communists, everybody to the left of the Socialists. Then Greece will have a three party system: the Conservatives (or Liberals, as they call themselves), the Socialists and the Left. The latter will not be that communist because without Moscow, there isn't much the communists can offer. Even the Eastern European Communist Parties are changing their names to Socialists or other strange names. So I don't know what appeal a Greek Communist Party would have. In the past, they have been a home for the protest vote, as is typical of many leftists in Europe; they also had a strong party structure, which went back to its beginnings in 1919. It was an underground party for many years, as I have mentioned, but it had organization and a social welfare element -- it would look after people if they were widowed or became unemployed or if they needed help for health reasons. There are reasons to belong to a party of the left because it does look after its constituents. It might find you a place to live or work or give you a loan or get you on your financial feet. That develops strong loyalty.

That explains why the Cypriot Communist Party -- AKEL -- used to get 30% of the vote, for that reason; it was a highly organized, socialized party that looked after its constituents. In Greece, the two smaller communist parties didn't have the financial resources to run a social welfare system as the "outer directed" party did, and that is probably the main reason why they stayed small. The party members were ideologically leftist and saw some advantage to being called "communists" although at times they dropped the label entirely.

Q: Let me ask one final general question. This concerns political reporting. From your various experiences, do you have a "reporting" philosophy? What instructions did you give your staff on reporting in terms of what and when to report?

KEELEY: That is a difficult question. I am not sure that I have a philosophy of reporting. I tended to report whatever I thought to be significant that might be of interest to Washington, whether they were conversations with colleagues, politicians of the host country, anybody who had something interesting to say. A certain amount of reporting comes from published sources -- from what you read in the press, etc. What you contribute yourself is what comes through personal contacts; I now refer to "spot" reporting, not analytical reporting.

Every once in a while -- and I must say that this has never been very well organized in my career -- I began to think along certain lines, based on political or social patterns that I perceived were developing which were of interest to our relationships. Then I would try to put together the evidence for my perceptions, do an analysis of the significance of the developments, and submit it to Washington. That was a voluntary effort.

There are always a number of scheduled reports. I never got into the habit of doing an annual assessment, which some ambassadors do. I usually reported *ad hoc* whenever interesting things arose, unless there was a triggering event. For example, if the Secretary of State is going to visit your post, as he did, I would send in a number of messages outlining what meetings would be scheduled, what subjects would be discussed, what the other side wishes to achieve from the visit. In other words, I tried to help the people in Washington who were preparing the briefing book for the visitor. In cases such as this, I always wrote biographic sketches of the principal people the visitor would meet. I usually didn't like the product that came out of CIA or the State

Department which would be included in the briefing book. I had certain insights of my own which I thought would be useful to the visitor, particularly when one had to deal with a complex character like Papandreou. I always hoped that the Department would take my comments and fit them into the briefing material.

Beyond that, there are certain periodic reporting requirements that have to be met. I did not take those on myself when I was Ambassador, but let the Political Section do at least the first draft. I generally reviewed most of the reports. That depended in part on how much confidence I had in my staff -- the DCM, the Political Counselor -- and the individual reporting officers. If I had a lot of confidence, I did not interject myself too much, unless I felt I had a contribution to make. If an ambassador lacks that confidence, then he or she is likely to do more of the reporting or to do a lot of heavy editing. I liked to see everything of significance that went out from my post, because my name was on the cable and I took a certain pride in the quality of the reporting, the writing, the analysis, from my post. I like material that is readable and to the point.

I used to issue some guidance to my staff on reporting, usually orally. These days the Department requires a reporting plan, which gives an ambassador an opportunity to get his staff together to discuss the special subjects that might be covered. The assignments are spread out through the year; we might believe that not enough had been done on the Greek military and its political orientation; we would then assign someone to have a first draft ready in March. We would run through various other possible topics and set up a schedule. If you are lucky, all your targets will be met. The reporting plan is sent to the Department, where it is sometimes amended by adding items the Department might be interested in and subtracting those matters which did not have any appeal. But a lot of the reporting of course is day-to-day and week-to-week because situations change; you can't always anticipate what will be timely and interesting.

Q: You just mentioned reporting on the military. Did you, at any of your posts, feel that the coverage of the military was inadequate?

KEELEY: I think it was inadequate in all the posts where I have served. We did not know enough about the inner workings of the military forces, either because it was difficult to find out, as it often is, given the closed nature of most military establishments, or because we had attachés who were active but not on the right subjects. They were not good at collecting information or intelligence of a politico-military nature, or in some cases we had no attachés. Then we had to rely on the political section, which had no means of penetrating the military. There are all sorts of explanations and reasons, but I never felt at any post at which I served that we had adequate understanding of the military. We should have had, because in many countries the military can take over the government. There are military coups all the time, particularly in the Third World. One may not need to worry about the British or the German military, but in most of the posts where I have served, the military is the potential next government, even if it is already a military one. There may be an internal coup or a palace coup.

So coverage of the military is important, but a difficult area to penetrate and to feel that you have an adequate grasp. I never found it personally very easy to penetrate the military. In most countries, the host government becomes very suspicious of you if you have close contacts with military people. It is not afraid that you are collecting information; it is concerned that you might

be fomenting a coup or trying to inspire some kind of rebellion against it, even, as I said, if it is already a military government. It is a very sensitive area and I suspect you are better off relying on the CIA for information through their peripheral activities -- cut outs, agents, secondary approaches. That is better than using an accredited diplomat known as such to the host government. It is not easy for such a diplomat to confront military officers and ask them leading questions.

ELLEN BONEPARTH
Labor Attaché
Athens (1986-1989)

Ms. Boneparth was born in 1945 and raised in New York City and was educated at Wellesley College, Stanford University and Rutgers University. After an eleven year teaching career at a number of Universities in the US and Israel, in 1994 she joined the Foreign Service. Her postings include Athens, Greece, where she was Labor Attaché, and Washington, where she dealt with United Nations and European issues. In 1990-1992 Ms. Boneparth served as Political Officer with the US Mission to the United Nations. Ms. Boneparth was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: Well, then, you're off to Greece. You took some Greek language training, and you went out there in what, '86 to '89? Who was the ambassador when you arrived out there?

BONEPARTH: He was my ambassador the whole time. Bob Keeley.

Q: Uh huh. Who was an old Greek hand.

BONEPARTH: Yes. He was raised in Greece. His father was a U.S. diplomat in Thessaloniki, and he was a terrific ambassador.

Q: Yes, he had a very distinguished career, and he worked under very dangerous circumstances in Africa, too.

BONEPARTH: And Cambodia. In fact, I took the lead in nominating him for a Creative Dissent Award, which he did get.

Q: How would you describe the political situation in Greece in '86 when you got out there?

BONEPARTH: Well, it was actually very interesting. I took a little holiday in Israel before going to Athens, and on the flight from Tel Aviv to Athens, I picked up a Greek newspaper to practice my Greek, and it was just after the U.S. had bombed the harbors in Libya.

Q: Bombed Libya in reprisal for a bombing in Berlin.

BONEPARTH: Right. But the headline in Greek was “U.S. Terrorists”. That kind of gave me a sense of what the atmosphere was in terms of the Greek press and U.S. diplomacy at the time. The Greek government was a socialist government under Andreas Papandreou. There was a great deal of rhetoric on both sides. The Reagan administration couldn’t bear Papandreou, and Papandreou couldn’t bear the Reagan administration, so the U.S. diplomats were very much in the middle.

Q: How did you find the embassy? Was the embassy a divided embassy? Did you find it a team, or how did you find it?

BONEPARTH: It’s a very large embassy. It had a lot of regional representatives. It had a lot of people from different agencies. The political section and the country team worked quite well. But I would have to say that it was never an embassy that had very high morale. Most of the people didn’t love Greece, contrary to my expectations. Fortunately, I was in a political section with people who were enthusiastic about being there, were good Greek speakers, and ready to immerse in the political culture of the capital. So from the point of view of my section, I had a marvelous time. But from the point of view of the embassy as a whole, I would say it was not a terribly happy post. There was a lot of complaining.

Q: I was consul-general there from ’70 to ’74 during the time of the colonels. There wasn’t much sympathy either for our policy or the Greeks, quite frankly. I think it showed that. What about the labor movement? You had a left wing government, which would seem to imply that the labor movement was hand in glove with the regime.

BONEPARTH: Well not exactly. The labor movement was as fractured as Greek politics. Every political party had its labor federation, so there were Communists, there were socialists, there were conservative labor unions. The socialist ones were dominant, because the socialist party was in power, but the General Confederation of Labor didn’t really work together to unite the labor movement. Sometimes you’d get freak strikes that, you know, were conducted by one set of unions only for political purposes. I was very lucky because I had a foreign service national out of the labor movement who worked with me, and she and I have remained close friends over the years. But because she was known, I had entrée to, and because I spoke good Greek, I was able to meet with a lot of labor union leaders. They were very wary in the beginning, because someone from the American Embassy was suspect. And a labor attaché was often represented in the press as trying to subvert the labor movement, because that was the Greek experience in the civil war period, and post civil war period. Or at least that was their perception. But, over time, I think we won a lot of those folks over, and they were much more open by the end of my tour to talking and sharing their views and so on.

Then the labor minister was terrific guy named Gennimatas, who was very interested in new ideas. And even though he wasn’t particularly pro-American, he always wanted to know what was going on in the labor policy field. So he was open to meeting with me.

Q: What were you trying to do with the labor movement?

BONEPARTH: Basically I was trying to report on what they were up to, and what their issues

were. I spent a lot of time anticipating strikes and trying to figure out how long the strikes would run and their impact on U.S. economic interests. But also I was arguing that the U.S. labor movement wasn't trying to subvert the Greek labor movement; that we had a very diverse labor movement in America, and there were progressive forces, there were more middle-of-the-road forces, and that I was not part of an effort to destabilize Greece through the labor movement, which was their perception.

Q: Speaking of the American labor movement, were you getting the feeling during this time of its clout decreasing?

BONEPARTH: Well, sure. It was the Reagan administration. I mean, the Reagan administration had a very clear mission to weaken the labor movement, and was very successful in doing so.

Q: Did this reflect itself at all in what you were doing?

BONEPARTH: I have to say that probably I spent 10% of my time on labor affairs. I was overwhelmingly consumed by my duties as political officer. I covered the Socialist Party, which, because it was in power meant that I was covering the government. We divided up the political section by political party, so with the beat of the Socialists, as long as they stayed in power, I was very consumed with covering the government. And I also covered Greece's role in the European Union, and there was a Greek presidency of the European Union in the years I was in Athens. So those were the issues that took the overwhelming proportion of my time.

Q: How did you find the Greek Socialist Party? What was it called?

BONEPARTH: PASOK.

Q: PASOK. Was it sort of viscerally anti-American, or not?

BONEPARTH: It was rhetorically anti-American. Although that seemed to taper off in the years that I was there. But it was a situation where there was a lot of bark and almost no bite. My role was to try to communicate to Washington not to take the rhetoric as the only aspect of the relationship. And that below the rhetoric we were having successful dealings. Not very successful, but relatively successful, dealing with the government. But Washington got upset by the rhetoric. The Reagan administration took it very personally, and so it was difficult to try and get Washington to see the side of Greece that we saw up close.

Q: When I was there, I think the thing that frustrated me – I wasn't in the political side of things, but running consular operations, but it's part of the country team – was how the Greeks, if something went wrong, it was always the Americans' fault. This is at a time when the colonels are running the place. There seemed to be, you know, readiness to blame somebody else for the troubles they had.

BONEPARTH: I think that's a third world phenomenon. I've talked to people who've served in a lot of third world countries, and there's this combination of envy and fear of the big powers running the show, and at the same time, you know, a strong desire to have influence with the big

power. So it's a bit of an inferiority complex. But I don't think it's true anti-Americanism. I never met a Greek who didn't have a brother or cousin in Chicago. And I personally never experienced, in a personal way, anti-Americanism at all.

Q: I have to say, exactly the same. And eventually I always ended up having to worry about the relatives, the cousin or somebody in Chicago, about getting visas.

BONEPARTH: But I mean, I think we overreacted, consistently. I'll give you an example. The holiday of November 17 is the celebration of the students standing up to the junta in 1973, and it has been turned into an anti-American demonstration, where the students march on the embassy. One of the years I was there, the wife of the prime minister, who was American, decided to lead a candlelight vigil for peace to the American Embassy. And the reaction of the Embassy was, close down early, send everybody home, this is an incredibly dangerous activity. When in fact, it was a bunch of Greeks holding candles and holding hands standing outside the American Embassy. Had it been up to me, I would have gone out and joined them, and participated as an American diplomat in the peace vigil. Instead we turned it into a confrontational thing. I think we could have turned it into a rapprochement.

Q: This is a period where the Soviets are going through their slow, almost dissolution. Were the Soviets sort of seen as the balancing force to the Americans?

BONEPARTH: Not at all, not at all. I mean, the Soviet diplomats stayed in Athens, they were posted there for eight years at a time, they knew everybody, they spoke excellent Greek. The small Greek Communist Party looked to the Soviets a little bit, but basically it was the European Union that was the counterforce to America. The Greek government at the time was committed to getting economic subsidies and infrastructure money and so on out of the European Union, at the same time that it was rhetorically criticizing the European Union. So, once again, it was that situation of bark and bite.

Q: Well, now, was there a patron within the European Union? Because I think of Kohl and the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) in Germany, I wouldn't think they'd be overly intrigued with the Greek government at that time. How about France? Was Mitterrand there?

BONEPARTH: Yes, I think Mitterrand was there.

Q: What I was wondering was, was there almost a sponsor of Greece?

BONEPARTH: No, Greece was very contrary. If the European Union hadn't taken its decisions by consensus, Greece would have been outvoted every time. And of course Greece used the European Union to knock Turkey, constantly. So, it was a very important platform as well as a source of economic support.

Q: During that time, were you looking at the Greek-Turkish relationship, as far as PASOK was going?

BONEPARTH: Well, you couldn't not, but that wasn't my beat. I didn't cover Aegean issues.

But of course, they pervaded everything. Another very big issue at the time I was there was terrorism. Domestic terrorism, November 17th terrorist group. They actually murdered one of our officers while I was in Athens, a naval attaché.

Q: Was there the feeling that the Greeks were not doing enough to do something about the November 17th group?

BONEPARTH: Yes, there was. Definitely. And I think that was the real cause of our antagonistic relationship, was that they simply did not want to cooperate with the United States openly about anything. And there were a lot of conspiracy theories about how PASOK was protecting November 17th, that November 17th was actually a wing of the PASOK, and so on. But the same thing was true when New Democracy was in power. As we now know, when PASOK in its last couple of years did track down the perpetrators, and break open the November 17th conspiracy, none of the people were identified with PASOK.

Q: Who was the head of the political section when you were there?

BONEPARTH: A fellow named Greg Mattson.

Q: Was Greg Mattson and the political section and Bob Keeley, were they sort of in line?

BONEPARTH: Oh absolutely. Mattson had served in Greece before, he had a Greek wife, he spoke excellent Greek, he was extremely well connected and interested in Greek politics. So I think he shared the same passion for the place that we all did.

Q: Well, how did he operate? I mean, Keeley? Was he able to make any headway? Could he talk to Papandreou?

BONEPARTH: Oh, well, he and Papandreou were quite cordial. His real problem was with the opposition, with the New Democracy party. New Democracy put out the message that the embassy was very pro-PASOK.

Q: This is tape two, side one with Ellen Boneparth.

BONEPARTH: I never saw any evidence. I don't think we were biased in favor of PASOK. We interacted more with PASOK than New Democracy because PASOK was in the government – was the government. But because in his earlier professional years Keeley had formed relationships with some of the PASOK people, the press and New Democracy constantly brought up what they considered to be his partiality toward PASOK, but I don't think that it was true. I think he was a totally professional diplomat.

Q: Did you have a problem with, while you were there, it was Reagan almost the entire time? Did you have a problem with selling Ronald Reagan to the people you were dealing with? Was he sort of a monster?

BONEPARTH: Well, I don't think there would have been much to gain in trying to sell Ronald

Reagan, because I wouldn't have persuaded anybody. So I think we just agreed not to discuss, I mean, we, informally of course, personally I had a lot of conversations about the U.S. government with people, but in my job there was kind of an agreement to just discuss the issues at hand and not get into U.S. politics or Greek politics.

Q: With the European Union, I've talked to people who have dealt with NATO have found that the Greeks spent all of their time keeping an eye on the Turks. And frankly, it was a disturbing force. Did you feel the Greeks were just using the European Union 1) to get money and 2) to stick it to the Turks? How were they working?

BONEPARTH: Well, I think the Greeks have a genuine fear of Turkey and are always conscious of the fact that their Aegean enemy has got six times their population, however many times their territory. Even the U.S. official policy as far as selling arms to Greece and Turkey was a ratio of seven-to-ten, which was a much higher ratio benefiting Greece than mere numbers would have suggested. So, the Greeks were very careful to cultivate the Greek lobby in America to keep the U.S. favorable. And I think that during the Reagan years one of the reasons we didn't have a major blow-up was that the president was always conscious of the Greek lobby and how far it could go in terms of putting pressure on Greece. So the theme of the Aegean is always there.

Q: Was Cyprus, I realize you were doing domestically, but in Greece, international affairs that concern Greece are all domestic affairs. Was Cyprus a major issue?

BONEPARTH: It was always an issue. I think in the period I was there, the Greeks were using Cyprus, well, I don't think they had a sincere interest in resolving the problem. It was another way to get at Turkey. And so there was a lot of rhetoric about Cyprus. These days, I think Greece is very interested in resolving the problem, as is Turkey. But stirring up the pot was, we were always trying to keep the pot from boiling over, and the Greeks were always stirring it up.

Q: Did you in the political section feel the weight of the Greek lobby?

BONEPARTH: Sure. They came to visit often. And they wanted to protect Greece's interests in terms of military aid. They had a number of issues – some of them cultural – but most of them revolved around defense aid for Greece.

Q: What was our military situation vis-à-vis Greece at that time?

BONEPARTH: We were in the process of renegotiating the SOFA (the Status of Forces Agreement) that enabled us to maintain four bases. In the time that I was there, we closed down our bases and we moved out of Hellenikon Airport, so it was a big time in terms of disentanglement. The government said they wanted the U.S. out of Greece, but of course as soon as we agreed to go along with that and we closed our bases, they were concerned about the economic impact of losing the U.S. presence. Eventually, we only kept one base in Crete, Souda Bay.

Q: Was there a feeling that you were getting from our embassy that it was about time to get the hell out of Greece, that things were changing and it was no longer that important? Where we

saying, "Let's get out of here?" Because this was happening at the Philippines at the time. At one point we couldn't live without our bases in the Philippines and all of a sudden we discovered that we could live very nicely without them and that they were a pain in the neck.

BONEPARTH: Well, Greece was important when the Soviet Union was a big threat, later. Strategically, Greece became far less important. So I think the time had come for our strategic purposes to cut down our presence. And since that was what the Greeks were demanding, it seemed logical to proceed with the negotiations, although Souda Bay in Crete remains an important base strategically in the Eastern Mediterranean. But the listening posts and the other things that we were doing were no longer very important in terms of covering Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Q: Did you sense any disquiet on the part of Greek politicians that all of a sudden we were getting out where getting out meant that 1) they no longer had the U.S. to kick around as much and 2) if we gave up those, we'd begin to take a look at the difference between Greece and Turkey. And when you take a look at the Greeks and the Turks, the only thing that keeps us happy with the Greeks is the Greek lobby.

BONEPARTH: I do think that the concern of what it would do to the U.S.-Greek relationship to pull out the bases was an underlying theme, particularly for New Democracy, which had more of a commitment to bilateral relationships than PASOK seemed to have. But I think that even underlying PASOK, there was the concern that if the bases aren't here, 1) we won't have the U.S. to kick around but 2) what will this do to our relative strength vis-à-vis Turkey. So, yes, you are right.

Q: Would you ever use this either overtly or subliminally in talking about Greek-American relations.

BONEPARTH: Well, I didn't because I wasn't in political-military. I wasn't covering the Aegean affairs. So I guess I'd have to defer on that one. I don't know if those types of arguments were used by others or not.

Q: Were there any political movements going on in Greece at the time that were of particular interest to us?

BONEPARTH: Well, the communists had split into a European communist and a post-Soviet group. And we had a hard-and-fast rule not to talk to the communists, which I found totally silly, as did our section. So we proceeded to have informal contacts with the European communists and I even made contact with some of the Soviet communist party types. But that was all part of communism imploding in Eastern Europe and Russia.

Q: Where would the Greek communist party put itself? You have the Euro communism which was coming out, but the Italians were practically autonomous. The French communists were almost a puppet of the Soviets. At that time, while you were there, where did you see the Greek communists?

BONEPARTH: Well, as I said, they had split – the pro-Soviets and the European communists – and they were competing a lot with each other for the same constituency. So they didn't grow in numbers, they didn't decrease in numbers. Their totals were the same but they were split. And the Euro-communists were fairly close to PASOK so there were times when there were alliances in municipal elections between the Euro-communists and the socialists.

Q: How about regionalism? Was it just an Athens-centered government?

BONEPARTH: No, the success of PASOK staying in power was that they did a great deal in the countryside in terms of providing social services, particularly medical services. And they got a lot of subsidies from the European Union for farmers. So when you went out into the countryside, you'd see building all over and people very content. I think the big mistake that's been made since, is that the State Department, in its efforts to downsize, has cut travel money for officers to visit outside of the capital in many, many countries, and that's certainly true in Greece. We were fortunate; we still had travel money. And I love to travel so I took advantage of it whenever possible. And I'd come back with fairly positive reports of what was going on in the countryside. And when it came time to predict election results, my predictions were always right, because I had been out in the country and knew that the rural voters were quite happy with how they were faring under PASOK.

Q: At one time, and I don't know how it was when you were there, Greek politics were very personal. Party leaders had their own group. They were like a bunch of feudal lords. Was that still the case?

BONEPARTH: Oh, yes. The prime minister had a kitchen cabinet and had the central committee of the party, but he definitely worked with his own cadre of people that he trusted.

Q: Were there any issues during the time you were there, '86 to '89 in particular, that engaged our attention?

BONEPARTH: Well, we've covered a lot of issues. The bases, the European issues, Turkey, Cyprus. There was a very close call in terms of Greece and Turkey going to war when a Turkish ship started exploring for oil in the North Aegean, but I'm not going to go into the whole story. But at the end of my tour, it was a very unstable time, because Papandreou, who had been in power for a long time was being accused of participation in a financial scandal – had a five bypass, or quintuple, bypass operation on his heart and barely survived it; and dropped his wife to have an affair with an airline stewardess half his age. So by the end of my tour, people were calling me the Rona Barrett of the State Department, because I kept having to write gossip cables about what was going on with Andreas Papandreou.

Q: Was this the whole political society focusing in on Andreas Papandreou's problems?

BONEPARTH: Totally. I mean Greeks love gossip and they are very political people. So they always know what's going on. They follow the news very closely and they consume a great deal of personal politics.

Q: Did you find yourself sitting around late in the evening with the political types in the Kolonaki Square listening to the gossip? Was this part of your beat?

BONEPARTH: Absolutely. Probably it wasn't Kolonaki, because Kolonaki became a kind of a youth center, a yuppie place, where coffee cost too much. But the journalists would go to a lot of local tavernas and trade local gossip and that was a lot of fun. But it also got tiring.

Q: They have their siesta and we don't.

BONEPARTH: Well, we do, actually. My nickname in Athens was Doctor Overtime. That was satirical, because the "doctor" referred to my academic background, but the "overtime" referred to the fact that I generally made it out of the embassy by 6 o'clock every evening, because I'm a fast writer and I got my cables cleared quickly. And then I would go home and have a siesta until about 8 (o'clock) so that I could go out in the evening and get home by 1 or 2 (a.m.) and still be back at work at 8:30 the next morning. So I definitely did my siesta almost every evening.

Q: In that type of environment, it's almost essential.

BONEPARTH: I had kind of a double life – a work life and an evening job. And both of them were part of the job.

Q: Greek-American relations are always a tricky thing; this was not a minor job. How did you find the relationship with the desk at that time or the NSC or anything else – you know, Washington.

BONEPARTH: Well, I would say that the Office of South Eastern European Affairs was not terribly pleased with the embassy at all times. They thought that we were too pro-Greek – that we had "clientitis". And that we weren't doing an extraordinarily good job of representing American interests to the Greeks. I don't think that was true. I think that they had a certain kind of – not South Eastern Europe, per se, but the higher-ups – had a preconception of the kind of reporting they wanted, which today we'd probably call neocon. But anyway, it was certainly not predisposed to hear anything positive, so anytime we had anything positive to say, they considered us to be clients rather than independent diplomats. But we did get the message from time to time that we were soft-pedaling and that we needed to be tougher.

Q: Well, did you have the, I don't want to say problem, phenomenon of politicians of Greek descent, particularly, like Sarbanes and others, who would come out of Congress and be more Greek than the Greeks.

BONEPARTH: No, I would not say that. I think most of, Sarbanes in particular, but most of the Greek members of Congress understood the overall U.S. interests and weren't too philhellenic. It was more the Greek church groups and AHEPA, and the lobbyists – the genuine lobbyists, or the Greek lobbyists who threw their weight around, not members of Congress.

Q: How about the other embassies? Was there much consultation or was each embassy going their own way, particularly the European embassies?

BONEPARTH: We had by far the largest embassy in town and we knew a lot more about what was going on. So, I think the other embassies were very eager to pick our brains a lot of the time. But occasionally, I mean, we were very close to the Brits and the Turkish embassy, but I don't think that played an enormous role in how we did the job. We had a lot of access to the Foreign Ministry. We didn't need to find out what was going on from other diplomats.

Q: The Greek media – was there any way of working with it or was it a creature unto itself?

BONEPARTH: I think there was a way to work with it, but I think you had to be very candid. You had to be direct with them. They didn't play by the same rules. I remember, for example, there was a left-wing gossip paper called Pondiki – I don't know if it was there when you were – which means “the mouse”, and their favorite thing was trashing the U.S. embassy. It came out every Friday. Everyone in the embassy read it cover to cover, because it had a lot of good information in it. And the editor kept calling me a subversive for the right wing in terms of trying to destabilize the Greek labor movement. So finally I invited him to lunch and I said, “I'm not trying to change what you're printing. But I'd just like you to call me up for a comment when you run one of these nasty articles.” And he said, “Well, we're not really interested in what you have to say.” But, the harassment stopped. So, I think there were ways to deal with the press, but you had to be pretty assertive and confrontational with them.

Q: You are now and you have been before involved in the women's movement. How did you find the woman's situation in Greece at the time?

BONEPARTH: Well, it was kind of an exciting time because Margaret Papandreou was definitely a feminist and was organizing...

Q: And she's an American, well was an American...

BONEPARTH: Who became Greek

Q: Yes.

BONEPARTH: And as wife of the prime minister, she had a lot of impact in terms of being able to use the party organization, and particularly the women in the party organization. She kind of turned them around from just affiliates of men's groups into an independent feminist organization and there was a lot of social policy that passed in those years. Family policy, policy on work, policy on marriage and divorce, that she was directly responsible for. So it was a heady time. It was a real women's movement.

Q: How about at the university? Were there gender studies? Was there movement happening in that field?

BONEPARTH: They never set up specific departments, or at least in those days they didn't; I don't know if they have since. But there were people beginning to do research on women, and so there was that type of ferment as well. Women's studies was taking off.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover – we may stop at this point maybe – about your time in Greece?

BONEPARTH: Well, I don't know if I've made it sound as positive and exhilarating as it was. But it was a great job at a great time with a great set of officers, and I certainly look back on that time as the best part of my career.

Q: Speaking of the officers, you were kind of the new girl on the block, I mean this was your first overseas thing. Did you find the fact that you came in as a mid-career officer and plunked in what many people considered a very good assignment, was there resentment or did you have people telling you how to do things or helping you along?

BONEPARTH: Certainly there was resentment, because I hadn't come up through the ranks and hadn't paid my dues, so to speak. That was their view. And I think that I had great luck in having a terrific supervisor and mentor. I had an ambassador that I totally admired. But once the Department admitted all of these people mid-career, they just let them sink or swim.

Q: This happened with the affirmative action program with particularly African-Americans, I mean an awful lot just sank.

BONEPARTH: Most of them left voluntarily, because the atmosphere was so unfriendly, and I pretty much went my own way and did my own thing, which of course, contributed to the resentment. So, I'm not saying that I didn't contribute to it. My evaluations, my employment personnel reports, were very strong, and if you just read about me as a performer in the section, you would have thought that I would have been promoted immediately. I did get early tenure. I got nominated for reporting awards, but I never got promoted. And if I had stayed in the service any longer, I would have brought a grievance against the Department. It was that informal resentment that I didn't really know how to handle and didn't do a very good job of handling and didn't get any help with.

GREGORY L. MATTSON
Political Counselor
Athens (1987-1990)

Mr. Mattson was born in about 1940 and graduated from Georgetown University. He served in numerous posts including Lisbon, Nairobi, Seychelles, Athens and Copenhagen. He was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 2000.

Q: This is a Foreign Affairs Oral History interview with Gregory Mattson. It's the 13th of February 2001. We were talking, Greg, when we finished last time about your assignment as political counselor in Athens from 1986 to 1990 following a year at the National War College, and you didn't need to go back to Greek language training so you went directly to Athens. I think Papandreou had been elected when you were there previously. Was he still in power, and what

was the political situation? We may be repeating a little bit of what we talked about last time.

MATTSON: He was still in power. He had won the next election - I guess it must have been in 1985 - with a slightly reduced majority but still had a comfortable working margin in the parliament. He had implemented some of his more radical domestic programs in the early '80s, was mellowing somewhat in terms of his foreign policy stances, but was still considered in Washington to be a difficult character.

Q: Who was the ambassador at that time when you went?

MATTSON: When I returned to Athens in '86, it was Bob Keeley. I think he arrived that summer or maybe the previous summer. Come to think of it, it must have been in 1985. He, of course, had had one other assignment in the political section in Athens during the period of the junta and in fact had spent a lot of his youth in Thessaloniki, so he had a lot of background in Greece and Greek affairs.

Q: So you had another ambassador like Monty Stearns who was there before who had a very strong background, had been a political officer, spoke fluent Greek. Did that give you as political counselor any problems, or were you able to clearly establish who your main contacts should be?

MATTSON: It was, I think, pleasantly easy with both ambassadors in terms of making and maintaining contacts. I think that was a tribute to both of them, because they were not only old Greek hands but they were also from the political cone. There's a tendency of people to repeat jobs that they have already done or know a lot about, but I was very fortunate that they let me be political counselor rather than that they acted as a suprapolitical counselor, so that was a very good situation. Ambassador Keeley, of course, had a lot of difficulties from the get-go because he had been criticized widely in the Greek press, especially in the conservative press, over comments that he made during his confirmation hearings. So he had a lot of difficulties from the beginning in terms of the conservative press.

Q: Did he also have a problem in the sense that his previous assignment had been during the junta period at the time the United States was supportive of the junta or at least had reasonably good relations? Some Greeks have always criticized the United States for not being more objective, as they put it, about the military government of that period.

MATTSON: His experience in the political section during the junta was rather unique. Apparently he was the only member of the political section and, for that matter, the only member of the sort of substantive side of the embassy who was openly critical of the U.S. policy vis-à-vis the junta. His wife was also quite politically active. She had close contact with Margaret Papandreou, for example, during the period before the Papandreous went into exile and subsequently, so he was actually in good standing with the anti-junta Greeks. His problem was not that he had some legacy or baggage from the junta period; his problem was rather that he was viewed by conservatives and rightists as being much too close to Papandreou.

Q: Why don't you say a few words about the structure of the political section. Was it pretty much

the way it had been when you were there previously, or had it changed in that intervening period?

MATTSON: It was exactly the same in terms of the number of officers. We still had, I guess, five political officers: one doing political/labor, which had been my previous incarnation; two basically doing external affairs, one of whom was focusing on Cyprus; and then myself and one other officer, usually a junior officer on rotation with other sections. The grade of political counselor had been reduced from minister counselor to counselor, and there might have been another adjustment downward in terms of the grade of the people in the section, but the number of people was the same. It's since been reduced substantially from that number; I think there might be only three people there now.

Q: What sort of main things did you do other than supervise the section? Were you responsible for contacts with the government or the ministers? How did you organize the work that had to be done?

MATTSON: A significant part of my job was supervising the work of the section and addressing front office concerns. Having been a member of the section, I did not want to siphon off the more interesting work; I wanted each of the officers in the section to be masters of their own portfolio and for each portfolio to be substantively rich. That sometimes was frustrating because there were some things that I wanted to take on that I denied to myself. But my contacts were split fairly evenly between the foreign ministry and the domestic political scene. Because of my previous assignment, I had a lot of contacts in New Democracy, some in PASOK. I was able to increase the number of contacts that I had in PASOK, so that was beneficial, I think, in terms of our reporting efforts. Then the other part of it was a lot of coordination within the embassy, of course trying to be supportive of the ambassador and the DCM in terms of their activities on the political side. So that made for a fairly busy plate. Also, the DCM, Ed Cohen, became ill - he had a very difficult situation affecting his eyesight - so the last year that I was there, which was the first year of Michael Sotirhos, who, by the way, was the first political appointee ambassador in Greece in a very long time, I was serving much of that year concurrently as acting DCM and political counselor.

Q: We'll want to talk some more about that in a minute, but I wonder if you could sort of review what were some of the main problems that you and the embassy were dealing with in terms of U.S.-Greek relations. You said you had a lot of contact with the foreign ministry, and I wonder if there were unusual problems or were they pretty much the same ones that you had dealt with previously.

MATTSON: I have a theory about U.S.-Greek, in fact Aegean, relations, that the issues are rather predictable and steady. Each time we change our personnel, we naturally begin to think anew about solutions. But very often many of the so-called solutions to intractable problems had been thought of many times before. Basically our approach was to try to maintain a good working relationship with the government of Greece, to maintain the sort of unfettered operations of our military facilities, which we needed, to attempt to get the Greeks and the Turks to work toward a *modus vivendi* between the two of them. We did have a pretty serious crisis during that period. The Turks had sent out a seismic research vessel, which provoked

Papandreou to mobilize Greek naval units and basically lay down a marker that if this vessel - the Sismik II, I think it was called - would proceed past a certain line into the Aegean, that would be a *casus belli*. The crisis stretched over one weekend and was very tense. Finally, the Turkish vessel changed course and headed east. Otherwise, the overall tone of Greek-Turkish relations was fairly steady. Papandreou in his rhetoric, of course, was always sharply critical of the Turks. I'm sure the Turkish embassy had a lot of reporting to do every time Papandreou went to parliament on foreign affairs, because he always had a lot of critical things to say about Turks while laying down various markers: if the Turks were to move one further inch on Cyprus, for example, that would be a cause for war with Greece, and that sort of thing. The substance of the relationship between the two of them was, I think, somewhat stabilized, but the rhetoric was still very bad.

Q: You mentioned the weekend crisis of a Turkish seismic vessel in the Aegean Sea, which obviously was a crisis in terms of Greek-Turkish relations. Did the United States, did the embassy in Athens, play a role in smoothing that out or getting through the weekend?

MATTSON: No, not directly. This issue was being worked in Brussels at NATO headquarters. We were carefully monitoring the situation, but we were not given any instructions to take any active role in Athens itself.

Q: Was there an incident involving an island also during the period that you were there? That occurred later, I think.

MATTSON: Yes, that was the Imia incident. That occurred, I think, in the mid-'90s. But it was a similar crisis, and I'm struck by the fact that every time there's a crisis in the Aegean everyone thinks it's the first time. I was rather surprised that there was almost no reference to this near conflict during the time that I was in Athens - I think it might have been in 1988 - with everyone claiming Imia to have been a unique event. We don't have a very good institutional memory. Nor do we at State have the inclination to feel anything significant preceded us.

Q: There were previous crises, too, not just over Cyprus but over at least one seismic exploratory vessel that I can remember in the late '70s.

MATTSON: That was the incident, I think, when Papandreou, then in opposition, had the famous cry, "Sink the Hora," which was the name of the Turkish vessel, and was demanding that the government take stern action.

Q: What about political cooperation in the role of Greece within the European Union? Greece, of course, was a member at that time. Was that something that occupied a lot of your time and attention?

MATTSON: Not very much. Greece was still feeling its way in the Community. We were, of course, encouraged that Greece was the beneficiary of a great deal of largesse from Brussels. I think all of us on the personal side were somewhat troubled that so many major projects which were funded by the EU (European Union), the EEC (European Economic Community) at that time, somehow never reached completion. There was a lot of speculation of outright corruption.

And that feeling that funds were being wasted was in sharp contrast to my experience subsequently in Portugal where I was DCM - and we'll get to that another time. Greece was thought of in that period as a very difficult partner for the EU. Politically, the European Community viewed Greece as troublesome, uncooperative on most issues, looking for every opportunity to leverage its membership to make things difficult for the Turks in terms of any accession plans that they had. So Greece was not considered to be a very stable or in fact particularly welcome member, and there were many northern Europeans who regretted that Greece had even become a member. So Greece had a difficult time in its early relationship with the European Community and vice versa.

Q: And it did not fill the seat of president, which is a rotating seat I think every six months, during the period that you were there.

MATTSON: It actually did, though I can't remember precisely when. It might have been the first half of 1990 or the first half of '89. But then their performance improved somewhat during that period. In fact - it's interesting - it's always predictable. When each of these countries becomes a member, there are people in Brussels who fear that the presidency will not go well, whatever that means. And then there's always a collective sigh of relief that the EU somehow survived a particular presidency. Its strange because almost all the work is done in Brussels anyway. But in fact Papandreou was a responsible president. I'm trying to think now whether that was during the period when he was in office or it was during the period of the so-called ecumenical governments. But Greece's performance, in any event, was considered to be quite acceptable during its presidency.

Q: Were you burdened with the need to share information, reporting, sometimes from the embassy? For the country filling the presidency, I know it's been a big burden.

MATTSON: We did. One of the officers was assigned to do that on a more or less full-time basis. There was a lot of political work to be done at the beginning of each presidency, sometimes in connection with some of the meetings that occurred during the presidency, and then especially at the end. In the intervening period it was rather unpredictable. Some off-agenda things inevitably would come up. Within the EU, more and more work, as I said, became centralized in Brussels or among the political reporters, *rapporteurs*, that each country has within the community. Now, interestingly, I think the Department sends an officer out to each of the capitals for the entire six months to augment the political section, and that person does all of the reporting, so it's much different. But it was an interesting experience for those who were involved. I personally did not have a great deal to do with that on an ongoing basis.

Q: You mentioned that Michael Sotirhos came as ambassador and that he was the first political, not career, ambassador to Greece for a long time. I think there probably had been some in the pre-war period or during the war. He also, I believe, was the first Greek-American to have that position, and he had served previously as ambassador, I believe, to Jamaica and had had some experience in Washington in various ways, so he was not a complete neophyte when he came to Athens. Do you want to say a few words about him? You served much of his first year basically as the acting Deputy Chief of Mission when Ed Cohen had to be evacuated, I guess.

MATTSON: Yes, he was, as you noted, the first Greek-American and also the first political appointee. He was from New York. He had a successful business, basically building or redesigning or refurbishing military officers' clubs. He had been in charge of "Ethnics for Reagan" during the 1984 campaign. As a reward, he then went to Jamaica for three years. He always wanted to go to Greece, of course. In fact, I remember vividly his first speech in Athens after he arrived, especially his introductory remarks. He told the audience of several hundred businessmen that when he was in Jamaica he would have telephone conversations on a weekly basis with Vice President George Bush, whom he called a family friend of 22 years. The conversations, he went on, always ended up with the statement he attributed to the then Vice President that, "If I go to the White House"- this is George Bush, Sr. talking - "then you will be going to Athens," and then he closed those remarks by saying, "And here I am." That, of course, signaled to his audience, which again was full of prominent Greeks and the media, that he had access to the White House. That, of course, obviously helped him in terms of the perception that he was someone who could get things done vis-à-vis Greek-U.S. relations by dealing directly with the President. The first year was, I think, rather successful, especially in comparison with the rest of his tour. He was a bit of a novelty. He spoke good colloquial Greek, fluent Greek. In fact, all of us learned a lot of Greek slang and jargon from him. He also developed the habit of going to a different Greek church every Sunday, and he would sing in the choir. This, of course, gave him what he craved - a tremendous amount of press play. In fact, he had a tremendous amount of press play throughout his time there. He also wanted from the outset to try to establish relations with all sectors of Greek society, so within a couple of weeks he decided that he wanted to meet with the Communists. Of course, we had never had any contact with the Communists since the civil war. Harilaos Florakis, who was the head of the Greek Communist Party, was a civil war veteran and virulently anti-American. The Euro-communists, then a European phenomenon but long since disappeared, were led by a fellow that I knew quite well, Leonidas Kirkos. They were also very critical, especially of U.S. foreign policy. So he asked me for my opinion, which was positive. I worked with him and together we brainstormed and stage-managed what turned out for me to be a most interesting day. Taking my advice, we decided to call first on Constantine Mitsotakis, who was the leader of the majority party. That meeting would be at 11 o'clock in the morning.

Q: New Democracy, the conservative party.

MATTSON: New Democracy, the conservative party. That was at 11 o'clock in the morning - or maybe it was 10 o'clock in the morning. Then about three hours later we called on Papandreou. I say "we" because I accompanied him on all of these calls, just the two of us: in the early evening Florakis, the head of the Moscow-leaning Greek Community Party, the KKE; and then an hour or two later, we met with Kirkos. It was a fascinating day for me because I thought these meetings were sequenced in just the right way and productive, symbolically and substantively. I accompanied him as note taker and in between meetings was able to draft and dispatch a telegram on the meeting that had just occurred. So we actually had Washington involved via a steady stream of cables. The Mitsotakis cable went in before we met with Papandreou, and the Papandreou cable went in before we met with Florakis, and so forth. I finished up with the final reporting cable at nine or 10 o'clock that same night. We were then able to do an analytical piece on the whole thing the next day. For me, as an old political reporting officer, it was sort of a fascinating day to see how all of these meetings went and then to report to Washington almost in

real time.

Q: Did either Mitsotakis or Papandreou have any problem, any objection, to the ambassador seeing the Communist Party leaders?

MATTSON: No, they didn't. At least they didn't voice any objection, and the press attention to that aspect was really quite positive, not only in Rizospastis, which was the Greek communist paper and coverage was therefore predictable, but across the political spectrum, where the prevailing theme was that this was an overdue gesture. That did not mean, of course, we were going to have good relations with the Communist Party after that, but it did open a door so that one of the reporting officers in my section was able to engage with the designated person from the KKE on various issues. I don't think we were able to move them off of any of their positions, but at least we were able to get directly from them their views on various topics.

Q: Did the State Department have any problem with this initiative?

MATTSON: I think this had been worked out prior to his arrival, so there wasn't a sort of back-and-forth in terms of cables saying if this would be appropriate or authorized. It was pretty much settled by the time he got there.

Q: Of course, the period that this took place was approximately the time that the Berlin Wall was coming down and lots of things were changing in Europe.

MATTSON: True. This would have been in maybe September, just to put a month on it, of 1989.

Q: So that was a little before the Berlin Wall.

MATTSON: But things were moving, things were changing.

Q: It's interesting that he was able to do that, and it sounded like it was done smoothly and in a good way.

MATTSON: Yes, and then he basically wanted, as he put it, to raise the profile of the embassy. Of course, again, when you've been around the track a few times, you realize that every new ambassador, or most new ambassadors, somehow see the previous incumbent as somehow deficient and they want to correct things or expand things. I worked for five political appointee ambassadors, and I don't know any of them who really thought that their predecessor had done a crackerjack job. Perhaps we'll get into that later.

Q: Why don't you say a little bit more about how you worked with him on an everyday basis. Did he leave it up to you to kind of manage the embassy and assign priorities that first year, or did he have really strong views of what should be done?

MATTSON: I'd say that in the first six months or so I had a lot of influence over the running of the embassy, maybe even for most of that year. I felt that he regarded me as a competent person. He trusted my judgment, he appreciated my initiatives. So that made things fairly easy. On the

other hand, he was a strong-willed person and wanted to have things done in a certain way. There was a lot of personal diplomacy at work. In raising “the profile of the embassy,” of course, he was raising his own profile. He wanted meetings with ministers pretty much every day. After the courtesy calls there would be other reasons to go back and see ministers. He was also very free with the press. He gave a lot of ad hoc street corner interviews as he was going into and back out of these meetings. So he was the subject of a great deal of press attention, mostly favorable during that first year.

Q: Did he travel a lot within Greece? You mentioned going to churches.

MATTSON: Yes, he did. He traveled a great deal, and these actually became fairly extravagant operations. He had a set-to with the defense attaché over the use of the DAO (Defense Attaché Office) aircraft. The military had to cable back and forth many times from Wiesbaden or somewhere else in Germany that this was the appropriate use of the plane. In that first year he must have made a dozen trips by air, even to places that were within driving distance. He was determined to maintain a very high profile. I remember the drivers always used to have to set off at midnight or earlier to be in place when the plane set down, and so forth. There was more than a bit of showmanship, rather than expediency, in using the plane. Of course he would call on the bishop and he would call on the nomarch and did the appropriate things in terms of protocol. These activities would be reported extensively in the Athens press, which dominates the Greek media, as well as in the local papers. Sotirhos had a USIS officer working almost full-time putting together “scrapbooks” of his press attention - every single reference. His involvement in ecclesiastical matters was not restricted only to the time that he was in Greece. He was and is a very active member of the Greek Cathedral Church on East 74th Street in New York. In fact, he has a designated spot to the left of the altar in that church. Interestingly enough, that church pastor is Father Stephanopoulos, the father of George Stephanopoulos, the former Clinton operative. According to Sotirhos, George Stephanopoulos had been a babysitter for the Sotirhos family when they were all living back in New York City.

Q: I was recalling the first time I met Michael Sotirhos was in Cyprus, and I don't really remember whether he came with the archbishop or with Senator D'Amato, or maybe he came a couple of times with both of them. I sort of connect him with the two.

MATTSON: He was a good friend of Senator D'Amato.

Q: Let me ask you one more question about how you came to be acting DCM for that long a period. You mentioned the health considerations that affected Ed Cohen. Was that sort of an abrupt decision and the new ambassador didn't have a chance to pick a new DCM, or was he comfortable with you?

MATTSON: Well, there wasn't a curtailment of Ed Cohen. Ed Cohen had very serious eye surgery, so what would happen would be, for example he had the surgery I forget where and he would be out a length and then he would come back very briefly and have to have another procedure done and that would again take him out of commission. So I wasn't actually formally designated as DCM, but Ed Cohen was often away from post or resting at home during that period.

Q: Were there lots of visitors, official visitors, that came to Greece while you were there this period?

MATTSON: Quite a number, not as many as we encountered later on in Portugal and Denmark. Of course, the embassy was always interested in having senior officials. We never had, for example, a Presidential visit. Secretary Baker came - I guess Baker was Secretary during that period - but only for part of one day. He made a tour of all NATO capitals and actually met with Papandreou in Vouliagmeni, which is close to Hellenikon Airport, for just a couple of hours and then sped off. But he was the most senior official to come, although, come to think of it, Dick Cheney also was there for a couple of days when he was Defense Secretary. We also had a fairly large number of CODELs (Congressional Delectations). But my recollection is that we didn't have as many visitors as the state of the relationship would suggest, given that Greece was a country with which we had a very important strategic relationship, and with which we had cultural ties going back so long. One would have thought that in fact we would have had more official visitors than we did, but we just didn't have that many.

Q: Why don't you say a few words about your relationship with the other members of the diplomatic corps, particularly the Turkish embassy or perhaps the Cyprus embassy? Was that something that you spent a lot of time with?

MATTSON: I had regular contact with my counterpart at the Turkish embassy but not so much with the Cypriots. I thought it was important that we glean the way the Turkish embassy saw things in Athens given the very important and delicate relationship between Greece and Turkey. So Ankara's view gathered from Athens was worth reporting on. Beyond that, again, the British were very knowledgeable about the Greek scene, and the French to a certain extent, so those were our best contacts.

Q: Did we still have the U.S. Air Force base at Hellenikon in that period?

MATTSON: Yes, although it was going to be closed. The announcement that it would be phased out occurred toward the end of that assignment. I forget exactly when it closed. I do remember that the DOD (Department of Defense) had just opened a \$3,000,000 commissary maybe a few months before they announced that the base was going to be closed. It's a rather sad situation now because that is sort of derelict land. If you go back, as I have often, you see all of these sports facilities and housing facilities, commissaries, PX (Post Exchange) and so forth. It's all overgrown with weeds and it just looks abandoned à la a place in the Ozarks in the 1930s rather than this pristine, manicured lawn lively base that we knew.

Q: What else should we talk about in connection with this assignment to Athens?

MATTSON: Well, we were in a phase toward the end of realigning our strategic relationship. You mentioned Hellenikon; that was going to be phased out. Also Nea Makri, which was a very important naval communications site outside of Athens. That was going to leave us with just the two facilities on Crete. So our relationship in terms of the political-military aspect was definitely receding at that stage. On a personal and professional basis, it was a wonderful assignment. We

had an extremely talented section. I note one thing - again going back to my time as political reporting officer - is that the last year of my assignment there were four national elections in Greece. Papandreou, of course, had become embroiled in a scandal, several scandals.

Q: What was the first scandal?

MATTSON: The first scandal had to do with George Koskotas. George Koskotas was a Greek-American who had come to Greece. Actually he was sort of a fascinating character. Everyday the Greek tabloids would speculate as to where this man had gotten his great fortune. He founded a bank called the Bank of Crete; he bought Olympiakos, which had the most important soccer and basketball teams in Greece. I actually met him a number of times. It turned out, of course, that he was a scoundrel and an embezzler and so forth. He has been in prison for years though. I think he is now about eligible for parole.

Q: Is he in the United States?

MATTSON: No, he's in a Greek jail. So that was a very big scandal, the Koskotas scandal. And then there was Papandreou's personal scandal in terms of his very public infidelity and divorce. So he had fallen from power, and they had a series of what they called ecumenical governments, multiparty governments, one led by a very nice man, Yiannis Tzanakakis, who was a New Democracy stalwart, the most able conservative politician. Mitsotakis was emerging on the scene. So that last year was very interesting in terms of the move into the post-Papandreou period. That was clear, though what was to come after Papandreou was unclear because there was a lot of maneuvering within PASOK. He wasn't quite ready to abandon the field yet. Of course, during that period he also had this heart surgery in London. So there were a lot of soap-opera aspects to the end of the Papandreou era. He attributed the fact that he hadn't died on the operating table to Dr. Yakub, his Egyptian heart surgeon, and to Miss Liani, the woman who was his mistress and later became his wife and his widow. It was a very interesting period, full of scandal, and you knew that you were moving into a new period in terms of the political dynamic. You just weren't sure quite what that would look like. Of course, that was the beginning of the end of the period of the mass campaign rally in Greek politics. In each of those four elections, for example, New Democracy and PASOK would have their rallies at the very end of the campaign. Balloting was always on a Sunday; the opposition party would have its final rally on Thursday, and then the government party on Friday. In Constitution Square in downtown Athens each of those parties was able to assemble a crowd of perhaps 1,000,000 people. Since then, of course, all of that has changed. It's now concentrated on television. They still have their rallies but not at all the way it was. It used to be thrilling to be at the Grande Bretagne Hotel on the balcony overlooking the crowd. Of course, you couldn't see all of the 1,000,000 people because they were down all the side streets, but you could certainly see a few hundred thousand of them packed into Constitution Square. There were the chants and slogans, then the responses from the clack that gathered below the speaker. These were massive undertakings in terms of logistics and bringing people in from all over the country. So that was, again, sort of the passing of an era, but it was really quite fascinating, that spectacle. At that point, of course, with the passing of Papandreou and then the subsequent failure of the Mitsotakis government - because both Papandreou and Mitsotakis were extremely talented orators and they could get crowds really excited - with their passing, Greek politics became a little more Europeanized and a little less

passionate and a little less interesting to the observer.

Q: To what extent did you have contact with some of the new generation, both in New Democracy and people like the current prime minister from PASOK, Simitis, or George Papandreou, the son of Andreas, the current foreign minister?

MATTSON: I had a good relationship with George Papandreou. We met several times at commemorative events outside of Athens. One was at the town of Kalavrita, the site of the Nazi execution of an entire village in reprisal. There is an annual remembrance there and I represented the embassy. George Papandreou was also present. We spent quite a bit of time together that day. Alluding to what I had mentioned the last time, if you see Greek politicians outside of Athens, it's very good for maintaining relations with them in Athens. Mr. Simitis I did not know personally, but the younger people in New Democracy I got to know well. Of course, in New Democracy you had two factions. One was the old war horses, people left over from the last time that New Democracy was in power, and many of these were in their 60s and 70s. The younger people were much more dynamic and you could see that they already had a strong influence in the party. The period of the ecumenical governments was very beneficial, because it was so fluid that you really got to see a lot of these politicians up close and to do a lot of the reporting. It was interesting, if somewhat exhausting, that every time you turned around, another government was in crisis and was going to fall. I was very proud of the political section. We fully earned the Superior Honor Award we received from the Department. The section was particularly strong during the last two years when Brady Kiesling, Ellen Boneparth, and Wayne Merry were there. Before, the section contained what I would call "careerists" less interested in the work and more interested in moving up the ladder.

Q: Did you spend a lot of time either in parliament or thinking about parliament when it was in session, when it wasn't in crisis, on the eve of an election?

MATTSON: I actually did. My Greek was good enough to follow the main points in the proceedings. It depended mainly on the speaker and the way he articulated. If you had a clear-speaking and not overly fast speaker on the floor of parliament, I could easily follow what was going on. And I thought it was very useful. The diplomatic corps tended not to go. There were two days during the year when the diplomatic corps was expected to show up and they did, for the opening of parliament and some other event - I don't remember exactly what it was. But I used to try to get to the parliament, which was in Constitution Square close to where all of the reporters' offices were and close to government ministries, on a regular basis. I used to make it a point to try to combine a drop-in at parliament - and I had a parliamentary badge and could sort of walk in and go right up to the diplomatic gallery or go to their team room - and then do something else useful while I was downtown. I think that was very much appreciated in terms of showing an interest in their proceedings. But I have to say that very few diplomats did that.

Q: What about the role of women in Greek politics at the time you were there? Was that beginning to change? It had been very male dominated.

MATTSON: It certainly was. Well, it was, and one of Papandreou's first acts when he came to power, probably within a month or two of coming into office in '81, was to basically pass

legislation which was going to equalize the rights of men and women, which were very unequal up until that point. For example, there were still laws on the books, I believe, as late as the 1970s and '80s, up until 1980, let's say, that, for example, a Greek woman could not travel abroad without specific permission of her husband, that sort of thing. So he did a lot in that regard. Of course, Margaret Papandreou, his American wife, was a strong feminist, and she was very involved in that as well. More and more women were being elected to parliament. Interestingly enough, up until, let's say, 1985 or 1990 the party that had the most women and the most visible women was the Communists, and then PASOK, which also had some influential women from the left wing of the party - they could have almost been comfortable in the Communist Party. So now, although it's nothing like the situation in Scandinavia where 40 or 50 percent of the parliamentarians are women, there's a very good representation of women. I think that women are considered attractive candidates in Greece. Many Greek voters feel that they're a little closer to real issues, they're a little less given to flamboyance and a little more interested in hard work, so the women, I think, are generally regarded as very good if not better parliamentarians than men.

Q: You mentioned the role of Margaret Papandreou. Did she have much contact with the embassy in this period? She, of course, knew Mrs. Keeley well for 20 or 30 years, but how about others in the embassy?

MATTSON: There was one event I remember at the DCM's residence for senior embassy wives that Mrs. Papandreou attended. We have a picture at home of my wife and other women from the embassy, five or six of them, with Margaret Papandreou. But there was not a great deal of contact there. She was, of course, obviously considered to be a contact of Mrs. Keeley. There is one other comment that I would make about the sort of MO, the *modus operandi*, in the embassy in terms of the Sotirhos era. I mentioned that I had a lot of autonomy during the whole period that I was there, and was gratified that when we left we were able to attend some farewell parties and dinners where ministers were present. There were five or six ministers during the ecumenical period from different parties at the reception that we hosted. But, we were within the last few months of our departure and Ambassador Sotirhos could not really have much impact on me directly. As soon as I had left, he made it known very clearly that there would be no contact with any minister or other high official in the government other than himself, not even by the DCM. I felt sorry for my successor, Sam Fromowitz, who basically was relegated to contacts with much lower-ranking people.

Q: I don't think we can leave this assignment to Athens without asking about November 17, terrorism, security. How different was it for you than when you'd been there previously? What impact did that have on the work of the embassy?

MATTSON: During the previous period that I was in Greece, from '79 to '83, as I mentioned before, there were a lot of fire-bombings and some assassinations. Nonetheless, there wasn't the sense of dread pervading the atmosphere that was apparent when I arrived back in 1986. I was struck, for example, by the fact that, when we drove from the airport to the house that we were to occupy, an embassy-owned house in Psychico, there was a guard box outside of the house with an officer inside. A policeman was stationed there 24 hours a day, every day. My first day at work, I was met not only by a driver who was to take me in, but by a follow car with a driver and

two bodyguards. I found this personally to be rather disconcerting. When I would come back home from work, the car would stop, the follow car would stop, and the bodyguards would jump out and sort of canvass the street with their weapons drawn and that sort of thing. This made me feel very uncomfortable, and I asked that the bodyguard detail be removed. That had been something that my predecessor, Towny Friedman, had had in place for some time. I signed documents that I was taking responsibility for their withdrawal. But there was a lot of concern throughout that whole four year period about November 17. I was identified in some of the proclamations which followed their terrorist acts as a likely target or as someone who deserves to be a target. Of course, it was during the period that I was there that Captain Nordeen, the naval attaché, was murdered. He was traveling to the embassy from his home in an armored car, and a bomb was detonated in a vehicle which was parked on the street as he passed by. He was killed instantly. That was the most serious successful terrorist attack against Americans in the period that I was there. There were several near misses. On the Greek side, the husband of Dora Mitsotakis, Bakoyannis, was killed, shot, with the signature .45 weapon in downtown Athens. And there was increasing frustration on the part of the U.S. that the Greek police were unable or unwilling to devote the resources necessary to penetrate and to break up November 17. Most sensible people recognized that it was most likely a very small operation, but here it was, having carried out its first terrorist act in 1975, now into a period a full 15 years later, and they're still committing these crimes with no arrests and really very good clues. The newspapers, of course, were in a feeding frenzy over this, not that they were condemning November 17. They actually gave a lot of attention to the proclamations that followed, because the proclamations usually dealt with social ills or failures of the government or failures of the government to stand up to the Turks, and they actually touched on some sort of popular themes. So November 17 was doing well, and of course most people speculated that there had to have been, at least in terms of the shooters, a second generation of people who were coming along. But in the period when the Red Brigades went out of business and the Red Army faction was rolled up, people just couldn't believe that November 17 was able to remain a functioning organization for such a long period. It's now, I guess, celebrating - if that's the right word for it - its 25th anniversary in existence. I imagine there's going to be a very interesting story to be told at some point when, we assume - not if but when - November 17 is finally cracked open.

Q: You mentioned the frustration that was growing at that time and of course has continued to grow in the subsequent 10 plus years. Was that frustration something that you as political counselor expressed to your contacts, or was it pretty much handled by the security officer or by others, other than your own personal security and the measures that were taken? To what extent did that affect either our policy or things that you were doing?

MATTSON: As DCM during that period after Sotirhos arrived, I used to have regular meetings with the minister of justice. These had to do with various issues relating not specifically to November 17 but to Greece's poor performance in terms of extraditing seized terrorists to other countries. There were a number of Italian, for example, and other terrorists who were in Greek jails. Then there was a very famous case of Mr. Rashid, who was captured in Greece. We wanted him extradited for a death that occurred when a bomb exploded over the Pacific on a U.S. aircraft. Greece wouldn't hand him over. I had a lot of very testy and difficult work to do with the Greek Government, mainly the minister of justice but also the minister of foreign affairs, concerning these various terrorists who were in Greek jails but who were being sought by other

countries including us.

Q: Did we get any satisfaction while you were there on any of these extradition questions?

MATTSON: No, not while I was there. Rashid was tried and sentenced to a prison term in Greece.

Q: In Greece?

MATTSON: Yes, in Greece. I think that of all of the Italian terrorists who were imprisoned in Greece, none of them was extradited. So especially during the period when Papandreou was in power prior to his last year, in '87 to '88, we were very, very distressed over Greece's performance in terms of extraditing terrorists to stand trial outside of Greece.

Q: Was Ambassador Sotirhos able to express this kind of displeasure, frustration? He had these good contacts with the White House and longstanding interest in U.S.-Greek relations. Some of this was bad news, this disappointment, frustration. Could he express that also effectively?

MATTSON: Although he indicated at the outset of his tour that he had a personal, family-oriented, friendly, etc., etc. relationship with President Bush, my experience was that he didn't or, perhaps, couldn't, go to the White House directly during his period in Greece. What the reason for that might be I'm not quite clear. But he did take the opportunities when he would meet with government ministers to convey U.S. displeasure, always in mild tones in my experience. Since he was very interested in sort of upgrading the profile of the embassy, and his own persona in Greek society, that often meant that he was not willing to tackle the really difficult issues between us.

Q: Did he try to make effective use of the U.S. Information Service, public affairs people, in this effort to upgrade the profile and American presence?

MATTSON: He did. The two sections that were hardest working on his behalf during the period he was there would be the Foreign Commercial Service - he looked to get a lot of new business into Greece; many political-appointee ambassadors have that inclination - and USIS. But again, it wasn't so much for the promotion of U.S. foreign policy objectives. There was a monumental effort made to plan, carry out, and then chronicle his own activities. A lot of self-serving speech writing and a lot of what one would call personal PR (public relations). It was a very frustrated shop, as I recall, and I had to do a lot of hand-holding with USIS personnel because they were very upset and frustrated with the amount of work that was levied on them to advance Ambassador Sotirhos' personal agenda.

Q: They being the...

MATTSON: The USIS staff.

Q: Anything else we ought to say about this period from '86 to '90 in Athens as political counselor and acting DCM?

MATTSON: My only parting thought, and I've referred obliquely to this already, is the difficulty of running an embassy when saddled with a self-oriented political appointee. And I regret to say Sotirhos ruined several careers, especially junior officers, after I left. I think it is unconscionable for the State Department to allow political appointees to exercise that kind of power over personnel, especially vulnerable junior officers. But then, the Department has seldom shown any backbone in dealing with political appointees.

JAMES ALAN WILLIAMS
Deputy Chief of Mission
Athens (1990-1994)

Mr. Williams was born in Wisconsin and raised in Virginia. After graduation from Princeton University, he joined the Foreign Service in 1965 and was posted to Ankara, Turkey. During his career Mr. Williams became a specialist in Greek/Turkish/Cyprus affairs and served as Special Coordinator for Cyprus, with the personal rank of Ambassador. His foreign assignments include Ankara, Nicosia, Bonn, Berlin and Athens, and he had several tours at the State Department in Washington. Mr. Williams was interviewed by Ray Ewing in 2003.

Q: Jim, we're probably in about August 1990 and ready to go on to your next assignment. What came next?

WILLIAMS: I had decided after staying in Berlin for so long and enjoying it so much that I really wanted to continue that type of work if possible, and that inevitably meant that I was going to seek a DCMship in some large embassy. I had had conversations before I went to Berlin about possibly going to Greece or Turkey. I had served in Turkey, I spoke Greek still, served in Cyprus, never in Greece, but I was looking at the DCMships in Ankara and Athens, trying to take advantage of my earlier experience and language training. It seems to me I arranged to be back in Washington when the new politically appointed ambassador, Michael Sotirhos from New York was going out to Greece. He was in Washington on consultations prior to going out, and that's when he interviewed me. I went in expecting to have about a half hour of the man's time. I knew there were other candidates waiting to be interviewed some time while he was there. I didn't know who they were exactly or when they were going to see him. I'd never met him before although I'd heard he was a businessman from New York City, which barely scratched the surface.

Michael is still alive; he is a Greek-American, first generation. His parents came from the Greek islands and he grew up in very modest circumstances in New York City. Went to CCNY, became a successful interior designer, got into commercial real estate and other investments, and in short became a multi, multi-millionaire by the time he was 50 years old. Had two children, had a wife who was also Greek-American. Very hardworking people. I think they drove themselves as hard as they drove their staff, but had this tremendous workaholicism, and that quickly became apparent in the interview. After about five minutes of pleasantries, and he was quite cordial, he asked if

we could switch to Greek. At this time, I had not spoken Greek seriously for years, I hadn't had any refresher. I'd been speaking German for the past four years, and found myself having to answer questions essentially with very short replies, using the vocabulary I was able to dredge up through my brain. We talked about his concept of leadership and loyalty. Loyalty was very important to him, loyalty upward as well as downward. We talked about that. I think he chose me among other reasons because I had never served in Greece. He was strongly suspicious of Foreign Service officers, or perhaps generally, but particularly Foreign Service officers who'd had a tour in Greece and wanted another. He thought their reasons were suspect, that they had been perhaps corrupted by the delights of being in Greece, the Levantine charms of the climate, the women, the weather, whatever. And some of the other candidates had had that experience. They were very strong candidates. Had better Greek than I did. Certainly had had the executive credentials I had had, but I had never served in Greece and it became apparent to me in that interview that was important to him. And serving in Cyprus was one thing, didn't count against me, but not serving in Greece certainly counted for me. And so the interview went on for about four hours. Fortunately I had not had much coffee and I had gone to the men's room before it started, but by the time it was over I was ready to leave, let's put it that way. And then he interviewed some other people, I left and went back to Berlin and never heard anything from anybody. Finally I called him in Athens just to ask how it was going and to say I'm still interested in the job if you're still interested in having me. He was very noncommittal, very courteous, but he said he still was considering people. He either told me then or told me later that he was under pressure to consider what we euphemistically call in personnel diversity candidates, women and minorities, to be candid about it. I'm sure the system had some candidates. And it wasn't until that spring as I recall, March maybe April, when I finally got the assignment. Athens came through, so we were very happy about that. I called and thanked him, and said look forward to working with you in Athens, and he said look forward to having you here. He had made some comments about his predecessor Bob Keeley whom he didn't like for some reason. Perhaps that's a common affliction that political ambassadors have when they succeed a career ambassador. Sometimes works vice versa too. In any case, we had a very cordial introduction to each other and I think in retrospect he handled the selection process very well. I know that he grilled everybody as thoroughly as he grilled me. It was a long, long session. Four hours at least. Dave Ransom was surprised at how thorough it was. I think I was the first one in the queue just because of the way the scheduling worked out.

Q: When did that take place again?

WILLIAMS: I think that was in the fall of 1989, or the summer. He went out that fall so it was probably when I was back on leave July or August. Before the wall fell. At that point I couldn't brag about having brought an end to the Berlin wall, but I could tell him about the occupation cost budget because I thought he would be impressed by how large a budget the American sector had, and other things I was doing. It was a friendly meeting; it was certainly a substantive discussion, and one of the most thorough meetings I've ever had with anybody on any subject. He took due diligence seriously as he had taken everything, business deals and everything else. I saw this again and again when I was in Athens with him. He really went into things in a very thorough way.

Q: I think I first met him in Cyprus about 1981, '82, early in the Reagan administration, and I

know he had been very much involved in fundraising, particularly with ethnic communities I think, for that election. I don't know if he took a position in the administration, but he was certainly close to the counselor during the Reagan period, Edward Derwinski, then he was ambassador to Jamaica. That was just before Athens, correct? Very early part of the Bush administration.

WILLIAMS: He had four years in the Reagan administration as ambassador to Jamaica, and then when Bush came in he was one of the few political ambassadors kept by Bush which was a big surprise to a lot of people who thought as Republican ambassadors they might be carried over.

Q: So he was the latter part of the Reagan administration and very early part of the Bush administration, but he was in Kingston and was selected to go to Athens.

WILLIAMS: He told me that his expertise had been, aside from the fact he was a committed Republican and believed deeply in the principles of the party, his expertise had been organizing ethnic groups of all kinds for Republicans. Greek-Americans for Reagan, Turkish-Americans for Reagan. He showed me the pins once. He had Arab-Americans, any conceivable hyphenate group you could imagine had a pin for Republicans. For Reagan, for Bush. And he had done that very well, bringing his tremendous drive and organizational skills to bear and had been rewarded first of all with Jamaica for that. Then when Bush came in, he knew Bush very well also, got Athens.

Q: I think in the early part of the Reagan administration before going to Jamaica I believe he had a position in the White House for a period. Is that possible?

WILLIAMS: He was with somebody in the White House doing something but I cannot remember what it was. He was certainly close to Ed Derwinski.

Q: And Faith Whittlesey maybe who twice was ambassador to Switzerland in the Reagan administration, but also had a White House position.

WILLIAMS: It's possible, but I never heard him mention her and she never came to Athens when he was there.

Q: So anyway, you got to Athens.

WILLIAMS: In August of 1990 as I recall. I called the ambassador as soon as I got to a phone the next day. He invited us over to the residence to the swimming pool for a get acquainted session. Estelle was there, their children were not there. Ann and Laura and I went over for what became a four or five hour discussion/swim/lunch at the swimming pool. This time it was all in English fortunately so it was much easier for Ann and Laura.

Q: A question that has popped into my head over the years is he was the first Greek-American U.S. ambassador to Greece I believe. How was he received? I was in Italy with John Volpe one of the first Italian-Americans to come there.

WILLIAMS: I think the Greeks were initially in awe of Sotirhos, cowed by him. He has a very strong personality, fluent Greek, fluent English, and able to chew people up or argue a case one way or the other with tremendous force. It's an overpowering personality when he comes on strong as I saw him do many times. The reason he had been suspicious of FSOs who wanted to go back to Greece a second time was he was certainly a Greek and took that seriously, but he was contemptuous of much of what modern Greece had become. The sloppiness, the filth, the lack of discipline, the inefficiency. The list went on and on. WASPs (White Anglo Saxon Protestants) like me would consider some of those things charming and part of the atmospheric delight of Greece, but Michael Sotirhos and Estelle as well, she was Greek-American also, had a very hard line about some of these things. They correctly pointed out, and some of their thoughts the Greeks would also point out on their own, that the system in Greece was essentially so corrupt and so bad that even very good people couldn't succeed there. Those same people when they immigrated, whether it was to America or Australia or Britain, did succeed. They got ahead. They prospered. And their conclusion was almost universally, well there's something wrong with the system in Greece. That was I think the starting point. My concern, knowing he was Greek-American, was that he would suffer from localitis and he would be too apologetic for what I already knew were some of the foibles of the Greeks. Not at all. He was tough as nails on the Greeks when the time came, but he also knew how to schmooze with them and get things done. He was very tough on his staff and drove himself and Estelle as hard as he drove anybody else. He was not easy to work for, but I think he knew how to get things done. For example, the DECA (Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement) agreement was up for approval in the Greek Parliament.

Q: The Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement related to the U.S. facilities in Greece.

WILLIAMS: Exactly, that was it. And in this period, this was the late 1980s, the Papandreou government was running out of steam with scandals and so forth. But the national elections they'd held had not produced a clear, decisive majority in the parliament so the only way the parliament was going to approve the DECA was going to require some arm twisting or some absences on the part of certain deputies. I forget how it was done because it happened before I got there, but Ambassador Sotirhos managed to persuade Papandreou to have some of his party's deputies, the PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) party deputies, absent themselves from that vote so that the New Democracy deputies would have enough votes to approve the DECA, and I think that's what finally happened. But he didn't achieve that easily or right away. It took a lot of sessions with Papandreou who in the end went along with it, and the DECA was approved. When I got there, Constantine Mitsotakis had become prime minister, again with a very narrow majority that the Greek election log never did produce a clear winner, although manipulated many times.

Q: New Democracy.

WILLIAMS: Constantine Mitsotakis of New Democracy ran the government and that was the party in power for most of the time that I was in Greece. Papandreou came back in the elections of November 1993 and I left in the summer of 1994.

Q: Okay, against that background, how did Ambassador Sotirhos use you as DCM? What was

your role as you saw it, as he saw it, and how did things work within the mission?

WILLIAMS: The first thing he did was literally the first month I was there he took me around to meet the president, Karamanlis, the prime minister, Mitsotakis, the foreign minister, Samaras. Virtually the whole cabinet. He was at those meetings. He took me in. It was a business meeting first of all, so we transacted some business and then he would introduce me in the course of the meeting and say, "This is my deputy who will be in charge of the embassy when I am away on leave." And basically the message was he's alright, work with him. So I had recognition and I knew the people. I met them when he finally did go on leave and I was the chargé and had to do some business with them. It was a very useful thing to do, and I was a little surprised he did it so early because there was a lot I needed to do in terms of learning how the embassy worked and so on, and he wasn't planning on going on leave soon. In the end he didn't leave until January when Desert Storm broke out and I had to call... no, he was there. But for some reason I had to call up the Prime Minister, Mitsotakis, at 10 o'clock one night to ask for urgent clearance to let our transport aircraft fly through Greek airspace on the way to reinforce our effort in Kuwait. I had met the prime minister, by this time several times in his office and elsewhere, and I got right through, the embassy operator got me to the prime minister's operator and zoom it went right through, and I found myself discussing in Greek with the prime minister. Military operations for which I didn't have the right vocabulary, but I did remember the word for logistical support and got that out. And the prime minister agreed very quickly. It was a short conversation, but it was facilitated by the fact that Sotirhos had laid the groundwork and made me acceptable, let's say, in his august circles. He was very good at that, and I met the military leadership as well through our MAAG (military assistance advisory group) chief who was a two star air force general, as well as through Ambassador Sotirhos early on. The Greek military. The chiefs of staff, the four stars.

Q: How did he see your role within the embassy?

WILLIAMS: Well, he wanted me to be the manager of things. He said he did. And in many respects I was the manager. But because of his knowledge of things, the fact that he'd already been there about a year when I got there, he was obviously in direct contact with a lot of people. If he was very interested in an issue it would be directly taken care of. One example, he was a businessman as I said, and a New Yorker, and perhaps for both reasons he had a good nose for corruption. And basically he was able to look at certain of our senior locals who had positions in procurement, warehousing, other areas, and surmise that they needed more careful review because they were dressed too well, their watches were too expensive. The apartment they lived in was in too upper bracket a section of Athens, something was going on. And I have to say, my initial reaction was he was being paranoid because I don't think of people that way. But when we looked at some of these folks, sure enough the procurement lady it turned out had been fleecing us for several hundred thousand dollars a year by various transactions with vendors. The books always balanced. You couldn't look at the books and find it. The enrichment came off the books. But we had a special investigation done. He was right. We fired her. We wanted to not pay her severance benefit as we were technically required to under Greek law because she was a senior FSN, but Washington did not want to back us up on that if it came to a court case. In the end we had to pay her severance.

He was very much involved with the personnel, especially the Greek personnel of the embassy.

Very suspicious of some of them, and as I said, in some cases, not just this one, his suspicions were well-founded. I think though, because it was essentially a suspicious approach and not what the Greeks had expected certainly, FSNs, it led to more tension than was necessary. Athens was not a happy post in his time, I don't think. Largely because of his approach to work and drive and when he gets under pressure like many of us, he gets rather terse with people, he can be brutal with people sometimes. Both Americans and FSNs as well as Greek officials. He could chew out a Greek minister as well as a political counselor with equal effect. So it was not a happy place. One of the issues that was our first delicate issue to deal with. Ann had to deal with this really, because Estelle, Mrs. Sotirhos, and the ambassador took it very seriously. Apparently a lot of our staff did not know which fork to use, I know that sounds absurd, but the Sotirhos's believe that you should use the correct fork and apparently they were used to meals where they had lots of utensils on either side of the plate. This happened before we got there, but we were told that a number of our senior Americans had inelegantly used the wrong utensil at a meal at the residence in the presence of the ambassador. Mrs. Sotirhos had noticed it and wasn't this a horrible thing and this had to be fixed, by God. Not today but yesterday. So Ann was given the mission of fixing it. We'd never seen this behavior. The American staff looked fine to us, in fact they'd eaten at our table and they seemed to know how to be. They didn't use their hands or anything.

Q: You probably didn't offer them quite as many utensils as at the residence.

WILLIAMS: Not as many perhaps, but they seemed like normal people, so it was a very delicate thing. I forget how Ann did it, because it was done in the presence of Mrs. Sotirhos and the ladies essentially. The ladies were given this message to take back to their husbands and I was not involved, but Ann worked it out with her diplomatic skills so that it became sort of a game. Ann made it enjoyable, they reviewed things, they had even a film as I recall on etiquette, and they went through it utensil by utensil by utensil, what it's for. And without telling the American ladies you dolts, you don't know which one this is that's why we're making you go through this, which is I think the way the Sotirhos' preferred to do it, Ann did it in a lighter, more educational way, and she only had to do it once, fortunately. But I mention this because as I say I never saw it and I was flabbergasted that the ambassador and his wife would put so much stock on that. So I said it must be the case that whenever anybody is at their table he or she eats impeccably. I'm not exaggerating. About a week later General Galvin or somebody like that, ranked four stars, came to the residence for a working breakfast and the ambassador was on my left, General Galvin was across the table for me. I was there and I think Laurel Shea the political military counselor was there. There were four of us at breakfast being served a representational breakfast at the residence. General Galvin, who also did not eat with his hands, was given a piece of toast or croissant, took it, buttered it with the butter knife, not his own knife, and then put it instead of on the bread plate, on the main plate. I was waiting for the ambassador to explode, but nothing happened. My lesson from that was, perhaps etiquette isn't the be all and end all.

Q: It sounds like the ambassador was very hands on, I think we can say.

WILLIAMS: Very much so. But if he thought you were doing the right thing, or if he had confidence in you or didn't think the issue warranted his involvement, he gave you pretty broad rein. The economic counselor, political counselor, he rarely corrected their stuff.

Q: Did he want to see every outgoing telegram?

WILLIAMS: No, he didn't. As I recall at the beginning he did and then gradually I started signing off on things and even when he saw it he would rarely change anything. So as his confidence grew in me, I think I took over more of that. He thought that I was too soft on people, that is not hard enough on people, and I certainly was nowhere near as hard as he was, and I think in a way his criticism was a badge of honor, but it was a fair point. I was perhaps too understanding of people and too gentle. He wanted me to be a lot rougher with some of them, and my perception was that personalities aside, a lot of these folks had gone through a rough period with him and there was no point in my grinding them down further. He never liked that, but he didn't seem to hold it against me. Just would remind me from time to time I had to be tougher.

Q: Ok, well we've talked briefly about etiquette and about Desert Storm in January of 1991 and the planes coming through. What were some of the other issues and problems that you had to deal with in your time there.

WILLIAMS: Well the constant one was November 17, the Greek terrorist group that had been so successful in assassinating American and Greek officials since 1975. Its first victim as you remember was Richard Welch, the CIA station chief in Athens. And they killed a couple of Naval captains, defense attaché was one, a Naval captain at the MAAG was another. They'd killed Greek officials including the son-in-law of Prime Minister Mitsotakis, Pavlos Bakoyannis, and they'd tried to kill quite a few others. We had our guard up all the time. I had to go in an armored car. I had a follow car; the ambassador had an armored car and a lead car, as did the MAAG chief and the defense attaché and so forth. It was not just the ambassador and DCM, but the more senior officials really had to be protected because we perceived that we were targets of November 17. Unfortunately, it has to be said that November 17 was more professional and more successful than the Greek police who were, at least on paper, supposed to catch them. They made few mistakes. The Greek police made many. The bad guys were very dedicated to their work; the Greek police seemed to care less sometimes. And to a large extent this is not the fault of any particular Greek policeman but a fault of the system which changed cops routinely whenever the minister changed. Not just when the government changed, the prime minister changed. Whenever the minister of public order changed all the senior cops would be rotated out. We learned the hard way that many people whom we had trained in say counter-terrorism or forensics or whatever, with a view toward catching November 17 and putting them out of business. They were lined up doing traffic on roads or something when the minister changed because they had not been permanently part of the structure. We tried to fix that, this goes back before my time and continued after I left. I don't think we ever really did fix that problem. The British and we put in a lot of effort to help them. As the Olympics approached they got a lot of other effort and support from NATO, from others. But they only caught November 17 and rolled it up because November 17 got unlucky. It was a highly compartmentalized group, fairly small. One of its people carrying a parcel bomb down near Piraeus one day had the thing go off and injure him so badly he was taken to a hospital. Once they had found him in that condition, figured out who he was, they were able to unravel the whole gang and catch most of them fairly quickly.

Q: But that was long after you had left.

WILLIAMS: Long after I had left. And it only happened because of that accident. Who knows how long it would have gone on if it hadn't. So it was always a mystery why in such a chatty society as Greece where gossip is the currency of the day and highly valued and used as the lead of an exchange, how a secret like that could be kept so successfully. The membership of November 17 and nobody would come forward. There were lots of suspicions voiced, and the CIA bought lots of information and leads, but as far as I know none of them panned out. People were in many respects afraid. November 17 had acquired Robin Hood type mythos, legend. All powerful, all successful, impossible to penetrate. It was never penetrated, and we never captured a member or put one away until this incident happened by accident many years later. But part of it was in addition to the way the police were politicized and rendered ineffective by this constant transfer and shifting of personnel and cadres. The system was defective in other ways. For example, judges were afraid to preside over trials. Prosecutors were afraid to prosecute certain people believed to be members of November 17 or close to it, because of fear of retribution. There were threats voiced, the names and the addresses of the family members including the wives and children would be published in left wing rags of various kinds whenever some trial was coming up. And that had a very definite intimidating effect on the judiciary, prosecutors, and others. Generally it was believed that November 17 had grown out of a left wing violent offshoot of the group that had opposed the 1967 junta from exile. I think that's correct, though I'm not sure that all the people who were finally caught and put away were of that vintage, but it was believed correctly to be a very small organization, often used the same pistol to kill people. The same ballistics would turn up again and again, and sometimes it would bring in hit men from overseas to assassinate folks. The Turkish embassy press attaché was killed the last month I was there that way. So it was really a bad thing, and particularly frustrating that for all the manpower and resources we invested and the Greeks invested to catch these people and put them out of operation, we had no success. None. It's particularly puzzling in that the Greek counter narcotics effort was much more successful. Again, same police force, different unit, but it's the same ministry, the same hierarchy. For some reason their antinarcotics unit maintained cohesion and had a much higher level of effectiveness. With some glitches, but a much higher level than the counterterrorism group ever approached when I was there. So that's a real mystery. But that was a problem and it was an issue that I had to deal with because of the visibility of the ambassador and me and others. One of the things I quickly discovered when I started presiding over watch committee meetings and country team meetings was that in looking around the parking lot, every other agency drove around in an armored, foreign cars. Now in Athens, European cars were quite common in those days. Big Cadillacs and Plymouths were not, which is what the ambassador and I had. So in other words, being driven around in a Cadillac with or without a flag on it was almost like putting a bull's-eye on the car, and my Plymouth had no other counterpart either. We had two Plymouths, both lightly armored, and those were the only such cars in Athens. So the MAAG chief had a BMW, the station chief had a Mercedes, lots of those, and on and on and on. But they blended in, whereas the ambassador and I stuck out. So we held a series of watch committee meetings and reported back to Washington what we had found. Again, this is a high terrorist threat post. Despite the Buy American Act, it really makes no sense to have the top American state officials in this post drive around in the uniquely American cars, when all the other American personnel are driving around in cars that blend in and fit much better in the

landscape, and are easier to maintain, because there were parts, the mechanics knew this stuff. And essentially we embarrassed DS, Diplomatic Security, in the department into waiving the rules and authorizing the purchase of some European cars. The ambassador got an armored Mercedes finally, and I forget what I got, what the DCM got. I wasn't looking for Mercedes, I just wanted something that was a little less visible. Because of November 17 and the high terrorist threat we got it, and it was a long haul. Our RSO did a lot of good work in that and I think we got some bureaucratic support from other agencies back in Washington since this was a no cost thing for them, it wouldn't come out of their hide to have state use some of its limited money to buy a foreign car.

Q: To what extent at that time that you were in Athens in the early 1990s did we think that November 17 was part of a broader international network or had ties abroad, and to what extent were you also concerned in addition to November 17 by Arab or other non-Greek terrorist groups that might operate in Greece?

WILLIAMS: Well there was at least one other Greek terrorist group, Revolutionary Cells I think it was called, which had been known to set off bombs at various places. There was one in Patras that went off the first year or two I was there. But they were kind of feckless, they didn't kill people with the ruthless efficiency and zeal of November 17, at least they didn't at that time. There were lots of Palestinians crawling around Athens at that time, and the Greek services were on top of them as we were through liaison and through direct means, and just down the street from my residence, two doors down the street, was the headquarters of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) where a lot of these characters came from time to time. It was never a problem for our residence. We just thought it was kind of amusing that the PLO was our neighbor. So we were to a much lesser degree concerned by the Revolutionary Cells and by the Palestinian groups. We were aware that they were there, but N17 was really the focus. Every year, as you know, on November 17 there is a march to the American embassy protesting the role of the U.S. government in the era of the 1967-74 junta and holding us responsible largely for what the junta had done to the people of Greece and the students of Greece on November 17, 1973. And this march, which starts at the university and comes up Queen Sophia to the embassy, usually attracts a large number of hangers on, including Palestinian groups, Kurdish groups, other groups. University students for sure, but some of these people got violent, stone throwing, that sort of stuff, even scuffling. The embassy was always protected by a lot of police, there were always arrests made, and they had tried to hold them back far enough so the rocks couldn't do any damage. You always had to be a little careful with that because you didn't know what was going to attach itself to the march, and that would be another cause for concern. November 17 never hid itself in large groups like that. As far as liaison with other terrorist groups who were part of an international movement, we never thought N17 was part of a broader international movement. We thought a large part of its success was due to the fact that it was not, that it was so sealed off, almost hermetically, from any source including foreign ones. There was some kind of cooperation we thought, some of the non-N17 hit men were employed to come in and do a job, just shoot the Turk or shoot the American and then get out of the country. How they were paid, how they were hired, we never figured out, but the surmise was that the active cadre was probably not in the inner circle. That's all that I recall about N17.

Q: Okay, what other issues were you particularly concerned about in this period. U.S. military

issues, Turkey?

WILLIAMS: Turkey was always on the plate. The bases were working pretty well although they were phasing out as they were throughout Europe. We had an army base up in the northern part of Greece that phased out. The large air force base near Athens, Hellenikon, phased out the first year we were there, and then the last year we were there the intelligence base on Crete at Heraklion phased out. So coordinating that, discussing that with our own authorities in the European commands in Washington and negotiating the circumstances with the Greek authorities was a big part of what we did in those years. We had two large communication relay sites outside of Athens which handled a lot of the message traffic for State and other agencies. We wanted to close them out or upgrade them. I forget what it was. Consolidate them. There were issues there that had gone on for years that we kept talking with the Greeks about. I think we finally shut one, scrapped the material, got agreement to do that, and then relocated to the other site.

A big issue that we had that is still I think a hardy perennial on the agenda of whoever is running embassy Athens was our effort to purchase the land behind the embassy. The parking lot. Originally that had been just a parking lot and there was a street between it and the chancery and that street was closed years ago for security reasons and gradually the embassy operation spilled over to put structures on the parking lot. Even though we didn't own the land we put up warehouses, other structures, and surrounded the whole thing with a security fence. But we really wanted to own the property outright to avoid the political arrows and other arrows we took from time to time from the owners of that land who thought that the rent we were paying was not enough. We almost got it. One year Sotirhos wanted to get this done because he'd gotten the DECA done, he'd gotten a tourism agreement done for the first time with Greece. He'd gotten a civil aviation agreement done by putting his laser-like focus on the issue and driving the American embassy folk to the point of distraction sometimes. But he got it done. And this was one he wanted to get done too. And he was right. He almost got it done. The problem was by the time he hammered the Greek officers' pension fund leadership into line, they were the ones who owned it, and got the foreign ministry to push them in line and to back this, the money that had been fenced off by FBO (Foreign Buildings Office) for purchasing the land, 12 million dollars, was no longer available. By the time he tried to get that money put back together again then the pension fund was at odds. We just never could line up all the stars together; it was that sort of thing. But our use of the property continued unabated. It was never challenged in any real way. There were threats of legal action by one party or the other, but it was always a potential vulnerability. We spent a lot of effort on that, discussing that with the foreign ministry and with others, ultimately with no resolution.

THOMAS M.T. NILES
Ambassador
Greece (1993-1997)

Ambassador Thomas M. T. Niles was born in Kentucky in 1939. He received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University and master's from the University of

Kentucky. Upon entering the Foreign Service in 1962, he was positioned in Belgrade, Garmisch, Moscow and Brussels, and also served as the Ambassador to Canada and later to Greece. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 5, 1998.

Q: Before going out to Greece could you talk about the Greek Americans and how they reacted to you?

NILES: I had never served in Greece before and I had few ties with the Greek-American community. I did know one prominent Greek-American from previous work in the State Department, Tom Korologos, who has helped a number of people with Congressional confirmations. He is a prominent Republican and a good friend. But I was not well plugged into the community before my appointment. I found out later that there had been some efforts by prominent Greek-Americans on the Democrat side to try to get one of their people in but there was no consensus in this group as to who the lucky guy should be. President Bush's Ambassador to Greece, Michael Sotiros, was a prominent Greek-American Republican, so the Greek-American Democrats logically thought it was their turn.

As soon as I was told of my appointment, in addition to the administrative details I began to study Greek and establish contacts in the Greek-American community. They knew me to a degree from my time as Assistant Secretary working on Greek-Turkish relations and Cyprus, so there was a certain amount of comfort on their part. I met with the members of Congress, Senator Sarbanes, Representative Mike Bilirakis, a Republican from Tampa, Florida, Representative George Gekas, a Republican from Pennsylvania and a few others. One congressperson who never showed any interest at all was Senator Olympia Snow of Maine. This went quite smoothly in my experience. I called on Archbishop Iakovos, with whom I developed a very good relationship. He was the Archbishop of North and South America. He retired in 1997 at the age of 85. He was quite a remarkable man. I visited him in New York, and he came to the Residence for dinner during one of his visits to Athens.

I was helped quite a bit by Mike Sotirhos, who as I said was the Bush Administration Ambassador to Greece with whom I had worked when I was Assistant Secretary. He was a good source of information. Andy Manatos here in Washington was very helpful. Throughout my time in Greece, even though there were some difficult moments in Greek-American relations, my own relations with the Greek-American community were quite good.

Q: This was before you went out and you had already dealt with the problem of Cyprus?

NILES: At that time we were coming off a very intensive effort by the Bush Administration, in which I participated, for about a year and a half to bring the Cyprus issue to closure. Unfortunately, this effort failed, but in retrospect we came very close. The tragic situation was that the Turkish government of the day was not able to muster the courage and domestic support to make the deal work to establish a bi-zonal/bi-communal Federation. Subsequently, the situation there has worsened. When I went out there was a sense of optimism and I went out a supporter of the administration's position that we should seek a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation. I have to tell you that I came back after four years in Athens very doubtful that this

could ever be negotiated and if it could be negotiated, whether it would work. I didn't realize it in 1992 but the Cyprus settlement under the London agreements of 1958 and 1960 essentially established a Bizonal/Bicommunal Federation that lasted for four years and whose collapse in 1964 led ten years later to the Turkish invasion in 1974. The only solution I see is a formal partition of Cyprus with links between the two communities.

Q: What about the business community?

NILES: I went and talked to the people affiliated with the Business Council for International Understanding, BCIU, and talked with others who were interested. Greek-American commercial ties are fairly limited. US interest in Greece was and I think remains very modest. Trade is around a billion dollars a year. As far as investment, Greece had and still has a problematic reputation among the American business community because of the anti-business policies adopted by the Papandreou Government (1981-89). I tried to attract more interest from the American business community during my time but it wasn't a great success.

Part of the problem is that it is a small country, 10.4 million, wealthy by world standards but relatively poor by European Union standards. If you are going to invest in the European Union market do you invest in Greece? Probably not. Since Greece has become a member in the European Union there has been little new US investment and some disinvestment. The latter was largely because of the crazy economic policies pursued by the Papandreou government in the 1980s, which featured nationalizations and enormous budget deficits. One of the things I tried to emphasize with American businessmen was the potential of Greece as the window into southeastern Europe. The problem is that southeastern Europe is not that attractive either. But, as people look ahead and see Bulgaria, Romania, the countries of the former Yugoslavia beginning on the path of economic development, Greece takes on new importance. In that sense the city of Thessaloniki could again become the hub of an economic region, as it was during the time of Alexander the Great, the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. The potential is there but it has not been realized. I worked diligently to persuade the Greeks to do the things that would change their problematic reputation but I don't think that I succeeded.

Q: You went out there on October 30, 1993. How would you describe the political situation at the time?

NILES: Well, Andreas Papandreou had just returned to power. There were national elections on October 10, 1993, and Papandreou, who had been left on side of the road for dead in 1989, politically as well as physically, returned to power. He had a severe health crisis in 1989 and had heart surgery in London. He also had a personal crisis; he divorced his wife, Margaret Papandreou, an American citizen, and married a former airline hostess, a very attractive and pleasant lady with a questionable reputation. While I was there some very compromising pictures of her were published in one of the Greek newspapers, *Avriani*, whose publisher had been a passionate supporter of Papandreou but for reasons that were not clear to me at the time, turned strongly against him. It was all very conspiratorial.

Q: These were topless pictures?

NILES: These were worse than topless. In some she was topless and in some she was naked. In some she was engaging in lesbian activities. It was dreadful. This all happened in the fall of 1995, and I think it helped precipitate the health crisis that ultimately killed Papandreou, because he was devoted to her. She nursed him back to health after his heart operation.

In part because of the mistakes of the Mitsotakis government, under the New Democracy Party, which was in power from 1990 to 1993, Papandreou's Party, PASOK, won the October 1993 election.

Q: PASOK?

NILES: The Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement. Theoretically, it is not a party but a "movement." It was a distinction without a difference in real life, but the terminology was important to Papandreou, who was probably a Trotskyite and believed in permanent revolution, for which you needed a "movement." He came in on the October 11, 1993, and I arrived on the 30th.

The Papandreou government was made up of prominent members of PASOK, as you would expect, and the only unusual thing about the government was that his wife was his Chief of Staff. We worked very well with her, however, and I found her both competent and agreeable. I was always able to see the Prime Minister when I needed to, and we visited about once a month. The other principle people in the government at the time included Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias, who had been foreign minister from 1985 to 1989. We got along fine but he spoke no English and no French, and only a little German, which he didn't like to use. This was a bit of a problem because while I was studying Greek I didn't speak it well enough to carry on with the foreign minister.

The minister of National Economy and Finance was George Yennimatas, a long-time colleague of Papandreou's who was tragically dying of lung cancer. He died in April, 1994 and was replaced by a younger, and more capable man named Yannis Papantoniou. Costas Simitis, the current Prime Minister, was Minister of Industry in that government. He resigned in September of 1995 to begin his challenge to Papandreou, which led him to the Prime Ministership in January 1996. I got to know all of the members of the government. They were a quite a mixed bag. George Papandreou, the son of the Prime Minister, was the Minister of Education and Religion, and I worked a lot with him on problems dealing with US schools in Greece: Athens College, The American College, Anatolia College, American Farm School, and the American School of Classical Studies. George was born in 1952 in Minneapolis. Gerasimos Arsenis was the Minister of Defense, and I worked very closely with him.

The day I arrived I got a message from Papandreou that he wanted to see me. I had not yet presented my credentials to the President but I drove out with my DCM, Jim Williams, to see him. We talked for about an hour and a half. We established our agenda and talked about the Cyprus problem, relations with Turkey, bilateral economic relations, and terrorism, which was an enormous problem with the activities of the November 17 group. This issue was one that came up frequently and was very frustrating because I don't think Papandreou ever came clean with me about what he really knew about November 17. He took a lot of secrets about that to his grave.

I told Papandreou when I came in that I had never been directly responsible for relations with Greece during his previous time in power but that I had been involved with some of the points of friction between his Government and the Reagan administration, particularly NATO issues, Greece's reaction to the establishment of martial law in Poland in December 1981 and the shutdown of KAL-007. On martial law, Papandreou said he could understand why they did that. On, the shutdown of KAL 007 in September of 1982, he opined that maybe it was a spy plane. Papandreou ran an overtly anti-American policy. He came into power in 1981 with three stated goals that had direct implications for us: to get rid of all the American bases; to get Greece out of NATO; and, to get Greece out of the European Union that Greece had just entered. Well, during his eight years as Prime Minister he signed a new base agreement with the United States, remained in NATO and of course stayed in the EU if for no other reason than because he couldn't give up the flow of money. But he drove both NATO and the EU practically crazy.

I told the Prime Minister that I had been sent to Greece by President Clinton and Secretary Christopher with a mandate to develop and improve on the relations between the United States and Greece. I said that President Clinton and Secretary Christopher didn't go through the bad experiences of the 80s and didn't come to the table with negative baggage. But I told him that if he wanted to go through the same type of experience, which at times approached guerrilla warfare, we could live with a re-run of the 1980s. Papandreou looked at me, smiled and said: "Mr. Ambassador, times have changed."

Q: Did Papandreou continue on his anti-American course up to the time he left power?

NILES: It moderated during the 1980s, and President Reagan's silent treatment didn't hurt a bit. Papandreou was the only NATO head of government who was never invited to Washington. That bothered him, as he was a former U.S. citizen, a war veteran, and a United States social security annuitant as I discovered.

Q: He was a veteran as well?

NILES: Yes, he served in the United States Merchant Marine. He was receiving all kinds of benefits while Prime Minister. When he died, I was in charge of distributing to his widow and previous wife his social security death benefit. His relationship to the United States was very complicated.

The whole story of Andreas Papandreou has not been told. I was at a reception in Athens in 1995 or 1996 when a very old man approached me. He was with the newspaper, *Eleftheros Typos*, which means "free press," and which was the mouthpiece of New Democracy. This paper was giving me a very hard time, primarily because the United States was not engaged in a guerrilla war with the Papandreou government. They could not make up their mind whether I was a homosexual or a philanderer having affairs with numerous prominent Greek women, so they accused me of both. They decided to have a bad relationship with me. In any case, the old man came up to me and complained that we had thrown him out of our country. I asked him when and he replied that it happened in 1946. I said that I could hardly take responsibility for that. He said that didn't really matter. He was a Communist at the time and was the United States

correspondent for the Greek Communist newspaper *Rizospastis*. This was during the Greek civil war so, in retrospect, he could understand why we threw him out. He explained that what really made him angry was that we didn't throw "that damn Papandreou out." He said that he had been a true Marxist-Leninist while Papandreou was a Stalinist. I explained that we could not have thrown Papandreou out as he was an American citizen by then.

There are all kinds of stories about him like that. He came to the United States in 1940, before the German attack on Greece. His father, George Papandreou, escaped to Egypt in April 1941 just ahead of the Germans and formed a government in exile. Was he a Communist? I don't know. I am sure there are a lot of FBI files on him. Max Kampelman, who knew Papandreou when he was at the University of Minnesota in the late 1940s and early 1950s, once remarked to me that, "If Andreas Papandreou was not a card-carrying member of the Communist Party of the United States, the only thing missing was the card."

During the first Papandreou government in the 1980s, the United States was regularly excoriated by the PASOK media. These were very left-leaning papers, much more so than the avowedly Communist papers in Western Europe. We were supported by what there was in the way of right-wing media. In 1993 when I arrived, Papandreou was back in power and we had a good relationship with his government. But the PASOK media continued to attack us violently, and they were joined now by the center-right media, which could not abide the fact that the United States had reasonably good relations with the hated Papandreou government.

But as an example of how much things had changed, by April 1994 I had succeeded in arranging for Papandreou to visit Washington and be received at the White House, something he had not been able to do during the whole nine years of his previous incumbency. It was a remarkable visit in many ways. Papandreou had last been in the White House in 1964 when he accompanied his father, then Prime Minister, for a meeting with President Johnson. The Greek and Turkish Prime Ministers had been summoned to Washington – I believe that is the right word to use – to be told by the President to stop causing trouble over Cyprus. Being in the Oval Office again was an emotional experience for Papandreou, and he reminisced a bit about how the lay out of the room had changed. Interestingly, he remembered a great deal about his 1964 visit.

Q: I think this is one thing that struck me during my four years in Greece and that is that the Greeks always blamed someone else for whatever happened. No matter what, from an earthquake to something more political it was the fault of the CIA.

NILES: I think that is in part due to the fact that they are a small country in this world that is dominated by big powers. And, to be honest, there is no question that we made some mistakes with Greece, particularly during the period of the Dictatorship. For instance, Spiro Agnew visited Greece in 1971. I think he did two things on that particular foreign trip. He represented us at the megalomaniac ceremony that the Shah of Iran had at Persepolis celebrating "2,500 years of his dynasty," and on his way back stopped off in Greece and visited his birthplace or the birthplace of his parents. When I visited that area - Kiparisis on the southwest coast of the Peloponnesus - the people there said they weren't so sure that they were proud to claim him.

Q: I want to go back to the initial meeting with Papandreou. You were both new and did he want

to start with a clean slate?

NILES: I told him that we wanted to look ahead and let bygones be bygones and he agreed. I have to say that I had an excellent personal rapport with him. Papandreou, had his health allowed, might have been prepared to really buckle down and solve some problems. We really did not get much done with him with the exception of the September 1995 interim agreement on Macedonia, and that simply undid a bad mistake he made at the beginning of his second Administration in November 1993. He was hard line on relations with Turkey. I couldn't tell if it was philosophical or political or just inertia. When I suggested that it might be good to open up a broader dialogue with the Turks, the Prime Minister always replied that if Greece did that, the Turks "would pose claims against our sovereignty." This was his way of saying that he was afraid the Turks would raise the delineation of the seabed in the Aegean and perhaps claim some small islands the Greeks regard as theirs. When he said that, I would always say that he could just reply that the issue was not on the table. But the most I could ever get out of him in reply was silence.

People told me that when Papandreou agreed with me it didn't mean anything. It could mean yes, no or maybe. If he said nothing it meant no. I quickly learned that a "yes" did not translate into action. I would go around to other ministers in the effort to follow up on a Prime Ministerial undertaking and say that Papandreou said such and such to me and get strange looks in reply. I soon came to understand why. He was physically only able to work only about three or four hours a day because of his heart condition. His foreign minister was not prepared to do anything without a strong signal from the Prime Minister, which he never got, with one critical exception. In September 1995, at a crucial point in the New York negotiations on Macedonia, Papoulias was trying to walk back from a commitment Papandreou had given us in Athens a week before to lift the Greek embargo on Macedonia if the Macedonians removed the "Star of Vergina" from their flag. We called Papandreou and he instructed Papoulias to move ahead. Interestingly, when we had a meeting in the White House with the President the next day to celebrate the success, Papoulias did not come. He sent the Greek Ambassador to Washington, Loucas Tsilas, in his place.

Papoulias was not inclined to move on any tough issue. I once had a conversation with him prior to a meeting of the Black Sea Cooperation Council Foreign Ministers in Bucharest. I told him this would be a good opportunity to see his Turkish colleague open a dialogue. Papoulias replied that he really didn't have much to talk about with the Turkish Minister. This response rendered me nearly speechless because this was so ridiculous. Finally, I listed a few things they could talk about but he didn't agree with me.

That period of immobility regarding Turkey which characterized all of Papandreou's time in office the second time around was important because opportunities were lost. I must say, however, that on the Turkish side the situation was no better. Mrs. Tunsu Ciller was hardly a good negotiating partner, but one of the people who served as Foreign Minister during her time in office, Mr. Gonensay, could have been a good interlocutor for the Greeks. There was so much bad feeling and so many difficult issues between Greece and Turkey that if you didn't work on the relationship constantly, it would inevitably worsen. The Turks did some stupid things, which scared the Greeks and caused them to do things that were equally dumb. In the fall of 1995 the

Greek parliament ratified the Law of the Sea Convention which the Greeks claimed gave them the right to a twelve-mile territorial sea in the Aegean. The Parliament's declaration noted that Greece was not establishing a twelve-mile territorial sea at that time but that Greece had the right to do so at a time of its choosing. A stupider move could not have been contrived. What this would mean, *inter alia*, was that in many areas, a twelve-mile territorial sea would close off large parts of the Aegean to Turkish warships without the permission of Greece. The Turks were aroused about this and the Turkish Grand National Assembly passed a resolution in November 1995 which said that if Greece should take this step the government of Turkey had the right to go to war without further reference to the parliament. They used the word "war" in the resolution. The Greeks took the stance after this that they had no immediate plans to implement a twelve-mile territorial sea but they had the right and they would exercise it when it was most advantageous to them. That was a dumb position, on both sides.

In the fall of 1995, before the weather in the Aegean got too bad for naval maneuvers there were frequent alarms of potential encounters, with ships going here and there. It was a very frustrating situation. There was a totally incompetent government in Turkey with Mrs. Tunsu Ciller, who was probably the most incompetent person to lead a major government in recent years. The Papandreou government was totally paralyzed, in part because of his health and the inability of his ministers to act without him.

Q: Both of these countries are members of NATO?

NILES: During the Cold War you could make a case that both needed to keep their eyes on the major threats, which were the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, and to a degree they did. Once the Cold War was over, it became clear that Greece's defense effort was aimed primarily at Turkey. They were also concerned about Albania, Macedonia and Bulgaria, but their basic defense posture was aimed at Turkey. For Turkey, however, Greece was probably problem number six. They were in a terrible neighborhood. They had borders with Syria, Iraq, Iran, Armenia, and Georgia to preoccupy themselves.

This didn't mean that Turkey had a good attitude towards the Greeks. They had this so-called army of the Aegean, which was stationed along the Aegean coast. I kept pointing out the Greeks that this was a cadre army used for training and that it couldn't attack anybody. The cream of the Turkish army was tied up in Kurdistan fighting the PKK. It was not as big a threat to Greece as it appeared, but there was an anomalous situation in which two NATO countries were arming against each other.

Q: Did your counterpart in Ankara and fellow NATO ambassadors feel they had to keep these people apart?

NILES: Well, we not only wanted to not only keep them apart but also start a better relationship. I worked closely with Dick Barkley, who was my initial counterpart in Ankara, and then with Mark Grossman. We always felt that we had a good cooperation. I don't think either embassy had a partisan view. We felt that both sides were behaving stupidly and we needed to save them from themselves.

I worked closely with three NATO Secretaries-General - Woerner, Claus and Solana - on this issue. The other NATO ally that was actively concerned about Greek-Turkish relations was the United Kingdom, but the Germans and the French also tried to help. I will say that the Dutch, during the time that they were in the chair of the European Union in the first half of 1996 were very active. I worked very closely with them. They are marvelous allies as long as you agree with them.

As I said, the NATO Secretaries-General were likewise strongly committed and made major efforts: first Manfred Woerner before he tragically died of cancer; then Willy Claes, a Flemish socialist, with whom I had a good working relationship before he ran aground over a scandal involving the acquisition of helicopters when he was the Minister of Finance; and then Javier Solana, who was a very active and effective partner in our effort to keep Greece and Turkey from going to war with each other.

But during the last few months of 1995, the relationship continued to deteriorate. There were elections in Turkey in December of 1995. Mme. Ciller's party lost, but after the election she remained in office as a caretaker prime minister. Just about that time, probably unrelated to what was going on politically in Turkey, a strange set of incidents began around the tiny island of Imia, or Kardak as the Turks called it. This island is about four miles off the southwestern Turkish coast in the area of the Greek island of Kalymnos in the eastern Aegean. A Turkish coastal freighter, sometime around December 10, 1995, ran aground on Imia. A Greek Coast Guard cutter from Kalymnos came by and offered to help pull the ship off the rocks. The Turkish ship said it did not need any help from the Greeks because Imia was a Turkish island. The Greeks said no it is not and they pulled the ship off.

At the end of December 1995 and the first few days of January 1996, there was an exchange of notes between the two Foreign Ministries. I cannot recall which sent the first note. They reiterated the conflicting territorial claims. It might have stayed there except that somebody in Athens leaked the notes to a right-wing Greek newspaper and they were published. The mayor of Kalymnos then proceeded to go to Imia and hoist the Greek flag. A Turkish team from *Sabah*, one of their big newspapers, flew out with a helicopter, tore down the Greek flag and put up the Turkish flag, videotaping the entire thing. Then they sent these videotapes all over the world. Athens was in a state of patriotic outrage. Ships were sent to the Aegean. Pretty soon you had the makings of a full-blown crisis.

At the same time, you had a political crisis in Greece. In September 1995, Constantine Simitis had resigned as Minister of Industry over a dispute involving the privatization of a shipyard. Prior to his resignation, Simitis had been working with some disaffected senior members of PASOK (Vasso Papandreou, Theodoros Pangalos and a former minister named Averinos) is what was clearly an anti-Papandreou effort. The papers called them "the gang of four" after the Chinese group of the mid-1970s. They made no effort to conceal their activities. Pangalos had been Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs who resigned in 1995 to run for Mayor of Athens. He lost, and later complained that Prime Minister Papandreou had sabotaged his campaign. Vasso Papandreou, no relation of the Prime Minister but one of many women in Greece said to have had what you call a "close personal relationship with the Prime Minister, had been Greece's EU Commissioner during my time there as Ambassador. At the beginning of November 1995,

Papandreou's health took a turn for the worse and he went into the hospital. On January 20, 1996, he resigned as Prime Minister, retaining his position as President of PASOK for the time being.

Simitis came in as Prime Minister, and in his new government Pangalos became Foreign Minister and Vasso Papandreou became Minister of Development. Basically, Simitis kept the best members of Papandreou's government and replaced the less competent. His was a much more competent government on balance.

But the first thing they had to deal with was the mounting crisis around Imia. I was in constant touch with the government, warning them against taking any rash steps. On the morning of the January 29, 1996, we learned that Greek forces had landed on Imia. I called the Minister of Defense and he confirmed that troops had landed on Imia. I told him he needed to get them out and he replied that he could not remove the troops from Greek territory. I called the Prime Minister and repeated my position, warning that the Turkish response might be unpredictable. I also alerted the Operations Center and my counterpart in Ankara that we might be in for a rough ride.

Q: You were part of the chain?

NILES: All hands were on deck. Mark Grossman was doing essentially the same things. One of the problems was that the Greek Chief of Staff, Admiral Limberis, was an ultra nationalist and very difficult to deal with. We tried to establish a contact between him and General Shalikashvili, who by then was Chairman, but that effort failed. Minister of Defense Arsenis had a good relationship with Secretary Perry. During the day of January 29 and into the night of January 29/30, the crisis intensified with more than ten ships from the two navies in the narrow area around Imia, along with planes and helicopters. The weather was terrible. I was in the office about 1:00 a.m. President Clinton had been on the phone with Simitis, Secretary Christopher had been on the phone with Pangalos, I was in touch with both of them, and Dick Holbrooke had been in touch with everybody. About 2:00 a.m. we learned that the Turks had landed forces on another tiny island – I cannot remember its name – very near Imia. At about the same time, a Greek helicopter crashed in the area, killing three crew members. It seemed that the crash was weather-related, but you could not be sure. It was a tense time. But, ironically, the fact that the Turks had troops on one tiny island and the Greeks had troops on Imia created a basis on which both could agree to withdraw their forces, and the crisis began to wind down around 3:00AM.

Keep in mind that Imia is about 4 hectares in area (9 acres), with no inhabitants and no water. The key to life in the Aegean is fresh water, although there are some islands that have their water sent in by tanker. The reason why sovereignty over Imia is important is that it lies only 4 miles off the Turkish coast and that with sovereignty over the tiny islands comes control over the adjacent waters and the seabed. In any case, around 3:00 am Athens and Ankara time, which would have been about 8:00 p.m. Washington time, an agreement was reached that the troops would be pulled off both tiny islands. Tragically, as I said, in the process a Greek helicopter crashed and three crew members were killed. They were the only fatalities. The Greek press blamed us for the accident. When we asked some of the journalists who made that claim how we could have caused the accident, they responded that we could do anything with satellites or

through some other means. I went to the funeral and it was very sad, as you can imagine. The thing that was remarkable was that more people weren't killed.

This crisis began to wind down on January 30. We could see a partial pull back by both sides. They gradually took their ships out and the number of aircraft decreased. The problem remained, however. The Turks claimed Kardak, as they called it, and so did the Greeks. We did not really have a clue of the legal background. We had never heard of Imia. We set our lawyers to work on the historical record. The Dodecanese islands had been Turkish from the early 16th century (recall that Rhodes was seized from the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem in 1527, thus the story of the "Maltese Falcon") until 1911, when they were seized by the Italians, who kept in theory through 1947, when they were ceded to Greece under the Treaty of Paris. In January 1932, the Italians and the Turks concluded a treaty that delineated that area. The Turks accepted Italian sovereignty over the Dodecanese Islands, which they had never done before. In December of 1932, the Italians and the Turks signed a Protocol to the January 1932 Treaty in which the Turks agreed that a designated list of smaller islands, which included Imia, were also Italian. It was clear that what they had done was to follow the three-mile limit. Anything in the Dodecanese area that was outside three miles from the Turkish coast was recognized as Italian. Imia is four miles from the Turkish coast, and as I said, Imia was mentioned in the Protocol as belonging to Italy. The Turks claim that the Protocol was not registered with the League of Nations, as international agreements were supposed to be at that time, and was therefore invalid. Under the Wilsonian doctrine of treaties being freely negotiated and publicized, i.e. no secret treaties, there was the League of Nations requirement that treaties be registered with that body. Turkey and Italy registered the basic Treaty of January 1932. Our lawyers said that because the basic Treaty had been registered, the Protocol did not need to be registered in order to be regarded as valid. That was the Greek position. Moreover, as they pointed out, both Turkey and Italy treated the Protocol as valid up until the end of WWII.

We took the position that we would not take a position on the sovereignty issue but that we would encourage the states, Greece and Turkey, to work it out. We said that we generally agreed with the Greek position that this was something that should go to the International Court of Justice. I personally think that was a big mistake. We knew by the time we took this position that the Greeks were right on the sovereignty argument. The Turks knew that we knew their position was very weak. When we refused to take a position it sent a signal back to the Turks that we prepared to countenance or not do anything about aggressive Turkish behavior toward the Greeks on the territorial issues in the Aegean. We did not want to offend an important ally, Turkey, but what this led to was a succession of Turkish claims and statements about the Aegean territorial issues that poisoned the relationship with Greece even further. At the time of the crisis, Mrs. Ciller talked about "thousands of islands, islets and rocks" whose sovereignty was uncertain. Mr. Gonensay, the Foreign Minister in the subsequent government, talked about "gray areas" in the Aegean. In May of 1996 the Turks raised an issue about a small island called Gavdhos, which is south of Crete. We took a strong stance and said that Gavdhos was a Greek island. Recently in the fall of 1998, the Turks raised questions about several other Greek islands, including Farmakonisi, which is inhabited. What this does in Greece, of course, is scare people and put pressure on the Greek government to be very tough in any dealing with the Turks because they see the Turks as threatening Greek sovereignty and trying to seize Greek territory.

By the spring of 1996, John Kornblum had replaced Dick Holbrooke as Assistant Secretary, and John, Mark Grossman and I worked over the next year or so to try to find some formula to deal with the Imia problem. We wanted Greece and Turkey to say in a joint statement to say they would send the issue to the International Court of Justice. There was always some problem on the Greek side or more frequently on the Turkish side. The Turks at one point said frankly to us that they knew they would lose a case on Imia in the International Court of Justice, but they would be prepared to allow that to happen as long as they could balance the loss with a victory. If they were to allow the issue of Imia to go to the Court of Justice, they wanted the issue of the militarization of the Dodecanese Islands to be taken up by the International Court of Justice simultaneously. The Treaty of Paris of 1947 was the peace treaty with Italy to which Greece and the US were signatories but Turkey was not. It ended Italy's participation in World War II and, inter alia, transferred the Dodecanese Islands to Greece. The Treaty of Paris also stated that the Dodecanese Islands must be demilitarized. The Greeks claim that until the invasion of Cyprus by Turkey in 1974 they observed those provisions. I have no reason to doubt that. After 1974, using article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which is the right to self-defense, the Greeks claim that the use of force by the Turks in Cyprus gives them the right to station forces on the Dodecanese Islands since the Turks might use force against Rhodes, which is very near Turkey, or one of the other islands. The real life situation is that because of the geography of the area, the Dodecanese being right along the coast of Turkey and far from mainland Greece, it would be impossible for the Greeks to defend the Dodecanese against a Turkish invasion, just as the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem were unable to defend Rhodes and the Genoese were unable to defend Chios against Suleiman the Magnificent in 1527. It is a little bit like the Berlin brigade defending West Berlin against the three encircling Soviet tank armies. But the Greeks felt they had to be there militarily so that their people would feel more secure. I didn't really buy that because the people on Rhodes knew that the garrison on Rhodes would not be able to fend off the Turks if they really invaded. All of our efforts to get the Imia issue to a resolution failed. When I left Athens on September 27, 1997, the issue was unresolved. To this day it remains a problem.

Q: I get the feeling as the crisis took place that it was like a fight among children. Children look over their shoulders and wonder who is going to stop them. Don't you think the Greeks and Turks wanted us to stop them?

NILES: Yes, they wanted us to stop them. I am sure that in their hearts they did. Neither one wanted to go to war over Imia, or anything else for that matter, but the media and domestic political considerations on both sides prevented them from stepping back. The only reason they did so was under pressure from the United States. The President, Secretary Christopher, Secretary Perry, Assistant Secretary Holbrooke, the two Ambassadors, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were all involved. Dick Holbrooke later commented that we were working during the night while the Europeans slept. That was a deprecatory comment about the European Union, unkind, perhaps unnecessary, but true nonetheless. The British reacted badly to this. They had been marginally helpful while the rest just stood around and wondered what was going on. I think this is an example of the reality that if anything important is going to happen it is going to be done by the United States. We are going to have to take the lead. We can't always do it by ourselves and shouldn't try. If we had not been totally involved with the Imia issue, Greece and Turkey could well have blundered into a war.

Q: *What about Macedonia?*

NILES: That was another tough issue. Shortly after the Papandreou government took off, in a series of totally inept moves, managed to turn relations between Greece and its northern neighbors, Albania and Macedonia, or FYROM as we called it, from marginally acceptable to really poor, and in some cases near a crisis. It was an example of extraordinarily poor management.

First, let us discuss Macedonia. Since the summer of 1992, former Secretary Vance had been involved in the problems of former Yugoslavia as a representative of the UN Secretary General. He worked with former UK Foreign Secretary David Owen. As the Bosnia situation spun out of control, he came to concentrate more on Macedonia. He had been involved with Secretary General Boutros-Ghali in an effort to find some way to build a bridge between Greece and its neighbor, the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia," or FYROM. The Mitsotakis government (1990-93) had real internal problems with this issue, and there was a split in the government in 1992 over how to deal with it. The Foreign Minister, Andonis Samaras, resigned over the issue. He remained in Parliament but formed his own political party, *Politiki Aniksi* (Political Spring) in opposition to New Democracy and the Mitsotakis government. But under the new Foreign Minister, Mihailis Papaconstantinou, an able, intelligent and responsible official, the Greek government continued to negotiate with FYROM through Secretary Vance and David Owen.

The Papandreou government came in to power on October 11, 1993. Around November 15, 1993, in a moment of truly unbelievable incompetence, the Papandreou government announced that it was withdrawing from the dialogue under Secretary Vance on the grounds that it was not leading anywhere. I thought that this was crazy and could see no benefit to Greece. I told them that just because a dialogue wasn't going anywhere in the immediate future didn't mean that you stop it altogether. In fact, the reason they backed out was simply that the talks had been initiated by the Mitsotakis government, and they didn't want anything to do with it. Shortly thereafter, our people in Washington followed this miscalculation with one of our own. In January 1994, against my recommendation, they decided to go ahead with U.S. recognition of the independence of FYROM/Macedonia. It was a step that was taken to bolster Macedonia vis-a-vis Serbia, and in this sense it was a perfectly logical move. Macedonia had been part of Serbia as the so-called *Vardarska Banovina* from 1913, after the Second Balkan War, until 1944 when Tito decided to create a separate Macedonian Republic within his new Yugoslav Federation.

The Serbs still consider Macedonia theirs even though it was taken away by Tito. Bolstering Macedonia by recognition was sensible in terms of the Serbian problem, but given the unsettled conditions between Macedonia and Greece, it did not make good sense. We did this in mid-January 1994. I argued against this move, but added that if we were going to do this we should get something for it, such as persuading Macedonia to do something to appease the Greeks such as changing their flag. Recall that in June 1992, in response to a decision by the European Union at its Lisbon summit not to recognize the independence of Macedonia, the Macedonians responded by putting the ancient symbol of Alexander the Great, the star of Vergina, on their flag. The Greeks, of course, went up in smoke. I remember a meeting between Acting Secretary Eagleburger and Foreign Minister Mihailis Papaconstantinou the August 1992 London

Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. Papaconstantinou complained that the Macedonians had appropriated a Greek national symbol and put it on their flag. Larry Eagleburger shook his head at Michael and said, "So what". Michael said it was symbol of irredentism, and in its own way, it was.

It was as if the Macedonians could really do against Greece. They did not have the forces to seize a gasoline station on the border, but as a symbol it annoyed the Greeks terribly. I argued that if we were going to recognize them we should get something for it. Secretary Christopher considered it unseemly for us to recognize a country only if they redesign their national flag. The U.S. recognition, which led to recognition by some of the Europeans, was a real bombshell. It precipitated actions by Greece against Macedonia which I had told Washington were possibilities. Washington didn't think that would happen. They always know better than stupid ambassadors. In any case, in response to our move the Greeks established a total economic boycott of Macedonia. They closed the Port of Thessaloniki. This was a country that was already suffering greatly from the war in Bosnia and the dislocations from the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. It was poor to start with and this meant that the economic situation became even worse. We had a real problem, indeed a mini-crisis on our hands that we had partially provoked. At the end of the day we reached an understanding with the Greeks to call a timeout on further moves. We agreed that we would not at that time establish diplomatic relations with Macedonia, and the Greeks agreed to begin a new negotiating process under a Special Envoy from the United States.

Q: What does that mean?

NILES: Well, we opened a Mission in Skopje with Victor Comras there as our chief representative, but we would not exchange ambassadors. The Greeks would not do anything more beyond what they had already done with their economic boycott. President Clinton named Matthew Nimitz as his Special Emissary to try to work out a solution. Matt did a terrific job, together with Cyrus Vance, He spent a lot of time in Greece and Macedonia on this problem. Gradually we established a basis that allowed us to make a breakthrough in September 1995. Dick Holbrooke, who was in Belgrade working on the Bosnia issue, dropped down to Skopje where he persuaded President Gligorov, who by that time didn't take too much persuading, that if the Greeks would remove the embargo, he would take the "Star of Vergina" of the flag. Dick then persuaded Papandreou to buy that deal, and both sides agreed to send representatives to New York to try to work out an agreement. This happened around September 4/5, 1995. Around September 20, the Foreign Ministers, Papoulias for Greece and Crvenskovsk for Macedonia, came to New York. I went back from Athens and worked with Matt Nimitz. Holbrooke was there for the first day and then he had to leave for Bosnia. At that time our bombing campaign was underway and the Serbs were in the process of being driven out of Croatia and large parts of Bosnia. During three days of talks, Matt Nimitz and the rest of us put together an interim agreement which was signed by the Foreign Ministers. The Macedonians agreed to change their flag, the Greeks dropped the embargo, both agreed to refrain from hostile propaganda, and both agreed to negotiations about the name. The Greeks wanted it to be called the Republic of Skopje or something like that. That issue remains open, but quiescent, today.

The next day we met in Washington with President Clinton in the Oval Office. Secretary

Christopher was not there and Holbrooke was in Europe. Tony Lake was there, as were Macedonia Foreign Minister Crvenskovsk, their Washington representative, Vera Acevska, Greek Ambassador Loucas Tsilas, Secretary Vance, Matt Nimitz and I. As I said earlier, Greek Foreign Minister Papoulias was not there, allegedly because he had to go back to Greece, but it was clear that he did not want to be in the same room with the Macedonian Foreign Minister, even if it were the Oval Office of the White House. It was a very nice ceremony. The President expressed his appreciation and thanked everyone present for their contributions. Again, it was a little like Imia in that there wasn't anyone else to do the job, and if the United States hadn't been available to do the job, it wouldn't have happened. Certainly Greece and FYROM would not have gone to war but relations between them would have remained frozen. They simply did not have the ability, in part because of domestic politics, to do it on their own, and there was no one else out there that could have brought them together.

Q: You mentioned the European Union. This would be something that you would think that the new European Union could jump into? What is more European than a dispute between Macedonia and a member state of the Union?

NILES: I don't know what the answer is. One of the problems is that Greece is a member of the Union. This is why the European Union has trouble dealing with Greek/ Turkish relations because Greece is inside the Union and the Turks do not accept the view that the EU position could be unbiased. That may be just a negotiating ploy by the Turks but that is their position. Plus, the European Union does not have the structure available to undertake a long-term effort on these issues. The rotating presidency, where for this six months it is in the hands of the Dutch and then the French take over is not conducive to a long-term commitment to these issues. It is hard to settle some of these things in six months. Also, the European Union member states in the area of national security policy have not really transferred authority to the European Commission to undertake actions on behalf of the member states. Sometimes, although I don't think it was the true in the case of Macedonia except, of course, for Greece, there are disagreements between the members. It is very difficult for the Union to come up with a coherent position if they don't agree among themselves and decisions have to be taken by consensus. That certainly was true in the case of Yugoslavia with German support of Croatia and French support for Serbia. How is the European Union under those circumstances going to come up with a policy? They can't. This is a real problem. We ask why we are always the ones who have to carry the can, and the answer is that there just isn't anyone else to do it.

Let me just run through Macedonia during the remainder of my time in Athens. There was one very important loose end after we signed the Interim Agreement in September 1995. That was the name. Since then, the parties have met several times in New York to discuss the issue but they have not been able to come with anything. We kept arms length, as there was not an impending crisis. The two countries were trading and living together quite well. The Greeks are basically buying Macedonia. Anything that was worth anything the Greeks bought. They bought the brewery, the cigarette plant, the refinery and the cement factory. Every other major factory was partially taken over by the Greeks. I think in time the Greeks will end up opening the larger part of the economy.

Q: Did Bulgaria enter into the issue?

NILES: Traditionally the Bulgarians considered a large part of Macedonia theirs. They referred to it as "Pirin Macedonia." But in this case, they were so paralyzed by internal conflicts that they just stood by and watched. That was fortunate. Let me talk a little bit about Albania. The Papandreou government also managed to have problems with Albania. There is a lot of history here. There is a substantial Greek minority community in southern Albania. The population is Greek speaking and Orthodox Christian. From 1912 to about 1919 the Greek-Albanian border was further north and an area which the Greeks call Northern Epiros was part of Greece. Albanians of course call it southern Albanian. CIA Director George Tenet's father was from Northern Epiros. Nicolas Gage, the author, was from Northern Epiros. The Greeks have a reasonable concern about the way in which the population there is treated, but the Albanians see that as a threat to their national sovereignty.

During the chaotic circumstances in Albania in 1993 and 1994, there was a political party in southern Albania among the Greek community called "Omonia." It means "community." Six or seven leaders of "Omonia" were arrested by the Berish government on alleged espionage charges. It turns out that at least one had a claim to American citizenship. The Greeks were outraged and adopted a hostile policy toward the Berish government. Bill Ryerson was our Ambassador at the time and we worked closely together to try to calm people down on both sides of the border. Foreign Minister Papoulias was [from the] town of Yannina, near the border with Albania, which is the major town in that area. He really cared deeply about Greek-Albanian relations. This was the only issue in which he was really engaged. The key was to get these men out of jail. Dick Shifter, our Assistant Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, managed to convince Berish to free the "Omonia 6." Various face saving concessions made. These men were too busy with smuggling and other things to be guilty of treason or espionage. Relations between Albania and Greece moved in a positive direction until the fall of 1996 when law and order in Albania collapsed as a result of the collapse of the so-called "pyramid investment schemes" run by the Berish government. But the improvement in relations was primarily due to the work we did. Dick Shifter was responsible for convincing the President of Albania to let these guys go. The Greeks by and large kept their end of the deal. In all those areas, the US was absolutely crucial in the negotiations. In the case of Turkey, if we had not been involved it is likely that Greece and Turkey would have had a localized war with casualties. This is one of our country's roles in the post-Cold War era. It is often frustrating and time-consuming, but there isn't anybody else out there to carry the load. Unless you want to say I don't care accept some sort of disaster, we are going to have to become involved.

Q: What about terrorism?

NILES: Terrible issue, Stu. You don't think of Greece as being a terrorist country, although they have had their share of it in the past. You don't think of Greece as being a place where a terrorist group could operate with relative impunity and maintain total secrecy over a period of 23 years. The first action by this group (November 17) occurred on the December 23, 1975 when they killed our CIA station chief, Dick Welsh. If I were a mystery story writer, it would be a fabulous story to write. The daring quality of this group, gunning people in broad daylight in the country's largest city, is amazing. They have used the same weapon repeatedly since 1975, most recently in June 1997 when they killed a person I knew, Costas Peratikos, outside his office in Piraeus.

This gun, a .45, has been used over and over again. This demonstrates to me that they obviously don't think will coming looking for them. We have lost four Americans and one Greek employee of the embassy to this group: CIA Station Chief Welsh in 1975, US Navy Captain Tsantes and his Greek driver in 1985, and USAF Colonel Nordeen in 1988, and Army Sergeant Stewart in 1991. There were two cases where buses with servicemen from our air base at Hellinikon were bombed where many people could have been killed. Overall November 17 has killed 22 people. While I was there they killed another person I knew, Mihailis Vranopoulos in January 1994; in July 1994 they killed the Turkish DCM, whom I knew; and in September 1994 they killed a Greek policeman. In all, there were four murders while I was there. They also fire a 3.5-inch rocket, one of a large stock which they stole from the Greek military, at our Chancery in February 1996. Had it not clipped the top of our fence it would have probably blown up a large part of the Chancery Building. Fortunately, it was at 11:00 p.m., and so the staff there was minimal but there would have been casualties.

Q: To what end do they do these things?

NILES: Well, each time they carry out a murder, they issue a declaration to tell the world where they are at that moment. The declarations are full of Marxist-Leninist verbiage, although Marxist-Leninist ideas aren't very relevant. They talk about the oppression of the workers, and the evils of the United States, the European Union, NATO, and capitalism in general. They also talk about the oppression of Greece and Cyprus. They are very hostile towards Turkey. In essence, it seems to be an ultra-left Greek nationalist group. These declarations have been written, we believe, by the same person from 1975 until now. We have analyzed them carefully and found stylistic and other characteristics that are consistent throughout the documents. One of our CIA experts did an extensive analysis and compared the texts with the writings of a number of current Greek writers. He came up with an almost perfect fit with the work of one of them, and we gave the results to the Greek Ministry of Public Order. They did nothing with it. No one has ever been captured and accused of being a member of November 17.

Q: I am referring back to my time when we had several terrorist acts. The Greeks seem to duck terrorism. We had some Palestinian terrorism and they let the people go. They seem to be unable or unwilling to deal with terrorism as long as it isn't directed at their own people.

NILES: That has absolutely been their attitude for a long time. Even though November 17 has killed Greeks, nothing is done to stop them. One of the smart things November 17 has done was to pick targets likely to be unpopular. They picked wealthy businessmen, the police, CIA or military officer from our Embassy, or people associated with the 1967-74 Dictatorship. They killed those people and it did not generate much sympathy on the part of the Greeks. This is one reason for their success. Some claim that another reason they have succeeded is the incompetence of the Greek police. I believe it is the lack of a commitment from the top to do something. All of my complaints and pressure to do something were unheard. The police were discredited as a result of their involvement in the Dictatorship from 1967 until 1974 so they do not have a lot of respect around the country. I have difficulty explaining it but there are all sorts of reasons why this terrorist group has been able to operate untouched by the Greek forces of justice. Nobody on the Greek side is prepared to do anything about it.

My feeling about November 17 is that it is a group of constant membership since 1975, that grew out of PAK, which was the resistance movement during the Dictatorship. PAK was formed and run by Andreas Papandreou. I tried many times to get him to talk about terrorism but he evinced total incredulity that this terrorist group could act as it did. I suggested to him that some of these people might have been followers of his in PAK, and he responded that it was an interesting idea but then let it go. I believe that November 17 goes back to PAK and consists of between seven and ten people who are otherwise prominent citizens in Greece and basically live two lives: one life as politicians, businessmen, doctors, lawyers, and so forth; and another life as terrorists. When the Greeks finally find out who they are, it will be a shock. It was very frustrating to spend six and a half to seven million dollars a year to protect the Embassy staff from this threat and to watch the Greek state deliberately ignore it.

Q: How did you travel around?

NILES: I traveled around in an armored Mercedes, which was part of the Berlin Mission, and thus paid for by the FRG, until after the wall came down and we managed to snare it for Athens. A five-man Greek police detachment, four in a car and one in my car, heavily armed also protected us. We put them through special training and got them good weapons. They had nine-millimeter Beretta or Glock pistols and some other automatic weapons. I was never outside the compound without these people. They became close friends of mine. We went to parties together and I visited their families. We climbed mountains and vacationed together. They were wonderful people. I would have been better off not needing them but I was well served by them. We took the armored Mercedes on cruises with us and drove it all over other islands. It would have been hard for November 17 to take me. They could have but they would have lost someone in the process. I was a hard target as were the DCM, members of the CIA Station and the military attachés. But we had over 125 Americans and we couldn't do this for everyone. My concern was the security of the people who worked for me. I was responsible for them. We had drills, exercises and security reminders constantly. Mercifully, none of our people were attacked while I was there, although we did have the rocket attack on the Embassy.

Q: I think that probably one more session will take care of it. I would like to ask you about your staff and if any of them carried over from the old days? How did you feel about the CIA because in my day the CIA had seized control of the embassies? Also, I would like to know about our military there. In my time it was dominated by Greek Americans who came out of the right wing of our own politics? Were there any consular or economic issues?

NILES: The consular issues were the child custody issues and they were terrible.

Q: We are now into a new year. It is January 5, 1999. The Papandreou, George or Andreas, were names the embassy had played with for a long time and I imagine there would have been a slight amount of suspicion and distaste surrounding them. You must have had a strong cadre of Greek-Americans in our embassy?

NILES: I did not really have many Greeks. I am thinking back to the political and economic sections. For instance, my first DCM was Jim Williams. Jim had served in Cyprus before but not in Greece. He was in Nicosia in 1974 during the Turkish invasion. He is now the Director of

Personnel. He could give you good insights into the 1974 events, including the assassination of Ambassador Davies. There were some officers with 1980s experience. My second DCM, Tom Miller, had served in Athens in 1985-1988 in the Political Section. He had been given quite a rough ride then by the left wing media as being in the CIA station, which was not true, of course. This happened because he played a large role in the Embassy's counter terrorism program during his previous assignment. Tom came to Athens in August 1994 with his experience in Greece with the Papandreou government, which was hardly positive. The second half of Papandreou's government in the 1980s from 1985 to 1989 was less difficult than the first, from 1981 to 1985, when Papandreou committed his most egregious acts like welcoming the establishment of martial law in Poland in 1981 and commenting that KAL 007 probably was a spy plane in September 1982. Papandreou toned down his rhetoric and modified his policies somewhat during his second term.

There were problems that we all remembered only too well. As I mentioned before, I told Papandreou when I first met him that we could go back and relive the 1980s if he wanted to but that wasn't our preference. He replied that times had changed. He had just come back in the October 10, 1993 election and I got there on October 30. It was clear to me from the outset that he was not physical capable of leading the country or having the same kind of impact, as his health had deteriorated greatly. He could only work maybe four or five hours a day. He could put in short burst of work. When he visited Washington in 1994 he was up and working for 12 or 14 hours a day but when he got back to Greece he needed a long period of recovery. His wife, Demitra, a controversial figure, was responsible for prolonging his physical and political life and made sure he was well taken care of.

The fact that we didn't have a strong cadre of Greek experts when I got there was probably a plus for us. We didn't have a lot of people who bore deep scars and wounds from the 1980s. There were many people in the Greek-American community who had a strong and abiding hatred for Papandreou because they held him responsible, and correctly so, for the strains between Greece and America. There were very few people from that community who came to visit me while I was in Athens who had anything positive to say about Papandreou, and most had strong feelings against him. They felt equally strongly about his wife, Margaret, who used to lead the November 17 demonstrations against the United States Embassy in Athens while her husband was Prime Minister.

Q: What about the CIA?

NILES: The agency had a reputation in Greece, which was partly deserved on the basis of relatively ancient history, and partly a result of Greek fantasies and conspiracy theories. I can't say what the situation was in terms of the operations of the embassy and the agency during the 1960s. The version that you often heard was that the CIA dominated US policy towards Greece and controlled the activities of the embassy.

Q: I was Consul General in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and to put it in diplomatic terms, the opinions of the CIA Station Chief carried undue weight. It was also the Nixon and Kissinger period.

NILES: I see. Well, the way the Nixon administration related to the Dictatorship in Greece is an embarrassment to us today. I frequently found myself trying to explain this to the people in Greece. It was a burden for all of us and will remain one for a long time. But the role of the Agency while I was there was a normal one. I looked to the Station Chief for advice on certain issues involving intelligence operations. I never felt that the Agency was out of control except on one occasion when a couple of its officers were found in a van on November 15, 1993. They were disguised and about to embark on some mission that I had not been informed of. The Greek police arrested them, and I was called into the Foreign Minister's office to explain. I quickly called in the Station Chief, told him that the two men had to leave the country, and that this should not happen again. He did not object. They left, and we managed to smooth it over. I told him we could not go through this experience again and that I did not want to be surprised. I can't say that nothing happened but we did not have any more problems of this kind. Either they were good at keeping things from both the Greeks and me or nothing else happened. I had two excellent Station Chiefs and was able to work well with both of them. Their influence was not excessive.

During my term we had a large Regional Security Office from the State Department as well as a large and growing FBI presence. I found much to my dismay that there was a certain amount of competition between the Agency and FBI. This was partially personality driven and partly due to the way the Greeks were able to manipulate the relationships that they had with both. The Greeks played one off against the other. They were no fools and saw the advantages of first favoring one and then favoring the other. DEA was also there, and they got involved to a degree because of the overlap between narcotics and terrorism. So, we had at least four intelligence-related agencies in the embassy. The big job for the DCM and me was to coordinate those agencies and make sure that they all kept us informed as to what they were up to and to see that they did not spend time fighting with each other. There were a few instances of competition that did not reflect well on the Embassy. But by and large, I was able to control things, except for the two officers caught with the disguises.

Q: *Who caught them?*

NILES: The Greek police caught them. It was a comedy of errors. Some old lady saw the van and thought a robbery was about to take place and she turned them in. It was a real counter terrorist operation, though. There was a suspect about whom we were quite properly concerned. We had talked to the Greek police and gotten the brush off. This was one of our problems. The Greeks police did not react, and we decided to do it ourselves. We made a major effort to upgrade the capabilities of the Greek police. We spent a lot of money training people from the Counter-terrorism Unit, and the moment someone was well-trained, the Greeks didn't trust him any more and they sent him off to collect customs on Samos or guard passes between Greece and Albania. I sympathized with the people on our side who became frustrated with this situation because it was a waste of money and put our people in jeopardy. One normal reaction was to try to do it ourselves, which could lead to problems. I don't know if my successors had better luck - I do not think so - but the whole issue of counter terrorism was of enormous frustration to me. On the training issue, I canceled the program in 1996 because it was clearly working against our interest of having a more effective counter-terrorism force. We would select the most promising members of the force, send them to the United States for training, and then watch as they were

sent off to do something totally unrelated to terrorism when they returned to Greece.

We were probably lucky during my time that nobody was killed. Fortunately, the November 17 guys were not skilled in the use of the anti-tank missile and the attack on the embassy failed. In that case, we were not smart or well organized, just lucky.

Q: What about our military representatives who were there? We had Greek American colonels who loved being back in Greece again as Americans and they liked the right-wing government. We also had bases.

NILES: One of the things that I was able to do as Ambassador was to substantially reduce the size of our presence there. I was helped by the fact that the Cold War was over. I also encouraged both the military and the civilian intelligence agencies, NSA, DIA and the CIA, to draw down. They do wonderful work and I had no problem with them, but I felt the numbers were too large. Before I got there our largest base in Greece, the USAF installation at Hellinikon, had been closed. It was attached to the main airport in Athens. It shared a runway with the main airport. It was target of terrorists from 1975 until they closed in 1992. It was useful but once the Cold War and Gulf War were over, it was closed and vastly reduced the American presence in the area. Its closure also had the desirable effect of reducing the visible profile of the United States in the Athens area.

This meant that the embassy had to do a lot of things that had previously been done by the Air Force. The commissary was moved for a while to a building on Sangria Avenue, which we later sold to the Onassis Foundation for six million dollars. This was one of the great real estate deals of my life. After we sold the building, we closed the commissary altogether and we put a small store on the embassy compound. Closure of the commissary was difficult for the military retirees, which I regretted, but they were ultimately not my responsibility.

In the spring of 1994, I presided over the closure of our base near Heraklion in Central Crete, which left us with only the Souda Bay Naval Station near Hania on Crete, which had about 900 military personnel on its permanent staff. With the exception of the commanding officer, they were all on short-term assignments without their families. It is on one of the great natural harbors of the Mediterranean. The water is deep enough to bring in a Nimitz class carrier and dock it. It is a bit tight turning it around, which we discovered with the *John F. Kennedy*, which is the same length. The only problem with the carriers is that they are slightly longer than the docking area, which is 900 feet long.

We had frequent visits there by SSNs and SSBNs. I took a ride on the SSBN Nebraska and the SSN Boston. In 1995, we stopped port calls in Athens for security reasons. In the summer of 1995 the Royal Navy carrier, *Ark Royal*, was in Athens. It had been in the "Sharp Guard" NATO surveillance force in the Adriatic and then came into port. November 17, using stolen weapons from the Greek military, tried to launch a couple of mortar shells at the *Ark Royal*. The only reason that this failed was because it rained and fuses got wet and these guys did not understand how to take care of their equipment. They were found because November 17 announced the success of their attack too early. The Greek police found these rockets on a rooftop near the dock. The *Ark Royal* had "Harrier" jets and various helicopters all over the deck and it could have

been a great disaster.

We had had the USS *Bellnap*, the flagship of the Sixth Fleet commander, tied up at the same dock maybe six months before. I talked with my naval attaché and we decided that this was too dangerous and from then on we passed up Athens for port calls. We went to Corfu and Rhodes. The *Lasalle* came into Thessaloniki but not into Athens because there was no way we could guard against this. November 17 had too many weapons that they had stolen and there were too many places from which they could launch one of those weapons at the ships.

Q: The destroyers used to come in but you had major units that were anchored off Athens, didn't you?

NILES: We did have units anchored off of Athens but this was before we closed Athens to port calls. We had the USS *Boston*, which was a 688 Class "*Los Angeles*" SSN and a Perry class frigate anchored side-by-side out in the harbor, where I visited them, but we didn't bring them in for security reasons. You can do that with smaller units but not larger ones. In terms of my military establishment I had six officers in my Defense Attaches' office. I had an ODC, Office of Defense Cooperation, which was separate from the embassy, with about fifteen officers and maybe fifteen enlisted people and a large number of Greek employees. It was seriously vulnerable to terrorist attacks as it was in downtown Athens. I spent a lot of my time trying to find another home for ODC. Finally, with the help of the Greek military, we found a vacant building on a Greek army base not too far from the Embassy and shortly before I left we dedicated that building. It was not perfectly secure but it was a lot better than the other location. The problem with overseeing a large military establishment really had been solved by the drawdown. We also closed the communications bases at Nea Makri and Kato Souli.

Q: This was on Crete?

NILES: No, those were near Athens. Nea Makri was near Rafina on the other side of the mountains from Athens and Kato Souli was a little bit further up the coast near Marathon. We got rid of those two and also turned over a small military installation (Site "B") on the northern side of Athens in 1996, and drew down the number of people in the embassy that were supporting these operations. I was able to reduce our profile and our vulnerability. Each base created additional security requirements. In answer to your question, there were some Greek-Americans among the military officers but not many. One of the reasons I had a somewhat easier run than any of my predecessors who were in Greece after the overthrow of the dictatorship in August 1974 - Mike Sotirhos, Bob Keeley, Monty Stearns, Bob McCloskey, and Jack Kubisch - is that they also had to deal with the political problems that arose from our large military presence in Greece. I was lucky that I did not have to deal with that.

Q: I would have thought that there would have been a slight bit of schizophrenia as far as the Greek government was concerned. It was essentially a leftist type government with anti-American overtones. At the same time the more we got our military out of there the less Greece meant to us in military terms, which reduced their bargaining position vis-a-vis Turkey. Was this a factor?

NILES: I think that recognition of that fact was one of the considerations that caused Papandreou to step back from his 1981 campaign pledge to close down all the US military bases in Greece. In addition to a pledge to carry out what amounted to a domestic social revolution, the 1981 Papandreou campaign had three major foreign policy planks: 1) get out of NATO; 2) get out of the European Community, which Greece had just entered; and, 3) get rid of the American bases. Since he won the election convincingly, you have to assume that a majority of the Greek people either agreed with him or did not care. For all of his rhetoric, however, Papandreou understood that while he did not like the American military presence, it gave him a call on American resources and military protection. He certainly did not feel he needed it against the Warsaw Pact, but he did have big concerns about Turkey, some of which resulted from his government's poor management of the Greek-Turkish relationship, such as in the 1987 *Sismik* crisis when Deputy Foreign Minister John Kapsis almost provoked a war with Turkey. I believe he came to see that a large American military presence in Greece gave him greater security vis-a-vis Turkey. The same was true of membership in NATO and the European Community. In any case, his three foreign policy planks remained unfulfilled when he left office in 1989.

By the time Papandreou left office in 1989, Greece had become heavily dependent upon funding from the European Community, which amounted to around five or six percent of the Greek GDP. He had also extended the base agreement with the United States. As is often the case in politics, very few people went back and asked why he didn't do any of those things he said he would. Papandreou clearly understood the value of the relationship with the United States as far as Greece's relationship with Turkey. He tried to keep as close to us as he could, as he knew we would stay close to Turkey. He was right, as we saw in the case of Imia. We saved both of them from themselves.

One interesting question for us now will be answered in January or February when the Greeks have to decide what kind of new fighter airplanes they are going to buy. Are they going to buy from Boeing or Lockheed Martin or are they going to go European? If they go European what that will do is: 1) burnish their European credentials; and 2) say that their relationship with the US military isn't so important any more. My sense is that they will buy some of both and keep the relationship with us.

Q: We have talked about the Macedonian problem but what about the efforts in Bosnia? Did that act at all on you?

NILES: We were able to secure Greek participation in the NATO force sent to Bosnia following Dayton. They are still there with a supply battalion. Why did the Greeks do this? They realized that participation in the NATO military effort gave them a voice at the political table. They also contributed to "Sharp Guard" in the Adriatic. Another reason why they joined these efforts was because the Turks were there. The Greeks felt that if the Turks were coming back to Bosnia, then they were going to be there, too. We encouraged the Greeks to participate. We also encouraged them to become more involved with the programs in Albania, Romania and Bulgaria. We didn't have to push hard because they saw that these partnerships were good ones. They saw that being involved was good for them. The Turkish angle wasn't absent there either. The Turks were also involved in these projects and they wanted to be there to balance the Turks and watch the Turks. Our military people worked closely with the Greeks and they were satisfied with the way the

Greeks performed. The Greeks also had military training missions in most of the southeastern European countries. They had to withdraw their military training mission from Albania in 1996, as there was no one left to train, although they kept their Consulate in southern Albania.

Q: There were too many people wandering around with guns.

NILES: Everybody in Albania seemed to have an AK 47 and they were using them. Of course, some of those weapons ended up in Greece, in some cases as far away as Samos and Crete. That was a disaster. Greek policy in southeastern Europe, once we got over the embargo on Macedonia and the problems I mentioned between Greece and Albania in the summer and fall of 1995, was farsighted and constructive. They saw their interests served by promoting democracy and economic development and were prepared to put resources behind it. We worked with them closely. Dick Shifter found that the Greeks were prepared to support his Southeastern Europe Cooperative Initiative (SECI).

Q: Were there any consular problems?

NILES: The only consular cases in which I became involved were the child custody cases. I remember two in particular in which I became actively engaged, one on Crete and one in Thessaloniki. Both were difficult cases and took up an enormous amount of time of the Consular officers involved, the DCM and me. On Crete the case involved a kidnaping of two young girls by their Greek father who lived in New Hampshire, I believe. The father brought them back to Crete. The courts in the United States said the children must be returned to the mother. The Greek government and courts said the same but the children stayed in Crete. I raised the case with the Foreign Minister, and finally with the Prime Minister. They looked into it and agreed that the children should be returned. But in the male-dominated, tightly-knit Cretan society, we were unable to secure the implementation of all of these court orders. When I left the girls were still there. There were charges of sexual abuse, but I don't know if they were true. This case had Congressional interest as well. Tom Lantos from California had a son-in-law who was a Congressman from New Hampshire. His name was Dick Svec. He ran for the Senate in 1996 against Senator Smith and lost. He was the Congressman involved and since he was married to Tom Lantos' daughter, Lantos was also involved. We did all we could. You can't go much higher than talk to the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and the Minister of Justice. We simply could not find a local official on Crete who would execute the court orders. The police officials in Athens were not able to force their colleagues on Crete to act.

The case in Thessaloniki was similar. Two children, in this case from Alaska, had been taken back to Greece against all court orders by the Greek husband. In Thessaloniki, the American citizen mother had the children but she couldn't leave the country. She tried on one occasion but was stopped. We helped her make her way out of Greece, bending, if not breaking, the law. The husband was outraged and blamed us. This happened in the summer of 1997 just before I left. The husband was talking about suing the Embassy. Good luck.

These are terribly difficult cases. Rarely is all the truth and justice on one side. The children are the pawns. The parent who kidnaps the children is breaking the law and should be punished, but often these cases are very complicated.

Q: We have lots of examples of women married to Iranians and the children are taken back under Iranian law.

NILES: They made a movie starring Sally Field, *Not Without My Daughter*, in which that happens. In Greece the situation was difficult because it is still a male-dominated society and very rarely will courts side against the husband in favor of the wife, even when they are both Greeks. The idea of courts acting against domestic violence where the wife is being abused is relatively new but it is getting started. As part of the European Union, Greece has to adhere to its standards. It is even more difficult in the Middle East.

Q: What about commercial issues?

NILES: I spent a lot of time working on commercial issues. One of the great advantages that American ambassadors had the support of the large and active Hellenic-American Chamber of Commerce. I think it is the largest and most active of its kind in Europe. It is an organization that has a high standing in Greece. It is well respected and prominent. For example, when Papandreou was on his last legs in the fall of 1995, the three principle competitors for his succession, Simitis, who ultimately won, Arsenis, the Minister of Defense, and Tsohadzopoulos, now Minister of Defense, each used the Hellenic/American Chamber of Commerce as the organization as the platform for a speech that amounted to the kick off of his campaign. The speeches had nothing to do with Greek/American trade or economic issues, but the Hellenic/American Chamber of Commerce was seen as an organization that could bring out a good crowd. For the Embassy, the Hellenic/American Chamber of Commerce made up for the fact that we had practically no funds for trade promotion. The Chamber sponsored shows that were very successful commercially. The only thing we provided was technical support, the Embassy's name and an ambassadorial reception, which they paid for. They regularly sponsored computer shows, a big maritime show, a show on defense equipment, and many others. All we did was show up and say what a great thing. It was the heart and soul of our trade promotion effort.

Q: Did you find there were problems with Greek law?

NILES: Before we get into that I want mention another commercial link between Greece and the United States. We put together a Greek/American Business Council, which was a smaller group of high-level business executives on both sides. It was formed at the time of Prime Minister Papandreou's visit to the United States in 1984. It played a useful role. It was not as successful as I had hoped it would be but it focused higher level US business attention on Greece as a place to do business, not just for the Greek market itself but for the southeast European region.

Q: Greece as the center of an economic region?

NILES: Yes, that could happen if the Greeks adopt smart policies and political conditions are favorable. Thessaloniki, when political circumstances have permitted, has been the commercial center for an economic region that includes what used to be Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, the European parts of Turkey, and Greece. This was true during ancient times under

the Macedonian, Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman empires. This can happen again, and I encouraged the Greeks to focus on how to promote this development, which would make Greece not just a market with 10.4 million people and a member of the EU and NATO, but also the center of an economic region, albeit one with lots of problems.

You raised the question about problems with Greek law and regulations. This was and is a problem. It is becoming less of a problem as Greek laws and regulations are being harmonized with those of the European Union. That is the public and official aspect. There is another aspect and that is the way in which the Greek system actually implements these laws. Here you run into the problem of the poor quality of the Greek bureaucracy, including corruption and poor organization. This is well recognized by the current Prime Minister, but recognizing and solving it are not the same. Greece suffers from the lack of a well-functioning bureaucracy, including the police and the tax service.

One thing that I implemented was a closer relationship between the IRS and the Greek tax service, and finally we established a permanent IRS training mission in Greece. This did not make us really popular with the Greeks. It was occasionally embarrassing because at the same time the IRS was trying to help the Greek tax service become more effective, it was taking some heavy hits at home for its own failures and incompetence. The fact of the matter is that however bad the IRS was, it was so far ahead of the Greeks that it was still able to show the way for substantial improvements for them. One reason why the Greek fiscal picture has improved so much in the last few years is because tax collections have increased substantially, and one reason for that has been the help of the IRS training mission.

One of the problems that any ambassador would run into in Greece was the inability of the Greek government to stick with its agreements. This frustrated investors who came into Greece in good faith under certain assumptions only to find that six months later things had changed. Frequently that had to do with personnel changes at the top. Ministers didn't always pay attention to the commitments of their predecessors. I spent a lot of my time going around to ministers saying that a deal is a deal and they couldn't just push these contracts aside. This was really difficult in the case of licenses to run casinos in Greece. During the New Democracy government, the Greeks issued casino licenses, most of which to American companies. Then the government changed and they decided they weren't so keen on casinos. In the meantime American companies had come in and spent a lot of money on licenses, casinos and hotels. My role was to tell them that whether they liked casinos or not was irrelevant now that they had a law on the basis of which the previous government had sold licenses. I told the Greeks that when you jerk a company around the word spreads and soon Greece would become known as a dreadful place to do business because the rules are constantly changing. I can't say that I was satisfied with the results I achieved in the commercial area. We established a better framework for the future but it was frustrating dealing with the Greek bureaucracy.

Q: How did you feel about what the Greek educational system was putting out as far as the future for Greece? You mentioned computers quite a bit as the entrée to the world.

NILES: The Greek system of higher education is not a success. The Greek constitution, adopted in 1975 following the restoration of democracy establishes in Article 16 that the Greek state has

sole responsibility for higher education. You could say that that is none of our business but you have several American-sponsored educational institutions that were there long before 1975 such as the American College of Greece. It is one thing, of course, to establish that constitutional principle, but it raises the question whether the Greek state is then able to implement it. During my time there, the answer was clearly “no.” In 1995, only 20% of the graduating seniors were able to gain admission to one of the Greek universities. What about the other 80%? You had Greek families sending their children all over the place for higher education. The thirst for higher education is as strong in Greece as it is in this country.

My effort with the government in support of the American-supported institutions was to get them to change or reinterpret the constitution, particularly in the case of non-profit institutions such as the American College, Anatolia College and the American Foreign School. The other two United States-supported institutions – Athens College and the American School of Classical Studies – were not directly affected by the constitutional provision. I tried to persuade the Greek government to stop regarding the American-supported institutions as alien bodies that had invaded the system. I was unsuccessful. Nonetheless, the institutions continued to grow. Anatolia introduced a four-year college, as did the American Farm School. I didn't really have a problem with Ministers of Education. They agreed with me that these American institutions played an important role but there was an enormous amount of resistance on the part of the Greek teachers union and the Greek bureaucracy, which were incapable of educating the population but did not want to admit it. Like monopolies everywhere they love their power. This is an issue that remains today.

I was able to establish a committee representing all of the US institutions in Greece with participation by the Ministry of Education at which they could talk about problems. It concentrated on day-to-day problems but didn't deal with the longer-term problem because its solution required a constitutional amendment. It is a bit sensitive for a foreign ambassador to advocate a constitutional amendment on such a sensitive issue. I did it but with the feeling that maybe this wasn't the role I should be in, but what could I do? I honestly believed then and now that this was in the interest of Greece. It was frustrating. You notice my frequent use of the word frustration. I love Greece but it is an immensely frustrating place to work.

Q: Did you run across any problems with religion and proselytizing?

NILES: Yes, as a matter of fact. I was totally unprepared for the attitude of the Greek Orthodox Church toward the rest of the world. This is an extraordinary thing to come up against. Shortly after I arrived, I called on Archbishop Serafim. He had been Archbishop of Athens and head of the Church in Greece for maybe 20 years. He died in 1998 and has been succeeded by Archbishop Christadoulou, who is said to be more flexible and modern. Archbishop Serafim was in his 80s and was one of the hardest-line guys I ever ran into. He was very ill with kidney problems and was on dialysis. He was yellow with jaundice, but he was a tough guy. He had a big picture of himself in his office in the archbishop's palace dressed up as a guerrilla during the war. He was dressed as a priest but had bandoleers of bullets around his body, somewhat like a Sam Browne belt, and was carrying a machine gun. He fought with the non-Communist Greek resistance group and claimed to have killed a lot of Germans and Communists during the war and in the Civil War that followed. His basically aggressive nature continued, and the entire

Greek church under his leadership had a relatively hostile attitude toward other religious organizations. They were very strongly against the Turks, and they hated the Vatican and the current Pope.

In September 1995, they celebrated the 1900th anniversary of the writing of the gospel of St. John on Patmos. It was a big religious ceremony. They tied it in with environmental protection. Tim Worth, the Under Secretary for Global Issues, came to the event. I asked him if religion was one of his issues but he said he was there for the environmental issue. The Patriarch from Constantinople, Bartholomeus, came as well. All sorts of religious people were there. The island of Patmos is an important place in Christian history because of the famous monastery there where St. John wrote his gospel and the fact that St. Paul visited the island. Patmos is not officially under the authority of the Archbishop of Athens; it is under the ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople. At one point the Patriarch Bartholomeus, organizing this event on Patmos, decided it would be a wonderful opportunity to cast a vote for ecumenism and suggested to Serafim that the Pope be invited. Serafim told Bartholomeus that he could invite the Pope if he wanted to but if he did, the Greek church would withdraw from the celebration. Bartholomeus withdrew the proposal. The Greek Church is very hostile toward many other churches. I tried to discover what is at the root of this. I finally found that it all goes back to 1054 A.D. and the Council at which the two churches split over two or three words in the Nicene Creed. In the West we say, "I believe in one God who proceedeth from the Father and the Son." The words "and the Son" which appear in the western version of the Nicene Creed do not appear in the Greek version. The church split over these words and a lot of politics. I had never heard of this dispute until I got to Greece. After I read the two versions and considered the meanings, I thought that the Greek version made more sense, for all that that opinion is worth. Then in 1204 AD the fourth crusade under the Pope of the day and the Frankish King of Sicily and southern Italy set out to liberate the Holy Land but in fact attacked Constantinople and seized it. The Latins held the city from 1204 AD until 1254 AD when the Byzantines took their capitol back. In the meantime, however, the Turks strengthened their position in Asia Minor and for the first time crossed the Straits into southeastern Europe. Ultimately, of course, in 1453, Constantinople was seized by the Turks. The Greeks blame the 500 years of Turkish occupation of Greece on the Fourth Crusade. Their argument is that if the Fourth Crusade had not so significantly weakened the Byzantine Empire, it would have stood as the bulwark against the Turks. Maybe that would have been true. If you think about the terrible consequences of the Turkish occupation for southeastern Europe, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece, you can see why they have a particular animus against the West and particularly against the Vatican. The Vatican was the inspiration behind or the legitimization behind the Fourth Crusade. The Frankish kings in Sicily would never have been able to pull this off without the Vatican saying that yes, these were schismatic Byzantines and attack them so that the truth faith may be restored. This historically-based hostility toward some other religions is pronounced.

You asked what our involvement in this issue was. We were constantly going to the government and asking them to lighten up on Protestant religious groups. The Mormons, for example, wanted to establish a house of prayer in Athens. In order to do that, by Greek law, they had to have not only State approval but also the approval of the local Orthodox Bishop. Well, in almost every case the local Bishop would find ways to say no. The Greek government was unable to force the local bishops to agree. It is a little like the child custody cases in which the government was

unable to enforce Greek law. The government couldn't force the Greek church to do what it should in approving churches for non-Greek Orthodox faiths like the Baptists and Catholics and in particular for the Mormons. The groups that engaged in proselytizing had a very tough time in Greece. We were under strong pressures from members of Congress such as Senator Hatch who pointed out that even though Greece was a good ally, the government was allowing discrimination against the Mormon church in Greece. There was no question that was going on, and the government would have allowed the establishment of Mormon houses of worship, but the Greek church said no. The Greek church is a state church and the Greek government finances the Greek church. Greek Orthodox priests are basically civil servants paid by the state. There is a tight interlocking relationship between the two. It is unlike most countries.

I developed a theory about why Greece is this way. There are three countries in Europe in which the church plays an extraordinary role in the life of the country. Those three countries are Poland, Greece and Ireland. What links those three countries? They were all occupied by foreign forces, the British in the case of Ireland, the Austrians, Prussians and Russians in the case of Poland, and the Turks in Greece. During this long period of foreign occupation, the respective national churches - the Catholic church in Poland and Ireland and the Orthodox church in Greece - kept the national spirits alive. Had it not been for the church in Greece, and I think that this is true for Poland and Ireland as well, the national consciousness might have been lost during the long occupation of the Turks, Austrians/Germans/Russians, and British. It wasn't as long in the case of Poland. The British occupation in Ireland started in the 15th century and lasted until 1921. It continues today according to the Irish.

In Greece there is no question that had the Orthodox church not been there preserving the culture, the language and the national feeling, who knows what would have happened during this period from roughly 1350 AD until 1913, when Thessaloniki and the rest of Greek Macedonia and Western Thrace were transferred to Greece. That is a long time. Large parts of northern Greece were not free until the latter part of the 19th century. I can understand why the Church occupies the place it does but it creates a lot of problems for Greece today as this country strives to modernize and join the European Union and the outside world. I hate to think what our first report on the observation of religious liberty in Greece is going to be like. We are going to have to describe Greece as a country in which non-Greek Orthodox churches are subjected to substantial discrimination.

Q: I was there when the Mormons were trying to do something without a lot of success and article one of the constitution stated that the Orthodox church was the official religion and thou shalt not proselytize.

NILES: It is still there. It hasn't changed a bit. Maybe the words have changed a bit but the law is the same. Religious groups such as the Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, and Baptists that proselytize have a difficult time. The Catholic Church has an uneasy relationship with the Greek state. There are pockets of Catholics in Greece. For example, the Ionian Islands which were never occupied by the Turks and were Venetian until the French seized them 1801, and then the British had them until the 1854 when Queen Victoria gave them to the Greeks. There are Catholics on some of the Aegean islands as well. Rhodes has some Catholics, as does Chios. You probably did not realize that Christopher Columbus was Greek. Some Greeks claim that he

was born on Chios, which was a Genoese colony until 1527, there is no question that he lived there for a while before he left Italy to go to Spain. When I visited Chios, the people told me that one of them had discovered America.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover?

NIELSEN: I don't think so. I left Athens on September 27, 1997. I spent a year as Vice President of the National Defense University at Fort McNair and was then retired.

BARBARA H. NIELSEN
Cultural Affairs Officer
Athens (1999-2001)

Barbara H. Nielsen was born in New York in 1949. She attended Middlebury College, Indiana University, and Yale University. She has also served in the Peace Corps in Katmandu from 1972 to 1974. Her career has included positions in Montevideo, Tegucigalpa, Dakar, Santiago, Algiers, Stockholm, and Athens. Ms. Nielsen was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on December 16, 2004.

Q: So we're talking about '99. You went to Greece for how long?

NIELSEN: For two years.

Q: So to 2001. I assume you went to Athens.

NIELSEN: Right.

Q: As public affairs officer?

NIELSEN: I was cultural affairs officer.

Q: This was a difficult time with the Greeks.

NIELSEN: Yes. Probably most eras have been difficult with the Greeks, but this was no exception. We were engaged in the former Yugoslavia, bombing in Kosovo, and this was not a popular policy in Greece. The government was not much in favor of it either, but in particular the press were quite anti. So the usual level of anti-American demonstrations was ratcheted up to a pretty significant level.

Q: Who was your ambassador?

NIELSEN: Nicholas Burns.

Q: So he was one of our top diplomats.

NIELSEN: That's right.

Q: How did he work with the public diplomacy side of things?

NIELSEN: He was very interested in public diplomacy. Of course, as someone who had been press spokesman, he knew a lot about it and he knew how he wanted to conduct his public diplomacy, so he set the tone.

Q: As cultural affairs officer, what sort of things were you doing in Greece?

NIELSEN: We have an ongoing annual American studies seminar which is a very useful event because the universities, though they're longstanding, don't really teach, at least not as a separate entity, U.S. literature, history or political science, so there's a gap there. I think the two week-long American studies course that is offered is an important contribution to that. We also do the typical seminars on other issues. We did one, for example, on biotechnology at the time that Europe was voicing great skepticism about biotech foods. Of course, our position is that they're safe and we would like to export them, so there was a need to try to educate the public to the science involved in this field.

In the area of American politics, we had elections coming up. I was there at the time of the 2000 elections, so we had a number of programs that were designed to help the Greek media and Greeks know what the issues were in the U.S. at that time.

There is also a small but significant number of American universities in Greece. This is kind of a phenomenon because the Greek constitution does not allow private universities. One of our goals was to convince the Greeks that maybe there could be a way to expand their public university system to embrace these private universities, which happen to be American universities. We felt that they offered an American-style education which was particularly strong in business and in technology, areas where traditionally the Greek universities were not so interested. That was another main focus of our activity.

We did some cultural events. Of course, Greece is quite prominent in theater and in the arts, so we could take advantage of that.

Q: How did you find the Greek government response to trying to move American style education in at some level, business training or this sort of thing? Any luck while you were there?

NIELSEN: I can't say that we cracked this very knotty issue of allowing private education in Greece. The Greek constitution expressly forbids it. Of course, there is a way to amend the constitution, but that was difficult and while in practice these universities were thriving because the Greeks recognized the value of attending them and they sent their sons and daughters, the formal recognition is something that has not yet been achieved. I left in 2001. It's still a pending issue. It was an issue of concern well before I got there. I think it's going to go on.

Q: I was there in the early 1970s with the colonels. My wife was involved with a small private

international school. It survived, but I think it was illegal. Like so many of those things, they just sort of slipped under the radar.

NIELSEN: What was the name of it?

Q: I think it was the Hellenic International School or something. It's merged into something else which merged into something else.

NIELSEN: And it was providing post-secondary education?

Q: It was providing high school education for basically foreign students. Some Greek-Americans sent their kids there, too.

NIELSEN: It was English medium?

Q: Yes.

NIELSEN: And patterned after a U.S.-style education. Of course, there is an American school there.

Q: Yes. This is a Department of Defense school.

NIELSEN: Initially it would have been. When you were there, the bases were still operating.

Q: The bases were still operating, but the school was separate and the kids were being sent there.

NIELSEN: Right, and funding probably was heavily coming from DOD. With the closing of the bases, the school remained and still remains, though it was suffering. There were many fewer American kids to go there. But it is one of the schools that the embassy sent its kids to.

Q: How bad was the anti-American hostility while you were there?

NIELSEN: We used to say that there are no more than 10% of Greeks who are really anti-American. That 10% can make a lot of noise. They can stir up demonstrations. They can write lots of editorials and so on. But you would not really feel that you were in a hostile environment. As an American diplomat, we found that by and large it was reasonably pleasant to deal with the Greeks. There may be obstacles, but they weren't anti-American obstacles. They were just procedural obstacles where the system was very difficult to get things done. The ministries were very inefficient and largely ineffectual, but that wasn't necessarily a reflection of anti-Americanism.

Q: It was a reflection of Greece.

NIELSEN: That's right. Greek reality, with a long tradition of a bureaucracy that just really doesn't move. The Greeks are aware of that, of course.

Q: Did you run afoul of the Greek Orthodox Church at all in the cultural affairs field?

NIELSEN: Yes, the Greek Orthodox Church took a vocal stance in favor of the brother Serbs, which was not our view of the war in Serbia. They were definitely partisan. One would like to think that the church was a force for peace and reconciliation. I'm not sure I would say that about the Greek Orthodox Church. They were pretty obscurantist.

Q: The Serb Orthodox Church is also. I served a long time both in Greece and in Yugoslavia. The Orthodox churches there were at the heart of the nationalism and the nastiness that turned into close to genocide.

NIELSEN: That's right. Surprisingly, and it should be surprising, if you have a faith-based organization, they shouldn't be into genocide despite the fact that they are very nationalistic. Indeed, the Greek Orthodox Church was supremely nationalistic. But they should see a contradiction between supporting genocide and professing Christianity. The Greek Church was clearly very nationalistic and not an easy interlocutor in any event.

Q: Did it impact on any of your cultural events?

NIELSEN: Not very directly, I don't believe. The Greeks, and certainly the ones we were working with, while they were culturally Orthodox, they were not practicing their religion very much. When the arch-patriarch would speak, he would command an audience, but, on a daily basis, the Greeks were not hanging on the word of the church. They were going about their secular business pretty much. Was that the case when you were there as well?

Q: When I was there, the Greek bishops forbade bathing of women and men in the same lake or something like that, and they were against a magician's show. But nobody paid much attention to it.

NIELSEN: And of course, bathing in a lake doesn't happen very much. You went out to the sea. I guess you could always segregate the beaches.

Q: This was up north near Larissa, where there was a lake or something.

NIELSEN: Yes, well, they have evolved some.

Q: On the cultural side, did you get involved in trying to explain the election of 2002, which dragged on and on because of the Florida vote and so on?

NIELSEN: Oh, yes, that was a topic. We ended up not having the traditional election night program. That turned out to be a good thing because election night just went on for a month. But we did make a valiant effort to make people aware of what was happening and to try to explain that it really wasn't a crisis, even though it was being portrayed as a crisis worldwide. People in America were going about their lives pretty much as they had been before. Yes, they did want to get it settled, but at least it really didn't provoke a constitutional crisis or a crisis in fact. It makes

you examine our system more closely. Trying to justify the Electoral College is not very easy. It doesn't make a lot of sense actually, except as a historical artifact, but it doesn't seem as though it's going to be changing any time soon.

Q: Did the Greek-American community play any role in what you were doing?

NIELSEN: They were a big presence. They were very well organized, very enthusiastic. They would send their delegations frequently to visit and the ambassador was very welcoming to them and definitely felt that we should partner with the Greek-Americans whenever possible. We did do that. They are certainly a force. The Greek Diaspora is as large as the population of Greece.

Q: Did you get involved in the name of Macedonia? Or was this something you tried to avoid?

NIELSEN: The worst of that had already taken place by the time I got there. But, yes, we in our Washington files, in our daily bulletins and so on, didn't always use the full name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia [FYROM]. Technically, that was the correct name, but occasionally you would see official pronouncements from Colin Powell... I can recall sending someone something under my signature, a monthly bulletin or something, and getting a letter back from someone who said, "Oh, since when has the United States gone on record as supporting Macedonia in its claim to use our name?" It was because we had sent something that, instead of referring to FYROM used "The Republic of Macedonia" most probably. I think the Greeks were becoming more culturally aware of their neighbor to the north. They're just going to have to accept that there's going to be a country by the name of Macedonia. The rest of the world really didn't much care.

Q: Yes.

ALPHONSE F. LA PORTA
Political Advisor to Commander of NATO forces in Southern Region
Naples, Italy (2000-2003)

Ambassador La Porta was born and raised in New York and educated at Georgetown and New York Universities. After serving in the US Army, he joined the Foreign Service in 1965. During his career the ambassador had several assignments in Washington in the personnel and administrative field. His foreign assignments include Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, New Zealand, where he served as Deputy Chief of Mission, and Naples, Italy. In 1997 he was named Ambassador to Mongolia, where he served until 2000. Ambassador La Porta was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: Let's talk before we move to the broader picture, the squabbling NATO allies.

LA PORTA: Not having served in Athens, but having served in Turkey, one of the things we always used to say is don't forget that hysteria is a Greek word.

Q: I'll agree with you.

LA PORTA: From the NATO command standpoint you're exactly right, whether it was commanders like Admiral Crowe or more recent ones, you could always count on these two allies behaving badly and consuming inordinate amounts of time of very senior people in NATO. The only, let me put it this way, I think there are a few good ways of getting beyond the history of challenge and response, like two teenagers who continually are needling each other and cannot find it possible to behave in a civil way toward each other. These two countries still have not grown out of their adolescence in the modern era.

One of the things that I felt that was consequential in terms of NATO attitudes vis-à-vis both Greece and Turkey was really developments in Afghanistan, Iraq and in other places in the Middle East. I argued both in Naples and in Brussels, and even in Washington, that it was time for NATO to adopt a mature alliance policy on the two rivals. This couldn't be done at the regional command level, but needs to be said to both Greece and Turkey, look, we've got more important business than to tend to your disputes over air space, ostensible rearming of one or another Greek island off the coast of Turkey, or some other dispute concerning transit of ships or aircraft. Until you guys figure out that you really want to adopt a more mature approach – mature probably wasn't the word we want to use but something like that – then NATO is not going to consider using any of the locations in your countries for exercises, training or other purposes. In other words, if they are not willing to fulfill their obligations as allies, then some of the political and tangible benefits can be withdrawn or held in abeyance.

They did begin to get a little of that message, especially as the Iraq conflict was warming up. The Greeks found ways to distinguish themselves from the Turks over develop the “second front” in Northern Iraq and moving supplies and forces through Turkish territory. The Greeks decided to play ball and put a lot of the command and control arguments behind them. They allowed NATO forces to do some training in Greek waters and to use the bases in Crete for counter terrorism operations and for maritime interdiction. We were able to make very good use of those training opportunities.

Q: Maritime interdiction was a major naval counter-terrorism program in the wake of 9/11. Could you briefly describe the program and what success it might have had?

LA PORTA: For NATO, maritime interdiction and surveillance in the Mediterranean were call Operation Endeavour. It had two parts: providing surveillance and security for U.S. and allied ships passing through the Strait of Gibraltar and other tight waterways; and detecting and stopping ships, mainly in the eastern Mediterranean, suspected of carrying contraband such as missile parts, things that could be used to develop nuclear and biological weapons, and the like. Operation Endeavour was highly successful, secured wide support in NATO and was a highly visible counter-terrorism deterrent – to the extent that the French showed up and volunteered ships for it.

Q: Souda Bay and other places. For a long time there had been very good training and then they under the socialist government.

LA PORTA: Socialist government, Papadopoulos' son, Nikos Papadopoulos.

Q: What about while you were there was Greece causing any problems vis-à-vis Macedonia or the former Republic of Macedonia?

LA PORTA: FYROM, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. When you referred to it in NATO the parlance you had to use those words by Greek insistence; in international fora they were known as FYROM rather than simply Macedonia. Yes, the Greeks never let an opportunity go by when they didn't remind you of their complaint with the Macedonians about the name of their country. There again it's a matter of let's grow up rather than a question of false nationalistic pride, pure and simple. In FYROM/Macedonia today you have some of the best preserved Greek Orthodox churches, ruins and artifacts. In fact there were a considerable number of Macedonian pieces in the series of exhibitions on Orthodox religion that was at the New York Metropolitan Museum last year. The things there are truly remarkable and the government in Skopje has taken great pains to preserve them.

End of reader