Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

STANLEY ZUCKERMAN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Today is 26 July, 2004. This is an interview with Stanley Zuckerman. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. You do go by Stan?

ZUCKERMAN: Yes.

Q: Okay, to begin with, when and where were you born?

ZUCKERMAN: I was born in Brooklyn, New York September 7, 1933.

Q: Right in time for the depression.

ZUCKERMAN: I arrived with the depression and Hitler's rise to power. And Roosevelt's as well, and only a couple of months before the end of prohibition, an event my father used to say was the real secret to Roosevelt's popularity.

Q: Well, Stan, let's get a little bit about your background. Starting first on your father's side. Where do the Zuckermans come from and what do you know about them?

ZUCKERMAN: I don't know a great deal about my forebears on either side. My father's father and mother came from Hungary in about 1880. My grandfather came first, and she arrived later. He was poor and ill and died young of lung disease. His birth certificate indicates that his parents, Herman Zuckerman and Tillie Richards, were also from Hungary. Unfortunately the census doesn't indicate what city people are from. One of the things on my list to do is discover more about my family history. On my mother's side, her parents on both sides came from somewhere in Russia to New York from somewhere in the Russian pale of settlement, I think around Minsk, now capital of Belarus.

Q: Both families were Jewish.

ZUCKERMAN: Jewish on both sides, yes.

Q: What were your grandparents doing, both sides as far as they all settled in the New York area?

ZUCKERMAN: My father's father was described as a tinsmith. I think he was pretty much a door to door peddler on the lower east side who would repair pots and pans.

Q: He probably had scissors.

ZUCKERMAN: Clicking scissors yes. He had some sort of cart. My father describes the family as being very poor. His father died in his early 40's and my father left school at the age of 15 or 16 to support the family. He described a childhood in which he would fight other kids for lumps of coal that fell off the East River barges when they were being unloaded onto trucks, sort of a Dickensian youth. But somehow he made his way into the textile business. He was never very successful as a salesman. My mother's side was more substantial. Her father was a tailor who, I am told by uncles, was quite good at his trade. They say the son wants to remember what the father wants to forget, and so I never got much out of my parents, but I did get some out of collateral relatives.

My mother's father, Meyer Rosenberg, was drafted into the Russian army, which meant 25 years and very likely death before discharge. If you returned from it you got a special seat in the synagogue near the Eastern wall. Fortunately he was working in some sort of protected position with an officer for whom he served as a batman and tailor. But the officer was transferred, my Uncle Al told me, and my grandfather was sent to a Cossack regiment where they beat him nightly for exercise. He decided to leave the Czar's army. His brother was going to London. He gave him his money, stole a horse and left Russia. This may be apocryphal, I don't know, but apparently there was a long trail from London to South Africa to Mexico to New York, searching for his brother with his money. He found his brother in New York, but the money was gone, but there he was in New York. He got a position with one of the boutique department stores. I believe it was either Henri Bendel or Bergdorf Goodman, one of those two. He raised a family of five in some comfort. He then left New York City to go to Florida to open a business in Jacksonville. The closest I have been able to determine as to why he and his wife, my maternal grandmother Ida Blum, went to Jacksonville was that my mother had a cousin named Celia Safer, and there was a Rabbi Safer in Jacksonville as well as a substantial Safer family. That is probably why he and his wife ended up there, opened a ladies' garment business, and made a living. But he fell ilhe had diabetes - and wanted my mother, who was the oldest of five children - two boys and three girls - to come with my father to run the business. My mother was also in textile sales. But my father didn't want to leave New York, which to him meant the known world, and so my mother's sister and brother went down, took over the business, quarreled and split into a men's wear store and a women's wear store, and both prospered. When my father died in 1962, my sister and I calculated that he had been outside of the city limits of New York four times in his life of 72 years. He couldn't imagine why anyone would want to be anywhere else at any time.

Q: Where had your mother and father met?

ZUCKERMAN: In New York.

Q: In the textile business essentially?

ZUCKERMAN: I really don't know how they met. They both were kids on the lower east side. But as my maternal grandfather prospered, my mother's family moved first to Harlem and then to the Bronx. A photo I have of her with a family friend makes it look almost rural in those days. She began to teach at the Henry Street Settlement on the lower East Side, teaching immigrant girls how to sew and how to design. My parents must have met somewhere in that period and in that place.

Q: Well then what was it like growing up for you as a kid, growing up in New York? Was it Brooklyn?

ZUCKERMAN: Yes. In Brooklyn. It was a very nice place to grow up. We lived in the south of the Borough, not far from Coney Island, in an area called Gravesend Bay, which was within the Bensonhurst part of Brooklyn. We had an apartment on the fifth floor of a six story building just two blocks from Lower New York Bay, and I loved to watch from my parents' bedroom window the great ships passing through the Bay on their way to Europthe Queen Mary, the Normandy, and others. We lived on Bay Parkway, which was quite green, and the area was very heavily made up of immigrant or first generation Jews and Italians. Before I left to study in Wisconsin I thought that was all there were, Jews and Italians. Not literally, but those were my friends. Our sports clubwe played basketball and baseball - were a mixture of Jews and Italians.

Q: How did the mix go?

ZUCKERMAN: It worked pretty well. Emotionally I think, Jews and Italians are very similar. But of course there were religious differences. I remember incidents of anti Semitism. There was some difference, some economic difference, not total, but the Jewish kids tended to come from lowemiddle or middle class families. The Italian kids tended to come from working class families, probably because their parents were more often immigrants. But most of my friends, Jewish or Italian, went on to college and became businessmen or professionals.

Q: How Jewish were you in the home?

ZUCKERMAN: We were strongly identifying Jews, but not observant. On the High Holidays, Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, we went to the synagogue, but didn't attend weekly services. It was a requirement that I be bar mitzvahed, the Jewish form of confirmation, which traditionally meant you had attained manhood and could fully participate in the weekly services. That meant going to Hebrew school every day for an hour after going to public school, which was a serious encroachment on my free time. When you were bar mitzvahed, once you were at the age of thirteen, and had gone through the ceremony, gone through the studies that enabled you to recite the prayers and make your parents proud of you, and have an enormous celebration in your honor, nobody cared if you broke open another prayer book. Yet, the family did not send me to a reform temple to study, because that was considered too non-traditional since all the prayers were in English. It wasn't thought of as being truly Jewish, since it lacked the traditional Hebrew prayers. And yet as I've noted, their own observance was very relaxed, although all of the rituals of life, of birth, of circumcision, of going through bar mitzvah, of marriage, of death were observed. All of these were done in a religious context.

Q: The Hasidic sects, were they around?

ZUCKERMAN: Not there, not in my part of Brooklyn, no. There were Hasidic communities in other parts of Brooklyn, in Boro Park, near Williamsburg, and later in the Ocean Parkway area, but they were rarely in view in Bensonhurst. The only ones we saw were old men who would walk around in Hasidic dress with rolled up newspapers crying out, "Buy old clothes." They bought used clothing and I have no idea what they did with it.

Q: As a family, did you have brothers and sisters?

ZUCKERMAN: I had a sister who much later in life, after my parents had died, discovered when she applied for a passport that she had been adopted. We pieced together what had happened. My mother had developed diabetes in the gestational period with my first sibling, and the baby was stillborn. My mother was an extremely strong-willed woman, and we could imagine her saying, "I came here to have a baby, and I am not leaving without one." So she came home, and the story was told to the neighbors that my sister, Myrna, was in an incubator. She was very small at birth, and she would be in an incubator for a month or more before she came home. Lo and behold a month and a half later, my mother brought home a baby girl who my sister, before she died at too early an age, determined had been borne by a nurse. The adoption was arranged by a doctor who may or may not have been the father. The baby was born and delivered to my mother, and raised with no distinction between the two of us, although she had blond hair and blue eyes. But one of my mother's sisters was blond, and there were redheads as well on both sides of the family. After she had discovered that she had been adopted, we became closer than ever before, and remained so until her death. I remain close to her children and grandchildren, who live in Dallas.

Q: Well what about family. What did you discuss around the dinner table?

ZUCKERMAN: My parents were not highly educated people but were very street wise.. In their generation, as children of immigrants, it was expected that you would begin work after finishing the eighth grade. But they were very capable in dealing with the world, particularly of the rough and tumble garment district of New York, where they both worked. They were comparatively well informed. They read several newspapers a day. It was a 45 minute subway ride to downtown Manhattan, and the Times or Herald Tribune was morning reading and the New York Post and Journal-American were brought home at night. I grew up in a household where there were really two or three Gods. In addition to the one you worshipped there was President Franklin Roosevelt and heavyweight champion Joe Louis. They were sort of fixed stars, unmoving and immovable - permanent fixtures in our lives. I remember being in Hebrew school on the afternoon that President Roosevelt died. One member of the class was acting up and our teacher, a rather stern woman, kicked him out of the class. She said, "Go stand on the street corner until you learn how to behave," and continued the class without him. Then he burst in and said, "Everybody in the street is saying Roosevelt died." The teacher responded: "That's impossible." That's how it seemed to all of us.

Q: Was your family involved at all in the left, the socialist movement? The Vorwarts?

ZUCKERMAN: No. They were reliable Democratic voters.

Q: You know I mean this is very much an element of that era.

ZUCKERMAN: They were very cynical about the Communists. Of course the Communists were very active and the left was very active in the textile industry.

Q: Yes. Dubinsky was...

ZUCKERMAN: I met David Dubinsky years later when I was a labor reporter for the Milwaukee Journal. He always came out of AFL-CIO Executive Council meetings with a fist full of theater tickets for the out of town reporters. My parents were sales people and not unionized, but they supported the work the unions did in improving conditions for the people who were involved in productiothe people who sewed and pressed and depended on hourly wages. But they thought the Communists sought to exploit them; they were outspokenly opposed to Vito Marcantonio, a Communist congressman of that period. At one point I was sent to study Yiddish in an organization called the Arbeiter Rink, The Workmen's Circle, which was a Yiddish socialist institution. My parents didn't realize that. They thought I should learn some Yiddish, but I think the fact that they took me out of the school wasn't necessarily because they thought I would be indoctrinated, but because the realized that it would endanger their privacy. Yiddish was their private language that they used when they wanted to discuss things they didn't want my sister and me to understand.

Q: A lot of us were cut off at the knees in language learning by parents. But I think mine is my mother used to speak German that way.

ZUCKERMAN: There was political talk at times but of an elemental nature. They had very fixed ideas about who was for the working man and who was for the Jews. Despite what we now know about Roosevelt's resistance to Jewish immigration before World War II and to bombing the rail lines leading to the death camps, there was this feeling that Roosevelt protected the Jews, which was sort of the touchstone of politics in New York.

Q: How about Mrs. Roosevelt? Was she influential?

ZUCKERMAN: She was not particularly influential at that point. I think her focus was more on other problems in the country, on the conditions in the mines and of the suffering in the countryside.

Q: Mayor LaGuardia...

ZUCKERMAN: Oh yes, Mayor LaGuardia was a great figure. I remember him when he read the comics to us during the newspaper strike. Indeed I remember him being constantly in the news. He would show up at every major fire. He was the perfect political figure in New York City. His father was Italian and his mother was Jewish, and he spoke Yiddish as well as he spoke Italian at political rallies.

Q: Well as a kid you went to public school.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, to public schools from elementary through high school.

Q: In elementary school, how were you as a student? How did you like school?

ZUCKERMAN: I was pretty good. We were very fortunate in those days. It was still the depression, the latter days of the depression going into the recovery that was induced by the war. The elementary school that I went to was run by Irish ladies, most of them unmarried. They were very strict, but they were very warm. I remember an incident that will give you a little flavor of the interplay between the Jewish elementary school students and the Irish teachers. I had a close friend who was on our team, the Panthers Social Athletic Club, Jordy Berkowitz who became very successful in the advertising business in Miami. Jordy was the class artist. The 5th grade teacher, a very nice Irish lady names Mrs. Klages, asked him to draw a Christmas scene on the blackboard at the rear of the classroom with pastel chalk. Over a period of several days, he created a wonderful scene of a fireplace with a blazing fire in it and stockings and candy canes hanging from the mantle. The teacher said, "Jordan, that is beautiful, but it needs some holly." Jordy went back to the blackboard and drew for awhile and then stepped away to display what he had done. And all the Jewish kids burst out laughing. The Italian kids and the Irish teacher looked perplexed because Jordy had drawn loaves of bread. We pronounced Challah - the traditional twisted loaves of Jewish bread made with eggs - "holly", like the decorative plant. I have never forgotten it. I do not see Jordy often, but there was a large high school reunion in Florida I went to last year and everybody who had been in that elementary school class remembered that story.

I am in contact now, because of the internet, with some of the people I went to school with as early as kindergarten. We went through school together through elementary school and into junior high school, which was in a different neighborhood and led us to broaden our social horizons. But our group still stayed in touch even through high school. By the time we got to junior high school, but to an even greater extent in high school, many of our teachers were highly educated, a number of them Jewish, who had to compete against others with MAs or even PhDs to get jobs teaching in the New York City school system during the depression. My English teacher had a Ph.D. and was the editor of a number of anthologies of short stories that were used in schools across the country. My journalism teacher, who oversaw our work on the Lafayette News, the high school weekly, published short stories in some leading magazines. In those days it was possible to get a good education in the public schools of New York. There were some tough kids in the schools but they were kept relatively isolated. They were sort of put in corners by tough teachers who would put them in the back of the room and knock their heads against the blackboard if they acted up. There weren't large roving packs of gangs which intimidated other students in the school. These days I understand that the high school I went to is a battleground, with police on permanent duty in the cafeteria.

Q: Well let's start in grammar, elementary school. What were your favorite subjects?

ZUCKERMAN: I read very early. I think I read before I went to school. My sister was a year or a year and a half ahead of me, and I read the books she brought home along with her. I remember that somehow my father managed to register me a little late in school the year after kindergarten. The classes were coded into three divisions, with first grade separated into divisions 1, 2, and three, with class one reserved for the kids who seemed, from whatever could be perceived from their behavior in kindergarten, to be the brightest, class two for the slowest kids, and class three for the average students. Because I was registered late I was put in class two, with some tough kids, but moved into class one because I could already read. I don't think it was an intellectual hot house by any means, but there were bright kids in the class. Many of them did well, and not necessarily the brightest ones. Some of the kids with whom I went to school, particularly in high school, have done spectacularly well despite having been very poor students. Larry King was Larry Zeiger when I knew him. I don't think he ever really finished high school, but he may have. He showed up in one of the yearbooks where there was a section for people who had to take extra courses and finished after their class. But some did very well. Out of that mix of pretty much first generation and second generation kids, out came lawyers and accountants and professionals and scientists and businessmen of all sorts. One thing they had was ambition; it was drummed into all of us that you had to go further than your parents, who were working hard to try to give you an easier and better life than their own.

Q: How about in books? Any particular kinds of books particularly grabbed you, authors?

ZUCKERMAN: My first memories were of a series of books about twins from different countrieMexican twins, Eskimo twins, French twins. They provided my introduction to reading. Also, at one poinperhaps when I was a couple of years older, some friends of the family gave me the first volume of an encyclopedia, covering the letter A, which I read all the way through and decided I would become an Anthropologist. But the war and the newspapers provided my introduction to geography. I was very concentrated on the war, and followed its progress as closely as I followed the progress, or lack thereof, of the Brooklyn Dodgers. I could identify every plane in the U.S. Air Force when I was eight or nine.

Q: You learned the silhouettes and...

ZUCKERMAN: Every one of them, the twin-fuselaged P-38, the British Spitfire, the Mustang. I loved them all, and, with little success, tried to assemble the balsam wood models that came in kits. I was all thumbs and there was glue all over my desk. We had a nursemaid, because my parents both worked, and New York was overrun with young girls from the coal mining towns of Pennsylvania looking for a way to stay alive by looking for live-in jobs. I don't know how we all lived in a two bedroom apartment. There were my parents, my sister and I and Marcia Kamerovsky from Nanty Glo, Pennsylvania, who was a wonderful woman. She was only a young girl herself, but she took part in a big chunk of our childhood. Her father had lost an arm in a mining accident and was on welfare. Marcia listened to the battle for Moscow with us on the radio, and explained why it was important. Before the war ended, her boyfriend was discharged from the army. He was from Detroit, and she left to marry him and settled down there.

Afterwards we had a string of nursemaids, one of whom was a very strong German woman who would listen to Hitler's speeches on a shortwave radio, and told me he loved small children. I told my parents about that and she was out of the house the next day. I remember exactly what I was doing on D-Day, and cheered on the troops as if it were a football game as Europe was gradually liberated. Much of my early reading was in photo books that depicted the suffering of children in Eastern Europe, although the reality of the destruction of European Jewry was not really known to us until much later in the war. When we saw the photos of the death camps, it was an unforgettable shock.

Q: Well one of the things I think for all of us that get ended up in the foreign service of that era was the fact that boy did we learn geography. You knew where Guadalcanal was, Iwo Jima, El Alamein, Rostov.

ZUCKERMAN: That is exactly right. The map, the daily map of the front lines depicting the point of our advance; it was like a football game. Football was really some sort of metaphor for war because of that presence of a front line. All of this was just terribly important to me. I remember I decided I wanted to be an engineer because I reasoned that there was so much destruction that there was going to be a need for a great deal of construction when the war was over. My parents couldn't afford what I wanted, which was really an elaborate Erector set. But a man living on our floor (we lived in a six-story apartment house), was in critical condition and somehow we were able to take in members of the family who had come to help. They were sleeping in our living room going through this terrible thing. Then I believe the mother became sick and the father then died, so it was an awful period for them. When they left, when it was all over, they gave me this wonderful Erector set. I tried to follow the complicated directions and put all of its many parts together, but discovered that whatever my talents were, they were not in the field of mechanics. I had a friend named Leonard Malamud who also wanted to be an engineer, so I invited him over to help. And he put the most wonderful thing together, managing to get the fractional electric motor the set came with to run the elaborate Ferris wheel he had built. So, to my parents' horror, I gave him that expensive Erector set. I decided I would be a journalist.

Q: Where did you go to high school?

ZUCKERMAN: Lafayette High School in Brooklyn. It was a high school constructed during the La Guardia period, down towards Coney Island, drawing students from neighborhoods that were predominantly Jewish and others that were predominately Italian, even though there was an overlap throughout both areas. The school was surrounded by fields overgrown by weeds, although some were not as empty as others. There were vegetable plots here and there, and marijuana growing in one famous field. The school was fairly large, between two and three thousand students. Because of the Italian kids, we had the best soccer team in New York City. We always won the soccer championships. I was editor of the yearbook and assistant editor of the newspaper, The Lafayette News. I wasn't a leading scholar, but did well, well enough to get accepted into what was then a fairly selective school, Brooklyn College, where acceptance depended not only on grades and performance on the state-wide Regents exams, but also on the results of a demanding entrance exam. But I had decided I really wanted to leave New York and see something of the country other than what I saw on a few visits to relatives in Florida and to upstate New York vacations.

Q: Well in high school, how about dating. Were you dating much there?

ZUCKERMAN: Oh yes. Social life was organized at that time around what were called "social-athletic clubs". They were not gangs; we played basketball and softball, sometimes in organized leagues. We played in both the YMCA and the Jewish Community House, since our team was made up of both Italian and Jewish kids. And we also had parties. For some reason we were considered a desirable bunch, so after our team meetings in the apartment of one of the more cooperative parents, we invited some of our female supporters to join us in a dancing party. So we were socially active, but going steady didn't really occur until later, in high school. The social athletic clubs were more a junior high school phenomenon that carried over into high school.

Q: How about areas in Brooklyn? Were there for a Jewish boy no go areas and that sort of thing?

ZUCKERMAN: No, not really, although we didn't really circulate outside of the Bensonhurst area of Brooklyn, except to go to Ebbets Field to see the Dodgers play, to Coney Island to swim or to Manhattan. Brooklyn's population was then three million, and was the fourth largest city in the US before it became a borough of New York City. Most people who live in Brooklyn know their corner of Brooklyn and they know Manhattan. I don't know anyone who knew all of the neighborhoods of Brooklyn. It was complex and ever-changing, and still is.

Q: How about Coney Island? Did you get down there?

ZUCKERMAN: Oh yes, all the time. My friends and I had a great routine during the hot summer days. We had trolley cars then in New York, and the kids' fare was three cents. It was perhaps 15 or 20 minutes from my house to Coney Island on the trolley. As young as 10 or 11, we would get on a trolley car very early in the morning, 7 a.m. or so, pay our three cents, get down to the beach, carrying with us shopping bags. We would arrive before the beach was crowded, and began to dig up soda pop bottles left over from the beach parties the day before and not yet picked up by machines that gathered them. They earned us two cents a bottle in deposits when we returned them to the boardwalk shops. We could gather enough for a day at the beach, which included not just swimming in the ocean but a Nathan's hot dog or hamburger or root beer or French fries, and a couple of rides. If we overspent and didn't have the three cents to get back, we could always tell a policeman that we had spent our money or lost it on the beach. He would take us over to the trolley car and tell the conductor "take these kids home". Those days were wonderful.

Q: I remember the large Canada Dry ginger ale bottles, five cents. I used to go around the neighborhood and ring doorbells and ask.

ZUCKERMAN: During the war of course, there were school projects. There weren't many aluminum cans; most cans were made of tin. We collected them and turned them in for the war effort. We were assured we were helping to beat Hitler. They also had us weaving Afghan quilts in the classroom. We all had little square metal looms, and we would sit there busily making five or six inch squares of woven wool that were then assembled by some higher power into blankets. I don't know where they were sent or what happened to them. But we really learned how to weave, an important skill I haven't put to use in the past 60-odd years.

Q: Well what were you pointed toward? I mean was it accepted at the time that you were going to go to college?

ZUCKERMAN: Oh yes. Never any question. I think it was probably some time in junior high school it became clear that writing was my real skill. I thought I would be a sports writer. I loved sports. I followed baseball very closely. The Brooklyn Dodgers were still alive and still one of the greatest baseball teams of all time, not because of their record, but because of the intensity of feeling for them by their fans. The day they left Brooklyn was traumatic. I was not in Brooklyn any more, but I gave up following the scores. For a long time after they stole away to California I simply divorced baseball. The owner of the Dodgers who moved them to Los Angeles was Walter O'Malley. One of the New York sportswriters, maybe it was Jimmy Cannon, wrote at the time that "the three worst men of the 20th Century were Hitler, Stalin and Walter O'Malley."

Q: Let's see, the war was over. You were about 12, so a couple of years later Israel was born. How did Israel play, and how about the plight of the Jews. How much were you picking up about that?

ZUCKERMAN: The plight of the Jews became clear when the word started seeping out. Everybody knew, of course, that the Nazi's despised the Jews and were oppressing them, and New York City and Brooklyn were full of refugees who had gotten out of Europe before it was too late, although the full scale of the Holocaust was not apparent in the early years of the war. There were many refugees, not just downtown, but even in my apartment house. These were people who left before the war started, but who had lost contact with their families. I remember there was a family that had come in the late 1920's whose sons were in the army. They couldn't read the letters their sons sent them because they could read only Yiddish. They would come and ask my mother to read the letter to them. As far as Israel was concerned, our family wasn't Zionists, and had no intention of emigrating. My parents were American born, so that the creation of Israel was hailed as something that would help the survivors of the Holocaust. But nobody in my extended family thought of emigrating to Israel. They were Americans.

Q: Well you would be getting ready to get out of high school and graduate...

ZUCKERMAN: I graduated early, at 16.

Q: So that was '49?

ZUCKERMAN: June of 1950.

Q: '50. What happened?

ZUCKERMAN: Well I had already been accepted at Brooklyn College, but I had told my parents that I wanted to study elsewhere and learn about another part of the country. Oh I learned something about upstate New York because we used to summer in the Catskill Mountains, in a town called Callicoon Center near the Pennsylvania border, a tiny little town. We stayed at a farm that had been converted into a small resort. Well it was still a working farm, but the wife of the farmer had taken in some borders in their house and then they had built some additional large cottages. They had taken a stream, a mud stream, and made a concrete a pool out of it. The stream ran in one end and out the other. They built a tennis court, and had rooms for about 70 people. The food was great; fresh farm food and freshly picked berries for breakfast. An uncle of mine discovered it. It was just a wonderful place. I spent every summer up there. There was a man, I guess I was in junior high school or the first years of high school, who I met who said, "Oh if you want to be a newspaperman you should go to the University of Wisconsin." Later, the family doctor spoke enthusiastically about my decision, extolling the progressive history of the state. Knowing little more than that about it, I absolutely decided I was going to go to the University of Wisconsin, and I did.

Q: Well before we move on to that, you are talking about your going in the Catskills. This of course was the heyday of the Borscht circuit.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes but this wasn't that kind of hotel.

Q: I know that, but I was wondering did you get in New York, any chance to sample the wares of the theater or the other stuff that was going on there?

ZUCKERMAN: Oh yes. The great popular entertainment form in New York in those days were the great movie theaters downtown - the Paramount, the Roxy, Loews, Radio City Music Hall - and they presented a feature film and a stage show, featuring some of the great entertainers of the dasuch well known artists as Frank Sinatra or Louis Prima. My sister and I would get on the subway and meet my parents downtown. ("Downtown" always meant Manhattan.) We would go to a restaurant and then to one of these shows. It was a great evening out. We also sometimes went to legitimate theater. I remember being taken to the Yiddish theater, although I didn't understand it, when I was studying at the Yiddish Workmen's Circle, the Second Avenue playhouse. I remember enjoying it enormously even though I could figure out what was going on only by the action rather than the language

Q: It was very hands-ish. Lots of, I mean the action was pretty explicit wasn't it?

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, except that some of these shows were quite complicated. I mean there were things going on, emotional tensions between people I couldn't figure out. I was sent to summer camp a couple of times, one of them a Jewish camp where Zionist songs were sung, Yiddish was taught and Israel was very much on their minds. But it didn't take.

Q: Well the University of Wisconsin. You were there form '50 to '54?

ZUCKERMAN: That's right.

Q: What, I mean this is I guess sort of your first time away from at least sort of in a different world wasn't it?

ZUCKERMAN: Not exactly. We went to Florida a few times. We had family there. I had two aunts and uncles in Jacksonville, so we were down there on several occasions. Both journeys were from North to South and back. I can't remember going westwards before I went to Wisconsin. I got on a train with a check for $300 in my pocket, about $20 in cash and the name of a Jewish tailor in Madison, Wisconsin, who would help Jewish boys find a place to live. I got off the train and went there. He sent me to the house of a furrier, who lived a long walk from the campus, and I stayed there during my freshman year for $5.00 a week.

Q: What was the University of Wisconsin like in those days?

ZUCKERMAN: Well it was very interesting. It was much smaller than it is now. There were 13,000 students. There were still a lot of prefabricated classrooms and Quonset huts that were set up to receive the large number of veterans going to school on the GI Bill.. I arrived in Madison on my 17th birthday but some of the people in my class were 23, 24, 25. Many of the veterans were already in graduate school, but even if you weren't in class with them you met them, and you were exposed to people who weren't the kind of students you would see in goofy films about "college days". They were serious people who had become older than their years, and they weren't wasting their time when they were preparing for the future. They were not there to fool around. That gave it, I think, a different atmosphere than it might have had, and I loved it. It was totally new to me. I met people who were very different than those I had grown up with, even though many were from New York or other places outside of Wisconsin. It had an enormous effect on in my life. I came to spend, on and off, ten years in Wisconsin, and still go back on vacations.

Q: Well what about, Wisconsin was sort of like a hotbed of radicalism wasn't it. I mean it went quite far back.

ZUCKERMAN: It was, compared to some places, a politically active campus, even though the 1950's are characterized as a period of political indifference. Madison was a rather "in your face" kind of liberalism. There were student protests against compulsory participation in the Reserve Officer Training Corps, and against Senator Joe McCarthy. I was the University editor of the Daily Cardinal, and we put out a newspaper five days a week. I went up to the little town of Sauk City with my roommate Richard Schickel, who became a noted movie critic, to cover the Joe Must Go meeting, which was an attempt to recall Senator Joe McCarthy. We were there to write about it, but a friend of ours who was a stringer photographer for the United Press, said, "Hey I need a photo," and he handed us this Joe Must Go bumper sticker. He took the photo, and the next day my sister called up. "What are you doing out there? What is happening to you?" The photo had appeared on the front page of the New York Daily News, at the time a Republican newspaper, and my family thought I'd stuck my neck out too far. So the 50's were not as dull as people now seem to think they were. We were very actively involved of course through the newspaper, and yet at a distance. In other words we, those of us working at the newspaper, could not be participants in the movement, although we felt deeply about it, and we were writing about it and editorializing every time there were signs of the university administration being intimidated by tail gunner Joe.

Q: Did the Korean War play any role?

ZUCKERMAN: Well we were deferred as long as we maintained our good standing at the university. I was deferred until I graduated but drafted immediately after getting out of school, still in the Korean War period. Even at the college paper, we were being bombarded with North Korean propaganda, and I still don't have the vaguest idea of where that material was coming from.

Q: How the hell?

ZUCKERMAN: In the mail, coming from North Korea somehow. We didn't use any, of course. There was no news in it, just heavy-handed propaganda. We papered the walls with it. The death of Stalin in 1953 had an enormous impact. There was one professor, a Polish professor of Russian, whose name was Sigmund Zavatsky, who I remember appeared on one of the many radio panel shows in which knowledgeable people discussed the impact of Stalin's death. WHA, the university's statewide radio station, claimed to be the oldest public radio station in the country. They were having panel show after panel show. What was going to happen? Zavatsky was the only person I ever heard in the entire country who said, "Watch Khrushchev. He is an in-fighter and some how or other he is going to take control."

But the Rosenberg casthe conviction of a married couple of spying for Russia and passing atomic secrets to hem - also had an enormous impact. The Labor Youth League (LYL) was an organization on campus with a few extremely active members, and it was as close an entity as there was to the Communist party. I remember trying to get people to counter the articles they kept writing for the Op Ed page. Our policy was that it was open to all students of all political views. Everyday we had a submission from a member of the LYL arguing that the Rosenbergs were innocent and should be spared the carrying out of their death sentence. We wrote our own editorials, but certainly refused to make the case the unique story of interest during that long and troubled period. Our own view was that guilty or not, the death sentence for a couple who had two young children was not warranted, and justice could just as well have been served by life sentences. But we also wanted other views, and not many people wanted to express them. I think most people felt they couldn't determine what the facts were. It was too complicated. They were students and this would take time away to read all the transcripts of congressional hearings and of the trial that the LYL kids were thrusting at us. Also, there was no death penalty in Wisconsin then or now, and perhaps people felt simply arguing against the death penalty would lead to the belief that they felt the Rosenbergs were innocent. In those days, reputations could be destroyed easily by such expressions, even if they were right.

Q: How about the Alger Hiss business?

ZUCKERMAN: That came a little later, but, I suppose most people felt that because of the kind of background he came from, the kind of person he was, it was impossible to believe he was in fact what he was accused of being.

Q: Quaker and...

ZUCKERMAN: Yes. That came as a shock and a blow and it took a long time I think, for people to see that someone from that class could be guilty of espionage against his own country

Q: Sort of he looked down our side.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes.

Q: Well later they were all over the place in sort of a campus Marxist tide.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, the Labor Youth League was where they concentrated. Students for a Democratic Society came later. Students for Democratic Action, which was the student branch of Americans for Democratic Action, was quite active, quite popular, and was firmly a liberal, outspokenly pro-democracy, anti-fascist and anti communist organization.. A large part of the student body felt they were there to learn agriculture or engineering or anthropology or whatever their career path, who really didn't feel they had time to be involved or the inclination to be involved in public affairs at that time. But I would say the center of gravity of those that were politically active, would be the outlook of the SDA, in that spectrum of liberal democrats centered around the fight with McCarthy. But the Young Republicans were also quite active. A future Secretary of State, Larry Eagleburger, was president of that organization while I was in school, and we joked about it in later years. Joe McCarthy only came to the University of Wisconsin campus once during my time there. I attended a speech he gave at the Student Union., and he was laughed off the stage. First of all he complained about the trouble he had walking because he had 10 pounds of shrapnel in his leg, when most people were aware that the late Ed Bayley, the great political writer for the Milwaukee Journal and a dear friend, had already gotten McCarthy's army records and proved that his purple heart for the injury to his leg came from an incident during an initiation ceremony when he crossed the equator for the first time. He had fallen from a ladder and broken his leg because the initiation required him to do so with a pail tied to his leg. That is how he got himself a purple heart. But the line in that appearance that did him in was when, in answer to a student's question of his opinion of General Douglas MacArthur, who had just been relieved of his command in Korea by President Truman, he said he thought Gen. MacArthur was "the greatest military genius since Genghis Khan." He left the stage when the laughter wouldn't subside and he never came back to the campus again.

Q: Wisconsin, you went there because you were told if you want to be a newspaperman that is the place to go. What sort of a class did they have, I mean was it a good center to learn about newspapers?

ZUCKERMAN: I learned about the newspaper business from working on the Daily Cardinal., the student newspaper that we published five times a week. I found the journalism department a little bit disappointing because there were only one or two outstanding people there. Graham Hovey was the most impressive. He had worked for the Minneapolis Tribune and the New Republic, later worked for the New York Times, both as a reporter and then as an editorial writer. I saw him last at lunch at the State Department, when he was covering African affairs for the Times. He was one of the two journalism professors from whom I really learned a lot. But it was one of the oldest journalism departments in the country, maybe the first, and it had some very traditional methods. I just found it useful to stay as a journalism major because it gave me an opportunity to move widely through all of the social sciences. I think I had as many credits in political science as I had in journalism. I really learned the newspaper business by working five nights a week and in the summer at the Daily Cardinal. One summer I stayed in Madison and ran the summer paper. I not only wrote almost everything in the paper, but set type in the back room and made engravings, plastic engravings. So I came out of Wisconsin really well trained in the business, but more because of the student newspaper.

Q: In view of your later career, how much did the international world intrude on you while you were there?

ZUCKERMAN: I think because of the war and its aftermath, we were very internationally minded. Students who could afford it or find some very cheap way to do it would get to Europe during the summer. This was soon enough after the war that it was cheap once you got there. There was still a lot to be learned about the immediate aftermath of the war. There was, of course, the war itself in Korea, the threat of conflict, the fear of conflict with the Soviet Union. You couldn't escape it. It was everywhere. Domestic politics was very much on our mind. I am not sure whether our love for Adlai Stevenson had as much to do with the external threat as it did with the internal threat, because we were frightened by what McCarthyism was doing not only to the nation but even the campus. I remember there was an episode in which a beloved history professor had authored an anthology. I can't remember the theme, but we found one entry, one professor's entry had been dropped because there had been an allegation that he had leftist ties, which were no more than allegations. I wrote a painfully careful - because it hurt us to do so - editorial decrying that act. We saw this creeping fear. It was ever present. So that we felt that McCarthyism and the fear that it engendered was a distraction to the real threat to America, which was external.

Q: Were you following events taking courses, events in China or Soviet Union or Europe or elsewhere?

ZUCKERMAN: Oh yes. I took courses in international affairs. There was a wonderful professor of history, a professor named Michael Petrovich, who taught Russian history. He had been in the OSS in the war, parachuted into Yugoslavia. We had another professor named Jaroslav Majda who was an escapee from Czechoslovakia and who told stories, meaningful to me because later on I served in Berlin, about his first night in Berlin which was during the airlift, and the enormous reassurance he had hearing those planes going over every minute as a demonstration of the incredible power of the West. He was a delight. He taught courses in the political structure of Eastern Europe, Eastern European governments and economics of Eastern Europe. So I think that when you talk about international affairs in those days, in my mind and I think most of our minds, it inevitably revolved around potential conflict, not so much with China but with the Soviet Union certainly.

Q: You graduated in 1954, what were you planning to do/

ZUCKERMAN: Well I knew the army was awaiting me. I couldn't get a job because I was 1-A in the draft. UPI had offered me a job and then pulled it away as soon as they found out I was 1-A, because under the Guild agreement they would have had to give me a pay increase each year, at least on paper, and I would have a claim to the job at the increased rate when I was discharged. So I checked with the draft board to find out when I was scheduled to be called. They said, November. I said, "Well that just wastes months of my life," and I volunteered for the draft. They moved me up to August. I spent July reading War and Peace, drifting in my brother-in-law's little speed boat in Jamaica Bay. I would go out when it was calm. I would float there with a six pack of beer and read War and Peace. I went in to the army, ended up spending 2 ï¿½ years in it. I did Basic Training at Fort Dix, and turned down an offer to go to Officer's Training School because I told them I didn't want to jeopardize my amateur status. Because I had taken some Russian language courses in college they classified me as a Russian linguist. I had a very limited vocabulary. I could read some, but my conversational ability was extremely limited. They put me along with other linguists, guys classified as linguists, in clerk typist school while we were getting security clearances. Then, since clearances took longer than the eight weeks of clerk-typist school, they were going to make us firemen, which meant we had to get up at dawn and stoke the coal-burning fireplaces in the barracks. Everybody scrambled to find something else to do. I got myself into the public information office at Fort Dix, where I got in trouble.

Q: How did you do that?

ZUCKERMAN: I was being fitted for a gas masks with prescription lenses, and while I was there waiting to be called, I saw a note on the door on the bulletin board. The title was Things that Soldiers at Fort Dix Have Been Hit In The Eye With. It was a long list - a cartridge shell, pebbles, this and that, everything imaginable. The last entry was Irving Schwartz. So I copied it verbatim and wrote it and sent it out, and by God it ended up on the front page of the New York Times in a prominent little box. We were getting phone calls from AP, UP and other papers; "who is Irving Schwartz, where is he?" So I was ordered to find out. I called the ophthalmologist's office, and he laughed and said, "It's a joke. He's a doctor here." So I admitted that to the Captain in charge of public affairs at Ft. Dix and he said, "You handle it." I told the media he was in Korea and we couldn't find him, couldn't determine what unit he was with. I learned a lesson from that. Be careful what you write, even when you have a job you don't take too seriously.

I really wanted to get overseas, but instead I was sent to a military intelligence company in Fort Meade, very near Washington. It was a very strange place. There were sergeants speaking Romanian and other exotic languages to each other who would spend the day lounging in the mess hall, while privates and even junior sergeants had to do KP. I talked to the executive officer and I asked, "What are your plans for me?" When I first came they made me write a military history of a company that was going out of business. They thought I had a Ph.D. in English. I don't know where they got that idea from. But that saved me from kitchen police for a couple of months. Then I said, "What happens now?" They told me they would send me to Fort Reilly, Kansas to study military intelligence analysis. Then I would come back to Fort Meade and do KP. As they needed people, they filled in vacancies overseas, but unless there was a particular need or something breaks out, my army career would be doing KP and calisthenics." So that seemed like a dismal way to spend my time in the army and I got back into public information through contacts with the corporals in personnel who really run the army. We were covering a maneuver in Little Creek, Virginia, near Norfolk. Awful living, in Quonset huts. It was a miserable day and my corporal friend called from Fort Meade and said, "OK we have an overseas assignment list. Do you want to go to Hawaii or Germany?" I said, "Germany," because I really wanted to get to Europe. So I was sent on the USS Geiger which put out a newspaper called The Geiger Counter.

Q: I think I went on the Geiger.

ZUCKERMAN: Did you really? What a scow! It took nine days to get to Europe. A terrible crossing, but I worked my way out of the below sea level hell in which we were stacked in five layers of canvas hammocks as far as the eye could see, with people getting sick from the top down. Ugh! I put out the newspaper, the Geiger Counter, and was able to sleep above decks on a couch in the office. Meanwhile, the major I had worked for on the maneuver was a very glamorous officer who had been the army's public relations liaison to the movie industry in Hollywood. He looked the part too. He would get them the tanks they needed for a battle scene. He said he knew the head of U.S. Army information operation in Heidelberg. I remember his name, Walter Pennino, because he later became public relations head for NASA. He took care of the astronauts and I ran into him in Brussels years later. His wife, Martha Pennino, was the chairman of the Board of Supervisors in Fairfax County. I was supposed to call him and he would get me into the office of public information for Europe, headquartered in Heidelberg.

We got off the ship in Bremerhaven. I don't know if you took the same route. There was a train virtually on the wharf, and you get on it. You are shoved, stuffed literally into a compartment with five other guys and five other duffel bags. You don't stop for 17 hours until you get to Zweibrucken where you have a re-classification center which was really run I think by former German concentration camp guards because we were on a strict assembly line. You got a haircut. Your uniform was pressed. You got an interview. You are sent off as if you had just come into the army, new classification. I got into my interview and I said to the personnel clerk: "Look, I am supposed to call this guy in Heidelberg who I am supposed to see about working for him at the EUSAREUR PIO. He said, "That is where I have you going." So he gave me a ticket to Heidelberg. When I got there I went to see Col. Pennino, thinking that my friendly major had arranged this assignment, and Pennino said "Who the hell are you?" I mentioned the name of Major Donahue, and he said, " I have 18 slots allotted to me here. I already have 19 people, and John Cameron Swayze's son is out in the field. I am getting rockets from CBS to get him in here."

Q: John Cameron Swayze was...

ZUCKERMAN: The best known news anchor of the time - the first well- known television newscaster whose sponsor, I remember, was Camel Cigarettes. Pennino gave me a pass. He said, "Go enjoy Heidelberg. I will find a job for you somewhere." I think I was sitting in the Red Ox, a famous student hangout from the days of The Student Prince. I met a friend from Wisconsin and we were having a beer when I was told to get back to Pennino's office immediately. I was leaving, and I had a ticket for Berlin. Pennino said, "Don't worry, it's a good job." On the overnight military train I met a sergeant in the dining car who looked at my orders and said, "Oh God, they have you in the headquarters company. It's terrible. You work all week and then you have to drill on Saturdays. You're lucky if you have Sunday to yourself." So I said, "Well, I'm done in." When I got off the train he said, "C'mon, I'll show you where the bus to Lichterfelde West is." That was the headquarter company barracks housed in a former German military academy. Then there was an announcement, "Achtung Private Zuckerman." A car was waiting for me, and I gave him a ride. I was assigned to the office of the U.S. Commander of Berlin. I ended up in the intelligence section. There were 14 officers and 13 enlisted men in the office of the Commander, Major Gen. George Konen. All the enlisted men were college graduates, some from Ivy League schools, and were treated very well. We were given extra pay to eat off base because we often worked very late. We wore our uniforms during the day, and thereafter we were free to enjoy a great city, which was full of great music, theater, restaurants and clubs. There were only six thousand American soldiers in Berlin, so it didn't have the air of a garrison town, and Americans were still very admired because of the memory of the Berlin airlift, which had ended only seven years before I got there. Because I extended my enlistment for six months, I was able to do the grand tour of Europe at the expense of the U.S. Army. The work itself was, as all military work usually is, brief periods of great of excitement with long periods of boredom in between. I was there during the Poznan uprising and the Hungarian rebellion, as well as the digging up by the East Germans of the US underground tap on the main trunk phone line from Soviet HQ to Moscow.

Q: When was that?

ZUCKERMAN: '56. I was there from May of '55 to January of '57. During the Hungarian uprising I slept on my desk those nights when we were sending reports.

Q: Well as a soldier, what did you do in these times of crises?

ZUCKERMAN: Well the intelligence office of the U.S. commander of Berlin was the liaison and contact with all of the operating intelligence agencies in Berlin, which had to funnel material through us to keep the U.S. commander of Berlin, who was the senior U.S. presence in that last occupied territory of WW II, informed of what was going on. The U.S. mission to Berlin, our diplomatic mission, was subordinate to him. So he had to be kept informed from them of what was going on and what they were doing. I was reviewing incoming reports, pulling them together, rewriting them and passing them on to the officers in the unit, who would look at them, edit it and send them on to the General. I was also responsible for gathering the weekly refugee numbers before the uprisings. This was before the Wall. We were getting 3,000 East Germans a week coming into the refugee camps in Berlin. These were mostly young workers. That is why the wall was built, in order to stem the loss of their work force. Then there were floods of East European refugees who would come though during these periods of uprisings. We saw many of the interrogation reports coming in from the refugee camps and they were fascinating. When this wasn't happening, I had time not only to do reading I had never had time to do in collegall of the novels of Thomas Mann and Fyodor Dostoevsky -, but also to read through the extraordinary files in the intelligence office on all that had happened in Berlin from the earliest days of the occupation until the present, including some very wild episodes of Soviet kidnapping of important judges and other important German members of the city government.. And we also had the opportunity to go to East Berlin without any barriers. We were encouraged to go and show the uniform, go to the opera, or walk around Alexanderplatz, one of the principal centers of the city. I saw a film the other night which included a scene of Alexanderplatz that, when I was there, didn't have a car in it or passing through it. You could have had a picnic in the center of Alexanderplatz. Now it is just teeming with life. But there was never any doubt in the mind of anybody who saw East Berlin or who spoke, as I had many opportunities to do, to refugees from the east, of the differences between east and west. Nobody had any confusion, as did some of the kids I knew in college, about who was telling the truth about the conditions in each other's society. It was part of my continuing education.

Q: What was the feeling in Berlin during the Hungarian uprising particularly also the post wives. There was real concern about war wives. If it was going to happen it would be Berlin. Were we practicing I surrender in Russian?

ZUCKERMAN: No. We had a very small force, 6,000 troops, real troops, not like us. We had a tank brigade. We knew why we were there. We were a trip wire. They had to kill us in order to take Berlin, and if they killed us, there was war. But I remember - was it Poznan or was it the Hungarian uprising? the latter I'm sure - when Willy Brandt, then mayor of Berlin, went to the Brandenburg Gate to talk a huge crowd out of marching into East Berlin to protest. Soviet tanks were lined up with their cannons pointed at street level on the other side of the Gate. Brandt convinced those people to people to go home and light a candle in their window.

Q: He was the mayor.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes. Every window, you couldn't see a window in Berlin without a candle in it. It provoked very deep feelings. Berlin then was probably the most pro American place that there has ever been on earth, including America. I mean, it wasn't that long after the airlift, and people remembered that period. But the feelings of Berliners extended to the East as well, and they had great empathy with those in East Germany and the nations of Eastern Europe. Berlin was full of ï¿½migrï¿½s in those days, as it had been even before the war. It was a magnet for Hungarians, Poles, Rumanians, and particularly ï¿½migrï¿½ Russians. The Berlin Ballet was organized by ï¿½migrï¿½ Russians, a family named Gsovsky. And one of the best clubs in town was the Boyar Bar, where aging Russian dancers gamely put on a show of very athletic traditional dances every night. I often wonder how long they were able to keep that up.

Q: Did you get any feel for the American diplomatic presence there at all?

ZUCKERMAN: I knew some of the people in the Mission, but I had more contact with intelligence people, with the CIA people, with the army intelligence, naval intelligence. They were the people that came to the office. I did meet some of the diplomatic people but the furthest thing from my mind was seeking a Foreign Service career.

Q: Being a corporal. Was Berlin in those days really the intelligence playground for both sides and every unit both east and west.

ZUCKERMAN: I was there when they dug up the tunnel. I didn't know about the tunnel. That was really held quite tightly. But we were having a visit by several senators, and there was a standard routine in place called the Blue Plate Special. We had the last horse platoon in the United States Army. The chrome domes, the horseback riders with chromed helmets, would ride up the ramp leading to the headquarters of the U.S. Army in Berlin, the U.S. command in Berlin, which was the old headquarters of the eastern wing of the Luftwaffe. It was very imposing. It was a very long, cobble stone driveway leading up to the main building in the compound. The dignitaries stood at the head of the driveway and the platoon would ride up and form ranks for inspection. Well, while this was going on, this military intelligence major in civvies, looking as he had been awake all night, walked right through the line, by passed the senators, whispered something in the ear of the U.S. commander of Berlin - it was Major General Dasher at the time - who took his leave from the senators and just walked away. It turned out he was telling him that East Germans had dug up the tunnel.

The tunnel was dug under the border between the British sector and the Russian sector of Berlin, and tapped into the trunk line from Soviet military headquarters in East Berlin to Moscow. It turns out apparently that, at some time before this happened, the Russians found out about it and were probably feeding us false information along with credible information. Just part of the spy vs. spy game. There is a book out about it - my wife is reading it - "Spies Beneath Berlin." It was something to remember. The East Germans made a filmed news clip out of the unearthing of it and it was shown in West Berlin theaters. When it came on the screen with the accompanying East German condemnation of the evil spies who dared to steal other peoples private conversations, West Berlin audiences would laugh and cheer. They were delighted at the sight of the Soviets having their own tricks turned against them.

Q: Well what were you thinking about doing? This is the heyday of the GI Bill. You knew you could use that for all sorts of purposes.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, I wanted to, and I thought of going back to school right away. But 2 ï¿½ years out of college, I really wanted to get my feet wet in the newspaper business first. So I went back to New York in January of 1957 when I was discharged, and started planning to look for a newspaper job with one of the papers there, with my first choice the New York Times, of course.. My college room mate Dick Schickel, was working for I think, Sports Illustrated at the time. He had a girlfriend who was working for Funk & Wagnalls, the publisher that put out an encyclopedia and an annual yearbook. They needed editing help, he said, and he was quite right in advising me that it was better to look for a job when you have one. They needed editing help right away and they offered me $60 a week. So I think I was out of the army three days, and I went to work as an assistant editor at this place, while I looked for a newspaper job. My father had a boyhood friend who was then circulation manager of the New York Times and I got in to see him. He sent me to the personnel director of the New York Times who interviewed me at length and then sent me to another office to give me a test. It wasn't the writing test I expected; it was more of an intelligence test. I was applying elsewhere, and put an ad in Editor and Publisher magazine which brought more than a dozen offers from my brief ad saying "veteran, journalism school graduate, seeks promising start". Then I got a call from the New York Times. They called me in and offered me a job. They said, "Congratulations, you are one of the three applicants we have chosen for jobs as news assistants for the New York Times." I said, "What's a news assistant?" "Well that is our development program. You will work in the newsroom helping reporters. Eventually you learn our style, you learn the ropes. If you show promise, and we feel that we want you as a reporter, a permanent reporter, you will become a reporter." I said, "How long is this process?' "It is typically four years." I said, "What do you pay?" "Forty five dollars a week." I just thought I couldn't do that. I felt that if I did spend four years doing that, my spirit would be broken. I knew some friends who went through it and had nice careers at the Times. I don't know if it was a mistake or not, but I turned it down.

Q: It reminds me a bit of the Ph.D. business. They take people who are all full of piss and vinegar just out of undergraduate thing, and they spend seven years doing drudge work.

ZUCKERMAN: Well I think probably looking back on it, I was ready to begin reporting, and not assisting reporters. It turned out I was a very good at it. I probably would have made it in less than four years at the Times, but it was a huge organization. I have met many New York Times people who spent their careers there, who wouldn't work anywhere else, and there is no finer news organization in the world. But I don't know. You make your choices and you live with them. I took a job in the South because the major national story at the time was the attempt to enforce the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court in Brown versus Board of Education. I took a job on the Georgia- Alabama border with the Columbus Enquirer in Columbus, GA. I went down there in May of 1957 and stayed for two years. I covered Alabama politics, Russell County Alabama government, and George Wallace's first run for governor when he was beaten by someone who was more racist than he was, leading Wallace to promise that would never happen agaithat no one would outmaneuver him on the race issue.

Q: Well how did you find this? I mean you know you think of particularly in those days covering sort of particularly at the county level Alabama certainly not a place to be black but also to be Jewish too. Or had that not happened yet because there wasn't the liberal pressure.

ZUCKERMAN: This was endemic in the south. The Ku Klux Klan didn't concern itself only with blacks but also with Catholics and Jews. No, I had a wonderful experience in the two years I was there. One of the most memorable things was covering Phenix City, Alabama, which, you may remember, was once called America's sin city.

Q: Oh yes, it was right by a military base.

ZUCKERMAN: Fort Benning was in Georgia, and the troops went across the river to play in Phenix City, which was born as a sin city. In the 19th century there was a picket boat that came up the Chattahoochee River; good folks got off in Columbus, and the prostitutes and card sharps were forced to get off in what became Phenix City on the Alabama side. The character of the town never changed. In 1954 there was a lawyer in Phenix City who ran for attorney general, the Democratic nomination for attorney general, on a platform of cleaning up Phenix City. He won the nomination and was shot dead a few days later in broad daylight on the main street of town. The grand jury indicted the district attorney and deputy sheriff for the murder. They returned 640 indictments and shut down the town, cleaned out the whore houses and the gambling dens and bars. That was a couple of years before I got there, but the events were still simmering. The circuit judge of Phenix City was disqualified from handling the case because he was knee deep in the rackets himself, but he survived as judge. His name was Julius B. Hicks and he was a very old man. He was almost blind. I remember one day, I was in the office of the clerk of circuit court, going through the records to see what had happened the day before. There was a quickie divorce racket running in town, and I wanted to see if there were any famous names that showed up, such as the woman who wrote the novel "Peyton Place." People would come down from New York, declare themselves as intending to remain and become citizens of Alabama, get a divorce that next day and go home.

The judge, who ruled on all these divorces and perhaps had an arrangement with the lawyers who brought in the case, was having a conversation in a voice loud enough for me to hear across the room. He said - his teeth used to clack when he talked - he said to someone sitting across from him: 'You know I have this farm in Jasper, Florida, and I take the Central of Georgia down there each weekend. The other week I was going down there and shared a compartment with this fellow who looked out the window as we passed through this little town in south Georgia." He said, "See that town? I grew up in that town. That is the cleanest, nicest little town in Georgia." He said, "You know why it is clean and nice?" The judge said, "No, why is that?" "Because there ain't a Jew in it." Silence followed, and I kept turning the pages of the court records, thinking OK, now its coming. But the judge continued: "And then I said to him, maybe that's why it's just a little town." I took that as a signal to me. He was doing the whole thing for me.

Other things happened that helped me get accepted by the court house crowd. I was covering a city commission meeting, and a man who was an engineer for the Central of Georgia railroad came in to complain that his fellow conductors and engineers were coming through Phenix City too fast at night and blowing their whistles, rather than slow their speed, and waking everyone up and somebody ought to do something about that, like complain to the Central of Georgia. Then he turned to me and he said, "I don't want to see this in the paper." His name was Buster something. I said, "Buster this is a public meeting, an open meeting." He said, "You better not put this in the paper." So I went back to the office and wrote a story on the important things that happened at the meeting, and then a little story, a side bar, on the Central of Georgia engineer who complained about trains speeding through Phenix City. The next day, it was in the paper, and as usual, I drove over the bridge, over the river to park by the Russell County Court House and make my rounds. The circuit solicitor, that is what they call the district attorney in the south, his name was Roy Green, he looked in the car and said, "Hey you better watch out. Buster is in there waiting for you." I said, "What is he saying?." "He says he's going to kill you." "Well what are you going to do about it?" "Well if he does that, I am just going to have to arrest him I guess." I went in the door. I came in and the swinging door just flung me against the wall. It was Buster. He was an elderly man, pretty big, but this was a long corridor, with the offices of the various county officials on either side of it. There was the circuit clerk, the clerk of courts, the tax assessor, the tax commissioner, the sheriff, all of them lined up. Buster came down that hall pounding at me with his right arm. I kept blocking the punch. I said, "Buster, cut it out. You made a fool out of yourself once already and now you're doing it again," and kept backing up and not swinging back at him. All those people came to stand at their doors and watch this. I said, "Isn't anybody going to stop this?" Finally the sheriff came up, and Buster was huffing and puffing. "Buster", he said, "it's ok. You got what you wanted. Why don't you go home." He got suspended for thirty days by the Central of Georgia. Some days after that, the wife of the clerk of courts, Gladys Wheelis, said, "You know, you're accepted now." "Why is that?" "Because you didn't swing back at Buster."

So I learned a lot about personal relationships, because in places like that, everybody knows each other. Entertainment is people entertaining other people in their homes. There were a couple of movie theaters and restaurants, but no real bars except Chad's Rose Room which was left over from the old Phenix City days, and they only served beer. They had a strip show and a dirty comic on a circuit that ran in a few towns from New Orleans to Atlanta with a stop at Phenix City. That is where we went for entertainment when we closed the newspaper down at midnight. Somebody would go early and get a table.

Q: Did you sort of learn the lesson not to be you know, I mean too much a wise guy, smart guy and looking down on the people and writing cute little things in the paper.

ZUCKERMAN: Well, the story on Buster wasn't cute. It was straight reporting. And when someone warns you not to write something that takes place at an open meeting, and all the people at the meeting hear it said, you feel you have to write it. Besides, it was a valid story. But a story that was cute and demeaning to someone wouldn't get past the editor. Anyway, I didn't feel that way. First of all, there were some very good newspapermen on that staff. There were also some very good lawyers in that little town, who read every word you wrote. Southerners are good lawyers although in every little case they handle they always seem to try to make it a grand constitutional issue. There was one I remember, he was not from there. He was from a nearby town, Opelika. He was trying a case and telling the jury "I'm just a country boy like you folks"...but he was a Harvard educated lawyer. Any little land seizure for a right of way or something became a constitutional issue. "They are taking this man's land, his property, the land his grandpappy farmed on", etc. But it wasn't about the Constitution; it was about money.One issue was always present however, either openly or behind the scenes, and that was race.

Q: This is very early on, and here you are coming from Wisconsin and New York. How did you adjust to this? What were your observations?

ZUCKERMAN: Well I felt first of all, that I was welcome in some ways. The reason I took that job was because I had a letter from Graham Hovey who was my favorite professor in the journalism department, who I had listed, with his permission as a reference. He wrote me a letter and he said, "I got a call from the managing editor of the Columbus Enquirer. He asked me about you and what you were like and everything. I told him you were a bit of a hell raiser, and the editor said, "Well maybe we need a little hell raised around here." Later, we became great friends, He was a terrific newspaper man who taught me a lot, Dave Miller. I went down there by train, just to make sure I realized how far away I'd be from home, and to get the feeling of the South as more than a stop between airports. I gained enormous experience on that paper, and worked very hard and sometimes up to fourteen or sixteen hours a day. One day I had seven bylines in that paper. I was writing everything. I would cover the city commission, the county commission, the courts, the police, the hospital in Phenix City. Often I would work from ten in the morning until midnight. I would cover the late police run on the Columbus side of the river. They had me writing movie reviews, music reviews, book reviews. You name it; I did it. When I left there, I used the GI Bill and went back to graduate school in Wisconsin, where I was offered a research assistantship in the political science department. All I really wanted was a year to do some serious reading

Q: This is when you headed back to Wisconsin.

ZUCKERMAN: Back to Madison. I had wanted to go to the University of Vienna. I had been working on my German with a teacher in Georgia, but they wanted me to demonstrate a knowledge of Latin. I decided that was probably the wrong political science department for me. Going back to Wisconsin was very stimulating. I was determined not to spend more than a year there before returning to newspaper work, and it turned out to be about the most focused academic experience of my life. The master's program was usually two years, but I was able to complete my course work, my orals and write my thesis in one year. I still had two more years of academic benefits remaining on the GI Bill, and my professors wanted me to stay on or go elsewhere for a Ph.D. I knew I didn't want to; I didn't want to abandon my career in newspaper work. I had an offer from the New York World Telegram and Sun where I had interviewed on my way back to Wisconsin. The day of my orals, I got a phone call from the assistant managing editor who said, "The job is still here for you, but I don't think that this newspaper will last more than six months. And there are going to be a lot of very experienced people on the streets." The professor I worked for as a research assistant, Jim Donahue, had good friends at the Milwaukee Journal, which at that time was considered one of the best papers in the country. I had interviewed with them. They offered me a job, but I thought I would go back to New York. Once I realized that was a bad idea I took the job with the Milwaukee Journal.

Q: So you were with the Milwaukee Journal from when to when.

ZUCKERMAN: From 1960 to 1963.

Q: What was the Milwaukee Journal like?

ZUCKERMAN: Well there was a huge difference from Columbus. We had seven or eight reporters at the Columbus Enquirer, and there were 140 at the Milwaukee Journal. It was a great paper with a long and proud history. Milwaukee was an interesting city, a real labor union city. They humiliated me by making me do a couple of months on obituaries while I learned the Milwaukee Journal's style book. But then our labor writer, John Pomfret, went off on a Niemann fellowship to Harvard (he recently retired as Executive Vice President and General Manager of the New York Times.) I was assigned to fill in for him during the year he'd be at Harvard, and the managing editor said to me, "He is going to come back, but he is not going to come back as labor writer. If you want that job, you have to apply for it." "I have to apply for it?" "Yes, other people are applying." So I applied, and they made me labor reporter, which was a huge break because there were 400,000 labor associated people, families or active union members, in Wisconsin.. The United Auto Workers were very big because American Motors was still there. The Brewery Workers Union of course, Steel Workers, Machinists, the building trades unions, Teamsters and others. The Milwaukee Journal was wealthy enough and interested enough that I got to travel to the major union conventions, to the quarterly executive meetings of the AFL-CIO in New York, to the AFL-CIO convention wherever it was held. During the strike against the Milwaukee Journal by the Mailers Union, which I covered, I was forced to come in at 6:00 in the morning and finish writing everything I had covered the day before by 9:00 a.m. because they were pasting up the newspaper by an offset printing process since the other unionprinters, engravers and the rest - wouldn't cross the Mailers' picket line. The strike lasted for months, and I was really getting run down. The AFL-CIO was going to hold its convention in Miami in December, and I suggested that it would really look bad to our readers if we didn't cover it. By then the strike was still on but it was old news, and they grudgingly let me go. The strike ended while I was in Miami, and I got a lot of dirty looks from my colleagues when I returned to cold, snowy Milwaukee with a great tan.

Q: What was your impression of what you were seeing of the labor movement during this time in the early 60's?

ZUCKERMAN: During that time it was still on the ascendance. You had that feeling, particularly because of the leadership of the UAW, which really broke so much ground in terms of not just wages but benefits. We were approaching a guaranteed wage for unionized workers in the US because Walter Reuther had negotiated supplementary unemployment benefits paid by the automobile companies, because they were always down for part of the year retooling for the new models. So auto workers didn't ever work a full year. But SUB went up to 80% of their annual pay.

Q: SUB means...

ZUCKERMAN: SUB, supplementary unemployment benefits up to 80% of their earnings. Everybody figured one day it would be 90% and then 100%, so they would be guaranteed they would receive their wage for a whole year, just the way a white collar worker did. That didn't happen. As we now realize, we had lived through the peak years of the organized labor movement in the United States.

Q: Well from a Milwaukee perspective how did you view the Kennedy administration and all?

ZUCKERMAN: I was still with the Milwaukee Journal during the Cuban missile crisis and I remember the entire staff glued to the television set in the lounge area, with everyone impressed by the seriousness of the situation and Kennedy's precise explanation of it. Kennedy was a strong favorite in the newsroom, although we did have a number of more conservative staff members. I think he became enormously popular in Wisconsin during his presidency, and that was certainly true throughout the country. Two people in Wisconsin, the then attorney general John Reynolds and the then Democratic Party chairman Patrick J. Lucey, had convinced Kennedy that he could win the 1960 Wisconsin primary, even though Hubert Humphrey was considered the third senator from Wisconsin at a time when Joe McCarthy and Alexander Wiley were the two conservative Republican senators. He represented the aspirations of the liberals in Wisconsin. As it turned out, Kennedy agreed to enter and won, and always regarded the Wisconsin Democrats as the people who started him on the road to the presidency.

Q. What were some of the highlights of your time at the Journal?

ZUCKERMAN: When I first arrived there, despite my experience in Georgia, they put me on the obituaries desk along with other newly-hired young reporters who hadn't had my experience. I was at a desk alongside one occasionally occupied by the most revered member of the staff, Richard Smith Davis, a man well in his 70's (it doesn't seem so old now) who was the music and arts critic, and the most gifted writer at the Journal. He was always assigned the most memorable events to covethe concert by Jan Paderewski, the funeral of President Rooseveland when he died, the Journal published a book containing his finest stories. He took me under his wing, and invited me to his cottage in Door County in northern Wisconsin, where I still vacation to this day. He was an unforgettable wit and curmudgeon. After he had a stroke and was hospitalized, with his doctor's consent for Halloween I sneaked a weak bourbon and water into his room hidden in a pumpkin. He loved it. He was very outspoken but none of the editors dared criticize him. One day the Managing Editor passed by our desks as Davis was bestowing some of his wisdom upon me. Davis interrupted himself and said in a loud voice clearly directed at the Managing Editor: "And above all young man, never, never be impressed by mediocrity." The editor almost tripped but righted himself without ever looking Davis' way.

After a couple of months on obit I was assigned the labor beat, but before I could dig into it a riot broke out during the attempt to integrate the University of Georgia. Because I had worked there, they sent me down to cover the events that were expected to be violent when another attempt was made to integrate the two black students after the weekend. I flew down to Atlanta and read back issues of the Atlanta Journal and Constitution in their newsroom to get caught up, then went back to the hotel to attempt to contact former Atlanta mayor William Hartsfield, who was considered the wisest man in Georgia politics. Somehow I got him on the phone, but he said he didn't give interviews to out of town newsmen who didn't know anything about the state and always got things wrong. When I told him that I had worked for the Columbus Enquirer, he changed his mind. He told me everyone was wrong about their expectations; that Governor Ernest Vandiver, a Republican, was getting enormous pressure from the business community to see to it that the violence was put down and that integration proceeded peacefully. They felt that the economic future of the state depended on investment from the north and that that would be influenced by progress the state could make in peaceful integration. Hartfield said that Vandiver had "crossed the Rubicon", and that the two young black students would go to school on Monday. I wrote the story that way and sent it back to my paper, and they called me and asked if I was sure about that since everyone else had it the other way. I told them that Hartsfield was the smartest guy in Georgia and I trusted him, but I didn't sleep very well over the weekend in Athens when I saw crowds gathering on Sunday night to prepare for the next morning. But Hartsfield got it right and made me look good. The State troopers and National Guard were there to keep the rebellious students in line, and the university was integrated. One of the two students was Charlene Hunter Gault, who went on to become a well respected correspondent for PBS.

Q. What other stories stick in your mind from your years at the Journal?

ZUCKERMAN: I remember covering a speech by the then Senator John F. Kennedy during the presidential campaign in 1962, and getting to meet him for the first time. (A couple of years later I met him both in Washington and in northern Wisconsin when I worked for the Governor.) But after his speech an ugly incident occurred as he was driven from the auditorium to another event in an open convertible. There was a group of elegant party-goers who were apparently not fans of his, and one of the ladies threw a glass of scotch at him, but forgot to let go of the glass. It missed Kennedy, but struck a wealthy donor from Milwaukee seated with him. Also nearby was the hapless sheriff of Milwaukee, a fellow named Clem Michalski. I hadn't seen the incident but word of it traveled fast, and I got to Michalski and asked him if he had made an arrest. He said: "No, I called a cop but they couldn't find the guy." I wrote a small side bar story to go with the story on the speech that couldn't help but make the sheriff look silly, admitting that he called a police officer to do a job that he might have done himself. The next day he called me at the newsroom and I was sure he was going to raise hell with the editor, but he was quite calm in asking for a correction. "But I got it right, Clem," I said. "That's exactly what you told me. He said: "No it's not. I never used the word cop. I said I called a policeman." I learned then that there are many people in public life who don't realize not to make things worse once they make fools of themselves.

Since you mention Kennedy, my most memorable impression of him was formed at an address he gave to a largely faculty audience while I was in graduate school during the presidential primary of 1960. Kennedy was not popular among the faculty because they were committed to a third candidacy by Adlai Stevenson and also distrusted the Kennedys, because as a family they were close to Joe McCarthy. Bobby Kennedy had worked as the counsel to McCarthy's senate committee and father Joe Kennedy was a McCarthy supporter. Kennedy was introduced to this initially hostile audience by one of my favorite professors, David Fellman, who taught constitutional law in the Political Science department. I remember his words as the best political speech I had ever heard. His introduction in its entirety was: "Ladies and gentleman. I present to you the only man who stands between Richard Nixon and the presidency of the United States, John F. Kennedy." Kennedy looked so thin in profile that every woman in the audience wanted to cook a meal for him. He was elegant, precise, and persuasive. I'm sure most of the audience voted against him in the primary, but rather than stay at home, that evening convinced them to vote for him in the general election.

But almost all of my work was taken up by my labor affairs assignment. Milwaukee then was a highly unionized city, and was the third heaviest steel using city in the country. American Motors, Harnischfeger, Allis-Chalmers, and many other heavy industries were there, and the United Auto Workers, Steelworkers and Machinists' unions represented them. We had seven breweries in Milwaukee then, each of which left a case of their product on my doorstep at Christmas, and the workers at all of them were represented by one of the more interesting unions in the countrthe Brewery Workers of America, which contained many old German socialists who regularly elected socialist mayors in Milwaukee. And, of course, there were the Teamsters, and I got to know their leadership, including Jimmy Hoffa, as well as dissidents who were trying to democratize that scandal-ridden union. All of that kept me busy. The Milwaukee Journal was one of only a handful of newspapers in the country that had a full time labor reporter on the staff, and that gave me the freedom to become knowledgeable enough about the subject that I was able to create my own schedule of assignments.

So by doing that, I got to know, or a least to talk to and listen to, such figures as Walter Reuther, George Meany, and the unforgettable David Dubinsky, who was head of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. He had a thick Yiddish accent, and at the Executive Council meetings in New York, he would come into the press room with a fistful of tickets to the best plays and musicals on Broadway and say "Vich vun do you vant, boys?"

It was at a UAW convention in Detroit that I met John Reynolds, who was then the Attorney General of Wisconsin, an office his father had held years before. Like most Democrats at that time, he was a former member of the Progressive wing of the Republican Party, who left to revive the nearly moribund Democratic Party of the state because the Progressives could no longer stay in a party that championed the career of Joe McCarthy. Those Progressives included not only Reynolds, but also Gaylord Nelson, who became Governor and then Senator; Patrick J. Lucey, who became Governor, Ambassador to Mexico, and then John Anderson's third party vice-presidential running mate in the 1980 Carter-Reagan election, William Proxmire who took Joe McCarthy's seat in the Senate after McCarthy died, and James Doyle, who became a federal judge and father of the present Wisconsin governor. We were in the suite of the head of the UAW in Wisconsin, Harvey Kitzman, and began a very long, very wet conversation that I think lasted until nearly 3 a.m. He was a most unusual man. There wasn't a clichï¿½ in him, and he told me he would run for governor if Gaylord Nelson ran for the Senate, and for the Senate if Gaylord sought another term as Governor. Reynolds was a highly intelligent, warm and generous person, but was not given much chance of higher office because he was not very telegenic, at a time that television was beginning to have a great impact on elections. He had a good voice but a difficult time with some wordnot because of his intelligence, which was exceedingly sharbut because of a dental occlusioanother word he had trouble pronouncing.

Nelson decided to run for the Senate, and Reynolds ran for the Governorship against an attractive Republican businessman who was a heavy favorite. In a tough campaign, Reynolds won by 6,000 votes, but he was the only Democrat elected in that Republican year of 1962. The Attorney General, Secretary of State, Lieutenant Governor and control of both houses of the legislature went to the Republicans. The Governor's term was only two years at that time, and against the opposition of a party that thought his election was a fluke, no one gave Reynolds any hope for a successful term and possible reelection. Reynolds approached me and a very dear friend and colleague, Ira Kapensteialso a Brooklyn bowho was the brilliant political reporter for the Journal. He wanted us to come to Madison as his top aideIra as Executive Secretarnow called Chief of Stafand me as his Press Secretary. We both liked him so much, and were also at that time thinking of moving on to Washington or New York, that we both agreed. But when the editors heard of our plans they offered Ira the Washington bureau, and offered me the Madison bureau, both highly sought after positions. Ira accepted but I decided to go with Reynolds, and became the Executive Secretary..

Q. How big a change was that in your life?

ZUCKERMAN: Ultimately it made an enormous difference. I never thought I would leave newspaper worl went with Reynolds because I wanted to see what the reality of government was like behind the official press releases. Reporters never really know for certain when they are being misled, although they're aware that all politicians, lawyers, even public spirited citizens and advocates of noble causes, all have their objectives and want to use you to further their interests. And at the end of my two years with the governor I decided the main thing I had learned was that, to a remarkable extent, the day to day activities of government are shaped by the anticipated reactions of the press.

Q. What kind of person was Reynolds?

ZUCKERMAN: He was the most honest man I have ever known, and perhaps the wisest. He believed that government was good, and he had faith that most people wanted to see it work well and would support good programs if they were fully informed of their purpose.

In a two year term, a governor can only try to get a budget passed and then start running for re-election. Instead of holding budget hearings with agency heads in Madison, he went out to visit the state institutions and hold hearings at mental hospitals, prisons, universities, and we filmed conditions in some of the most neglected of them. When it came time to present the budget in an address to the legislature, we had a tarp placed over the glass dome of the legislature's chambers and showed the film as he was laying out the reforms that were needed. Two weeks later he was to speak on how the large budget increase would be financed, but after going to the podium he apologized for the difficulty of speaking with a bad cold and shocked me by turning the podium over to me, to read the speech I had written. The plan called for a significant increase in taxes, and if I ever had thoughts of seeking elective office, they probably ended right there. Reynolds had run against the state sales tax. He believed in the teaching of a famous Progressive tax economist at the university, Harold Groves, that all taxes come out of incomincome taxes, sales taxes, property taxes, and even indirectly estate taxeand that the fairest way of distributing the tax burden was through the income tax. The Republican majority refused to pass a budget unless Reynolds accepted a sales tax increase, and eventually a compromise was reached to allocate the increase between the two taxes. In the event, a budget was passed that significantly affected the well being of teachers, the university, improved conditions in the prisons and hospitals, but also gave the Republicans a strong weapon to use against him in the next election.

But before that, President Kennedy was shot, and it changed everything. Reynolds, along with his close friend and ally, Patrick J. Lucey, chairman of the Democratic Party, had talked Kennedy into running in the Wisconsin Presidential primary of 1960. They revered him, and had asked for nothing in return. Lucey was offered the position of Postmaster General in the new administration. Despite the strong political power of the office at the time, Lucey declined because he didn't want to go to Washington until his business provided the financial independence that he thought was necessary in public life. Dealing with the Johnson White House was very different from the dealings we had with a White House where we really had friends. I had gone to Washington with Reynolds to try to persuade them, at the behest of the Big Ten Universities - who were educating PhD physicists who had to go to Livermore in California or Brookhaven in New York to conduct research - to build a national research facility in the Midwespreferably south of Madison. Reynolds met with Kennedy while I met with Ted Sorenson, Kennedy's top assistant. We had prepared a good presentation, bound it in leather, with a description of the high speed reactor the physicists wanted, all their illustrious names, and the case for helping the Midwest keep the science PhDs that they had trained. Sorenson seemed very interested. When we left the White House Reynolds was walking on air. I asked him: "Did you get it?" He said Kennedy said he'd get it if he could but then said to him: "Now let's talk about something we both know something about; what's the political situation in Wisconsin.?" After Kennedy died, Johnson gave the project to Mayor Daley. It's now at the Argonne National Laboratories in Illinois, associated with the Fermilab nuclear research facility.

Once the budget was passed, we had other adventures. Wisconsin was paying for the construction of its inter-state highways on a pay as you go basis. The state couldn't borrow money under the constitutional provisions at the time, so it had created a separate building commission that could borrow funds for capital construction with the full faith and credit of the state behind it. But the use of the funds was limited to bonds for state office buildings, excluding highways. We tried to put together a bipartisan committee to pass a referendum measure that would allow the state to borrow for highways, arguing that it would not only speed up construction, which was falling behind the pace of neighboring states, but also save money that was being eaten up by inflation. Of course the road builders were all for it, but there was a built in animus in the public that borrowing money in such large amounts was dangerous, even though they of course were borrowing money for their own homes. So the effort failed, despite a long and difficult campaign to win public support.

Then along came the presidential primary of April, 1964. President Johnson had made it clear he wasn't going to campaign in the primaries, since he felt he had enough support to win the nomination by acclamation, so he asked Gov. Reynolds to run as a favorite son pledged to Johnson. That was the year that Gov. George Wallace of Alabama decided to run in Wisconsin and a number of other northern states to prove his argument that his view of forced integration, disguised as a battle for states' rights, had support in the north as well as in the south. That was a campaign that Reynolds really enjoyed, because he could travel the state espousing a moral cause rather than fighting over budget issues. There was no contest on the Republican side; Sen. Goldwater was unopposed, and the Wisconsin primaries were open, meaning voters could vote in either primary they wished to without declaring a party affiliation. Many Republican voters crossed over to vote for Wallace, either to embarrass Johnson or because they liked Wallace's message. We had anticipated as much, and also were aware that there was disaffection in some of the ethnic, strongly Democratic neighborhoods of Milwaukee over racial issues that could lead to a strong Wallace showing.

The Governor and I went to Washington to seek some help from the White House, at least to gain some association of the President with the campaign. While he was in with President Johnson, I sat down with Bill Moyers, then Johnson's top assistant. Moyers asked me how many votes we thought Wallace could draw, and I told him it could range from 100,000 to 200,000, probably between 25% and 35% of the vote. He seemed shocked, grabbed a pad on which he wrote down the figures, left me and walked straight into Johnson's office. He came back in a while and asked what we wanted them to do and I told him we really needed a photo of the president and Reynolds together to use in a campaign flyer to demonstrate that Johnson was engaged. On leaving the office and meeting Reynolds with the President in the ante room, a photographer came out and took their photo together. After we returned to Washington I waited for the photo to come while holding up printing of the campaign brochure so that it could be on its cover, but the photo wasn't coming and I began to feel uncomfortable. I suspected the White House felt it was better to let Reynolds take the blame for a possible strong showing by Wallace rather than have the press speculate that it was a sign of the unpopularity of Johnson. I called Moyers and told him that I was getting queries from the press about the absence of any sign of Johnson's interest in the race, and that if we put out the brochure with no photo of his support it could lead to the President being blamed for a strong Wallace vote. We got the photo two days later. Wallace got about a third of the vote, and the press treated it as a Wallace victory. Reynolds was interviewed after the vote by Sandy Vanocur, a first rate correspondent for NBC, who asked him to explain why Wallace did so well. Reynolds' answer cracked Vanocur up. He said: "I've never won an election by such a huge margin in my life!", and pointed out that he had gotten more votes in the Wisconsin presidential primary than anyone in history, with the exception of FDR.

And then we had to face the primary election for governor. Thinking Reynolds had been weakened by the presidential primary, Dominic Frinzi, a lawyer in Milwaukee who had defended racketeers, ran against him for the nomination. Again we won, but Frinzi got a lot of votes from ethnic voters on the south side of Milwaukee. This carried over into the general election, eroding the margins we needed from Milwaukee to overcome the expected Republican strength in smaller cities and rural areas. So John was beaten for re-election by 18,000 votes out of a total of 1.3 million cast. Given the significant tax increase he had fought for, that wasn't anything to be ashamed of, even in the year of a Johnson landslide.

Johnson named him to the federal judgeship that had come open in Milwaukee, and he served until he died in 2001. His most memorable decision was ruling in favor of a case brought by a former college roommate of mine, Lloyd Augustus Barbee of Memphis, Tennessee, representing a young black girl and her family who claimed that the Milwaukee schools were segregated by a deliberate designation of school district boundaries. The decision caused an uproar, and Reynolds, using his enormous political skills, diffused it with two actions. First he called upon John Gronouski, our former tax commissioner who had become Kennedy's appointee as postmaster general and then Johnson's ambassador to Poland, to come up from time to time from Austin, Texas where he headed the Johnson School of Public Policy at the U of Texas, and act as referee to see that the decision was carried out. Gronouski's appointment was greeted favorably by the East European population of Milwaukee's south side, who feared that they, rather than the residents of homes in the more expensive northern suburbs, would have the sole responsibility of dealing with the changes to come. Then Reynolds did something truly brilliant. He asked Barbee how much he had been paid during the eleven years in which he had fought doggedly to get the City of Milwaukee into federal court. "Nothing your honor; my clients are not people of means." Then Reynolds turned to the attorneys from Milwaukee's major law firm and asked them how much the firm had been paid by the city during the two years of the litigation in federal court. "Um, er, 2.5 million dollars." Reynolds ordered the city to pay Barbee $500,000 for his fee and expenses, thus causing an uproar among the good citizens of Milwaukee so great that they forgot how upset they were at Reynolds' order to integrate the school system.

Q. I take it you came to the Foreign Service after Reynolds' defeat in 1964. How did that happen?

ZUCKERMAN: The day after the election, my telephone, which normally rang 125 times a day, stopped ringing. It was as if the earth stood still. We still had until early January to wrap up affairs and there was much to do, so I started listing all the things in priority order. The list was pretty long before I realized I had failed to list "Look for a New Job." Just then the phone rang. It was Congressman Henry Reuss, a very respected Democrat from Milwaukee who was chairman of the House Banking and Currency Committee, who asked me to come to Washington to work for him as his press secretary. It was a big confidence booster on a bad day, but I knew that I didn't want to slip into a career as a professional staffer. I had worked for the best politician I could imagine, and even then the stress of being responsible for another person's reputation rather than your own, and being controlled by his schedule, was a burden I didn't want to bear for life. I told Reuss I would consider it, but soon after got a call from my friend Ira Kapenstein, who was working for Postmaster General Gronouski as his special assistant, if I would come to work for them. I told him I didn't want a job in Washington, but would like to add to my overseas experience if there were an opening in one of the foreign affairs agencies. He called me back in a couple of days and said he had set up appointments for me with State, AID and USIA, and I came down to Washington a week later.

Q. And what happened in those interviews?

ZUCKERMAN: It sounded as if AID was a possibility, and State talked about a civil service job in PA, but there was no likelihood of something overseas for the immediate future. At USIA, however, they liked my background in journalism and government and said there was a good chance of what was called a Limited Career Reserve appointment, which meant an appointment for up to five years. I was not even considering that much, but hoped for two to three years of service in a developing country. They said I would have to pass an oral exam administered by three senior Foreign Service officers, and it would take some time to set it up. I told them I would shortly be out of a job, was not a person of inherited wealth, and flying back and forth between Madison and Washington wasn't going to be easy. So they did something very encouraging; they made a few calls and got what I later realized were three outstanding officers together the next day. I spent two hours with them, did the best I could with their very challenging and faranging questions, and went back to Madison. A week later I got a call offering me a job, which I accepted, and a couple of days after that there were three FBI men talking to people in the office and the legislature working on my clearance. Since I had had a top secret clearance from my army days that was only seven years old, my clearance came through quickly and I was sworn in mid-January at the old grade of Class Four (now 2) step 7, which was still below my salary as chief of staff to the governor. But they assured me I'd be overseas before long and the housing allowance would even that all out. They also assured me that, since I was at the top step of Class 4, a promotion to Class 3 wouldn't take long. I had no knowledge of the Foreign Service system, and in fact had to build a record for five years before that happened.

Q: What kind of assignment were you given.

ZUCKERMAN: I was told I was going to Africa. I was sent to see Dan Oleksiw, a legendary guy, huge guy, who was then deputy director for African affairs, and who passed away not long ago after a remarkable career. I entered his office to find him with, two phones to his ears and two conversations going at once. He interrupted both and said, "Oh yes, you. You are going to Nigeria. Go over to the West Africa desk. Work with somebody there. We will put you with someone and you can help them and learn something about Africa before you go. So I said, "Fine." I went over and I was sent to help David Burns, an experienced officer who was working on West African affairs. I remember one of the first things I was asked to do. There was a forthcoming presidential visit by the unforgettable Maurice Yamï¿½ogo, who was the then president of what was then Upper Volta.

Q: A country that had always been uppermost in your mind.

ZUCKERMAN: Of course (laughter). I'd done extensive reading on it over my lifetime. (more laughter.) Yamï¿½ogo was a star at the time because he was outspokenly warning against Chinese incursions in Africa, so he was a great hero to those in the Africa bureau who were concerned about Chinese ambitions in Africa. Burns had a number of West African countries to look after as a desk officer. He said that we really should have a film of Yamï¿½ogo's visit that we can send back to Africa. I was asked to write a treatment of what such a film would consist of. I did, and the film was made, showing the royal treatment he had been given in America. Of course he was deposed not long after he got back. I am not sure if the film got there before he was deposed or not, but it was my introduction to both the Foreign Service and to Africa.

Q: Had you ever done any film stuff before?

ZUCKERMAN: Never. All my background was in print media, in newspapers. That was the only thing I ever wanted to do. This was an interlude between the political work that I had done and my planned return to newspaper work. My interest was in getting some additional overseas experience, learning something about the Foreign Service, and perhaps then, together with my German experience, being able to find an overseas assignment with some news organization. In the course of my stay on the African desk, I was regularly getting notices from Personnel that I had been given an onward assignment first to Lagos, Nigeria; then to a new post in Port Harcourt, Nigeria; then to Bamako in Mali, and after a suggestion that it might be Tanzania, finally to Elizabethville in the Congo. I was sent to study French at the Foreign Service Institute. I had had some Spanish and some Russian, but I was not a particularly adept linguist. This was a challenge. I spent five months and got qualified in French. I was to leave in October to go to what was then Elizabethville which, after Maurice Tshombe was deposed by Mobutu, became Lubumbashi.

Q: This would be October '65.

ZUCKERMAN: October '65. They had wanted me to take my first assignment in Washington. I said, "No, that isn't why I came to the Foreign Service. If I wanted a job in Washington I had had offers of several, (including one to work for Sergeant Shriver's new Office of Economic Opportunity), but I had no desire to work in the domestic bureaucracy. They acquiesced, and sent me to Katanga, the former breakaway province of the Congo, as the number two man in a three man information post. That is how important Katanga once was in our plans. I flew into Belgium. I was in the air on my way to Elizabethville, stopping first in Leopoldville, when the then prime minister Moise Tshombe was overthrown.

Q: Who was a creature whose power base was...?

ZUCKERMAN: He had been the president of the short lived Republic of Katanga. I guess in a move to reconcile disparate factions he became the prime minister. He was displaced by Joseph Mobutu. I got to Leopoldville, I stayed a couple of days, and got some briefings. The PAO was a very colorful officer named John Mowinckel, among whose achievements during WW II was liberating the bar of the Hotel Crillon when Paris fell to the Allies...

Q: Along with Ernest Hemmingway.

ZUCKERMAN: I think Ernest Hemmingway took the Ritz. He took the Ritz and Mowinckel took the Crillon. At any rate I finally arrived in Elizabethville. I remember getting off the plane and by chance, along with the consul, Art Tienken and Ralph Stuart Smith, the PAO, the provincial minister of information was there, and I was introduced. All I could remember to say, after all those months studying French, was "bon jour." Whatever French I had just disappeared as if you had erased a blackboard. It was not an auspicious start. They took me to a moth eaten hotel, which I got myself out of after one night, and moved into the Grand Hotel Leopold II, which was also in disrepair, but at least I had more than a sheet of cloth for a doorway. I settled in for three months there while I looked for a house. My wife and my two stepchildren were to join me in about six months. I found a house that had been the home of Moise Tshombe's radio operator. There had been a machine gun nest in the back yard which overlooked the river and a badly damaged bridge. The contractor was deepening the machine gun nest and making it into a swimming pool, which could serve as a source of emergency water supply if need ba traditional Foreign Service justification.. The house was in an area that the local European residentwho numbered about 15,000 at the time - regarded as dangerous because it was across the river from the city proper. But it turned out to be a lovely place, especially once I forced the contractor to abandon his plans to put broken glass on the top of the walls, which was a common feature on the walls of most of the houses lived in by Europeans.

Elizabethville's name soon changed to Lubumbashi once Mobutu started Africanizing the names of cities in the Congo. There was a Congolese village near us. My stepson Chris was then about eight years old and liked to play soccer. The kids living in the village had some rolled up rags for a soccer ball, and he joined them out in the dusty fields, and they were delighted when we came up with a real ball. We soon became very welcome in the neighborhood. We never had any security problems, but when we left three years later, a Belgian family took the house and they were shortly thereafter found bound and gagged and robbed. We were never touched. At any rate, the post was quite active. There were three daily newspapers in that town, as well as the Official University of the Congo. Most important, and in fact the reason that Lubumbashi existed, was the presence of the Union Miniere, the mining company owned by the Societe General of Belgium, that was the major source of foreign earnings for the Congo, bringing in about 80 per cent of its foreign exchange..

Q: This was a copper mine.

ZUCKERMAN: Copper was the principal product of the mines but there was also cobalt and silver and uranium, and probably other valuable minerals. The uranium for our first atomic bombs came from the Kipushi mine outside of Kolwezi, north of Lubumbashi.. So there was quite a bit to do. Whether there was enough for three people to do was questionable. With my press background I got to meet the people who ran the newspapers very quickly and got along very well with them. Not long after I got there, however, there was a staffing problem in the capital and they wanted to transfer me to Leopoldville. I had just about gotten the house in shape to receive my wife and kids, and I really didn't want to go there because they wanted me to act as assistant information officer. The officer in charge of the information section had come on a direct transfer from Tehran and didn't speak French at all, and by this time after several months, I was fairly comfortable in it. Ralph Smith who had been transferred to the Congo from Paris with his lovely French wife, wrote a persuasive letter to the main post saying that I had started so well that it would be a shame to take me out now. He was so convincing that they decided to reduce us to a two man post, made me the branch PAO, and transferred Ralph back to Washington.' He was delighted. I found myself running the post with no background in the administrative work at all. Luckily the third man at the post was Bob LaGamma, who went on to a terrific career in Africa except for a long stay in Italy. He became a PAO in Nigeria, South Africa, Togo, and Director for African Affairs.

Q: Is he still around?

ZUCKERMAN: Bob is retired now.

Q: Do you know where?

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, he is living in Reston, Virginia.

Q: How do you spell that?

ZUCKERMAN: LaGamma. He is in the phone book. I was at his 65th birthday dinner Saturday night.

Q: I will give him a call.

ZUCKERMAN: You should. Bob knew a lot more than I did about Africa. He knew slightly more than I did about administration but neither of us were very familiar with Agency administrative regulations. However we had a first rate Executive Officer in Kinshasa, the new name for Leopoldville, who was Charlotte Loris, who passed away not long ago, who was a great help to us in managing our finances. She also helped us solve a problem we had because there was a very loud bar next to our American Cultural Center, and it would disturb our visitors to the library and our programs.

Q: The American Cultural center was what?

ZUCKERMAN: The American cultural center was a USIS library. We could hold lectures there. We didn't have a suitable facility for showing films, which were important in Africa. The center of the city was European except for Congolese government officials who lived in good houses We used to take a jeep out to the African living areas that surrounded the city, which contained housing built by the mining company for their workers. We would go out several times a week to different cites, as they were called, in our truck which carried a projector, other equipment, and a generator, and we'd attach a big sheet to a wall. We showed films with three or four thousand people sitting in the square. There was very little other entertainment available to the people in the cites.. There was no television available to them, although there was a tiny station run by the Franciscan fathers that reached houses in the center of town. There was radio, but little else except the bars. They loved the cinema. When we rolled into town kids would run alongside the trucks crying cinema, cinema.!!!

We wanted to be able to show films in the Cultural Center, but the bar next door was so loud it became impossible to consider. It opened about noon, and by afternoon was a terrible nuisance. We couldn't do anything at night. The landlord of the bar was a Belgian named Mr. Levy, from whom we rented the Cultural Center. I told him it would be a boon to our relationship if we could annex that bar and break through the wall separating the two spaces. We could make it a theater, and because it would be at sort of a right angle to the rest of the library, we could have a sliding wall so we could enlarge the library for a conference area. We worked out an agreement. Charlotte Loris came down to help us negotiate with this Mr. Levy, who was head of the Boy Scouts in Lubumbashi. We reached agreement and took over the bar, and built a very nice little theater.

Q: Were our films in French?

ZUCKERMAN: Everything was in French. The Congolese spoke, had to actually speak, at least three languages. The Belgians made sure that everybody had at least a third grade education. Some went on further than that. They had to speak their native village language, of which there were some 350 in the Congo. Then they had to speak a vehicular language. The three vehicular languages of the Congo were Swahili, Lingala, and Chiluba. In our area and right up the eastern half of the Congo it was Swahili. And they had to learn French. So the youngest kids at least could get along in three languages.

Q: What about the Europeans?

ZUCKERMAN: The European population was divided almost like guilds. The Italians in town were the contractors, who built the houses and office buildings. The Greeks were smugglers. The Belgians worked for the Union Miniere, the great mining company on which the prosperity of Katanga province and, indeed, the Congo was built. Then, very surprisingly, there was a significant community of Jews who had come down starting early in the century, trailing after an adventurous young man related to them from the Isle of Rhodes. His name was Sol Benatar, who left Rhodes at a very young age and amassed some money selling trinkets to workmen digging the Suez Canal. Then he came down to Elizabethville when the Belgians had discovered the enormous deposits of mineral wealth in Katanga and were building the railroad in from the port of Lobito across Angola, the Benguela railroad.. Benatar bought land, made more money, and eventually started a textile company called Solbena with mills which I believe still exist all over the country.

Q: I was wondering. I have never served in Africa, but I understand most of the stores are little ma and pa stores in much of Africa were Lebanese.

ZUCKERMAN: My understanding is that that's true in West and East Africa, but it is less so in Central Africa., although there were some very capable Lebanese businessmen where we were. The Jews were not principally store owners. They were selling goods on a wholesale basis to merchants in the interior of the country. The community grew so large that the Benatars had a synagogue built in 1921 and brought down an Italian rabbi. They were very much part of the community. I imagine the Belgian community there is very scarce now. I really don't know what has happened to them. At the time there were some excellent restaurants in Lubumbashi, and it enjoyed one of the finest climates I have ever lived in, 4.000 feet high and nine degrees south of the Equator.

Q. What were your other activities?

I originally approached the work down there from the standpoint of my journalistic background, thinking the most important contribution I could make was with the press. But I soon realized the long term effect was going to be realized by whatever contact we could make with the students at the university. They liked basketball, so we put together an American basketball team and played against them. I am not sure whether that helped the relationship along or not. They were tough kids and there were a lot of elbows. I don't know if it was better for us to win or to lose. It cuts both ways. If you lose, you lose something besides the game, since basketball was our game. If you win, you lose something because no one likes to lose. But the students played well and I finally concluded that that was the best outcome; we won, but they were proud of having made it close. And so we played more matches, and we began to establish a good relationship with them.

We had a Fulbright professor at the university who was quite ineffectual, who was teaching Romance Philology, but we wanted him to teach English. We got AID to put in a tape laboratory into the university, and we started teaching it ourselves. The university was quite open to our participation. There was a Belgian rector and an Italian vice rector. Bob LaGamma and Bob's wife, Anita, who is a wonderful poet, had no children at the time (they have five now), and handled a lot of the teaching. I was also teaching, and we also involved a couple of other people from the consulate. The students were extremely excited about learning English, and we were interested in trying to identify bright kids who we could submit as candidates for graduate study in the United States. You sit in a classroom, and look around and every once in awhile you see a kid whose eyes were shining, who absolutely would just be leaning forward on every word, ingesting everything. We identified eight of those kids and went to the vice rector with a list of those we meant to propose, and he shook his head and said, "You are stealing my diamonds." So I guess we put our fingers on the right students. As in all cases, not everything turns out as we had planned. Some of those young men who did well went to work not in the Congo, but for international organizations. I am told that some who came back from the various programs we had were not well received when they returned to the Congo. Some did not survive.

Q: Well this is always a problem. I mean I saw this in Yugoslavia where doctors would come back with the latest techniques and the doctors in Yugoslavia would try to shove them to one side because they were challenged.

ZUCKERMAN: We discovered a young Italian student who was raised in Elizabethville who was studying physics at Princeton. This was when the Apollo program was being designed, and we invited him to describe the program to the Congolese students..

Q: You had better explain what the Apollo program was.

ZUCKERMAN: The Apollo was a NASA program inspired by President Kennedy's challenge to send men to the moon and return them safely within 10 years. This young man was very conversant with the intricate plan that was being developed. We arranged for a bus load of students to come to the center for this young man to lecture them before a black board and explain to them what the plans were. As he showed the configuration of the plans, the three stage launching, the separation of the lunar module from the mother ship, the landing, the separation of one part of the lunar module from the other, reconnecting with the capsule which would then re-launch itself back to earth, they broke out into peals of laughter. I realize now that the Rube Goldberg nature of that plan would seem to encourage skepticism, and let me tell you these kids were not totally naï¿½ve. I was told by the rector of the university that there was an uncanny ability in theoretical physics among members of the Luba tribe. They would eat up advanced mathematics, calculus and symbolic logic like peanuts. It was a gift. So these were not kids who were necessarily cut off from advanced thinking. But to them at that time they thought it was a joke. Later when we had films to show of the earlier Mercury program and the like, they were enthralled.

There was something though, when you showed films in Africa, not to these kids but to village people, there were very strange and unanticipated reactions. After Kennedy was shot, we had a prize-winning film that was produced by USIA that was called Years of Lightning Day of Drums. It was shown around the world. At one point in the film there were images of grief-stricken people from around the world reacting to the news of his death. The camera was fixated briefly on an old Greek woman in a black shawl with a very lined face. Invariably the audience would break out into laughter. I asked our projectionist, whose name was Gerard Yumba, why in the world they were laughing at such a sad moment. He said, "Because she is ugly." In other cases we would show a film where there was a transition of the seasons when leaves would drop from the trees and snow would fall. They had never seen snow for one thing, but they couldn't interpret the falling of the leaves as representing the changing of seasons. Seasons didn't change. It might change from rainy to dry, but leaves didn't fall; snow didn't fall, wind didn't come and blow things away, and so the language of film, the western vocabulary of film didn't make any sense to them. And as it turned out, the Congolese who saw the film, which consisted of the funeral procession to Arlington Cemetery intercut with scenes from Kennedy's presidency, concluded he was truly a great man, because he died and came back to life so many times. We would converse with the agency film division about these things, but they would shrug their shoulders and couldn't handle it.

Q: What about the university. So many universities including our own ended up with sort of a theoretical Marxist faculty or at least significant portions. It seems as if students, this remains the last resort of Marxism. How about that there?

ZUCKERMAN: There was a vague collectivist ideology floating around, some of it drawn from the village socialism that was part of African tradition. But it wasn't the kind of systematic Marxism that was found in Latin America. Octavio Paz, the great Mexican poet, once said the only place in the world that Marxism existed was in Latin American universities. But when Mobutu took over, there was a strong transition in the political atmosphere. Young people were sent in to take over the newspapers who were "progressives." But what "progressive" meant was absolute loyalty to Mobutu, and to a very strident nationalism. They renamed the cities to eliminate the vestiges of colonialism.. Even Mobutu changed his name to Mobutu Sese Sekou followed by a very long series of names that no one could remember.

Q: And the Congo became Zaire.

ZUCKERMAN: The Congo became Zaire, which didn't seem to make any sense at all. Zaire was a river. I am told that Zaire is a Portuguese word, but when the Portuguese first came to west central Africa and came to what is known now as Angola, that territory overlapped with what was then the Kingdom of Kongo. That was the name, and to return to the name of the Congo makes perfect sense. Getting back to your question, it wasn't Marxism as such, but there was a great attraction for what was going on in China, what was going on in the Soviet Union. Lumumba was apparently a Marxist, but you know, it was our coloration really, attempting to throw one blanket over all such political concepts that really led us astray. We sent one very progressive, outspoken, leftist student leader to the U.S. on a student leader grant. He traveled and, when he came back, wrote the most remarkable things in the newspapers. Of course he had some critical remarks to make about the United States, but he described the US as a genuine democracy, where people speak freely and do not get punished for it. He even gave a lecture to his fellow students, some of whom treated his remarks with derision, but others of whom were clearly impressed. I have never since observed such a remarkable payoff from one of our student grants.

Q. Why was the Congo such a mess then and now?

ZUCKERMAN: It is a huge, wealthy country, and at the time I was there it only had 16 million people in an area the size of the U.S. east of the Mississippi River. There are nine different countries on its borders, almost all of which were doing better than the Congo. So it was a source of frustration, and of course everything was usually blamed on colonialism, on the loss of nationhood. But there couldn't have been a strong national identity in the Congo before colonialism since tribal loyalties came first, and in many ways still do. We had a very great interest in making sure it didn't break up and that still remains our principal interest, since it would result in enormous instability in the heart of Africa and have repercussions in every one of the bordering nations.

Q: And what was living there like?

ZUCKERMAN: It was usually very comfortable. My kids, then 6 and 8, went to the Lycï¿½e Kiwele, a school with a student body about half Congolese and half European. Not speaking French, they struggled quite a bit, but working with a tutor after school they managed to squeak through. I found a great difference between the Belgian approach to education and our own because, starting with first grade, each class was assembled at the end of the school year to receive certificates to advance to the next grade. The kids, even at that age, were called up in order of their standing in class. When I went to Belgium on my next overseas assignment, I realized that must have been the explanation for the Belgian driving habits. They had an urge to pass the car in front of them even if there were a solid line of cars on the opposite one lane road, and wherever you were going, you couldn't get there more than ten seconds sooner. But they would risk their lives in the face of an oncoming car in the other lane to gain one car length. I thought it had something to do with being called up in front of their parents to receive their certificate in order of their rank in class, and having to beat out the kid in front of them, that was imprinted firmly on the Belgian driver..

My wife was pregnant in our second year there, and one of the periodic uprisings in the northeast broke out. The former police of Katanga, the Katangese Gendarmes, had fought the central government during the secession of Katanga from the Congo after independence was declared in 1960, and were suppressed finally by UN intervention. They had been sent by the central government as far away from Katanga as possible, far up into the northeast. But, led by some South African mercenaries, they were making their way back toward Katanga. It was thought that it would be better for us to leave, so I was pulled out a couple of months short of the end of the two year tour and went back to Washington with plans to submit my resignation, along with thanks for a very stimulating couple of years in which I was able to do some traveling in Africa, learn French, learn to appreciate the work that USIA was doing, and it was time to go back to my newspaper career. When I got back to Washington, I told this to David Dubois, who was then deputy director for African affairs and a wonderful gentleman. He said, "Well that doesn't make any sense. You did well there." At one point I got a commendation for work I did during the blockade placed on Rhodesia, once they announced unilateral independence.

Q: UDI, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence.

ZUCKERMAN: That's right. The copper belt in northern Zambia was cut off from the supplies of fuel needed to keep the mines going. The Anglo-American copper mines, which were more Anglo than American, were in desperate need. It was going to affect world copper supplies and destabilize the Zambian economy. So the US government set up a fuel airlift by chartering one Pan Am 707 and one TWA 707, and flew them down to Kinshasa. Ships would come up the Congo from Matadi on the Atlantic coast carrying drums of diesel fuel. They would be loaded on to these planes, each of which was configured completely, except for the cockpit, to carry cargo. It was 1000 miles from Kinshasa to Lubumbashi. Each of those planes could make three round trips a day. The fuel would be off loaded in Lubumbashi and trucked to the railroad, loaded on railroad flat cars, taken down to the end point in Ndola or Chingola in Zambia, offloaded and sent to the mines. There was a need to make sure that Africans knew what we were doing to help Africa survive, because many of them, particularly in east Africa, were skeptical about our intentions. So somebody in Washington got the very bright idea of taking journalists and politicians from east Africa, but mostly journalists, and flying them to Kinshasa, putting them on the plane to sit in the cockpit because there was no where else to sit, and accompany the fuel to Lubumbashi. I or Bob would meet these journalists at the airport, and take them to dinner, give them a briefing, and we would then get them on the train that was carrying the oil to Zambia. They would see the whole process, and then they would fly back to their home in Kampala or Nairobi or Dar es Salaam. It became quite a chore. I was spending my life at the airport.

One day a fellow was to arrive who was really more a politician than a journalist, a member of the Ugandan parliament, but he had a newspaper column as well and he talked himself into one of these trips. While he was in Kinshasa, Milton Obote was overthrown as president of Uganda, and this fellow was in no hurry to get back to Uganda until he found out how the dust settled. So I made perhaps four trips to the airport, having being told by Kinshasa each time that he was on the arriving plane. The plane door would open and each time my man wasn't there. We had no telephone communications, so I sent a telegram to the main post saying I really didn't want to go back to the airport again, because it was quite a drive from down town, until I was assured that someone had seen the visitor get on the plane, seen the door close, and the plane taxi out with him on the plane. A couple of days went by and finally I got the telegram saying he was absolutely on the plane and that I could go to the airport without disappointment. He was to arrive at about five or six o'clock in the evening and I went out to the airport. All of us were so fed up with this guy by now that I thought the best thing was to get him back to Uganda as soon as possible. Otherwise I would probably never get him out of Lubumbashi, and if I did, the people in Zambia were going to be driven crazy trying to get him to return from there. As I waited, I spotted a British Air Force plane on the ground. The crew was eating dinner in the airport restaurant and I asked them where they were going. They said to Nairobi. I told them I had a dignitary coming in on this fuel plane that was arriving from Kinshasa at about 5:30, who had to get back to Kampala through Nairobi in a hurry, and asked if they could wait for him. The crew chief said "Well, mate, we don't like to fly over the Rift Valley when it gets dark and it gets dark here you know, by 6:30." I told them I had been assured he was on the plane, and they agreed to wait.

At about 5:45 the plane came in, the door opened, and once again he was not on it. The worst thing I had to do was to tell those guys I had made them delay their takeoff for nothing. They didn't say a word; they just walked slowly to the plane and took off as the light was fading. I was furious. I sent off a rocket of a message not only to Kinshasa but to Nairobi and Kampala as an immediate telegram, which has to be opened immediately, even if it meant calling a communicator into the embassy in the middle of the night. Somehow, the distribution got to be Africa wide and I still don't know how that happened. People in communications were awakened all over Africa with my wailing and my insistence that this guy would never see the light of day if he pulled that stunt again. The next week I got a letter from the redoubtable John Mowinckel, who directed USIS operations in the Congo, telling me if I ever sent a telegram like that again I'd get both of us fired. My visitor arrived a couple of days later. I bought him dinner and put him in a hotel. Somehow the train down to Zambia was held up for a couple of days, so we emptied the petty cash drawer, hired a taxi and sent him off to Ndola. I presume he made it.

Despite my having awakened an entire continent, when I got back home I was congratulated for my work and encouraged to stay for another tour. I was offered an assignment to the US Mission to the European Community, preceded by a year at the Johns Hopkins Center in Bologna to study international economics. I said it sounded wonderful, but I had found that there were no English language schools there, and I couldn't subject my kids to diving into Italian when they had barely acquired enough French. So they decided I could do the work at the School for Advanced Studies of Johns Hopkins here in Washington, and it seemed a good idea to spend a year in Washington improving my grasp of economics, go to Brussels and improve my French, and only then return to journalism. We found a house in Virginia, our daughter Jennifer was born in September, and I spent a very enjoyable year at Johns Hopkins. I spent a lot of time with a wonderful professor, Isaiah Frank, who not only was the man who wrote the basic text on European integration, but was also very interested in developmental economics. There was a lot of reading, a number of papers, but at the end of it, the job at USEC was abolished during a general draw down of overseas personnel for balance of payments reasons. But I still went to Brussels, to the Embassy as Information Officer.

Q: This is balance of payments.

ZUCKERMAN: Balance of payments, that's right. They were eliminating the new job that was being created for me at the Common Market Mission, but they still wanted me to go to Belgium at the embassy, and I did.

Q: Well before we leave this, just a couple of questions about Katanga. You were there before the Shaba business came. There were two invasions of that area by people from I guess the Shaba area.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, well Shaba was the new name for Katanga. But we had left before the general evacuation of the post because my wife would not have been able to fly if we had waited longer. Bill Harrop was then the consul, having replaced Art Tienken in the middle of my tour. We got on very well. Harrop, as you know, returned at some point as ambassador to the Congo after serving as ambassador in Conakry, and later became ambassador to Nairobi and then Israel. He was very interested in what came to be called public diplomacy, which sometimes works and sometimes fails. There was one of many threats of an attack on Lubumbashi by former Katangese gendarmes from the far north and the Congolese government wanted us to send troops, but President Johnson opted instead to provide American aircraft to move Congolese government forces down from the capital to re-enforce Katanga. The planes, C-130's, would fly in with troops and supplies early in the morning, and leave almost immediately. The local population was not really aware we were doing this, that there was an American presence helping to defend them. So with Harrop's consent I asked the air force guys if they could delay their departure until the African market downtown opened and then come in pretty low so the Congolese could see the American insignia on the planes. It was my introduction to the law of unintended consequences. C-130s flying at a couple of hundred feet make a terrific noise, and the ladies both shopping and selling in the market fled in fear, but as I recall the papers called it a helpful gesture.

During this period, by the way, we lived under a strict curfew. Everybody was confined to home from 8:00 p.m. until daybreak. Restaurants were going broke. We were told to put American flag posters on our front doors. We were in good standing in the Congo, and an American flag on a car would guarantee easy passage through any blockade. But in this case we were warned, the airport was shut to all white people; no Europeans could go to the airport, and most flights were cancelled. We were in a jam because we had obtained scholarships to graduate school for two of our best students at the University of the Congo in Lubumbashi. We had to get them on a plane to Kinshasa to get on a boat to the States, which was to carry scholarship students from all over central Africa to go to the U.S. I thought this was a nice idea; they could mix and attend lectures preparing them for life in the United States, a nice interlude instead of just flying into a different culture without preparation. As the date for the ship's departure got closer we were getting more and more desperate.

Then we heard a radio report that the curfew had been lifted, and that there was a flight out that day. We picked up the students, who had been all packed and ready to go for days, and loaded them into our office truck and drove out to the airport. Before we got there we were stopped at a military blockade. I remember the young soldier who was aiming the biggest handgun I have ever seen directly at my head. What worried me most is that his hand was shaking. Luckily, both of the students came from the north, where the soldiers came from, and spoke Lingala along with the local language of Swahili. The students gradually talked him down, and he finally put his gun away and, with misgivings, let us proceed. The chief of security for the region was a man named Stanley Mika. When journalists used to come down during the occasional periods of stresI remember that Anthony Lewis of the New York Times came down once - I would brief them and help them get in touch with the appropriate people. Lewis asked me what the usual drill was, and I told him that he would meet with people in the governor's office, at the Union Miniï¿½re, the Belgian consulate and the US consulate, and pretty soon he would be picked up and arrested. Then Stanley Mika would come and get him out of jail and take him home for dinner. That was exactly his experience. Anyway I get out to the airport with these kids and take them to the plane and get them on, and Mika comes over to me. He said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "Well there was an announcement that the airport was open." "The airport is only open to Congolese", he said. "All of my men have orders to shoot to kill." So that was probably as close as I came to trouble, although I still find it hard to believe that that young soldier would have followed that order, because there was still a post-colonial mentality in the country, and there was a tendency to associate white people with authority. So not being confident of what to do without a senior officer around, he probably wouldn't have been able to carry that out. At least I like to hope so. But the persuasiveness of the students was undoubtedly the deciding factor.

Q: You mentioned you found that radio, film projections and teaching at the university were key means of reaching your contacts. What was the problem with the press?

ZUCKERMAN: Oh it wasn't very professional. One of the papers had a Belgian journalist down there as an advisor who tried to develop some journalistic professionalism. But the level of journalism was very parochial. Although they had a reasonable audience, with three papers in a town of a couple of hundred thousand people, circulation was restricted to interested Europeans and the small percentage of educated Congolese who occupied the political and administrative levels. For working class Congolese, even literate ones, buying a newspaper was a luxury, and radio was by far the main source of information among all, probably including the political elite. As a consequence none of the papers could make any money. They were largely supported by political factions or businessmen, and perhaps by some of the consulates. Congolese music was popular all over Africa and you heard it on radios all over the center of the town and in the citethe towns surrounding the center of the city built by the Union Miniere to house their workers. Strangely enough there was a very good classical music station as well, run by monks of the order of St. Francois DeSalle. There was a polio outbreak in the 1950's when all the schools were closed and the school run by the Franciscan fathers inaugurated a radio station and started conducting classes on the air. Its founder was a wonderful monk named Pere Richard, and after the polio crisis had passed he continued to operate the station with good music and news. It was a little island of the western world in the heart of the Congo, and was a good source of information. We picked up VOA of course, and BBC. The French had a strong signal coming in from Brazzaville, and the Paris Herald Tribune came in a couple of days late. Together with our cable traffic and the Wireless File we kept pretty well in touch with events. At one point the Franciscans put together a six, not 60 not 600, but a six watt television station that could cover the center of town. They began to broadcast films that they were getting from the French embassy, and we began to offer films from our own library. Interestingly they reached a lot of African officials who immediately had television sets shipped in from either Belgium or Zambia. But most of our film activity was sending those crews in our jeep to the cites. It was the only entertainment, beside drinking and dancing, that they had.

Q: The Congo had a reputation for practically the entire post colonial period as being a CIA province. I mean as far as CIA had a lot of influence there, and I think helped Mobutu. Did you find that the CIA influence penetrated to what you were doing and that?

ZUCKERMAN: Not much. We were good friends with the representative there, as one would expect in a small post. I probably helped him more than he could help me, just by the contacts we had in the university and by giving him some idea of what was going on there or among the media. But I was very hesitant to turn over any contacts to him. USIA drew a pretty firm line as far as providing any kind of cover. I guess there had been some in the past, but if there had been any kind of justified suspicion on the part of journalists or the university faculty that we were in fact not what we seemed to be, we would lose all influence and credibility. The credibility I had with the press came from their knowledge of my past newspaper experience. I knew what their problems were and what they were dealing with. They were putting out a newspaper under roughly the same conditions that we put out our student newspaper at the University of Wisconsin.

Q: OK well you came back. You took economics and stuff at the Johns Hopkins School for International Studies here in Washington? This would be '67 to '68 and was to prepare you for an assignment in Brussels. Right?

ZUCKERMAN: Exactly, yes. It was a broad spectrum of courses on Atlantic issues, focusing on European integration, but also on political and national security issues. I didn't seek to matriculate for another master's degree, because I didn't want to spend a lot of time in the language lab. But it was very useful. I had taken some economics in college, but learning more about balance of payments issues, about the mechanics of European integration, the history of it, that was new to me. That was very helpful. And I had the great good fortune of spending a good deal of time with Prof. Isaiah Frank, who had worked at State for a while as deputy assistant secretary for economic affairs, and who was a very wise man. He had written some basic texts on European integration, and was also very well informed on issues of economic development. Most of what I learned at SAIS I learned from him.

Q: Well now trying to capture the time, in a way European integration was almost, it was our policy child. I mean we from Acheson on had been pushing very hard.

ZUCKERMAN: Well it was a prerequisite for participation in the Marshall Plan. The whole purpose of the Marshall Plan was, while rebuilding Europe, to encourage the breakdown of commercial barriers and the growth of continent-wide cooperation.

Q: Coal and steel community, that whole thing.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes.

Q: Well now at the time of the 60's when you are looking at this, were questions raised or was thought given OK, this thing might become really successful, and might end up as a power unto itself, another European power which could rival us in I am thinking economic commercial terms. Was that at all considered?

ZUCKERMAN: Certainly there was that consideration, but I think the overwhelming point of view of the American government, and I think this was common to both parties, was that the breakdown of economic barriers and the strengthening of European confidence would make another European conflict far less likely. And also that Europe would be a better partner when we could negotiate with it as another great power, rather than have to deal with the prickliness of individual states that felt they were in a subordinate position in negotiating with a great economic power like the United States. Dealing as equals, it was thought, would be far more conducive to good commercial relations.

Q: Well then in '68 you were off to Belgium?

ZUCKERMAN: To Belgium.

Q: And you were there from '68 to when?

ZUCKERMAN: '71.

Q: What job did you have and what were you doing?

ZUCKERMAN: I was the information officer at the U.S. Embassy. ...

Q: Did we have, was there in fact an ambassador to an embryonic European Community?

ZUCKERMAN: Oh yes. We had a mission to USEC, the US Mission to the Common Market headed by Ambassador Robert Schaetzel, and a mission to NATO headed by Ambassador Harlan Cleveland, and we had a mission of course to Belgium headed at that time by Ambassador Ridgeway Knight. We had a three man USIS post at the Embassy, although our local staff helped us carry out administrative support for the USIS posts supporting USEC and NATO. At times I was asked to go over and help out at NATO when our mission was short-staffed during a conference, usually to cover the event and write a story for world-wide distribution on the Wireless File.

Q: Well you know there are periodic visits of the President.

ZUCKERMAN: There was only one presidential visit while I was in Belgium, but that was a big onPresident Nixon's first stop on his first trip abroad as President. It taught me a great deal about the needs of the traveling White House press corps, and it went off quite well. That was in 1969 and Nixon was greeted quite warmly by the Belgian press. We were worried on his arrival when he casually put his arm across the back of King Baudouin, who had greeted him at the airport, as they walked to the reviewing stand. It was a front page photo in the major newspaper, and to our relief the caption said that the President had engaged in a "typically warm American gesture of friendship" rather than treating it as an inappropriate act. Later on I was asked to go to Ireland to assist in working with the press on Nixon's visit there, with Tom Tuch coming from Berlin.

Q. What does one do to please the White House press?

ZUCKERMAN: The principal tasks are ensuring that they have a good place to work, all the facilities they need to move their stories, and access to all but the most private events, such as meetings between the President and the Belgian Prime Minister. This was before computers so that stories were generally filed by telephone or telex from the press center. Today they would do it by a direct feed from their computers to the newsroom. But in those days we had to have a huge room for more than 200 newsmen with ample phone banks and several telex companies ready to move their stories. We also had to have a schedule for the newsmen mirroring the President's own schedule, buses to take them where the President would be exactly when he got there, and access for photos to all events. If the press was unhappy, the White House would be unhappy, but from all reports both the press and the President's party went away pleased.

Q. And what were your major concerns? Belgium was a dependable ally, wasn't it?

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, but remember this was during the Vietnam war, and while a good number of Belgians remembered our role in liberating them during World War II, and gave us the benefit of the doubt, the younger people were very opposed to our policies. In fact, they seemed to be taking their cue from the behavior of people of their same age in the US and elsewhere. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was a blow to the left in Belgium and elsewhere, but it did little to allay concern about Vietnam. We also had problems from our friends, who on the one hand were afraid that we were neglecting European security needs by getting caught up in a part of the world that was of less interest to them than it was to us. On the other hand our departure from Vietnam would certainly cause them to be concerned about our reliability should we be needed to defend Europe. There are some situations that are just intractable.

Q. Was the press hostile on the Vietnam issue?

ZUCKERMAN: Not uniformly. The Belgian press represented virtually all shades of political expression, and we had good relations with all of them. The Socialist Le Peuple was among our good friends despite differences over Vietnam especially, but their criticism was never cutting. That was one of the benefits of the tendency of Belgian institutions, that they were typically headed by people of a certain age. They had memories of when we were really needed. My major problem was with television, which had two branches. RBT was the Flemish channel, and they were generally very supportive. RTB was the French language channel, and they were the scene of bitter battles among pro-and anti-American factions. The best friend I had in Belgium was Henri Francois van Aal, who was the host of the Belgian equivalent of 60 Minutes. They called it Neuf Milliothe Belgian population at the time was nine million. He was a very professional newsman, who later became Minister of Francophone Cultural Affairs, but while he was at RTB he treated us very fairly. We were able to help him become the first foreign TV newsman to win a Neiman Fellowship at Harvard, and the Fulbright Foundation in Belgium was able to help finance it. Unfortunately the person who became RTB's "expert" in US affairs was a fellow named David Lachterman who was truly expert in producing programs about the US that cleverly used material appearing in the US that was self-critical, without any balance by material showing, without cynicism, healthy aspects of our society. An example was the CBS program "Hunger in America" that showed American audiences something that shocked them because most Americans were not as aware as they are now of the pockets of extreme poverty that led some families to live in actual hunger. Belgian audiences, however, were less sure that they knew as much as they might about the real America, and the program had a greater affect there than it did in the US, because it called into question the image of America that they had seen in movie theaters. So we did battle for three years with RTB, winning some and losing some, but overall we made a dent. Our space program was, of course, of major interest in Belgium as it was everywhere. The Apollo 11 astronauts came to visit and the Belgian foreign ministry and the city of Brussels agreed on a triumphal motorcade from the airport to the Palace. We were worried about making sure there was a good turnout on the streets, and went to RTB with the route map. They surprised us by taking a camera mounted on a car to show the entire route on their widely watched evening news show the evening before the event. The next day the motorcade route looked like motorcades of Lindbergh's return from his Paris flight or of Eisenhower's triumphal return from Europa parade I witnessed as a child.

Q. Was the experience in Europe beginning to make you question your decision to leave newspaper work?

ZUCKERMAN: It did, but a career in the Foreign Service didn't seem likely given my earlier work in Democratic politics. I was serving on a five-year appointment as a reserve officer and that would end no later than the end of my posting in Brussels. But it was announced that the administration had decided to change the nature of the USIA Foreign Service by giving its members the title of Foreign Service Information Officers and the stability that the State Department Foreign Service enjoyed. The granting of career status would be determined by interviews with each officer by senior panels. I was sure there wouldn't be room for me, since it would provide an opportunity to get rid of people who might have gotten hired because of their Democratic political connections.

I was vacationing with the family in Italy when I got a message telling me to fly to Frankfurt to be interviewed by the panel that had been sent to Europe. I had to fly from Ancona to Rome and than up to Frankfurt and got in late, but the panel was kind enough to give me more time to get to the Consulate. I was subjected to a long and thorough interview, and I think I enjoyed good luck because the other people they had interviewed that day were young officers whose early tours had been in Sweden, Paris, and other European posts. I guess my Congo tour must have impressed them, and I didn't go out of my way to talk about the nice golf course or the good food and weather. Not long after I returned from vacation I was offered career status, and I was impressed by the fact that my political background had not been a barrier. We decided that the work I was doing gave me more time with my family than either politics or journalism ever would, and I was interested in the work. By this time I had become really involved and deeply absorbed. I was also mindful of my tendency to get bored with being in one place too long, and thaunless I was working for a newspaper with multiple bureaul would want to change jobs every few years. The Foreign Service allowed you to change scenery radically, to experience a dramatic cultural change every few years, without ever giving up your seniority. It was just unique in that respect.

Q: Let's go back to your experience in Presidential visits. Let's go to your first presidential visit. How did that go. This is Nixon's first time as president. He had been vice president of course. Usually the staff around, particularly early on, is both amateurish and demanding. How did you find this from the presidential staff?

ZUCKERMAN: Well, the first thing that happens to you is the White House takes over your life. They move in, and there is somebody assigned to the task of coordinating the public affairs side of it on the White House part and on our side. On our side, I was given the responsibility, reporting to our wonderful PAO Ed Brooke, of doing the basic liaison with the White House people and with the Belgian foreign ministry, usually in the company of Ambassador Knight and Embassy political, administrative and security people. They determined that the Hilton Hotel would be the headquarters, and we went over there with the administrative people from the embassy to work out the logistics of the press center. I pretty well knew what the press needed, where television cameras should go, where you could allow still photographers to go, where the writing press would go. I urged, successfully in that case, that the press center be joint, that the American press and the foreign press should share the same quarters. As time went on, the American government backed away from that because of complaints from the American press. I thought it was a big mistake, because the US press, particularly the TV prima donnas, often left a bad taste in the mouths of the local newsmen, and limiting our press center to US media could only color the press coverage in the press of the host country in a hostile direction. But the White House press office's major concern was, of course, how the President was treated by the American media, and we were left to pick up the pieces after the circus left town. In Nixon's visit to Belgium, however, that wasn't the case, and the local press coverage was excellent.

Q: How did the Belgian Foreign Ministry people react to our requirements?

ZUCKERMAN: The White House people would insist on priority treatment for the press. For instance there was one part of the visit where the President would lay a wreath at the Belgian tomb of their unknown soldier, which is located at a very narrow, crowded area of the historic district of Brussels. The need was to maneuver the buses carrying the press so they could get the best pictures possible of Nixon laying the wreath. But there were crowds across the street behind barriers who would be witnessing the ceremony, and moving the buses to provide for our press would block their view. So what we devised was a system where we would be able to move the buses in just after the wreath was laid and before the president moved away, so the photographers could get their shots. There was also a press and photo pool close to the President so that should have been enough, but there was another reason to move those buses quickly. We had to get them to the next site, perhaps a couple of hundred meters away, where the president was going into the palace with King Baudouin. It was at that point in our discussions that my counterpart in the Belgian Foreign Ministry, press spokesman Jean Francois de Liedeclerq (who had a son born the same day as my son David in the same hospital, the Clinique Edith Cavell) made a wonderfully accurate observation. He said in front of the Ambassador, the Foreign Minister, the White House people and everybody else: "You know, I have just come to realize the difference between the American approach to such visits and our approach. We will permit any role for the press that does not interfere with protocol. You will permit any roll for protocol that does not interfere with the press." That is a constant where ever you go, no matter which party controls the White House.

A year later, when President Nixon was making a visit to Ireland after leaving the Soviet Union, I was asked, because we had no USIS post in Ireland, to provide press support along with Tom Tuch coming from Berlin and a young officer from Vienna. Congressman Rooney, who ruled over our budget for a long time said, "We don't need a USIA mission in Ireland. We don't have any enemies in Ireland." He was probably right. I was tasked to go to Limerick where the press and White House party would overnight before going to Dublin. We had to look for a place to put 220 newsmen. There was no really suitable place. There was a beautiful hotel that was built by an expatriate Irish-American who had returned to Ireland, bought Dromoland Castle, and built the Clare Inn. But they wouldn't give him a liquor license for the Clare Inn, and he refused to open it until they did. So we negotiated with the county, and they gave him a liquor license for one night. So he stocked the bar and then he brought in all the new help. Nobody had worked there before; it had never been opened. We had the bar opened at least for the reporters since there was nothing else to do in Limerick. But there was a to do because the White House reporter for the New York Times, Max Frankel, later its editorial page editor, wrote a brilliant series of limericks, datelined Limerick, about the Nixon trip. They were hilarious, and the piece circulated around the bar. Much of it was focused on the staff's search for the birthplace of Nixon's putative Irish ancestor, which was thought to be a place called Timahoe. The problem was that they found two Timahoes, and arbitrarily chose one for the Presidential ancestral home. President Nixon's staff saw the piece and didn't like it at all, and to my surprise they succeeded in convincing the Times not to publish it. We left the Clare Inn and flew to Dublin the next morning where there was a parade during which someone threw an egg at Nixon and, by the grace of God, missed. We got to the airport without further incident. Now the night before, a dinner for the press was thrown at the Dromoland Castle by the man who also owned the Clare Inn. People had their choice of going to an Elizabethan dinner served by ladies dressed in Elizabethan costumes with all that they revealed, or to an old Irish country dinner. Well I went to the country dinner with some of the press, and other people went to the other dinner, and somehow I got very sick the next morning. I was in extreme distress on the motorcade going to the airport. I could barely make it until the President left. I went back to the hotel and was really having very a bad case of dysentery, worse than anything I had had in the Congo except for one bout of salmonella. I couldn't go to a farewell dinner that was being held for us that night at the Russell Hotel, thrown by its manager.

As it turned out, I missed a great dinner but I learned a lesson that served me well for years. I called the front desk and asked if they had a doctor in the house. This was in the Gresham Hotel, a beautiful old Edwardian hotel in Dublin. The desk clerk said, "Well Dr. Murphy is our doctor, but he is not here now, what is your problem? Maybe I can help you." I described my condition, and she said "Well I know what he does in these cases. I will leave word with him, but until he comes, do you trust me to give you his treatment?" I said, "I would trust anybody right now." She said, "Get undressed; get into bed." Shortly there was a knock on the door; she came in trailed by a waitress with a very large tray, and on it were two bottles of, as it turned out, room temperature 7-Up, two goblets, a canister, a silver bowl of sugar, a salt shaker and two hot water bottles. She opened one of the cans of 7-Up and poured it into the goblet. She put in two teaspoonfuls of sugar and shook some salt in and stirred it up. Then she put a hot water bottle on my stomach and a hot water bottle on my feet. She said, "Now you are to resist going to the bathroom as long as you can. Slowly sip this 7-Up and then fill it up again after you finish and try not to go to the bathroom." I tried to follow her instructions as best I could, but I didn't survive very long. I had to go to the bathroom. I drank more 7-Up. This time I held out for maybe 15 minutes, and continued drinking the 7-Up mixture. There was a knock on the door, and the waitress came in, replaced the hot water bottles and left two more cans of warm 7-Up.. I continued the process until, after another half-hour, I was totally free of my ailment.

The phone rang and it was Dr. Murphy. He said, "How are you doing my boy?" I said, "I'm doing fine and I don't know why. I have had all kinds of cures for this condition but this one doesn't seem very scientific." "Oh yes," he answered, "this is very scientific. Dysentery is a vicious cycle. You have got an irritation in the bowel that forces the release of liquid. The more you lose the more you have to go to the bathroom. It's a vicious cycle that has to be broken. So we give you a bland liquid like 7-Up. We put some sugar in there because you have lost a lot of strength. That releases the carbonations also, so the carbon dioxide won't be an irritant. We put some salt in so you will retain the fluid. The hot water bottle on your stomach relaxes the cramps and help you resist going to the bathroom." I said, "Well it makes great sense, but what about the hot water bottle on my feet?" "Oh," he said, "me mother always did that."

I have used that cure whenever I have been afflicted again, and it has always worked.

Q: Well, you were in Brussels from '68 to '71. You certainly know about the problems we were having in Amsterdam.

ZUCKERMAN: With drugs?

Q: Well no, I was thinking about anti Vietnam protests. I mean it got quite vicious against our consulate general. How about the anti war movement Belgium? What was happening and how did we deal with that?

ZUCKERMAN: It was contentious, but we were not the subjects of large scale demonstrations. We were criticized in the press. There were the same images on Belgian television that were seen here in the States. Yet I think Belgian feelings were tempered. The conservative party, in this case as elsewhere in Europe called Liberals, was strong in Belgium, and I was once told by the editor of Le Peuple, the Socialist newspaper, that all Belgians were basically conservative. He said "We have Conservative conservatives, Socialist conservatives, and even Communist conservatives, but we are all basically restrained in our behavior, except when it comes to the linguistic divide."

So while Belgians were generally critical of our actions in Vietnam, their real fear was that our strength was being squandered on a war that didn't really threaten our interests, which they, of course, felt should be centered on the defense of Europe. At the same time, many also would react to our defeat in Vietnam by a loss in confidence that they could count on us to defend them in case the Russians came westwards. Nevertheless, there were still enough people around who remembered WWII. Any taxi driver immediately, when he discovered you were American, started talking about the kids who demonstrate on the university campuses. "They don't understand. They weren't around during the war. They don't know how we would be living now if it wasn't for the Americans." So it was a period of declining popularity, but there was still, even among the younger people, an identification with the rebellious spirit among young Americans, the same identification that they had with the French youth during the 1968 demonstrations there. I remember seeing the film MASH with French sub-titles and not being able to hear the English dialogue because of the constant laughter and applause of the young people in the audience and having to depend on the subtitles to know what was going on.

Q: It was a series about a military hospital in Korea.

ZUCKERMAN: Not the television show, the film. The film came out in '69 or '70.

Q: '69. I saw it in Saigon.

ZUCKERMAN: I'm surprised the Army showed it to the troops in Saigon. The Belgian kids loved it. They loved it for its irreverence, and the fact that the Americans were criticizing their own war, that there was debate in America. Most of the tenor of the debate was identified as opposition from American sources, so they never lost respect for American democracy. They never were confused by the fact that American society was divided on the war. The Belgians didn't like the war for different reasons; the kids for one reasoour interference in what they thought was a war of national independence -, and the older people for reasons I've described. But they did not respond, for the most part, in the same way as was the case either in the Netherlands, France, or even in the United States.

Q: In some ways the Belgians were really a different breed of cat than some of the other parts of Europe.

ZUCKERMAN: I think to some extent yes. They were different not so much in what they thought but in how they expressed it.

Q: How about the University or universities? Did you get into them? You know some places the universities in Europe particularly after '68 which had stirred things up. It wasn't just anti American, so it meant that the left had sort of taken over.

ZUCKERMAN: The Free University of Brussels was that kind of institution at the time. It didn't mean that we were forbidden from being on campuses, but we were more welcome at the University of Louvain, or Leuven in Flemish, where the university was located. We had many opportunities to be there and we co-sponsored with their international affairs department a number of very good seminars on international affairs. We also had no problem reaching the press with serious seminars. We had a seminar for political writers on American elections before the 1970 mid-term vote. We didn't have access as yet to videotape, but we asked USIA to make kinescopes of a number of the Sunday talk shows and of the ads that would be used in the congressional campaigns. We had about 20 journalists in attendance for two days, with a mix of speakers and films, and even the leftist press came. We had good relations with all elements of the press.

Q: How about the Belgian communist party How did we view it and deal with it or not deal with it?

ZUCKERMAN: The Belgian communist party was almost invisible.

Q: It wasn't like the 27% or something in France?

ZUCKERMAN: Oh no, because there were strong socialist parties on both sides of the language divide. There was a Flemish socialist party and a Walloon socialist party. They were social democrats, social Christians, a Catholic party. They pretty much soaked up the energies of the left. The problem was that Belgium had this language problem, and it was by far and away the greatest focus of political energies. It wasn't left and right; it was Dutch and French.

Q: Well did you find was it kind of almost the way it was in Canada where you had to make sure that you touch both bases on everything you did?

ZUCKERMAN: Sure.

Q: How about your employees?

ZUCKERMAN: They were very mixed, but you know, many Flemish names belong to French speakers and French names belong to Dutch speakers. Some leading French language TV journalists had Flemish names, like Henri Francois van Aal or Luc Vendeweghe. And the reverse was true in the Flemish language TV. There was a great deal of hypocrisy involved. The extremes got people stirred up. I think it eventually colored the entire political spectrum. It was tearing things apart. Neighborhoods were torn apart. This neighborhood would have to be Flemish and that neighborhood would have to be French. And some of the conflict arose not just out of language per se, but because there was apparently more collaboration on the Flemish side with the Germans during the war than by the French speakers, although I believe there were Belgian Nazis of both communities who formed units to fight on the side of the Germans on the eastern front. But the language battle was a fight in which we had no dog, yet it was a huge distraction. The real battleground for us was television because RTB, the French language television, produced the most effective anti-American content, although we also had friends in both their documentary and news divisions of RTB. The Flemish language television was far more pro-American; in fact much of their programming was American sitcoms in English with Flemish subtitles. Their news programs were generally professional and straightforward, as, for that matter, was true of the RTB newscasts. It was the occasional documentary in the hands of one of the firebrands that gave us problems, far more so, than any of the political parties.

Q: Was that driven by France too? Or was that local, I mean...

ZUCKERMAN: Home grown.

Q: Home grown.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, it was more driven, surprisingly, by lingering anti-German feelings. The leading anti-American TV film maker was the son of Jewish refugees, who was motivated by his hostility to the American re-arming of Germany.

Q: Was there any competition there with the Soviets?

ZUCKERMAN: A little, but of not real consequence. I was once invited to a Soviet cocktail party and went with Henri Francois van Aal. It was the strangest reception I've ever attended. There were these security goons around the edges of the room. They could have had signs on their heads saying KGB. Van Aal picked it up immediately There were some Russian press and Embassy people who were being watched closely by the goons, who held glasses from which they never drank. The host was the Soviet press attachï¿½, a rather decent man, who was clearly embarrassed. The Soviets tried to influence the press by appealing to the Belgian spirit of fairness, since we obviously had a lot more influence. And strangely the Cubans apparently were active, but didn't seem to have much success at all. They were out of their familiar water.

Q: Well what happened. I mean did it have any effect on your work or anything in September of '68 when the Soviets and others in the Warsaw Pact went into Czechoslovakia?

ZUCKERMAN: Oh yes. Probably the most successful political film that USIA ever made was a film called Czechoslovakia 1968. It came out the following year. It was wordless. It was a mixed series of slides and film showing the history of Czechoslovakia from the birth of the nation, the pre-war years, the crush of Hitler's boot, the joy of the liberation, the re-birth of life, the Communization, the Czech Spring and then, finally, the entry of the Soviet tanks. It was one of the few films that we produced that we were able to place on Belgian television. The Czechoslovakian episode was devastating, a devastating black eye for the Soviets. Reaction to it was as bad or even worse than Belgian reaction to our involvement in Vietnam because it was closer to home.

Q: What about, you are thinking about this. This is the time after the '68 invasion of Czechoslovakia. An awful lot of the "intellectuals" in France peeled off from the Soviet cause. Was there an equivalent intellectual group in Belgium and if there was, how did you deal with them?

ZUCKERMAN: The Belgian Communist party was such a non-entity that no one cared. Belgian Socialists were not at all pro Soviet. I think the Khrushchev revelations of the Stalin era had more to do with the loss of any remaining illusions about the Soviet Union than the Czech fiasco. It didn't take Czechoslovakia to do that but it was obviously an embarrassment. We didn't have to exploit it; the Belgians did a good enough job.

Q: In Belgium they didn't have the same powerful intellectual group that they did in France.

ZUCKERMAN: There were of course people in the universities, and commentators in the press and well known writers who were leftists. But I just don't think they had the institutional framework that made a pro Soviet point of view meaningful in Belgium. There were some of them in influential roles, but there never was a feeling that Belgium was ripe for subversion.

Q: Well then in '71 you left, and what did you do?

ZUCKERMAN: Well I had always wanted to go to Asia and I was offered a job in Korea by John Reinhardt, who was Director for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and later, in the Carter administration, became director of USIA. It was more than an offer; I was sent orders to go as press officer in Korea. So we went back home for home leave, visiting my sister in Dallas and then undertaking the very long trip to Seoul with by now four children. My son, David, was born in 1970 in Brussels, by now Jennifer was 3, Julie was 11 and Chris was 13. So with four children and 16 pieces of luggage we flew first to Washington and then Dallas, and then after a week or so on to San Francisco and Tokyo where we finally spent the night. Then we left for Seoul where we were met at the airport with two vans to transport us through this incredibly different human and urban landscape than any I had ever been in. What came to mind was the old comic strip Terry and the Pirates. We were driven through these dusty back streets to an approach to the living compound adjacent to the US military base in Yongsan, at the southern end of the city. As we approached we were struck by a pungent odor, which came from a large truck into which muscular men stripped to the waist were emptying honey buckets.

Q: Honey being manure.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes they were collecting the human excrement which, I was told, was used as fertilizer by farmers. To leave this scene and enter through the gates of a small American town with neat lawns and tidy ranch houses was a dramatic transition. We were taken to a four bedroom, furnished concrete block house built by AID some time before. It was basic housing, but pleasant and very livable. It was fun, although very different from the lovely house we occupied in Brussels on Avenue Pere Agniello near a church square called Chante de Oiseasong of the bird, whose other name was Vogelgesang, same meaning in Flemish. There was a bakery around the corner and a wonderful cheese shop, and here, just a few weeks later, we found ourselves in this compound off the military base with a maid and gardener waiting for us, and we settled in.

We found the place was furnished. I soon got my first taste of what I came to realize was the incredible self-confidence of Koreans. In the shipment of our household goods that was eventually unloaded, we had made the mistake of shipping a washer and dryer to Korea, not having been informed that there were appliances in the house. But they unloaded the washer and a small but essential piece had broken off during the shipment, the balancing piece of hard rubber which kept the rotating barrel stable. The GSO was there and said, "Oh we are going to have to send for this part to General Electric. It will take about three months. We will lend you a washing machine in the meantime." While this was being discussed the Korean who was unloading the shipment picked up the broken piece and told the embassy translator that he had a friend who could make a part like this. I asked the price, and the answer was "A dollar." "How soon?" "Tomorrow." The next day he came back with the part. They had made a sand mold of the part, poured the rubber, and it fit. We put it in and it worked. I didn't realize at the time that it was a foretaste of what Korea was to become.

Q: You were in Korea from '71 until?

ZUCKERMAN: '73.

Q: What were you doing? What was your job?

ZUCKERMAN: Well there was an information officer and a press attachï¿½. I was the press attachï¿½. They did away with the information officer's job when he retired and gave me both jobs. Korea was in a period of repression during the Park Chung Hee regime that was particularly difficult for the Korean press. I was at a disadvantage because I did not speak Korean. I wasn't given Korean language training, except for some lessons I took early each day in my office in order to learn some basic phrases and to be able to give directions to taxicab drivers, but reporters and editors almost uniformly in those days spoke English. Most of them had worked in one way or another for the American press during the Korean war. My best friend, Chin Chul Soo who was deputy managing editor of the leading newspaper, Dong-a Ilbo, spoke impeccable English. He could easily have taught in an American university, or in a French one at that because he was also fluent in French. He is now living in the U.S. although, as was true of many of the leading intellectuals in South Korea are, he was born in North Korea. He taught me a great deal about the inner workings of the Korean press. It was very compromised by heavy political influence. Dong-a Ilbo, however, was quite independent, unlike most of the others that were owned by individuals with strong political ambitions and corporate backgrounds. The Korean national television network, KBS, was a very strong element in the county's communication system.

There was a Korean news service, Yonhap, which distributed its local feed to subscribers by telex or in some case by messengers. There was a great deal of interest in the press, not just in Seoul but around the country, in not just receiving press releases but actively participating in USIA sponsored seminars on press matters and on American subjects. They wanted to learn more about press freedom, as well as about how the American press did its job. They were vitally interested in anything having to do with American attitudes towards Korea. I think one of the things that made us most useful to them was when Tillman Durdin, an Asian expert and long-time correspondent for the New York Times, went to North Korea, the first American journalist there probably since before the war with the exception of any correspondents that followed the US army across the border. He had interviews all over North Korea and he wrote a very informative series of articles for the Times.

The Korean Editors' Association was to meet on the island of Chejudo, just off the south-western coast of Korea. It was a lovely island dominated by an inactive, snow-covered volcano. I was invited to attend, and we asked the Voice of America to do an interview with Durdin, in cooperation with our television service in Washington, and we supplied questions that we knew the Korean editors wanted answers to, remembering that the situation in North Korea was as little known to us or them as were conditions in China or other closed societies. VOA did an interview with Durdin, about 20 minutes worth, and I took the videotape to the island with me along with the equipment needed to view it. The editors gave it their rapt attention, and then asked that it be played over and over so that they could fully digest the interview, of which we had both English and Korean versions. All told, as a large group or in smaller groups, they looked at it five times. There was nothing more important to Koreans in those days than issues of security. North Korea's artillery was only 28 miles from Seoul, well within range of the city. More than a million Koreans had died during the war, and our presence was vital to their defense. As one very liberal editor of a leading literary journal told me, there were no doves in Korea, at least at that time. There was no misunderstanding of who started the war or why, and no confusion about what would have happened if the United States had not intervened. They had no desire to lower their guard in any way. That is not the case today.

Q: Thirty years later there are many Korean doves.

ZUCKERMAN: That's right. Little understanding seems to remain in the younger generation of the history of the conflict or how it started. Among other thing we did at the time was to publish a magazine which included stories on Korean-US interaction and which circulated among many Korean students. Along with a young officer who oversaw the magazine, I had an assistant information officer who was very skilled in communications technology, and he took to video tape very early in the game. I think the post in Korea was the first USIS post that actively used video tape in our information program. I remember one time when Secretary of State Rogers came through. We experimented with the use of tape to ensure that his press conference was accurately reported. Many of the Korean reporters prided themselves on their knowledge of English, but it was a mixed bag. Some of the press people in attendance could make mistakes in a press conference of such importance that they could have serious consequences. So we informed them before the press conference began that we would be recording it on video tapboth the questions and the answers. Since the event was taking place in the mid afternoon and none of the reporters were facing tight deadlines, we asked them to remain in the room after Secretary Rogers left and we would replay the tape, stopping it after each question and answer to translate to ensure that everyone had a full understanding of the Secretary's words. If there were any clarification necessary we would still have Secretary Rogers' spokesman, Charles Bralater deputy director of USIA - in the room to help to handle it. The result was that neither the print nor electronic press was guilty of any distortion of the Secretary's remarks, perhaps a first in our experience with the Korean press, which ranged from the serious and professional to the off the wall amateurs, not unlike our own press. The technique proved to be a useful tool, one that we used when we felt it necessary.

We also started to refine our methods of getting our material out to the large number of daily newspapers in Seoul and beyond; I think at the time there must have been at least six Korean language newspapers in Seoul and two that published in English, in addition to many radio stations and as I remember three television stations. Although we still made sure that important material got directly to the key reporters and editorial writers and columnists, we started to distribute a good deal of our daily traffic through the Yonhap news service, which circulated to all papers in the country. Since it was coming to papers through their own news service, the press started using some of our materials that otherwise would have been discarded or not even read.

We also spent a great deal of time with American newsmen. There was no resident American correspondent in Korea at the time, but Don Oberdorfer of the Washington Post, and Bernie Krisher of Newsweek, Herman Nickel of Time Magazine and others were based in Japan and would periodically visit Korea. Phil Habib was a very savvy and colorful ambassador who insisted that he get to meet with the US press guys before they saw anyone in the Korean government, and to see them again before they left the country so that he could pick their brains for any information he might not have picked up on his own.. To digress for a moment, I realize that I hadn't mentioned the ambassadors I worked for in my earlier assignments. When I arrived in Brussels, the ambassador was Ridgeway Knight, a legendary Francophile. Knight was replaced by the first political ambassador I worked for, who was John Eisenhower. He was the son of President Eisenhower, and was quite popular in Belgium because of the association with his father, who was still revered in Europe. He turned out not to be deeply interested in the job, but was a military historian and he hoped to have a good deal of time to pursue his writing and research. He was a bit irked by some of the responsibilities of the office. In the case of the Congo it was a very active and colorful diplomat named G. McMurtrie Godley, who loved to travel wherever there was fighting going on.

Q: A story I heard, maybe apocryphal, Eisenhower turned to his DCM and was heard to say, "There really isn't much to being an ambassador." Of course the answer was, "Well you aren't doing very much."

ZUCKERMAN: Well I choose not to criticize him. You know, I think he did the best he could. He brought a name that really meant something to the Belgians, and to that extent it was a wise appointment. In Korea however my ambassador was Phil Habib.

Q: Oh boy!

ZUCKERMAN: We had a Brooklyn mafia at the time. Mort Smith was the PAO. He was a very hard driving officer who spent his career in Asia. He was a junior officer in Seoul and then a branch PAO in Kwangju. Then he went away and learned Burmese and spent a long time in Burma. Then he came back to Korea, first as deputy PAO and then as PAO, and later served as press spokesman for Habib when he was Assistant Secretary for East Asia, as DCM in Singapore, and as a Deputy Director for the VOA.. He was from Brooklyn. Phil Habib was from Brooklyn. His secretary was from Brooklyn. The AID director was from Brooklyn. So everybody talked about the Brooklyn Mafia. Habib and I actually grew up in nearby neighborhoods. Habib was from a Lebanese Catholic family, but grew up in New Utrecht, which, like my own neighborhood of Bensonhurst was heavily Jewish and Italian. He told me that he was hired by his religious Jewish neighbors to turn on their lights for the Sabbath on Saturdays. He probably knew as much Yiddish or more than I did. We got on very well. He was very tough, or at least he had mastered the art of acting at being very tough. He was a wonderful person, who, along with his Ambassadorial limousine, kept a nondescript Toyota to drive around in without attracting attention. Later he bought a sports car that I think he drove only on the compound. He found out that we had a poker game going, a Korean-American poker game. There was Mort Smith and myself and Dick Peters the political counselor and four Korean editors, Chin Chul Soo and his boss Park Kwan Sang, both from the Dong-a Ilbo. (Park later became head of the Korean Broadcasting System.) There was also an editor from the Chungang Ilbo and the editor of the official government paper, Seoul Shinmun, the only one that was printed only in Hangul, the Korean alphabet. The other newspapers used a combination of the Hangul and Chinese characters.

We would play every two weeks, meeting in one another's house, first dinner and then poker. The best food was served in the Korean houses. One of the wives was a professor of home economics at Ewha University which I believe was the oldest women's university in Asia. She was a spectacular cook. We sat on the floor, ate and then played cards. Habib heard about it and said, "I'm playing." "We already have seven guys," we pointed out. "OK," he said. " Now we have eight, and the next game is at my house." So we all went over there, and he loved it as did the Korean participants, who had known him when he was a young political officer. But as a result of his being the eighth player we had to play only five-card games, and we developed a game of five card high-low stud in which you dealt cards and then you would turn the first four up one at a time, betting after each turn. The last one remained down. He was a great bluffer, but he was not as successful as legend would have it at the poker table. I don't know how, but I could usually tell when he was bluffing. His tenure in Korea was interrupted when he experienced a very bad angina attack. A young cardiologist at the US Army hospital really saved his life. He said, "Look, you are going to have a massive heart attack. If you have it here we won't be able to save you, but if we can stabilize you and get you back to Walter Reed so you can have it there, you might make it." That is exactly what happened. He was sent to Walter Reed and returned about three months later, 30 pounds lighter and determined to exercise. Under doctor's orders he took up golf which, before he took it up, he used to chide us about as a waste of time. There was an army golf course in Seoul and he soon became an avid golfer. When he went home and I later followed, we continued a foursome playing around different courses in Virginia.

Q: How was it working in Korea at that time? I mean Park Chung Hee was at the height of his powers and as you said he was a dictator, but he was also popular., I mean the farmers were doing well. The economy was beginning to come along at this time. It hadn't reached its peak but how did you find dealing in such a controlled society?

ZUCKERMAN: Well we were not restricted as such, but the people we were dealing with had to be careful, and we had to be careful not to get them in trouble. Some of my friends were arrested by the Korean CIA, which was a very rough outfit. They couldn't talk about it afterwards. We began to find out what was happening to them, that for printing unacceptable stories they would be held for several days and be subjected to beatings of the soles of their feet with rubber truncheons. That way the bruises wouldn't show.

Q: Did this discourage newsmen?

ZUCKERMAN: Yes. Chin Chul Soo eventually left the newspaper business and started teaching because he thought he couldn't follow the government's line. He had been the leader of the press corps that was taken to North Korea during the first meeting between the Korean Red Cross and the North Koreans to arrange family meetings. He was an esteemed newspaperman, and yet even he was treated roughly. When we had heard of a friend disappearing for a few days to a notorious Korean CIA house known as Dong Bingo Dong, we would get together for lunch with him after a respectable wait to let the dust settle. We met always as a small group. When some of them were taken we could let it be known how displeased we were, and Habib communicated firmly that press repression was a strong irritant in our relationship.

During one of the worst periods in the relationship with the Park Chung Hee regime, the July 4 holiday came around, and one of the two English language papers invited the ambassador to write a column for our Independence Day. He asked me to draft something, and I tried to draft it so that it wasn't inflammatory. But in describing American democracy it made the point that at the heart of our system was the belief that the government must govern with the consent of those it governs. I sent it to him and he asked me to come to his residence. He said, "Where did you get this from. Where did you pick this up from? Is this some Agency material?" I said, "No, I wrote it." His daughters were upset with him because, they said, "how can you sign your name to something that someone else writes?" He turned to me, not to them and said, "Listen. I did the writing for a hundred people before I ever signed my name to anything, so I will sign it. It's a good piece." To my surprise it was printed without change in the Korea Herald. The paper was run by Kim Soo Duk, also known as Sugar Kim, and I was afraid that publishing it would get him in trouble. Apparently it didn't because I met him years later at an aviation meeting in Montreal on the downing of the KAL plane by the Soviets. He, like me, was spokesman for his delegation.

Q: How did you find your relations with the station chief? Again our CIA had very close relations with the KCIA, the Korean Central Intelligence.

ZUCKERMAN: I had no relations, other than socially, and I didn't consult them and they didn't consult me.

Q: I was just wondering whether or not you could go to them or pass the word that so and so had been arrested?

ZUCKERMAN: That would go through Habib. He was personally interested. He knew the Korean press guys personally and in many cases for years.

Q: How about contact with the military, the Korean military?

ZUCKERMAN: We had some, but the US Eighth Army people were the prime contacts with the Korean Army. We did some filming for a newsreel we produced on the Army's training to build confidence in the Korean population about their military capabilities. Once I flew up with a camera crew to film the first night test firing of the Honest John missiles we had given them, not far from the North Korean border on the Imjin River. It was the coldest night I've ever experienced, even including Canada, but the sky was clear and I think the entire Milky Way was in view.

We got to learn more about the Korea military when I hired a press assistant who had been the head of the defense press corps. His name was Park Seung Taek. Now each of these ministerial press corps was kind of a club, and at the right time of year an envelope would be passed to the head of the group and he would subdivide it among the others. I never thought he would accept my offer, but to my surprise he accepted, because he was tired of being a kept man receiving surreptitious handouts. He became an incredible source of guidance for all of us, both at USIA and at the Embassy. My previous press assistant was a wonderful man, but he decided after having worked for 15 years for us to take advantage of the preferential treatment he had earned to move his family to the U.S. The last I saw of him was in West Allis, Wisconsin where he worked for a bank. But Mr. Park introduced us to military information people who helped us in many ways, and I think was of very good use to the Pol-military officer in the embassy by just letting him know who was who in the military. I mean this was a dense population and culture to penetrate. It is like Japan; it is really an extended family.

Q: Did you, I mean, while you were there were any of the famous incidents happening, the Pueblo or the raid on the blue house.

ZUCKERMAN: No, not those events. During my years there were occasional skirmishes along the DMZ that created periods of tension, but the most memorable event by far was Nixon's trip to China. Just the announcement of his visit was stupefying to the Koreans.

Q: Did it have the same effect as the Shokku in Japan?

ZUCKERMAN: It was, oh yes. It was a shock. And although the event was being broadcast on Korean television and our media and government information contacts could see it in their own offices, a large group accepted our invitation to come to our offices to watch it with us. Despite the fact they knew it was happening, and they understood why it was happening, they debated whether it should happen or not. When they saw Nixon step off that plane and shake hands with Chou en Lai there was a collective gasp in the room. They still could not believe what they were seeing, because we had been telling them for all these years that the Chinese represented a threat to their security. After all, they had come into Korea and we and the South Koreans and many other nations had to fight them on Korean soil. The relationship that counts most in Korean families is that of the older brother to the younger brother. They felt they were the younger brothers to us, and I don't know if the right word is betrayal, but it was a reversal of a dogma which they had come to accept as the basis of a mutual approach to world affairs. This was very hard to digest. Probably the government accepted it more easily. I think there was a lot of consultation. They had their own long term interest in China. Korea is a Sinitic culture. China still represents the mother culture, and even though they had their own and they fought to remain independent all these centuries, China was still the 600 pound gorilla in the neighborhood. I think it was in the minds of some long range thinkers in Korea that there would come a time that Korea would benefit from the kind of relationship with China that has now developed. There are huge Korean investments in China now, and Korean style is greatly popular in China, particularly among young people.

Q: You only stayed in Korea two years. Was that the normal tour?

ZUCKERMAN: No, I was supposed to stay for another two years, but my wife was unhappy with the high school. My son had taken up with some boys who were looking for trouble and finding it, and with a daughter approaching high school age as well we asked for and got permission to return to the US.

Q: And did you keep touch with Habib?

ZUCKERMAN: As I noted, we played golf in Washington, but not poker. He was a very busy man, particularly after he became Undersecretary of State. Eventually, he developed renewed heart problems and had to retire, but he avoided the heart ailments that had killed his father and brothers in their early 50's and he lived until 71. He enjoyed a happy retirement in California, giving occasional speeches and playing golf. He was truly an extraordinary ambassador, who had a great way with the press. He convinced them that he was giving them inside information because of his ability to give them the impression that he was giving them sensitive confidences. But he was really reading from the hymnal, giving them word for word answers straight from Washington guidance cables. At the same time, he never misled the press, and never betrayed a trust. The last time I saw him alive I was working as PAO in Brasilia, and he had just been named to the job of coordinating our negotiations with the Sandinistas and our relations with the other Central American countries, about which he knew little or nothing. Harry Shlaudeman was our ambassador in Brazil and not only the senior US diplomat in Latin American affairs, but also a former coordinator for Central American policy. Knowing of my past work with Habib he asked me to come along to the airport where Habib was arriving in a military jet. As we walked out to the plane Habib's gaze fixed on me rather than on Shlaudeman and he bellowed, pointing at me, "What are YOU doing here?" Nothing had changed.

Q: Well I think this is probably a good place to stop, Stan. We should pick this up the next time in 1973 and where did you go?

ZUCKERMAN: I went to Washington for five years, then to Mexico, Canada and Brazil.

Q: Ok we will get all these but we will take our time.

Today is 9 August 2004. Stan, you went to Washington. Where did you start or what were you doing in Washington?

ZUCKERMAN: Well, they put me in the East Asian bureau coming out of Korea, and made me the Japan and Korean desk officer, monitoring and assisting the USIS posts there. I was, of course, very familiar with the Korean program. We had a very interesting program underway in Japan which gave rise to a good deal of controversy within the agency. A very creative officer, Alan Carter, was the PAO, and he was developing a very experimental program that was upsetting some of the old timers in the Agency, in part because Alan was getting the attention of younger officers in other posts who wanted to put some of his innovations into their own programs. Alan had been the director of our public affairs program in Vietnam as the war drew down, and had held other senior positions. He had run the motion picture and television division for awhile. Later on, he was the deputy director of a division that went under various names but was essentially the central programming division of USIA.

Alan was trying to institute a program in Japan that took account of its very advanced appreciation of design, its outstanding educational system, and its deep interest in and concern over the impact of US policy on its own security and its economy. His approach corresponded more directly with the kind of analysis that a private public relations firm might make in dealing with the affairs of a client. The audience was more thoroughly analyzed than in most programs to identify the key people whom the post wanted to reach. Every program that was developed was carefully thought out, and had a beginning, a middle and an end. It ended with an evaluation by officers who did nothing but evaluate the work that was done and made an effort to candidly assess its strengths and weaknesses. He had certain theories, one of which was that we did our best work when the programming, whether they were conferences or video or film showings or lectures, took place in our own facilities. Japan, certainly Tokyo was a difficult place to get out to the institutions we dealt witmedia, educational, governmental, artbecause of the size of the city, the traffic and the dispersion of those institutions. And he felt that once we brought them into one of our centers, (and we had centers in six cities, Sapporo in the north, Tokyo, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, Fukuoka, and a VOA transmitter on Okinawa) we could create an American experience.

He also seemed to some observers to have rules that were extremely rigid and unrealistic. I remember one instance in which they were having a major conference on US Japanese relations and needed a high ranking official participant from Congress or the Executive Branch. I went to the director of the agency, James Keogh, who was able to get the then minority leader of the U.S. Senate, Hugh Scott, who was very knowledgeable on Asian issues, to agree to do an interview with the Japanese audience from a studio at the Voice of America. The problem was that Scott, given his schedule, could agree to participate in principle but had to withhold firm confirmation until we got closer to the date in question, because he had no notion of what the Senate's calendar would be on that date. Because all of our programs involving important people always ran the risk of falling through and disappointing our audiences, Alan had set a deadline for all speakers to absolutely confirm their participation no later than three weeks ahead of the event so that the post could do all the preparatory work, print the biographies and all of the displays that were necessary to create this total experience that he had in mind. He called me up at dinner time in Washington, to say, "We are going to have to pull the plug on Senator Scott, because the three weeks are up." I said, "Alan, you can't do that. He is not only a leader of the U.S. Senate; he was personally recruited to do this program by the director of the Agency. We just have to wait and keep our fingers crossed and try to have a backup set up in case it falls through." Well we went to the mat on it and Alan understood that it wasn't going to help his program any if I had to tell the director of the Agency that we're pulling the plug on the Minority Leader of the Senate. Ultimately Senator Scott did appear and made an outstanding presentation.

Sometime after that an inspection of the post was carried out, led by a notorious opponent of the Japan program, that returned scurrilous findings. One of the inspectors noticed that a picture of President Ford was pasted on a square block, a design feature, and he took it to mean that the post was conveying the message that the president was a blockhead. The inspection report was full of silly observations like that which made it plain that the inspection had been set up to do Alan Carter in, to do the program in. I had mixed feelings about some aspects of the program, but it certainly did not deserve that kind of treatment. It was achieving a lot in an environment that was far more culturally complicated than was true of most of our posts. Alan came to Washington and participated in the kind of face to face showdown that was reminiscent of what Erasmus must have faced in challenging 16th century Catholicism, because the dispute was both theological and political. Alan survived, but the real effort of his opponents was not to destroy the program in Japan but to make sure that nobody else tried to copy it. Well, this was a new experience for me. I had never truly worked in Washington before except for a brief period a few months before I went to language training and then to Africa. The other year I was in Washington was spent at Johns Hopkins. It gave me a totally different picture of the kind of problems that you are not aware of in the field, particularly of the bureaucratic infighting. It was a useful exposure for me once I had major overseas assignments of my own, and prepared me for handling relations with Washington from abroad.

Q: Well did you I mean it really sounds like you are up against a religious experience on one side or the other. People were Carterized or weren't Carterized. Did you get any feel for this? Why were people so adamant?

ZUCKERMAN: Some of it I guess was politically tinged, but I think more of it came from the old way of doing business in the Agency, in which a public affairs officer turned over his card file to his successor with the names of his contacts. Well, we had gone through several iterations of trying to keep really coherent records of people we had contacted, when they had been contacted, what programs they had participated in, what we knew of them, followed their careers. But Alan developed this to what some felt was extremes, almost a secular catechism. I couldn't second guess that. I had visited Japan when I was in Korea, but when I was assigned to back up the program in Washington I spent a month visiting all of the posts and getting a feel for their program. I started in Sapporo on the northern island of Hokkaido and ended up in Okinawa.

When I got back to Tokyo Alan was waiting for me with fire in his eyes because he had been getting reports back from each of the branch posts of questions that I was asking that gave him the impression that I was being critical. We had a real set-to, but I observed to him that his branch posts were manned by very young and inexperienced officers, some on their very first assignments after their training assignments, who had nothing to compare the Japan program with. They were obedient practitioners and followers of his system, but had little sense of the need to sometimes color outside of the lines. I showed him the schedule that awaited me at my hotel in Sapporo, where I arrived on a Thursday. Nothing was scheduled that day, Friday was a local holiday, and my schedule showed several appointments on Monday and Tuesday. I called the young man, who was single, at home and invited him to dinner that night. We had a nice talk. I said, "Maybe there are some people who I would like to meet despite the holiday or on the weekend. The schedule was so loose I was wasting a tremendous amount of time. I finally gently conveyed to him the understanding that I wasn't there as a tourist. So we did get some things going, and I did meet some people and learned something about the program. By the time we got finished talking Alan was able to concede that perhaps there was not enough awareness at the post of how beneficial it would be to the whole program if I understood and could represent the posts' program in Washington.

Q: Did you get the feeling that had been conveyed to you, here is a guy from Washington and he is trying to screw us or upset or do it in, so let's not open up too much. Were they were suspicious of you?

ZUCKERMAN: No question there was suspicion, not on Alan's part, but I think these people had been visited by many people interested in what they were doing, and the program had been the object of concern by some of them. Alan knew what was going on in Washington; that the old guard felt that he was trying to be scientific about something that was ultimately intuitive. Well, I didn't come to be a convert to the church of Alan Carter because I didn't think it was applicable to all situations. But I believed that it was extremely important that he try to see if that system would work in a place where we hadn't done a very good job before. Japan had media circumstances that were unbelievably more complicated than most of what any PAO confronted anywhere in the world, and the major media were remarkably advanced. I mean when you had giant publications like Asahi and Yomiuri or TV networks like NHK, these were gigantic media empires. They covered the country by helicopter. The educational institutions and research centers were world class, and Japanese artists had a profound influence on international design standards. He deserved a chance to see if his system worked in such an advanced environment. I think he ultimately did get that chance. But when his tour was up they replaced him with someone with strict orders to resort to more traditional methods of reaching people. I am not sure that worked better. I doubt it. On the other hand, I think Alan was not well served by having people at the posts who were so inexperienced that they were in no position to question whether all things in the program were effective or not. But nonetheless I admired him. He was one of the few people in the Agency who really had the guts to experiment with new techniques. I think they did wonderful things with their Cultural Centers. They redesigned them so that they were up to speed with Japanese design, which was extremely experimental, full of wonderful new ideas which have affected our own sense of design in the US. So I thought it was narrowness on the part of the Agency to be so skeptical and demeaning of something it should have been proud of. Well I only stayed in that job for a year, but it was a very good experience for me. I got a chance to visit Seoul as well and was able to keep in touch with the program and with the friends I had made there, Korean and American.

Q. Where did you go when you left the Japan/Korea desk?

ZUCKERMAN: I think we talked about the impact that television had made on me in Brussels, having come from a print world. I had met a Hungarian film maker one of whose films I had sent to Washington without anybody ever looking at it. He was making films about Nobel Prize winners and up, and I thought those were precisely the kind of films that would be meaningful to our audiencefilms on the most distinguished of Americans. Personnel called me and asked if I would go over to the film and television division as the policy officer, the number three position behind the director and the deputy director. I met with the director of television at the time, a political appointee, Bob Scott, a very decent man who had less than a realistic fix on how films and television productions fit into our mission overseas. He had realized that his division was looked down on by the rest of the agency, particularly the Foreign Service, because it seemed that film makers were making films for each other without any relevance to the program in the field, without any full understanding of our audiences. They kept score by the placement of their work in places where people had nothing else to see, Papua New Guinea or wherever. They weren't enabling the posts overseas to reach sophisticated audiences which, as you know, exist even in the least developed countries. The people who ultimately run those countries have a much more sophisticated understanding of the outside world than the people they govern. It seemed that he had sought to balance that by getting a deputy director who was a Foreign Service officer. But as so often happens, personnel sent to him someone who couldn't be placed anywhere else. He had gotten someone who was far short of what was needed. So he wanted to fill in behind him with the number three man.

I didn't fully realize that at first, and I told Bob Scott over lunch that I would not take the job if it meant simply clearing their stuff with the State Department to make sure that it didn't violate any policy or to monitor it myself for that reason. I was concerned about the quality; I was concerned about the product. I told him the story of the film I had sent to the film division that no one had even deigned to look at to see what someone in the field thought should be the kind of material we needed. He said, "Well, I promise you that we will look at it and if I think it is workable, we will let you oversee the making of a pilot of that kind." So I took the job. I moved down there, to a building in, at the time, a rather neglected area of Washington on 7th and D Streets, now a very lively neighborhood. It was a very different world because it was dominated by Civil Service rather than Foreign Service people. I was not aware of the intensity of competition and jealousy within the ranks of the Civil Service, in which you could not advance unless someone else was knocked out of the way. This was not true of the Foreign Service, because we were constantly changing jobs, moving to and from Washington and between geographic areas. You could be promoted by virtue of your performance and not necessarily because a job of that rank is waiting for you.

When I got down there, I retrieved the film on Rene Dubose, a French-born scientist working at the Rockefeller Institute, who was the first to connect environmental degradation with human health. I showed it to Bob and several others that he had called in to look at it. Everybody immediately said, "Oh it's not up to our standards of production quality." I said, "Of course not." It was black and white; it was grainy. That was not the point. The point was the content and the subject and the approach and the ideas. Bob said he saw what I meant and would let me oversee the production of a pilot to see if it worked. He then asked me, not in front of all these people but privately who I wanted to start with, and I said Margaret Mead. He took that to the front office. James Keogh was the director, and they came back with a suggestion that we start with Clare Booth Luce. I said that I didn't think she had the worldwide reputation that Margaret Mead had. We were looking for people whose greatness we did not have to explain or justify, but a subject that our audiences would want to listen to; who would want to see this film because of what they knew about the contributions of this person. The front office backed off and we started working.

Now I had no way to be sure that Margaret Mead would agree to make the film. She was not a favorite of the administration, nor was she a supporter. That was the first task. Next, I had to get someone in the film making staff, an executive producer, to work with me on the technical side. The production director who had been brought in politically was a very colorful guy from California whose beard was about four times larger than yours. But he had great sympathy for what I was trying to do. He gave me a young fellow just out of the Air Force who had not been contaminated by the old executive producers there, people who didn't produce films but who chose the producers and oversaw their work. They were the project directors, not immediate hands on people. The person they brought me was Tim White, a very capable young man. He was a conservative and I wasn't but we got along very well. He understood what I was going to do. We were going to try to do something which had a high level of credibility, which meant we didn't want the film maker's art to be so obvious that sophisticated audiences would feel they were being manipulated. We wanted Mead to narrate her life story and to talk about the contributions she had made, and to use those filmic elements needed to make the film attractive to the eye and to the ear, but to really make sure that the individual was the story, that her ideas would come through so that the audience felt they had spent an intimate hour with that person.

I called up Margaret Mead to explain our plan, and she said that she would be in Washington and would meet us for breakfast at the Mayflower Hotel. Tim and I talked about it first. We were going to have to tell her that this is a government film and that the interviews would take place over a much longer time than an hour, so we would have to edit her remarks. If at some point there was something that could be an embarrassment to the government, we would probably have to cut that out. And if she couldn't live with that, then there was no way we could run the risk of making a film that she would then denounce. So we sat down with her. Before we could get a word out of our mouths she said, "USIA is a great agency. You stood up to Joe McCarthy. I would like to make this film but I don't want to get you guys in trouble. So if I say anything that could be embarrassing don't worry, just stop the camera and we will start over." She was absolutely delightful. We didn't know that she knew at the time she had a terminal illness. She died three years later. The film was very basic. We made it very cheaply. We had about $30,000 over and above what I now know is a large part of the below line costs, such as the salaries of the people that are doing things and the administrative overhead. All that was there, the money was there. The government process spoiled me for my later film-making efforts; once we got the subject to say yes, the money was there.

Q: Did you get access of footage of her...

ZUCKERMAN: We were able to get from WETA portions of a film that she had made on her return to Papua New Guinea, and of her speaking in pidgin English with the natives there. So yes we did. We also shot in various locations. We shot a good deal of the interviews in the tower of the Museum of Natural History in New York, which was the temporary office she had been given when she first got there. But as she said in the film, "I soon found out that this was a wonderful office. There were two staircases, and if someone was coming up that you didn't want to see on one staircase, you could go down the other." She was wonderful. The film was finished and we showed it to people in the division and they said "Very good and interesting but you know, we don't know how the posts are going to react, how they are going to use it." I said, "Well why don't I take it and show it before we distribute it."

The system was that normally we would ask posts if they wanted it and you would send it to the posts who would order it. So I set off on a trip for one month. I started in Tokyo and ended in Istanbul with 12 stops in between. It was the most demanding trip I've ever made in my life. I would get to a place in the evening, work the next day, see people that night and leave the following morning. I went from Tokyo to Seoul to Taipei, to Manila to Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok to New Delhi to Tehran to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem to Cairo to Ankara and Istanbul. Everywhere I went we would show it to a television station; we would show it to a woman's group and maybe some other viewers that the post thought appropriate. Absolutely without exception, every television station production chief we showed it to said: "Why aren't we making a film like this with".... and then they would name their "living national treasure." It struck a spark. The posts liked it, and we sent it out. It was shown quite widely. As a matter of fact quite recently the centenary of Margaret Mead's birth was celebrated at the Smithsonian. Wilton Dillon, senior scholar at the Smithsonian, was a student of Mead's, and is a member of the board of directors of the non-profit corporation I formed when I retired to continue doing this kind of thing. He asked me to cut the film to a half an hour so it could be shown at that conference, and I did that. So it is still alive and in the National Archives, although there is some doubt as to the survival of all of the footage that didn't make it into the film. I still have to investigate that. I was told it was thrown out, but I don't believe it. We went on to make six films in this series, which was called "Reflections."

Q: Who were the people?

ZUCKERMAN: After Mead we did Samuel Eliot Morrison, the historian; architect Buckminster Fuller; AFL-CIO head George Meany, and NAACP executive director Roy Wilkins. By this time I was really getting leaned on to choose people who I thought had so obvious a political message that they would be very suspect, and would undermine the credibility that the series had gained. We proposed that the posts themselves could let us know who they wanted to show to their audiences. We sent out a list but let them add names that they came up with. The name that was not on the list but that everybody put at the top was Leonard Bernstein. He was younger than our typical participant. We wanted people who were at the age, as we delicately put it, at which it was appropriate to start summing up.

Q: The age of reflection.

ZUCKERMAN: The age of reflection. But we also did Bernstein when he was about 60. I wasn't around for the completion of all these films, but I identified the people and got them to agree to participate. I got Bernstein through a friend of mine in Milwaukee, Ben Barkin. He represented Schlitz beer which underwrote the summer season of the New York Philharmonic. When Bernstein came to Brussels with the orchestra, Barkin was on the platform behind him as TV floodlights blinded them. I called out "Who is that guy with Ben Barkin!" He almost fell off the platform. Well Ben got Bernstein to agree to make the film. It is the only film of the six that is not now in the public domain because his estate has got it tied up. Somehow the Agency had to agree to give him the rights to his voice, and gave the visual rights to the producer. Perhaps in time that will also become publicly available because it is a wonderful film. That was made partially in Israel because it was too expensive to film him conducting the New York Philharmonic, but it was much more reasonable to go to Israel to film him conducting the Israel Philharmonic.

But overseeing "Reflections" was only part of my duties. I worked very closely with our news division in an effort to get them to cover activities that were useful to our posts, and that meant that either we had to figure out how do stories that had lasting meaning, or else get them footage of timely events more quickly than we could by sending it through the pouch. An opportunity arose when President Ford was to deliver his State of the Union Address. It would be written about in the foreign press, but there weren't satellites around at that time to give them access to the event in real time, or to give them the voice and image of the speech and of the House of Representatives. And language was also a problem. So we set up an experiment to see how fast we could get the entire speech on film to key posts in the language of their countries.

We started by bringing translators into the studio to monitor the speech, with advance texts available, and take notes as they viewed it. We did this, as I remember, in French, German, Arabic, Japanese, Italian and Russian. At the same time, we had people calling around to all of the international agencies of the US governmento State, AID, the Peace Corps, the Foreign Agricultural Servicany Agency that might have people traveling abroad that weekend (the speech, I believe, was on a Friday). We found the people we needed and gave them a copy of the film in a large case to take immediately to the USIS office at the Embassy, or in some cases we'd have someone at the airport to meet them. The result was that on that Sunday night, the PAO in Bonn was able to host a showing at his home for a large roomful of German officials and newsmen, and other posts who received the films in record time thought it was a real breakthrougeven those who received it in English were able to use it for their key English speaking contacts. This was just a foretaste of what communications would be like once satellite transmissions became possible.

It was also the year of the bicentennial, and we were looking for a project that would be equal to the occasion. There was a plan to make a film about a forthcoming scientific breakthrough that the US was deeply involved in, and they chose to explore the early work in genetic splicing and its implications. Several of us thought this was fine but too narrow, and what we eventually produced was a series of 13 half-hour programs on the cutting edge of American science in, among other fields, physics, aeronautics, space, agriculture, paleontology (that one was called "Exploring the Past), and even social sciences. The films were very widely used and translated.

Q. And where did you go once the assignment in the Film division was over?

ZUCKERMAN: I had been assigned to attend the Senior Seminar in National and International Affairs beginning in late August of 1977, but in February as I remember I had a call from the Personnel Division asking me if I could recommend anyone who would be able to serve as spokesman for the US delegation to the Sixth Conference on the Law of the Sea at the UN. The delegation was to be headed by Elliot Richardson, one of the most distinguished public servants of his time. A friend of mine, McKinney Russell, had been named Deputy Director of the film division, and he was one of the best officers in the Agency. So I felt, having worked with him for several months to help him get settled in, that it would be a very useful phase between then and the beginning of the seminar to propose myself for the task, as long as Richardson agreed and would allow me to leave in time to attend the seminar.

Q, Well, you're a New Yorker. What was it like to go home again?

ZUCKERMAN: The experience in New York was wonderful. I was born and raised in New York but left on my 17th birthday to go to school in Wisconsin. I had visited my parents of course, but only had lived in New York again for three months when I got out of the army and took a temporary job working for Funk and Wagnalls, editing their international yearbook and looking for my first newspaper job. My college room mate, Dick Schickel, had become a movie critic for Time, and found for me this wonderful two story apartment in a four story brownstone house on the upper East Side that I was able to rent for the four months or so that I would be in New York. That gave me the opportunity to rediscover the city and to realize I could live there again. It was a great joy. I went back to Washington as much as I could. My kids came up. My wife came up, but I was relearning the New York City subway system, and I delighted in it.

Richardson himself was an extraordinary human being, a truly great person who would have made a wonderful President if only it were an appointive position. He often introduced a speech by recalling being introduced by someone who said: "Ladies and gentlemen, I now want to present the former Undersecretary of State, former Assistant Secretary and later Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, former Secretary of Defense, Former Secretary of Commerce, former Attorney General, and former Ambassador to the Court of St. James. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you the former Elliot Richardson." He loved that story and told it over and over again. But he wasn't the former anything. He was a truly great public servant, and an extremely decent and self-effacing man.

During the summer of 1977, the summer of the great New York blackout, I had a phone call from a reporter for the Boston Globe, his hometown paper. He said that he had just seen a private preview of an interview former President Nixon was doing with David Frost, and added: "Nixon talks about the firing of Spiro Agnew, the resignation of Agnew. He talks about Richardson, when he was Attorney General, coming to him with the evidence on Agnew. Nixon is saying that he told Richardson 'Yes, but you can't get out in front on this and announce it because everybody knows you wanted the vice presidential nomination and will think it is vengeance. So we will have to handle it a different way.' The question is, would Richardson confirm this." I said, "Well I don't know, but I will talk to him." It was late; it must have been seven or eight o'clock at night. We all worked late during the UN session and I went into his office and I told him of this conversation. Richardson said, "It is absolutely true." I said, "Well do you want to talk to him or not?" He said, "Sure, why don't you get him on the phone." (I reflected on the widely known fact that Richardson harbored presidential ambitions and would want to keep on good terms with the Boston Globe.) So I got him on the phone and stayed in the office as Richardson was answering the questions. I, of course, could only hear his responses, but I could sense what he was being asked. I knew exactly what was happening. He was in a talkative mood, and a very good reporter realized this and was leading him into much different issues than Richardson had agreed to discuss. I wrote him a little note that, on reflection, was somewhat out of line. "You should say only what you want to see in print and then shut up." He looked at it and he terminated the conversation. He said, "I wish I had met you 20 years ago."

Q: Well before we leave this Washington time, you were with the American Foreign Service Association which essentially is the Foreign Service's union. This is a pretty active time for it wasn't it? These were people who were, I mean it was sort of the era of the young Turks.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes it was. Bill Harrop, Charles Bray and Tom Boyatt were among the founders of the movement to take what was a professional association and change its nature to compete to represent its members as a union. This dilemma arose because the Nixon administration surprisingly moved to allow government employees to form active unions. AFSA would have to become a representative for bargaining purposes on issues relevant to Foreign Service members, making it a bona fide employee labor organization. If not, the American Federation of Government Employees or some other existing public employee union would have the inside track to organize Foreign Service officers. And the question was, did the Foreign Service belong in the same bargaining unit with an organization representing a much larger membership of civil servants, whose interests, and problems were so different from those of us who lived and worked under very different conditions and very different personnel rules.

Q: As you mentioned before, quite a difference.

ZUCKERMAN: Bill Harrop and I were friends from the Congo. He had been the consul general for the latter part of my stay in Lubumbashi, and had earlier served in Brussels. I saw him when he came through Brussels when he took a year off from the Foreign Service and devoted it to organizing AFSA as a union. By the time I got back to Washington, they had already won the representation election and were actively and aggressively representing Foreign Service interests. Tom Boyatt was president of the AFSA Board of Governors when I served my first term on the board. He's still active in AFSA in retirement. There was a move in the mid 1970's to absorb USIA into the State Department, a move that finally succeeded during the Clinton Administration. Everybody at State thought we really wanted to be part of State and be part of the Mother Church. I had mixed feelings about this. I had been in the Agency for only ten years or so, and could see benefits in terms of career advancement for some officers, but that we would face a loss of independence in carrying out our programs. Knowing what I know now and seeing the results of the amalgamation of the Agency into State, it is very clear that the fears of the old timers were very well founded. Public diplomacy has suffered a great loss of identity and agility by becoming part of a much larger bureaucracy, in which public diplomacy is being confused with domestic public affairs. I am not sure whether public diplomacy suffers by being more closely identified with the State Department overseas as some do, but in any case I don't think that is a major problem. I think the real problem relates to resources.

There is a natural tendency within State to consider the work of its political and economic officers to be the heart of its diplomatic responsibility. That's where career ambassadors come from, although it's true that a number of public diplomacy officers have gotten ambassadorial posts. And it's hard to dispute that the work of gathering and analyzing information about the politics and economies of the governments with which we deal, and to carry out the diplomatic relationship on issues of highest importance, is the primary reason for the existence of foreign ministries. But it means that, without the independent budget that USIA had, the functions of units of State that don't have the lead role become subservient, and their budgets become vulnerable. The major exceptions to this is Diplomatic Security because of the challenge of dealing with protecting embassies in an age of terrorism, and Administration, because they control the money. That first attempt at consolidation failed, and I'm grateful that I never had to work under the present conditions, in which there are no Deputy Assistant Secretaries for public diplomacy in the regional bureaus as there should be, but only an officer and staff at a functional or regional desk. And although there is an Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, he or she doesn't have control of the functional budget or of personnel assignments. Serving on the Board was very useful because it broadened my understanding of and exposure to issues that affected people in the Foreign Service outside USIA and State, such as those who work for the Foreign Commercial Service, the Foreign Agriculture Service, AID and others. There were issues involving Consular affairs, administration, and many others matters that I had never been sufficiently concerned about, and it helped to broaden my understanding of the problems of my colleagues. Above all, it helped me a great deal once I went back overseas and had a major post to run. I was made aware that we were not alone in the Embassy or even in USIA. So that was a very useful experience.

Q: How was the USIA-State merger issue finally resolved?

ZUCKERMAN: We held meetings at USIA to hammer out what would be the position of the two-person USIA membership on the AFSA Board. We formed a negotiating team within the AFSA board, trying to negotiate a description of a relationship which would give us freedom of operation consistent with what had always existed, meaning political policy guidance from the Secretary of State or his representatives. That was not an issue overseas, since the Kennedy administration established the primacy of the Ambassador over all of the agencies that worked in the embassy. We knew that the PAO and his staff worked for the Ambassador as well as for his area director back home, and that most Ambassadors understood that we lived within budgets that were set for us in Washington. The PAO had two Efficiency Reports written on him or her. We formed an advisory team within USIA to back us up in negotiations, and eventually arrived at a position that tried to square the circle, in which a closer relationship would be formed to negate the possibility of the kind of clash between the Secretary of State and the head of USIA that had occurred when Frank Shakespeare, a conservative Nixon appointee, had made public statements that contradicted the position of then Secretary William Rogers. But our paper had no effect because the White House let the matter drop and apparently was not interested in effecting a merger. I am on the board again by the way, as a retiree representative.

Q: Before we go on to the Senior Seminar, give us some more on your work for Richardson on the Law of the Sea issue.

ZUCKERMAN: Richardson was very interested in the way the newspapers were going to treat this sixth conference on the issue, to know if they would be interested in covering it after all these years of negotiations.. The impression I was getting from our contacts with newsmen was not promising. Their attitude was "call us up when you've got an agreement." The issues, after all, were very arcane. One of the reasons I took the assignment was that I had overseen production of a film on the issues involved in the Law of the Sea, including navigation rights, the rights of maritime passage, offshore zones of economic control, the mining of manganese nodules found on the sea bottom,. and the status of the sea beyond national territorial zones, that developing nations wanted treated as "the common heritage of mankind", to be overseen by a new entity that would. exploit the wealth of the sea for all nations to enjoy.

Richardson had two deputy directors of the staff. His principal aide was Richard Darman, who went on to be a heavyweight in the Reagan administration as budget director and has since made a lot of money at the Carlyle Group. His career was built on working in ever more important jobs for Richardson, as assistant secretary of whatever Richardson was Secretary of, but he felt that Richardson was a very dangerous man, who had, in Darman's view, unduly idealistic views of the world. When I came along and started writing stuff for Richardson he came in to my office and said, "My God. What have we allowed to happen here. The two of you guys think the same." He didn't think that the open sea should be treated as the common heritage of mankind. In his view that was nonsense. Who gets there first owns it. If you can mine the manganese, you mine it! The nodules were there for the taking, although it took advanced technology to find it and bring it to the surface economically. Manganese is an inappropriate name for it. It was the nickel that was within the nodules that was the most valuable mineral. But in any case, the press was not excited about it and wouldn't be until there was the prospect of an agreement.

I suggested that it could be useful to go to New York before the session began to meet with several key editorial boards to explain the importance of the issues to them, and he agreed. I set up calls on the editorial boards of the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and the New York Daily News. The Daily News was, he thought, an unusual venue since their readers didn't seem to be interested in such matters. But a former colleague of mine at the Milwaukee Journal had become chief of their Washington Bureau, and he told me that the new editor of the News was very interested in international affairs, so he helped set that up. We went to the Daily News first and were received very warmly, despite the fact that it was then seen as a conservative newspaper. Lo and behold the next day there was an editorial in the News supporting the goal of the conference, including Richardson's picture. The experts on the staff were impressed because it had been a long time since the issue had gotten that kind of attention. We went next to meet with the editorial board of the New York Times, where Max Frankel, who wrote those limericks in Limerick that so outraged the Nixon staff, was on the editorial board. We had a very useful discussion with them, and found a number of the editorial writers well versed on the issues. Then we went to the Wall Street Journal and we ran into a buzz saw. I have never experienced such vitriol heaped on a man of Richardson's distinction. He reassured me afterwards that he wasn't upset. But Jude Wanniski, who was a very conservative economist, ripped him up one side and down the other about the whole negotiation, about its economic aspect, and about the proposed changes in maritime law. We had the biggest navy in the world and didn't have to worry about anyone else. It was clear that the Wall Street Journal had a schizophrenic problem unlike that of any other newspaper. It is a very serious newspaper, with an editorial board that is close to insane. The contrast between the quality of work of its news staff and its editorial writers is probably greater than any newspaper in the United States and possibly the world.

Q: It continues too doesn't it?

ZUCKERMAN: To this day. We kept trying to bring them around. Admiral Max Morris represented the Navy on the negotiating team. I told him that the Journal's editor was not at the meeting with Richardson and that perhaps he would be impressed by the strategic issues if Morris would brief him privately. Morris had a lot of Navy money to spend so he invited the editor, whose name escapes me, to lunch at Fraunces Tavern in lower Manhattan, an historic place. Morris tried to talk the editor into understanding that there were very real economic and defense interests involved, especially naval interests concerning freedom of passage through straits. He couldn't move him an inch. Obviously he had been briefed on his staff's meeting with Richardson and I had the feeling that Wanniski was the point man for the board on that issue. My agreement with Richardson was that I'd be able to stay only through mid-August, and would have to go back to Washington for my assignment to the Senior Seminar. He gave me a nice dinner and I was chagrined that the draft treaty that came out of the conference was not ratified by the Reagan administration, although several aspects of the treaty have been accepted by us as international law.

Q: Before we leave the Law of the Sea conference, was Roz Ridgeway on the team at all?

ZUCKERMAN: No, not at that time. She was later in charge of all fisheries issues..

Q: But I think somebody mentioned, you know all this stuff about mining nodules was basically a cover for the CIA operation of the Glomar Explorer which was to raise a Soviet submarine. The nodules were not a possible thing and there was enough nickel elsewhere.

ZUCKERMAN: I am not sure that was the case. At the time the Glomar Explorer was out there trying to raise that submarine, and they could have used the undersea mining thing as a cover. But Richardson certainly took the mining issue seriously. He felt that we had to negotiate the ratification of the treaty at the same time we were negotiating the treaty itself. So he formed a very large group of NGO's with interests in different aspects of the Law of the Sea, tried to bring them along and involve them in every stage of the negotiations, as well as private interests such as those interested in deep sea mining.Q: Not just NGO's but private concerns.

ZUCKERMAN: Mining companies were very assiduous participants in those meetings and were represented on the negotiating team. They had samples of those manganese nodules encased in Lucite. I had one on my desk. They made sure to remind me of its importance. Now nothing much has come of it because things have changed; there is lots of nickel in Canada, Indonesia and Cuba, as well as, I think, in Russia. But at the time it was felt that not only was the resource of potential value, but that the principle of freedom of access was as well. Of course the developing countries were talking about some international control system, and that was anathema to the private sector and to many people in the public sector. But in any case I am not aware of deep undersea mining becoming financially feasible as yet.

Q: It may at some point.

ZUCKERMAN: It could be.

Q: Then you went to senior seminar for what, a year?

ZUCKERMAN: An academic year.

Q: What years?

ZUCKERMAN: '77-'78. We were the 20th session. We called ourselves the fighting 20th.

Q: I was the 17th.

ZUCKERMAN: Oh, predecessors of ours. Well as you know it was possibly the greatest year of its kind that anyone could have invented, but now it's been phased out. As Hume Horan, a brilliant member of our class, once remarked, somebody took a look at it and said, "What, a year for these guys to roam around the country and get to know the gay community and the Chinese community and go to Puerto Rico and talk to the factions there, and then traipse around the world? What nonsense! We can do this in three weeks." Well it is a shame. I think it was the most exciting year I spent in the Foreign Service in terms of really coming to grips with some of the domestic issues that we may have known of intellectually, but were unable to truly grasp the way the country was changing because we were overseas. It didn't hit us. We weren't aware of the impact that rising degrees of crime and violence were having on the cities and on the political behavior of Americans. During most of the year our focus was largely on energy, because it was the year after the great energy crisis when gasoline went to the unheard of level of 65 cents a gallon and there were lines waiting to fill up. So many of us set off in a different direction and invited a lot of speakers on energy.

But because it was the 20th year of the seminar, they proposed to the Soviet Foreign Ministry, working through their embassy in Washington, that they invite us to go to the Soviet Union for a few weeks and the Soviet senior diplomatic training group would be invited to come to the United States for an equal length of time. They agreed, and we went but, for whatever reason, they passed on the opportunity to send their senior training group. Before we left on that trip, which was going to be to Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev, we went to a briefing given by the deputy chief of mission of the Soviet Embassy, who was extremely acerbic, who said, "You are going to go and you are going to come back and tell stories that the Russians aren't living as well. You won't understand their culture. You will carry with you the prejudices, all the rest of it." We also met with the Polish ambassador, who later defected to the US, who was charming and welcomed us warmly. We stopped in Brussels on the way to Moscow for a briefing at NATO, delivered by former Secretary of State Alexander Haig, who had become our Ambassador to NATO. So off we went, and had an extraordinary time traveling for two weeks in the Soviet Union and several days in Warsaw. We were struck by the variety of experiences we encountered in the USSR. We went to the opera in each of the cities we visited, and were delighted by the intimacy of their opera halls. Even the Bolshoi opera house in Moscow was smaller and less overwhelming than most opera houses I've been in.

One day we were taken on a long ride to what we were told would be a model pig farm. The drive through the countryside was pleasant, and we were taken off the bus and led into a small movie theater and shown a film of the pigs and how they were handled, how well they were treated, and presented a slide show on the production levels and the scientific advances that had been made in the industry. Then we were led back to the bus. We asked "Where are the pigs?" We were told: "They are not available right now," We never saw a pig, a live pig at that pig farm. We didn't meet the Soviet deputy ambassadorin Washington again, but we all agreed that if we could, that would be the first story we would throw at him.

Another event that was more rewarding was a couple of hours we spent with a very engaging man who was the head of the Soviet Arctic exploration division in their ministry of science. He was explaining the importance of the north to Russia and of the great effort the nation was making to exploit the riches of the arctic. He also made reference to the Law of the Sea in connection with the Soviet naval program, and then took questions. I asked him why the Soviet Union had failed to agree to provisions of the treaty that would seem to be as important to their economy and security as they were to ours. He said, "Those are questions which affect all delegations, and each delegation has different perspectives on these things for various reasons which we needn't go into." I felt he was a man we should not press on this because obviously he was a serious scientist and couldn't honestly defend a position that he knew to be a matter for politicians to defend. We became aware of the extent to which political pressures affected every element of Soviet policy. He was a scientist, working in a society that was obviously very controlled, and left little room for dissent. We also were aware, since many of my colleagues had served in Eastern Europe, that Soviets standards of living were remarkably below those of most of their empire, something that was confirmed by what we saw in Warsaw. It may be the only empire in history where this was the case. This was particularly true in East Germany and Poland, and, I am sure, in Czechoslovakia. But we did have some warm contacts with our interlocutors which gave us reason to believe that there were a wide range of political feelings which, for understandable reasons, could not be expressed. At the same time, they were patriotic and proud of whatever they could point to as improvements in their lives.

In other trips we went to Puerto Rico and had interviews with all of the different factions on the issue of whether the island should remain a commonwealth or become a State or seek independence, and we were able to visit several other parts of that lovely but troubled island. We visited military bases, and went to Greenville, Mississippi at the urging of Hodding Carter III who was the State Department's spokesman, and the son of a legendary newspaper editor who was one of the few voices of reason in the South at that time. His mother was still living there. We went out to a remarkable dinner, to a place called Doe's Eating Place, which I think they tried to expand to other cities when Bill Clinton was president. They had the best meat I have ever tasted in the United States. I wouldn't include Argentina but certainly the United States. We went after that to the only place in town where you could get a late drink, that was in a Chinese restaurant. Hodding Carter's remarkable mother took us there, and showed us a trick I've used whenever I've found myself in a situation where it was necessary to be a good sport and show that I had some talent. She pushed a cork into a wine bottom and challenged us to get it out without breaking the bottle. I won't tell you how to do it but some day I'll show you. Greenville was a remarkable place. It was different from the south that I had seen. It was delta country, and older than Columbus, Georgia or Phenix City, Alabama, which were not settled until 1828. It was cotton farming country, and there were efforts made to support independent, struggling black farmers. We were taken to some African -American sponsored businesses that were being stimulated by the office of economic opportunity, and we came away with some hope that change was possible in the deep South, as has proved to be the case.

We also went to San Francisco and met with the leaders of gay groups, and the head of the Chinese community, who arranged a great dinner for us. We went to New York and spent a day looking over the shoulder of intake workers in a welfare office in the Bronx. We encountered a range of experiences that would have been difficult to imagine had we not had that year. Among our speakers, I arranged for my former boss, then Governor and now Judge John Reynolds, senior federal court judge in Milwaukee, to come and speak to us about the judicial system and its problems. He was a great foe of mandatory sentencing laws that had been passed by Congress at a time when the American people had been persuaded that judges were soft on criminals. He made a very strong case for letting the judge decide the sentence, because the facts of each case were rarely the same, and trying to make one shoe fit all led to many injustices.

Each of us was given six weeks to travel to almost any place in the world to gather information and write a paper that could be useful to the group. Hume Horan and I had become close, and we decided we should do a paper jointly in a place we might not otherwise get to during our lifetimes. That would probably be Antarctica. So we designed a joint project that would involve the political and environmental issues of that continent. But it turned out that the time frame in which the research would be done would be in the Antarctic summer, when large planes couldn't land on the ice. The Navy would have to take us from Christchurch, New Zealand, in a lumbering C-130. The flight could take more than eight hours and, if the weather closed in unexpectedly, we'd have to turn back and try again. We decided, regretfully, that the plan was impractical, so Hume did a paper on the administration of the national parks of the US, taking his son along, and I went to Mexico at the urging of Ambassador Patrick Lucey, chairman of the Wisconsin Democratic Party when I worked for the governor and later governor himself. He said that we were beginning to learn that Mexico could be another Iran and that I should come down there and do my paper on the Mexican oil situation. I did, and got access to a lot of interesting Mexicans with whom I later came to work closely. I wrote a paper which indicated that our fears that the world's oil supply was quickly coming to an end were probably overstated. Sadly, that remarkable year ended, as it had to, but left all of us, I believe, rejuvenated and re-educated about our own country. By the time it ended I knew I was going to Mexico as public affairs counselor, which would be my first post at which I really had responsibility for the entire public affairs program. It was a very large program with, at the time, about 20 Americans and 120 Mexicans in three cities, Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey.

Q. How did the assignment to Mexico come about?

ZUCKERMAN: Well, while I was working at IMV I got a phone call from Governor. Lucey who was in the middle of his second term. He told me that he was going to announce his resignation as governor the next day and would accept appointment as ambassador to Mexico, a post offered to him by newly elected President Carter. He said he wanted me to come down with him. I said, "Pat, we don't do things like that in the Foreign Service. Number one, I am the USIA representative to the American Foreign Service Association board. It's our union. We frown on ambassadors who come in and tried to replace their staff with old buddies. He said, laughing, "You know, I asked you to come back when I was elected governor, so I figured the only way I can get you to work for me again was to join the Foreign Service." I said, "That's very kind of you, but you should go down there and get to know your staff and work with them. If they are not doing what you want them to do, tell them what you want. If that doesn't work, you are free to make changes, but in doing so, you can talk to the director of the Foreign Service and to personnel. You can try to get the kind people you need, but you shouldn't do it without knowing first something about the abilities of the people who are now working there."

I happened to know the PAO, Len Baldyga, who was there at the time and was a friend of mine who had a very good record, and told Lucey he should keep an open mind about him and others on his staff. So Lucey went to Mexico but six months later he came back to Washington and we had dinner. He said that he had problems with his Country Team, that it seemed that Mexico for many years had been a retirement post. Not much had been going on, but that Mexico was changing. Not only was the population growing rapidly, but they suspected that there was a good deal more oil than had been thought in their offshore reserves. He said that the PAO was a very capable man but that he was laid low with a bad back and that his staff was not really giving the Ambassador the support he needed. He said it was true of virtually the entire Country Team, made up of the heads of key sections and other Agencies. I told him that I had accepted a request by the Agency to go to New York to work for Elliot Richardson, who was going to be Ambassador to the sixth UN conference on the law of the sea. I had agreed to go up there to work for him in Washington and then go up to New York for the session until August, when I was to go into the Senior Seminar in National and International Affairs, a very prestigious year-long assignment. So I said there is no way I would be available. I was already in the 'midst of my senior seminar year, when he came back to Washington. He said he was going to make all the changes he had talked about, including most of the Country Team. He was really fond of Len Baldyga, who went on to very high level assignments including directing our programs in Europe, but thought that Len, whose interest was mainly in Eastern Europe, also might welcome a change. I said that decision was between him and the director of the Agency; that he would have to talk to John Reinhardt, the Director of the Agency under President Carter, and if Reinhardt wanted me to go to Mexico when I finished the Senior Seminar I would. Director Reinhardt agreed to the transfer, so at the end of the senior seminar I went to Mexico.

Q: This is during USIA?

ZUCKERMAN: Yes.

Q: OK, you were there from '78 until when?

ZUCKERMAN: 1983. It was my longest time at a post, and in retrospect the greatest opportunity I had had in my career to effect changes in perceptions in a complicated country. It was a time of great change in Mexico, in which there was great admiration for our democracy, as well as a strong underlying historical animosity. My time there spanned much of the terms of three ambassadors.

Q: When you went out there, I mean obviously with a friend, governor Lucey, as ambassador there, you had been hearing about this and all. What were you getting about Lucey and the USIA operation before you went there?

ZUCKERMAN: I knew that he was on very bad terms, not with the PAO who he liked, but with some of the staff. Len had very serious back problems at the time and for much of the time his deputy was running the post. There was a feeling that Ambassador Lucey expected the post to operate as his public affairs staff did when he was governor of Wisconsin, with press releases going out every couple of days. I told him when I heard about it that I thought that was a mistake. But by the time I got there the well had been a bit poisoned and the staff was in the doghouse. They felt that he didn't understand their program, and he felt they didn't understand his needs. It was a bad situation. When I went down, of course I was free to talk to him in a way that other counselors couldn't because they didn't have the long personal friendship with him that I had. I told him that he was probably harming himself by creating too high a profile, by being so prominent in the press, and it would be better to lower it somewhat. He did, and I asked him if would agree to meet with my staff, get to know some of them, and talk about what his problems were and how we could best support him, and let us exchange ideas on that.. He came down and he was pretty strong in stating what he thought we should be doing, laying out a level of activity that sounded like an election campaign. I went to him afterwards to talk it over, without doing it in front of the staff, and told him that there were things we not only shouldn't do but in fact couldn't do. That we would work up a program that will help support the country plan's goals, and also try to help him communicate effectively with the Mexican public because when the U.S. ambassador to Mexico said something, he was listened to. But this also meant he couldn't expect to do that on a daily basis, because it would appear overbearing and meddlesome.

This was in early September or October, and we were beginning to turn some things around. We had some staff changes. I wanted to bring down a new press attachï¿½/information officer because I thought that was one of the problems. The incumbent was quite competent, but had lost the ambassador's confidence. Lucey was upset because as governor he would travel around Wisconsin with one assistant who would handle press matters and also take notes for thank you letters and the like. But he had too many people traveling with him as ambassador and he thought it was a waste of money. He wanted the press attachï¿½ to travel with him but also to serve as an assistant for the note taking. The press attachï¿½ thought it wasn't his job to do so, and the ambassador said "Well either the press attachï¿½ will help do some staff work for me, or my staff assistant will do the press work." So the result was we lost a man traveling with the ambassador, which I thought was a setback since I wanted him to support our program and I thought we should do our best to support him. The Agency agreed that I could bring down Larry Ikels, a very able replacement who could do the job, and that problem was resolved. So we were getting things turned around when all of a sudden, we got word that President Carter would be coming to visit in February. You know what a presidential visit means; it displaces all other activity. But in this case the White House descended on us in early December and we were just upside down for the next three months in preparation for that visit. I had worked on President Nixon's visit to Brussels, but although I was a liaison to the White House press people I was not the PAO there. This one was a much bigger event because there was no real problem in our bilateral relationship in Brussels, but in Mexico, the oil issue had become very important.

The left in Mexico felt that a deal to sell oil and gas to the United States meant bargaining away Mexico's patrimony. Oil concessions had been given to British and American companies in the early part of the 20th century when there were fields discovered in Tampico up on the Caribbean coast. The industry was nationalized by President Lazaro Cardenas who mobilized the oil workers to support his actions. There is a major statue on the upper part of the Avenue Reforma, leading to the upscale neighborhood of Lomas, of Los Petroleros, the oil workers who led the drive to nationalize the oil industry. Oil and Mexican nationalism were identified as being one and the same. So the left raised a storm. Here was Jimmy Carter coming down and the papers were up in arms. "He is coming to steal our oil. They will take our oil; they want to take everything away from us". We were having country team meetings about the visit, and I said it was getting to be such a confrontational thing that we needed a cultural event of some kind to soften the atmosphere and to try to assure Mexicans that this is not a crisis situation, but a natural feature of a long term relationship.

At first we proposed that Vladimir Horowitz be invited to come down and play. The White House objected because he had played at the White House and then had released a record that used the White House for what they felt was self-promotion. There were three symphony Orchestras in Mexico City, the National Symphony, the National University Orchestra, and the Mexico City Philharmonic, which was founded by the wife of President Lopez Portillo. It was the best of the three, with internationally recruited members. The president's wife was herself a competent amateur pianist. Mexico was swimming in oil money then, and she had brought in Americans, Russians, Poles, Germans and French and had hired some of the best Mexican instrumentalists as well. It was an international orchestra, although the Mexican conductor was hired because of his friendship with Mrs. Lopez Portillo rather than for his talent. I suggested we ask Leonard Bernstein to conduct a concert with the orchestra, an invitational concert for the business community, diplomatic community, senior officials of the Mexican government, cultural figures and with the two Presidents and their major aides in attendance. I didn't know it at the time but Bernstein had celebrated his honeymoon in Acapulco, and had written "Trouble in Tahiti" while he was vacationing in Mexico. The White House liked the idea, and Bernstein agreed to do it for expenses only. Well we were delighted. Mrs. Lopez Portillo was delighted, although her first choice for a cultural event had been a grand exhibit of American art. I was told by my staff that during the US bicentennial celebration there was an exhibit arranged for travel to three posts, Warsaw, Paris and Mexico, It was called The World of Franklin and Jefferson, and contained splendid displays of that period. It was put on a train to come to Mexico City, but the train could not be found for about four days. It was carrying material borrowed from museums all over the US, and word of that fiasco made the White House back off. So we got Bernstein, but we promised Mrs. Lopez Portillo that we would try to organize an exhibit of American art when we could do so with the proper amount of planning, something that was impossible just before a Presidential visit.

Bernstein came down, but sent ahead a program for the concert. It consisted of a mix of American and Mexican music. I remember it included the Symphonia Indio by Carlos Chavez, El Salon Mexico by Aaron Copeland, Samuel Barber's Elegy for Strings and would conclude with the Bernstein Symphonic Dances from West Side Story. I was awakened at 2 a.m. shortly after we received the program, by a fiery redhead with the title of ambassador who worked for Mrs. Lopez Portillo. She said, "Who decided on that program?" I said, "Why Leonard Bernstein of course." "But Mrs. Lopez Portillo was never asked," she said, and I said, "I don't think that Mr. Bernstein, who is conducting for nothing, and who as the conductor normally chooses the program, was aware that she wished to be consulted." The Ambassadress said President and Mrs. Lopez Portillo detested West Side Story because it showed the Hispanic population in a poor light. So that selection would have to go, and in any case she wanted the second part of the concert to be a classical symphony, preferably German. I said that that was above my pay grade, and we got Bernstein's agent Harry Kraut to come down to Mexico and to meet with Alfredo Elias, who was nominally the head of a non governmental charitable organization, an organization of Mrs. Lopez Portillo's, but really was a principal advisor to her, to come to my office. He said that the wife of the President had very strong opinions and in Mexico her word was law on cultural matters. Kraut said, "Well I don't know. Lenny was asked to conduct the concert in honor of the 20th anniversary of the consecration of the reign of Pope Paul VI. The Pope's staff sent up a list of music for Lenny to choose from and Lenny told the Pope he would take it under consideration." Well, Alfredo's face went pale. He got Mrs. Lopez Portillo on the phone and put her on with Kraut, who said, "I don't know. I guess we won't have a concert. I don't know how Lenny feels about this but I will leave it up to him" We thought the whole thing was off, but Bernstein sent word that he would take the West Side Story waltz's off the program and perform Beethoven's Fifth Symphony instead. I couldn't believe it, but the fact was that he understood Mexico. He understood that this was important, and didn't want to create a diplomatic incident. He came down and he conducted a wonderful concert before a packed house of some of the most important people in Mexico, with the two presidents sitting there with their secretaries of state and national security advisors in the presidential box and the diplomatic corps, the cultural elite of Mexico, and Mexican and American business leaders filling the theater..

At the end of the concert, Bernstein took a great bow, walked off in his resplendent white cutaway, and the applause continued awaiting his return for more bows. But instead, the orchestra's regular conductor appeared in a business suit and led the orchestra in the two national anthems and the concert came to a close. Afterwards there was a dinner at the ambassador's house with Lopez Portillo and Bernstein having a contest as to who could start a Latin American song that the other one couldn't finish. It went on until 1 a.m. After the dinner, I wanted Elias to meet Bernstein, and we went to the Presidential suite which the government had provided him in a superb hotel. Bernstein came in and told Elias that the orchestra's conductor had pushed his way past him in the wings of the stage, blocking him from returning for a bow and from having the orchestra receive a standing ovation as well. : "That conductor should be fired," he said, "not because of what he did to me, but because he does not love music."

You could tell the experience was a wonderful one for the orchestra, and they really played their hearts out. They never sounded so good. Anyway, a year or so later, Mrs. Lopez Portillo reminded us that we had promised to follow through on a major art exhibit. We negotiated it and the Mexicans promised to bear a good share of the cost in security, transportation, a lot of things. So I went to Washington and told them we have to follow through on this. The Mexican relationship was becoming so important; oil and immigration, trade and drugs were major bilateral issues. There were so many issues that Lucey suggested that a meeting be held in Washington with the agencies that had interests and responsibilities for aspects of our relationship with Mexico. He went up there and he called me and said: "You want to know what happened when I walked into that room? There were 70 people there. Virtually every agency of the U.S. government had some part of this."

Q: Also telephone and personal relationships that completely bypass the embassy.

ZUCKERMAN: That happened a little later in Mexico, but I experienced that in Canada, where the embassy was a bystander, where EPA, you know they were buddies with their counterparts in the US. We started a series of binational meetings that involved the foreign minister and elements of Mexico's bureaucracy and ours that interfaced, from law enforcement to immigration to commerce to customs to agriculture to EPA, all of them. It was and still is a very intense interaction. And more so now of course since NAFTA. I remember one of my professors at SAIS, Isaiah Frank, a former deputy assistant secretary for economic affairs, stopped me on the street one day while I was visiting Washington. and said, "You know, a group of us floated this idea, maybe you have seen it. A group of us got together about the wisdom of looking for a free trade relationship with Mexico." I said, I didn't think it was politically possible at that time. I meant that they would see it as another attempt by the United States to dominate Mexico, draw it further away from Latin America to North America, which it was geographically but not culturally or emotionally part of, but saw itself as distinctly different from the US-Canadian relationship.

Well it became a fact much sooner than I would have guessed. It became a fact not just because of significant changes in the Mexican government, but in the Mexican population. Mexico was slowly but surely developing a population of middle class, educated people, who cold no longer abide not having the political freedom that should go along with the responsibilities they were holding in the private sector. This is a development that we may be seeing happen much more slowly in China. I am hoping it goes in the same direction. I do remember that one of the first people I really got to know in the academic community in Mexico was Pedro Aspe, who was then professor of economics, head of the economics department at a private university that was set up by the business community to counter the Marxist economic approach that the national university and most of the universities in Mexico preferred. This was not true of the Instituto Tecnolï¿½gico de Monterrey or of several others. Aspe's students at ITAM, the Autonomous Technological Independent University of Mexico, were receiving a thoroughly modern education in economics and other social sciences. He told me he was graduating 48 students with majors in economics that year, of whom 26 had been accepted into first rate Ph.D. programs in the United States. They continue year after year, and other universities, other private universities began following suit.

My wife taught at one of them, the University of the Americas in Cholula, outside of Puebla. Monterrey Tech was also turning out people with solid foundations in economics, and these people were going into first rate universities in the United States. The Minister of Agriculture was a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, and formed a Wisconsin alumni association when Pat Lucey was there. He borrowed a plane from Lopez Portillo's fleet to fly a bunch of people up to a homecoming football game in Madison. In any case, Aspe later became Minister of Finance under Miguel de la Madrid. So the country has really begun to change.

To get back to Mrs. Lopez Portillo and the art exhibit, the Agency agreed and put up some money, but the Mexicans put up more. We agreed that to succeed, the exhibit needed a first rate curator. We decided it would be an exhibit of works from the five great museums of Washington, including the National Gallery, the Phillips. The Corcoran Gallery, the Museum of American Art, and the National Portrait Gallery. It was decided in Washington that the right man was professor emeritus of art history at the City University of New York, a prominent educator named Milton Brown. He was a wonderful gentleman. He came down and a group of us took him out to eat at a very traditional Mexican restaurant, Cafe Tacuba. We got to talking and I said, "Where are you from?' He said, "New York." I said, "Yes, I know, but where in New York." He said, "Brooklyn." I said, "Where in Brooklyn?" He said, "Bensonhurst." I said, "Where in Bensonhurst?' He said, "Bay Parkway." I said, "Where on Bay Parkway?" He said "The intersection of Bay Parkway and Bath Avenue." I said, "Which corner?" He had grown up diagonally across from me a generation earlier. Every store I knew by one name he knew by another.

He did a wonderful job. He talked those Washington museums into taking things off their walls that had never left the United States before, never even left those museums before. Samuel F.B. Morse's huge portrait of the House of Representatives in the Corcoran, a great work historically and very important, was one of them. It and 89 other works starting from the colonial period up to Diebenkorn, hung at the Palace of Fine Arts for three months. The director of the Agency, John Reinhardt, came down to represent the President at the opening, and it was formally opened by the president of Mexico and his wife. The next president of Mexico was also there, but we didn't know who he was. But we knew he was there because he would be chosen by the outgoing President from among the cabinet members, all of whom were also there.

The exhibit enjoyed great success and drew large crowds, but being Mexico, it was criticized by the left for not exhibiting this artist or that artist or whoever. Mexico, I decided was one of the two countries where art was really politics. The other one is France. Mexico is like that. There were 16,000 working artists in Mexico at that time and many great museums. The Anthropology Museum of Mexico is the greatest of its kind in the world. The Museum of Modern Art is a wonderful museum. The visual arts are not my field; I was more interested in music, having played piano from childhood, but I really got an education, not only in the arts, the plastic and visual arts, but in the life style of artists, who in Mexico are deeply involved in politics as well as in the arts, and more revered by their countrymen than in any other country that I'm familiar with.

Q: Well did you find in Mexico as in France that there is an intelligentsia, you know a group that sits around in cafes essentially but has great influence, somewhat of that nature or not?

ZUCKERMAN: Not in areas of policy that in most countries, including Mexico, were critical. The Mexican system at the time was very cynical. The PRI, the Institutional Revolutionary party of Mexico, had been in power longer than any other party in the world at that time except the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Eventually it was in power longer than the CPSU. After the revolution there was great infighting and war between generals who finally made peace on a cynical basis. That was the agreement that the president would serve for six years but could not be re-elected. What that meant was everybody would get his turn at the trough. The manner in which the powers came to be exercised involved the guarantee of government control of the key sectors of power. They controlled the economy through the ministry of finance. They controlled the ministry of the interior, which meant not what we mean by the ministry of the interior, the geological wealth, the mines, and the public parks. They are talking about the police, internal control, the army, forces of control when needed. Those things were the keys to power. The left, the people who sit around in cafes and complain, were allowed to play with the educational system, the media (as long as it never criticized the president), and foreign policy. Those areas were the playgrounds of the intellectuals of the left.

Q: I have been told that the foreign office was sort of the playground of the left because it didn't mean that much in a way.

ZUCKERMAN: That is right, at least not for a long time. When I was there, nationalism was a major element in Mexican's relations with us. Everybody in public life had to be nationalistic, to ensure that they were perceived as defenders of La Patria. But to some it was a calling; to others it was performance. The Mexican school textbooks were outrageous in some respects. We tried to undertake a program in which we would comment on each other's books' treatment of each other's society and history. The official who dealt with us on the textbook issue was actually one of the more sophisticated people in the Ministry of Education, but it was clearly a matter of great sensitivity within the educational community. We had some pro forma meetings and discussions, and we turned sets of some representative US high school social studies texts over to them. But we could never get them to turn their books over to us, although we were able to buy them in the open market. Then we sent them commentaries not by the State Department, but by American educators. They said "Thanks very much." I don't think anybody ever read them.

Outside of the sacrosanct areas like education or criticism of the president, there was a great deal of political freedom in Mexico. There were outrageous things in the Mexican press, as long as the limits were observed. There was a close contact of mine at the time who was director of the Institute of Fine Arts, although he was a career diplomat. His name was Juan Jose Bremer who later became Mexican Ambassador to the United States. But he suffered a terrible blow when somebody got access at night to the periodic newsletter that the Institute put out and surreptitiously inserted a scurrilous story about the Grand Poobah who was the Great Whore of Mexico that was recognized as a thinly disguised description of the President's wife. He was fired on the spot and was sent off to the frozen wastes (as the Mexicans pictured it) as Ambassador to Sweden. His career was apparently ruined, but his resurrection as Ambassador to Germany and to the US proves that Mexico has changed, at least to the extent that one administration doesn't feel obliged to punish those who have been castigated by a previous one. You could not take on the president or the first lady with impunity. That was the limit, but within that you had wide ranges of views in the Mexican press, and it ranged from left to right. The PRI tried to enfold all of these tendencies within its house. There was a left wing of the PRI and a center and a right. The left wing was represented by a newspaper called El Dia that was run by an extremely interesting man named Enrique Ramirez y Ramirez. We surprisingly became friends. There was growing interest, particularly along the border but even beyond that, among American newspapers about what was going on in Mexico. But they didn't know Mexico. There were a few correspondents in Mexico City at the time. Alan Riding, an Englishman, was there from the New York Times. He really knew Mexico, he and his Dutch wife Marlise Simmons, who was corresponding for the Washington Post. There were correspondents from both Dallas papers, and of course the US wire services were represented. The smaller towns along the border and the larger cities nearby, like San Antonio or San Diego, knew something of Mexico but mostly at the border. They didn't know the real Mexico, which was Mexico City.

I thought we needed to get media people together, and I called my friend Dick Leonard, the editor of the Milwaukee Journal, who also happened to be at the time president of the International Press Institute. I asked if they would co-sponsor with us a meeting between Mexican and American editors and publishers, suggesting that it could be held at the Wingspread Foundation in Racine, which was built by Frank Lloyd Wright as a home for the Johnson Wax family but had become a conference center for the Foundation. Now the Mexicans knew Miami. They knew Houston, San Diego and Los Angeles, and some of them knew New York. But they really didn't get very deep into the United States, certainly not into Wisconsin. Leonard was very interested and I was trying to then round up Mexicans to participate while Dick Leonard was trying to get a list of Americans to come along. He turned up a very impressive list of Americans, of American publishers and editors. I was having trouble with the Mexican left.

I didn't want to have just the more business oriented papers. I went to Ramirez y Ramirez, the publisher of the most leftist newspaper in the country, the newspaper of the PRI's left wing, and he readily agreed to come. Once he agreed, everybody on the left then had cover. So another editor I was friendly with, Manuel Becerra Acosta, who was the editor of Unomasuno which was the newspaper that all the UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico) professors read, also agreed to come. These people were not overtly pro PRI, but gladly took the party's subsidies. They were emotionally for the PRD which was a socialist party. There was also the PAN which was a party which had its base in the north, a Catholic, conservative opposition party which eventually gained the presidency and shattered the PRI's monopoly. There were influential papers in Monterey, the largest city of the north, who also came along. We flew to Chicago with difficulty. American Airlines graciously set aside the front rows of the cabin class section for our distinguished guests. The United States government never paid for business class for anybody, except for the first trip of ambassadors to their post. Other than that it was steerage class. But these guys were up in front and of course they all smoked as they would have on Mexicana Airlines. At the time, smoking was allowed only in the rear of the plane, but thankfully somehow the other passengers got the word and didn't complain.

Well we got to Chicago and we were whisked through immigration and customs with the help of pre-advised airport authorities, and had a very comfortable bus waiting to drive us to Racine, a drive of an hour or so. Mexicans are a very voluble people, and they were deep in discussions until we got out into the snowy March fields, at which time they fell silent as we entered through a landscape with which they were totally unfamiliar, with farmlands covered with snow, and farmhouses, simple white farmhouses and silos. They were fascinated. I think they were impressed by both the silence of the scene, and by the neatness and sturdiness of the farmlands and the image it conveyed of an organized agricultural society. We got into Racine and we went to the Howard Johnson hotel, which was the closest lodging we could find to the Johnson Center. We had a reception that night with the American editors and with distinguished people from Milwaukee before the blazing, three story fireplace that dominated the great room of Wingspread. We had a great three days. Ramirez y Ramirez gave a talk that people still talk about on why there is a difference in how Mexicans and Americans viewed the world, of how their greatly different historical experiences had brought this about. We had both Ambassadors speak, Lucey and Hugo Margain, Mexican ambassador to the US. We had speakers from several universities, and American newspaper publishers and editors spoke as well. The two delegations really hit it off, although there were some cultural shocks. We drove into Milwaukee to have dinner as guests of the Milwaukee Press Club. We drove in along the freeway at about 6:30 p.m., when everybody who worked downtown was already home eating dinner. The Mexicans looked out on the city which to them looked like it had been hit by a neutron bomb. They said, "Where is everybody?" You know they are used to crowds in Mexico like in China or Japan, where the streets are always crowded. And when we arrived at the Press Club there was an organized demonstration by some group because of some recent Mexican injustice, which they took in good stride.

They then insisted on reciprocating the following year. They invited Mexican and American editors and publishers to come down to Mexico City with their wives, that was something we couldn't do, and took us to a resort outside of the city. This was at a time when Mexico was swimming in oil money. Every night there was a different meal at a different restaurant with different gifts for the ladies. It was so splendid; it was way beyond the means provided by our representational funds. Then it ended back in Mexico City with a visit to Los Pinos, the Mexican White House, and an audience with President Lopez Portillo.

The next year was to be our turn again, and we knew we couldn't compete with the sumptuous offerings of the Mexicans, who merely had to contact Los Pinos or Pemex and the money would be forthcoming. We decided to have the next meeting in Washington. This was now the Reagan administration. Pat Lucey had left towards the end of the Carter administration. He was on the outs with President Carter, feeling that Carter had left the liberal part of the party behind, and he resigned to campaign for Ted Kennedy when Kennedy decided to challenge the President's re-election bid. Carter did offer him at that point either of two cabinet positions which Lucey turned down. He was replaced by Julian Nava whose father was Mexican born. Julian Nava had a Ph.D. from Harvard, was on the Los Angeles school board, and served for the remainder of Carter's term. President Reagan designated John Gavin, who was well known for his career as a movie actor, to be ambassador to Mexico. He had not yet been confirmed, but I called him and asked, because apparently he was a good friend of the President's, if he could help get us into the White House for at least a briefing by somebody on Mexican-American relations and, if at all possible, some sort of access to the new President. He said he would try.

We had the meeting in Washington here at a conference center and it went very well. We were hosted for lunch in Congress by Clem Zablocki, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs committee and an old friend from Wisconsin. But we weren't sure we could get into the White House until, at the last minute, it came through because of Gavin's efforts. One result was to increase my respect for the skill of people with an acting background to do things that had great psychological meaning to an audience. John Gavin, many people didn't recognize this, was part Mexican. His mother was from Sonora, and she came from a family of Californios, people who were in California when it was still Spanish. Gavin spoke exquisite Spanish, and could do so in a Mexican accent or a Castilian one. Lucey, although he didn't speak Spanish, had a lot of clout in Mexico because they knew he could call the President without having to go through the State Department. He got three or four votes out of the U.S. Senate when they were needed to pass the prisoner exchange bill, and did it on the phone. That was more important to the Mexican government than whether or not Lucey could speak Spanish, although it did limit his access to non-English speaking Mexicans.

For some reason, they weren't immediately impressed by Ambassador Gavin's Spanish ability because they resented the fact that he was an actor. They joked about sending the Mexican comedian Cantinflas to America as ambassador. They were forgetting that President Reagan himself was an actor, a fact that Gavin would mention now and then. And Gavin had made the contact that got our group of Mexican and American editors and publishers into the White House. We were ushered into the cabinet room, to be briefed by Richard Allen, who was then the National Security Advisor. Gavin was acting as master of ceremonies introducing him. The briefing began and continued for a while and then, as if it were by accident, the door opened, the connecting door to the Oval Office, and President Reagan came in. The editors got up, and even some of the most left-wing Mexicans rose and seemed genuinely impressed by being so near the President. He said, "Oh," as if he were surprised, and apologized: "I didn't want to interrupt your meeting. Jack," he said, and added, "could you come into my office when you're finished. I want to talk about something." Well that sent the signal to the Mexican editors that the ambassador they were getting was as close to this president as Pat Lucey had been to Carter, if not more so. It was a very shrewd way to handle the situation. The Mexicans were already planning a follow-up meeting for the next year, but before the time came the Mexican peso went from 22 to a dollar to 200 to a dollar in one day.

Q: Ouch!

ZUCKERMAN: Mexico was devastated because oil prices collapsed. They were borrowing money based on the expectation of oil at $40 a barrel, as it is now. But in those days it rarely passed $20 and was usually less. The debts they had incurred from the banks, that also had the expectation of $40 to the barrel as collateral, could not be paid.

Q: Stan, I think this is a good place to stop. We have a lot to cover. This is going to keep on for awhile. I would like you to talk about working with the various ambassadors, their styles and how they affected you. Then talk about your impressions of the two Presidents you worked with, Portillo and de la Madrid, and your dealings with the government, the effect of the peso collapse, the oil thing.

All right we will mention a number of things. Maybe we will kick this off. How about your ambassadors, how they used you and your impression of how they operated.

ZUCKERMAN: Well as I mentioned, when I got there, I got there knowing the incumbent ambassador who had already been there for a year and a half, Patrick J. Lucey, who had resigned the governorship of Wisconsin to take the ambassadorship. There was no need to get to know each other. We had worked together when he was the Democratic Party chairman of Wisconsin, and stayed in touch over the years. We would see each other when he came to Washington during my time there or whenever I was in Wisconsin. When he arrived in Mexico he brought along with him a young man, Bob Dunn, who had been his chief of staff for a while, and then became director of administration of the State of Wisconsin. He was a lawyer by training, a very capable person and served as Lucey's special assistant. So it was a very pleasant environment in. which to work.

Lucey also had changed a good part of the country team. We were all new to the post. John Ferch, with a strong background as an economics officer and in Latin America, was the DCM. At that time he was easily the best DCM I had ever worked for. He really excelled in keeping close touch with every government agency represented in that very large embassnot just the immediate foreign affairs family but a very extended family of U.S. agencies. He had regular quarterly meetings with every head of agency to prepare briefing papers for the Ambassador on how things were going and what problems each one faced. It was a remarkably good country team. The meetings, the staff meetings were very workmanlike, very issue-oriented, who was doing what or what was coming up and what was the ambassador needed for.

Although Ambassador Lucey didn't speak Spanish, he did try to learn and had mastered the usual polite phrases. Years later he told me a story that, after he left Mexico, he was invited to a very important wedding in Milwaukee, and was asked by the family of the marriage couple if he would join them in receiving their guests on the receiving line. A lady passing through said, in very American-accented Spanish, "Buenos Dias; como esta Ambassador Lucey.?" And he said, "Muy bien y usted?" She turned to her husband and said, "You see, I told you he spoke fluent Spanish." He loved to tell stories on himself. Pat Lucey was a very interesting man. He was born in a tiny town in western Wisconsin called Ferryville, on the Mississippi River near La Crosse. His father was a butcher who owned a number of farms. Lucey was, among other things, an expert meat cutter, and also helped manage the farms. He had a Catholic education and graduated from Campion College in Minnesota. Two of his brothers were priests, one sister was a nun. Lucey was a Catholic liberal of the Jack Kennedy or Eugene McCarthy variety. He had very deep feelings about social justice. He and John Reynolds, the governor I worked for, helped organize the Wisconsin Democratic Party which had been the third party in the state of Wisconsin. The voters' decision was made in the Republican primary, which was always a contest between the Stalwarts and the Progressives of the old Robert Lafollette tradition. Joe McCarthy drove the Progressives out of the Republican Party and they took over the Democratic party and made it a party which eventually elected William Proxmire as senator, Gaylord Nelson as governor, John Reynolds as attorney General and then governor, and Pat Lucey as governor, so it is a thriving two party state now. He came out of that tradition.

I saw him after the Carter victory, for which he had worked hard and succeeded in delivering the Wisconsin vote, just as he and John Reynolds had put together the Kennedy campaign in Wisconsin. We talked abut what if anything he wanted to do in the Carter administration. He had just been re-elected to his second term as governor, but he said that his great focus of interest was on how the world was going to manage what was then seen as a crises of too many people and not enough food, and he wanted to play a role in managing that. Well we don't talk about it much now because food doesn't seem to be a problem in much of the world given the green revolution, given surpluses of the producing countries. He was on a short list for two cabinet positions, which went to others, but he was offered the ambassadorship to Mexico and, to everybody's surprise, he accepted it, resigning the governorship in the middle of his four-year term, because he felt that Mexico was as close as he could come to addressing his focus of interest.

Q: Well how about as a Catholic and dealing with population, because basically when you are talking about population you are talking about restricting it, I mean if you can.

ZUCKERMAN: He doesn't have those problems. His views were pretty much like Senator Kerry's announced views today, that whatever he thinks of abortion personally, he believes it is not an area where the government should control a woman's choice. So he had never had any problems on that score. In Mexico his relations were very good with President Lopez Portillo who was thought to be an intellectual, and who had been a professor of law who the PRI felt might add a touch of class to the presidency. My golfing partner was a Mexican who was sitting out the Lopez Portillo administration after having worked in the Banco Rural, the agricultural bank, for President Luis Echeverria, who preceded Lopez Portillo. After the Carter visit in February, 1979, when Lopez Portillo insulted President Carter to his face, I felt that Lopez Portillo could have been elected by a landslide in a totally free election. He was very popular because he stood up to the Gringo president. This friend of mine said, "When he leaves office he will be the most hated president in Mexican history, because I know how much we stole when we were in office, and the guy who has taken my job is stealing 2 million dollars a month. I have that on good sources. And if he is stealing at that low level, you can imagine what is going on at the top."

Well Lopez Portillo was estimated to have amassed a fortune of over six billion dollars by the time he left office. Nonetheless, the venality of the regime was not thought by any of us to be different than what normally took place in Mexican sexennials, particularly in the last year of the administration's term. And despite the turmoil that occurs as the Mexican president's term reaches an end, there were still a number of issues that needed addressing, in which the Mexicans were very happy to have a person with the kinds of contacts in Washington that Pat Lucey had, including the prisoner exchange bill that I spoke of earlier.

Q: I would have thought that American prisoners in Mexican jails, I mean there was a reverse side, but speaking strictly form the American side, yes there has always been a real problem for us because you know, an awful lot of people get caught in drug things and all. A lot of young people get caught in the system, and it is a difficult system to play with, the legal system, you know, who do you pay off or not and how you are treated and then you are kind of left on your own once you are in jail.

ZUCKERMAN: Well there were more Mexicans by far in American jails than there were Americans in Mexican jails. Partly for the reasons you mentioned, there were extra judicial means of avoiding a prison sentence in Mexico, at least to a greater extent than might have been true in the U.S. But in that and on other issues, Lucey was of great help to the Mexicans in explaining to them how bilateral issues could be managed. He liked to do it without getting involved with the Mexican proclivity to shout first and negotiate afterwards.

Q: This is tape five, side one with Stan Zuckerman. You were talking about Lucey being on good terms with the foreign minister.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes. Santiago Roel was a politician himself from northern Mexico, from around Nuevo Laredo. They saw eye to eye on the need to improve US-Mexican relations, and when problems arose at lower levels of the relationship, where we would deal with our counterparts in the foreign ministry, Lucey had no problem in picking up the phone and trying to work out a solution. One day I was at the Ambassador's residence, waiting downstairs to leave with him to some event, when the phone rang and kept ringing. So I picked it up and a voice said: "Patrick, this is Santiago". I explained that the Ambassador was getting ready to leave but that I would have him return the call as soon as he came down. They were pretty obviously on close personal terms.

As for our own interactions, we dealt with a number of different elements of the foreign ministry, particularly the North American desk, the education ministry, the universities and the cultural entities, as well as, of course, with the media. The cultural entities were not at the cabinet level but were very important in Mexican life, particularly the Institute of Fine Arts which managed the musical and plastic arts. The Prime Minister who succeeded Roel, Jorge Castaneda, had a son named Jorge Castaneda junior who later became foreign minister under president Vicente Fox, the current president. He also had a stepson, Andres Rosenthal, who was the American desk officer at that time. He was educated at the University of Pennsylvania. Like me he had an Argentine wife, spoke perfect English, and was very Americanized. As a consequence, because he looked so European and had studied in the US, he bent over backwards to make sure his nationalistic credentials were in order. His, mother was a Russian Jew who, I was told, had served as a translator for Soviet UN Ambassador Vishinsky. Andres was a sophisticated and smart diplomat who later became deputy foreign minister. But on such stormy issues as immigration, which was a major part of the bilateral problem, he gave no quarter. The flow of Mexican immigrants to the United States was of great importance to Mexicans, not only because they had a natural interest in the well-being of their citizens, but those ï¿½migrï¿½s relieved, by their access to the American labor market, the pressure on Mexico to find jobs for their ever increasing population. Those workers also were a very strong source of hard currency for the Mexican government, because Mexican laborers, as do most Latin American laborers who come to the United States, sent remarkably high portions of their earnings back to their families. So they were very sophisticated in turning our complaints against us. They were quite right in saying there would be no huge flow of Mexican migrants into the United States labor market were it not for the demand. Of course we passed legislation which put the onus on the employer for making sure that a person had credentials, believing that businessmen respected the law and wouldn't violate it. Well it did nothing at all to change the flow, and the Mexicans were not going to help us. We were asking them to help stem the flow that was of importance and of benefit to their country, and they were not about to. So unless we really want to build a wall along 2000 miles of our border with Mexico, we have had to learn to live with the immigration problem, with what we call illegal and what they call undocumented workers.

Q: We are sticking to the Lucey period right now. How did Lucey deal with this?

ZUCKERMAN: He dealt with it straightforwardly, stated our needs, stated our position but was realistic about it. He told his counterparts in the American government in the INS and in the State Department and to the President himself that unless we really were able to get American employers to observe the law, and to vigorously monitor the working papers and the status of the people they employed, there would be no end to the problem. Unless we truly wanted to arm the border outside of the several crossing points at which we do make major efforts, it wasn't going to hold. I went up north for a visit to the border east of Tijuana in the San Diego area, and it was an extraordinary sight. I was driven at night along the top of sort of a levee by the border patrol. They suddenly turned on the spot lights on top of their vehicles and there, in this vast field, there were hundreds and hundreds of Mexicans huddled, sitting there waiting for the time when there would be nobody at that crossing point, and they could run across. We have put up fences now, and it has driven the border crossers further east of Tijuana, further west of Ciudad Juarez and further west of Brownsville.

Q: It is extremely inhospitable country.

ZUCKERMAN: Very dangerous country, and yet they come. We held a conference, I had mentioned this last time we met, in Wisconsin at Wingspread of American and Mexican publishers and editors. One of the American participants was the then director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Lionel Castillo, who was himself of Mexican descent. He told a story directed at both the Mexicans and at the American participants about a young man from the deep interior of Mexico, around Oaxaca, who was picked up at the border and put on a bus back to Mexico. The young man was about 12 or 13 years old. They sent him all the way back to Oaxaca. The first time he was picked up in the Tijuana area. The second time they picked him up again in Juarez. Somehow they realized he was the same kid. They had fairly good records, and they sent him back home again. The picked him up a third time and again sent him back home. After that they never saw him again. Castillo said, "I am certain he kept trying until he made it. As I think on it, it is Mexico's loss and our gain. Any kid of that age who had that kind of fortitude and that kind of desire to come to this country and work, is going to make it." And it is the story of American history. We get the best. The people with the greatest desire, the greatest energy to improve their lives come to us. When Mexico can keep those people, Mexico will have a better future.

Q: You mentioned I think it was Lucey's chief of staff, named Dunn I think it was.

ZUCKERMAN: Bob Dunn.

Q: Because at some point it becomes an issue of what we will call the Temple Dogs or whatever it is, I mean the guardians of the gate. In other words, was Dunn used as somebody to keep sort of the embassy away from the ambassador or not?

ZUCKERMAN: Not at all. Dunn was used as a contact for Lucey with certain people in the business community as well as with a number of government officials. He had a law degree, had been Director of Administration for the State of Wisconsin, and after working in the Carter White House became director of communications for Levi Straus. He's now the head of a non-profit dedicated to encouraging ethical behavior in American business. He was not a typical political watchdog without anything to offer the process. On the contrary, he was a valuable asset. He tried to maintain cordial contact with the American Chamber of Commerce in Mexico, the oldest and probably the biggest in the world of American expatriates at the time, who were of course very important in Mexico. Lucey incurred their wrath because they were lobbying Congress, with other American Chambers of Commerce abroad, for an increase in the deductibility of foreign earnings from their US income tax. They though that Lucey, given his political clout, could be a great help to them with Carter, as he probably could have been. But he declined to help, because he thought they were adequately protected against double taxation, that they were living quite well, and that it was unfair to distort the tax code even further than it already was.

This caused him some problems when some unnamed members of the American community in Mexico bad mouthed him in the Wall Street Journal, saying he was not doing well as Ambassador but never mentioning what the real issue was. It was followed by a very hostile story in the Los Angeles Times saying that he was doing a disastrous job in Mexico. He got word from friends, who didn't know if it was true, that the source of the story might have been Bob Strauss, then head of the Democratic National Committee. Lucey had had some rough dealings with Strauss, especially during the 1960 convention when LBJ and John F. Kennedy were contesting the nomination down to the bitter end. The story was a very embarrassing one and, to anyone who knew the facts, clearly false. He called me up to his office to discuss it and asked what he could do about it. I said that if he had some powerful friends who could go to the New York Times or Los Angeles Times to dispute the story, that could help. But my concern was the effect it could have on his ability to do his job in Mexico and the danger of having Mexicans feel that his job was on his way out.

We had mixed relations with Excelsior, which was the leading paper at the time. They were a mixed bag. They had some very hostile left wing commentators, but every once in awhile we would get a decent editorial. More often than not, they were stridently nationalistic. I called up the editor and offered Excelsior an exclusive interview with the Ambassador, something they had long sought, but only if they agreed that it would be conducted by a columnist we knew who was usually very straightforward and not a flag waving hyper-nationalist as were most of their stable. He wasn't a big fan of ours, but was even handed, and the editor agreed. He came to the Embassy the next day and conducted a very far-reaching interview on the major bilateral issues on our agenda. We always used as a basic tenet of our position vis a vis Mexico that there was no issue that one could point to in which the American position did not reflect the best interests of Mexico including, in the long run, immigration. The next morning Excelsior's front page had an eight column banner headline, a picture of Lucey and a story that ran half the front page and another inside page. It contained the most accurate, well balanced, thoughtful, thorough exploration of American policy that we had ever seen in a Mexican newspaper. Lucey got phone calls immediately from the Mexican desk in Washington, which saw Excelsior the same day as we did, congratulating him, and told him they were reproducing it for the American press. They told him the story just shut the door on any discussion on how he was doing in Mexico. So he was very gratified. The story that ran in the L.A. Times didn't take hold in Mexico, and it allowed him to do his job without having to look over his shoulder.

Q: The reason I asked is I have talked to other people who have served at various times there and they were saying Mrs. Lucey was a problem. Was there a problem?

ZUCKERMAN: Well, I'll be seeing Ambassador and Mrs. Lucey next week in Wisconsin. They are both 86; their birthdays are a couple of weeks apart. Mrs. Lucey is a very outspoken Greek-American woman who was equally outspoken when he was governor. He was a liberal and she held a number of conservative views on social issues. They have had a marriage that has lasted 60 years or so. Yes, she is outspoken, but she did not create problems with the press or Mexican contacts, and was a gracious hostess. I think the problem is one that many staffs have with ambassador's wives who are demanding about their furnishings, their house, the staff and other matters that affect her life and her ability to fulfill her responsibilities. In all the years I have known her I've never had a problem, except for her objection to my cigars.

Q: Did you ever find yourself because you were close to Lucey called in to kind of cool things down?

ZUCKERMAN: Between them? No.

Q: No, not between the two of them, but I mean I am thinking between the embassy staff.

ZUCKERMAN: I can't remember any. Like most ambassador's wives she usually got her way. If she was asking for something that was not feasible, the ambassador would tell her to drop it. He took the heat.

Q: So I mean policy wise they were both on the same wavelength. Sometimes you have an ambassador's wife who is riding a hobby horse...

ZUCKERMAN: No. She never spoke publicly. They entertained a great deal and she certainly knew people in the business community. She was a very important contributor to the success of the real estate business that she and Ambassador Lucey established in Wisconsin. She also got on well with the Roels and other important contacts of the Ambassador. Sometimes, if they had no official dinners, they would invite an English-speaking couple over to a small dinner, and that included the great Mexican artist Ruffino Tamayo and the Nobel Laureate Octavio Paz.

Lucey was and remains a man of genuine intellectual interests. He is also the most remarkable political organizer I ever met. When John Kennedy was having problems with the disarray of the Democratic Party in Ohio, he asked Lucey to go in there and see what he could do to straighten them out. Senator Young was elected to the Senate at an extreme age by pledging he would serve only one term. Because he was only going to serve one term he was very frank with voters. He would get letters complaining of his votes and answer them by writing: "Dear Sir. Some idiot has written me a letter and signed your name to it. I feel I should warn you that someone is using your name in an effort to embarrass you." Well he decided he loved the job so much he wanted to run again. He showed Lucey those letters and said, "My God what am I going to do about these." Lucey said, "Let's put them together and publish them as a campaign book." He did, and he got re-elected. Lucey was the key to the building of the Democratic Party in Wisconsin. He would labor, and it was part of his business background, for hours and days over a mailing and how it would be put together, and where the pitch for funds would come and how it would be phrased. He was a superb fund raiser. He was somewhat more conservative than the governor I worked for; he was a fiscal conservative, whereas the governor I worked for had raised taxes and raised the budget by 25% to finance many needed improvements in state programs and facilities. But he wasn't re-elected, and Lucey was.

Q: What about, was Lucey able to work with the Chamber of Commerce? Was he able to get over that?

ZUCKERMAN: They did manage to do a number of things together, but he realized that they were working with him because they had to and he was doing the same. He had good friends within the chamber, although most of them were Republicans. They were an overseas business community which, as you know, where ever you find them, are interested mainly in the security of their firms and their investments. They are far less involved in issues of the American political scene than their American business counterparts would be in the United States. They are part of a different universe, and live very well within Mexican society. But he had a number of strong supporters, and foremost among him was a man who was a leading member of the business community, Victor Agather. He held a big farewell lunch for Lucey at his home, and even if some in the business community resented Lucey's unwillingness to push for tax relief for the wealthy, Agather's standing in the American business community was such that everybody had to attend. He had a huge room in his house in which he could almost hold a ball, and he filled it up with long tables, and every seat was taken. At the end of the meal, he got up and toasted Lucey as the best U.S. ambassador he had ever known, and he had been in that country for a long time. He was not only a successful businessmamaking and distributing Timex wristwatches world-wide - but also a World War II hero who piloted a B-29, one of which he and several friends of his owned and kept in Texas as part of the Confederate Air Force. Every once in awhile they would go up there and fly it, once even flying it up to Oshkosh, Wisconsin to the annual air show. When I was area director for Latin America I visited Mexico and the cultural attachï¿½ held a reception in my honor. By that time, Agather was quite ill, had to move about with a respirator and required a nurse in attendance at all times. But he came to the reception, and to a breakfast held the next morning for a group of artist friends of mine. He was a remarkable man, one of a kind, who understood that there were issues more important than the narrow commercial focus of most of his colleagues.

John Reinhardt was the Director of USIA at the time, and came down to Mexico to represent the President at the opening of the major art show that I spoke of earlier. I was with him on one of his visits to an official we dealt with when I got a phone call in the car from the Ambassador. He said, "You have to come back to the office." I said, "I'm with John Reinhardt", and he said "I know, but you have to come back, I'm resigning." I turned to Reinhardt and told him that I had to return to the embassy because the Ambassador was resigning and he said: "Go do your job. Others will take care of me." Lucey wanted me to help him with his resignation statement, which made no reference to the fact that he was planning to work for Ted Kennedy, who was going to challenge President Carter's re-election. When he got to Washington he was invited to lunch one on one with Carter, who knew what was up. Carter had told Lucey that he was going to offer him the cabinet-rank position of energy czar whenever Secretary Schlesinger left. Lucey had become greatly involved with energy issues while in Mexico and was on top of most of them, particularly those involving gas and oil. But when Schlesinger left the post Carter named someone else without ever saying a word to Lucey. He told me that at the White House lunch Carter had offered him one of two cabinet positions; I. believe they were HUD and Commerce. Lucey told him that he had already made a commitment to work for Kennedy.

Q: Trying to pick this up, Carter bothered a lot of Americans and people involved in the political sphere but also regular Americans by making promises and then not doing it. The most egregious one was forcing the Germans to support the so-called Neutron bomb and then deciding not to do it leaving Helmut Schmidt dangling out there. He was detested for that. Was there a feeling, I mean you are close to sort of the politics, of concern about Carter and how he ran things?

ZUCKERMAN: There was disappointment among Democratic elected officials and party workers that Carter appeared to be so vulnerable, that he had not reached out beyond Georgia, beyond the people from Georgia who surrounded him in the White House instead of using his office to establish strong ties across state lines with the Democrats in other regions. John F. Kennedy, I think I mentioned to you once, was as popular among Wisconsin Democrats as he was in Massachusetts. That was true in many other states. Lyndon Johnson had the same problem as Carter, because he was seen as so Texas bound. It was very hard for him to break into and form strong alliances in other parts of the country. With Johnson everything was transactional, whereas with Kennedy it was pure Irish politics. I help you not because I want something in return right now, but because I know that when I need help, you will be there.

With Kennedy, and then with Johnson, there was a federal judgeship vacant in Madison, and the senators and the governor were all behind a labor lawyer named Dave Rabinowitz from Sheboygan. Rabinowitz had been the lawyer for the United Auto Workers in the bitter Kohler strike that lasted for years, and Kennedy nominated him for the judgeship. He was primarily a bankruptcy lawyer although he handled labor cases as well. Well labor lawyers and bankruptcy lawyers were not the people who ran the American Bar Association. The Wisconsin chapter of the American Bar Association found him only marginally qualified. In a famous statement, after the nomination had not been acted on by the judiciary committee and the question came up at a press conference as to whether Kennedy would re-submit Rabinowitz's name in the next congressional session, Kennedy said: "I'm for Dave." That is the kind of thing Wisconsin Democrats wanted to hear and just in the spirit that they welcomed. Not long after Kennedy died, Reynolds and Lucey both got phone calls early in the morning, about 6 a.m., from President Johnson wringing his hands. "Oh what should do about this nomination. You know it is really going to cause me problems." That wasn't the way Kennedy would have done it. It was clear Johnson was setting a price for that nomination that he would collect some day and he wanted Rabinowitz' sponsors to beg for it and know that something would be expected in return. It was the opposite of the way Kennedy had done it. I think that was what weakened Johnson. I think it may not have been the same with Carter, but it was a bloodless kind of relationship with most of the people in the party. It was distant.

When Carter came to Mexico in early 1978, Lucey went all out for him. This was only shortly after I had gotten there. Carter came down the steps of Air Force One looking terrible. It was the morning that Ambassador Adolph Dubbs had been killed in Afghanistan, and when the U.S. embassy in Iran had been over run for the first time, the first effort to take over. He had been up since 3:00 in the morning. There was talk of canceling the visit, but he thought the meeting was too important to postpone. But when he got off the plane I thought he was terribly sick. He looked awful, and the schedule of course was brutal. It was from the airport to a meeting with President Lopez Portillo to a meeting with the foreign minister, and then there was a formal lunch at the foreign ministry. The issue hanging in the air for the meeting was all about oil, all about energy. A deal had been negotiated in which Lopez Portillo had to face down the left in Mexico who didn't want any kind of agreement with the United States about oil, about selling oil because of the history of American ownership and British ownership of Mexico's oil resources in the 1920's. He faced them down and there was a tentative agreement on the sale of natural gas to start with. Schlesinger became the Secretary of Energy and he rejected the deal because the price was above the world price. Lopez Portillo was known to have said, "The Americans have left me hanging by my paint brush," the image of a painter painting a ceiling and someone taking away the ladder. So that was in the air. At the end of the dinner, Carter was asked to speak. He made an unscripted, rambling kind of nostalgic memoir about his visit to Mexico as a young man with his wife when he had gotten Montezuma's revenge along with a few other pleasant statements.

Q: You better tell what Montezuma's revenge is.

ZUCKERMAN: Montezuma's revenge was dysentery, said to be inflicted as a payback to those who had conquered Mexico. I was sitting with Mexicans and nobody at the table blinked an eye or snickered or frowned or anything at Carter's reference to Montezuma's revenge, but greeted it with murmured laughter. Lopez Portillo got up and gave an extremely nationalistic response. The key phrase was "We know who our friends really are by the way they treat us." Every Mexican and all the foreign diplomats knew what that meant. There was an audible gasp from the audience. It was an insult to the American president, and I don't think Jimmy Carter realized it at the time, because I think he was groggy. Afterwards, all the American presat least those who weren't based in Mexico - wrote about the Montezuma's revenge statement as if it were a huge gaffe, and I told them they were missing the story. The next day the Mexican press was full of praise for Lopez Portillo because he had stood up to the American president.

Q: In the Mexican context when you say our friends, how they treat us, what I mean was there something in the air immediately or was it just generic?

ZUCKERMAN: What was in the air was the gas deal. They were just outraged because Lopez Portillo in their view had stuck his neck out in order to make a deal that they saw as mutually beneficial. The delivery of Mexican gas would be good for the United States; the Mexicans were getting a better price than they could get elsewhere, and it would open the door to a more fulsome energy relationship. They were never going to allow ownership of Mexican production facilities, but they certainly were and are a major supplier and a dependable supplier of gas and petroleum products. That's what was in the air, and every Mexican there and most of the Americans in the room outside of the press knew what he was saying. So Carter was not that popular in Mexico, but that was not the reason for Lucey's disaffection. It was really first of all that if Teddy was going to run, Lucey was a Kennedy guy and always would be. He could have been in JFK's cabinet if he wanted it. He knew that and LBJ knew it. It didn't mean he was hostile. He supported Carter when he ran but in a race between a Kennedy and anybody else, he was for the Kennedy, as he was for Bobby Kennedy.

Q. How hard was it to work with the Mexicans in setting up the details of the President's visit? Could they get their act together?

ZUCKERMAN: We had an embassy team assigned to work with our counterparts on the Mexican side. The key counterpart for such an event was the Estado Mayor -. a professional military household operation at Los Pinos, the Presidential compound, which was extraordinarily effective. The first event was to be the arrival at the airport. You go there and they tell you exactly where the plane will come and exactly where it will stop and where a speech is being made and here were stands for 5,000 people. How many people do you expect in the stands? They said there will be 5,000, and there were 5,000 people, with 50 peso notes in their pockets. Every place you went you would know exactly who would be there and how many and it never failed to work. They were in full control of everything. The Estado Mayor could get anything done it wanted to.

Once there was a space exhibit to which we had gotten NASA to send some models and posters. The Mexicans wanted the Ambassador to walk through it with President Lopez Portillo. Lucey thought he needed some technical backup if he were going to explain the space program to the President, and we called NASA in Houston and they sent us down an astronaut. He made a great hit. However the day before the exhibit we went to look at the arrangements and nothing was uno stands, no exhibits, no posters, all of which we had supplied. We were astonished because the Estado Mayor had to know that the President would be there, and apparently something had fallen through the cracks. We called the Estado Mayor and told them there would be a very embarrassing situation because it was hard to believe that the exhibit could be mounted overnight. They said: "We have already taken care of that. It will all be up." The next day it looked like it had been built a week before. Everything was in its place. I learned that if you really needed something done in Mexico, you got it done through the Estado Mayor.

The visit in Brussels that I had worked on was very different. It was just honorific; there were no big issues. But a presidential visit opens the door for contacts that, if you are able to, you keep and will serve you well all during the rest of your time in the country you're assigned to, and I found that true on Presidential visits elsewhere. I made friends with people in los Pinos, the Mexican White House, who afterwards would come to my house for dinner. A call from the top impresses people and helps move things along, and that's true in many countries, including our own. So despite the mess it made of our program for three or four months, the visit was a helpful experience. But right after the visit the post was inspected, and received a terrible report. The inspection report noted that we lacked program activity, never mentioning that we had been tied up for a full three months in preparations for the President's visit. I responded with a point by point refutation and asked for a new inspection. The Director threw out the inspection report and said you don't need another inspection. It was a hatchet job and even Washington knew it.

Q: Well how about after Lucey went; you say you had almost an interim ambassador didn't you?

ZUCKERMAN: Not for long. John Ferch was the charge but Bob Dunn called me and said, "What do you think of this? A top guy on the list is Julian Nava. He is an elected member of the Los Angeles board of education, a professor at one of the California state universities. He was an historian. His father, a barber, was born in Zacatecas and left during the Mexican revolution, as did many Mexicans. Nava was a pilot in WWII and then a Ph.D. in history from Harvard." I said I thought the Mexican press will welcome it. Nava came down and we got on well. He spoke excellent Spanish, and he was liked by some of the Mexican left. He could talk to intellectuals, and did so. But he never really got a good welcome within the Mexican government, the top echelons of government. I think there were racial reasons. He was darker than anyone in the Mexican cabinet. He was truly a son of Mexico. The Mexican cabinet all talked about "Nosotros los Indios," - We Indians" - but outside of the one or two junior ministers, it was a pretty solid European cabinet. Nava didn't have the kind of political clout that Lucey had because his political experience was purely local. He didn't have that kind of access in Washington that Lucey had and the Mexicans knew it. He was treated poorly for the worst of reasons by the Mexicans. The last time I saw him, he was in Mexico doing some representation for a US manufacturer, and seemed to be in good spirits. I don't think the time in Mexico hurt him. He did, however, make a big mistake when he arrived in Mexico. There was a notorious chief of police in Mexico who had built a mansion in Zihuatanejo and kept a string of polo ponies in Cuernavaca, all on a monthly salary of $400. He was later tried and convicted of any number of things. When Julian Nava came to the airport, he was met there by this Mexican chief of police and rode off with him in his limousine in front of all of us and the press, a terrible mistake.

Q: Did he know, I mean normally the ambassador goes in his own car. I mean it sounds like no one had briefed the ambassador about you know, just the normal entry route.

ZUCKERMAN: I don't know. I think that Nava felt that he had better contacts with Mexico than we did, and the devil take the hindmost. You know, in the day to day work in the embassy, he did a fine job. In a larger sense though, I don't think he made use of the opportunities as best he could. At some point he thought he could actually stay on in a Reagan administration, but he didn't. It was again a period when a charge ran the Embassy, and John Ferch had gone on to Cuba as head of our mission there and later became our ambassador in Honduras, and there was a rather long gap before John Gavin, Reagan's appointee as Ambassador, was confirmed and arrived on the job. John Gavin's nomination by the president caused consternation and some disdain in the Mexican press and the public because he was identified as an actor. I think however, once he came down, although he did have some difficulties later on, he did impress a good deal of Mexican society with his superb knowledge of Spanish. His Spanish was impeccable. His mother was born in Mexico, in Sonora. I think I mentioned his mother's family had settled in California before California became a state. He was a cousin of one of the leading writers of Mexico, Carlos Fuentes, who he called Charlie Fountain. They had spent a lot of time together as children.

He had a tendency shared by almost all politically appointed ambassadors, including Lucey at times, to sometimes speak out on Mexican affairs as if they were presidents of Mexico rather than Ambassadors to the country. It was appropriate to speak publicly about issues relating to our interests, but dangerous to tell Mexicans how to manage their own affairs, at least in public.

Problems became serious I think, for Gavin, in 1985, after the great earthquake in Mexico City, at a time that I was already in Ottawa. The president was saying that they had lost 10,000 people, and Gavin made a public statement that there were 20.000 or more who had died. He may have been right, but being right was not necessarily the objective of diplomacy. He sometimes felt that you had to talk tough to Mexicans. On such issues as trade, they had a rather closed society. A businessman could for instance, decide that he wanted to make Waring blenders in Mexico, so with a little clout he could get an exclusive license from the US manufacturer, a high tariff from the Mexican government, assemble the parts in Mexico and sell the blenders for three times the price they could be bought in the US. He could then play golf every day because all he had to do was check the office once in awhile to see that everything was going well.

So dealing with them was hard, and Gavin felt that sometimes you had to deal publicly with them. So did Lucey. But Lucey told me that he was once told by the late Meyer Rosenne, at the time the Israeli ambassador to Mexico, a man who had been a lieutenant general in Israeli security and had served in Mexico for a long time, that his approach to Mexicans was wrong. After a speech that Lucey had given castigating the Mexicans for their restrictiveness in trade and investment, the Israeli ambassador told him: "Pat, you have to understand something. Think of Mexico as an adolescent boy. He is just becoming aware that he is attractive to females. He's got a little money in his pocket for the first time. You come along and tell him he's got pimples on his face and he ought to blow his nose and straighten his hair. The Mexicans will react like that adolescent boy would." Lucey took it to heart. Gavin on the other hand, felt that Mexicans needed a kick in the butt once in awhile. And I remember that Harry Shlaudeman, who was a career ambassador of great experience, once told me that he thought that Gavin handled the Mexicans exactly as they should be. From our standpoint you know, it didn't make our job easier.

Ambassador Gavin and I started off on very good terms. I was due to leave at the end of 1982, but after we had worked together for awhile he asked me to stay for a second year. That was helpful to me as well. My wife and I had separated. After a year, she agreed that my two younger children could came back to live with me. I knew that shortly after my next tour they would be going off to college, and I thought they would be unprepared for it, unprepared for living in the States. They had been overseas so much and protected from many things that school kids have to learn to do in the US, so that I wanted to get to a post that had good public schools, reliable public transportation, and a place where they could get jobs after school. The one place I could do that was Canada. A friend of mine was in Canada, and was extending for a year. At first the Agency wanted me to take over the post in Bangkok but I said I would not take two teenagers to Bangkok as a single father. They were very supportive, so I stayed the second year. But during that time, Gavin came to feel that I wasn't being enough of a flack. I worked on his...

Q: What is a flack?

ZUCKERMAN: A flack is a personal publicity representative rather than someone with the extensive program we were carrying out. I got a call one day from our area director, Steve Dachi, asking me what had gone wrong with my relations with the ambassador. He said he thought we were on good terms. I said, "I thought so too. He was at my house last night for dinner. Why do you say that?" "Well because he has told Charlie Wick he thinks it is time for a change in the PAO-ship." I said, "That's fascinating. Are you sure that it is right?" "Oh yeah. Don't worry. We will take care of you. There is a job in Tampa." It was in an advisory role to the newly established Delta Force for rapid deployment to hot spots. "No," I said, "I will handle it down here." I made an appointment to talk to the ambassador and told him that I understood that he had asked the Agency to replace me. He was obviously upset and surprised that I had learned this, and when he asked where this came from I told him something anyone in the government learns fairly soon, that there are few secrets in Washington, particularly when a good job is coming open. He said he was sure there was some misunderstanding, and the issue disappeared, but he did mention that he hoped I could put more staff time into supporting his public appearances, and I assured him we would continue to do all he needed where public affairs were concerned. And that was it. But obviously there had been some damage to our relationship, although we worked the rest of the year together as best we could. Before I left he held a very nice farewell lunch for me with a large turnout of editors and people in education and the arts. He was very courteous, very gracious, and we've spoken since then.

Q: Well what about, one heard about Gavin having problems at the embassy. He changed DCM's a couple of times I have heard, and also he had so called temple dogs which were notorious, personal staff who sort of isolated the ambassador. Could you comment on that?

ZUCKERMAN: Well the only real problem was a young man who had been in the Foreign Service and was in Washington at the time that Gavin was awaiting confirmation and was doing the usual reading in and meeting different people in Washington who had an interest in Mexico, and becoming acquainted with the issues. The young man, I think he was a class 6 officer, quite new to the service, was assigned to assist Gavin's preparation for his confirmation hearings. He formed a friendship with him, resigned form the Foreign Service and came back in as special assistant to Gavin at the level of a senior officer, a Class 2, a rank that is now called a Counselor. From a class 6 officer to a counselor is a process that can take up most of a career with about five or six assignments in between. I think there was resentment, more resentment than there would have been had he come in from the outside because he was sharing in matters that were well above what he would have been dealing with had he not run into Gavin in Washington. We had some run-ins. I think a number of people did. I don't know whether it really affected the ambassador's ability to do his job.

The staff meetings were perhaps a little more restrictive than they might have been. Maybe not everybody talked with as much candor. But I think Gavin did, on the whole, as good a job as was possible under the circumstances. Reagan, of course, was not popular in Mexico. He became more popular later on. He came down to a big show that Lopez Portillo put on when he invited 22 presidents to gather in Cancun. Many of them wouldn't have come until they learned that President Reagan was willing to come down to it. Normally a president wouldn't want to come down if he was only one of 22, but he did. It was a good show of support for Mexico. I think relations warmed after that. But the same issues were there, and still are. I think there was an effort made to systematize the relationship, starting during the Carter administration but carried over into the Reagan administration, to systematize contacts at all levels between Mexico and the United States. We had these annual bilateral meetings which went beyond the foreign ministers. We brought together representatives from top levels of the branches of government that were part of this complicated interface between the two societies and it has helped to make relations flow more smoothly.

Gavin was a bit put out with the career people during the time I was able to observe him, because I think, he was used to being treated like a star and didn't feel he was getting that treatment in the embassy. I remember that he chewed out my information officer once because, at a speech he was giving before the American Chamber of Commerce, the waiters served coffee while he was still speaking and he could hear the cups rattle. We discussed it afterwards and I asked him to blame me if something goes wrong and not on someone who works for me. I added that if he wants us to handle all of the arrangements for his public appearances, rather than handle it through his special assistant, we'd be happy to do it. But blaming a very experienced officer like my information officer for a waiter serving coffee while he was speaking was something we might not be able to control. He was good about that. But things like that came up now and again. As you know, ambassadors are treated with respect, but people who work for them also think they are professionals, and there was some feeling among some people in the embassy, not all, that Ambassador Gavin expected more than the normal political appointee might. But I am not aware of any real trouble with the Mexican government until that flare up with him in the administration of Miguel de la Madrid, successor to Lopez Portillo. I think his relations with Lopez Portillo were pretty good.

Q: Did you, this covers the entire time you were there, have a problem which I am sure will surface when we talk about your time in Canada, but the cultural effect of American media on Mexico? Did that bother the Mexicans?

ZUCKERMAN: Well Mexicans in the best areas of Mexico City had access to cable television, which brought in American news. It brought in American football which was becoming very popular. The Dallas Cowboys, you would think, were a Mexican team. I guess satellite and cable have become even more extensive now in Mexico. When there was a story in the American press about some failure of Mexican society or Mexican government it would bring a barrage of responses form the Mexican press of all stripes. It didn't matter what the political coloration of the press was, it was energized to defend the flag, and rabid nationalism was just below the surface. But below that surface of instant nationalism or nationalistic response, there was a great regard I think for American society, and a contempt for the inability of the Mexican government to care for the people at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder, who were largely living in Indian communities. In some of those communities the first language wasn't Spanish, but Nahuatl, or one of the other pre-Hispanic languages. Middle class Mexicans, especially during the time when the peso was enormously overvalued - when it was 22 to one before it fell one afternoon to 200 to onwere living very well. If you got on the plane from Mexico City to San Antonio or Houston, there were even farm hands on the flight, who because of the exchange rate could afford to fly up there and buy Christmas gifts and bring them back to Mexico. There was an enormous amount of economic activity between Mexico and the US at that time. Mexicans were buying up Southwest property left and right. In San Diego there were high rise condominiums at Coronado Beach that were being bought by so many Mexicans that they were referred to as "Tortilla Towers" by the native Californians. Everybody was buying a safe haven because of their certainty that the peso would fall, and that it could be accompanied by a political crisis. This fellow who I told you had been deputy director of the Banco Rural owned three houses in San Diego. People were not only traveling to the US, not only watching American television, but were also angling in every way they could to acquire a green card. Everybody wanted the ability to go back and forth across the border freely. Many of the more substantial businessmen got them. They were almost dual citizens, members of both societies. Mexicans told jokes about themselves. They told about the fellow who went up to Tijuana and made his first trip across the border into San Diego. He said, "Oh now I know why America is so rich while we are so poor. You got the paved half."

They held a complicated view of America. Octavio Paz, who I met on a number of occasions and who I regarded as the most remarkable Mexican, and perhaps one of the most remarkable men I had ever met, wrote a book, a classic called "The Labyrinth of Solitude". It attempts to explain the complicated psychological differences between Mexico and almost everyone else, but certainly between Mexicans and North Americans. Mexico he describes as another aspect of Spanish culture, which is another aspect of western culture. The Mexican part of it is the Mestizo, the mixture of the Indian and the Spaniard. Even if it is not a genetic mixture in all circumstances, it becomes a psychological mixture, even among Creoles, Mexican families of pure European descent. And he describes the result as a mask over the face of the Mexican that obscures the real cultural difference between us and them. Americans expect other people to be open because we are so open, whereas Mexicans reveal themselves only gradually and only when it is called for by their own needs.

This reveals itself in unexpected ways. I remember something that happened on one of the trips we were working on, one of the exchanges with Mexican and American editors. There was a sports writer in the group who we knew well, a convivial man who was very well regarded by the editors who wanted him to work with us on the arrangements. We were meeting to discuss speakers and their subjects and the like, and there was a dinner followed by a series of toasts, all of them the expected gracious complements on how important it was that we were establishing ties across the border and the like. This sports writer gets up and launches into a fiery nationalistic speech about Mexican patrimony and how we welcome American interests but we will always defend Mexico's freedom and integrity against all would be invaders. I thought what the hell was that all about? One of my Mexican friends took me aside and told me it was just like our reciting of the pledge of allegiance, a ritual of no great consequence. I think he was also making sure that the others stayed in line and didn't go overboard in making Americans think that there were no differences between them and us. And yet at the same time there is an enormous, deep familiarity of many Mexicans with American society. I remember when the Seattle Mariners came down to play an exhibition game in the baseball stadium with one of the Mexican league baseball teams. I was asked to throw out the first ball, but I wouldn't agree to do it unless they also let my 9 year old son David throw out a ball as well.. Of course I threw my ball, as most people do when invited to do that ceremonial pitch, into the dirt. My son threw a perfect strike. The fans laughed at me and cheered for him, just as an American crowd in a baseball park would have done. It was a reaction that was common to both societies. I really feel there are no humans on the planet who know how to enjoy themselves more than Mexicans who have some spare money to spend. But our Mexican staff, who earned decent salaries but, with few exceptions, were barely in the middle class, were even more delightful to be with. I think I was closer to them personally than I was to any staff I ever worked with, even before I joined the Foreign Service. They were wonderful, thoughtful, and very warm human beings. We had a great time, great parties; any occasion would trigger one. We would go down to the basement shipping and storage area and see somebody off with carnitos and beer after working hours. It was a great group. Mexicans and Americans, no matter what they say, know how to get along. My closest relationship was with my driver, Salvador Lupercio. He was a sweet, gentle man, with a great sense of humor and a strong dedication to his job. He was eligible for retirement at the time the peso fell, and the longer he stayed on the weaker his pension became. But he refused to leave the job until I left that summer, no matter how hard I urged him to do so. I kept in touch with him for a long time but am afraid he's gone now.

Q: Well you know, in listening to you, I have a feeling there, I am sure there are more than two, but from the American point of view there are two Mexicos. One is Mexico City, and then there is northern Mexico. I am not talking about those Indian indigenous populations or the southern one. I am just talking about the two areas that affect us. One is Mexico City where power is concentrated, and then northern Mexico where most of the officials and all have got their own ties to California and Arizona and New Mexico, Texas. I mean they are almost running on, I mean did you find that being Mexico-centric that sometimes Northern Mexico was beyond your control or something.

ZUCKERMAN: All of Mexico was beyond my control, and really beyond US control. We had very good programs going in both Monterrey and Guadalajara, and also had a nice distribution of bi-national centers in a number of cities. I had never worked with bi-national centers before, but they were a tremendous asset, not only as English-teaching centers, but also as cultural programmers and in some cases libraries. They were chartered under Mexican law and were legally Mexican institutions. We helped them and tried to provide cultural programming and assistance as we could, particularly by bringing down experts in teaching English as a second language to help train their teachers. In Monterrey, we had an officer who was spending all of his time messing with the small library, which was housed in the consulate which nobody came to unless they needed a visa.. We just took the whole collection and gave a grant to the bi-national center in Monterrey. They built a wing on to the center and we put a real library in there, and all of a sudden the library was well used.

Monterrey was vastly different from Mexico City. It always has been. It is a strong Catholic area, whereas Mexico City is still under the spell of the anti-Catholicism of the Mexican revolution. I was told by a left-wing editor that many people think Mexicans are Catholic because they go to church, pin little metal hearts, legs, arms, trucks, cows on a panel displaying the Virgin in hopes of a cure for whatever or whoever is ailing. They also, at the commemoration of the vision by a peasant of the Virgin, will crawl on their knees from Puebla to Mexico City as a way of showing reverence at the Cathedral built in her honor. But my friend said they are not Catholic, they are religious. They pray at churches that were built on the ruins of their old pyramids, and if the churches ever go, he said, they would still pray at those sites. At any rate, no president, at that time, would ever be photographed going to church. Vicente Fox is now in Mexico City and I don't know his practice. The north won that election because more of Mexico became northern-like, became interested in becoming an effective society. There is now a northern style newspaper, La Reforma, in Mexico City that wasn't there when I was there, which more closely displays a journalistic style and lack of front-page editorializing that is uncommon in Mexican journalism.

Q: How about when you were there? I mean was there a difference in your dealing or our efforts in Monterrey and elsewhere and in Mexico City?

ZUCKERMAN: Well in Monterrey, we had open access to Monterrey Tech, which was arguably the best university in Mexico. There were very strong, friendly newspapers. And Monterrey was also the best site, at a time when we had no post in Tijuana, to organize programs involving communities on both sides of the border. We had programs between border newspapers and border universities. But after my time in Mexico, when I was area director, a post was established in Tijuana. Now the Mexicans were very aware of the dual nature of that part of their country, so they built a cultural center in Tijuana because it was their view that the northerners didn't realize they were Mexican. They would call a truck, "camion" in Spanish, a "troca". Their language was being affected by English words, and beyond that, their proximity to American society was making them a different kind of Mexican, lacking the nationalistic fervor of those who lived closer to Mexico City and losing the mentality that saw the United States as a threat to Mexican sovereignty. We couldn't really cover the territory; it was just too huge. At one point we had a post in Hermosillo, where we had a consulate, but we couldn't maintain it. From time to time the PAO from Monterrey would make a visit there. Border towns like Brownsville and Matamoros were also out of reach. We had a good post in Guadalajara which people from Mexico will tell you is the most Mexican place in Mexico If someone in Mexico said he was going to the US but could only visit one city and would want to go to the most American city of all, I'm not sure anyone could honestly designate one. But the state of Jalisco and its capital, Guadalajara, are considered very much the heart and soul of Mexico. Lopez Portillo was from there. His successor was from not far away. We had good programs there, not huge programs but good programs. We identified candidates for Fulbright grants, exchange grants. We had good relationships with the newspapers. We supported the consulate. But the fact of the matter is that while I was there, Mexico City, with its 20 million people, was a combination of New York and Washington, the political, cultural and financial center of the country, and that's where our programs were focused...

Q: What about the universities in Mexico City? One thinks of the Olympics that is coming back now. Who was the minister who was involved in the Olympic troubles?

ZUCKERMAN: Luis Echeverria, later President, was minister of the interior when the demonstrations took place. Recently I saw that he was absolved of responsibility for the deaths that occurred when the Army fired on demonstrating students.

Q: This was '68. I always think of universities as being quite radical and difficult to penetrate because as so many places in other parts of the world, heavily Marxist faculty and all of that. How did you find that?

ZUCKERMAN: UNAM, the Autonomous National University of Mexico which, with its preparatory school had over 360,000 students, was very hard for us to bring a speaker to. We had professors who were tops in their fields who their counterparts at UNAM were eager to invite, but were dissuaded because of the prospect of student demonstrations against an "imperialistic agent" coming to the campus. But we had a wonderful library in Mexico City, the Benjamin Franklin Library, which I believe was the first US government library established overseas. It attracted the students from the university, because the collection was good but, more importantly, the shelves were open. They could browse freely in our library and talk with us freely, but it was difficult for us to be on that campus. We could go on many other campuses. Certainly ITAM, the Autonomous Technical Institute of Mexico, was a place where we were welcome. There were several Catholic universities we had good relations with, as well as private institutions and some with government affiliation. In fact we had relations with certain faculty members at UNAM, those who understood that they needed contact with us so that they could give their students the preparation to operate internationally and understand the changes that not only US and Canadian but also European and a number of Asian societies were undergoing.

There were enough foreign businesses established and growing in Mexico, with Mexican employees and in many cases managers, that a middle class was developing that was free of the cant of not only Marxism but of the revolution. That is the generation that has transformed Mexico into what it is now. It was not as open to us as it might have been, but even in Europe, including Belgium, we had to work carefully so as not to put the people we worked with in a difficult position. We had good relations with people on the left in the universities who were not excessively doctrinaire. Most had several identities. Few could exist on their academic salaries. They would write for the newspapers, sit on boards and commissions and lead issue groups. We could interact in that manner freely, away from the university proper, but it enabled us to talk about the day when we could really do things at UNAM of the kind that we were doing at Monterey Tech, ITAM and elsewhere - bring the kind of American professors down that their counterparts at UNAM would have been delighted to meet and share with their students.. But many on the left changed over the years, as they have in the US. There was a very prominent leftist professor at UNAM, Adolfo Aguilar Zinsser, who was the brother in law of Manuel Becerra Acosta, editor of Unomasuno. He had studied at Harvard and was an outspoken critic of Mexico's energy policy towards the US. Surprisingly, he became a top aide to Vicente Fox when he became president, and eventually became Mexico's ambassador to the United Nations. Tragically, he died in an automobile accident in Mexico in his early 50's. He was a good example of the kind of person who had strongly antipathetic feelings towards the US, who nonetheless enjoyed a good argument over a beer and gave us an insight into what was going on in the university and in the intellectual world of Mexico Dealing with the students was a matter of whether or not we could draw them into functions and into the library which they were free to come to, and many did.

Q: Was there a solid exodus of the Mexican children of sort of the ruling class going to American universities and coming back?

ZUCKERMAN: Very much so, particularly among the wealthier classes. But it was also increasingly the choice of the political classes as well. As I mentioned, the head of the American desk, whose stepfather was on the left of the PRI and became Foreign Minister, went to the University of Pennsylvania. The son of the darling of the left wing, Jesus Reyes Heroles, who was minister of the interior and the left's favorite to succeed Lopez Portillo, received a Fulbright scholarship, studied in the US, and became ambassador to the US. I think Mexico was re-orienting itself. For a long time the Mexican upper classes thought first of Europe when it came to educating their children. Spain, France, to some extent Britain had been the destinations of choice, but an American education had become the most desirable credential for success in the "new Mexico".

I did a paper when I was in my last year of the Foreign Service at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown, which took a look at the opportunities for study in the United States open at that point to foreign students. And I took a look at the Fulbright program as a fraction of that. It turned out that the Fulbright program, funded mainly by the US government except in countries where there was bilateral financing, accounted for less than 1.5% of foreign students in American universities, which indicated the enormity of the private flow of foreign students to the United States. I argued that since our program was so comparatively small in proportion to the total flow of students, it should re-adopt the reason stated by the original proposal by Senator Fulbright for its enactment: to work for better international understanding and world peace. This would mean adopting a broader view than the Fulbright Board favored, of selecting only the very top scholars no matter what their fields, but also looking for ways to address the needs of universities in places that the eminent scholars didn't want to go to. The example I used was the request from the Jesuit Central American University in El Salvador, which had suffered the assassination of a number of its priests during the civil war, for a professor of journalism. At the time, El Salvador was still dangerous, but we found a young assistant professor of journalism who was willing to go there, and he made a difference greater than a lofty scholar who might have been willing to stay for a week rather than a year could possibly have done. He helped to reestablish relations between the US and the University, where it was assumed that the killings could not have taken place without US acquiescence. The presence of foreign students here was not only a great cultural advantage, both for the foreign students and the American students who studied with them, but an enormous source of income for the US. I pointed this out on many occasions to the people who were talking about the fear of having 30,000 Chinese students in the United States. But those first 30,000 students, most of whom already have returned to China, seem to be having an effect on Chinese society, from what I heard on a recent trip to China. Their American experience has given them new aspirations.

Q: Oh yes. Unfortunately we are at a period of time right now when we are inhibiting this because of security.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, we are losing our greatest advantage in the ideas market. I was going to mention one other thing when we were talking about issues. There was one issue I had some flak on from Washington because of a decision we made when formulating the country plan. Drugs were a problem then as they are now in Mexico, but the Mexicans were most worried about marijuana because their kids were using it, and less worried about the cocaine and about poppies. We had very quietly gotten an agreement with the Mexican government in which we gave them planes and worked together so we would identify targets for their planes to spread crop destroying chemicals. I think it was a very quiet agreement that never appeared in the Mexican press, and the level of binational cooperation on drugs was never discussed lest it stir nationalistic protests. We were under pressure from Washington to have a major drug information program, but we thought better of it, that public information at that time on that issue would make it more difficult for Mexicans to maintain the kind of cooperation they were giving us. Because there was so much conflict in so many other areas, we thought that if this was working, we should leave well enough alone; leave it up to the Mexicans to educate their kids not to use drugs. That was the principal thrust of USIS anti-drug operations, to try to build resistance within that society to the use of drugs by their own kids, which was an inevitable by-product once they started producing them, as happened in Brazil. There we got governors' wives organized in each state's anti drug campaigns. But we didn't do it in Mexico. Later on, as things really became bad, I am sure that the post had to start waging the kind of anti drug campaign that we waged elsewhere, but hopefully with the cooperation of the Mexican authorities.

Our country plan raised eyebrows on another matter, because along with dealing with immigration, trade, economic and political relations, we also identified a program activity that others thought too broad, too much of an amorphous catch-all. But we defended it because we thought it was at the heart of our contentious relationship with Mexico, and that was mutual misconceptions about each others' society, history, and motives. There were things which happened in America which were read by Mexicans in a way totally different than how we read it, and the same was true as to how we read Mexican events. We felt that the way to deal with that was in creating programs that were fully bi-national in conception, participation and execution. In other words we wouldn't just program to Mexicans, but would act as intermediaries in bringing Mexicans and Americans together, as we did with the press, as we were beginning to do with university groups. These were seminars in which ideas were exchanged between groups, rather than us lecturing to a passive audience. That is what we worked on more assiduously than anything else - to try to figure out a means of communicating in such a way that people felt they were on equal footing, that we were listening as well as talking.

Q: Can you give an example perhaps of during the time you were there of sort of mutual misperceptions?

ZUCKERMAN: The most obvious one from the uninformed US side was the perception of Mexicans as a nation of Indian peasants controlled by a veneer of transplanted Europeans, peasants who were largely unsophisticated, uneducated, and violent. From our vantage point, we were witnessing a rapid expansion of the Mexican middle class, the beginnings of a political upheaval that would throw off the one-party monopoly of power held by the PRI, and an economic growth stimulated by an expansion in education and newly discovered oil reserves. From the Mexican side, there was a grudging admiration for our political system, economic prowess and perceived efficiency, but a resentment that our liberal democratic ideals were for internal use only, and didn't extend to our dealings with Mexicans and other developing countries. Furthermore, there was a tendency to see nefarious motives in anything we did in dealing with them. If we gave them the benefit of higher prices by selling oil and gas to us because of reduced delivery costs, they thought it was a scheme to control their resources. When Secretary of Energy Schlesinger reneged on the gas agreement because it was well above world prices, we were attempting to undermine Mexico's economy. Also, we were stealing their manpower by luring Mexicans to work on our farms and in our factories by paying them higher wages than they could earn at home, but treating them as slave labor. When floods destroyed homes and farms in Tijuana, a friendly governor had to decline our offer to supply tents to house the displaced because it would be seen as interfering in Mexican internal affairs. The list is long.

Q: A couple of things just before we finish. Cuba. Did Cuba come up?

ZUCKERMAN: Yes. Cuba was a constant issue. When Fidel Castro and Che Guevara had to leave Cuba after the aborted first attempted revolutionary attack, they came to Mexico on a little boat call Granma. I was told by the director of Televisa, the privately owned, staunchly independent and conservative television network, that Guevara and Castro had appeared in one of their novellas as doctors in white coats. He told me that if he had known that was going to happen, "I would have hired them and made them stars to keep them from getting back to Cuba." There was a great feeling of camaraderie between Cuba and Mexico, certainly in the left wing of the PRI. It was part of a way of putting a stick in Uncle Sam's eye, but it was also part of the way that the oligarchy that controlled the PRI and reaped the benefits thereof could demonstrate at very low cost, without giving up their mansions, chauffeured cars and casas chicas, their love nests, that in their heart of hearts, they too were revolutionaries. They certainly were not going to upsetting the apple cart within Mexico, but had to bow to the widespread public approval of Castro, not because of what he was doing in Cuba, but because of how he had stood up to the colossus of the north. These days, however, relations between Mexico and Cuba are not as close as they once were.

Q: Well in a way your next post had the same thing didn't it, Canada. I mean just again the designated whipping boy or something like that.

ZUCKERMAN: I take great pleasure in pointing that out to people who say, "What are you doing in Canada for God's sake? They're just like us!" I point out to them that anti- Americanism was invented by the New England colonists who opposed the revolution and fled to Canada when independence became a fact. Because on a superficial level we see very little difference between ourselves and our cousins to the Great White North, we overlook the often subtle differences that make Canadian society somewhat different than our own. They pride themselves on having less violence, greater egalitarianism, and nicer cities in many cases. But many of the most talented of them seek their fortune in the US, in the media, in our universities, in our businesses. In many ways, the US plays the same role vis a vis Canada as France plays vis a vis Belgium. Ambitious Canadians know that the gold ring is on the US merry go round.

Q: Well finally before we leave Mexico, there are two issues. One, how about corruption? You know I think of the dinosaurs of the PRI, and you mentioned the chief of police at $400 a month and living very well thank you and salting away his polo stables and all that. Did corruption play a part in what you were doing or did you have to work around it to get stories in? Anyway how about the whole corruption picture?

ZUCKERMAN: That never arose when it came to our dealings with the press. We never paid to place a story. But corruption existed at every level of Mexican society. You could be driving late at night and a policeman stops you and says, "You went through that light.' You say, "What light? There is no light here." Well you can pay 200 pesos there or they take you down to the station and it is 1000 pesos. "I am a diplomat. You can see it on my license." "Yes well we can straighten it out down there. You are tired. You give me 200 pesos and you can go home." I had some wealthy friends who owned some land on which they got a permit to build a luxury apartment house. It was designed to contain 16 apartments. They determined that they miscalculated, that in order to make money on the project they would have to have 20 apartments, and add two stories. So they went to negotiate this with the official in charge of such things in the Mexico City bureaucracy. They worked it out. "How did you work it out?" They said, "He gets one apartment. We get three, we can make it." I said, "Well doesn't that drive you crazy?" He said, "Look you have to understand Mexico. None of these people get paid very much. Every Mexican official has to raise his own taxes. He is the one who is responsible for bringing the income in that he lives on. It is unfortunate but it is a part of life."

People in Mexico accept it, the mordida, the bite. He doesn't have to ask for it but you make it available. In a sense his view becomes your view. You are asking me to give you something that will enrich you. Why should I? The law doesn't require me to do this. You are asking for an exception to the rule. What do you expect me to do? What would induce me to do such a thing? You know what it is; he doesn't have to say it. So you have to come prepared to say the right thing at the right time.

Q: Stan, one last question on this unless you have something else you want to add. You were there when the Reagan administration came in. How, did you have a problem dealing with Reagan at first? You know here is a movie actor. I think all over the world I think we had a problem of somebody who is coming from the political field and had the reputation of being far right, in presenting him, and also the impact of Charlie Wick.

ZUCKERMAN: I didn't have any problems other than those I mentioned when the initial Mexican reaction to Reagan, in the press anyway, was that he was an actor and therefore unqualified to be president. They forgot about his being a governor of a state with a GNP much larger than their own. But I think the Mexican government obviously treated him with respect no matter what they may have said privately to each other. We didn't have a problem with Reagan; we had a problem with his staff at one point. When Reagan was going to come down to Cancun to attend a meeting of 22 presidents that the Mexican president had arranged, I was awaiting an invitation from the White House advance team to work with them on press facilities and other things that we would normally be involved in when a President visits. Instead the advance team, the pre advance team, seized on a long-time Embassy staffer who was sort of a meeter and greeter for the embassy who had insinuated himself into the confidence of these young and idealistic people. Finally we began to have contacts with the White House press people, but there were still meetings on subjects that we'd have to be responsible for in which we were left out. Finally I talked to Ambassador Gavin during the meeting in Cancun. There was a mid-day break and he and I went for a swim, and I told him I was having a hard time dealing with the White House people, and wondered if he knew what the problem was. He said "Well let me ask you a couple of questions. Did you ever have Julian Nava stay at your house after he came back to visit?" I told him that Lucey had stayed at my house, but Nava had not." Gavin said he knew that Lucey and I were friends, but they were concerned about Nava. He asked if I had written speeches for Nava that he had used in campaigning in the US for Carter during the election, and I said, truthfully, that I hadn't and that he had never asked me to. He acknowledged that those issues were the source of the problem, and that he would straighten things out. After that it became much better.

Q: Did the problem in Central America, I am speaking of the heavy Reagan involvement at the time you were there. Did that impact?

ZUCKERMAN: Yes. We had organized demonstrations in front of the embassy on many occasions. Young people in designer jeans would parade denouncing our activities in El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Central America was close to Mexico, but when I got to know Central America more when I was traveling as area director, nothing frightened Central Americans more then their proximity to Mexico.

Q: The colossus to the north.

ZUCKERMAN: Colossus to the north, right. It never got out of hand, never got violent. I don't remember us ever having a rock thrown at the Benjamin Franklin Library or people not coming to English language classes at the Mexican American Institute. The demonstrations were pro forma, but we took them seriously for security reasons.

Q: I take it the papers would essentially support the Sandinistas.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, but the greater focus at that point was Salvador. I am trying to remember the exact sequence of these conflicts, but clearly Salvador was the focus because it was the bloodiest at the time. The official line, the official position of the Mexican government, was that we were mishandling the situation. They weren't supporting the leftist regimes, but they felt there were other means to ameliorate the situation. The real problem was hunger. The real problem was the rigid class system, the oligarchy, which in the case of Mexico was the pot calling the kettle black. But it did not, and this was the important key point, it did not take precedence over the real issues that Mexico was concerned with in its bilateral relationship with us. Those were the economic and immigration and energy issues that were at the heart of their well being.

Q: All right, well I think, Stan this is a good place to stop, and if we don't, if you have anything to add, fine, on Mexico.

ZUCKERMAN: I wanted to respond to your request that I think about any specific examples of the aberrations in the Mexican press. I spoke to a good friend who was our information officer, who came down to Mexico with me, Larry Ikels. We compared notes last night, and we agreed that it wasn't so much any specific zaniness on any particular story. It was an overall atmosphere of paranoia which colored almost everything that appeared in the Mexican press vis a vis the bilateral relationship, because Mexicans are raised with their mother's milk, and certainly in their school system, to regard the United States as a threat to their sovereignty. One could argue they had reason to do so following the loss of much of what is now the American southwest to the United States after the war of 1848. But it was that paranoiac reaction that saw every gesture, every initiative of the United States vis a vis Mexico, as having a hidden agenda which was to compromise Mexican sovereignty and control of its energy, especially during the time I was there. There are a couple of incidents that Larry reminded me of that we were involved in, that didn't specifically relate only to the press but beyond it. But they do serve to illustrate the point.

One of them turned out to be an incident that probably was in my own memory the most shameful act I ever committed on behalf of public diplomacy. Mstislav Rostropovich was the conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra. They came down to Mexico to perform at the Cervantino festival in the lovely old Spanish mining town of Guanajuato. At the end of the concert he came out to conduct an encore. He conducted the Stars and Stripes Forever, and there was an uproar in the audience, with loud shouts of "down with American imperialism," because they saw that patriotic American march as a hostile gesture. When Rostropovich came down with the orchestra to Mexico City to perform, he held a press conference a day before the concert and responded to questions from the press as to his choice of an American march that had inflamed his audience in Guanajuato. He told them that Sousa was to the march what Strauss was to the waltz, the best example of its genre, and he thought that settled the matter.

Ambassador Lucey had a small dinner in his honor that night, and we talked about the uproar at the concert in Guanajuato. I asked him what his encore would be at the concert in Mexico City. He said, "Well, we are playing the Pathetique symphony of Tchaikovsky, which ends on a religious note and usually isn't followed by an encore. But if one is demanded, we would probably play the march from The Love for Three Oranges by Prokofiev. That, I suppose would be acceptable for a Mexican audience." I said "Yes, of course," ... and this is something I rue saying to this very day, "but it's possible however, that the Mexican press would feel they taught you a lesson in Guanajuato." And raising his eyebrows he said, "Oh?" The next night the concert was held and received tumultuous applause. He came out to do an encore and he conducted the Prokofiev march as he had indicated he would. Great applause followed, and he came out again and went right into a vigorous performance of the Stars and Stripes Forever. Half of the audience was on its feet shouting, "Viva Mexico." The other half was applauding. Of course the newspapers went wild with it. I think he was delighted, but I don't think it was my job as a public affairs officer to induce a hostile reaction in a Mexican audience, even though it was not at the expense of the maestro who, as I say, thoroughly enjoyed it.

The other incident reflects upon the political venom which many Mexican columnists spewed when we undertook a program that was popular among most Mexicans. As I mentioned earlier, at the time of the Carter visit, the wife of President Lopez PortillCarmen Romano de Lopez Portillo - wanted a large American art exhibit as a cultural highlight of the president's visit. I think I mentioned that we told her it was something that we would be glad to entertain for the future, but we only had a few months before the president's visit, and something like that takes a long time and a lot of preparation. After the visit was over, she didn't let us forget about it. So we entered into negotiations. The Mexicans cooperated and assumed a very generous portion of the financial responsibility for an exhibit which was curated by a distinguished professor of art history from the City University of New York, Milton Brown. He accepted the assignment on the condition that the five great museums of Washington would contribute works to this exhibit, and would not in any way bar him from taking any works he wanted from their walls. He took 90 works starting with Copley and ending with Diebenkorn, spanning almost the entire history of American art.

It was a great success. Almost 200,000 Mexicans came to see it in the two months it was up. Excelsior, which was at that time the leading newspaper in Mexico and very nationalistic, chose to pick a violent critic of the United States to review the exhibit. He lashed out at it for what it did not contain, meaning a series of artists who should have been there if we had taken Mexico seriously. And to our delight, every artist he named was in fact part of the exhibit. We called on Milton Brown, who turned out to be an excellent polemicist, to respond, and he made Excelsior's critic look like a fool. But that is an example of how, even in the cultural field, a Mexican newspaper, a leading one, would reach out to find someone who would find a political basis for criticism of the exhibit. It was one of the things that made me conclude that art is politics in Mexico as it is no where else, with the possible exception of France.

Q: Well then you went up to Canada where there is absolutely no paranoia concerning the United States.

ZUCKERMAN: That is not true. I specialized in paranoid countries.

Q: I would say, other than a different accent.

ZUCKERMAN: Well you see, it is the birthplace of anti-Americanism. The United Empire Loyalists went there at the end of the revolution when they were the first non-French speaking white settlers allowed to settle in Ontario. To this day you go to the York club in Ontario, and you have to toast the queen before cigarette smoking is allowed both before and after dinner. I think that still exists. It certainly was true when I was there. I went to Canada for very specific personal reasons. I was at the time a single parent. My kids were of high school age, and this probably would be the last post when I had any supervision over them before they went off to college. I wanted to take them to a post where they could learn to live in a world different from the world of young children in a diplomatic setting, which meant they would have to learn to use public transportation, go to a public high school, and get jobs after school. The only place I could do that was in Canada. It was coming open a year after I was due to leave Mexico, but I stayed an extra year, despite my disagreements with Ambassador Gavin, which we worked out, in order to be in line for that posting. We spent three very interesting and very cold years in Ottawa. My kids achieved everything I hoped for and went off to college far better able to cope with the real world. And I also persuaded Adriana Bianchi, an Argentine scholar with a US education who I met when she was teaching at a university in Mexico, to join us in Canada where we were married.

Q: Well you were there from when to when?

ZUCKERMAN: I was there from 1983 to 1986.

Q: What was your job?

ZUCKERMAN: I was the counselor for public affairs.

Q: Who was the ambassador, and how did he operate?

ZUCKERMAN: Well he was a very interesting and colorful man. His name was Paul Robinson. He was the president of an international insurance company that his father had founded in Chicago, and was the chief Illinois fund raiser for the Reagan campaign in Illinois. He had made many waves in Canada by making it his personal task to travel the country berating the Canadians for not pulling their weight in meeting the common defense obligation, that their spending on military hardware and on mutual defense was disproportionate to their GDP, the lowest proportion in NATO. He trotted out many figures to describe the disparity between NATO's defense posture and that of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies at that time. But every time he gave a speech the figures tended to change, to the delight of our critics. My first task was to find some way, because he was a very determined man and was not easy to contradict, to get him to use accurate numbers and stick to them.

I had, when I was in Mexico, very good relations with what we then had - a world class printing plant that served all of Latin America and much of other parts of the world. Our two major printing plants were in Mexico and the Philippines, and the magnificent book of 90 full color reproductions of the works in our Mexican exhibit were all printed in collaboration between those two printing plants. I called the people at the plant in Mexico and asked if they could produce a pamphlet which would contain the Ambassador's basic speech, with his photo, and get it to us very rapidly. They said they would do it in record time. So I went to Ambassador Robinson and told him that his basic speech was important enough to warrant a mailing to universities, defense institutions, periodicals and newspapers, but since he didn't use a text, it would be useful if he would dictate the speech to his secretary. He thought that was a great idea, and did it right away.

We then gave the text to the Embassy's defense attachï¿½ and asked him to get every one at the Defense Department whose armaments were mentioned to vet the numbers and make sure they were accurate and up to date. We sent the corrected material to Mexico and I believe it came back in a fine little pamphlet with the Ambassador's photo on the cover within a week or ten days. From that time on he stuck by that text, with the correct figures that we could defend against critics. And from that day on we were on fine terms.

He was a great baseball fan, a lifelong Chicago Cubs fan with a box seat for all their games at Wrigley Field. The manager and a few stars of the Toronto Blue Jays would annually come to Ottawa as guests at a dinner that was held in a beautiful hall in the majestic Canadian parliament building to discuss the outlook for the team in the coming year and answer questions. A collection of the leading lights of Canadian politics were invited to the dinner, and the Ambassador, knowing that I grew up in Brooklyn and was a Dodger fan, invited me to join him at the dinner since his wife was not a baseball fan. There were four large round tables, with about 10 people at each. The majority leader of the Canadian senate was the host at our table, and before dinner and the session with the Blues Jays, called on each of us to tell his favorite baseball story. It started with the Ambassador, went around the table, and ended with me. I had only one story to tell, and while others were telling theirs I wondered whether it would be acceptable to tell it in that august company.

Q: Why ?

ZUCKERMAN: There is a rather strong word in it, without which it makes no sense, but since this was hopefully among friends, I took the risk of telling it... I told about having gone to see the Brooklyn Dodgers with some friends of mine when we were about 12 or 13 years old at Ebbets Field, a night game. There was pitcher called Hugh Casey who was a real roughneck. He once reportedly had a fight in a saloon with Ernest Hemingway when the Dodgers trained in Cuba. He was a heavy drinker and was one of the early relief specialists in the major leagues. That night the Dodgers were getting beat up, and he came in to relieve, in the fifth inning as I recall. He pitched the rest of the game, getting in and out of trouble, but won it. It was a marvelous performance from a guy who was out of condition and getting by on sheer guile. We waited at the players exit to get his autograph, and finally he came out dressed like an insurance salesman, snap brim hat, brown pinstripe suit. Now we were only interested in his autograph. We congratulated him on his performance, and offered him our pads and pens. He said, "Not now kids, I am really a little tired." So we followed him down the street, and just before the elevated subway station he stopped to get the News and the Mirror, which came out late in the evening, and to get a shoe shine. While he was getting his shoes shined we asked, "Can we get your autograph now?" "Let me rest a little kids. Let me just read the paper," Well he tips the shoe shine boy, goes up the stairs of the elevated and goes through the gate leading to Manhattan. Our route was to go the other way, back to Coney Island, change subway trains and go up to Bay Parkway. Instead we followed him on the train to Manhattan, standing by as he read his paper, repeating our request. He said, "Not now kids, just let me read a little more."

Before we knew it we were at Union Square, 14th Street in Manhattan. He gets up to leave the train. We follow him off the train pleading. "Mr. Casey, we have done everything you said. We are in trouble now. We should have been home a long time ago." (This was long before cell phones.) He went through the turnstile and I called out to him. "Mr. Casey, if we go through this turnstile it is going to cost us another nickel to get back on the subway. Why don't you just show us some kindness and give us the autograph. We followed you all this way." He stopped, and he turned around and came back to the turnstile, and we extended our pads and pens certain that he wasn't going to walk off and disappoint us. When he reached us he stopped and said, "F..k you, kids," and he turned and walked away. I have used that story to describe to people in various cities what could be in store for them if they really want major league baseball players in town as a constructive influence on their kids.

Well those at the table, to my relief, roared with laughter, especially Paul Robinson. We got on even better after that evening. The next morning I found a copy of the new annual baseball almanac on my desk. Inside the cover page it was signed: "Good Luck Kid. Hugh Casey." I knew it came from the Ambassador and we had a good laugh about it. I'll never forget that, when he left the Ambassadorship after the election to go back to Chicago, he threw a huge dinner for the wealthiest people in Ottawa at which he charged an attendance fee of $500 a head, all of which went to the Kidney Foundation. (His mother's life was saved by the donation of a kidney from his sister.) It was hugely attended. He had gotten the best hotels into putting up tents and serving their favorite desserts, and it went on and on until one or two a.m. and there were about 12 or 14 of his closest friends and a couple of us embassy types left. I would not attempt to reproduce his articulation at the end of such a long and wet evening, but as I remember he said to the groggy assemblage, throwing his arm around me: "I never would have guessed that when I left Ottawa, my best friend would be a New York liberal Jew."

I have seen him since, both in Washington and Chicago and we always exchange Christmas cards. He was such a baseball fan that he put up a pitching machine and a backstop on the front lawn of the ambassador's residence, and made me get up to hit soon after I got there. I had played some baseball as a kid and I hit the first pitch from the machine, a line drive. He said, "I've finally got a PAO who can hit. A slash hitter." He promised to reward anybody who could hit the ball far enough to break a window in the residence, but the lawn was huge and thankfully nobody did it. Everybody sort of laughed about his miniature baseball field until one day Pierre Trudeau, then prime minister of Canada, stopped by with his three sons to have a go at the pitching machine. He was colorful, and I think that despite the fact that he was a target for lampooning in the press, they knew that he was a man who had a good sense of humor, loved Canada deeply, and I think that in the long run, because Canada did increase its defense budget, he had a useful effect on Canadian defense policy.

Q: This concentration on the defense thing, was there some guidance from the State Department or was this his thing, or did people in Washington tell you to cool it?

ZUCKERMAN: Well I think there was consternation on the Canada desk over the stridency of his message, but he was regarded as a powerful political appointee. It certainly was not a contradiction to the President's own message, and whatever the concerns were, he did as he chose in this matter. He was not off line on the message. He was just not a traditional State Department type. But that is true I think in the case of many political ambassadors who choose to be proactive in public affairs. I am not at all convinced that it is a bad thing. It is very rare for most career ambassadors to call attention to themselves by haranguing the host country on an issue of mutual concern. But sometimes a political ambassador who comes there for a short time can get away with something that needs saying. Any foreign ministry can observe that, well he is not really a career diplomat, is he? But they hear the message. In the case of the political ambassadors for whom I have worked, they had an advantage in being able to make phone calls that most career ambassadors can not, to people in Congress and the Senate and the White House, whereas most career ambassadors have to wade through State Department channels.

Q: How did you find, well, a little bit of compare and contrast between the environment in your job in Mexico and Canada?

ZUCKERMAN: The issues were in some cases similar, but the context and the style were very different. The Canadians were every bit as hostile as the Mexicans to our involvement with the contras in Nicaragua and the right wing government in El Salvador. And when we brought the son of Violetta Chamorro, who later became president of Nicaragua, to speak in Ottawa, there were those who thought we were out of line. The son was the editor of the only remaining independent and outspoken newspaper, La Prensa. His father, the editor, had been killed. The son was a very bright guy, educated in the US and we had his appearance sponsored by the International Press Association representative in Ottawa, who was editor of the major Ottawa newspaper.

Chamorro gave, I thought, a very realistic assessment of where the Sandinistas were headed and what the opposition was like, discounting the contras, and what was happening to them. When it was found out that we had paid his expenses, somehow the Ottawa papers made that the story. Even if we asked how else he could get there, since there was no money in Nicaragua for people who are not in the government to come up there, they played it as if we had used subterfuge. It seemed silly and somewhat amateurish in our eyes to characterize is as underhanded. Later on when the strategic defense initiative became a high administration priority, and we were told to flog it, we had speakers coming up who were greeted with total derision. It was not an issue for Mexicans to be concerned about because they had no direct involvement in the strategic defense of North America. But the Canadians did, and they thought, as many Americans did, that the concept was eyewash

Canadians loved to feel that they had built a society that was free of the violence and poverty that existed in the US, and that they had a better life. And yet, when you take a look at the number of Canadians who have come here to make their name, they are everywhere. They are everywhere in the arts, the sciences, the universities, and the media. During the Vietnam War there were a large number of Americans of draft age who had come to Canada because of their opposition to the war or, in some cases, just to avoid the draft. A number of them ended up teaching in Canadian universities, and became some of the harshest critics of American policy in Canada. But those issues were conducted and talked about in perhaps a less paranoid manner than was the case of Mexico, mostly because there was vastly more interchange between the two societies. That was not only on the level of the academies and the newspapers and business, but in government.

In the embassy in Mexico, at the time I was there at least, there was very little direct interchange between Mexican government officials and their counterparts in the US government. In Canada, however, our environmental people and their environmental people would talk directly. Our commercial people and their commercial people, our treasury people and their treasury people had direct lines to each other's offices. They knew each other. They traveled back and forth. So the differences are subtle, but real. The Canadians are determined not to become a mirror of American society, although that varies depending on where you go in Canada. Canadians in Ontario and Manitoba fear that someday they will lose Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia to the United States because the Canadians there are so much more pro American, feel so much that their lives and concerns are very much like those of Americans. In Manitoba, Ontario, and then certainly Quebec, attitudes are far more nationalistic, although Quebecers sometimes seem to feel more comfortable with Americans than with their English-speaking Canadian countrymen.

Q: Well then you go to Nova Scotia where Boston is their capital.

ZUCKERMAN: That's right. And Quebec is a very complicated issue because it's Canada's great divide. But the Quebecers use that. They like to feel closer to us than they do to Canadians, the Quebec nationalists anyway, than they do to English speaking Canadians. They had a consulate in Boston of about 34 people, which was extraordinary. They were very active in developing business ties, particularly in energy. They sell a lot of power to the United States from their vast hydro electric resources. But the recurring efforts of Quebec nationalists to gain autonomy was an issue that we obviously stayed strictly out of, because it is for Canadians to decide. We would gain nothing by entering into it, although obviously we don't relish the idea of Canada splitting. The pressure within Canada waxes and wanes. Right now it is in a waning period. I think certainly every American administration would prefer a united Canada, although when you get out to the West of Canada many people say "let them go and be done with it." I doubt that it's going to happen. At least I hope it won't.

Q: Well did you work well say with our consuls general in Montreal and Quebec and Toronto. Were you having a problem of keeping the Quebec nationalists from snuggling too close to us and trying to co-opt us.

ZUCKERMAN: We had offices in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, consisting of one American plus a Canadian staff and a library. Those programs were very active because they were in great cities. The major universities of the country were in those places. Carleton University and Ottawa University had some decent departments, but the strongest centers of higher education were elsewhere. You had McGill in Montreal plus several French-speaking universities. The PAO in Montreal was also responsible for Quebec City which was the site of Laval University. Toronto of course had the University of Toronto, which is the great university of Canada, but also York University and in Lower Ontario some very good universities, Kingston, Queens College, the University of Western Ontario and a university in Waterloo that was probably the best center for computer science in the country. In Vancouver, the University of British Columbia was outstanding, and there was a first rate university in Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba. There were also consulates in Calgary and in Winnipeg. We tried to serve them by sending materials for one of the State Department local staff to distribute. Canada is a vast country but it is not very deep. About 80% of the population lives within 150 miles of the U.S. border. So you can't cover the whole country, but we really seldom try to cover any country geographically. We try to find the people who shape attitudes in the country and the institutions to which they belong. We tried to form cooperative relationships with those people, the gate keepers, to reach the country as best we can.

Q: Well talk about Quebec. I somehow have this feeling that Quebec in a way parallels France in that they have their intellectuals at the university and all. Were these important people?

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, but there is a very important distinction to be made here. The French in France don't accept the Quebecers in the way the Quebecers would like them to. Their accent is very different; it's still rooted in 17th century French. The Quebecers are North Americans, but they love their French roots; they love their language. Their differences with English speaking Canadians are not merely linguistic, but really involve a matter that may be more serious, since it represents a question of economic and class distinctions. Ottawa adjoins the province of Quebec, separated only by the Ottawa River. Just across the river is the town of Hull. When we were moving in to our house in Ottawa, all the workmen, all the delivery men who would come to our house were French speakers. During the heyday of Anglo ascendancy in Montreal, there were clubs which would not accept French Canadians as members. There was a class distinction which is much stronger I think, ultimately, than the language distinction. But still the same, the movement for independence has given rise to much greater sensitivity within Canada and the realization that if they want to remain united, they would have to address the language issue and the class issue as well. It is a healthy country. They have really good, strong partisan battles, and the strength of their several political parties wax and wane as ours do not.

Q: When they lost, the party almost disappeared.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, the Progressive Conservatives almost disappeared and really have not recovered from their high water mark in the 1980's. They were the dominant party while I was there and then a couple of years later they had only a handful of members of parliament. So there are much stronger swings of fortune there than here. There was a strong third party in Canada, the New Democratic Party which is pretty much a socialist party. One major difference between us is that Canada has a parliamentary system, which produces a very different style of politics than we practice in the US.

Here, the most useful attribute in Congress is the ability to rise to a committee chairmanship. That is achieved by longevity and developing strong alliances that may not be visible to observers. The accumulation of debts owed by those whose careers you have advanced can be collected once you advance to more important committee chairs. All of this gives you power to get your legislation passed, and to control the agenda of an important area of congressional action, from defense to finance to public works, to health and labor.

In Canada, the give and take of parliamentary debate values the legislator who is fast on his feet and shines in the quick response that brings hurrahs from his fellow partisans and also brings him attention in the press and on television. American congressional leaders must be powerful. Canadian parliamentary leaders must be brilliant. And they are the product of an enviable educational system. I was friendly with a professor who lived in Ottawa but was born in a tiny town in the north of Saskatchewan, I think it was Ruppert. His father came from Russia as an indentured servant, a Jew who spoke only Yiddish and an Indian dialect that he learned in Saskatchewan. And he worked his way out of that, but the son, because of a Canadian policy of trying to ensure equal education throughout the nation by paying more to young teachers who would go to very distant, rural areas, got a good enough education in that tiny town to be accepted at the University of Saskatchewan. His education there was good enough to get him accepted into the PhD program in economics at the University of Chicago. It is possible that a story like that can occur in the United States, but only in the case of an exceptional teacher who spots an exceptional student. Canadian schools, and the entire educational system, are not tied to local property taxes as ours are. Good schools don't exist because they are located in wealthy areas. The money is spread around to all, and it results in an educational system that is far more uniform across the country than is our own.

Q: Well now did you find that you were keying programs to the English speaking and then to the French speaking. Did you have different focuses or something?

ZUCKERMAN: Not really. We had good relations with the University of Ottawa which was French speaking and more left than Carlton University. In Montreal we dealt with McGill which was English, and with Concordia which was French. But if it was a common venue, we invited people equally. We did start a Fulbright exchange program, which really didn't exist in Canada because everybody thought we didn't need one. We did it in a different form though, and this was with the international relations department of Carlton University. We worked out an agreement whereby professors from the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins in Washington would come up and teach a several day course in their specialty at Carlton University, and Carlton University professors would go down to the School of Advanced International Studies to lecture in their specialties in Canadian affairs. It was the only way you could do it with Canada; it had to be two way. It served a very good purpose. Canadian studies in the US are not what they might be. It is a rather rarefied field for a small number of students and scholars but it does exist.

The North American Free Trade Agreement created new interest in the relationship once it was more than a bilateral free trade agreement with Mexico only. Then the complications that followed out of an attempt to design an agreement which would benefit all three countries took very extended negotiations which concluded long after I left. It created more controversy in the US than in the other two nations, even though Canadians undoubtedly lost some jobs to the US, but there was a fear in the US that jobs in the trans-national auto industry would move to Canada. The tri-lateral negotiation was an undertaking that I couldn't believe, at the time I was in Mexico, was ever possible, as I mentioned earlier. I think it was because we weren't as fully aware as we might have been of the growing power of the new Mexican middle class, people who were professionals or white collar workers who no longer felt they needed political tutelage. This is ultimately what brought about the political change in Mexico that made NAFTA possible.

In Canada, there was already an enormous amount of American manufacturing and there was significant Canadian-owned manufacturing in America, as well as significant cross border investment in each other's industries-. So in a sense it was easier. But reading Mexico into all of that was a great achievement, because of the significant cultural differences and production processes. I am not an economist, but I salute the negotiators who were able bring it off, and the political skills it took to not only negotiate it but also to have it accepted by a majority of the political actors in all three countries.

Q: You know that for years there were these battles where people holding your job and similar jobs had implied, and that was, I don't know what you want to call it, but the overflow of American advertising and all, and American oriented radio, magazines, TV what have you all to the Canadian side, and their attempts to stem this. How did it stand when you were there?

ZUCKERMAN: Well it was certainly there. The Canadians at the time still had restrictions requiring movie theaters to have X percent of Canadian productions on their screens. There was a fuss about American books overwhelming the Canadian products on the shelves of their book stores and libraries. But I think that is changing. You know I make films now, and I get a little check each year from the Canadian consortium that protects American film makers by tabulating the amount of American programs seen on Canadian television and send us a our pro rata share of the royalties owed by Canadian cable systems. I think what is happening is that Canada is now producing some first rate films that are seen in the United States. They have extraordinarily good writers. Margaret Atwood and Robertson Davies are probably read by as many Americans or more than Canadians who are reading American authors. Stephen King might be an exception along with more literary writers like E.L. Doctorow, Phillip Roth, Joyce Carol Oates, or John Updike, But at that same time there is a sensitivity on the part of most countries who feel that their own cultural achievements are being neglected by those of countries like the US, France and the UK whose international media dominate much of the planet. Hollywood is probably the bete noir of foreign cultural commentators because its output dominates local productions simply by the unmatched production values of its films, even if they are artistically inferior to many of the superb small foreign films that serious film fans in the US enjoy. American films are hugely popular in every country I've worked in, including Canada, where our common language and cultural affinity makes them more accessible. But I can't imagine that that will remain a serious issue forever because of the growing strength of Canadian culture and Canadian identity. They are proud of their distinctions and are gaining in self-confidence.

Q: Did you get called in, I mean is this an issue had this become an issue while you were there on any particular thing.

ZUCKERMAN: When we would have meetings on cultural issues we would bring up the Canadian content issue and point out that it was unbecoming a nation that was justifiably proud of its writers, artists and film makers. They would acknowledge that we brought it up and move on, sort of the same reaction that Mexicans have when we point out the distortions in their textbooks. It was a political issue because most Canadian film makers would probably find it more difficult to have some of their films shown without the cultural protection laws. And yet they could point to figures that showed that American films were easily within reach to most Canadians, which was certainly true in all of the video stores and on television. Canadian channels and Canadian cable services carried American television coming from the cities across the border closest to them. So it is really a hopeless task to seal the border off from cultural flows each way. And it is inevitable that the cultural flow would be greater flowing north than flowing south, except for the fact that proportionate to their size, I think Canada is holding its own.

Q: What about Cuba?

ZUCKERMAN: Cuba was a freebie for Canadians. Canadians love to be friendly with countries with warm climates. Even working class Canadian families spend a couple of weeks as far south as their budget will allow. If you go down to Miami in the winter you will hear a French Canadian station that operates only in the tourist season. Canadians discovered that travel to Cuba was cheap and fun and then the hotels began improving as foreign investment went in. So although their differences with us over how Castro should be handled were not very different from the way Americans who disagreed with American policy would describe it; nonetheless, it was one of those areas where they were free to tweak us, free to pull Uncle Sam's beard without any consequences. We understood that. There were problems of course, once you start trying to export to the United States Canadian products containing sugar that was bought in Cuba, that ran afoul of American laws restricting Cuban goods. I don't know how they could determine which box of cookies had Cuban sugar in it rather than beet sugar from wherever. It is pretty silly, you know, when you get right down to it.

Q: How did you find, say, the Canadian media? Did you go to the Globe and Mail or any newspaper and you know, say could you get a little more even sided coverage in this issue or that?

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, but that wasn't usually the way we would do it. We would, if somebody was in town, a lecturer, a government official who could state our case, we would make them available for an interview. I mean we would not lecture the Globe and Mail, which is a great and responsible newspaper. They had a first rate correspondent in Ottawa, a columnist who we were very close to. He agreed with us on some things and not on others. But you earn a good relationship with newsmen by doing certain things that allow them to develop trust in what you tell them.

We had several high level visits while I was there. George H.W. Bush came to Canada when he was vice-president and enjoyed a very successful visit. Then later there was what was called the Shamrock Summit between Brian Mulroney, who was prime minister, and President Reagan. It was held in Quebec City which I got to know very well by running back and forth a dozen times before the visit. Before a presidential visit the Washington press corps scheduled to accompany the visit was given a special briefing on the issues. The briefing was to be given by Richard Burt, the then Assistant Secretary for European affairs before Canada became part of a new bureau called Western Hemisphere Affairs. The briefing was to be given in Washington, and we arranged with the White House for a hookup to be set up at the National Press Building in Ottawa, where most newspapers and broadcast media had their offices, and where we had ours. There was a nice studio downstairs and we were able to get a video and sound feed directly into it. The Canadian press came out en masse - about 100 people were there. We had an agreement that, at a certain time in the briefing, Secretary Burt would accept questions from the Canadian press. As far as I know, it was a first, and I'm sure it has now been done wherever facilities are available; at least I hope it's done, because it's important that we treat the press of a host country where the president travels as professionals deserving equal treatment with our own press. There's always a desire by the White House press office to take care of the US press first for obvious reasons, but we got much better treatment for the president than I recall from visits I worked on where the foreign press was clearly given second-class consideration.

Once we got a satellite dish and USIA started WorldNet, we would invite a half dozen or so Canadian reporters to our office to participate with press in several other countries in interviewing important US officials. Once Secretary of State Shultz participated in such an interview, as did a number of other cabinet members, and the press was very enthusiastic about the program. The interview subject couldn't see them, but he heard their questions and answered them directly. It gave the press in the participating countries the opportunity to ask questions relevant to their own bilateral issues and not only those important only to the US agenda, and created a lot of good will along with many useful stories. Virtually every post now has access to this kind of activity, and I understand there is now new technology that permits programs that are directed at single countries, even smaller posts.

Q: Well did you get this "poor little us" stuff? You ignore us and all that. I got a little taste of this from this program we have here, this oral history program. Oh about six or seven years ago, in our collection we have taken excerpts from interviews dealing with various countries and lumped them together you know, for the help of someone. One day one of the Canadian correspondents, I think a major one from the Globe and Mail ran across ours at Georgetown University. The next thing we knew, there were front page, "American diplomats expose all. Feel that Canadians suffer from an inferiority complex." I think one of the people was Paul Robinson who mentioned he carried a gun with him in his car.

ZUCKERMAN: I was not aware of that.

Q: This is after. This was a time when I think we had some stuff going on. But I mean you know it was front page stuff when it came. Then of course, another Canadian man in Washington was beaten so he went and called some more on it. It is the only time our embassy wrote and said, "What the hell is this program." It is the only time we ever had this.

ZUCKERMAN: Well every country in the world is sensitive to how they are dealt with in the United States, and particularly in public. I know that Canada is a great country, but in baseball terms it's Triple A. They feel a bit neglected because of being so close to a giant and seemingly, in the eyes of others in the world, so close culturally. People talk about North America and they mean Canada and the United States and they make no distinction between us. When you live there as an American, you realize the differences are quite real, and yet we are probably more alike than any other two countries. Americans are more like Canadians and Canadians are more like Americans than either of us is like any other people. That is a fact of life, and most Canadians understand that, and most deal with it. You know, Canadians have a great sense of humor. They kid themselves. They kid themselves vis a vis the United States as well. I am neglecting here also to mention that Paul Robinson was not the only ambassador I had served with there. Tom Niles was a career officer, came to Ottawa about midway during my three years there, and we had a very different embassy when he ran it. He was a very professional diplomat, a very serious man, and got along very well in Canada and was respected. He didn't make, and didn't seek to make, the kind of public splash that Paul Robinson did. I wasn't there when he left, and I'm sure he left great admiration behind him, as did Ambassador Robinson, even on the part of many people who disagreed with his politics.

Q: Well did you find while you were there, was the Reagan-Mulroney friendship, two big Irishmen a factor in your work?

ZUCKERMAN: Oh sure. As I mentioned, they called that summit the Shamrock Summit because of the Irish antecedents of the two principals. Reagan was not uniformly popular throughout Canada. He certainly was as popular among conservatives in Canada as he was among conservatives in the United States. But the strategic defense initiative was particularly problematic, as was the fear among many liberals and socialists that he was taking too aggressive a stance in our dealings with the Soviet bloc.

Q: Known as Star Wars.

ZUCKERMAN: Star Wars was simply not taken seriously in Canada. Nonetheless, despite strong political and attitudinal differences, nobody really hated Ronald Reagan. He didn't stir up the personal hostility that there was in the case of Richard Nixon or these days in the case of George Bush. There were strong differences over issues, but it was a time of reasonably good relations. You know, there have been periods in American-Canadian relations, I guess especially during WWII, where there were some very sharp elbows on both sides, particularly because Canadians entered the war several years before we did. Now there were some issues that are sort of bedrock in the case of Canada and the case of Mexico. In the case of Mexico it is immigration, where they know they are wrong but they need it. They need the money that flows in from migrants and they need the relief of population pressure among young people for whom there are no jobs. In Canada, it's largely economic; it could be fisheries on the west coast and east coasts - the salmon fisheries in the west and the cod fisheries in the east. And then there is always litigation about some economic disagreement or another. Most recently it was the legitimacy of stumpage fees we'd levy on Canadian logs.

Q: Well fish go back to colonial times. You could make a full solid diplomatic career based on fish.

ZUCKERMAN: A friend of mine has. He is retired and still working on the salmon, called back to work by the State Department because he knows more about the issue than anyone else.

Q: Were you married at this point or no?

ZUCKERMAN: Yes. Adriana and I were married in Canada about a year after I arrived.. After I went to Canada with my children, who were 16 and 13 at the time, she came up to visit and scout employment opportunities and found a job teaching and doing research. She wanted to get married in a town with a nice name, and we found a small town 130 miles straight north of Ottawa with the lovely name of Mont Laurier. We drove up there and noticed the trees getting smaller and smaller the further we went. We had discovered a wonderful little Belgian restaurant up there, and after being married at the City Hall, had a lunch for a small group including Ambassador and Mrs. Robinson, my children of course, my sister and her husband from Dallas, a very bright young member of my staff, a Canadian couple who became our best friends, and the Ambassador's chauffer. That was on October 20, 1984, and we had arranged for the restaurant, which was opened that day only for our party, to have a roaring fireplace going, since that late in October in northern Quebec could be extremely cold. As it turned out, it was probably the hottest October 20 in northern Quebec's history. We all took off our jackets but were still sweating. But the meal was wonderful, and then we went back to the Ambassador's home where the rest of the embassy staff had been invited by him and his wife to a reception in our honor.

Q: Did energy issues come up at all?

ZUCKERMAN: We were great importers of Canadian oil from the oil patch. There the Athabasca oil fields produced an oil derived from tar that was more expensive to mine and refine than crude oil at the time, but is far more competitive at today's oil prices. They have a goal of producing up to three million barrels a day by 2015. We also get a sizeable amount of electricity from Quebec's hydroelectric plants, and I believe there have been other sources of oil found in Alberta and other western provinces.

Q: How about I can't see why it would involve us, but did we get involved with problems the Canadians had with their Native American, or Canadian, tribes along the border?

ZUCKERMAN: I believe the only issue that arose, and I don't think it was much of an issue while I was there, was the trade in cigarettes. There is a tribe that overlaps the New York and Quebec border.....

Q: Probably Mohawk Confederacy.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, and they can sell duty free, tax free cigarettes. All borders create issues. But no, that was very much a Canadian issue. They dealt with it with a soft touch and I don't remember it being of any great moment. My one great regret dealing with the question of Canadian native Indians, or Inuit, was that the Canadians never followed through on a proposed tour for information people from foreign embassies to the far north, as they had arranged for ambassadors at one time. I thought I had my counterpart in the Canadian Ministry of External Affairs convinced he should really take some information officers from different embassies on such a trip. He thought that was a great idea, but it didn't happen. I was counting on that, even though when I retired I did on my own get to Antarctica, but I was really hoping I could get to the Canadian Arctic. There is a wonderful trip I never had the time to make on a train that runs from Winnipeg up to Churchill where, if you get up there at the right time, you can watch the polar bears come in to feed on people's garbage cans.

Q: What about did you get involved with media along the border? I am thinking the Montana border, British Columbia, affairs that would involve you. Any city's newspapers picking on the Canadians?

ZUCKERMAN: There might have been an issue in the Pacific northwest because of the scuffle over timber imports, but it just wasn't the same situation that we faced on the border between the United States and Mexico, where you had a situation like El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, where there are three times as many people in Juarez as there are in El Paso. Both cities are drawing from the same aquifer, and we are using two or three times as much water as the Mexicans are. Or the situation between San Diego and Tijuana with the waste water from the Tijuana River polluting Imperial Beach south of San Diego. You don't have that kind of friction between publics on either side of the US-Canadian border born of issues that really divide them. There aren't that many twin cities as such. People from Manitoba tend to think of Minneapolis as their shopping destination, just as people from Ottawa went to shop in small towns in upstate New York. Even with the Canadian dollar weaker than ours at that time, prices were better in the U.S.

Q: Vancouver sits off by itself. I mean it is like 100 more miles from Seattle. There is no particular relationship.

ZUCKERMAN: There is no dependency for jobs the way there was along the Mexican border. So no, I don't think so; we were relieved of that.

Q: How about Nova Scotia?

ZUCKERMAN: Well we had an interesting coincidence that then Canadian foreign minister Allan MacEachen and George Shultz were classmates at Stanford. MacEachen was from Halifax, and so he insisted on meeting every three months, which was an impossible schedule to maintain. But they met several times a year, and they met a number of times in Halifax. Halifax is a wonderful town, and I enjoyed going there, but we met in other places too, I remember meetings in Calgary and Toronto. They were not meetings designed to try to settle a specific issue, but rather to try to keep current the management of the relationship, and they were largely successful.

Q: Well then you left there when?

ZUCKERMAN: I left in the summer of 1986.

Q: Whither?

ZUCKERMAN: To Brazil, as minister counselor for public affairs. That was a stark contrast to both Mexico and Canada. We were sent to Brasilia, a new capital born of the desire of President Kubitschek of Brazil to move the country, whose population was concentrated on its Atlantic coast, inland to a plateau 3000 feet above sea level, a vast plain of red clay and brush. When I looked at a map I could see that if you pushed Africa and Latin America together, that Lubumbashi in the Congo and its laterite soil was practically the same laterite I saw 25 years later in Brasilia, and they were virtually at the same latitude. It was remote, somewhat more quiet than we preferred, but increasingly livable, particularly after I had been in Brazil awhile. We had at the time seven USIS posts in Brazil. The headquarters was, of course, at the embassy in Brasilia, with large posts in Rio De Janeiro and Sao Paulo, and smaller posts in Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre in the south and Bahia and Recife in the north. We also had a widespread system of bi-national centers, one as far north as Manaus that was created and run by a wonderful man with great enthusiasm for the United States, and it was a great excuse to get up to Manaus, visit him and his board, leave some books or other gifts, and make sure they knew we appreciated what they were doing. There were, after all, almost a million people living in that city on the Amazon, which was a free port.

Q: Didn't they have an opera house and all that?

ZUCKERMAN: They had an opera house that was built during the great rubber boom of the 19th century. It was under repair when I was there. The New York Philharmonic came down with Zubin Mehta. He wanted to play in Manaus, but we had to tell him it was still under repair, but he still went up there to take a look at it because it is a wonderful little theater, similar to the one built during the silver boom in Mexico in Guanajuato.

Q: You were there from '86 to '89. Who was the ambassador?

ZUCKERMAN: The ambassador was one of the great career ambassadors of our time, Harry Shlaudeman. He is a very quiet man, reserved, somewhat shy, but probably the most utterly professional diplomat I have ever known. He arrived there just shortly before I did. He had been the Assistant Secretary for Latin America, ambassador to Argentina, Peru, Venezuela, deputy chief of mission in Chile, served several tours in Colombia as a young officer, and before he came to Brazil was special negotiator for Central America during the problems in Nicaragua. After his retirement the first President Bush, who later gave him the Medal of Freedom, talked him into going to Nicaragua as ambassador. Other than a tour in Bulgaria, he served his entire career in Latin American affairs.

Q: He had been in some very difficult posts.

ZUCKERMAN: Oh yes, and he had been negotiator for Central American affairs, largely dealing with the Sandinistas. He was a great golfer and if he resented anything viscerally about the Sandinistas when he was in Managua it's that they had torn up the only golf course in town and made it into a tank training ground. I met him in Washington when I was told of my assignment and he wanted to know my background, where I was from. I told him Wisconsin and of my political work there. He rubbed his head and said, "My God, the people's republic of Wisconsin." The first few months I was there, he would hold staff meetings and go around the table and ask questions and nod his head and walk out. I felt very distant. I didn't know if he was at all interested in what we were doing. One day that first Christmas, between Christmas and New Years, I was for some reason working. I got a phone call, picked it up and it was Ambassador Shlaudeman on the line. He said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well I am pretending to work." He said, "Want to play golf?" I said, "When?" He said, "Now." And we left the embassy and went to the golf course, and had a wonderful time. I think it was just his way of communicating to me that things were OK. We became quite close. We still correspond by internet. He is living in California.

Q: Well what were the issues that particularly concerned you in Brazil?

ZUCKERMAN: The issues that seemed most central to the relationship were economic ones. The Brazilian economy itself was strong but the country was in a constant state of financial crisis. While I was there, there was a terrible period in which price controls were imposed and food disappeared from the markets. My wife had to go out with a friend to a farm and, under the light of a bare bulb in a back room, this farmer cut meat for us that he wouldn't sell in town. The Europeans sent meat that was deep frozen as an emergency supply. The Brazilian press called it "carne mumificada" mummified meat. It was truly inedible. The US was seeking to help out in stabilizing things and of course the IMF took the lead, but it was a very difficult time for Brazilians to get through this. There were also trade issues of enormous importance involving agricultural products, and Brazilian manufactures. Our markets were not as open to the Brazilians as they would have liked, and they were effectively barring us from entering into their computer market. As a consequence, Brazilians had to do with computers of local manufacture and design which were not suited to the very advanced state of most Brazilian manufacturing corporations.

The contrast between Brazil and Mexico was very great. Brazil represents two-thirds of the South American economy. The State of Sao Paulo at the time, maybe it is even greater now, had a GDP greater than that of Argentina. One of the reasons for the striking nature of Brazil's economic advancement is that, unlike Mexico, it has always welcomed immigrants. As in our own experience, they have attracted ambitious and entrepreneurial people from Italy, Germany, Japan, Russia, Poland, Syria, Lebanon, and Jews from all parts of the world, along of course with the original Portuguese and the only people who came without wanting to, the Africans who were enslaved until 1888, largely from Angola and other West African areas. The largest expatriate Japanese community in the world is found in the state and city of Sao Paulo. They number more than a million.

In Mexico, it is not impossible to settle as an expatriate, but difficult to become a citizen. I think only the refugees from the Spanish civil war were fully welcomed, as were a number of Jewish refugees from Hitler. The resulting difference is that, although autos are manufactured in Mexico, they are assembly plants of foreign auto makerGeneral Motors and Volkswagen and the like. The Brazilians, I believe, do more of the manufacturing of parts and participate in the design of cars. They also manufacture airplanes that are used by US and European airlines, particularly planes made by Embraer. They are also large arms manufacturers, who had been selling tanks and heavy weapons in the middle east, particularly to Iraq. The two best hospitals in the country are in Sao Paulo. One is the Einstein Hospital, one is the Syrian-Lebanese Hospital. I think this openness to immigration has given it a very different texture than Mexico. It has some world class newspapers and very good television. Mexico has a powerful networTelevisbut is surpassed by Globo, the Brazilian network that is probably the most successful in the developing world. It produced novellausually erotic soap operathat are seen around the world in translation. Among the leading newspapers are the Jornal do Brasil in Rio, the Gazeta Mercantil in Sao Paulo (the Wall Street Journal of Brazil) as well as the Estado do Sao Paulo, Folha and several others. And the fourth largest news weekly in the world is Veja, produced by Editora Abril, the largest publishing house in Latin America, that prints more than 100 magazines. These are serious publications, producing good and usually responsible journalism. On economic issues however, as is the case with newspapers in most countries, even our own, they tend to take the side of their own country when there is a conflict on trade matters. The newspapers in Brasilia itself were particularly egregious, but everybody in government read the papers out of Sao Paulo and Rio.

Q: Did you find it difficult doing your business situated in Brasilia as opposed to being in Sao Paulo?

ZUCKERMAN: We had to be in Brasilia because the Brazilian government was there, which meant our embassy was there. But since the major media and cultural institutions were in Rio and Sao Paulo, I traveled there rather frequently, and tried to make visits to the other posts a couple of times every year. We had good staff at all of our posts. We had three Americans plus a large local staff in both Rio and Sao Paulo, including a book translation operation in Rio. We had good communications within Brazil by telephone, but the people who made a difference in the arts, the universities and the media were not in Brasilia. There were great universities in both Rio and Sao Paulo. There was a university of modest stature in Brasilia, the University of Brasilia, but the University of Sao Paulo was a great institution, as was the University of Campinas in the interior of the State of Sao Paulo. There were both church and public universities in Rio, good universities in Porto Alegre and elsewhere. Porto Alegre was full of surprises, with people in industry very interested in the arts and very strong media. I developed good relations with people in those cities. We opened up a new bi-national center in Recife while I was there that is still going, replacing one having been run by someone who disgraced us. It was not as much fun or as easy to operate from Brasilia as it would have been from either of the other two main cities, but we had close contact with our posts and the program was well coordinated. Today we have posts only in Brasilia, Rio and Sao Paulo. We have shrunk that much.

Q: You mentioned the Universities. Did Brazilian universities follow the same pattern as so many other Latin American ones where there is very strong leftist Marxist anti-American student body. I mean it is almost dangerous to go into there.

ZUCKERMAN: No. I mean certainly undergraduates, certainly in Latin America but even in America, you will find tend to have political views that are rather more to the left than in the general population. But I can't think of a university campus in which we couldn't speak to people and carry out programs anywhere in the country. It is just a different atmosphere than in many Latin American countries. We don't own any land that was once part of Brazil. There are certainly differences over policy issues, and Brazilians are temperamentally quite different from us. They are culturally a distinct and voluptuous people, and yet they like many of the same things we like, such as American style shopping centers and most American products. We were of course criticized from the left. The designer of Brasilia, Lucio Costa, and the architect of its buildings, Oscar Niemeyer, were men of the left. Niemeyer was in fact a communist, and the city was laid out by city planners who had in mind very strict rules about how things would be organized. But from a sterile plot of land on an arid plain in the middle of nowhere, it has now really blossomed, because Brazilians will recreate the life style they love no matter where they are. The restaurants are getting much better. Outside of the Plano Piloto, the central plan of the capital, cities have grown up made up of people from the northeast who originally worked on the city who chose not to go home. Satellite cities like Taguatinga and Ceilandia and other towns appeared so that there is a large population on that high plateau now, well over two million people. They grow three crops of soybeans a year on that land; having been made fertile by the development of nutrients to enrich the clay and sand soil, and the climate is very congenial. They are vast exporters of agricultural goodsoybeans and elsewhere oranges and of course coffeall of which, except for coffecompetes with our produce very effectively.

Q: This is tape seven, side one with Stan Zuckerman.

ZUCKERMAN: You have heard the song, "They Grow an Awful Lot of Coffee in Brazil," they grow an awful lot of everything in Brazil, wonderful fruits, oranges. They make up the major imported source of oranges for the prepared orange juice we drink. It is a country of enormous diversity. They think of themselves as a future major power, and with a population of about 175 million or so, with vast resources, much of it unexplored, and a very productive population, there is no reason why they shouldn't be world class. Now when Charles de Gaulle visited Brazil, he was said to have observed, "Ces't ne pas une pais serieux." -it is not a serious country. And I suppose by some standards that might seem true. Brazilians love to play so hard that they are not as productive as they otherwise might be, but that is not true of the places where things are really happening. It may be true in smaller cities that are right on the beaclike Bahia or Fortaleza, and it's probably harder to work hard in Rio than it is in Sao Paulo. But they produce an enormous percentage of the shoes we wear in the State of Sao Paulo, and the traffic jams in the city of Sao Paulo occur not because people are playing hard but because they're working hard, and the same is true in Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte. That is also true in cities most Americans have never heard of with more than a million people, like Curitiba. But they still find time to enjoy life,

Q: Was there an impact or any observation by some of the, the extreme poverty in the cities that one hears about and the crime and all this?

ZUCKERMAN: Well there is a tremendous influx of migration of rural people into the cities where the jobs are, where the wealth is. And as is the case in many Latin American countries, a lot of protection is given to squatters. If you leave your house unoccupied, and someone else moves in, it is not as easy to get them out as it might be in our country, but that isn't what they were doing. They have been squatting on empty land. There has been a vast movement of landless peasants into the Amazon, into Amazonia, which is a vast region which includes land that is not jungle, but is part of what is known as Amazonia. That has given rise to a major issue between us on environmental concerns. It arose not out of encouragement by the USG to limit deforestation in the fragile Amazonian rainforest, but by statements by celebrities such as the British rock artist Sting and, more importantly, by a delegation of US Senators led by former Sen. Tim Wirth and including heavyweights like Al Gore and the late Senator Heinz. They visited the rainforest and made strong statements asserting that Brazil was putting the planet at risk by allowing the Amazon to be destroyed.

It was one of the few episodes in which I thought the Brazilian press and government began to act in a manner that one would have expected in Mexico, with an explosion of vituperation for our interference in their affairs. They pointed to our own denuding of forestland in our early history in order to develop our country, and our arrogance in declaring that Brazil had no right to develop its own. There was in fact a very inefficient use of the rainforest arising out of clear cutting land that could then be used to raise cattle. But once you cut down the native vegetation, the land becomes less fertile because the nutrients in the soil are leached out by the heavy rainfall. Then the cattle farmers just move on to new forest areas and cut them down. There is an experimental station I visited with USIA Director Catto run by the Smithsonian that demonstrates the inability of forests newly exposed by the clear cutting of neighboring trees that makes it more difficult for them to survive the exposure to the elements.. We did point out to the press that there were more trees today from New York City to the Canadian border than there were in the 19th century, because most of those small farms had disappeared and the forests were allowed to recover.

We also did something that was possibly the most successful event of its kind that I had experienced in my public diplomacy career. We had formed a very strong friendship with a number of media associations, including the Brazilian associations of magazine publishers, of newspapers, of television and radio, and of journalism education. My closest ally was a man named Roberto Civita, who was president of the largest publishing house in South America, Editora Abril, which published more than a hundred magazines, the most important of which was Veja, the world's fourth largest news magazine. Ambassador Shlaudeman had given a very good speech which got wide attention, describing our own environmental movement, how it started and where it led, starting with Teddy Roosevelt who started with conservation, Rachel Carson who wrote her seminal book Silent Spring, and ending up with the present focus on ecology and the attempt to undo the damage done to our environment.

Then we held in Rio de Janeiro a seminar attended by 150 science writers from all over Brazil, and co-sponsored the event with the International Association of Science Writers, which was headed by an American at the Smithsonian Observatory in Boston. We got the UN development program to pay for two Asian science writers who wrote on ecological problems in the Philippines and Indonesia, and we brought in several American writers and a couple of U.S. based European science journalists working on the environment. The whole purpose of it was to demonstrate to the Brazilian press what the press was doing elsewhere in covering environmental issues, and how they were pressuring their governments to act against environmental destruction. It had an amazing effect in alerting the Brazilian press to the reality that they had a role to play in shaping public opinion and the environmental policies of their government, as well as taking the heat off us. Even though the worst of the storm had died down, all of a sudden a flood of very professional articles starting appearing about environmental problems in different areas of the country, Our program worked because we arranged contact for the Brazilians with their professional colleagues in other developing and European countries and not just with us. We didn't have a government speaker in the whole seminar. The speakers were all journalists, and the suspicion that the Brazilians were being fed uniquely US policy faded. There is still an ecological problem in the Amazon, but the Brazilians are far more aware of it now than they were, not because of our pressure, but because of their own growing environmental movement.

Q: How did Brazil, did they look toward the United States or towards Europe. I am talking about the business governing class and all.

ZUCKERMAN: Well, the man who was the head of our Fulbright program, a very professional Brazilian academic, said to me one day, "You know, it is a terrible thing to be a colony. But to be the colony of an underdeveloped country was really worse." Today, Portugal is more dependent on Brazil than vice versa. Certainly there are ties to Europe, but they are more commercial than cultural or political. Brazil has far greater access to the American than to the European market. They had great markets in the middle east, particularly in armaments. If you take a look at what is going on in Iraq right now, one of the companies working for us in Iraq is a Brazilian company construction company that is experienced in very large scale projects, and who probably had had contracts with Saddam. So Brazilians are probably less parochial in their view of the world than many developing countries, to the extent that you can call Brazil developing. It is a mix of a highly developed society and a third world society. Rio and Sao Paulo, may have dreadful slums, but they still are world class cities, as are many other cities in the south. The northeast of the country and other areas beyond the reach of the bourgeoning economy are still comparable to areas of the third world.

Q: How about social life there?

ZUCKERMAN: In Brasilia, social life largely involved the diplomatic community. We had some friends in the press, and others who had little or nothing to do with the Embassies, people Adriana knew through teaching at the University of Brasilia, others in business or professional life, and some in the Brazilian government with whom we established personal friendships. But Brasilia was at the time a diplomatic pond. It is the only place I had served where I went to diplomatic parties with some regularity. There were a few restaurants, and a rather nice golf course, which was a great source of relaxation but very much a social club for expatriates and the diplomatic crowd. But Brasilia was a rather isolated place, 700 miles from the coast. It wasn't easy to get in the car and drive somewhere beyond 10 or 20 miles without stocking provisions. So when you weren't flying out of the city, you were living in it. Being able to travel to the other posts at a certain point changed my attitude about Brasilia. Most Brazilian cities are somewhat chaotic, certainly it's the case in Rio and Sao Paulo. They are also hard to get around in and somewhat polluted. The government people were forced to move to Brasilia and hated it, but after awhile they were grateful that their children could walk to school without having their lunches stolen, and that the air was clean and that the slums were conveniently relegated to the shanty towns that had grown outside of the central city. Brasilia itself was close to living in a western-style suburb. Things have changed by now. The city is bigger and traffic is worse, but there is more to do and I think Cariocapeople from Ridon't leave Brasilia on weekends to fly "home" as they used to. Brasilia is now home.

Q: One of the things in the Foreign Service passed on for generations certainly for generations in the Foreign Service is that the Brazilian Foreign Service is first rate.Did you get any feel for this?

ZUCKERMAN: Oh yes. They are highly professional, highly trained, very proud, and very powerful compared to our State Department or Foreign Service, within the US government. You don't do anything in foreign affairs without going through Itamarati, the Brazilian foreign ministry. They are in charge. When there is someone in the ministry of mines or health or commerce who has the title of assistant secretary for foreign affairs, he is a Foreign Service officer from Itamarati. He is not a political appointee and he is not somebody from that agency. He is a diplomat. So can you imagine how powerful the State Department would be if it staffed every office in the bureaucracy that was called Office of the Assistant Secretary for International Affairs? And they are good; they know their stuff. They are good to deal with. The people we dealt with in cultural affairs, in educational affairs, and press relations were terrific to work with.

Q: Did you get any feel for class divisions? I have talked to people who have served in Brazil, both African American and white, who said the Brazilians talk an awful lot about their one big happy family but don't believe it.

ZUCKERMAN: There are more terms to describe people of color in Brazil than we have. Here it is largely just black and white. There are many more terms used in Brazil, from "preta" for very dark Afro-Brazilians, through "mulatta" for mixed blood to "morena" for lighter skinned individuals and I'm sure a number of other terms to describe subtle differences. Here, one drop of African blood has typically been used to describe an individual as black. There has certainly been more inter-marriage in Brazil, and mixed couples don't attract attention in most places. But if you are described as "preta" in Brazil you have far less chance of moving in that society than has become the case in the US. We had a regular interaction with Afro-Brazilian organizations that welcomed our bringing African-Americans to Brazil who could help them to understand how the American civil rights movement succeeded so well. A man I later made a film about, John Hope Franklin, was a guest lecturer and was adored by the Brazilians, especially but not only by the Afro-Brazilians.

Q: He is an historian from...

ZUCKERMAN: He is an historian born in an all-black town in Oklahoma, educated at Fisk and Harvard, who taught in black colleges in North Carolina but became chairman of the history departments of Brooklyn College, the University of Chicago and Duke University. He is now professor emeritus from Duke and Chicago and still writing. He is 88 and authored a boo"From Slavery to Freedom: The History of African-Americans", that is a standard text now in its eighth or ninth edition.

Slavery didn't end in Brazil until 1888. It was however, a different transition in Brazil than it was in the United States. Brazil didn't have a civil war. Some people say it is because of the Portuguese heritage of ameliorating differences rather than facing them head on. But they went from a monarchy to a republic, from slavery to emancipation, and from dictatorship to democracy without shedding much blood at all. They took more time to achieve those changes than we did, but with a lot less bloodshed. Today, if you are a light skinned person of African Brazilian heritage with talent, you can move anywhere. If you are dark skinned and you are Pele, you can be the most popular man in the country, the soccer star. If you are born in a slum in one of the favelas above Rio, and don't get much of an education, your only hope is either that you have some talent that will catapult you out of your low station in life, or that you will find an illegal course to wealth. The state of Bahia, especially the city of Bahia, has an African culture with many African traits. The feasts of different African gods whose names I forget are celebrated there as they are in Nigeria and Angola. The famous Mardi Gras in Brazil really amounts to thousands of white people sitting in the stands watching black people having a wonderful time. But it's also true that intermarriage was accepted in Brazil long before that was true in the United States. There is ease of movement among the people who are of mixed ancestry throughout the society, but there are certain classes that feel that they are as isolated and as hopeless as were American blacks in the days of segregation.

Q: Well is there anything else you think we should cover in Brazil? Maybe one on the cultural side, anything that we did that found the Brazilians particularly responsive?

ZUCKERMAN: There were many American touring cultural events that would travel through South America. When we could latch on to one, and could find some money, we would try to get them to one or more Brazilian cities. We had a cultural attachï¿½ at the time, Frances Switt, who was a hard driver. She was not as popular among her staff as she was with those of us who appreciated the results of her work. She was a whiz at spotting a show, a Broadway show or a revue that was going to be in South America, and finding either an American or Brazilian company to back it, put some money up in collaboration with us. These events went over very well, since the popular artists in Brazil are a dominant expression of Brazilian culture.

Brazilian music, Brazilian dance, are world class, and are a very important part of the world's music. Certainly there is a great interplay among Brazilian popular artists and American. So many Brazilian artists have made it big time in the United States, Tom Jobim being the most famous. And American artists were appreciated by Brazilians, so when shows could come to town and Brazilians could come to see them, especially in Rio and Sao Paulo, they made a big hit. There was a time when the United States government could help underwrite the cost of a tour by the New York Philharmonic or other of our great orchestras. But those days have disappeared. Now we send small groups, and individual artists have come and played and have made important contributions. Brasilia was not a hotbed of cultural activity. It had an orchestral hall built for some reason as a Pyramid, which has nothing to do with Brazilian history, and with dreadful acoustics. It was designed by Oscar Niemeyer. The New York Philharmonic came on its own, with local underwriting, and the Israeli Philharmonic and the Leningrad Philharmonic came with underwriting by their governments and, in the Israeli case, by the local Jewish community. The music starved Brazilian audience was always the same, and it didn't matter what orchestra performed. It didn't make any difference. It was not what drove the relationship or affected it in any meaningful way. Educational exchange was much more important. We had a very good Fulbright program.

Q: Well was there the pattern that developed in so many other countries in this period, of the young college graduates of the country would go to the United States to get their masters and Ph.D.s in some field, often technical.

ZUCKERMAN: They would not only go to the United States, but to the University of Sao Paulo or Campinas as well and get a first rate Ph.D. in computer science. But the United States was sought after for its educational opportunities. We had a first rate system of educational counseling where students could come in and look through CD ROMs telling them about American universities. Not all of these students would go with American help. It is a little known fact that we had going, at one point, a huge export industry of American education. We are losing that now because of the current security restrictions. But at the time, there's no question that in terms of a destination for advanced education, although Brazilians went to Europe and elsewhere, the most desired education destination was the United States. Competition for Fulbright awards was very intense. Our bi-national Fulbright program in Brazil was the best that I had ever worked with.

Q: Well you left there in '89

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, in the summer of '89. I was supposed to stay until 1990, but there was a new director of the agency after the election, after the first George Bush became president, who was Bruce Gelb, Chairman of Bristol-Meyers Squibb. I was asked to come up and become the director for Latin American and Caribbean affairs in Washington.

Q: So we will pick this up the next time when you came up in 1989.

Q: OK, today is 7 September 2004. Stan, 1989. What does being the director of Latin American and Caribbean affairs mean in USIA terms at that time?

ZUCKERMAN: Well it means being responsible to the director of the Agency for our programming and our personnel in 27 countries in the area. As I remember, at that time we had well over 120 US officers at posts in Latin America and the Caribbean, and more than 600 Foreign Service nationals. The total budget was about $33 million. The posts ranged from huge ones like Brazil and Mexico, where we had in Mexico about 20 Americans and in Brazil at the time about 24 or 25. They were working at multiple posts, seven posts in Brazil and three in Mexico. At small posts like Surinam and Guyana we had one American and a couple of FSN's. But it was an extensive region with varied problems, requiring a good deal of travel, and I think it gave me a very different perception of the realities than you get while working in Washington.

There you are involved in a lot of policy discussions at State, but can easily lose track of what is happening on the ground. In USIA, even in Washington, we had some tools that would allow us to really interact very directly with the posts. We didn't have a large enough operation to assign a single desk officer for each country, so each of our people were responsible for multiple posts. But they were interacting on a daily basis with most of their posts, answering questions, giving the support from Washington they needed in the field. The Agency had a system requiring annual country plans in which the posts would relay to Washington an analysis of the state of our relationship with the country they dealt with, the problems facing U.S. policymakers in that country that we could help them respond to. Then the posts would list, in priority order, the kind of responses that we could make that would help make American policy better understood, by achieving contact and influence if possible with the people who made the key decisions that affected that nation's response to American policy.

Our best tool for rapid reaction was WorldNet. It was a reasonably new tool, introduced by Charles Wick when he was director, in which we could have satellite contact with the major embassies and posts in the world. That meant a large investment in hardware, not only securing transmission contracts on the appropriate commercial satellites for use in the different parts of the world, but also having the means of downloading those transmissions, which required an antenna of varying sizes depending on the proximity and the access of that post to a good signal from the satellite. The result of the use of this tool was to allow us to bring journalists or other opinion leaders into a venue, typically a media room in the American center or the consulate or the embassy, and give them the opportunity to hear a statement from an American figure, one usually but not always a governmental official, and then ask questions of him or her. If necessary, we would use a translator either at the Washington end or at the receiving end.

Now this technology could be used in a variety of ways. One was as a form of distance learning, where you have a seminar when either the speaker is not available to travel or you don't have the resources to bring one to the post. In many cases a speaker could be made available to more than one post at a time, particularly where there is a fast-breaking event that requires immediate explanation of our action. There were a number of occasions in which this was very valuable. The one that comes to mind immediately was the crisis situation in Panama in which then President Noriega was expected to make a major statement affecting our accusation that Panama was a major transit point for the shipment of illegal narcotics to the US. As I remember he was to address the Panamanian people over a holidaI think it was Labor Day here, and we wanted our position made clear before he spoke. Mike Kozak, who was then a State Department attorney who was assigned to work in the Latin American Area, was a very bright guy, spoke good Spanish, and he agreed to a series of short interviews of 10 or 15 minutes each, that we would do directly with press or television in about six different countries in Central America and a couple of major South American capitals. It worked spectacularly well. We got coverage all over the region, and demonstrated that we could use the speed of that technology to deal with a foreseeable problem. You could take the wind out of an event that might otherwise trouble us for a week or a month, trying to catch up with and explain what happened after it happened.

Q: A question Stan, how did you personally feel and sort of your colleagues about the idea WorldNet was first surfaced? You know this is sort of something coming out of Hollywood. Was there a lot of skepticism or was it jumped on quickly?

ZUCKERMAN: At the time that WorldNet was being introduced I was in Canada. I remember Canada was then part of the European circuit, was in the domain of the assistant secretary for European affairs, and therefore our structure would always follow the State Department in terms of the assignment of individual countries to bureaus. I remember we had long discussions by phone with the home office. Sam Courtney was then director of European affairs in USIA. He wanted all of us to come in with ideas as to what our position should be on the proper use of this new facility. At the time, I pretty much said the same thing I described in terms of what the priority, not the exclusive but the priority use of this tool should be, and that is for rapid response when necessary to bring a key policy figure to an audience, and who was willing to be subjected to the questions of foreign press, foreign media, foreign experts on American policy matters. That became the position of our European area, because it represented the view of a number of other PAOs as well. Now it has demonstrated its usefulness beyond responding to fast breaking events.

There have been many instances where cultural issues can be usefully the subject of a WorldNet program, but we all felt there was no substitute for the ultimate interaction which is a human being either visiting a post or of our contacts, opinion leaders in foreign countries, visiting the United States. The direct interaction of individuals is the number one tool, I think, not only in public diplomacy but in foreign policy. WorldNet was suspect for the reason you alluded to, because most officers were wary of the tendency of all elements of the U.S. government to rely on new technology to reach their objectives. We all felt that just as strategic bombing didn't win World War II, longdistance communication couldn't always change minds. But most of us felt that getting the Secretary of State or other key officials to talk directly to our audiences and answer their questions via World Net was an extremely effective tool.

Q: While you were there, in the first place I guess when you came on board, Nicaragua was still ticking away wasn't it? I mean you talk about you know, the transition from your perspective from the Reagan to the Bush administration in Central America.

ZUCKERMAN: Well I wasn't in Washington during the Reagan administration. I don't know if there would have been too much difference in the way Nicaragua was handled. We had a post in Nicaragua consisting of one American and a number of Nicaraguans, but it was very difficult to get things to them. We did manage through neighboring posts, usually through Costa Rica, to get materials in. Our post in San Jose was working with Costa Rican radio, giving them materials that were broadcast and heard in Nicaragua. It was indirect, but made a difference. With a presidential election was agreed to by the over confident Sandinistas, we started conducting some training classes in the techniques of campaigning by satellite, held at our Embassy in Managua for invited members of the opposition. We were able to bring people who were experts in monitoring elections into our Washington studios who could exchange ideas with the Nicaraguans. Their experiences weren't always appropriate for conditions in Nicaragua, but at least there was a level of contact that added to the confidence of the opposition. I remember that after the election, when I was able to go down there, we were enthusiastically welcomed by the Chamorro people. I remember there was one thing we did right after the election, or not long after the election, when Denny Martinez, a great pitcher who was from Nicaragua, pitched a perfect game.

Q: Who did he play for?

ZUCKERMAN: He played for Montreal, and he was the first Nicaraguan to play for a major league baseball team. We wanted him to do a WorldNet interview for the Nicaraguan press. They are great sports fans there and the country adored him. He could have been elected president. He had a very compelling personal story, having overcome alcoholism and rebuilding his career. His family was still living in Nicaragua and he said he would do it. But I remember that the team was traveling to Los Angeles, and we had to arrange for a complicated hook up from a studio there to get the signal into Washington and then to Nicaragua. Our facilities were in the US Embassy, but even the Sandinista press came. In the middle of it, in walked President Chamorro and made a statement so moving, thanking him for raising the spirits of all Nicaraguans and for representing his country so brilliantly, that Martinez was in tears. And even the Sandinista papers had to carry the story, along with her praise of Martinez and of how much he had contributed to the new spirit of democracy in Nicaragua.

Now one of the weaknesses of this tool was that it was a one way visual dialogue. It was two ways by voice, but the logistics and expense of allowing a two way visual communication was at the time prohibitive. There were many cases in which people who were new to the format among our foreign audiences would sit there and say, "Wait a second. You mean I can see him, but he can't see me?" This was a very instructive remark because it emphasized again what a dialogue really was. It had to be an exchange of ideas between equals, even if the speaker was of grand rank. It also sometimes didn't work, for instance when we used it during the period in which the ratification of the new Brazilian constitution was the issue. We asked for and got the participation of the then chief justice of the Supreme Court, Warren Burger, to give a talk on the American constitutional process and the role of the judiciary in the interpretation of the constitution, and how it came about. And at the other end in the auditorium, along with many legislators, the press and distinguished judges, there was the aged distinguished Chief Justice of the Brazilian Supreme Court, who could not be seen by Burger, although, of course, Burger could be seen by all. Burger made some nice initial remarks to began his presentation, when the Brazilian justice interrupted, and started an explanation of Brazil's constitutional process, going on and on, hardly taking a breath. We could see Burger's face on the giant screen getting redder and redder and redder. We were relieved once the program ended because if it had gone on much longer I'm afraid Justice Burger would have gotten up and walked out of the studio in Washington, creating a reaction in Brazil that we weren't looking forward to. These days there are alternative means of communicating visually, in which exchanges can be arranged among a small number of peer groups in each country interested in exchanging views on a common subject, and which permit both parties to see each other. I understand it is an increasingly useful tool.

Q: Well now when you got there, what was the feeling about Nicaragua, because at one point this is so the focus of the Reagan administration and was playing out when Bush came in. What was the feeling in your office on how this was going to go?

ZUCKERMAN: Well, first of all, I think there was total recognition that Nicaragua was a tortured country, mis-governed throughout its history; that the American role in Nicaragua's history had not always been admirable, that the Sandinista regime was pretty much a continuation of the whole story, and this was reflected in reporting from the embassy. There was a great deal of corruption; the Sandinista leaders were enriching themselves in the same manner that Somoza and his predecessors had done. And for whatever reason, including that the contra insurgency that was being underwritten by the United States was probably a drain on their resources, the Sandinistas seem to have decided that the best alternative would be an election that would clear the air and legitimize their rule, and they were certain they would win it. After the victory of the opposition, the United States promised a major assistance grant of, I believe, $500 million to help immediately the process of rebuilding and aiding Nicaragua, which was a desperately poor country, and had suffered terribly during the conflict. Managua had still not been rebuilt after the major earthquake they had suffered some years back. But then El Salvador was in turmoil, as was Panama. I had the feeling that $500 million check was never cashed; it seemed to circulate from country to country like a Christmas fruit cake that everyone gets and passes on to someone else but never gets eaten. I haven't been down there for awhile, but I felt then and still do that this so-called dagger at the heart of American security, this spread of Communism we were going to see marching up through Mexico into Texas, was always a fantasy. Once that bubble was burst, our interest went elsewhere. We never truly followed through on our promises. It is a disgrace that Honduras and Nicaragua especially should be such miserable places with so little hope, so long after we had treated them as the prime focus of American security interests in the entire region. You know, if you are going to be an empire you have really got to first look close to home to make sure there are no problems in your neighborhood, and that you have to make an effort to have decent relationships with what the Russians call their "near abroad.". For some reason our attention span is too short to be able to follow through, and that almost guarantees we will have problems in Central America again.

Q: Did you feel at all frustrated that you were here in Washington but you weren't, didn't have any hands on any policy?

ZUCKERMAN: Well we did participate regularly in State Department meetings. We had our say on and input into discussions on matters involving that aspect of the issues in Central America and elsewhere that we had the tools to address. But we kid ourselves about the real impact we may have had on policy, or about how much of any of those meetings affected the decision on the issue of the day. What we did have that gave us an advantage was the ability to convey to the posts the flavor of thinking in Washington, and to be of more use to the posts in instilling a better understanding of what in their program planning was realistic and what was not.. We didn't have the huge bureaucracy that State had, and I think I could get a cable out more quickly, or get things done by telephone, and then later by e-mail, than was possible for a desk officer at State, who would have to get endless clearances and revise a message to satisfy every nit-picker.. You know we had also a very difficult resource situation. Almost every year we would have to cut staffing at our posts.

The typical process was to always cut the big posts because the small posts were down to bare bones. There wasn't much to cut there. So the targets were always the most important places to us like Mexico and Argentina and Brazil. One year I sat down with my people and asked: "Why don't we turn that around. Why are we taking our ammunition away from the places that really count the most to American relations with Latin America." So we agreed to undertake an experiment in taking two small posts, Surinam and Guyana, and have them served by our post in Trinidad, which was the place that had the best air communications to them. And it was tough to do because the Ambassadors in both those posts didn't want their American USIS officer taken out. We agreed we would leave a local staff of FSN's that could carry on the basic work of distribution of materials, and we would schedule speakers that would serve that mini regional circuit of those three posts and have the Trinidad PAO escort them if necessary. After much wringing of hands and protesting, George Jones, who is now on the AFSA board with me, conceded to the change. He loved the USIS program, thought it was one of the most important tools they had in Guyana, but he reluctantly went along. I think it worked. It wasn't the same as having another hand on deck for the Ambassador to use in that role, but given the alternatives, we thought it was wise. Since then, the situation has gotten much worse. Where we had seven posts in Brazil we now have just three. I don't know the extent to which they have been able to maintain FSN's in consulates, but I think we have lost some of those consulates as well. So in big countries like that, our impact is diminished.

Q: How did we deal with Cuba or was that sort of taken out of your hands.

ZUCKERMAN: Actually the first thing I had on my plate on the first day I walked into my new office was a request to sign off or comment on a memo on the creation of TV Marti. Now we already had a radio Marti, which was widely listened to in Cuba, very hard to jam, and of very good content. I listened to it to satisfy myself that they were doing a professional job, and they were. It wasn't an endless harangue. It was a good news report with the emphasis on Latin America and where we had information on events in Cuba that might not circulate widely in Cuba itself. But this new idea was to deliver a television signal that could be see in Havana and elsewhere on the island.. I did some research on it, I didn't have much time, but it became abundantly clear that television not only would be a much greater threat to the Castro regime than radio, that they would take steps to jam it, but that it was much easier to jam than a radio transmission. Even though it would be an expense for Cuba because they would have to use energy to fire up jammers, they would be compelled to do so. No question about it. So we would be cranking up staff that I think is now about 700 people, and sending TV news and other programs to Cuba that few if any Cubans would see. I have seen the result, and it is a pretty good newscast, but since it was clear to all but a few zealots that it would not be seen by Cubans, it was obviously meant only to satisfy the Cuban Americans in Miami, although it would have no effect at all on the movement of information to Cuba. I said that in the memo, and I was told "thank you very much", and it went on the air.

The first signals were sent from a tethered balloon in southern Florida or some island off Florida. It broke loose once. To this day despite the fact that much money and effort has been put into the attempt to penetrate Cuba with a TV newscast, it hasn't worked. There was an outfit we later had dealings with when I was working on my final assignment in the State Department in the office of the Undersecretary for Political Affairs. The Air National Guard of Pennsylvania had a plane that could beam information radio or television signals and get under radar. I understand they have recently had some success in Cuba, but they are not going to be able to keep that up. So it's a vain attempt.

We pushed other efforts. We placed an officer in Cuba, serving on the staff of the American liaison office, technically an element of the Swiss embassy in Cuba. We were allowed one person in there. We sent good people down there who could really operate on their own. We talked to the Cuban Liaison office here about being able to get American scholars to Cuba as part of our speaker's program, and had permission from our side of the aisle to try to make it happen. Joe Tulchin was head of the Latin American division at the Wilson Center, and he agreed to go to Cuba as our first speaker. It took a long time for the Cubans to respond, and we started getting resistance from some on our side because some felt we would be aiding Cuba in this effort. I didn't feel that sending an American speaker who could represent non-government views on the situation in Latin America and on current scholarship on the continent was more of an asset to Cuba than it was to us. It was a means of starting a dialogue, and of testing whether or not they really wanted any kind of information on an official basis. At the last minute the trip was cancelled; the Cubans declined to give him a visa. I am sure that it was as much a matter of consternation within the Cuban bureaucracy as it was in ours. Since then I think we have gotten some people in who carried out programs. Our presence there is important. Certainly it is important in giving whatever help we could to those people, intellectuals and artists, who have been mistreated because of their opposition to the Castro regime. But American policy has remained in the hands of largely those Cuban Americans who feel that the way to get rid of Castro is with an iron fist rather than a velvet glove. It hasn't worked thus far. There are some signs of change I guess, but the recent moves by this administration to make it more difficult for Cuban Americans to send assistance to their own families could have an effect on the Cuban population in south Florida. I hope it does. I think our policy has been wrong for a long time.

Q: Well we have been trying to get rid of Castro now for about 45 years. Obviously we are not really talking about a successful policy.

ZUCKERMAN: No that is pretty self evident.

Q: Did you have the feeling that you had agents, spies or friends of the Cuban American Florida community in your agency keeping track of what we were doing?

ZUCKERMAN: Not on my turf, but certainly they had their own bureau. They had Radio and TV Marti within the bureau of broadcasting. That was their home base. They controlled personnel there. They controlled who the newscasters were; they controlled who headed it. The first head of it was a man who was a chemical engineer, Tony Navarro, who was Cuban born, conservative, and a very decent man. We were on good terms, but he was the Ambassador of the Florida Cuban community to Washington, and he had to represent their interests as best he could.

Q: Well did you get any feel, Stan, about a gap between the older generation, people who left Cuba, and kept thinking about they would return, and the next generation who had been born, really became rather than Cuban Americans, became more American.

ZUCKERMAN: I didn't have that much contact with them because there was only a limited number of things you could do in Cuba. I wasn't allowed to travel there to visit our operation because there was a USG rule against anyone of my rank visiting the Island. There does seem to be less passion about returning to Cuba among American-born Cubans than among those who left Cuba for America. Our general counsel at USIA and I became friendly, and worked together on a number of issues, including of course Cuba. He was Cuban born and came to the US with his parents. He name is Alberto Mora, and his father was a doctor in Cuba, and his mother Hungarian. He seemed to me a very bright, level headed guy who was realistic about what we were doing in Cuba. He was probably a good influence on his Cuban friends, but I doubt if he had any independence when it came to the Radio or TV Marti undertakings and had to handle the legal end of it. I can't say that I knew Jorge Mas Canosa welhe was the head of the Cuban American National Foundation and his son took over after his father's death. He was a powerful force in Washington. TV Marti was his baby. He was at almost every meeting on a Cuban subject that I attended, and I think his presence had a stultifying affect on the discussions, because his influence within the Reagan and Bush administrations on Cuban matters was enough to ruin a diplomatic career. He was a self-made millionaire and single minded on US-Cuban relations, seeing to it that no activities took place that would indicate an accommodation with Cuba as long as Castro was alive. And upon Castro's death, he envisioned a return to the island by him and his friends in Miami who would be welcomed as heroes and would create a capitalistic, democratic Cuba.

I am sure there are great divisions and all shades of political feeling within the Cuban community about this. What I am afraid of, what a lot of people are afraid of, is that when Castro dies, there will be a struggle between the people who stayed in Cuba and resisted and those who stayed behind, with the Communists waging a rear-guard battle..The people in Miami seem to think that with the money that they gave and with their influence, they will go to Cuba and remake it, reclaim their property, all the rest of it. I am not so sure that is going to happen. I think it is going to be a very difficult matter for the United States to handle because the people who stayed are going to have a very legitimate claim to keep what they think were useful contributions of the Castro erhealth and education mostland throw out the rest.

Q: Well as somebody who has been around countries where they have had problems, I mean you almost know the outcome. The people who stayed in the country have little to no regard for those who left. We are seeing this in Iraq, we are seeing this in Germany back after the war. It just doesn't work. The people who have gone away, they are seen as traitors.

ZUCKERMAN: Well Willy Brandt had that around his neck, and yet he did become chancellor of Germany. But in Cuba, the proximity and the enormous disparity in resources between the Miami Cubans and the island itself is going to make it more conflictive. One would hope that by the time it happens, there would be greater sensitivity, if I can use that word. I understand it is out of favor in Washington, but greater sensitivity among the Cubans in Miami as to how to handle their return. It would be wonderful if a delegation went into the interim government of Cuba after the fall of Castro and said, "What can we do to help?" Instead of saying, "We want our property back. Get out of my house."

Q. Was much of the Latin American program information program directed at limitingCuban influence?

ZUCKERMAN: To a great extent by the time I was running the Latin American operation, Castro's influence in Latin America had diminished very greatly.One of our major focuses at the time was to encourage the growth of free markets in Latin America. I remember there was a very major program organized jointly by Treasury and State which would feature a conference in Latin America with David Rockefeller as the star attraction. Before he left, we had him do a number of interviews with economic writers in a number of countries in Latin America by WorldNet. He was talking to people who had once been very taken with the socialist transformation of Cuba but who, despite retaining an admiration for Fidel for standing up to the U.S., had seen the Cuban economy atrophy under Castro's rule. Rockefeller was greeted with some suspicion, since there's always suspicion and paranoia in Latin America and elsewhere when we start talking about free enterprise. He was able to lay out very frankly what our hope was, and that was for a growth of trade between the United States and Latin America on a more even basis. Much of the turn towards open markets and freer trade in Latin America came as a consequence of that effort, but the return of economic difficulties in the continent has led to the return by some of those governments, with the possible exceptions of Chile and Mexico, to the old protectionism of the past.

Q: Let's turn to Panama. When you arrived, what was the situation particularly with Noriega and all that?

ZUCKERMAN: This is hard for me to remember because for a long time Noriega was one of our favorites, despite his corruption, until he ran afoul of our concern about the growing drug problem. It wasn't long into my tenure that in the middle of the night I got a call saying that we had gone in with military force. I had to call the then deputy director, Gene Kopp, wake him up about two or three in the morning. He wanted to know why we weren't given a heads-up by State. It was an embarrassment for me, but all information had been very closely held. Edward R. Murrow once said to his counterparts at the State Department when he was director of USIA: "You have got to let us in on the takeoff and not just the crash landing." And that was never truer than in this instance. Certainly the invasion of Panama was having repercussions all over Latin America. We just played catch up. We got someone before dawn over to the task force, and had someone on that task force throughout that crisis. It was not that difficult a public affairs problem within Panama after it was over because Noriega didn't have that great a following in his own country. It was a plutocracy and everybody knew it. I don't know how much better off it is today, but presumably the drug matter is somewhat more under control. Drugs were the issue as far as we were concerned in Panama, but also in many countries in Latin America where drugs were either grown, manufactured, or transported,

Q: Could you do anything to respond to the problem?

ZUCKERMAN: In most places we were aiming our efforts at the widespread phenomenon that countries involved in the drug trade inevitably found the epidemic spreading to their own children. In Brazil, before I arrived there and while I was there, the post had developed a strategy of enlisting the efforts of the wives of state governors to head a campaign warning young people of the dangers of drugs. The program was started by our post in Sao Paulo, and they got a number of governor's wives involved to good effect. But nonetheless, drugs were flowing into Brazil, at that time, from Bolivia, and found their way throughout the country. Rio was probably the most affected. There were materials produced in USIA which reflected the same themhandle the stuff and your children will suffebut in truth, I don't know how much an effect our efforts achieved.

Another effort we made was to enlist the energies of the governments of the Andean and other countries, but first of all the Andeans, in coordinating our information efforts to curb drug use. I think we succeeded in five countries in signing memorandums of cooperation between our government and theirs. Peru and Colombia were the first to sign, and several others came along later. It was not a transformative undertaking, but we were able to help them by sending our materials to them in Spanish so that they could use them as a basis for their own campaigns, modifying them to address their own situations more precisely. We also used speakers from the appropriate US agencies, either as traveling speakers or on WorldNet, to bring audiences of professionals in the field up to date on what our thinking was on how to turn the tide. But the DEA and others responsible for the effort were in very close contact with their counterparts abroad, so we didn't try to program to the professionals.

Q: We were talking about how you were focused on Central America then.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes, Central America and the Andes were in the limelight because, during my tenure, the Bush administration developed a heavy focus on counteracting drug traffic. Our director, Bruce Gelb, liked to find ways to be part of the action. We suggested very early on after the program was announced that he visit the Andean countries, go down there and see what the posts were doing, and get more familiar with what the problems were. He jumped at the chance, and we went down to Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia. He spent a couple of days talking to people in La Paz, but we couldn't get down to the Chaparral where the drugs were growing. In Peru, a country a friend of mine called "the Saudi Arabia of coca", we were flown by helicopter into an advanced base where destruction of coca plants was taking place. I assure you, flying over those fields where coca growers lurked you wanted a helmet to sit on. It was pretty dicey. We actually set down with armed men all around us on a hill side where coca plants had been burnt to show us the effectiveness of certain defoliants. Then on to Colombia, where we had briefings from the ambassador and met with some of the Colombian officials working on the drug problem. When we returned to Washington, a member of Gelb's staff told me that he felt that he had gotten a good feeling for what USIS was doing. USIS remember, is the name that we used overseas, U.S. Information Service rather than U.S. Information Agency, because that had been the historic name while it was still part of the Department of State. I think it's useful for a director who is generally stuck in Washington to get out into the field, even if it is going to an embassy for a reception, being feted in the capital and then moving on and getting briefings by the post. But to get out in the field and see something as dramatic as he did, made him feel much closer to the problem. Then of course, from our standpoint, we could hope for greater support.

Q: What was Gelb's background?

ZUCKERMAN: Gelb was chairman of Bristol Meyers-Squibb. His brother was the Chief operating officer. After he left USIA he became ambassador to Belgium. His father was an entrepreneur who brought Clairol to this country from Germany where it was called Klein-all, because the man who developed it was named Klein. He told me a story about how his mother had smuggled the formula back to the U.S. just before war broke out in her brassiere. In any case his background was as a businessman. He had been a fund raiser in New York for Bush. He was new to government, and that is one of the reasons why I felt that kind of travel was useful to him.

Q: Did you have any feel that in his own way he was trying to compete with Charlie Wick who had made such an impact and was so close to Ronald Reagan, Mrs. Reagan really.

ZUCKERMAN: I didn't get that feeling. He had a very different style. Charlie Wick was a friend of Ronald Reagan, although. I don't think he was a Reaganaut. He was not super conservative. He was just a friend of Ronald Reagan's. They raised their children together. They lived next door to each other. It was an enormous benefit to the U. S. Information Agency when the Washington newspapers reported that President and Mrs. Reagan spent Christmas Eve at their home with the Wicks. That message was heard all over town. I never had the disadvantage of working cheek by jowl with him, although some of those who did had to put up with ideas that seemed zany at first and some people found it difficult to say no to him. If they did, they sometimes paid the consequences. I was told that a bright guy named Bob Earle, who worked for him, apparently once had an ash tray thrown at him. But Charlie Wick treated him very well, and he got good assignments thereafter including Mexico as PAO. But Wick did have the one thing that every bureaucrat wants in the leader of his agency, the ability to get money, and we prospered during that period, although you had to talk him down from some things that just weren't going to work. But all in all, he made a very important and valuable impact on the Agency.

Q: Did Argentina come across your radar more or less? I mean Argentina has always struck me as here is this country with everything going for it and nothing works.

ZUCKERMAN: Well it comes across my attention more forcefully because my wife is from Buenos Aires. I have visited there several times as area director, and a number of times since I left the service. Argentina is one of the few countries in the world that is self sufficient in energy and food. It has an educated European population. At the time of the beginning of the war it was either the fourth or seventh leading country in per capita GDP, depending on whose statistics you accept. You still see the grandeur of the place when you go down there. I don't know if you have been to Buenos Aires. It is a European city, with the highest concentration of psychologists per capita in the world. It has a thriving culture, great restaurants, and wonderful food. I hate to tell a Texan this, but the greatest meat in the world is in Argentina, along with some wonderful wines and attractive, intelligent people.

They can't get it together because they have been mis-governed for so long. Like many countries in Latin America, but certainly in Brazil and Argentina, holding minor office is a route to great wealth. State elected officials retire after a few years at multiples of their salaries, and the federal government is forced to pay the bill. These are regimes that have encouraged the growth of cynicism about government, and without a citizenry that has faith in the government, it is very difficult to find anything good that can come from such a situation. They have been disappointed over and over by people who they thought would finally lift them out of chaos. There was a period there when the government tied the peso to the dollar. It had the immediate effect of attracting investment and boosting the value of the peso but it couldn't be sustained. It couldn't be sustained because they couldn't control inflation. So just as in Mexico it wasn't a slow leakage, it was a burst of the dam when the country goes down. You have got to adjust the exchange rate when the situation calls for it. There wasn't a hell of a lot we could do in Argentina except show the flag, programs about rational economics, maintain the relationship. As elsewhere in Latin America, we had these wonderful bi-national centers. The Bi-national Center of Buenos Aires is a great independent institution with 10,000 students or so learning English and bringing people in close proximity to American culture. So we maintain the dialogue; we maintain the relationship. But the institution that affected policy more than any other, including the U.S. government, was the IMF. They determined in effect what the relationship would be because we got blamed for whatever the IMF would do.

Q: Where did you go then? This would be '92.

ZUCKERMAN: I was called in by then director Henry Catto. Catto was a man of great charm and intelligence who was from Texas, had been spokesman for the Defense Department, had been ambassador to El Salvador, and to the Court of St. James, spoke excellent Spanish, and was the best director of USIA that I had personal dealings with, perhaps because I was in Washington for a longer time and was at a higher rank, permitting me to have more contact with the Director. Perhaps I am unfair to others whom I haven't had as much contact with. But he was a great pleasure to work for. He suggested to Larry Eagleburger, who was then the Deputy Secretary of State, that we needed to have a USIA officer at the State Department at a level where he could have some input into discussions of current policy, and bring resources of the Agency to bear as appropriate, and also keep the Agency informed as to where it could direct its fire. Although every area director was plugged in to his or her regional bureau, Catto felt one step higher would help, and Eagleburger agreed. Catto asked me to go over to work in the office of the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, the third highest position at State, who was at the time Arnold Kanter.

I went over and met the Undersecretary and we had a good talk and worked out a lofty title of Coordinator for Foreign Information Policy. It was a total mystery to everybody at State and USIA. They found me an office and allowed me to bring an assistant with me, who was Joe Bob Johnson, my policy officer at the Latin American division. We were also given a State Department secretary. Shortly after I got there I called Deputy Secretary Eagleburger, who I knew some because we were both at the University of Wisconsin at the same time. He was a senior when I was a freshman or a sophomore. I was a staff member of the rabble-rousing student newspaper, the Daily Cardinal, and he was the head of the Young Republicans. We met again in Brussels, when he was the political advisor to NATO and I was the information officer at the embassy. We did have contact there; he had dinner at my house and when I was leaving Brussels for Korea he and a colleague of his took me to a farewell lunch. I've always been proud to have known him. It was a great achievement for him personally and a great honor for the Foreign Service to have a career officer become Secretary of State. Catto had taken my name to Eagleburger and he said fine, so I called him up and said, "Ok you have gotten me here; now what do I do?" He said, "Anything you can." And I came to realize that that was the way things operated at State. You carved out your own area of operations and did it until and unless someone pushed back.

Arnie Kanter and I talked over my own view of what I should be doing and, since the major concern of the US at the time was the situation in Yugoslavia, I decided that is where we could really best put our energies immediately. There were opposition radio and television stations in Belgrade whose message was not heard throughout the country. They didn't have the technical means to do it because their transmission equipment was weak and apparently in poor repair, largely because of the absence of spare parts. So we decided we would try to help there. Marvin Stone, the former Deputy Director of USIA under Charles Wick, had taken over an organization named the International Media Foundation that provided help in building democratic media. He was a former defense writer and then editor of U.S. News and World Report. We became very good friends when he was in USIA, particularly after he came down to speak for us in Brazil while I was PAO. His organization was an AID grantee and I heard that they had bought $235,000 of spare parts and other things that the independent television station in Belgrade could use to strengthen its signal, but they couldn't get it in because there was a UN embargo on shipments to Serbia.

So Joe Johnson and I got a meeting together of interested parties in different bureaus in State. We found out that the antenna that was then being used by the Belgrade television station was in fact one that had been put on long term loan to them years before by the United States government, acting through USIA. We suggested that the International Media Fund's material could also be offered as a long term loan, and that would, since it remained USG material, give us the right to send it through the diplomatic pouch., making it a permissible shipment despite the embargo and safe from mis-handling by Milosevic's henchmen, who were giving the independent media a hard time. The group reached agreement on that, and Marvin was delighted at the prospect of getting the material out of London, where it was awaiting transshipment. We sent a telegram with what we thought was the good news to Belgrade, informing the embassy of our plans. The embassy at that time was headed by the charge', the Deputy Chief of Mission in the absence of an Ambassador. He sent back a response saying that such an act would bring potential physical danger to bear on the staff of the U.S. embassy in Belgrade. I couldn't believe that response, since the Serbs had many better excuses to threaten harm to our people than what we were planning, and physical harm would obviously escalate the tension between us to a level that Milosevic had thus far avoided. We got another meeting together, and Joe and I were the only ones on the room who supported asking the DCM to give us a better justification for his fears than was provided in his initial response. Nobody in the State Department wanted to second guess a DCM who raised the possibility of physical harm coming to our people. I called our PAO there, Mike Hoffman who had been my deputy in Brazil, and I asked, "Is this real?" He said he thought the DCM had just dug in his heels. Nobody at the post wanted to send a dissent message, so we were stuck.

Then the question came up as to what alternative was possible.. The most feasible was to go to the United Nations and seek an exemption from the embargo. We discussed that with the British who thought it was a good idea. The issue went to the Security Council, and it gave us the exemption. So the shipment went, and it was brought to the Yugoslavian border by truck from Budapest. The truck crossed the border and was promptly hijacked, and probably distributed to Milosevic's favored stations. I don't think Marvin Stone ever forgave me, but we had to make the effort. Our friends in Yugoslavia knew we were trying. In retrospect, I thought I could have gone to Larry Eagleburger and asked him if he really wanted to let the DCM call the shots, but that was really Arnie Kanter's call, and I had enough respect for him not to try an end run. I was very disappointed by the inability of people at State to look at this realistically. It was a CYA reaction.

Q: Cover your ass.

ZUCKERMAN: That's right. Because if a drop of blood was shed, it could be traced to a decision to move this equipment in, and they feared that the blame might land on their desk. Well it seemed to me to be so remote a possibility that the Yugoslavians were going to do something stupid. The real risk of danger was not to us, but to the people at the independent radio and TV stations who were ready to take the risk of Milosevic's people coming down hard on them.

Our other major issue was what to do with the VOA/Radio Free Europe plan to build a $200 million transmitting station in Israel for the purpose of improving our signal to central Asia, something that was conceived before the Cold War ended. It was something we really forced on the Israelis, although they were good sports about it, and they had received an advanced payment of about 16 million dollars to offset their local costs. They gave us land out in the Negev Desert, but it turned out that it was on a flyway, migratory flyway, for birds flying from Europe to Africa. It became contentious among environmentalists. The Israelis said if you want us to go ahead we will; we won't back out, but if we go ahead you are creating a new problem for us.

Eagleburger was dead set against this. I was assigned to head a task force that would meet, discuss it, and make a policy recommendation as to what to do. We discussed it in a meeting that drew too many people, including large numbers of people from VOA and RFE, as well as people from State and the Board of Broadcasting. We sat down to prepare a summary of the discussion with the points made by the broadcasting people, the key one being that they felt the need to have a third backup to their existing two signals in order to guarantee a strong signal to the stanUzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and the others.. But even before we completed the analysis and recommendation an editorial appeared in the Washington Times containing all of the discussion that had gone on in what was supposed to be a confidential meeting, obviously leaked by Radio Free Europe or VOA or both. I was singled out in the editorial for criticism, and no one in State public affairs wanted to respond to it. But we went ahead and made the only recommendation that made sense, that the overblown project be terminated, and it was to the great dismay of its proponents.

The key question, when you got right down to it, was why on earth we needed a three tier signal capability in central Asia that was worth not only $200 million, but would also create domestic problems for the host country, Israel?. This was not some new broadcasting target, one that would open up an area of the world that was denied to us. It was overkill. It was being pushed by Steve Forbes, who was the head of Radio Free Europe at the time. We had exchanged some harsh words at a meeting held at USIA on the issue, mostly because of his bad-mouthing Foreign Service officers for resisting his plans. But nonetheless the recommendation prevailed, and the USG was spared a $200 million expense, with the exception, we thought, of the $16 million we had pre-paid to Israel for site surveys and other expenses. But a good friend of mine, Mort Smith, who had been my PAO in Korea and was then Deputy Director of VOA for facilities, was asked to go to Israel and see how much of that $16 million could be recovered. He was a nice Jewish boy from Brooklyn with a very direct manner, who had negotiated the original agreement with the Israelis, and he came back with all of the $16 million. No one could believe it, including Mort. I think the Israelis must have been so happy about the cancellation of the project that they felt the $16 million was worth it to get the monkey off their backs.

Q: How long were you doing this?

ZUCKERMAN: For a year. We also related to a number of the geographical and functional bureaus on some initiatives. We helped the Bureau of Economic Affairs avoid a mishap because they were issuing a paper on trade. Despite the fact it dealt mostly with imbalances in our trade with Asia, the only country they were mentioning was Japan, which was not the only country in Asia with which we were running a trade deficit. It was a needless provocation and they agreed. I also on a weekly basis attended the director's meeting at USIA, and as you know, the State Department has a couple of different internal computer communications systems. Joe and I had access to the one that the senior officers of the department had. Sometimes the top USIA people didn't know abut a meeting that was going to be held that really involved us, that is, when it was on an issue that we should have had input into. So I think I helped improve communications between us as did Joe, because he was going to meetings as well. So I thought that it would be a good idea to continue placing a USIA officer at a prominent level at State.

Well after the election, Peter Tarnoff was named to replace Arnie Kanter, and I heard that they wanted to streamline the seventh floor, where the Secretary and other senior officials were housed. They thought many offices, including the Undersecretaries, had added too many appendages, and they wanted to place them elsewhere. I met with Tarnoff on a Saturday morning, and he said he thought the work we were doing was very valuable, but that it should be placed in the office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. I said that could work, but that it would not give the person who held the job the access that came from being a part of the Undersecretary's office, which was the purpose for the creation of the position. Also, there were misgivings in Assistant Secretary Margaret Tutwiler's office when this move was made. So I had made it one of the first things I did when I arrived at State to have a meeting with her, to explain what I understood my job was, and that in no way would it overlap with her responsibilities. As I remember, she didn't say anything during the whole meeting except OK. But Tarnoff felt that we had to unclutter the Undersecretary of State's office, and there were several other offices that were nominally attached to it.

So I went back to USIA. They offered me postings to Madrid, Tel Aviv, New Delhi, several other very nice assignments. But my wife had dug into the job of her dreams, at the World Bank. Adriana was an educator. She had a Ph.D. in international relations and developmental economics from the University of Texas. When we got back to Washington in August of 1989, she set her mind on getting a job where she had always wanted to work, at the World Bank. By January she was working for them, and she still is. So I had to make a decision at that point. because USIA was pretty strict about how long you stayed in the US between overseas tours. I think the State Department was very flexible, but USIA was not. I was coming up on the six year limit. The new director of USIA was Joseph Duffy, who I had met on several occasions over the years, and we met in his office to talk about what he wanted to do with me. We talked about my going down to run television, or what used to be the television and film operation which by now was almost exclusively television. He thought he needed someone down there that could keep it involved with the rest of USIA, and although retirement and a new career was a definite consideration for a number of reasons, I might have stayed if that job were offered to me, even if it meant forgoing some financial advantages that the federal government was phasing out. But the job was given to a political appointee, and when the Agency was merged with State, television was given to the Board of Broadcasting along with VOA, an enormous mistake in my mind. And so I decided to retire.

I spent my last year as a member of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University, conducted a seminar on public diplomacy and organized a colloquium participated in by the other Institute members, and wrote a paper on the future of the Fulbright Program. I also thought seriously about what I wanted to do in retirement, because I heard from somebody, and I thought it was very good advice, that you shouldn't retire from something, you should retire to something.

I decided I wanted to make documentary films again, although I had made them in a distant manner in USIA, picking the subjects and overseeing the productions along with my other responsibilities for the film and television division. I put together a proposal and got together with Tim White, the then young producer who carried out the Reflections series with USIA, who had gone on to a commercial television career. We decided to form a non-profit corporation to make films. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting liked the idea when we showed them what we had done for USIA and gave us some start up money to produce treatments on three potential individuals. Before I did this I had gotten a ruling from the USIA legal department that I could organize on paper a non-profit corporation as long as I wasn't working at it, and we did that.

When I retired in October or right at the end of September, 1994, we were able to start almost at once. In the period since then, we have made three major films for PBS. This series is called First Person Singular because PBS didn't want to use a title that had been used in government films. Our first film was on architect I.M. Pei, the second on historian John Hope Franklin, and the third on Nobel Laureate Elie Wessel. We did another private film for the North Carolina Council on the Humanities on Charles Kuralt, the CBS broadcaster who was to receive their 25th anniversary humanitarian award, but died before the award was to be given at a banquet. The film treated his career and showed how close his work mirrored the kind of activities that the Council on the Humanities was carrying out.

We started a film on Beverly Sills that we may be able to pick up at a later time, but we had a disagreement with her agent over where we could raise the money. So it has been an interesting retirement, involving a good deal of travel in connection with the productions. I've done some travel with my wife on her working trips to Asia, the Middle East and Africa. I see more of my children and grandchildren. I don't do as much reading as I would like because fund raising is so hard and so constant. Films are expensive, especially if you have to meet the quality standards of PBS. I have eight grandchildren. Two of them are in England, and six of them live within a half hour of us, and they keep me very busy..

Q: Okay, well, Stan, I want to thank you very much.

ZUCKERMAN: It has been a pleasure.

End of interview