

AMBASSADOR ROZANNE L. RIDGWAY

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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[Note: This interview was not edited by Ambassador Ridgway]

Q: You spell your name just like Ambassador Ridgway Knight did. He used to take great umbrage if someone put an "e" between the "g" and the "w."

RIDGWAY: Right. I met him once. He was walking down a corridor in the Department and saw my name on the door. He stopped in to see me since we both had a distinctive way of spelling "Ridgway." I must have been a junior officer at the time - probably an FSO-6. So I was greatly honored by his august presence.

Q: Let's start at the beginning. When and where you born and tell us something about your family.

RIDGWAY: I was born in St. Paul, Minnesota on August 22, 1935. I was my parents' first child. My father had been previously married, so I already had an older half-brother when I was born. I then became the middle child, since my parents had another off-spring after me - a younger brother.

My father was an extraordinary man. He was born in 1884. He was certified to teach in Ohio at the age of seventeen, even though he had never attended college. He graduated from normal school. He had one of those sparkling records. He taught for a number of years and became the superintendent of the Mansfield, Ohio, school system. I suspect that the salaries in those days were quite inadequate, which I think probably was the main factor that made my father decide to go to work in the tire business. He went to work for Goodyear, then General Tire, Seiberling, and perhaps other tire businesses in Akron, Ohio. I never knew much about those years. However, in 1935, a couple of years after the death of his first wife, my father visited one of his customers in south St. Paul. He signed on as a salesman with that company, which first specialized in tires and then also went into the truck body business. He had met and married my mother in 1934 in Akron, so it was in the following year that the whole family moved to St. Paul, where, as I said, I was born.

Q: Do you know much about your ancestry?

RIDGWAY: I don't know a thing about it. From the little I know, the family probably came from Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania or Ohio. My father left Ohio as he traveled as part of his job and finally landed in Minnesota.

Q: What about your mother?

RIDGWAY: My mother was thirty years younger than my father. She was from Omaha, Nebraska. She had been born in St. Paul, but had moved to Omaha early in life. She went to high school there. She was one of ten children; her mother was divorced. Life was not easy, I am sure. Like many of her 1930s contemporaries, she went to work after graduating. My mother went to work in my father's household, when his first wife died to take care of my older half-brother and she eventually married my father. 1935 was a terrible time.

Q: Did the Depression form you in any way?

RIDGWAY: I don't think so. It had a major impact on my mother though. The Depression formed my mother. I was more a child of WWII. By that time, I was aware of what was going on - flags and presidents and stars in the windows. Our next door neighbor had three sons in the armed services: a sailor and two marines, so he displayed a flag with three stars in his window. At that time I was old enough to be aware of rationing and coupons - red points and blue points. So my recollections are much more about the WWII era than the Depression. I well remember the death of FDR, the maps in the newspapers showing the Allied latest advances, and the war movies.

Q: I was born in 1928 and lived in Annapolis, Maryland, so we were quite conscious of the war and particularly of the navy's contributions. I think WWII was probably as powerful an introduction to the international scene as one could expect in one's lifetime; it shaped the careers of many of those who joined the Foreign Service after 1945.

RIDGWAY: That is certainly true, but there may be too much made of this impact. I was between 5 and 10 during the war era and I don't think I joined the Foreign Service because of the war. We did discuss daily events in the family. My mother had two brothers in the services - one with the air force in Germany and the other with the 2nd marine division in the Pacific and as my grandmother lived very near us, we were quite conscious of what was going on in the war.

One thing that I did learn, which surprised many people later, was that I learned the military ranks and insignias. I could tell what the badges and ribbons that had been given to a soldier were for. I collected chevrons. In part, this was due to the assistance of a soldier who later became my uncle. He rose to the rank of staff sergeant. So I was a pol-mil officer very early in life!!

Q: As you grew up, were you a reader?

RIDGWAY: Absolutely. I think in fact, despite the age differences among the members of my family, we were a "poster" family. We had dinner when my father came home from work, and then talked about the day's events and what was ahead for us and the country. He talked about his day; mother talked about her day; the kids talked about their days.

We all read; we all listened to our favorite radio programs - mine were "Captain Midnight," "Jack Armstrong," and "the Lone Ranger." The family would listen to the news together. On the week-ends, after listening to Walter Winchell, we listened to a program of light opera. On Monday evening, there was a show which featured operettas.

We did read and then discuss what we had read. It became a life-long passion. When mother died, my brother and I decided that we didn't need our inheritance and gave the money to the local library in St. Paul, as reading was a central part of our family.

Q: What kinds of books did you like to read?

RIDGWAY: I read everything appropriate to my age - The Bobbsey Twins, Nancy Drew, Albert Payson Terhune's book on collies and other dogs. I read books by Walter Farley on horses. The neighborhood grade school which I attended required book reports, that also stimulated interest in reading.

Q: Was there any particular subject that interested you in elementary school?

RIDGWAY: I just liked school. I attended Hancock Elementary School, which still exists today. It was right across the street from the family house. I was good in school, as you would expect little girls to be in any case. I was probably insufferable to my classmates, because I loved spelling and reading and I would show off my skills. I could also add and subtract. I am sure lots of kids disliked me for my abilities. We used to have a weekly spelling test on Fridays. I would study words all week long and then took the test. The girls always did better than the guys.

As I said, I just liked going to school. I thought that is what you did and I enjoyed it.

Q: What were the politics in your family?

RIDGWAY: It was split. My father was a Taft republican; my mother was a democrat. One end of the table thought one way and the other thought a different way. When my grandmother joined us, we had another adherent of the Roosevelt democrats. I don't think the ideological divide was as severe as it might be today, when such political differences might split a marriage. I think my father and mother just represented different points of view. They both voted all of the time, never missing an election. They just canceled each other out. It was sort of a family joke, but they both would go to the polls.

Q: Minnesota was known for its liberal bent.

RIDGWAY: Yes, indeed, especially St Paul, whose representative was Eugene McCarthy. Our State Senator was Edward Thye who was aligned with Walter Judd, who was part of the Joe McCarthy crowd. Judd used to be known as the "congressman from Taiwan." Judd represented a district outside of Minneapolis, as I recall. In 1948, Hubert Humphrey became mayor of Minneapolis and then went on to the U.S. Senate.

Q: You started high school in the mid 1940s. Was that a local school?

RIDGWAY: I started in 1947 or 1948 at a school about six blocks away from my house. It was a small school - Wilson High School - which closed later. I would guess that my class consisted of about 150 kids. I used to walk to and from school. I enjoyed high school, just as I had elementary school. I enjoyed history and English. I took Latin like everyone did; at the time, it was considered a standard college prep course. I also took a couple of years of Spanish. I took two years of advanced math - algebra and trig. I skipped geometry; I had no interest in it and managed to by-pass it. I took chemistry and physics. We had a well rounded education.

The school had, as was customary in those days, a two-track system: college and business which included typing, shorthand, and book-keeping. There was no pressure from the administration to focus on one objective or the other; it let the students pretty much decide what they wanted to do. This is not to say that there weren't certain prejudices in existence at the time, However, if I had said at the dinner table that I wanted to become a fireman, I would not have been stopped. The family would just have put up with it until I changed my mind. There was never any question about my going to college. My older brother hated school. He got by, but that was about all; it was a struggle for him. I think he and my father had some "arm-wrestling" matches to get him through high school. He was never interested. When he graduated from high school, he became a truck driver and delivered bread. He went off to the Korean war, along with all the other boys in the neighborhood. My brother never wanted to go to college. It was just expected that I would. I think everyone assumed that since I did so well in school, that I would go on in the academic path. I did take typing, along with the college prep courses, just to be ready for life after college.

When I became 16, I went to work at Montgomery Wards. I worked every day in this era before computers. I worked in their warehouse in St. Paul - a large facility that served three states. Catalogue buying was a big business then. I and a lot of other high school kids staffed the warehouse late at night. Montgomery Wards was a wonderful employer. I was in the "pricing" department, which was a combination of pricing and inventory control. We used to go to work in the evening and took away what was known as the "tally sheets;" those were records of what had been sold during the day. It was a very elaborate system; our role was to deliver these sheets to various parts of the warehouse. The following day, the full time employees would record what had been sold and at what price. Then they would re-order those items that needed to be restocked. As I said, this was before computers became widely used. Today, one person with a machine could do the work that we did back in the late 1940s. After collecting the filled-out tally sheets, we would put new tally sheets where the record keepers would be working the following day. Depending on what part of the month it was and what sales were being run, I might work from 2:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. or 2:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. six days a week, since I worked Saturdays as well. When a new catalogue was issued, I would also work on Sundays. During the summer, I would work full time. I always worked in the same department, although the tasks might change from time to time.

Over a period of time, I mastered all the tasks, I think. I even won an award at one point. The supervisor of the department was a woman, who had attended St. Catherine College, a neighborhood all-women's college. She went for two years and then decided to seek full-time employment at Montgomery Wards. She was very happy, and was considered a real success, given the times. She asked me whether I would be interested in a permanent position. I really wasn't. I think perhaps she sensed that she really had not moved up the ladder in the many years she had worked at Montgomery Wards. The whole second floor of the warehouse where I worked - which was quite large - was staffed entirely by women, except for one man, who had a glass enclosed office in one of the corners. Whether one was conscious of that situation or not, it was apparent to me what the system was. I did continue to work in that department through high school, but I had no interest in such a situation as a permanent career.

Q: You graduated from high school in 1953. You obviously had a very busy schedule. Were you able to squeeze in any extra-curricular high school activities?

RIDGWAY: Yes. I did a lot. I don't know that I did it well. I was on the student council; I was the editor of the school newspaper; I belonged to the girls' athletic association, and won letters for some girls' sports. In those days, girls didn't really play "sports" as we know the term today. I was active in the Latin club, the international affairs club, as well as in other clubs. But, as I said, I didn't spend too much time on these various activities.

My job at Montgomery Ward really began in the evening. If I was late, that was alright as long as I had made the necessary arrangements before hand. My job was to distribute the tally sheets and have new ones available for the next day's staff; when I did it was not as important as making sure that it was done that day. So as long as I informed my colleagues at the warehouse that I would be late, they were very good about accommodating me.

Q: You mentioned that you belonged to the international club. Did you learn anything there?

RIDGWAY: Not a thing. I can't remember anything about that activity except the name of the club. I don't remember whether we ever had any speakers. In fact, I don't know that we did anything.

Q: While you were in high school, U.S.-Soviet tensions were increasing. Did your school go through any "nuclear explosion" drills?

RIDGWAY: No. Whatever drills the schools went through happened long before I got to it. When I started high school, the Soviets had not yet exploded a nuclear weapon. The significant event that took place during my high school years was McCarthyism, which began during those years and peaked when I went to university. During my years in high school, it was pretty much of a "standard" world. Wars looked the same as they had - Korea was divided by a military front as we had experienced in WWI and II. The main issue was whether MacArthur would drop a nuclear weapon on the Chinese. There was no concern that anyone would drop a nuclear weapon on us; we still had the monopoly.

If there was an international event which had an impact on me, it was the Berlin airlift. That was in 1948. We became aware of the kids and candy, etc. in the airplanes. We knew that there was a "Cold War", but it was not a constant concern. I remember studying the question of the Japanese Peace Treaty and the issue of Germany's future and our alliance with Europe, i.e., would Eisenhower return to Europe? We discussed the 1952 elections and some of those issues, e.g., Truman vs. MacArthur. It was not a "duck and cover" time; that came a little later, I think after the Cuban missile crisis, when we worried about what might fall on us from the sky. That was not an issue in the early 1950s; the technology had not yet become the threat that it became later.

Q: How about domestic issues? Was the question of the future of labor unions a concern in your family?

RIDGWAY: Not really. My mother took care of the house and family. My father's business was not unionized; it had nothing to do with unions. My older brother may have joined the Teamsters when he began to drive, but I really can't remember. Unionization was not an issue in our household.

Q: You graduated from high school in 1953. Did you know what you wanted to do next?

RIDGWAY: I did not have many choices. The college that I was going to attend, Hamline, was right across the street from my grade school. I was a child of the neighborhood. The professors all lived in the same neighborhood. They all knew me. Some of their kids had gone to school with my brother and me. The college had a practice, which I think may in fact have been state-wide, of offering a half-scholarship to students who graduated in the top 10% of their high school class. So, even before I graduated, I had a written offer from Hamline for that half-scholarship. By the way, Leonidas Hamline was the first Methodist bishop of the Northwest Territories. There is a church here in Washington on 16th Street named after him as well.

It was clear that I would attend Hamline; there really was no alternative discussed. When I think of what tuition was in those days, it hardly seems real in today's terms. I think in 1953, the annual amount was either \$500 or \$750. Since I was going to live at home, college was financially manageable as I could earn whatever the school didn't cover.

While I was at college I continued to work during the summers, but I did not work during the academic year. I didn't need to do it financially, particularly since Hamline's contribution grew somewhat and my folks chipped in as well. When I wanted to come to American University on a program called the Washington Semester, which is still being offered by the college, the college covered my costs. I spent the first semester of the 1956-57 academic year, my senior year, in Washington.

So, where I would spend my college years was well-determined. I wanted to major in political science, given the interest that my family had shown in politics. I enrolled in that department, having satisfied certain requirements, universities in those days had such things. That is, students had to have studied certain basic subjects, such as a couple of years of a foreign language, a couple of years of science, a couple of years of literature, etc. in order to be able to nominate a major.

One of the courses Hamline offered was a survey of modern civilization, taught by an astounding professor who could really teach. The course was a broad overview of thousands of years of human history. After taking that course, I decided to change my major; I became a history major. It was a terrific choice and I have been excited by history ever since.

Q: Did you concentrate in any particular areas?

RIDGWAY: No. The school was really too small to allow such a practice. It is so even today. By the end of the four years, I had taken every history course offered - some Latin American, some English, some American (colonial, Civil War, 20th Century). I ran out of history courses; in fact, I also took all the courses in the political science department I could take. As I said, I spent a semester at American University; that gave me the opportunity to take my Foreign Service oral exam while in Washington. During that oral exam, I was told that the board's analysis of what I had studied suggested that in my last semester at Hamline I should take at least another economics course. Therefore, in my last months at the university, I took a couple of economics courses.

Q: Let's go back. How did you get attracted to the Foreign Service?

RIDGWAY: Very early in my academic career, I had come to the conclusion that I didn't want to teach. I couldn't see myself going on to graduate school to do more studying, which I would have had to do if I wanted to teach at the university level. I probably disappointed a lot of the faculty when I did not write a senior honors paper. I started to do research in a subject I had practically no interest in; then the sun came out and I felt trapped in a room full of dusty stacks of materials at the University of Minnesota library. So I quit that. I just wasn't interested.

I met a Foreign Service officer when he came to Hamline on leave. He discussed the Foreign Service with my class. He had application forms with him which would allow applicants to take the 1956 written exams. At about the same time, Ambassador Patricia Byrne was featured in a Life magazine article about women in interesting careers. At the time, I think Pat was a vice consul in Laos; she had graduated from a Wisconsin college - Beloit or Ripon, I think - a college which was the same size as Hamline. The notion of joining the Foreign Service, which in the Midwest always had the taint of an Eastern Ivy League establishment, became more enticing in light of Pat's experiences.

I knew from reading various magazines that there was such a thing as the Foreign Service. All of these bits and pieces began to become a focal point for me at about the time the Foreign Service officer visited Hamline. I think he had been a vice-consul in one of the West African countries. He talked about the various career possibilities in the Foreign Service. He might well have been an economic officer because he discussed agriculture and issues of that kind. Since he had application forms, and I had to face the issue of what I would do when I graduated, I took one of them and filled it out and sent it to the Department.

I took the test in June, 1956. I really didn't expect to pass it and was prepared to spend my senior years acquiring some knowledge of the business world. I thought that if I failed by a little bit, I might go on to graduate school. I would not have had any problem getting a fellowship, particularly since the faculty was pushing me in that direction. But I didn't fail, much to my surprise. I passed - not by much, but enough to pass. I then went on to my Washington semester, during which, as I said, I took my oral exam, which I also passed.

Q: Let's go back to the Washington semester for a second. What did you do during that period?

RIDGWAY: I lived away from home for the first time in my life. That was a novel experience. I lived in a dorm at American University. I met some people there whom I consider friends to this day - particularly one, who later became my roommate. I learned how to navigate in a large city. I wrote a paper on the Bureau of the Budget, which gave me a different perspective on the government, i.e., through budgetary lenses. I worked on this with Catherine Seckler who was the head of the political science department at American. I took many courses in the field of public administration and history. The program included visits to a lot of prominent people around the city which gave me further insights into government and how it operates. But mostly, I learned how to live away from home.

Q: Do you have any recollection of any of the questions you were asked during the oral exam?

RIDGWAY: I remember a lot of the questions. I was asked recently, in a completely different setting, about my experience in the exam. I was asked about Hoover, Mason and Slidell - how did they fit into American history. I will not forget those questions, because I think those questions were tossed at me to see how I would handle a subject that was not well-known.

I was asked some questions about modern economic issues, especially on the situation in Germany. I didn't know much about that and said so. The other questions dealt primarily with history. Fortunately, I had attended a university that was known as a "blue book" school, which judged students as much on how they organized their thinking as on how many facts they knew. Therefore, I found the oral exam less of a challenge, than I would have had I not gone to a school like Hamline.

At some stage, I was asked whether I was engaged. I said "No." I have been criticized throughout my career for not being offended by such a question. I supposedly did not have the right feminine instincts. As far as I was concerned, if they wanted to know whether I was engaged, I would gladly tell them. I didn't find it offensive. The question was not pursued, that is, I was not asked about whether I was dating or whether I was interested in marrying in the near future.

Q: At the time, I believe the regulations still required a woman, upon entering marriage, to resign.

RIDGWAY: That is right. It was so until 1970, when Kissinger lost a case in the Supreme Court. The Department then went back to all the women who had had to resign and invited them to rejoin the Foreign Service. Some came back and had wonderful careers, such as Elinor Constable, who was a co-worker in the oceans and fisheries world later. Kate Clarkburn came back.

Q: At the end of your oral, were you told whether you had passed?

RIDGWAY: Indeed I was. They told me that I had passed the oral and that I would be contacted to schedule a medical exam and that in the meantime, my security clearance would be initiated. I got my papers for the medical while still in Washington; I took the exam over at 801 H. St, NW.

When the Washington semester came to an end, I returned to St. Paul to live at home and finish university. I became aware that people were asking questions about me - the security check. Since I had never lived anywhere but in my parents' house and had gone to school within blocks of the house, the whole neighborhood was aware of what was happening. Eventually, the security man came back to me to see whether I had any other names for references - someone who might not be a neighbor. I am sure this was one of the cheapest clearance processes that security had ever undertaken.

Then I got a call from Washington telling me that a new class would be sworn in in June, 1957. Of course, that was the end of the fiscal year in those days and the Department was obligating its last funds. I was asked whether I would be interested in joining that class. I said "yes," since graduation was going to be on June 4 - or thereabouts. I left St. Paul for my new adventure a week later. I was twenty-one at the time.

Q: How long was the written exam in 1956?

RIDGWAY: It was a multiple choice exam, which took all day. I did not take the language test. I have said to people that if they haven't read the 1953 revisions to the examination process, which were intended to open the Foreign Service to a wider pool of candidates, they would not understand how I got into the Service. Those revisions allowed me to apply for and become a member of the Foreign Service. For one thing, I would not have been able to afford the cost of travel to Washington for the three and a half days that were required before 1953. I would not have been able to offer the kind of foreign language skills required, which one would have acquired almost exclusively by some kind of immersion program, like living overseas. Furthermore, in light of my name and the name of the school from which I graduated, I would never have passed the screening, regardless of what the regulations might have said.

When I look at those women who were able to enter the Foreign Service before 1953, like Margaret Joy Tibbetts and Frances Willis, I note how extra-special they were, e.g., PhDs, etc. A more ordinary female applicant, such as a graduate of Hamline University of St. Paul, MN would not have been allowed to cross the threshold. Your name and school were on the front of the "blue book," the dossier used by your examiners. Mine would not have gotten very far, even if I could have afforded the three-and-a-half day trip to Washington.

As for the language requirement, unless you came from a bilingual home or had at least one year of immersion overseas, there was no way an applicant such as myself could have qualified before 1953. What the Department did in 1953 was to provide an option which allowed a candidate who had passed the oral and written exams to wait for three years before having to take the language test; that suited me fine.

Q: After being sworn in, were you asked to list three countries where you would like to serve?

RIDGWAY: No. I was asked whether I would like to start with an assignment in Washington or one overseas. I said "Washington." My instincts were telling me that I still needed to learn how to live away from home and that the adjustment would be easier in a domestic environment rather than in an overseas one.

Q: What was your family's reaction to your choice of careers?

RIDGWAY: Some members weren't sure to which Washington I was going; they weren't sure what kind of uniform I would be wearing. Others thought that I was joining the Motor Vehicle Department of the state government - the license-issuing division. My mother and father were very proud. They weren't at all certain what I would be doing, but since I had been educated, they accepted that I would move away and start a career.

Q: Did you ever have an opportunity to discuss the Foreign Service with some knowledgeable people?

RIDGWAY: Not really. The university still thought I would pursue an academic career. In fact, they had prepared some papers for me to fill out which were applications for a Danforth scholarship. It was then that I confessed that I had taken the Foreign Service exam, had passed it and was joining the Service. Hamline did not offer a degree in international relations; they didn't even have a set of courses that might lead a student into the international relations field. However, I think the university probably understood what I was getting into more than my parents did, who viewed my job as just another government position. I think the staff at Hamline was quite flabbergasted that the university had managed to turn out someone who had quietly passed the Foreign Service exam. However, I don't think any of them had any expertise in the field and therefore could not really counsel me on what I might face. So, I just took off for Washington.

Q: You started in Washington in June, 1957. How did you get established in Washington?

RIDGWAY: In fact, one of the girls with whom I had become acquainted while at American University and who lived in Silver Spring, had a job in Washington. Her university room-mate did as well. They had rented an apartment and let me know that should I return to Washington and was in need of shelter they would be glad to have me. I joined them in a dreadful place on DuPont Circle. DuPont Circle in 1957 was entirely different than it is today. It was horrid. It was a tough neighborhood with a high crime rate. We soon were two in the apartment as one of the girls became pregnant and had to leave to get married. We didn't have much money. If we returned late at night in the car given to my friend by her parents, we would park illegally, as we had to be close to the front door of our apartment house.

There were rats running through the tumbling-down walls. It was a red-brick house, which today might sell for \$1 million. The house contained something like 8 apartments with panels bisecting fire-places, it was real ramshackle. But the rent was right: \$50 per month. I could walk to the State Department, where I would catch a bus to take me to the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) for the A-100 course.

Q: How many people were there in your class?

RIDGWAY: Since it was the end of the fiscal year, it was well attended. We had 42 students in the class: 6 women, 36 men.

Q: Could you characterize your classmates?

RIDGWAY: After I became a senior officer, I returned about every other year to sit on a promotion panel. I used that opportunity to look at my own file. First of all, there was a group of returning veterans, young men who had been drafted and then discharged. We had a number of former Navy lieutenants, and Marine and Army captains - junior officers in other words. Most were married; some had a child or two; one, I think, had twins. They were in their late 20s or early 30s. Then we had a group of unmarried people in their early 20s. I was not the youngest member of my class; we had a woman who was a few months younger than I. In between these two groups, there was a group of men and women in their mid to late 20s, who might have had a graduate degree, although I don't remember anyone with a law degree.

Most of the students came from large universities. Those who came from small schools came from places like Reed, Swarthmore, Bryn Mawr, Wooster and the University of Virginia, so everyone had attended a top notch school. I think there was a Foreign Service club at 1800 G Street, NW. I remember our first reception there. All my classmates were standing around drinking Manhattans and Martinis, trying to impress each other by letting others know that they had read David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* and a lot of other stuff of which I had never heard, much less read. So I just decided to observe the scene. That tactic resulted in an analysis which is part of my personnel file which highlights this approach of mine. The judgment in that paper was that I would not make it in the Foreign Service; that I was in the third quartile of the class primarily because I would not participate and was inarticulate. My guess is that that was probably a good description of my role in the A-100 course. I was just not about to play the game of "can you top this?" It never occurred to me that it had any value.

Q: I think many of us remember back to the pushing and shoving that took place in the A-100 course and the discussion of who would be the star of the class.

RIDGWAY: I don't think that at the time I was even thinking of becoming an ambassador. All I could focus on was going to work in an interesting new chapter of my life. The career, as far as I could see it, suited my interests and was a natural follow-on to what I had studied. Being an ambassador was not really on my radar scope.

Q: Was there any attempt to educate the class in the history and background of the Foreign Service or to indoctrinate you in the importance of what you had joined?

RIDGWAY: No. We could use the word "elite" for the members of the Foreign Service in those days. Somewhere, in the 1970's, that was taken out of the vocabulary. There was no attempt to brain wash us. The course was an endless parade of "talking heads", organization charts and other very basic stuff. I think the course was about 16 weeks long; it was dreadfully dull. All of the students just wanted the course to end so that they could go on to their assignments. The people who were in Washington, living with their families in temporary quarters while awaiting an overseas assignment, were of course the edgiest of all. Their situation could not have been pleasant.

As the days moved on, we all became more anxious; it was time to go to work. How long could we absorb the dull material they were throwing at us? Not that going home was a great joy; we were in the A-100 course during the summer and my apartment did not have air-conditioning, not to mention the tough neighborhood and the rats, etc.

Q: Did you, in the three months of classroom come to any conclusion about a career path?

RIDGWAY: Not really. If the Department wanted me to go through the A-100 course, that is what I would do. If they wanted to assign me to a hardship post, there I would go. I think my lack of full participation probably had some impact on the assignment I was given. It was probably the worst assignment in Washington in the entire class. Others seemed to have gotten more interesting jobs, both in Washington and overseas. When the assignments were handed out, I thought mine was pretty much an invitation to leave the Service.

Q: What was this assignment?

RIDGWAY: I was called an "Educational Exchange assistant." It was a job in the Educational Exchange Service, part of the Public Affairs Bureau (P). Our offices were on 19th and K, NW. We ran the Fulbright program and provided cultural presentations and similar activities to our overseas embassies. My specific job was to answer public correspondence, or to be more accurate, to decide which form letter response might best fit the public inquiry. There were a few that needed non-form replies, but they were a minority. I worked at that from 1957 to 1959.

Q: How did you like the job?

RIDGWAY: I did not become restless. I was still learning. After a year, we moved to Connecticut Ave., NW, across from the zoo. In the spring of 1958, it became clear that I needed to do something besides the job. The Department's recreational newsletter announced at about this time that a women's fast pitch softball team was looking for players, so I went and joined the team. We won the East Coast championship that year, and in 1959, I was the catcher on the team. We really had a very good team.

Through that venture, I met a whole new set of friends. I played softball with them in the summer and basketball in the winter, on a team representing the Departments of State. I also took up golf and played a little tennis. I became engaged in a whole new area of life and a whole new set of friends. I should mention that our second baseman was Diane Rehm of NPR (National Public Radio) fame now; I still do some broadcasts with her from time to time. I must say that this new area of activity was instrumental in my getting through the first two years in Washington.

Q: What about meeting your language requirement?

RIDGWAY: I took Spanish on my way to my next assignment as the third personnel officer in our embassy in Manila. I am sure that the assignment people thought that Spanish was the appropriated language for the Philippines. So, before leaving U.S. shores, I went to FSI for language training. I found that I had an ear for foreign languages. The teaching at FSI was superb. I suppose that my passive approach to my career made me perfectly suited to language training. I didn't argue about anything I was being taught. I just repeated what I was taught, memorized it and absorbed it. Pretty soon it all fitted neatly. At the end of the 16-week course, I was rated 3+ and 3+, which was certainly good enough to get off language probation.

Q: When you started working on the exchange program, did you have any training or did they just toss you in?

RIDGWAY: I had no training. I went to work in an office staffed entirely by women who had started with the Office of War Information (OWI.) After the war, the residual functions were assigned to the Department of State and what was the nascent United States Information Agency (USIA). State had a Bureau of Public Affairs, and the residual OWI functions and staff were sent there. These women ran a lot of the exchange programs. My office was responsible for the public information process. We kept all of the statistics on exchange programs, such as names and numbers. It was all run by a computer predecessor called the Royal McBee system. We used needles to punch out holes, and then we retrieved the information the same way by seeing how many holes a needle could go through without meeting resistance. It was a 19th century system which worked well for us. We got our basic data from that system. It enabled us to write our annual report for Congress. We had one woman who kept up the system and maintained a card on every participant. Our office also used the data to write speeches for officials. And, as I said, I answered public correspondence.

My co-workers were talented. They became good friends; they were very helpful to me. They were not mean and did not have an "edge". They had progressed in an atmosphere that was not entirely friendly to them. They were good.

Gertrude Cameron, who headed the office, was a top quality boss. I'll never forget her; she was a red-head. She helped me immeasurably to grow up and did so without destroying me. She taught me how to dress for an office, how to write, how to stand up for what I believed in, and how to make sure that my product was always the best that I could produce. I learned. Today, her approach might be called "tough love" - but it really was not that tough. She had a lot to teach me and did that superbly. She was a class act: dressed well, spoke well, and was energetic. In short, she was a great role model and a great supervisor. My performance evaluations were not sterling, but they were thoughtful. She was mostly concerned that my attitude of watching and evaluating would be viewed as reticence. She always stressed to me the importance of "backbone strength" and the need to hide my reticence, if I couldn't get rid of it entirely.

So, my first two years in the Department were highly educational: I learned how to live away from home; to manage my money; to work in an office environment, to pick friends and to shun those who might become troublesome; and, in general, to get along in the world on my own. And incidentally, as I was heading off to Manila, my roommate in Washington got married; she too had learned a lot of lessons in self-sufficiency.

Q: Was there a sort of "sports mafia" in the government?

RIDGWAY: I really don't know. There were people who played sports. Many years later, when I was studying German at FSI in 1982, I remember taking a few minutes off in the lounge area and there ran into a woman who was an Army colonel. She was also studying German, but in a different class. Nevertheless, our gaze met and it came to me that she might have been one of the softball players during my first two years in Washington. I asked her and in fact she had been. So I don't think I ran into a "sports' mafia" in the Department. There was a group of women who had turned out for most of the sports and who had bonded over many years, and who took in newcomers as they came out for these teams. Although I played some of these sports for only two years, I have stayed in touch with some of these teammates, even up to the recent past when I had dinner with some of them.

Q: You went to Manila in 1959. How long were you there?

RIDGWAY: I went in August 1959 and stayed there for two years, until November 1961.

Q: What were the Philippines like in those days?

RIDGWAY: They suffered then from the same problems that they have today, although perhaps not as acute. Ramon Magsaysay had died; the Hukbalahaps had been defeated. The Philippines was a country that we hoped would become a democracy with a constitution, a representative legislature, responsible political parties, and an effective president at the head of a well-functioning government, etc. However, those lofty ideals could never be reached, primarily because there was no middle class. The Philippines had a small upper class and a large, mostly poor, lower class. I have never forgotten, even now fifty years later, what it was like on my first day in Manila. I arrived in the evening after a forty-hour-long flight from St. Paul. We flew propeller-driven planes in those days, which meant both slow flight and frequent refueling stops: Seattle, Anchorage, Shemya, Tokyo, and Okinawa and finally Manila.

I arrived in the evening on a mid-August day in 1959. The next morning, determined to show that I was a good Foreign Service person, I put on my walking shoes and left the hotel to take a look at the city. It was a week-end. I walked a couple of blocks behind the hotel and encountered the worst poverty I had ever seen or even imagined. There were small children playing on garbage piles, etc. I immediately turned around and returned to the hotel to collect my thoughts about what I had just seen.

My experience over the next two years was a remote experience. I was the last name on a 13-page diplomatic list, so I was never part of anything that had to do with relations between the Philippines and the U.S. I spent all of my time working on both American and local personnel matters for the State Department and other agencies. We had about 900 Americans stationed in Manila, and many more Filipinos. There were a number of activities in Manila, which you would not find in normal embassies, such as a large printing plant.

Despite my lack of involvement in U.S.-Philippine issues, it was impossible not to notice the poverty that was endemic. You could see it when you drove to the tennis courts, to the golf course or to places around the country. I ended up saying to all who would listen that had I been born in the Philippines in roughly the same circumstances in which I was born in the U.S. I would have become a revolutionary.

The lack of concern for the standard of living of the majority of Filipinos by the upper class was mind boggling. This class couldn't care less about the circumstances that faced so many of their countrymen. Eventually, it all unraveled and has never been put back together again. The Philippines is a clear example of what happens when a country does not have a middle class and has a corrupt upper class, as it did in my days and does even today.

Q: Who was our ambassador in the late 1950s?

RIDGWAY: I served under two ambassadors, each an illustration of different extremes. The first was Charles Bohlen, better known as "Chip" and husband of Avis Bohlen. They had three children, one of whom eventually worked for me and is a good friend. She must have been about 13 at the time. The Bohlens were real "class." They knew I was at the bottom of the diplomatic list; nevertheless, they invited me to functions like small lunches at their residence.

It was clear to me that negotiations for bases were the principal foci of the embassy and its leadership. As a result, a lot of time was spent on managing the military relationship.

Bohlen was replaced in 1960 by John D. Hickerson. He and his wife were certifiable. He had been our ambassador to Finland after being the assistant secretary for UN affairs. Earlier, he had been involved in the development and administration of the Marshall Plan; he had a very impressive reputation in Washington. Legend had it that he was a failure in Helsinki, primarily due to his wife's conduct. He left there in 1959.

The Hickersons' tour was a nightmare. When they got off the plane, Mrs. Hickerson was clutching a copy of *The Ugly American*. I know much of this history because, as the officer working on community morale, I heard lots of stories about the Hickersons. She was apparently determined that the embassy staff relate to the local community. For example, she forbade the continuation of our bowling league - because "it was an all-American activity." I kept the score for the league and therefore knew what transpired.

For the women's luncheon group, Mrs. Hickerson issued an edict that every attending American had to bring a Filipino guest. It had to be a different guest for most lunches. It got to the point that by the third lunch, most of the Filipino guests were maids, dressed up for the occasion. In local society, an American would either know a member of the upper class or her maid, and no one knew that many upper class Filipinos. The wives of senior officers had already brought wives of cabinet officers, so there weren't many more guests available.

At the first luncheon, Mrs. Hickerson gave a speech. Unfortunately, her dress was unbuttoned. In the tropics one could tell, because the pockets faced backwards instead of forwards, so that the buttons were on her back. Most of us were very busy wiping our mouths with napkins so that our amusement would not be too visible. The Hickersons' presence in Manila was a very sad, sad situation. It was really awful. Finally, the Department sent inspectors to review the situation, which resulted in the Hickersons' transfer. Finally! Their tour was a disaster.

Q: I assume that you, in the Personnel office, felt the impact of the ambassador and his wife more than most embassy members did.

RIDGWAY: That is right. I had a good view of the impact. For example, as I said, I kept the scores for the bowling league. That was to be disbanded. In fact, it wasn't; we just didn't announce the scores in the embassy newsletter. Staff was not about to give up bowling on their own time. For those women who had representational responsibilities, which in a typical embassy revolves around the ambassadorial residence, this period was just dreadful. I would hear the stories as did the secretaries. Almost all of the allegations would end up in my office sooner or later. I found the situation desperately sad. I think the point of view of the ambassador, which eventually filtered down to the staff, was that we were in Manila to "save our little brown brothers," which offended the Filipinos. The embassy situation deteriorated day after day; it was not a good time to be serving in Manila.

Q: Let's talk a little about a personnel officer in a huge embassy. What did you work on?

RIDGWAY: I was the third American officer in a three-person section. I had a number of assignments. For example, all new arrivals had to report to me on their first day. They would give me their leave cards. In the course of that first day, I would accompany the newcomer to their meetings with the security officer and then with the disbursing officer to get on the payroll. Then I would take them on a quick tour of the embassy: the coffee shop, the motor pool, etc. I introduced the newcomers to the staff with whom they would have to work and rely upon. Then I would help them fill out and file their travel vouchers, so that someone could figure out how much leave, if any, they had taken on their way to Manila. Those were the days when people would take a steamship line and take their time getting to posts.

We had many Americans assigned to Manila. They were assigned not only to the embassy, but also to a number of regional offices set up by Washington. As a result, I saw a lot of new people, month after month. I did some work for USIA, which had regional operations in Manila, which included the printing plant.

I put together the embassy's newsletter, which wasn't that much work. As I said, I kept the bowling scores. We had an orientation program, which we would run periodically. I would put that together, which meant getting speakers, showing the "March of Times" film on the destruction of Manila, and finding ways to fill the time productively.

I think we would describe the job today as a combination of community liaison, family, new arrivals, and morale officer.

Q: How was the morale? Did you have a number of people who were overseas for the first time and fish out of water?

RIDGWAY: I didn't encounter that problem. Those problems were left in the hands of the other two personnel officers. We had some people who had to be sent home. We had a big community in a steamy tropical outpost, so we had alcohol problems and relationship problems, such as liaisons and affairs. Those problems might have arisen even if the atmosphere had not been so steamy and the gin so cheap, but we sure had those issues.

My office was so remote that people found comfort in coming to it to talk about their romantic difficulties. If their personal problems had resulted in some official action, such as early transfers, that did not fall in my area and those people went to see other personnel officers.

The duties I have mentioned kept me occupied during my first year. I should note that when I was assigned to Manila, I was an FSO-8, a junior officer who was still on probation. After my initial assignment and before I arrived, the embassy's rotation program for junior officers was stopped, so the promise made to me that I would be part of a rotation program was never kept. As a result, in my second year, I remained in the personnel office. However, I moved up one step in the ladder and became the second officer in the section. I took on new somewhat more responsible duties of dealing primarily with local staff. That got me involved in some new areas, like the printing plant, etc. I became involved in keeping leave and pay records, getting orders to move people, and briefing and debriefing local staff. During that year I also conducted a local wage survey. I also employed local language teachers and kept track of their work. I worked with FSI to get the right teaching materials. We taught Tagalog primarily, but also gave courses in Spanish or French for those who needed another language to get off probation or for other reasons. Today, one would merge all of my duties under the term "human resources development".

Q: Did you have any questions about our local hire policies? Were they paid adequately? Were they treated well?

RIDGWAY: The ones I had contact with were treated wonderfully well. They had been in the embassy longer than anyone else. They knew what was going on. They valued their jobs, particularly in light of the conditions in the Philippines. Their jobs were worth something. I don't know that we paid them a lot, but we ran local wage surveys frequently to make sure that we were matching the salaries offered by Filipino enterprises. Our locals worked well. As is always the case, they were the mortar that kept the bricks together, so to speak.

Q: Was there a junior officers' group? Did you get to meet senior officers?

RIDGWAY: None of us were really treated as junior officers. The men may have met together; they were assigned to the substantive sections of the embassy. They probably met to discuss the issues of the day, but with the demise of the junior officer rotation program, we pretty much stuck to our own sections. Interestingly enough, there were no junior officers in the consular section when I first arrived. In my second year, one was assigned there. I don't know whether he was involved in a rotation program; he may have been. Once I left post, the rotation program may have been re-started.

Q: Did you feel isolated from the rest of the embassy?

RIDGWAY: I was isolated. But one has to do what one has to do. I worked with sympathetic people. I had my books. I lived in furnished government housing with a swimming pool, that, incidentally, I used. I dated, I danced - in fact, I had a wonderful time. So, although I might have expected something different, I adjusted to the cards I was dealt, and did the best I could with them.

Q: How was the leadership of the administrative section?

RIDGWAY: They were pompous. Incredibly pompous! It was the same situation that I had encountered at Montgomery Ward. The American staff were mostly women, except for the counselor for administration and his deputy, who were both male. That is the way it worked in those days. I think the women were very good. They were not responsible for what happened; they did their best to keep it from happening, but couldn't. When I returned to Washington, Evelyn Blue, who was one of the best, had replaced Bernie Witfield, the personnel officer for FE who had sent me to the Philippines. Both were great. Personnel then was better organized; the officers really knew their people. They did the best they could; they tried to be honest with their people in terms of what they could expect from the Service; they tried to be honest with the posts about whom they were sending out; they tried to do their best to see that both the talent and problem cases were spread out through the regions and not all sent to one or two posts. They would "talk turkey" with the officer, letting him or her know where they stood in terms of a future career. They didn't have to worry about being sued in those days.

When I returned from Manila, Evelyn and others in the personnel field tried their best to get me an assignment in a different field. That is when I went to Palermo as a visa officer. Otherwise, I would have been stuck in the personnel track. They were grateful that I had remained in personnel for my second year in Manila without raising a fuss. I could have raised a storm, we were now in the 1960s. For example, I remember the case of a Foreign Service Reserve officer who was assigned to Manila. She had joined the Service under the Wriston program, I think it was 1967, which had established a time limit for people to decide whether they wanted to join the Foreign Service and serve overseas or to remain in the Civil Service, which restricted their access to many jobs in Washington. This new officer was married and Washington decided to treat her as if she were a single officer, with no government payment for her husband's travel, no family allowances, etc. Married women were not supposed to be in the Foreign Service. The fact that she was married when she joined the Service under the Wriston program seems not have made an impact on the Department. That is an issue that we challenged Washington on from the embassy's personnel office. We finally prevailed, and that officer got housing suitable for a couple. After her tour in Manila, she joined the UN Commission on the Status of Women; you could hardly blame her after what the Department put her through.

I returned to Washington in 1961. The next year, I went to FSI for Italian language training. I had a chance to talk to Evelyn Blue and others. They knew about the Foreign Service officer case I just mentioned and were thankful that I had stayed on in my job for a second year without raising a fuss. As a result, they were very helpful in getting me the visa job in Palermo.

Q: When did you go to Palermo?

RIDGWAY: 1962. I stayed there for two years.

Q: Tell us a little about life in Palermo in the early 1960s?

RIDGWAY: It was terrific. I spent the first year as the immigration visa officer. In the second year, I concentrated on non-immigrant visas.

I managed to learn the Italian language quite well. The Sicilians will speak Italian, although they also use a dialect all of their own. Since Sicilian is mostly spoken on the islands, I didn't make much of an effort to learn it. In fact, one had to be careful in the usage of the Sicilian accent - a mushy southern accent. I remember checking into a hotel in Rome one time. I spoke to the clerk in Italian. When I gave him my identity card, he asked why, as an American, I spoke Italian with a Sicilian accent! So I switched to English for a while.

In Palermo I found the same syndrome I had found in other places: a wonderful, educated, long-suffering staff of Foreign Service nationals, who had to teach successive generations of young American officers the ins and outs of consular work.

Our quota was of course over-subscribed - 5,666 immigrant visas for all of Italy. I would guess that the waiting list probably had 500,000 people on it. It was tough! Every so often, Congress would pass a law allowing people, who had waited for extended periods, to enter the U.S. outside of the quota process. That had a mixed impact. In any case, I think the system in existence at that time was depressing to both the applicants and to the visa processors. I don't know if the present system is much of an improvement.

I must admit that in working on immigrant visa applications, I learnt a lot about the community I lived in. I got to know Sicily quite well. My language skills certainly improved, because Italian was the only language that I used in my work. I also learned how to work with another group of Foreign Service nationals.

As I said, in the second year in Palermo, I worked on non-immigrant visas, which were handled on the floor above the immigrant visa section. I used what I had learned about the island to establish the bona fides of an applicant. Lyndon Johnson was our president and the administration emphasized the need to increase the number of visitors to the U.S. We were under pressure to screen applicants as thoroughly as possible to eliminate as many of the "permanent" visitors (those who stayed in the U.S. after their visas had expired) while at the same time under pressure to reduce the number of refusals - entirely contradictory policies .

There were fourteen American officers and staff assigned to Palermo. Eleven of us were single. The ages of the singles ranged from 22 to 55. We all got along, although all eleven did not necessarily "chum" together. The older ladies had their own circle, and the younger ones had theirs. We all had cars; we all spoke Italian and made our own friends in the local community. We did a lot of traveling around Sicily and had a great time. Palermo was a great assignment. Palermo was just a nice post. I liked it very much.

Q: Who was the Consul General during your tour?

RIDGWAY: Loren Carrol. His deputy was Joe Wiedenmayer. Phil Damon headed the consular office. Mary Chiavarini headed the passport and citizen section. I still see her at the Washington opera. Betty Jane Jones, who was one of my colleagues, still lives in the Washington area. Another Jones, Elizabeth R., was the administrative assistant to Marion Quinnery. Both of them, as well as Phil, have passed on.

Q: Did you get any feeling for the political situation in Sicily?

RIDGWAY: It didn't take too long to see it. The political reporting was done by someone else in the Consulate General, mostly by the CG himself. We had an economic officer. The deputy CG usually had an economic-commercial background. We had two senior locals who worked on substantive reporting. One was Johnny Parlazono, who eventually married an American Foreign Service staff person, Mary Del Fleming. The other one concentrated on economic matters. Both of these locals had offices on the top floor.

We in the consular section became aware of the political realities in Sicily such as the roles of the Church, the Christian Democratic Party, and the Mafia, etc. through our contacts with the local population. It was clear from my work in the immigrant visa section that the Church was the center of political life, in the tradition of a 16th century society.

Q: Did you find the great discrepancy in wealth that you had witnessed in the Philippines?

RIDGWAY: No. The whole island was poor. It was a completely different situation. In the first place, you found some social and political coherence in Sicily. The Philippines, even today, with all of its islands and languages and ethnic divisions, does not have the coherence that you would find in Sicily. The Sicilians are mono-culture Europeans, not the mixture of Pan-Asians, Pacific islanders, and Spanish you will find in the Philippines. It is true that Sicily had been invaded over the centuries by most of the world's great civilizations. One could go from Syracuse and the Greeks, to Educe and the Normans. It was an island of history. It probably was stripped of all of its trees to build warships by all of the invaders. The temperature was steaming hot; it took the nap right off one's tongue. The Sicilians were a hardy lot; dark skinned, family oriented, with a very rigid code of behavior enforced by the Mafia and the Church.

Q: Did you run into any problems trying to puzzle out family relationships and feuds?

RIDGWAY: No really. For the most part, these family issues were unrelated to immigration issues. Our clients were mostly a mother, a father and dependent children (under 18). The sad story in that situation was often that the parents had waited so long for visas that the children had grown up and were over 18 and therefore not eligible for immigrant visas under their parents' quota number. We would have pathetic, wrenching scenes; all we could do was watch, because we had no way to avoid the family separations that we were causing.

Another issue that we faced stemmed from the refugee relief program, which had several years earlier allowed the issuance of certain categories of applicants above and beyond the quota. When the program was initiated in the 1950s, the Department sent a whole group of officers to the consulate to work exclusively on this refugee relief program. In Sicily we still had a number of people who had applied for visas under the refugee relief program, but who for one reason or another had been turned down. Those decisions may have been correct at the time they were made, but I spent a lot of time researching those cases, because we had requests to over-turn those decisions. For example, one might go to a small town in Sicily to find that the only playing field was owned by the Communists, and if you wanted to play soccer you had to join the Communist party. Those who did that were turned down by our officers as belonging to a Communist organization.

I well remember the one case that kept me busy fighting the bureaucracy. I finally won. It involved a sailor who had married an Italian woman in Naples. When they applied for a visa for her, the American officer discovered that in 1946 the lady had received from Florence a foglio di via (citation for suspected illicit activity). That was judged to have been an official citation for having received a payment for prostitution. I don't know whether it was or not. But I did know that for all of the years that this couple had been married she had stayed in Naples and he had stayed in the Navy. He got as many assignment as he could which would take him to, or base him in, Naples. This marriage had continued for many years. The basis for the citation was a matter of debate; it was not necessarily evidence of prostitution. I and others took on the case claiming that the original judgment had been erroneous, as there was not a scintilla of evidence of prostitution. Right after the war, cities all over Italy were pushing people out; if you didn't have a relation in the city who had been living in the city for decades, you were forced to leave. This woman might well have found herself in that position; she was living on her own. But in our mind, it was a leap to assume that she was a prostitute. We fought the original finding for a long time and finally won. We fought other cases where we were not so successful. I was proud of what we had done in the case of the sailor's wife.

We had a lot of similar issues. As I mentioned, our annual quota for immigrant visas for Italy was 5,666, with half a million applicants waiting for their number to come up. That put a lot pressure on the non-immigrant process; we had to be sure that the applicants were bona fide. Washington was pressuring us not to turn people down and not to hold family members hostage. So we were really in a bind.

Q: How often did you hear from Congressmen with Italian constituents?

RIDGWAY: Senator Keating was one of most avid correspondents. Then there were the people in the Buffalo area. We heard a lot from New Yorkers. All we could do was our best; we made sure that we kept full notes of our interviews and investigations. This was before the era of litigation. Today I think I would advise a consular officer not to keep any notes. Then, we kept thorough notes because we knew that when we turned an applicant down, it would soon be followed by a Congressional request for information. Of course, what a congressman heard from a constituent was not always what we had heard from or learned about the applicant. We had to be in a position to defend our decisions and that is where good notes became invaluable.

Every so often, we would take on a fight with Washington. Sometimes it became more work than it was worth and we would drop our appeal. In other cases, as I have illustrated, we kept at it until a decision in our favor was made.

Q: It seems that despite the pressures, you did communicate with applicants, unlike the situation in many of our visa mills today, where an officer, sitting behind a bullet-proof glass shield, has "30 seconds" to talk to the applicants and pass judgment.

RIDGWAY: We never had an atmosphere in our visa section such as what I have seen as I travel around the world today. On my last trip, I was in Lithuania, where I called on the embassy; our ambassador was John Tefft, who used to work for me. As I tried to enter the chancery, I had to navigate my way through long lines of visa applicants. We never had anything like that in Sicily, even in the days when the pressure was on.

Occasionally, a travel agent would come in with a large stack of applications from people who had seats on a chartered aircraft going to the U.S. We also got requests to rush applications through; although most of the travel agents knew what would pass muster and what was likely to be turned down. We always had time to review each application and pass judgment on it. In some cases, we would ask the applicant to come for an interview; in others, we just passed judgment from the written record. It was nothing like what I have witnessed in Mexico City or anywhere else in the world.

Q: Did the Mafia ever pose a threat?

RIDGWAY: The Mafia was really not a concern. My one experience with that group had to do with a young man whose visa I had refused. He was about 18 years old. After I refused the application, I got a call from someone who told me that the young man worked for the Archbishop of Palermo. I was pretty sure that despite his efforts to disguise his voice, the caller was the applicant himself. Then I got some threatening letters which were made to appear as if the writer was a member of the Mafia; it had caskets and crosses all over the page. That got ugly and continued over the New Year. Someone even shot a bullet through a window in my apartment. The word then got out that I was having some problems with this applicant. I received an invitation through a travel agent to go to the town of Corleone, where the Mafia leadership wanted to inform me that they had nothing to do with all the unpleasantness that I was encountering. So, on a Sunday afternoon, I went to Corleone and walked into a house off the main piazza. I had a disgusting drink there.

As I understood the Mafia rules at the time, they were not to mess with American consular officers. The Mafia didn't believe that we were really essential to their activities; if they wanted someone to enter the U.S., they had their own means, which did not include a U.S. consular officer. We assumed that a Mafia person just went from Palermo to Tunis, and then to Marseilles, and perhaps from Marseilles to Florida or New York. We never saw applicants that were deemed Mafia members. In the course of this incident, I was briefed by Mafia emissaries on life's realities. They said that they would insure that the young man would not bother me any longer. He didn't. He probably got to the States through the devious path I described earlier.

Q: Did you ever encounter any problems with the Mafia, such as payment of protection money, etc?

RIDGWAY: No. I lived in an apartment in the city. Some of my colleagues lived in nice homes by the sea and they had guards. It was clear to them that without guards they were likely to encounter problems. I didn't have to do that, although I did "lose" my car; that is, it was broken into on one occasion, and the radio and battery were taken by the thieves. As soon as those were replaced, the whole car was stolen. Three weeks later, the remnants, i.e., the chassis, were found. That is all there was - the barest remnants of a fully operating vehicle. It was found in a swamp outside of town. The insurance company insisted on taking these paltry remains and rebuilding the car. That was the only criminal problem I encountered.

Otherwise, we all faced the same difficulties. I still mention them when I talk to classes of Foreign Service officers. We would see the title to the same truck with a succession of people who came to us from the same town. They all would show us that title to prove that they had ties to Sicily and would therefore return after their visit to the U.S. This type of fraud popped up with other "evidence" of ties; they used the same title to a piece of land or a bank account, always with the same amount of money in it. We became quite familiar with these "communal" ownerships. We always had to face the question as to whether this questionable evidence was enough to warrant a refusal on "moral turpitude" grounds. I generally just smiled, handed the documents back to the applicant, and went on to the next case. We seldom received any complaints or inquiries when we refused visas to people who tried to get by with those games.

Q: My experience as a supervisory consular officer suggests that new Foreign Service officers take attempted fraud as a major sin, not recognizing that they are dealing with a foreign culture that views efforts to obtain a U.S. visa in a different light than they do.

RIDGWAY: One of the sad aspects of Sicily came to light after I left. It nevertheless was instructive for the rest of my career. Two of our Foreign Service nationals in the immigrant visa section were discovered to have been taking bribes over a period of years. They acted so consistently with the local culture that their malfeasance was not easy to detect. Applicants for immigrant visas received an invitation to come to the consular section for an interview. At the end of a working day, the American staff had a list of 80 immigrants who would be coming in the next day for their interviews. They were listed in the order of the date of their registration. The fraud worked like this: when they arrived the next day, the receptionist would "sell" them their place in line. Many of the applicants paid to be moved ahead in the schedule of interviews. In some cases, they paid for nothing because they were given the spot on the list which they had already been given by our system. At the end of the day, as the applicant paid for all the processing, x-rays, visas, etc., he or she was charged an extra sum for the "favor" received from the receptionist by the cashier. The receipt, of course, was only for the legitimate charges. No audit would have discovered this scheme, because the cash and the copy of the receipts were always in balance. The "extra" charge was a side deal with no record. It took us a long time to discover this scheme.

The CG was surprised at how smoothly this scheme had worked, given the mores of Sicilian society. No Sicilian was surprised. In the U.S., someone would have complained almost immediately - not in Sicily, as such schemes were part of their societal fabric. When I heard that, I realized - I still believe this today - that some of the most important questions to be asked, even in the corporate world, are about the process, the control points, and the checks and balances needed to minimize the potential of such "side" schemes being developed. I know that people will continue to try to beat the system, but it is important that any process have checks built in to it to minimize the potential for fraud.

Palermo was a wonderful assignment. When one knows the language, has a little more money than before, has a car - it was the first time I had had one since joining the Foreign Service - lives on the local economy with some personally acquired furniture, has Italian and American friends, has a job that was consuming although limited to roughly 40 hours per week, and lives in a place full of culture and sophistication, what more could anyone ask for? It was just wonderful.

Q: Did you run into any Italian-Americans who came to Sicily to find a bride?

RIDGWAY: No. It was the other way around. The potential brides used to come through the non-immigrant section trying to get a visa to the States, where they hoped to find a husband. We saw Italian Americans when we delivered Social Security checks or veterans' benefits. In many cases, these people were quite well to do. They had returned to Sicily with accumulated dollar savings, which they put into building traditional Sicilian homes up in the hills. They lived quite well. Many fell ill, and then were dumped into convent hospitals; we used to deliver their monthly Social Security checks there to allow the convents to support these patients. Some looked terrible, so it wasn't always clear what was happening to the money.

Q: Were you in Palermo when Kennedy was assassinated?

RIDGWAY: I was. I had been at an Italian movie, "Giant," with a friend. We turned on the radio in my car and heard about Kennedy dying. We thought it was the father who had had a stroke. When we realized it was John Kennedy, we headed for the CG, where other staff members were also congregating. Some hadn't heard. We headed for the home of the administrative officer, Marian Quinnery. We woke her up and suggested that she go to the CG with us to lay out plans for the ceremonies which were bound to follow, such as lowering the flag, how it was to be displayed (our flag pole not being able to fly a half-mast flag), and getting a condolence book. This all happened before we had satellite transmission, and before we could receive long-distance television. Maybe our people in Rome had access to some TV feeds, but once the films were shown in Rome and then sent to Sicily, the footage was barely discernable. Radio reception was terrible. So, we were really out of the news-loop, except for a few crackling news reports on TV.

The whole island of Sicily wept. Kennedy was their guy. We issued visas with his picture right behind us. Very often, while Kennedy was still alive, people would see that photograph and fall on their knees, and cross themselves. People saw the U.S. and John Kennedy as one and the same. Because of this 'reverence,' we had lines and lines of people waiting to sign the condolence books. We stood by the table and shook hands with all the visitors. We did this in shifts, which were long, since there were only 14 American staff members.

The Sicilians declared a holiday on the day of Kennedy's funeral. There was a huge parade down Palermo's main street. It was a very touching response from the Sicilians. For those who today say that it really doesn't matter what the world thinks of us, the fact of the matter is that then and now, the world looks at the U.S. for leadership and for a certain kind of public image. I was very touched by the Sicilian response in those few days. The local coffee shop sent coffee, biscottis, and other goodies to us to help us out while we greeted the mourners.

Q: You transferred from Palermo in 1964. What happened then?

RIDGWAY: It is a long story, which starts with my assignment, for the first time, to a substantive position as political officer in The Hague. On the day I left Palermo for home leave and transfer to the Netherlands, just as I was boarding the airplane, Alitalia workers went on strike. I was forced to return to Palermo; I stayed with B.J. Jones, who was the head of the consular section at the time. While I was at her apartment, BJ called me from the CG to tell me that she had just a call from the Department who wanted to tell me that my orders had been changed from "home leave and transfer" to "direct transfer" to The Hague. BJ wanted to know what to tell the Department. For reasons that I can't explain, I suggested that the Department be told that I had already left.

The next day, I went out to the airport, left Italy and flew to Minnesota. It was important for me to get home; I was very much a home-body in any case. In St. Paul, I got a call from the Department saying that since I had already started my home leave, they canceled my assignment as political officer in The Hague. I don't recall being disappointed; in fact, I may well have thought that the trade off, being home, was worth the cancellation. I had lost my father in 1962, and my mother was a widow. I hadn't been home in a longtime and I wanted to be there.

I spent some of 1964 in Minnesota, using a lot of accumulated leave. I rented a car; the weather was great and I had a good time. One day, I got a letter from George Vest, then the chief of the NATO Political Affairs office (EUR/RPM). He welcomed me to his staff; I had apparently been assigned as political officer to his office. That way, I became a political officer working on NATO matters. I learned later that George had reviewed about 12 files - every one male but mine. I was very pleased that he saw something in my file which made him select me. My career to that date covered a lot of different activities, but certainly nothing on NATO or political affairs in general. He saw something which led him to believe that I had a future in political affairs. Fortunately, he was right, as my career thereafter illustrates. George personally selected me for the NATO assignment.

I spent the next three years, until 1967, in EUR/RPM. It was then a very powerful office. There were 25 or 26 officers in that office; all eventually became ambassadors. Many became assistant secretaries. David Aaron became the deputy national security advisor to the president. It was a group of very talented people; I learned a lot - and I mean a lot - from them.

I would like to digress at this time for a minute. I had to learn a lot when I joined the staff. I started just when the NATO Secretary General, Manlio Brosio, was visiting Washington. I was given all of the memoranda of conversations and asked to summarize the essence in an airgram to our European posts. All the issues that were discussed were totally foreign to me, including European participation in NATO nuclear affairs. I generally managed to screw up the airgram. People like Ron Spiers, David Popper and George Vest had to help me to edit it, to ensure that the report reflected what had been discussed and concluded. I didn't have a clue what I was writing about and obviously missed all the subtleties.

One Sunday, when I was working on this airgram, I was sitting in an outer office in EUR; it was very quiet. Then a couple of fellows in rough clothes came in, holding a blueprint. They asked what I was doing in this office. I said that this was my office, which I shared at the time with John. One of the fellows said that according to the blueprint he had, I was sitting in an elevator shaft. I said that that could well be as it was far removed from the main corridor, backing up on a bank of elevators serving what I now know to be corridors 2 and 5. I said that whatever the blueprint shows, John and I were now sharing this space as our offices. The men left.

I should mention that this was a period when some women, who had not been selected by someone like George Vest, began to seek legal remedies against the Department's sex discrimination. One of the issues concerned waste baskets; these women claimed that they didn't have the right kind of baskets for people of their rank. They claimed that they weren't treated properly; they didn't have offices comparable to those occupied by males of equivalent rank; etc. To this day, people ask why I didn't join other women in this legal action against the Department. My first seven years in the Service were highlighted by marginal assignments and were very slow for someone aspiring to a career in a substantive field. I can't explain my attitude very well. I wasn't raised in a family which drew any gender distinctions; if I had said that I wanted to be a fireman, they would have said, "Fine. Go to it," so I didn't have the frustrations that many women in the Department apparently had. It never occurred to me that junior officers would not sit in an elevator shaft, working on a Sunday on an airgram concerning a subject they knew nothing about, so I never joined the Alison Palmer legal suit. Later, in the 1970s, when all of these things matured, I formally opted out of all of the women's class-action suits. From that point on, I think I was viewed as generally unsympathetic to the alleged "women's struggles in the Department." I wasn't unsympathetic, but I just didn't get it. I didn't see the world as some of my "sisters" did. I didn't have the resentment that they had about some of the things that had happened. I had had a good time in my service, so I was just not on the same wave length as some of my "sisters."

I also often tell another story. I used this one when the American Academy of Diplomacy gave me an award, with Dave Popper present. I mentioned the struggle I had had to get out that first airgram. That was the beginning of my understanding of nuance, even though I was totally bewildered, then and now, by people who thought that Europeans would accept a sense of participation in lieu of actual participation in making NATO nuclear policy. George Vest would wink at me when we came to the subject, because that was the name of the whole game - to substitute "a sense of participation" for actual and meaningful participation. That never really worked, as shown by the work we did on the multi-lateral forces.

There was another document written by RPM, a very famous newsletter that went out to all the American embassy political counselors in NATO countries. During my first November in RPM, I was asked to make a contribution. I was working on a NATO parliamentary conference at the time. It was suggested that I write a short piece on this upcoming conference, which I did. I sent it in to David Popper. He asked me to come to see him. He told me that what I had written was not the kind of writing that RPM produced. I should note that all the senior officers were exquisite writers. David said that I was telling readers things that they already knew. RPM's job was to bring new material to its newsletter readers. He suggested that I take my draft back and pretend that I was an outsider looking in on RPM, or that I was on top looking down. From these points of view, I would be looking for trends and themes and insights that give the reader more knowledge than the fellow sitting next to him.

I took my draft back and re-wrote it trying to keep Popper's injunctions in mind. That version was accepted and was included in the newsletter. After that, I tried to make this way of handling the efforts of junior officers a habit in dealing with junior officers working for me. I would not reject their drafts without suggesting improvements or would not sign the paper while noting somehow that the author didn't know how to write. I would call the author to my office to explain where improvements could and must be made, so that his or her memorandum would have an impact on the addressee. I have never forgotten the extent to which a group of guys - I was the only woman on the RPM staff - took time, not only with me, but with other junior officers as well. They helped us to pick up communication skills, which are so vitally important to a diplomat. I followed their example in all my future assignments. I have heard stories, as most of us have, of ambassadors and other senior officers, who took full credit for pieces written for them by their subordinates and where they may have changed only a word or two. They didn't find a way, or perhaps ever try to find ways to push their junior officers forward. The most famous practitioner of this art was Ronald Reagan, who would never take credit for a piece even with his name on it; he wanted the author to get full credit. I was fortunate to work with a group of people who practiced "give credit where credit is due." It was a great lesson to learn!

I have another story related to the general issue of the status of women. In about 1966, I was about to be assigned to our embassy in Oslo, Norway as special assistant to Ambassador Margaret Tibbetts. In 1964, Carol Laise and Tibbetts became the two women who were nominated for ambassadorial positions. They were the first since 1953, when Frances Willis was appointed as an ambassador - Laise to Nepal and Tibbetts to Norway.

Tibbetts objected to my assignment. She called me and gave me her reason. She said that she wanted me to hear from her personally regarding the reason for her objection. She said that we had to be very careful because the Department might well have looked at her assignment and decided to load up her staff with female officers, thinking "they would all be comfortable together". She thought that my assignment would not be in my best interest as a career enhancement. As it turned out, she really didn't need a special assistant.

I had some very fascinating times in EUR/RPM, learning how to write, to think, to understand NATO, etc. I traveled to Europe with some CODELs (Congressional Delegations). Those three years in RPM really expanded my horizons and my professional skills. In 1967, I was assigned to Norway as a political officer. Tibby welcomed me in that position.

Q: Tell us a little about the NATO issues you had to deal with in RPM.

RIDGWAY: Looking back on those days, I am just as bewildered now as I was as a new officer. We faced two major issues. The first was the tensions between the U.S. and France with the de Gaulle decision, reached in 1966-67, to take France out of NATO. I was in RPM when the official notice of France's decision to withdraw from the military side of the alliance was delivered. We had already begun consultations on what the rest of alliances would do if France withdrew.

The other issue dealt with the alliance's nuclear policy. If we were going to have a "flexible response" to replace "massive retaliation," choice would have to be made between a conventional or a nuclear response to a Soviet attack, and if nuclear, then at what level? - from battlefield nuclear weapons up to strategic weapons. Some of the targets for retaliation were likely to be in Europe. The Germans and the British were quite anxious about that possibility. The British had nuclear weapons; we were trying to develop a nuclear use doctrine that incorporated their arsenal. In that case, they wanted to be at the table as dogma and plans were being developed. The Germans could see that their territory would be fair game, particularly for tactical nuclear weapons; that scenario suggested that they too should be at the table as plans were being developed.

As a result, McNamara's defense department had to face the issues of how the U.S. would accommodate the demands of the allies without making their role decisive, and how many of the allies should participate in the development of nuclear strategies and roles. There was a feeling that the development of nuclear policy and doctrine was very complicated. In fact, during these years, that issue became an academic industry. There was a feeling that it would be useful to the U.S. to have a cadre of people in the defense and foreign affairs departments of some of our NATO allies, who understood the issues and could explain the rationale for the decisions taken. The trick was to educate this cadre without letting it in on the decision-making. This dilemma eventually led to the establishment of the "Nuclear Policy Group," which consisted of the U.S., Great Britain, and on a rotating basis, three other countries, later decreased to two. In order to insure that the table wouldn't accommodate any more participants, the Pentagon actually had a table built. It had a hinge in the middle and when the "Nuclear Policy Group" had a meeting, they would fold the table, take it to the meeting site and set it up. It only had room for the originally approved membership of five countries. So the development of and participation in a nuclear-weapon-use doctrine was an issue.

There was also a question of whether an understanding of the issue of the use of nuclear weapons could be expanded, and whether countries could develop a feeling of participation in the decision-making process by the creation of a "multi-lateral force." That was under discussion when I joined RPM and was still under discussion when I left. The "multi-lateral force" in fact was one ship, the Claude V. Ricketts (DDG-5), a vessel that carried nuclear devices and had launching capacities. It was to be manned by a multi-national crew, including the Germans. That was supposed to provide these countries with a sense that they had a finger on the nuclear trigger. The concept was that training on both operations and the decision-making process leading to the use of the weapons would be started on this ship. I didn't think that this ploy would make the Germans feel more comfortable with the whole issue. The "multi-lateral force" concept disappeared over time, as the U.S.'s and Great Britain's cooperation on nuclear issues deepened and as the French developed their own independent nuclear force, even if there was some cooperation between the three countries on target selection.

I think the educational benefit was the main result of this attempt to find a means to cooperate without weakening U.S. decision-making capacity. What was never resolved was the issue related to the fact that the potential use of tactical nuclear weapons implied their use on some European targets. There was no way of escaping that possibility. That issue was left unresolved until the end of the Cold War. Every time there was a military exercise or high level war games by the allies, the Germans would usually stop the games just as the issue of the use of those weapons on European soil would arise. It was a tough issue.

Q: It was a subject that you became involved in again later in your career. During your RPM tour, did you become involved in any of the discussions that people in think-tanks were undertaking?

RIDGWAY: No. The Department under Dean Rusk kept its distance from these discussions. The secretary said that he was not going to become involved in playing games, i.e., participate in discussions on the consequences of a nuclear exchange. He viewed some of the discussions to be so far out that he just would not get involved. He thought that any consideration of a nuclear exchange was just unacceptable. He was more interested in finding ways to avoid any possibility of even contemplating such a fate. He would not engage in a discussion of "first use" or "retaliatory use." His focus was on preventing such possibilities from ever arising. The Pentagon did play some of those games, but I think, as the numbers of potential casualties increased, it too saw the folly of pursuing such scenarios. The Pentagon played with these scenarios because it had "first use" weapons and "second use" weapons and had to be concerned with the protection of their retaliatory weapons and with other military dogma issues. All of these issues were fodder for the think-tanks; they wrote a lot of papers on these various matters and their writings became denser and denser. I found myself on the fringes of these discussions.

I was more involved in analyzing the political impact of the French withdrawal from NATO and in looking for new tasks for the alliance. I was in RPM when the "Committee on the Challenge of Modern Society" was created. Over time, these efforts became quite rewarding, even if at the time they were seen more, in political terms, as a way of avoiding the impact of the French withdrawal. There was a myriad of NATO committees. There was one called CICR, which met every week. I had the task of back-stopping our representative on that group. Then there were regional expert meetings, which also required work on my part. My job was to get information to our representatives, usually a regional assistant secretary or the head of INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research). After the meeting I would take the reports and make sure they were distributed to all relevant parties in the U.S. government. In some respects, that was a collection and distribution function, which didn't require much substantive knowledge. The major issues were handled by people like David Popper and Ron Spiers, who had a tremendous background on atomic and nuclear issues.

Q: Let's talk a little more about the French issue. I realize that you were the junior and the newest member of RPM, but what were your and RPM's reactions to de Gaulle's withdrawal?

RIDGWAY: I actually had left RPM by the time the withdrawal took place. The last French action took place in 1968, by which time I had moved on. I do remember that a group of "three wise men," Charles Bohlen, Dean Acheson, and John McCloy, was put together to advise us on a reasoned and careful response to the French action. Bohlen had been our ambassador to France, McCloy was the "father" of the NATO alliance and of our relationship with Europe, and Dean Acheson had been secretary of state and was a well known and respected lawyer-diplomat. These were the best!

The atmosphere at the time was very anti-French, like today when we have "Freedom Fries" and "Freedom Toast." The EUR front office had a number of experts in the NATO field, such as Walt Stoessel, Bob Schaetzel, and Dick Davies. They were very thoughtful people. They assigned their staff aide to organizing and supporting the group of "three wise men." That aide happened to be Larry Eagleburger. That was a real boost for his career, from staff aide to manager and perhaps eventually a participant and note-taker for a very prestigious group of foreign policy experts.

As I said, when the actual withdrawal took place, I was gone, but I think that there was a sense in RPM that the NATO alliance still had a mission. The French absence from the military alliance was perhaps even welcomed by some. They were always troublesome, always yelling about command assignments and who was in charge, etc. The French continued to participate in the political council, but they just couldn't vote on major issues, and on ministerial level decisions. I think the focus was more on how the alliance would move forward in light of the French decision. There were also questions about the new location of the NATO headquarters, which had been in Paris. The Belgians stepped up and offered us temporary locations until a new headquarters could be built.

Every effort was made to minimize whatever damage the French withdrawal might have caused. The dialogue on political issues continued. The French still had not rejoined the military alliance when, later on, I became the assistant secretary. I did find, though, that they did participate in the groups dealing with Berlin. They belonged to a quadripartite group used to discuss various political issues. The ties to the French were maintained. We had high level meetings with them. Eventually, we just accepted the fact that de Gaulle was de Gaulle. We finally accepted that the French would view the world through their own prisms, which may be quite different from those of other nations.

Q: During the 1964-67 period, did our commitment in Vietnam intrude very much into your activities?

RIDGWAY: The Department had a terrible personnel policy. If you were assigned to Vietnam and didn't want to go, you had to find someone who would take your place. The CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support) program was a major consumer of junior officers. Firstly, Vietnam personnel requirements required the Department to engage in massive recruiting; secondly, it stepped up the promotion rates, which had an impact on personnel in the 1970's, and thirdly, the Department assigned people from all regions and skills to Vietnam. This had a major impact on all junior officers, who continually wondered when their number would be called.

On the substantive side, we kept trying to get NATO to contribute to our Vietnam efforts. This went beyond just military requirements. We might encourage the Europeans to provide a civilian hospital or something like that. For the most part, NATO countries were desperate to accommodate American needs, while remaining consistent with the views of their domestic constituents who mostly opposed our efforts in Vietnam. When I got to Norway in 1967, I found that they had their own way of dealing with this challenge.

Much of the political consultation within NATO at the time, focused on Vietnam, including discussions about "domino theories" and other American pet views. However, by the late 1960's, Vietnam had not yet reached the crisis point.

Q: Within EUR, what was the view on Robert McNamara?

RIDGWAY: He was viewed as a little wild. This was the era during which we were introduced to systems analysis. I think even today, people who use system analysis are seen as people who use "hard" data, while Foreign Service officers work with "soft" data. I think at the time, this distinction was probably even starker, because system analysis was a new discipline stemming from the private industrial sector, academia, and the advent of computers. We have come a long way since then. I think people would probably laugh at the methodology used then.

The Pentagon had moved to what was called "program budgeting" and "zero-based budgeting." This was a new world for the State Department. We didn't understand it at all. I think these Pentagon innovations caused an intellectual divide between it and State. I should note, however, that on NATO matters, the two departments viewed each other's experts with respect; we may not have shared the same view and conclusions, but we listen closely to what each of us had to say. This was before the Defense Department established a huge bureaucracy to handle international affairs, which is headed by an undersecretary, and which now thinks it is the State Department. At the time, all NATO issues were dealt with by a small office headed by an assistant secretary for international affairs (ISA). Usually, the assistant secretaries came out of a well-recognized community of defense thinkers. I work with one now: David McAuliffe. At the time, people on both sides of the river engaged in NATO issues got along. I remember that there was a colonel in the ISA whom I used to have to call to get Defense clearance on my weekly messages to various NATO committees. His name was George Seignious, he later became quite well known as was a Lieutenant General. In fact, I replaced George as president of the Atlantic Council many years later. The working relationship between the Pentagon and State in the late 1960's was a congenial one which worked smoothly, even while the Pentagon was undergoing major changes and turning into a high tech bureaucracy. State was far behind; it never caught up.

Q: Even though you were the junior on the staff, did you pick up any vibes about Dean Rusk's preoccupation with Vietnam and the Middle East, leaving NATO and European affairs in the hands of Undersecretary George Ball?

RIDGWAY: George Ball was as deeply involved in the Vietnam issue as he was in the Middle East, so I can't really answer your question. I recall one year when a Congressional delegation headed to Paris for an annual NATO parliamentary conference. Senator Javits came to the Department to talk to Dean Rusk about NATO and current issues in the alliance. The secretary certainly met with the senator, even though they were from different political parties. That sort of bipartisanship does not necessarily exist today.

I always thought that, in many respects, Secretary Rusk may have had greater confidence in the way European relationships were being managed than were Vietnam issues. That may have led him to concentrate more on the latter and on Asia in general. I think the secretary had his priorities correct.

Dean Rusk was a very genial person. I have warm memories of a secretary who had no reasons to include me in meetings in his office, who had no reason to read my briefing papers or to learn my name, and who had no reason to wish me well as I joined the CODEL going to the NATO parliamentary meeting. He did all those things, so I have very warm memories of Dean Rusk. He was a real gentleman. Years later, when he was teaching international relations at the University of Georgia, and advising the law school on international law, he called me. I was then either an assistant secretary or heading the U.S. involvement in fisheries and oceanic affairs. He said he was a voice from the past calling because he knew that I had had an interesting career. He said some of his students were in the Washington area and would be interested in some of the issues that I had been involved in. He asked whether I would be willing to speak with to. He was actually calling to make an appointment for his students! I thought that was terrific and, of course I was glad to spend some time with them.

Q: Tell us a little more about your experiences with that CODEL.

RIDGWAY: One word: disgusting! In the delegation was Wayne Hays, with his "secretary," Patricia Peak. He would attend a NATO meeting and then the two of them went to the "Crazy Horse" saloon, where the entertainment was primarily scantily-dressed girls. This was still an eye opener in the 1960's, even though today it might well be seen in many cities in the States - all, of course, on U.S. taxpayer's money. I could not believe it. The issues discussed in the conference were handled in a very superficial way. I don't think a CODEL would behave the same way today in similar circumstances, it would show up in the media immediately. However, in the 1960's this kind of behavior was not unusual. Later, when I was in Norway, some of the participants in NATO parliamentary conferences would come to see me. I put a serious work program together for them, but I refused to be their control officer; I had "been there and done that." One of my colleagues became the control officer. He had to tell one of the members of Congress in the middle of the night that he would not give forth. That is what went on those days, and all Foreign Service officers knew it.

Q: In 1967 you went to Oslo as a political officer. What were the state of relations at the time?

RIDGWAY: They were very good. Norway was facing a couple of issues. In 1968, Norway had to hold a plebiscite on whether to continue its membership in NATO. The outcome, of course, was of concern to the government and our embassy. The Vietnam War led down all sorts of strange paths. There was one school of thought that kept pushing something called "participatory democracy," something akin to what we might see today in California. While in California, the push comes largely from the right; in Norway it came from the far left from the People's Socialist Party and particularly from a couple of its more strident members. While the younger Norway generation was certainly anti-Vietnam War, Vietnam troubled all Norwegians. These groups kept urging: "NATO out of Norway and Norway out of NATO." The judgment we had to reach was an estimate of the impact this political drive would have on the plebiscite.

We had a stake in Norway, beyond just an alliance and the desire for close relations. We had major NATO headquarters in Norway, and it was an important military member of NATO. When I reached Oslo, the government was a coalition - an unusual circumstance given that for most of the post-war era the government had been run by Social Democrats or Labor. However, over time the Norwegians did what they could as good NATO partners to provide advice on economic assistance issues.

Another issue arose at about this time, which was just as important to the alliance and to the Scandinavians, which was the coup in Greece in 1967, when the "Colonels" took over the government, tossing out the King and becoming "rulers" themselves. The U.S. recognized the new government and dealt with it much to the displeasure of the Scandinavians. They wanted to bring the "Colonels" up before the European Human Rights Tribunal and other international bodies, which might expose this most undemocratic approach to governmental change. Our position, and that of the Greeks, became quite "dicey" in Scandinavia. When added to our position in Vietnam, it made us very unpopular in that part of the world.

In Sweden, we had a series of political ambassadors. In 1967, it was William Heath, who was followed in 1969 by Jerome Holland, a very distinguished African American who was something like Paul Robeson - athlete, intellectual, scholar, and accomplished business man. Young Swedish people would chase Holland all over Stockholm berating and hassling him, until he left in 1972. Today, we might have closed the embassy, viewing the protests as close to terrorism. From our Oslo perch, we could see the smug Swedish society chasing a prominent African American all over their country; it was just awful.

Norway was never that bad. We took a very low key approach on Vietnam. We didn't do a lot of public speaking. In time, the Norwegians, through their ambassador in Beijing, tried to bring the U.S. and North Vietnam together in dialogues, which were an adjunct to the Paris negotiations that were being conducted at the time. We had a part of the American delegation come from Paris to meet with several Norwegians who were meeting with some North Vietnamese. The Norwegians were playing the role of intermediary; that is the role they thought they could best play to resolve the Vietnam issue.

It was a difficult time for a Foreign Service officer. I can remember walking to the Foreign Ministry in the winter in early 1968 to give out material trumpeting that the Tet offensive had been a great victory for the United States. My Norwegian interlocutor, who went on to have a very distinguished career in his foreign service as ambassador to Washington and later ambassador to the UN, agreed that I could just put these handouts on the corner of his desk and report back to the embassy that I had delivered the message to the foreign office. Whatever happened to all the handouts, I don't have the slightest idea; but, it showed how desperate our propaganda efforts had become. We and our hosts could not miss the impact of Vietnam on our society; we were being torn up by this issue.

I traveled a lot in Norway as it was preparing for the fall 1968 plebiscite. There was also the beginning inkling of a potential referendum on whether Norway would join the European Community. This was a bipartisan debate; the affirmative was supported by the conservative coalition government as well as by the Norwegian Labor party. Knut Frydenlund was sort of a shadow foreign minister, and he and I worked closely putting together material supporting Norway's participation in the Community. He also worked closely with Ambassador Tibbetts as well. We met often with Labor people, because they were the largest party and had the best chance of attracting the broader spectrum of Norwegians. In the center and on the right of the political spectrum, you had a lot religious parties, which were not really interested in the issue.

I traveled frequently; the ambassador was very generous allotting travel money for the junior staff. If I wanted to entertain, I had access to some representation money; that also provided me with more senior role models who taught me many valuable lessons. I met with newspaper editors. I spoke in schools and on military bases. My topic was usually NATO. In 1967 the Norwegians voted to remain in NATO, and in 1970, they voted against joining the European Community (later Union), a position they still hold today.

Along the way, I established my credentials with the Norwegian Labor party and the likes of Gro Harlem Brundtland, Knut Frydenlund and Thorvald Stoltenberg, people who in the later years took over the Norwegian government and with whom I stayed in touch with them, even through my later assignments.

In 1968, we had to suffer through what was a unique experience for Foreign Service officers. Here we were overseas representing our country, while the local and the American media ran continuous shots of Washington burning. First, we had the Martin Luther King assassination, which was followed by the riots in the streets of our nation's capital. Then, I flew home in May 1968 to attend my older brother's funeral. As I was embarking on my flight back to Oslo, I learned that Bobby Kennedy had won the California primary; when I landed in Oslo, I was greeted with the news that Bobby Kennedy had been killed. Then came Kent State with pictures of young students lying dead, shot by National guardsmen.

When in May 1969 I was asked whether I wanted to return to Oslo for another two-year tour, after home leave, or to extend my current assignment for an extra year to June 1970, I chose the latter. I really had done all I could in Norway. I was the third of three political officers; it was not that busy a post, nor could I have learned much more. Three years was just about right for that kind of an assignment. Also Ambassador Tibbetts had left after Nixon's election and was replaced by a political ambassador, who had a different view of how an embassy should be run.

I returned to Washington in June, 1970. At that point, I got a call from Joan Clark. She told me that there were no positions available at my grade level in EUR. I think Joan was the deputy executive director of the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs (ARA) at the time. On the basis of Ambassador Tibbetts' recommendation, she said she was prepared to offer me an assignment as the Ecuador desk officer. I was over-grade for it. ARA was certainly not my "home," as I had mostly been in EUR thus far in my career. Joan thought I would find it interesting, so I decided to accept it. In September of that year, I became the Ecuador desk officer.

Q: Before we pursue that new assignment, let me ask you how the embassy in Oslo viewed the Soviet Union.

RIDGWAY: I did not get involved in any discussions on that issue. I didn't see much reporting about Norway and the USSR. Norway had no affection for the Soviet Union. Even if the younger generation was pushing for Norway's withdrawal from NATO, there was no support for a closer relationship with the USSR. I don't think the Norway-USSR relationship was much of an issue.

There was a lot of close military cooperation between NATO and Norway such as military exercises, a large MAAG (Military Assistance Advisory Group) complement in Oslo, headed by a two-star Air Force general, Gus Taute. One of the issues that we had to deal with was President Kennedy's letter putting to bed any questions about who was in charge of American representation in Norway. CINCEUR (Commander in Chief, European Command), who was in charge of American troops in Europe, considered the MAAG to be part of his command. We kept telling General Taute, and other military officers, that MAAG was not an operational military command and therefore its activities came under the jurisdiction of the American ambassador. Kennedy's letter helped straighten that problem out.

But it was not beyond the MAAG to try to avoid the embassy's supervision, sometimes going off on their own tangent, probably with the blessing of CINCEUR. For example, in September 1969, the Norwegians were going to hold an election a couple of months later. Unbeknownst to the embassy, General Taute and his staff had given approval to a U.S. military exercise, which involved U.S. paratroopers jumping into Norway at about this time. After it happened, there were pictures on the front pages of Norwegian newspapers of U.S. troopers floating down onto Norway. Then came the hunt for who had authorized this ill-timed exercise, and it turned out to be the MAAG. The general's view that this was strictly a military operational issue just didn't wash and he was told that. The tug of war between the MAAGs and the embassies raged across many countries in Europe and created a lot of tension before it was finally settled.

While I was in Norway, I don't remember seeing any analyses by our political section on what the Soviets were up to in the country or what the Norwegian views were on Soviet foreign policy. I think the Soviet threat was primarily seen as an issue for NATO. NATO had listening posts on the North Sea that were run by the Norwegians.

In any case, any effort by the Soviets to establish closer relations with Norway, if indeed that was their goal, was certainly derailed by the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968. When Soviet troops invaded Prague, there was a much stronger reaction from the Norwegians than they had displayed when they faced the issue of NATO membership. The Norwegian population was furious at the Soviets. The USSR embassy was just down the street from where I lived, and I watched thousands of Norwegians streaming down the street to the Soviet chancery to protest the Prague invasion.

If there was a Norwegian communist party, it was minuscule. The far left was represented by the Socialist People's Party, which some may well have considered communist. It could have been, in light of much of the fuzzy thinking that was so prevalent in the late 1960's. However, I am sure that there was intensive cooperation between us and the Norwegians, through NATO and the military commands. But I was not privy to that information.

Q: What was the Norwegian attitude toward the West Germans in light of their experiences with the Nazis before and during WWII?

RIDGWAY: What I noticed the most was the West Germans' acquisition of sea-front property in Norway, just as they had done in Spain. These were second homes for the Germans. Soon, the Norwegians passed a law that prevented further sales of coastal property to Germans. For example, the Germans had bought up a lot of property around Trondheim, which, incidentally, they had burned to the ground during WWII. That did not make them very popular with the Norwegians. So there was some tension.

Q: Was there a societal split between generations in Norway, as there was in France and in the U.S.?

RIDGWAY: No, they didn't have anything like that in Norway, the society remained fairly traditional. There were first-time voters, who voted either far right or far left. By the time they voted the second time, they tended to move toward the center. The young conservatives were conservative, not reactionary, and the Labor Party supporters became young social-democrats. One did not find many extremes in Norway, except perhaps among college kids, who, after graduation, joined the mainstream.

Q: Why did Norwegians object to membership in the European community?

RIDGWAY: You must remember that there were only about four million Norwegians. They had their own oil supply. They didn't need the Common Market for their economic well-being as they were doing very well on their own. Europe was probably too sophisticated for the Norwegian religious community which was a "Bible belt." Prime ministers were members of the Christian Democratic Party - until just a few months ago, anyway. Until recently, Kjell Magne Bondevik was the prime minister; he was a vigorous political leader of the Christian Democrats when I was in Oslo. That party is particularly strong in the south of Norway.

There really was no great need for Norway to join the European Community. It is difficult to explain Norway to people who do not live there. For example, it took 18 months after my arrival before a Norwegian invited me to his home to repay a hospitality that I had extended earlier. I did invite Norwegians to my home - people of equivalent age and rank in the Labor and Christian Democratic parties or in the media or academia or in the foreign ministry. I just tried to become acquainted with a broad spectrum of Norwegians of my age. As I said, 18 months passed before anyone reciprocated my efforts. I think, because of this Norwegian attitude, Oslo was a difficult assignment for a lot of Americans - single or married.

You have to accept that the Norwegians are geographically quite isolated. Many live in fjords remote from contact with the larger world, even people living in the next fjord. That makes them somewhat suspicious of strangers. It therefore takes time for Norwegians to take your measure, and to come to trust you, a stranger. But, once a Norwegian reaches a decision that he would like to become friendly with you, he or she becomes fast friends and they truly become a wonderful friend. They are unassuming, plain people - well cultured and educated. In light of their personal approach, they tend to see people from the European continent as opposites to themselves: as arrogant people, who are full of themselves and hardly plain. Norway knew that it didn't need Europe for economic or even political support; there was no compelling reason for them to join the Community and put up with all those people in Europe who were so unlike themselves.

Q: Was Sweden a factor while you were in Norway?

RIDGWAY: No. The Norwegian view of Sweden at the time had been forged by WWII. The Swedes had supported Nazi Germany, even while officially keeping a "neutral" stance and the Norwegians had been cut off by the Swedes. There were still some tensions between the two countries. When the Norwegians bought some armored vehicles from Volvo, I think, they also ordered three years of spare parts. This was to guard against any possibility of the Swedes stopping supplying these parts. The Norwegians were suspicious. On the other hand, both countries were monarchies, I would not say that the relations between the two were close. They get along, but I would not categorize the relationship as warm or even friendly.

Q: After Oslo, you went to work in Washington as the Ecuador desk officer, a country named after the equator. You went from the Arctic Circle to the equator. You worked on Ecuador from 1970 to 1972?

RIDGWAY: That is correct. Then from 1972 to 1973, I was the deputy director of the Office of Policy Plans and Programs for ARA. As I mentioned earlier, the Pentagon had devised "systems analysis", "zero-based budgeting" and "management by objective." Some of these new management techniques filtered over to the State Department and that is I think why ARA conceived of this new Office of Policy Plans and Programs. You have to remember that ARA was the bureau that had come the closest to integrating AID (Agency for International Development) personnel with State staff. We were "back to back" with AID, and we had some control over AID funds. In fact, I think that the official title for the bureau was ARA/LA, one being the State designation and the other the AID name.

When I got to the Ecuador desk, I found that the office adjoining mine was Ken Milow who was the AID desk officer. When he went on leave, I took care of his AID responsibilities and vice-versa when I went on leave.

Q: Let's first talk about the bureau. You had come from EUR. Did you find any "cultural" differences between the two bureaus?

RIDGWAY: I think it was at this stage that I formed my views about what skills were necessary to be successful in real foreign policy, including in the process of making it. ARA was at the time headed by Charles Meyer. He had been at Sears before becoming assistant secretary. His two deputies were John Crimmins and Bob Hurwitch, both career officers. My office covered Andean affairs - Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Columbia and Bolivia. It was headed by John Fischer. His deputy was Bill Steadman.

In 1970, this office faced some major issues. When I arrived, Ecuador was toward the bottom of the office's concern. Chile was the major problem, i.e., Salvador Allende, and the upcoming elections. I reported to the office after taking some leave. I was briefed on Ecuadorian issues by my predecessor. One was Gulf Oil's investment in a pipeline that traversed Ecuador. Another looming problem was that the American tuna industry was about to begin a new fishing season. Every year since 1948, when Ecuador proclaimed a 200 mile territorial sea area, there was a collision between our fishermen from San Diego and the Ecuadorian authorities over fishing rights in this 200 mile zone. Every year, two American boats were seized by the Ecuadorians.

Q: I should note that this was probably the beginning of the long career you had in the fishing business.

RIDGWAY: Right. There was an ongoing process called the Quadripartite negotiations, which involved Chile, Ecuador, Peru and the U.S. Argentina, which was not involved, was the host. The discussion centered on the divergent views of maritime law and international Law of the Sea, and the impact of the American fishing industry on these views. There were American boats fishing off the waters of these Latin American countries, and every year, a couple would be seized. They would be fined and then returned to the U.S. This practice became so customary that it spawned a body of U.S. law, which said that the fishing industry would be reimbursed for the fines; that reimbursement would then be deducted from the AID allocation to the Latin American country which had seized the ship(s), for the following fiscal year.

In 1967, the U.S. initiated the Law of the Sea program called "Sea Beds, the Common Heritage of Mankind." From that year on, we maintained that territorial seas could only expand 12 miles from shore and that there was an inherent right for ships to move unimpeded in maritime straits. Don McKernan was then our ambassador for fishing negotiations, S/FW (Special Assistant to the secretary for Fisheries and Wildlife). He had a wonderful job. Through various treaties, that office not only covered the fishing industry, but also such matters as the protection of migratory birds. That staff would travel from Canada to Argentina to assure free paths for these birds. Wonderful tasks!!!

In my career experience, I had never come across S/FW. Most of the staff had come to the department from the outside, e.g., Don had been in the Bureau of Fisheries in the Department of the Interior. They had lived in a world that was completely foreign to me. McKernan was heading a delegation that was going to a meeting in Argentina, where another round of the four-power fishing negotiations would be held. The goal was to try to create a market place for Ecuadorian tuna products in return for American access to the off-shore fishing grounds. I should mention that Peru and Chile were included, because, depending on water temperatures - this was in an age before El Nino and La Nina had been discovered - the tuna, or herring, or whales might migrate into waters off those countries' shores. Normally, the American delegation included an ARA representative, usually John Fisher or Bill Steadman. However, because of the Allende issue, neither of them could leave Washington on a tuna fishing issue, which appeared to be small potatoes.

As a result, as the new Ecuador desk officer, I was invited to be the ARA representative and I went to Buenos Aires as a member of the fisheries delegation. It was a great training experience. Just as EUR/RPM was staffed with people really confident that it could train a lower level officer without unduly burdening themselves, McKernan and his team fell in the same category. They had room at the negotiating table for an officer of lower rank who was not steeped in the fisheries issue. In fact, they did not mind letting this officer chair some of the sub-committee or side meetings. They also knew how to deal with an American fisheries industry advisory group that traveled with them. That group insisted on being present; it didn't want any side deals made without their knowledge or involvement. In fact, as with EUR/RPM, I became a trainee in a new subject.

Q: What did you do to get yourself up to speed in geographic and functional areas issues, which were totally foreign to you?

RIDGWAY: First, I read a lot of material from the office of the geographer about boundaries and the debate about the extension of those boundaries into the sea. I also tried to bring myself up to speed on the issues involved in the Law of the Sea. My experiences on the Ecuador desk were also helpful, because I learned a lot as I prepared briefing papers for senior officers who had a need to know one thing or another involving Ecuador. I looked back on what the office had done in the previous year and the year before that. I made sure that those papers were up to date; if they were, I would put just my own imprimatur on them and send them forward to the Executive Secretariat.

Then, there was Congressional correspondence, primarily regarding visa cases, as well as calls from people wanting to know whether it was safe to travel to Ecuador. All of that provided welcome background and historical perspective. When I began to focus on fisheries, I turned all of that work-load over to my AID colleague. Since the delegation leadership had invited me long before the meeting, I was able to join it as it brought itself up to date on where the issues stood and had moved, if at all, since the last quadripartite meeting. There was a document which was under negotiations; I could follow that and learn a lot about the issues and views of the participants. So, slowly but surely, I was able to read up on the background of the issues on the table and then learn about the process. I was fortunate to be a quick learner, so I picked up a lot before leaving for BA (Buenos Aires).

When I arrived in Buenos Aires, McKernan asked me to chair one of the subcommittees that was focusing on trade and tariff issues. I knew nothing about the American fishing industry and its market in the U.S. In fact, I knew nothing at all about the industry. I turned to the representatives of the American tuna industry and asked them to brief me as thoroughly as possible on their industry and to give me their views on the issues facing my sub-committee. I must say that even in retrospect, I was not misled even once by them. These were people who had been dealing with these issues for a long time; they could have shown skepticism about my ability to do the job. But McKernan had asked me to take on this task and the American industry representatives pitched right in and became my expert advisors. I learned a lot from them!

Over time I saw that the U.S. had different, as well as contradictory views, because we had a multiplicity of interests - not just tuna. For example, we had an interest in the successful outcome of the Law of the Sea conference. We had an interest in a more peaceful hemisphere in which the U.S. would be highly regarded. We had an interest in the health of the whole fishing industry and the American consumer. While I had to balance all of these interests; the U.S. tuna fishing industry did not. In the beginning, I found them very helpful.

I also developed an admiration for McKernan, who dealt with the more junior staff; he allowed us access to all meetings. I was able to watch his negotiating style; I watched as he would put issues aside because they had become too contentious and before they could poison the atmosphere so that nothing could be done. He would go after the smaller manageable issues, which, when resolved, gave the negotiating teams a sense of accomplishment and a drive to continue.

I have to tell you about one of the fascinating things that happened in BA. The ambassador, John Lodge, asked whether he could entertain all the delegations. McKernan agreed. When the invitations went out, I didn't get one, although the rest of the American delegation was invited to the ambassador's residence for lunch. McKernan went to the ambassador to ask why I had not been invited. The reply was that the lunch was "stag" and by definition in State, women were excluded. Today, the invitation would read "without spouse." But at that time, the rule was that if the function was "stag," women could not attend. At this point, the industry representatives, usually hard-headed men of European descent, who were almost all Yugoslavs, became very upset; even though, they were accustomed to patriarchal families. They said that if I were not invited, they would not accept Lodge's invitation. My biggest supporters came from people whom one might instinctively assume would fully support State's rules. McKernan had to tell the ambassador that if I were not included in the lunch, the U.S. delegation would not attend.

The ambassador's response was to invite his wife, as well as a USIA inspection team, which happened to be in BA at the time, because one of the inspectors was a female. So there were three women at the lunch table as he could not conceive of having only one woman at the table. This way, I went to the ambassador's residence. The ambassador had the nerve to say within my hearing - and I will paraphrase his comments - that none of this "invitation flap" would have happened if I had had a satisfactory sexual life! I thought that those who heard that comment would faint. It was the most stereotypical cliché statement that one could hear, and this was from an American ambassador in 1970! I would not be surprised if the women who sued the Department in the 1970s routinely ran into this kind of prejudice. For me, it was a unique experience; I am glad I didn't have to run into it time and time again. I assume that such rampant discrimination was much more prevalent in the Department than I knew or encountered.

I was accustomed to working with people who had such major challenges in front of them that any competence that might be available to them was welcomed, regardless of gender. But I guess that BA episode was a reflection of the period.

Q: What was your impression of the other delegations?

RIDGWAY: This was my first exposure to Latin Americans. I found the members of the delegations to be very competent. I would meet them again later in life when I returned to the Law of the Sea negotiations. They were all fearful of the impact that this assignment might have on their careers. They were on tight reins, despite the fact that they were almost all career diplomats. They all had fiery military types looking over their shoulders. They also had to wave the usual flag of nationalism along with tales of alleged long histories of American abuse of their region. They were certainly not admirers of the American fisheries industry. They had declared a wide territorial sea because they believed that resources of great importance to them and their people were being exploited by the U.S. They were not in a giving mood. An accommodation would be expensive and that is probably the major reason why we never reached an agreement.

Q: How did the negotiations end?

RIDGWAY: They were absolutely indecisive. We came home after three weeks and hunkered down, waiting for the fishing season to begin. Then we went through the normal ritual, i.e., the American fishermen would go about their business within the 200 mile territorial zone and some of their boats would be detained. Two had been the quota until that year, when 51 were seized. That was just staggering! The situation became totally out of control. By sheer accident, I had taken an apartment in Columbia Plaza, which was right across the street from the Department, because I would be called frequently in the middle of the night by the Operations Center to tell me that another incident had occurred off the Ecuadorian coast.

Of course, all this inflamed Congress. Everybody was going nuts. One night, I got a call telling me that the "John F. Kennedy," our newest aircraft carrier, was under attack. That was a bad report. However, it turned out that it was another fishing boat, also named "John F. Kennedy," that had been seized. Someone in the Department had seen that name on a reporting cable and had assumed that it was the aircraft carrier, that would have been a *casus belli* (cause for war).

The two years I was on the desk were very difficult. The fishing problem spun out of control. When 51 vessels were seized, all the legal sanctions were applied. We shut down the AID program. When we did that, the Ecuadorians said that we no longer had any reason to be in the country, and they forced a shut down of our MAAG program. Finally, they charged the U.S. with economic aggression under Article 17 of the Rio Treaty. The Organization of American States held a meeting sometime around midnight during which the Ecuadorians charged us with all sorts of misdeeds. The OAS voted on the Ecuadorian charges and we lost by a vote of 21 to nothing. All of the other countries in the Western Hemisphere agreed that we had committed economic aggression. It was a huge embarrassment, which never registered on Capitol Hill, which was much more concerned with its San Diego constituency, than with the foreign policy implications of the OAS vote. Tensions continued to build until the fishing season was over.

Q: Why were 51 seized rather than the normal two?

RIDGWAY: I am not quite sure, but it could have been that the fish showed up in large numbers in the Ecuadorian zone, moving from Peruvian and Mexican waters, and all of the San Diego fishermen decided to head there that season. Obviously, there was a very large influx of boats; there had to be to have 51 seized.

There was another interesting aspect to this story. The U.S. takes its obligations toward its citizens very seriously. It also desires to maintain a consistency in its international practices. That makes us somewhat different from other countries. For example, the Japanese have a very large tuna fishing industry. They shared our views on territorial waters, i.e., that they did not extend beyond the 12 mile limit. Outside of that zone, all resources were subject to international jurisdiction. Tuna, being a pelagic highly migratory fish, didn't belong to any one nation. There was an Inter-American Tuna Commission which met annually to mete out fishing quotas. The Japanese also fished in these territorial waters and also had their boats seized. The Japanese fishermen turned to their government and said since it believed that boats were detained illegally, it should then pay the fine. The Japanese government said that the two were distinct and separate; the government was expressing its views, that if a boat was seized that was an issue for the industry, which would have to pay the fine. The Japanese fishermen paid the fine; however, after that, they severely cut back on their fishing activities in these territorial waters.

On the other hand, the American fisherman, if his boat is seized, goes to his Congressman pointing out that his government has taken a position which makes the seizure illegal under international law. The fishermen demanded Congressional action. Since Congress couldn't get the Ecuadorian law changed, it agreed to reimburse the fishermen for the fines they paid. The costs of those fines were then taken out of the following year's assistance program for that country. As a result, there was no incentive for the American fishermen to be careful, other than regarding the physical risk they took. It could have been dangerous if the Ecuadorian navy had begun to fire on those ships. The American fisherman took no financial risks; all the fines and losses of cargo or equipment was reimbursed to him by the U.S. government. However, all of a sudden, starting in December 1970, the situation worsened.

Q: Were the Peruvians and the Chileans making any contributions?

RIDGWAY: They had no fish off shore. The fish were all off Ecuador. The Peruvians had their own problems. They belonged to something called the IPC (International Petroleum Corporation). We had no leverage left with the Peruvians as we had closed all possible doors with them since we had applied every sanction in the book to them already.

Q: What was the Ecuadorian government like?

RIDGWAY: As I remember, it was not terrific. Of course those poor people haven't had a terrific government since I became acquainted with the country. It is a beautiful country, inhabited by the customary economic extremes: a few very rich people and many very poor ones. Guayaquil was the home of malaria. The Indians lived in abject poverty. In fact, the whole country, while beautiful, was totally underdeveloped. The oil companies were busy exploring and laying pipelines. They were very concerned that these pipelines might become targets in the ongoing battles.

As the Ecuadorian desk officer, I spent almost all of my time on this fishing problem. There were efforts made, as I have described, to ease the tensions and move to a more normal relationship, but that was just not to be. The American fishing industry kept doing what it had been doing for many years, despite the increasing risks. 1971 was a more "normal" season. International political tensions in the fisheries industry were almost entirely subject to where the fish were in a particular season.

In the meantime, the ARA front office was being asked to provide someone to fill a chair on an interagency committee on the Law of the Sea. By this time, I had learned a lot about the Law of the Sea, the views of our military on this subject, ocean resource management, and I had established good relationship with the parties most interested in these subjects. As a result, ARA turned to me and asked me to become the ARA person on the Law of the Sea. I agreed to do that and took on this new task.

In 1971 and 1972, another ARA country invoked the 200 mile territorial jurisdiction; this time it was Brazil. They not only claimed the 200 mile zone, but they also announced that no nuclear powered ship would be allowed into that zone. Our Navy went nuts.

The Pentagon had believed that it had a special relationship with the Brazilian armed forces, starting from WWII, and the battles in Italy, such as Monte Cassino. General Walters had been involved with the Brazilians in WWII. There was agreement that if anyone could bring the Brazilians to see reason, it was the Pentagon. State reluctantly decided to take a back seat. The Pentagon sent the secretary of the Navy to Rio, who happened to be John Warner, who later became senator from Virginia. It was a disaster. He did not offer the Brazilians anything. He just told them that they couldn't impose those restrictions, and furthermore, good friends don't treat each other that way, etc. The Brazilians stuck to their position; they had their interests to protect. Nothing was resolved.

During all this back and forth, an American-based fishing boat was fishing for shrimp in the Amazon basin. The ship was based in Florida and fishing off northeast South America, i.e., Guyana. When that boat entered the 200 mile Brazilian zone, the Brazilians went after it. They started by buzzing it with B-25s, WWII relics but still flyable. Don McKernan, still S/FW, became worried because the backwash of low flying large airplanes could easily flip over the rather frail shrimp fishing boat, and that would have been a disaster. We were just going to have to agree on some arrangements which would allow our shrimp fishermen access to the Brazilian coast. No one liked that idea one bit.

Congressman Sam Gibbons (FL) represented the shrimp fishermen. He was on the Ways and Means Committee, which was chaired by Wilbur Mills. At the time, that committee was reviewing the international coffee agreement. That review was proceeding without any major stumbling blocks. Phil Trezise (or Willis Armstrong) was our assistant secretary for economic and business affairs and was responsible for getting that coffee agreement ratified by Congress. He ran into Sam Gibbons who asked him what the Department intended to do to protect his shrimp fishermen. I then got a call from Jules Katz, who was then one of Trezise's deputies. Jules wanted to know what shrimp had to do with international coffee agreements. I told Jules that obviously he didn't understand the political implications of the shrimp business, or fish in general. I then explained the shrimp problem to him and that any effort at resolution would require negotiations with the Brazilians.

The ARA front office then decided that since I was already involved in the shrimp issue as the Ecuadorian desk officer, I should add the Brazilian shrimp issue to my portfolio. I was probably the only ARA staffer who had had any contact with the issue and the people involved, both in the fishing industry and the U.S. government. So I joined Don McKernan's delegation to Brazil. We were supposed to come up with a shrimping agreement with the Brazilians.

It doesn't take long, even for a newcomer, to be brought up to speed as the American shrimping industry had some very fine instructors. I learned about brown, pink, and white shrimp, and about the fishing process, among other things. We did manage to come up with an agreement with Brazil on shrimping rights, including a payment for licenses, which the Pentagon lawyers had always fought, because in their view, such payments acknowledged the validity of a 200 miles territorial zone. They viewed such payments as a potential threat to free access to oceanic waters for our Navy.

On the other hand, we had an interest in resolving the shrimp issue because we also had a coffee agreement at stake, not to mention the long-term military relationship with Brazil; Brazil has a very important role in the Western Hemisphere. So, for once, I was dealing with a significant country, unlike Ecuador, which attracted very little interest in Washington.

I did some research on what Brazil's attitude might be and showed it to John Crimmins. I found that this was not the first time that the Brazilians had fought for "their" marine resources. At one point, they had attacked some Breton French lobster fishermen. De Gaulle and the French made a lot of statements on how they would defend their lobster fishermen and on how they would send their aircraft carrier "Clemenceau" to provide air cover for the French fishermen. The Brazilians told the French to proceed and threatened to bomb the aircraft carrier with their outdated bombers.

All that, of course, gave rise to a massive media frenzy, highlighting the threats from both sides. But slowly, over a period of time, and as nothing really developed, the story faded and ceased to be a hot topic. In fact, the "Clemenceau" rounded up the Breton lobstermen and took them home to France. The French could see that the Brazilians would not give in to threats and might take some dangerous actions. As we could see that the same thing might happen in our case, we did manage to come to a fishing agreement with Brazil unlike our failure with Ecuador, Chile and Peru.

This all happened in 1971 and 1972. Finally, the "powers to be" decided that my role in all of these fishing issues had far exceed my role as Ecuadorian desk officer in importance and moved me to the Policy and Plans Office of ARA. I became a deputy director and was given responsibility for a region-wide set of issues, which included fisheries and marine resources. I also represented ARA on interagency and intra-Departmental committees. I was also assigned to assist with CASP (Country Analysis and Strategy Policy).

I was still only an FSO-4 in 1972, after 15 years in the Service. The Department of Commerce offered me a GS-14 position. I thought about the opportunity seriously because it was an increase in pay and because the job was much more central to an organization than what I was doing in State. Meyer, Crimmins and Hurwitch knew what I was doing, but as far as the Foreign Service itself was concerned, my duties were so far out of the main stream and somewhat irrelevant to what it saw as its main job, that it was unlikely that I would get much credit for the work I was doing in ARA. So I had to consider the Commerce offer seriously. But, in the final analysis, I liked the Foreign Service; I liked what I was doing; I adored working with John Crimmins, who, like the people in EUR/RPM, took time to tutor me in some of the finer points of foreign relations. To this day, I think of Crimmins when I see some incorrect grammar in the New York Times. He and I would have arguments and marshal our supporters to debate the usage of some word or phrase.

I wrote a lot of Congressional testimony for him and learned how to do that. A lot of that testimony had to do with fishing issues. The American industry had a number of vocal spokesmen in Congress. When those issues were under discussion, John would take me with him to the Hill. I would write his testimony and would assemble the briefing book as well as brief him before his appearance before a Committee. We spent many evenings worrying about Congressional pressures. It was during this period that I developed many contacts in Congress connected to fishing issues. ARA allowed me to set up my own Congressional channels. My effort was not to start any confrontations, but rather to engage people on the Hill so that they could see all sides of an issue.

It was working with people like Crimmins, as well as the EUR/RPM staff, that convinced me that my future lay with State. I thanked the Commerce people for the offer, but declined it. They were a little upset, because they had misunderstood me and had thought I had agreed to take their job. On that basis, they had gotten approval to establish a new GS-14 position, so naturally there was some disappointment when I turned it down. However, I think in light of how my future developed that I made the right decision. The Service had recruited heavily during the Vietnam era. Like many Foreign Service officers, I too was unhappy with how promotions were becoming fewer and fewer. I was anxious to move ahead and the Commerce offer had held some attraction. I had been an FSO-4 for a good while. While I had had good efficiency reports, written by some very good writers like Crimmins, the competition was very fierce and the number of promotions limited, so it was very slow going. Despite all that, I stayed in the Foreign Service and was finally promoted to FSO-3 in 1973.

Q: While working on maritime issues, did you notice any change in our attitudes on issues such as territorial waters and fishing rights?

RIDGWAY: No. We lost an opportunity by not showing greater flexibility. In my view, we lost a huge opportunity. We had developed a position intended to accommodate as many American interests as we could. These included 12 mile territorial sea limits, international jurisdiction of resources beyond that 12 mile territory, some coastal state jurisdiction over resources in the continental shelf, and freedom of navigation through straits and passages, including submerged passages. We were not prepared to negotiate, and what we proposed was our bottom line. The Pentagon would not budge. This was understandable as there was no reward in the military system for giving something up, and the military couldn't even contemplate anything resembling that. Therefore, we never could get the Pentagon to move off its initial position.

In 1970, after three years of preparatory work in what the issues were in the Law of the Sea meetings, the third international conference on the Law of the Sea opened. It debated issues of coastal states' jurisdiction over economic resources, territorial sea, freedom of passage, and seabeds, among others. I viewed what went on through my prism of Latin America experiences. The paucity of resources in the developing world made it predicable that these countries would lay claim to the resources within the 200 miles of territorial seas. I thought that we should negotiate with them. We could not win with our non-negotiable position, which sounded like "what is mine is mine, what is yours is mine." We should have negotiated on coastal states jurisdiction over natural resources.

I thought we had our own interests in being somewhat flexible because we also had foreign vessels fishing off the New England coast and we had an enormous number of species in the Pacific high seas where we had considerable interest, as well as pelagic fisheries off the West Coast and certain fish in the Gulf of Mexico and shrimp off Brazil. We tried to accommodate all these interests by insisting on international jurisdiction over anything beyond 50 miles, except for coastal state situations. Developing countries would not agree to anything like that. They wanted coastal state economic zone jurisdiction. Our delegation just would not negotiate. At the end of the day, the U.S. went for the 200 mile exclusion in the face of international law, because the New England fishing interests had won the intra-U.S. battle.

I would sit in the U.S. meetings supporting the ARA position which was the sole voice for a more flexible position. Deputy Secretary John Irwin, the PM legal advisor, would chair the intra-agency meetings of ARA. Irwin would side with PM. Then we would go to interagency meetings with a fixed State position. We would negotiate some more, but the ARA position was always in a minority. We would lose twice: once in the intra-State meetings and then even in the interagency meetings, with an already compromised position. I would complain about this situation, but no one understood that in the first instance we were negotiating with ourselves and in the second instance in an interagency forum with an already-compromised position. I must say that I watched this process for the rest of my career. We continually showed up in an interagency forum with a position that was the result of compromises reached within State.

After watching this process for three years, I came to the conclusion that we lost opportunities for some acceptable international regime for Law of the Sea. The Pentagon, with its complete inflexibility, won most of the interagency battles, unless there was someone in the White House or the NSC (National Security Council) who understood that the game was over. It seemed that the issue was always "who gave up this right?" The goal seemed to be for each American bureaucracy to be able to say at the end of the day: "We didn't give it up; they took it." Eventually, that is how the Law of the Sea was put together. It was ridiculous; we got nothing for our intransigence. We could have negotiated a number of things, including access, more clear-cut terms, and transit passage. In fact, it was our politics that in the first year of the Reagan administration forced us to announce jurisdiction over a 200 mile territorial zone despite, as I said, the requirements of international law. All we got was condemnation. We could have done much better.

Q: It sounds very much like the challenges that State people face when involved in base negotiations. Pentagon lawyers just won't consider any compromises.

RIDGWAY: It is not just the lawyers. There is no military officer who wants to see that his or her file has a comment from a superior that he or she had successfully "given away" any rights exercised by the U.S., including bases on foreign land that we used "temporarily." No officer wants to see in his or her personnel file "that this officer successfully negotiated the withdrawal of U.S. forces" or "had surrendered residual rights" even if it was in the face of inevitability. That is not the way to succeed in the military. As long as base negotiations are led or at least heavily influenced by the Pentagon, there won't be much progress made in the issue of base rights.

Let me just end the discussion on this part of my career. I was coming to the end of my ARA assignment. I went to see my career counselor. His advice, and that of his colleagues, was that I should take a position in FSI as the A-100 course coordinator. I told them that was the last thing that would interest me. The career counselor did not give up; it was pointed out that the job was at my grade level and just perfect for me at this stage of my career. I said, "Thanks, but no thanks" and returned to my ARA office.

Soon after, Ron Spiers called me and told me that he had just been named ambassador to Bahamas. The Bahamas were to become independent in September, 1973. He would be our first ambassador. He went on to point out that he had had only one overseas assignment, as politico-military counselor in London. He added that he knew of my work from my RPM tour; and, just as importantly, he recognized that I had had experience in several embassy functions. He said he needed my experience and asked me to join him as his deputy. It didn't take me long to recognize that being a DCM (deputy chief of mission) was far better than what career counseling was considering. I said almost immediately that I would be delighted to join his staff, and soon began to wind up my ARA responsibilities and to learn about the Bahamas.

Q: We are now in 1973 and you are headed for the Bahamas as the DCM. Before we get to that, I think we would be interested in your comments about Jerry Bremer.

RIDGWAY: I can only give you part of the Bremer story. My experiences with Bremer started during the 1971-72 period. At the time, there was a major tussle between Secretary Rogers and NSC Advisor Henry Kissinger about who was to develop and manage foreign policy. The Vietnam issue was also on the front burners at the time. These issues loomed much larger on the Seventh Floor, in the White House, and in the media than did our work at lower levels on the fisheries issues bubbling up along Latin American coasts.

There was a National Security Council and national security system in existence at the time. I do not remember who on the NSC staff was responsible for fisheries issue, but it was either Dennis Clift, or possibly Hans Binnendijk, who was later one of the leaders of the National Defense University. One of them was following the fishing issue as part of his responsibility for all Law of the Sea matters. Our position on the Law of the Sea was that coastal states should have jurisdiction over ocean resources only in territory up to 12 miles plus something to recognize certain rights on the continental shelf. We firmly believed that beyond these boundaries oceanic resources were best managed by international agreement. Our debates with Latin American countries compromised of two American interests: 1) gaining international support for our Law of the Sea position, which had a major defense component, and, 2) the Nixon administration's desire to appear somewhat different in Latin America from his predecessor(s). The NSC, just like the Department, was split on many of these issues, because various parts represented various American interests.

There was a body of sanctions legislation that was still being imposed. So the question arose as to whether it might be possible to find some ways to waive some of the sanctions so that we could return to the bargaining table with Peru, Chile and Ecuador on the important question of access to tuna resources. None of these issues seemed to be of interest to the Seventh Floor of the Department. Nevertheless, working in an interagency context, and with the approval of the ARA leadership, I put together a comprehensive program which, step by step, would have returned us to the negotiating table with the previously mentioned Latin American countries and the American tuna fishing industry. This package would have required the waiving of certain presidential sanctions.

I learned many years earlier, when in EUR/RPM, that papers to the White House had to be short. Therefore, I sent a very short paper through channels to the secretary of state to sign, before being sent to the White House. When the paper reached the Seventh Floor, I got a call from one of the secretary's aides, Jerry Bremer. He told me that my paper would not go any further, as there was not really an issue, or at least one important enough to involve the secretary or the president. He said my paper would be returned. I went to see Jerry, whom I had not met before, to ask him who he thought he was to decide what the secretary should or should not see and what he might want to send to the White House. It was very clear that Bremer saw himself as the guardian of the secretary's gate; he would decide what the secretary saw and what he would not see. That was quite a revelation to me. I had run into similar situations before; most people who serve in State come to understand the attitudes of staff aides of senior officials. Bremer's attitude was just another example of the role these special assistants and staff aides saw themselves in.

We solved the problem rather simply. The NSC called the Department and asked that the paper be forwarded to them, so they pulled the paper through when I couldn't push it through. My paper finally reached the White House, and was the subject for some discussions with the Ecuadorians. These discussions did not advance the issue very far, but I found the process quite educational.

Ten years later, at the time when Jerry Bremer was the Department's Executive Secretary in the Reagan administration, I had been pretty much dismissed by that administration. However, thanks to some friends, I had been able to hold onto a parking permit in the basement of the Department. I was considered suspect since I had served in a high ranking position in a Democratic administration. During that time, I reached my 25th anniversary in the Foreign Service and received a certificate signed by the Executive Secretary of the Department, Jerry Bremer. I asked to see Walt Stoessel, the Deputy Secretary at the time. I took my certificate with me and told Walt that if after twenty-five years, which included a couple of ambassadorships, the best I could get was a certificate signed by an officer junior to me, then I would return that document. I left the office without the certificate.

In 1985, when I became the assistant secretary for Europe and Canada, Jerry Bremer was our ambassador to the Netherlands. He did a brilliant job there. He had to face one real major issue: we had an important military base for tactical and intermediary range SS/20 Pershing missiles. There were five European countries with such bases, established primarily so that the Germans would have an easier domestic political process to pursue when permission was required for stationing missiles in their country. Geri Joseph, who had been our ambassador to the Netherlands during the Carter administration, had left our relationship in very fine form. He had developed a very good, friendly atmosphere. He was succeeded by William Dyess and then Bremer.

So Jerry was our ambassador at a very crucial time. He negotiated with the Dutch government on the language of a basing agreement which would be acceptable to the Dutch parliament. He did a first class job in getting that agreement. He was a different person from that junior staff aide on the Seventh Floor that I had run into many years earlier. His use of power then, though, followed a pattern that was typical of my Foreign Service experience, and which I suspect is still typical today.

Back to ARA. I stayed there for three years, in two jobs, as I have mentioned. I must say that many of my colleagues viewed a tour in ARA as being "out of the main stream," something which was contrary to my best interests, and which, according to them, should have made me stay in EUR.

I went to the Bahamas with Ron Spiers. We did face some very interesting issues during my 1973-75 tour. Ron was my ambassador for the first year; he was succeeded by Seymour Weiss, who had also been the director of PM. We were accustomed to viewing the Bahamas as "British." We used to turn to the Brits to get advice on how we should behave vis-à-vis the Bahamians. Secondly, over time, the Bahamas had become a "luxury" post, not in terms of housing or office space, both of which were barely adequate. People used to refer to membership in the Lucaya Club as an illustration of a lifestyle; that club is viewed today as one of the world's finest clubs, as it was then. Then there was a sailing club, a yacht club, and the golf club. Membership was restricted to white clientele. I think it is fair to say that from the beginning of our representation until Ron and I got there, the Consul Generals (Turner B. Shelton was the last one) missed all of the political aspects of life in the Bahamas. Incidentally, I had run into Shelton before, when he was our ambassador to Nicaragua and a great friend of Somoza's on Law of the Sea issues. It was easy to miss the political and economic dimensions of the Bahamas if you were sitting out at one of the clubs, enjoying "life." It was easy for the American staffs to believe that the United Bahamian Party, which was totally white, represented the future of the country. In that way, the CG missed every election prediction.

When Ron came, he told the staff that the new embassy would have to make a "statement." It would have to show the new black government, whose leadership incidentally, came from the Progressive Party, that we were aware of the political realities in the Bahamas.

The new prime minister was Lynden Pindling. We were to make it clear to the government that we were interested in the future of the Bahamas as a new country, and not as an appendage of their colonial masters. Ron dropped his membership in all of the fancy clubs. For about six months after that the black community just observed us to see if this sea change in our attitude was for real.

In that six-month period, we had to deal with a couple of significant issues. One had to do with "hot pursuit," which was closely connected with the Law of the Sea. The Bahamas is an island nation. Under some old arrangements, the U.S. was permitted to just run in and out of Bahamian territorial waters in pursuit of criminals, such as drug dealers and smugglers without first having to seek any kind of permission from the Bahamian or British authorities, and we had become accustomed to doing just that. Large parts of the U.S. Navy really thought that this unfettered access should continue. It felt it should have the rights of archipelago passage, which would allow them to navigate at will through all the passages between the islands. That right of archipelago passage is still an issue today wherever the "nation" is a conglomeration of islands, such as the Philippines, Indonesia and the Bahamas. However, and quite naturally, these island nations want to know who is navigating in their waters.

Then there was the issue of their territorial seas, which, I believe at the time, was only three miles. The Bahamas was not one of the "bad" guys, claiming waters far from their shores. They, however, opposed us on the archipelago issue. Fortunately, the Coast Guard contingent responsible for the waters between the U.S. and the Bahamas was headed by an admiral stationed in Miami. I knew him as "Red" Wagner. He was very sensitive to the issue and very respectful of the Bahamas as a newly independent nation. He was not about to sail in Bahamian waters without respect for Bahamian policies, just because we had been doing so when the Bahamas were part of the British Empire. He and his staff kept in close contact with the Bahamian authorities whenever his ships were chasing some suspects. On a couple of occasions, he was denied access to their territorial waters, on which occasions the Coast Guard did not violate those Bahamian wishes. It was therefore, with the Coast Guard's help that we rebuilt relationships with the Bahamian authorities. When I left, the cooperation between our two countries was very good. The more difficult problems, which stemmed from a major increase in drug trafficking and corruption, arose after I had left.

Quite apart from wishing to have good relations with a newly independent country, we had to face issues which arose from the very important military bases that we had in the Bahamas. Among them was one which was part of an underwater detection system set up to protect our vessels. These bases were originally part of the deal for the "loan" of 50 American ships that Roosevelt worked out with Churchill during WWII, some time before we joined the fray. As a result of that "loan" we were given perpetual rights to these bases by the British and they became part of our Cold War defense system. These were really stations, rather than bases, which were links in various U.S. under water detection systems. Today, when the Soviet threat has passed, people are trying to figure out what to do with these stations; one suggestion is use them for a whale detection system.

I should note that as DCM, I was also the Consul General for the Turks and Caicos Islands. I went to these islands to negotiate for another station, or link, in our warning system. Another important base was off Andros Island, where the Andros trench is over 6,000 feet deep. We used these waters to test the noise generated by our submarines. We wanted to retain the right to continue this testing program.

It is interesting to note that the Defense Department, while wishing to maintain all the rights it enjoyed during the British rule, was not willing to give the Bahamians anything in return. We had enjoyed these rights free of charge from the British; we were not about to give up those free rights just because they were under a new jurisdiction. The Bahamians viewed the issue somewhat differently than the British, who were also a member of NATO. Finally, to "secure" our "rights" we put together an assistance package, but had trouble obtaining Congressional approval. After I left, Congress did give its approval.

It was an interesting time to be in the Bahamas. We changed offices and moved into newly leased space. We had to acquire an ambassadorial residence and housing for the staff. I had a lot of administrative-management responsibilities. Most importantly, I helped Ron establish a new relationship between the Bahamas and the U.S., moving from relations with a colony, which was often managed by an American political appointee (all undoubtedly well intentioned, but viewing their appointment perhaps not as a substantive job), to relations with an independent nation, which were managed by a professional diplomat.

At about this time, the administration named Elliot Richardson to be its ambassador to the UK. On his way to do some bone fishing, Elliot stopped in the Bahamas. He saw Ron and asked him to join him in London as his DCM. Ron knew London and had worked on many of the UK-U.S. issues over the years. The DCM job in London was certainly more challenging than that of an ambassador to the Bahamas. In many respects, Ron had achieved the goals he had set out for himself in the Bahamas, so he agreed to join Richardson in London.

Ron was replaced by Seymour Weiss, who had been a member of the Civil Service for many years, and whose last job had been director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs. I worked for him for a year in the Bahamas, following the same issues that I had worked on during Ron's term.

Q: Talk to us a little about the status of a new country in 1973.

RIDGWAY: The British had been in the Bahamas for many years, and they continued to have a major presence in a governor general, who had an impressive house. There had been a long "training" period to prepare the Bahamians to take over the management of their own affairs. Bahamians had been sent to Canada and to the UK for training. The new chief-of-protocol, a brilliant man, had done all of his training in Ottawa under the Canadian chief of protocol.

Before independence came to fruition, the Bahamas had already established a parliament; so in fact, they were really ready to become an independent nation. The British left gracefully with full honors. The only ones that didn't understand the changed nature of the political situation in the Bahamas were the Americans, who had predicted that the first election in the free nation would produce a white government. That undoubtedly was the view from the golf course, where Americans spent much of the time. The leaders of the new government, all black, were well-educated, well-trained, and ready to take over. They all had had years of experience working in the British administration. The smooth turnover can be attributed to the careful transition program that had been pursued for many years.

Q: Did you have to do much to overcome any problems that Turner Shelton and his staff had left behind?

RIDGWAY: Not really. When we arrived, Shelton had already departed. He had in fact been our representative to the "white" Bahamas. We focused on the new government, which as I said, was primarily "black." As I said, Ron just dropped all the memberships in the "white" clubs, which undoubtedly offended many whites. It was the right thing to do. Eventually, the black government, which did include whites, began to view us as having appreciated the changed nature of the management of Bahamian affairs.

Q: Did Cuba play any role in the Bahamas?

RIDGWAY: Not really. The only time that it would be included in conversations was when someone would pass through with Cuban cigars for Henry Kissinger. We had pre-clearance in the Bahamas, which meant that some of the cigars were confiscated by Customs, which really upset Henry.

Robert Vesco fled to the Bahamas, as did Howard Hughes. When U.S. authorities tried to get Vesco extradited by using an old British treaty that dealt primarily with wire transfers, we participated in helping out the legal authorities, but we were not part of the case. Justice used our physical resources to try to make its case. In the end, they were not successful in the Bahamian courts.

Q: You indicated that the black community initially watched us to see whether our attitudes had really changed. By the time you left, what was the mood in the black community?

RIDGWAY: I thought it was quite positive towards us. I used to measure it by the volume of invitations that we received, which rose steadily, and included invitations to such events as the burning of a mortgage on a church, or a church celebration of some kind - "Bringing Greetings" as it was called. We would be invited to "Bring Greetings" on certain occasions; we accepted most of them. Ron would "Bring Greetings" on some occasions; I brought the same on one occasion. I remember that the Southern Baptists held their international convention in the Bahamas once while I was there - a plurality of Bahamians being Baptists. That convention was attended by a huge number of American Baptists. We "Brought Greetings" on that occasion. There was a wonderful small Catholic Church in Nassau, headed by a monsignor who was trying to build a Catholic community on the islands. That also gave rise to invitations, which we would accept.

Our efforts were intended to convey to the Bahamians that we understood that the Bahamas was a new nation which would now be viewed differently by the U.S. than it had been when it was a colony. We also wanted to convey that we understood that the leadership of this new country was primarily black, and that we would do our best to pursue our interests with a respect for the major changes that had taken place in the country. The most effective avenue to achieve our goals was to be engaged in the community, instead of spending our days on the golf courses with white players or at the many other clubs with whites-only memberships.

Q: Did you have any problems with our naval stations?

RIDGWAY: No.

Q: How would you characterize the Bahamas overall?

RIDGWAY: The Bahamas was a very gentle place. I don't know what the situation is today. There were three horrible murders while I was there. We all agreed that this was not likely to have been committed by a Bahamian; that was not the way they behaved. In fact, it was a kid from Milwaukee, who was mentally challenged. When the authorities combed through his apartment, they found all kind of black magic images. He just went to the Bahamas and murdered people.

Bahamians were gentle. They were sweet. The people were at ease with themselves. They had their own view of their place in life. I am told that all of that has now changed. However, we are talking about the late 1970's before the drug invasion, before Columbia, before drug trafficking brought all the bad stuff into the country for trans-shipment. In the 1970's, the country's principal earnings came from "sun and sand" and some fishing. I always seemed to end up in situations where fishery was a central issue. In the case of the Bahamas, it was spiny lobsters, rather than tuna or shrimp. This is not to say that one could not foresee that over time, the Bahamas would have to face some major issues. Young people cannot be asked to accept that their future lay in waiting on tables or changing bed linens. In the late 1970's, that was pretty much what the future held.

Some Bahamians tried farming. I remember tromping through a prospective avocado grove with the minister of planning. I don't know whether that ever got off the ground. I also saw a farming operation on Andros, which AID tried to establish with a \$10 million grant, which was part of the assistance package developed in exchange for the base rights. I don't know what happened to that project. I don't know whether the Bahamas became self-supporting in the meat and vegetable area. It had to feed not only its own citizens, but the huge influx of tourists as well. I have been told that over time, drug money corrupted the government and the society as a whole. The young people, given a choice between making an easy buck or being paid for working in a service industry, went for the easy buck, which was not surprising. I would guess that over time, our relations with the Bahamas soured somewhat as a direct consequence of the drug trade.

Q: You left the Bahamas in 1975?

RIDGWAY: Correct. I left in the middle of some negotiations over spiny lobster fishing rights. Cuban-Americans had, as Cubans, fished for spiny lobsters off the Bahamas when the islands were part of Great Britain. When the fishermen moved to Miami, nothing had changed, as far as they were concerned, and they insisted on fishing as they always had. To complicate matters, there was a legal dispute over whether spiny lobsters were a fishery that was coastal in its nature or whether it was an international matter. The issue was whether the lobsters, when they moved, were in constant contact with the continental shelf and other similar theoretical questions. The dispute was creating open warfare; our Coast Guard was concerned that the Cuban-American fishermen were leaving Miami ports armed to the teeth to defend their interests and were continuing to take the spiny lobsters. You could just about predict when open combat would break out, because the spiny lobster does migrate, or at least moves in great numbers. You could easily see the long trains of spiny lobsters moving in the clear waters of the Bahamas, it was easy to know where the fishing was going to be rewarding.

The Department of Commerce, NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), and the national fisheries service sent a team to the Bahamas to negotiate lobster fishing rights. I ended up being the embassy's action officer, because I knew a lot of the officials involved from previous encounters with fishing issues. However, my tour of duty ran out before the negotiations were concluded. I was going to the senior seminar, starting in the fall of 1975, and I left Nassau at the end of August.

Q: Did the spiny lobster issue get resolved?

RIDGWAY: It got resolved when we agreed that our fishermen would have to buy licenses to maintain their fishing rights. I think the tensions haven't completely abated, and I suspect that there is still a lot of poaching.

Q: You were in the senior seminar for the 1975-76 term?

RIDGWAY: No. I was in the senior seminar for three weeks. I left the Bahamas on Labor Day week-end, and stopped in Sarasota to play golf with a friend. Eastern Airlines then went on strike, so I couldn't get to Washington over that week-end. As classes were to start on Tuesday, I arrived a day late. Because the class picture was taken on the first day, I am not in it.

When I arrived, I had a stack of telephone calls awaiting me, most of the them from Carlyle Maw, the undersecretary for security assistance. Kissinger was then the secretary of state. He invited me to lunch, where he told me that the ambassador for ocean and fisheries affairs, Thomas Klinger, whom I had known, had just resigned to go back to the University of Miami law school, where he had been a professor, leaving the ambassadorial position vacant. A search had begun for a replacement, and the Department wanted me to leave the seminar and become the special assistant to the vacant ambassadorial position until one was found. I declined with thanks.

I went on with the seminar, even though the dialogue about my possible reassignment went on for a couple of days. There were a lot of phone calls back and forth. Finally, my classmates told me that in the end I would lose, as Maw was an undersecretary and very close to the secretary and that there was no way that I could refuse his offer. They told me that I had it all wrong and that after all, I did have some expertise in fishery issues, and suggested that I accept the offer. I was a special assistant to a vacancy, which in effect meant that I would be the head of the fisheries and ocean affairs office.

Eventually, I got a call from Larry Eagleburger, the undersecretary for management, telling me in his usual fashion that I had to take the job. I told Larry that I really wanted the ambassadorial job and I didn't want to be a special assistant. I had been a special assistant or the action officer behind the scene too often; it was time to be the "boss." He told me that he thought that that would be very difficult in this situation, since that ambassadorial position had always been filled by a political appointee - and always a male one at that. I suggested that he go back to the people who were making the decision and put my name up for the appointment. This was on a Thursday night.

On Monday, Larry called back and said that the job was mine. The fishing industry, of course, knew me, having worked with me from 1970 to 1975. I was very comfortable with them; and, as I said earlier, they had taught me a lot about fishing. I recognized that they had a bias and an economic stake in the outcome of the various negotiations, which may not have been the same as our political interests, we understood each other. They knew that a fisherman had to be caught cheating only once, and his credibility was gone. So they supported my nomination.

So I left the senior seminar after only three weeks to become the deputy assistant secretary for ocean and fisheries affairs. This was done so that I could get started while my nomination was being prepared for submission to the Senate for confirmation. I was confirmed as ambassador for ocean and fishing affairs in February 1976.

Q: Did your candidacy raise any objections from the White House and the political operatives? After all, the job had been filled by political appointees and you were a career Foreign Service office.

RIDGWAY: The White House could not find another candidate. Names would be mentioned, but would run into opposition because of inadequate background: the candidate might know about deep sea fishing but not about coastal or vice-versa. I was seen by the industry as having adequate knowledge on all fishing matters. I think, in fact, my nomination solved a lot of problems for the White House; it was not going to raise the ire of any constituency. I think they got a very good ambassador!

Q: You had this job from November 1975 until July 1977. Why was the position ever established?

RIDGWAY: In 1973, Congress established a Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES). After WWII, as nations began fishing off the coasts of the U.S., and the world's big fishing boats were built (e.g. the Japanese returned to whale fishing under the guidance of the American occupation forces), international issues began to arise. It was a traditional issue on a non-traditional matter. There had always been a Fish and Wildlife Service in the Department of the Interior and a Bureau for Commercial Fisheries in the Department of Commerce. There were also some institutes that watched the exploitation of sea resources. The emergence of this global fishing industry brought a realization that some kind of international management and agreement were necessary. There was potential for conflict on the high seas resulting from these issues. Our own fishing industry realized that its territories were being invaded by foreign fishermen, such as the Soviets and the Icelanders.

As a result, a body of international agreements was developed and signed by all interested parties. The International Convention for North Atlantic Fisheries managed all fishing under its North Atlantic purview. The International Tropical Tuna Commission tried to manage the resources off the west coasts of South America. The International North Pacific Fisheries Commission tried to manage the activities in its geographic area. There was an International Halibut Commission, which tried to manage the exploitation of a very fragile resource. The Atlantic Tuna Commission functioned to manage that resource. There was also a Seal Commission and a Whaling Commission.

These were all efforts to manage one resource or another based on the characteristics of that resource. As a result, a body of conventions, interested groups, and processes were developed. Every year, scientists, fishermen, and governments would meet to agree on an allocation of resources, all of which migrated from body of water to body of water. Then there were Law of the Sea meetings, the third and last of which was held in 1976 and focused on getting an agreement to limit national jurisdiction to three-mile territorial waters. From the mid-to-late 1940s to until about 1970, there was a very effective management of international fishing. It was effective even after that date, but the politics of coastal states began to take its toll when the Latin American (LA) countries complained that the regime was not helping them because, for example, it equated the importance of tuna or whales to them, with the interests of other countries, some of which were far away, but had begun to fish for those resources in their territories. LA countries felt that they had a special interest in these resources, because they were more plentiful off their coasts than off the coasts of other countries, and that should be recognized by international agreement.

In the United States, the New England fishing industry began to suggest that foreigners be barred from their coastal waters. They were particularly concerned about the huge Soviet fleets which were just sweeping up all that was available in the seas in which they sailed. On the West Coast, it was the Japanese who were sweeping up all available salmon, as well as other fish. There was a mounting crescendo for new jurisdictional powers for the U.S. coastal states up to a 200-mile limit.

I think I mentioned earlier, that the Department of State absolutely ignored the political power of the American fishing industry. It ignored the rising power of the foreign fishing community in coastal states, particularly in developing countries. It continued to take the position that sea resources could only be protected within a 12 mile coastal zone and beyond that, the exploitation of resources should be under some kind of international management. The Department, throughout all intra-agency meetings, held firm to this position. I would sit in on these meetings making the point time and time again that that position was untenable and that we had to find some way to get some important concession in exchange for widening the coastal zone to 200 miles.

I predicted that we would eventually join all the other coastal countries in this territorial enlargement. I don't think I was taken too seriously, since I was representing just one geographic bureau, ARA, which just didn't understand global concerns and U.S. national security interests. Eventually though, I was proven correct. In 1975, Senator Magnusson submitted a bill to Congress called "The Fisheries Conservation and Management Act," which claimed for the U.S. all fishing rights in territorial waters out to 200 miles, and gave management jurisdiction to regional fisheries councils in places such as New England, the Mid-Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico, Alaska, Southern California and the Pacific. However, the State Department opposed the Magnusson bill, arguing that it would not serve long-term U.S. national security interests. In some respects, the Department was correct in its judgment, because a claim of 200 miles jurisdiction would bar it from protecting the American tuna fishing industry, which was plying its trade off Ecuadorian shores. However, that argument was dismissed through the claim that Ecuador, or any country, did not own the tuna because it was a migratory species. The fishing industry's position was that "what was ours is ours and what is yours is ours," which was extraordinarily hypocritical. However, it too stood by this rather untenable position. That bill, however, passed in 1976. Jerry Ford signed it, thereby making the law of the land a program which by March 1, 1977 would bar all foreign nationals from fishing off the coast of the United States unless their country had entered into a governing international fisheries agreement with the U.S. which had to be approved by both houses of Congress.

There is part of this story which seems to have gone unnoticed. I happen to be very proud of it, although most people remember me for my efforts as assistant secretary for European affairs. The fact is that between January 1976 and March 1977, we in the Office of Fisheries Affairs managed to enter into agreements with all nations whose fishermen plied their trade off our shores. Every one of these agreements, except one, was approved by both houses of Congress.

We worked night and day; we traveled thousands of miles. It was a different way of organizing diplomacy. Initially, we sat down and went through the Magnusson bill line by line. We put all of the stipulations of that bill into a model governing fisheries agreement. We included everything. Congress had, in effect, stipulated that all requirements which had come from the legislative history of fishing in U.S. territorial waters be included in the GIFA (Governing International Fisheries Agreement). I first took a couple of teams to a few countries for test runs. Then we established separate teams who worked from the same script and could be counted on to maintain a consistent U.S. posture. I took the agreement to the Soviet Union and Poland, both of which were interested in fishing off our coasts. The European Community came to Washington, as did the East Germans and the Japanese.

When we were completely comfortable with the model agreement, I took it to Congress and showed it to interested parties there. I met with a lot of skepticism, since people there felt we could never get any country to agree to it. However, they did say that if we got a signed agreement with any country, they felt they could pass it through Congress speedily. Thereafter, I made a policy of keeping Congressional parties up to date on our activities. We were adamant with other countries: they had to sign the agreement as it was written or there would not be a deal. There were two countries that had great problems with the model: the Soviet Union and Japan. I sent a memo to the secretary, which laid out the prospective negotiations for the next 13 months, which would be with all the countries whose fishermen worked off our coasts, and how we planned to proceed and a when. We attached the GIFA and requested the secretary's approval.

The secretary was no more interested in fisheries than the man in the moon was. Larry Eagleburger got Kissinger to approve my memorandum. Larry was very helpful to us; he was a stalwart supporter of our efforts; he understood what we were trying to achieve. After that first approval, we never went back to the secretary on these issues. We operated from that initial memorandum, which gave us all the leeway we needed to be successful.

I should mention a little side story. One of the issues that had really roiled the American fishing industry, and which was not helpful to our efforts, was that the U.S. Department of State had shown absolutely no interest in its problems. The industry maintained that successive administrations had appointed political types who kept the issues away from higher ups. There were some very well-known American politicians who had occupied that ambassadorial spot, e.g., Donald McKernan.

When I took over, I would go to the secretary's staff meeting, probably as acting head of OES. One time, Kissinger said that the German Foreign Minister Genscher had called on him to complain that the Germans had been allocated a very inadequate herring quota off the coast of Maine. Kissinger said that he replied that the quota was ridiculous and had told Genscher that the Germans could fish for all of the herring they wanted. The secretary then asked who was in charge of such issues. I raised my hand. He then proceeded to make a fool out of me at that staff meeting, which is one of the reasons why, when we later sent him the memorandum I described earlier, we made sure that Larry shepherded it through.

Years later, at Bilderberg, West Germany, I gave a long briefing on U.S. Soviet relations at the request of Secretary Shultz. I had to fly there from Moscow, where I had just attended a meeting with Gorbachev. The audience consisted of all of the attendees at those famous conferences, including Kissinger. After the briefing, Kissinger took me aside and asked me how it was that he had never met me during all of his time as secretary of state. I then told him that he had humiliated me during a staff meeting and I promised myself then that I would never get near him again. He blanched and that was the end of that conversation.

Back to the GIFA agreements; after getting the secretary's approval, we worked for 13 months to get the GIFAs signed by other governments. We worked long and hard. As we got each agreement signed, we took them to the Hill, where they were approved.

Q: I imagine that with each approval, you gained more credibility for the next round.

RIDGWAY: That's right. Other countries saw that they had to follow the established pattern if they wanted to have some agreement with us, even though the GIFA was not international law at the time.

The Soviet delegates, after having imbibed a little too much one day, allowed that if we ever tried to enforce the law, they would blow us out of the water. We told them to stop drinking, because some day we would have to enforce the law. They subsequently changed negotiators, a move which eventually led to a U.S.-Soviet agreement.

The Japanese presented a different challenge. They raised a very interesting issue. As I said, I have been blessed with the acquaintance of people who were willing to tell me what their requirements were. This was very important, particularly at the beginning when I was a neophyte in the fishing business and could not base my judgments on personal experience. These people never misled me. For example, the tuna industry told me at the beginning all about their operations, their market, etc. The Japanese came to Washington and told us that they could not be treated like other nations. They had different requirements. The Japanese legal advisor was Mr. Owada, whose daughter is now married to the Crown Prince. He later became the Japanese ambassador to the UN. He told me that he thought I was acting in violation of international law, which, by the way, was true; we certainly were. Congress had known that and had decided to ignore it.

I suggested that he view our position not in terms of existing international law, but rather in light of "anticipatory" international law. I was severely chastised by the Department's legal advisor. When I went to talk to him, he told me that I had no business talking about "anticipatory" international law. I told him that since we were acting in violation of existing international law, I had to find some answer to give to one of the world's leading international lawyers. Furthermore, I told him that the only reason he knew of my comment is because a member of his staff, who had been assigned to my delegation, had overheard my comment and had run out of the room to tattletale. I continued by saying, that, as far as I was concerned, this individual had shown poor judgment, and if that lawyer was assigned to my delegation so that he could report daily or frequently to the Department's legal advisor, he was not welcome and would no longer be included as a member of my delegation. We then agreed that that member of the legal advisor's office who had been assigned to my delegation, would henceforth work for me and not for the Department's legal advisor.

I told the Japanese that our model agreement had been used successfully with other governments. If the U.S.-Japanese agreement were to differ from previous versions, that would be noticed in Congress, creating, at a minimum, major delays. If, however, I could take a signed agreement to the Hill and tell them that regardless of the words, the agreement would work the same way as all others, that should allow it to be passed expeditiously. The Japanese insisted that they needed a different text and needed more time to consider the issues. They wanted me to come to Tokyo to help them get the necessary concurrences from all interested Japanese communities. Fishing is a serious business in Japan. Therefore, after our meetings in Washington with the Japanese team, my team and I flew to Tokyo. There, we were met by a demonstration a block away from our hotel. The fishermen were protesting my presence and the American position. I appeared on the Japanese equivalent of the "Today Show," where I had a chance to make our points and to take a tough stance. I said that we understood the very serious nature of the issues, but that unless we reached an agreement, it would be very difficult to continue our fishing relationship, which, after all, had been profitable for both sides.

Some time before that moment, the Japanese Fishing Agency invited our delegation to an evening in a geisha house, which was the customary courtesy extended by a Japanese governmental agency to a visiting delegation. Since I was the only woman member of either delegation, I said that the male members of our delegation were free to attend, but I would prefer not to go. However, the Japanese insisted that I, as head of the delegation go (something they had accepted unlike the Argentines, who had found it very difficult to accept a female chief of delegation); if I didn't go, the party would be canceled. As I had been told by our Japanese experts that these kinds of invitations were very important to the Japanese; I agreed to accept it. So we spent an evening in a geisha house. It was one of my most uncomfortable evenings ever, as I was in the midst of female subservience, and that was bothersome to me.

After several meetings in Japan, we returned to Washington, where we were joined some time later by the Japanese delegation. Eventually, an agreement that was totally unlike any other GIFA was signed. It was a very strange looking agreement. On February 28, 1977, we had all country GIFAs signed and approved by Congress, except the Japanese one. It had been delivered to the Hill; I had testified about it both in the House and the Senate. I had assured everyone that, despite the different language, it would have exactly the same effect as all other GIFAs.

However, there were a lot of people in Congress who just wanted to flex their muscles and test what I had signed. I was asked what I expected would happen, i.e., how the Japanese would react, if the agreement were not approved. I told them that I thought the Japanese would take their nets out of the water. I think there were people in Congress who wanted to see whether my prognostication was correct. Throughout the evening and night of February 28, a number of people sat in my office at State waiting for reports from the Pacific. What were the Japanese doing since there was no agreement? They, as I predicted, took their nets out of the water. We knew this and Congress knew it. The Hill people admitted that we had been right and promised to follow through with an approval of the Japanese GIFA. A couple of days later, both Houses approved the agreement and the Japanese resumed fishing. By the end of the 13 months, we were exhausted, as you can well imagine.

Q: Did the GIFAs become the standard for international fisheries agreements?

RIDGWAY: They did become the standard. The problem was that we said that there were two kinds of fisheries. There were those fish that remained in the waters in which they were born and those that migrated. The example of the first was salmon, and of the second, tuna. The GIFAs resolved a lot of issues for coastal states with coastal fisheries, but not for issues raised by migratory fish. Tuna issues were still on the table, particularly as at about this time that fish became involved in some dolphin related disputes. Furthermore, salmon continued to raise issues, even after the Law of the Sea said that the states in whose rivers the salmon spawned have a special interest in the salmon swimming in the high seas. It is very difficult to enforce mandates on the high seas, unless there is some specially recognized and accepted authority. I have lost track of the ins and outs of the salmon fishing problems in the Pacific, but I understand that even today there are difficulties stemming from the fact that there is an area in the Pacific where salmon congregate irrespective of origin, i.e., Russian, Canadian, or U.S. before they return to their streams of origin. Asian fishermen are heavily involved in fishing in this area, which makes for debates on the management of salmon resources. As far as coastal state jurisdiction, the GIFAs did set a standard and become a model for other international fisheries agreements in the standards, the policing, and the management of the resources.

Q: Historically, the U.S. has been involved in discussions with the Canadians about fishing in the Grand Banks. How did the Canadians respond to the GIFA draft?

RIDGWAY: In 1977, the Canadians took the position that the U.S. could not invoke jurisdiction over 200 miles of territorial waters as that would have given us too much say over what the Canadians saw as "their" fish. In response, they also decided to assert jurisdiction over 200 miles of water off their coasts. Therefore, by 1977, both countries had a 200-mile coastal-resource jurisdiction. The trouble was that the issues had little to do with fish far off shore; they involved resources close to shores on both coasts. There were issues in the Great Banks, in Georges Bank, in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, which were a great salmon fishing area, in the Beaufort Seas, which had oil exploitation possibilities, and in other areas.

I led the negotiating team for our discussions with the Canadians. I had 80 people on my delegation. I was the only woman. In July 1977, after about three months of negotiations, we agreed on an interim agreement that was to last one year. That was done to buy us time for more extended negotiations. That interim agreement froze into place a little bit of science and a little bit of allocation, including an understanding that the two sides would go to an international court to get a determination on where the outer boundaries should be drawn, particularly in the Atlantic Ocean, the primary area in dispute.

There is another feature of the GIFA, which I should mention. This one had longer-range implications. In March, 1977, as I mentioned earlier, the Japanese kept their pledge. We had a new administration in Washington. Warren Christopher was the new deputy secretary of State. Patsy Mink was the new assistant secretary for OES. When she was nominated, I had a meeting with her to say that I would like to stay on in my deputy assistant secretary and ambassador for oceans and fisheries role until the GIFAs were all signed and delivered, and until the Canadian negotiations were completed. She agreed, particularly as we were also busy with several other negotiations; we had a busy, fruitful office.

At the end of the first week in March, the Soviet Union decided to test American resolve to protect the new 200-mile limits. Even though the Soviets had signed the GIFA, all of a sudden they began to fish within that 200-mile zone. A process had been established several years earlier to examine alleged violations. In the middle of the night, I was called by the Coast Guard operations center. As it had already contacted out legal advisors, we now had a telephonic conference including the Coast Guard ship at sea. The question was whether the Soviet vessel should be seized; it was clearly within our 200-mile zone. It was clear that the Soviets were testing us. We all agreed that the Soviet vessel should be seized, which the Coast Guard proceeded to do. I thought the Department would go crazy the next morning. Both Christopher and Mink wanted to stop the seizure operation immediately and Christopher turned around and overturned the seizure decision.

The Soviets kept on fishing. A couple of days later, another Soviet vessel was spotted navigating within the 200-mile zone. We went through the same process, and at our level we again decided to seize, this time, however, we sent our "recommendation" forward to Mink and Christopher before acting. This time, Christopher told us that we had no idea what else was going on in U.S.-Soviet relations; I personally was told that I didn't understand the realities and importance of these relations and didn't have my priorities straight. Cyrus Vance was at that very moment in Moscow discussing a very important package. According to history, what Vance was about to table was a whole new set of nuclear positions, which threw the Soviets into a tizzy. Vance came home empty-handed and we in fisheries also didn't achieve our goals. As a consequence of this flap, I was taken "out of the loop." This was my first experience with "linkage," which, from all my years of experience at the negotiation's table, I have concluded does not work.

Of course, the American fishing industry rose in fury. Congress was furious; it felt it had just passed a law and now the Department refused to enforce it. And sure enough, a third Soviet vessel entered the 200-mile zone. Christopher again refused to take any action. He held a press conference at which he announced that we would not take any action against these Soviet "intruders," since we had other issues to pursue with the Soviets. The net result of the deputy secretary's position was that hearings were held in Congress. I had to testify, much to my annoyance. Staffers and some of their principles knew full well what had transpired; nevertheless, they wanted a public show. The Coast Guard was also called to testify, as well as representatives of some other agencies. Finally, the third Soviet vessel was seized. Because of the earlier incursions, the Coast Guard wanted to make an example. It brought the Soviet ship into Boston harbor; its nets and catch were seized and the fine assessed was the equivalent of the value of the vessel. It was the Soviet's turn to be upset. All regulations concerning fishing in the 200-mile territorial waters were re-written to exclude the Department of State from any decisions concerning the enforcement of the Magnuson Act. In the end, the Department was the real loser.

Years later, when I had the pleasure of working for George Shultz, I was delighted to work with a secretary who understood that the various domestic interests had to be kept separated when dealing with international issues. His philosophy was to try to move these interests along in tandem with our international concerns, and that the Department should not link them, particularly when it was likely, that by doing so, one might screw all of them up. He understood that the Soviets would take whatever they could, regardless of the importance of the issue. At the first Reagan-Gorbachev meeting, after their initial meeting, they agreed to issue a joint statement. I was the lead negotiator trying to put this statement together. When we sat down at the negotiating table at about 11:00 p.m. in preparation of a 10 a.m. press conference the Soviets opened the meeting by referring to a conference being held at the time in Moscow between Pan-American Airways and Aeroflot. The Soviets said that Pan-American was holding out on some issues that they felt had to be resolved and that unless these issues were resolved, the Soviets would suspend the negotiations over the joint presidential statement. I told them that was okay with me. I closed my briefing book and walked out, even though the Soviets tried to remind me that that would be end of the joint statement. I called George Shultz and told him that the Soviets were still playing their "old game." I added that I was sure that the Soviets were dragging in a secondary issue in the hopes of gaining some leverage on more important matters. In pre-Reagan days, our side would have gone into a tizzy over the Soviet move. Shultz would never react that way.

In any case, when Christopher took the position that he did take, I went to see Carol Laise, the Director General of the Foreign Service. I told her that I had understood that I would be in the fisheries job for two or three years. I told her that I had essentially finished all the GIFAs and that I still had to testify on the Canadian GIFA, which I would be glad to do, but that beyond that, I really didn't see a role for me with the then existing "Seventh floor" incumbents and thought that the time had come for me to move on. I added that I was not in tune with the Department's leadership and no one seemed to care about my functions and responsibilities, which were perceived by the leadership to be just a little bit more than marginal. I told Carol that I was ready to be sent overseas as an ambassador. And that is what happened.

Q: I have run into the "linkage" issue at much lower levels. There is, I think, an endemic problem in the Department's approach. People seem to be reluctant to engage in what they consider a "secondary" issue. I think this is a real challenge for the Foreign Service and this is when strong leadership from the Department's upper echelons becomes essential.

RIDGWAY: There are two ways to tackle the issue. Your suggestion is certainly one way. The leadership has to be prepared to weigh all American interests. The other approach is to line up all the interests vertically so that you cannot act on one without action on another having been taken; that is the way to approach negotiations. Without that, nothing is served; not a single one of the interests on the list is served. The negotiator has to understand that all of those interests are "ours"; he cannot be allowed to act on one and not the others.

I found the Christopher approach very disappointing. I was stunned that people thought that in fact they could get something from the Soviets on nuclear issues by not pushing on other matters, like fishing rights. As it turned out, we struck out on both.

Once I finished the Canadian interim agreement, I was appointed as our ambassador to Finland.

Q: Before we get to that assignment, let me raise a couple of questions. Did you encounter, in your fisheries job, the challenge of diminishing ocean resources?

RIDGWAY: Not during my tour. What happened later was that we extended coastal jurisdiction to 200 miles and gave the management of the resources in those waters over to the people who were exploiting the resources. Under such circumstances, I can give you the predictable outcome: you kill the resources. During the late 1970's, we had a healthy fishery environment. However, the politics were not healthy; people were upset by all those "foreigners taking our fish." It is true, I think, that some foreign fishing vessels exceeded the quota allocated to them and used fishing methods that scoured the seas. Through the GIFAs we tried to put mid-water trawls in place so that the nets could not be dragged on the sea bottom, thereby killing all the breeding grounds. There were rules established to protect resources and they were enforced.

In time, I guess the resource-depletion problem would have arisen anyway, because the demand for the resource was greater than the availability. But, by and large, the combination of scientific management on an international basis - or on the basis of the nature of the fish plus the capacity to enforce the rules - might well have protected the resource at least better than it actually was. I think the serious depletion did not take place until the Law of the Sea went into the nature of coastal state jurisdiction. I think it was as simple as that. Our own resources were already devastated by that time.

Q: In your eyes, was the New England fishery industry a fragile one at this time?

RIDGWAY: No. It was a solid industry. Fishing was good all up and down the East Coast; there was squid, mackerel for fish meal, herring, among others. Under the international convention on the North Atlantic fisheries scientists had a role every year in determining the size of the catch for the following year. The first set of numbers that went into the hopper was the scientists' limits. The second set of numbers represented a range of sustainable use, which politically and scientifically was the highest we could manage. Then came the major negotiations on who got to fish what, i.e., what was each nation's quota, fish species by fish species. The enforcement may have been inadequate, but I think this approach was correct.

When the quota establishment was turned over, region by region, to the fishing industry, it only took a few years before the resources were depleted.

Q: One final question: Did Soviet spy vessels become a concern at all?

RIDGWAY: A little. Not all the Soviet fishing vessels were actually fishing vessels. Although there was some spying, it was accepted by all and predictable; they weren't around that much.

Q: During your tour as the ambassador for fisheries and ocean affairs, did you have much contact with the U.S. Navy?

RIDGWAY: Not very much. They just wanted to be sure that the GIFAs did not interfere with their freedom of passage and those kinds of issues. The Coast Guard was part of our team, both their legal counsels and their operators. Our negotiating team consisted primarily of the Department's lawyers, people from OFA (Office of Fisheries Affairs which later became the Office of Ocean and Fisheries Affairs) and myself.

I might just briefly mention the history of OFA. It started, I believe, with S/FW (Special Assistant to the Secretary for Fisheries and Wildlife). That office was concerned with international fishery issues, which had become more prominent after WWII. Wildlife also became an issue, because species such as whales and seals do migrate. Then there were questions about access for marine research vessels and other issues of that nature.

People then became interested in environmental issues, which also do not recognize national boundaries. I think Herman Pollock was the first State Department official to take on this task. Senator Pell, who had been in the Coast Guard during WWII, was very interested in this subject. He submitted legislation that created the Bureau of Ocean, Environment and Scientific Affairs (OES) and shepherded it through the Congress. S/FW became deputy assistant secretary for ocean and fisheries affairs in this new bureau. The ambassadorial rank that went with that job was continued, which meant that Senatorial confirmation was required for that job. OES was first headed by Dixy Lee Ray, who was from the state of Washington and a nuclear energy expert. She was succeeded by Fred Irving, then by Patsy Mink, and then by Tom Pickering.

Q: You mentioned whales earlier. Who was responsible for that concern?

RIDGWAY: Congress passed an act in the 1970s, the Marine Mammal Act, which provided for protection of whales and dolphins. The politics of whaling took right off after the passage of that act. The U.S. was a member of the International Whaling Commission; our representative on that body was an employee of NOAA. I was not personally involved in negotiations on whales and fur seals.

Q: In 1977, you went to Finland as our ambassador. You were there until February, 1980. Did you have any problems in getting White House approval of your nomination, since that position is often filled by a political appointee?

RIDGWAY: Not really. I was offered a different embassy first, which I initially accepted. When I went home and began to consider the assignment, I came to the conclusion that the offer was not a very substantive one. I had traveled the world for two years; I had finished concluding a series of important international agreements; I had been an ambassador for what I considered major issues; and I thought I deserved more consideration than I what was being offered.

I had visited Finland during my travels. I sat down with a friend and we took out an atlas; we covered each country that was available alphabetically. When we got to Finland, I realized that that was the right assignment for me. The next day, I went to see the Director General again and asked for Finland, which was okay with the Department.

Q: What were the major issues in U.S.-Finnish relations that you had to contend with?

RIDGWAY: There weren't many, but the European scene had a lot of topics at the time that were of interest to the Finns. In the first place, the Conference on Security and Cooperation had concluded in Helsinki in 1975. The participants had signed the final act there. Finland had been a major player in these negotiations, and therefore, had an interest in doing what it could to soften the edges of the east-west confrontation. They were, after all, part of the east-west boundaries. They were very active diplomats in giving life to the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act.

In the Spring of 1977, at one of the periodic review conferences on progress toward the goals established by the Final Act, the United States, which was represented by a team which included some well know people and which was headed by Arthur Goldberg, raised hell with the Soviets about their human rights record. The Europeans were startled by our approach. However, Ford and Kissinger had been chastised by the Republican conservatives for signing the Helsinki Final Act, which this group viewed as de-facto recognition of Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe without any benefit to the U.S. The administration countered by claiming that much progress had been made in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union on human rights.

At the first review conference, the American administration set out to show that it insisted that the human rights provisions of the Final Act be followed strictly. That conference, held in Belgrade, ended up in chaos after the U.S. strategy became obvious. No one knew how to deal with the U.S. position; both the Soviets and the Europeans became upset. The United States was pretty proud of itself.

The Finns, after these various blow-ups, were still trying to manage the atmosphere in the hopes of salvaging something from this first review conference. In addition to the human rights issues, the conference also became involved in a discussion of the Pershing and the SS-20 missiles which principally involved NATO. The major issue was whether, and how, the U.S. would respond to the placement in Europe of the Soviet SS-20s and whether the Soviets were prepared to submit a negotiating proposal, as well as a re-armament policy.

During my ambassadorial tour, Afghanistan also became part of the dialogue, as did the U.S. position on participation in the Moscow Olympics of 1980. That is, in short, a description of the political issues that we faced in our relations with Finland during my tour in Helsinki.

Finland, at the time, was not high on Washington's agenda. Washington, frankly, did not understand it. It may even have bought into Franz Joseph Strauss' Finlandization, i.e., that somehow the Finns had sold out because they were so close to the USSR. Washington didn't know Finnish history and didn't pay much attention to the country. It knew nothing of Finnish society or its economy, which was more capitalist than any other northern European economy - more than Sweden, Norway, or Denmark. The economy had a very small state segment - an important, but hardly major factor. It had been created to pay reparations that the Soviets had demanded at the end of WWII.

The Finns were very interested in American markets. In Finland, U.S. ambassadors had had business as their major and most interesting focus, long before the Seventh Floor decided that ambassadors had to pay more attention to American business in their country of assignment. We were trying to sell aircraft to Finnair. We had some commercial disputes. Other issues included: the American hockey stick industry didn't like what the Finns were doing in their business, and cheese. We also assisted Finnish firms trying to gain a foothold in the U.S. market. Finlandia Vodka was having a very difficult time getting a share in the American market and was always looking for advice on how to improve their position. Nokia, a brand new firm which had got its start with the manufacture of the timing mechanisms for the 1980 Lake Placid Winter Olympics, was beginning to manufacture their wares in Atlanta and Houston.

There were other issues: Finns wanted to sell their ice-breakers to the U.S. Coast Guard, which was a real non-starter. When I told the Finns that, it made for big headlines in the local papers. While we manufactured our own, I don't know how good they were, as I remember one had to be towed back from Antarctica, when the screws fell off. But they were American!

The Finns were very active internationally in such activities as peace keeping and other UN activities which were essentially ignored by Washington leadership. However, I do believe that there were people in Washington that found Finnish views on international matters helpful and interesting, particularly on what was happening in Moscow and in Europe.

Q: How did you find Finnish relations with the Soviets?

RIDGWAY: Very carefully done. The Finnish president had always been responsible for Finnish foreign policy and national security matters. Urho Kekkonen was the president while I was in Finland. He may have been viewed as suspect by many people in Washington - perhaps for good reasons, but I didn't know. The prevalent view was that the Finns would manage their relations with the Soviet Union, keeping their national security uppermost in their minds. They were not about to challenge the Soviets on matters which they thought the Soviets would misinterpret. What Washington didn't understand, or wasn't willing to take into consideration, was that the Finns had lost 10 percent of their male youths fighting the Soviets. The Soviets knew full well that if they ever made a move on Finland, the Finns had a standing military force that was severely limited by a WWII peace treaty, but a reserve force of 600,000 men that could be called up in 48 hours. I can tell you that all of those men would have rushed to arms. The Finns were known to be fierce fighters; I doubt that there was a single Soviet soldier who wished to return to Finland to fight another war. As a result, there was a very delicate balance.

The Soviet experiences in Finland in WWII from 1939 to 1940 and from 1941 to 1943 had not been good. Until the lakes froze, they were getting beaten by the Finns. Once the Soviets could cross those lakes, they outmatched the Finns, who had ran out of manpower. After all, the Finnish population was 4 million and the Soviet Union 200 million. The Finns were fierce fighters. They wiped out a Soviet division in one night on one occasion, so I doubt that the Soviets were anxious to return to Finland.

Q: What was the situation with the Karelians?

RIDGWAY: Western Karelia had been ceded to the Soviets after the 1939 Russian-Finnish war and there was no movement to return to the pre-war borders. The Karelians were not interested in irredentism. I have talked to Finns in recent years and there are Karelian societies, but no signs of irredentism. In any case, the Finns can see what has happened to that area and are not interested in having it back - too expensive. About 400,000 Finns were repatriated after WWII; they had been displaced by Karelia being ceded to the Soviets. In this way, the majority of the displaced had been taken care of.

I don't think Washington was able to handle the nuances of Finnish foreign policy. I think the bureaucracy viewed the Finns as "neutral." It didn't know whether the Finns would be for or against any particular U.S. policy. John Foster Dulles used to say that there could not be any "neutrals." President Bush has essentially taken the same attitude, particularly in respect to terrorism and related U.S. activities. Folks don't like neutrals. I should add that the Finns were certainly not neutral about "democracy" or "capitalism," which were two issues of great interest to the United States, but on which Washington never understood Finland.

Q: Was there any spillover into U.S.-Finnish relations from the problems we had with the Swedes and Olaf Palme.

RIDGWAY: No. The reactions in the two countries were not the same.

Q: How were Finnish-Swedish relations?

RIDGWAY: They were proper. They had a long history together. Sweden owned Finland for 800 years. I used to read the Swedish newspapers that catered to the remnants of a Swedish population that still lived in Finland. There was no way that I would ever learn Finnish, even though I made an effort to study it, so I relied on my Norwegian, which enabled me to read the Swedish newspaper, which I found to be quite balanced. Western Finland was still very close to the Swedes; they had bilingual signs. Depending on which locality you were visiting, the first line of the sign might be in Finnish; in other places, it might be in Swedish. You could choose either language for your university candidacy. I think over time, the Finnish language was used more and more. The week I left Finland, the Swedish royal family was visiting Finland and I attended the ceremonies that were held in western Finland. Relations were cordial. There were a lot of Finns working in Sweden, which at the time was much wealthier than its neighbor. I think the Finns knew that if "push came to shove," they would once again be the frontline troops for the Swedes. The Finns knew that if the Soviets were ever to make a move in Europe, they would be among the first to be thrown into battle, which is the way it had been from time immemorial. The Finns were the ground forces defending northern Europe, whether in the Russian, the Czar's or the Swedish army.

Q: How did the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 play in Helsinki?

RIDGWAY: I won't speak for the Finnish government, but my impression was that knowledgeable Finns in the foreign policy area considered Jimmy Carter as naive from the outset; I don't know that Brzezinski was viewed any more favorably. After Afghanistan had become the issue and following Carter's speech about the misunderstanding with the Soviets, the Finns had taken measure of our administration. They had co-existed with the Soviets for a long time and knew them far better than we did; when the issue of the Afghan invasion came up in the UN, the Finns abstained.

I gave my final speech as U.S. ambassador to Finland to the Finnish equivalent of the Council of Foreign Relations. I sent my remarks to the presidential palace beforehand. The president read them and came and sat in the front row. I had developed a pattern for my speeches. I would speak in English, but periodically, my thoughts (not verbatim) were repeated in Finnish. My final message was that Finland had to be careful not to compromise its neutrality. We understood Finnish neutrality and we didn't want anymore for Finland that it wanted for itself, which was a credible neutrality. I went on to say that it was not entirely clear to us that the position Finland had taken on Afghanistan was one that fit the image of credible neutrality, particularly given Finland's own position. I am told that this speech remains one of the hallmark speeches in Finnish-U.S. relations and that it is still widely available in Finland. That was my final goodbye.

I returned a few years later as part of a Reagan entourage. I think I had something to do with President Reagan choosing to stop there. He gave a very important speech in Helsinki's Finlandia Hall.

However, I have to go back a second to the Carter era and re-emphasize that the Finns could not believe Jimmy Carter. I loved Finland; I thought I had had a very good tour. I thought I made sure that the Finns understood that the U.S. was interested in them and understood the nuances of their policies. That is not to say that the Finns were right on everything and that I approved of all they did.

During the Christmas holidays of 1979, I got a phone call from Harry Barnes, who was then the Director General. He told me that Lucy Benson had resigned as Undersecretary for Security Assistance. Matt Nimetz, the Counselor of the Department, was going to replace her and the secretary wanted me to join his team as the Counselor of the Department. I think I suggested to Harry that I really wasn't ready to leave Finland, but he said that this was very important and he insisted that I return. He was right; the Counselor's job was very important and I agreed to take it.

I returned to Finland after Christmas to wrap things up. I gave the speech I described earlier and arrived back in Washington mid-February, 1980.

Q: On what day exactly did you return?

RIDGWAY: February 18, 1980. It could have been on the 19th or 20th, but I think it was the 18th. As I said, I left Finland to become the counselor of the Department. It seems that while I was en route back to Washington, a number of decisions were taken in the Department. These shaped my view of the Department for many years thereafter.

As I said, Matt Nimitz, who had been the counselor, was replacing Lucy Benson, who had retired. In effect, I was replacing Benson. Taking down her photograph in the "rogue's gallery" took down the only photograph of a woman. The Carter administration had made a lot of noise about affirmative action and women's equality and that sort of stuff. However, when Nimitz became the undersecretary, he took with him the responsibilities for Northern Ireland and Cyprus, both of which had been part of the counselor's portfolio, taking from me, from the counselor's office two major responsibilities.

With respect to infrastructure, a decision was made, unbeknownst to me, that the new counselor would also not enjoy the same transportation privileges as had her predecessor and all other Seven Floor principals, so no car was dedicated to that office. I would have to rely on the Department's motor pool.

Furthermore, it was decided, while I was on my way back from Finland, that the counselor would no longer be invited to the secretary's staff meeting.

So, I landed in the full blush of expectations, expecting that I would be treated as my predecessor had. I was, in fact, quite pleased that I had been promoted to a senior position, in part as a reward for the fine job I had done in Finland. The Finns thought I had done a good job. I didn't win them over to our side - no one really expected that - but I think the general view was that I had done a good job in Helsinki. So I viewed my assignment as counselor as a promotion to the Department's senior ranks. I thought I would be able to contribute to the Department leadership's understanding of European issues. I was quite surprised, therefore, when I found out that I was not invited to the secretary's staff meeting. I went to see Warren Christopher and asked that I be included in the secretary's staff meetings, as had my predecessor. He told me that that was not possible. I asked whether I could talk to the secretary about it. Christopher said: "No." I never, never saw Cy Vance, although I was his counselor.

I also never had any access to any items on the secretary's agenda. When I retired in 1989, I used a line, which I have used ever since with women's groups and minorities: "Do not take a token job unless you have a token brain!" People who knew me understood the reference. The frustrations, if you do not have a token brain and find yourself in a token job, are enormous. You spend the day looking for things to do.

Q: I gather that what you are saying is that the administration really downgraded the job of counselor, but offered it to you because it needed the picture of another female among the photographs of Seven Floor principals.

RIDGWAY: I am convinced that that was the case. There seemed to be no other reason why those decisions were made, particularly while I was traveling back from Helsinki. The atmosphere was not helped when I was told that some of the changes were made because the Department's leadership didn't know what my skills or competence were. That would suggest that at least I would be allowed to attend the secretary's staff meeting where my competence could be judged, i.e., whether I could or would make any contributions to the discussions. Furthermore, it was also suggested that over time, my skills would have been evaluated by assigning to the counselor some tasks to at least test her competence; but, that was never done.

As it turned out, the few assignments that I was asked to undertake had relevance to my next assignments. There were also pieces of activity in the Department which the principals refused to engage in. Consequently, over time, I found enough work to keep reasonably and constructively busy. However, it was a struggle to reach that level of activity.

Q: At this time, the Department was headed by two lawyers, one of whom, Cyrus Vance, had considerable experience in international negotiations. Did you have an opinion regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this team?

RIDGWAY: How could I judge since I never saw them in action? What I saw was the same thing as every other member of the American public did. As far as I was concerned, they were in a different world. Nimitz, my predecessor, who became undersecretary and took some of the choice assignments with him, was also a lawyer. I think his legal background may have given these three principals the view that they were the senior partners in a law firm and that I was the brand new junior associate. I would have been perceived as a young lawyer who was years away from being considered for a partnership, even a junior one, and therefore too junior to be dealt with directly by any of the senior partners. I have learned since my tour as counselor that this style of management was prevalent in the prestigious law firms, and they brought it to the Department. I have seen this style replicated again and again in the Department and in other bureaucracies, and I have come to believe that it is not appropriate or effective in the management of large organizations.

I was the counselor for only one year, because Carter lost the 1980 elections. During that time, I worked on a number of issues that proved useful in the future. While I was in Finland, the administration, Patsy Mink, Warren Christopher and others, had to take up the question of the U.S.-Canada fisheries agreement. I said earlier that I had managed to cobble together an interim agreement which covered all the fishing issues between the two countries. The thought at the time was that eventually, both countries would go to the World Court to get a determination on the proper boundaries between the two countries. We had salmon fisheries which didn't respect national boundaries in any case, and there were major catches off George's Bank that had to be assigned.

There are a number of lessons here to be learned by those who are interested in the international negotiating process, particularly when an issue touches domestic interests so fundamentally. In the case of Canada, when I returned from Finland, I found that Lloyd Cutler had been appointed as the chief U.S. negotiator and Marcel Cadieux had been appointed as the Canadian negotiator. Both were famous lawyers. They were to negotiate a longer range, permanent agreement. In fact, the two had done so. However, during the last phases of the process, they went behind closed doors. They did emerge with an agreement, which was then circulated to American and Canadian fishing interests, who went nuts. They were never, in any case, easy to deal with, especially since their livelihood depended on the outcome of these various negotiations. In these U.S.-Canada negotiations, those interests had been shut out of the final stages of negotiations. That did not sit well at all. When it was presented to the U.S. Senate by the U.S. negotiator, the Senate refused to ratify it.

When I got back from Finland, I watched the unfolding of this drama. Tom Pickering was then the assistant secretary for Ocean and International Environmental Affairs. I just watched but did not get involved. I knew what the problems were and why the industry was upset as I had struggled with that industry while I was ambassador for ocean and fishing affairs. I had learned that that industry, like most other interest groups, could not all of a sudden, at the end of the process, just be shuttled aside while the governmental negotiators reached their agreements. They have to be in a position to protect themselves from their own constituents. They need time to consult with those constituencies before any final arrangement is agreed upon. I did provide Tom with my views on this, but of course the damage had been done by that time.

As I mentioned before, we held a review of the Helsinki Final Act, in Belgrade in 1977. We did not fare well at that conference. We were accused by the Europeans of doing our best to undermine what was known as the "Germans' Ostpolitik" and that we were trying to sabotage a rapprochement by accusing the Soviets and the East bloc of all sorts of human rights violations. Another review conference was scheduled for 1980, and two of the issues for us were who was to head our team and who would provide the support. It was decided that the counselor would be responsible for back stopping the team, because that job was viewed as having the most spare time. The administration named Bill Scranton as the new head and chief of the U.S. delegation to this conference that became known as the "Madrid review conference." Max Kampelman was named as the deputy chief of the delegation. I didn't know either of these two people. Somewhere along the line, Bill Scranton developed an inner ear problem and could not therefore take the job. The administration then named Griffin Bell from Georgia to head the U.S. delegation. The conference opened with Bell as head of our delegation, although it was Kampelman who was the effective leader.

I was asked to form up the rest of the delegation. In doing so, I had an opportunity to meet with representatives from American human rights groups, such as the Helsinki Watch, the American Czech Society, the American Slovak Society, the Ukrainian Catholics, and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Many of these organizations were based in Cleveland and Chicago. I traveled throughout the country to brief them and to discuss with them the possible composition of our delegation and what our position on various issues would be in Madrid. While I also assured them that we would be resolute on human rights, I also informed them we did not want to jeopardize the success of the conference by going overboard on the human rights issue.

Poland became another issue that was discussed at Madrid. I was asked to head up an interagency working group on this issue. The administration wanted to make sure that we were ready for whatever might happen in Poland, including the question of how we might extract our people if the Soviets really clamped down on Lech Walesa and his movement.

These were the sorts of issues that were brought to me to staff, in part because no one else seemed to be seriously interested. We had visits from several Eastern European delegations, staffed by unattractive apparatchiks, who would offer up some small human rights step, such as releasing a family from detention or giving Western journalists greater access, in exchange for being allowed to visit Washington for some "political consultation." As no one in the Department wanted to meet with these delegations, I once again was designated as the lead U.S. official.

I have another illustration of what I did as counselor. A woman, now considered a great lady, Eugenia Charles, came from Dominica, but no one would meet with her. David Newsom, then the undersecretary for political affairs, had sufficient rank to be able to host functions at Blair House for Caribbean leaders. I was invited because I was the only other senior official in the Department who had a paneled office. It looked impressive, which was enough in their eyes. My actual duties did not have to be revealed to the visitors. I also met with Tom Adams of Barbados. There was a spate of Caribbean senior officials who came to Washington to suggest that the U.S. pay greater attention to that part of the world. They needed economic assistance. Charles wanted to know if she could have a \$50 thousand grant to purchase a couple of fast boats from U.S. Customs which had been confiscated because they were involved in drug smuggling. She wanted to use the boats to bring the various islands in Dominica together. Others in the Caribbean had the same idea of using confiscated boats to bring the islands closer together. Our answer, of course, was "No." It was always our answer to our Caribbean neighbors, because no one took them seriously. No senior official in the Department would even see them.

Under those circumstances, Dave Newsom and I formed a team to worry about Caribbean issues. As a result, during my year as counselor, I stayed busy on some aspects of East-West relations (except for U.S.-Soviet relations), on Caribbean matters, on the Madrid conference, and on the fisheries issue - matters that senior officers in the Department did not want to get involved in or did not have the time for.

Q: Let me go back to some of the issues you have mentioned. First of all, let's talk about the U.S.-Canada fisheries issues. When you took the counselor job, what was your involvement?

RIDGWAY: My comments will span the Carter and Reagan administrations. I mentioned that the draft agreement was submitted to Congress, but ran into heavy opposition in the Senate. In fact, it never moved out of committee during the Carter administration. When Reagan became president, he appointed Al Haig as his secretary of state. Robert McFarlane was named as counselor. It took a while for both to be confirmed. I went to the Haig staff meeting. I think there were a number of people who watched me and could not get over my naiveté^{1/2}. I did not realize at the time that the new Republican team viewed us leftovers from a Democratic administration as politically brainwashed and potentially as disloyal to the new administration. In their eyes, there was no way that we could remain in any senior positions. I did not realize that at the time, but have learned so subsequently. I went ahead and introduced myself to Haig, shook his hand and told him that I would be glad to serve him in any way I could. I volunteered to move out of my office, so that McFarlane had a place to sit, but Haig rejected my offer. McFarlane ended up somewhere else, busy writing up a whole new national security process which would give the secretary of state the lead in that area. So I stayed in my office. I was told not to attend any more of the secretary's staff meetings. Obviously, my presence was not welcomed as soon I was asked to move to an office down the hall, which I did happily. After doing that, I went home. I realized that I was really no longer a principal and that the people in charge of assignments for Foreign Service career personnel would have to find me another assignment.

As had been tradition, the first foreign leaders that a new president meets are the Canadians and the Mexicans. In Reagan's case, his first trip would be to Ottawa in March 1981. Foreign Minister Allan MacEachen came to Washington to work out the details with Al Haig. I was told that MacEachen's first words to Haig were that there would be no discussions in Ottawa unless the U.S. resolved its problems with the draft fisheries agreement. Haig went nuts, as only Al Haig could. He didn't have a clue about the fisheries issues. MacEachen told him that this was a serious problem that had to be resolved or the presidential visit would be a disaster. I was told that after the meeting Haig asked Walt Stoessel, the EUR assistant secretary-designate, who handled fish in the Department. Stoessel is supposed to have said that the only person who knew anything about the subject had just been moved out of her office and had gone home. This happened on a Saturday. Stoessel called me at home and told me that I had to return to the Department. I said I would be glad to do that, but that I really didn't have anything to do.

So I returned to the Department and was handed the U.S.-Canada GIFA, which by then was a real mess. It was the last week of January right after the inauguration. I was given an office and a parking pass, thanks to Joan Clark. Dick Kennedy, the under secretary for administration-designate, told me he would like to put me in the office previously occupied by the Middle East negotiator, but that there were a lot of people clamoring for it. He did give me an office in that suite, and I took my secretary along. I started to travel to try to unstuck the two treaties. The Canadians did exactly the same thing. They had re-appointed their old negotiator. We had, of course, worked together to put the interim agreement together. So, here we were, back in harness once again, trying to resolve an issue with which we were very familiar. The environment had changed considerably. By this time the two fishing industries were very angry and suspicious of each other; the resulting politically-charged atmosphere made compromise very difficult to reach.

The very best that the two of us could do was to withdraw the interim agreement dealing with fishing rights, leaving in place the other agreement. The Americans were convinced that it was in their best interest to fish only on their side of the dividing, line rather than try to fish in waters on both sides of the line under a regime that would impose some limitations on their catch. The American fishermen told me that they believed that the best solution for them and the fish would have been to allow them unfettered fishing rights to the point where it was no longer commercially viable. At that time, the fishermen would go broke, leaving the fish an opportunity to restore their species. This view was held particularly by the New England fisheries industry, who were the most difficult to deal with. I raised this proposition with some scientists, who confirmed that such a point could be reached.

We then went to Congress and sold them the package that we had worked out. I talked to Ted Kennedy and many others. This was not a partisan political issue, and it mostly covered economic issues of importance to east coast fishermen. In fact, it was these east coast fish that were best managed bilaterally, even though tradition demanded warfare between the two countries.

The west coast fishermen, who were primarily interested in salmon, knew quite well that those fish were spawned primarily in Canadian rivers, which made some cooperation almost mandatory. They were managed by barb size, length of fish, season, etc. Those issues were manageable. It was the east coast fishermen, from those who caught sardines off Maine to those who fished for squid off the Carolinas' coasts who were difficult. They simply did not want to be regulated, and certainly not by a bilateral U.S.-Canada agreement. They wanted to terminate the interim agreement. So we told them to fish until their hearts were content, but only on their side of the U.S.-Canada border, and that we were then going to take the matter to the World Court. That Court's decision on the border line turned out to be quite detrimental to the American fishing industry. There were choices to be made as to where that border line would be drawn out for 200 miles from the coast. When the World Court drew the line, it was nowhere near where the Americans had hoped it would be.

In the meantime, the American fishing industry and Congress had managed to destroy the fishing industry. The fishermen had withdrawn so many of the resources that fishing off the east coast was no longer viable. They came to Congress and said that they could no longer afford to fish and that their livelihood was therefore in serious jeopardy. They wanted some kind of subsidy, which they got. Their earlier stance, that they would fish until they went broke, was quickly changed to one that required governmental subsidy after most of the marine resources had been exploited. They went out and fished what they could, made up the shortfall with a government subsidy, a mechanism (so well used by many other industries) until the marine resources were replenished, at which point they went back to their old fishing patterns.

For the negotiators, this was a few weeks of hell. The package had to be finished by March 11, when Reagan was to visit Ottawa. His administration did not trust me, since I had served in the previous one. But I was all they had. I worked the Hill and mounted a major public relations campaign through press releases and briefing papers. At the very last minute, we briefed Reagan just before his departure. Among the first questions the president was asked in Canada dealt with the fisheries issue. Unfortunately, Judge William Clark, the deputy secretary of state, had not had a chance to brief Reagan on the subject, nor had he wanted to sign the final documents, which I needed to conclude my negotiations with the Canadians. In his job, Clark seemed to be focused on making sure that those "communist" leftovers from the Carter administration were properly reigned in. He had suddenly decided that what I had worked out was probably a trap to embarrass the president, instead of being a solution to a real issue. The funny part about this process was that it was the Reagan administration that had asked me to pick up this U.S.-Canadian agreement once more and bring it to a quick resolution. The Canadians were diligently working their side of the issue and had seen that from late January, I had been similarly engaged. I don't think too many high-level officials in the Reagan administration were particularly interested in what I was doing, although a few knew what I was doing.

In any case, I got agreement from a vast majority of the American fishing industry and the Canadians. I went to Maine, to Boston and to all other fishing centers, as well as to the Hill. I had everyone's agreement on our document and the process, only to be blocked at the last minute by Judge Clark. Finally, some sensible people close to the president recognized what would happen if Reagan arrived in Ottawa empty-handed on fisheries. Demonstrations were already breaking out in Ottawa. It was bound to be a mess.

By the end of that day, I managed to get approval for all the agreements and the president took off to Ottawa. I also went as part of the delegation to make sure that there weren't be any last minute slip-ups. The Congress passed what it had to and the final papers were sent off to the World Court. That was my last involvement in the fishing business. I have watched over the years as fisheries management became a political art and not a scientific one. People wonder why we no longer have a viable fishing industry off the New England Coast; it was bound to happen when we chose the political route to resolve these issues - the wounds were self-inflicted.

The other issue that crossed lines entailed Czechoslovakian gold. We had claims on that gold and the Czechs had submitted counter-claims. This story started when the communists took over that country in 1948. There were very substantial American-Czech and American-Slovak communities in the U.S. They had hired a top notch law firm. Ed Merrigan was their lawyer. I had met with the Czech delegation, while trying to fill my working day, after the resolution of the fisheries issues. After finishing with those issues, I was restored to my non-entity status by the Reagan administration. I am in my office holding the space for Dick Kennedy so that it won't be stolen by someone before he had a chance to assign it officially. We are now in the Spring, 1981. At that time, the price of gold was about \$800 per ounce. The Congress decided to consider that, despite the pleadings by Merrigan, if Czechoslovakia was not prepared to pay the adjudicated claims of American citizens, it would authorize the U.S. Government to confiscate the gold to pay those claims. This was a very popular authorization, which had been used in other situations. I should note that depositary gold is something different than other resources. It is a central bank resource and when a government begins to tap into those, it will face major opposition, particularly from the New York Federal Reserve Bank, which has a major role in international financing.

The question arose as to who should be assigned to disentangle this problem. And there I was. If I could solve the fisheries problems, surely I could do something about the gold problem. As it turned out, I had met previously with the American-Czech community in 1980, while doing something to keep myself busy as counselor of the Department. So in 1981, I started to work on the gold issue and that got me back into the halls of Congress, and particularly with Senator Pat Moynihan, who was one of the principal sponsors of the gold confiscation legislation. I was trying to find ways to get the claims paid without the confiscation. I spent the time between the spring of 1981 and February, 1982 traveling to Prague and hosting a few Czech delegations in Washington. My task was to negotiate a gold claims agreement. We managed to come up with one in early 1982.

Q: How did you find dealing with the Czechs?

RIDGWAY: Nations like Czechoslovakia and Hungary had fine central bankers, who were well-trained before the communist takeovers. They understood international banking. The Czechs quite naturally wanted their gold back. The gold had been confiscated by the Nazis. At the end of the war, a U.S., French and British trilateral commission was formed to take control of Nazi confiscated gold, which was found all over the world. The commission was in the process of returning the gold to its rightful owners in the late 1970s and early 1980s. However, in the case of certain countries like Czechoslovakia and Albania, the communists took control of the reins of government before all the gold could be returned. Because they confiscated all American properties in these countries, the program to return the gold was stopped. We took the position that until the claims of American citizens were satisfied, the gold would be held in our possession.

The claims were adjudicated and the U.S. presented a bill to the communist government in Czechoslovakia for compensation for the losses Americans had suffered. Czechoslovakia refused to pay. This dispute had been on the table for years and had been left entirely unresolved. I really believe that the Czechs would have been happy to leave the issue unresolved until it became clear that Congress might well take the gold and at \$800 per ounce, that was real money, which also made it a very attractive target for Congress. With that threat on the table, I was able to work out a deal with the Czechs and Congress. By pure fortuitous circumstances, many Congressional members and staff that I worked with on this gold problem were old acquaintances from the fisheries issues because both of these constituencies, fishermen and American-Czechs, tended to be in Cleveland and on the East Coast. They understood the issue and the dilemmas.

These people gave me enough latitude to negotiate with the Czechs, who insisted at the beginning on putting a price tag on the gold. My suggestion to them was that they take a look at all previous claim settlements by other countries with the U.S. Lo and behold, they found that in agreements previously reached with China, Poland and Yugoslavia, the amount of the claims were exactly the same as the value of the assets held in the U.S. The conclusion had to be that if a number had to be negotiated with the U.S., it was bound to equal the value of the assets held by us. I suggested to the Czechs that they might as well face reality and accept the well-established pattern.

I traveled a lot to Czechoslovakia to make the deal palatable. These were not people we liked; these were not governments we liked. There were people in Washington who enjoyed "sticking it to the commies." In fact, I found that the human and political requirements were quite similar in all countries, regardless of regimes. Over time, we developed a very elaborate scheme, which was acceptable to all parties.

I took our draft proposal to Congress and was met with some skepticism; how did we know that the other party would not just take the gold and never pay the claims? It was a fair question. There were some who didn't want to have an agreement at all. Others just didn't understand or trust the process. When we came to discuss the bottom line, i.e., the dollars to be paid out, there was wide discussion about the process. That was very exciting.

In February 1982, the British moved their gold which consisted of sacks of coins sealed by the Reichsbank, but marked "Bank of England," to Zurich. Ours were moved overnight on pallets, from the New York Federal Reserve Bank to Zurich on a Swiss Air flight. The gold was moved uncovered so that a brick or another object could not be substituted for a bar of gold. This shipment was worth \$88 million.

In Zurich, the gold was put in a warehouse. In the meantime, the Czech deposited their check in a New York bank. That bank did all the processing, except for the final clearance. I was in a hotel, hiding from people who might want to serve me papers, which would have stopped this exchange process. On the final day, after all the gold and the Czech payment were safely in the proper hands, I was on the phone to the bank in New York. The Czech were on the phone to the Zurich warehouse and the airport, where a Czech aircraft was standing by with doors open. The bank told me that the check had cleared; I was also informed that the gold was being trucked from the warehouse in Zurich to the airport. All went smoothly; the Czechs repatriated their gold and we paid off the American claims which had been filed against the Czechs.

Q: Did the claims exceed available funds? And if so, how did you handle that?

RIDGWAY: We had no problems of that kind. The claims had been adjudicated, so they were not overstated. In fact, the problem was not with the base claims; I believe all were paid as adjudicated. What was not paid was the interest that one could have calculated as having accumulated between 1948 until 1982, which may have disappointed the claimants. However, they did receive a valid value for the lost property. But those who were compensated seem to have taken their money and were apparently sufficiently satisfied. The Foreign Claims Settlement Commission was responsible for making the payments to the Americans. Of course, the claimants had to pay their lawyers, who were very happy with the settlement. Bondholders did not get any compensation; the best we could do for them was to negotiate a process which would allow them to claim compensation from the Czech government. I have no idea how those claims were finally settled.

After those negotiations, I returned to my little office and sat there waiting for something else to come my way.

Q: Let's talk a little bit about the Helsinki review conference in Madrid. How did that go?

RIDGWAY: Madrid went on and on and on. There was a preparatory conference, as well as other pre-conference activities. I was no longer a part of the picture. Griffin Bell left; Max Kampelman became the head of the delegation. By the end of 1980, he was being well-undercut by those who opposed the whole process, "didn't want to deal with the USSR." They didn't see the possible tradeoffs, like human rights, although the U.S. in general had not seen that possibility for a long time. So, as I said, I didn't participate in the conference, even if I had been involved in its preparations. The conference actually went on for about three years. I think that our strategy at the conference made it clear that Reagan had a good feel for the Soviet Union and knew politically how to deal with the leadership.

When the Korean airliner was shot down near the Soviet border, the consensus was to withdraw from the Madrid conference and from the negotiations on arms limitations. The president saw that these were all separate issues and insisted that the U.S. stay in the negotiations. While we did take a firm rhetorical position, as Reagan was not about to sacrifice a whole set of U.S. interests to show our displeasure with a Soviet misdeed, the Madrid conference went on. If I remember correctly, it did advance the cause of human rights. Kampelman played a very solid game; it was not a repeat of Belgrade. He brought the allies along by being clear on our goals and directions; he helped to bring the American human rights community to a position which was more constructive than might otherwise have been the case. Last, but not least, we learned the advantages of dealing in trade-offs.

Q: Tell us a little bit about the problems you confronted in Poland.

RIDGWAY: I had a couple of problems. In the first place, the Poles had declared marshal law to deal with the shipyard strikes; and, Lech Walesa that created all sorts of difficulties. We were concerned about being prepared on a contingency basis for what we might have to do to help our personnel. I was asked to chair an interagency committee assigned to worrying about that issue. I don't remember much about what we did. The Polish situation did deteriorate. In August 1980, the issue of how we might have to help our people was given to another group. I should note that no one in a senior position ever showed much interest in what we were doing.

I do remember one aspect of this work. There was a real concern that the Polish situation was deteriorating so rapidly that the Soviet Union might feel obligated to intervene with its own forces. As intelligence indicated that many Soviet troops had left their barracks, and that command centers were popping up here and there, we had to judge whether the Soviets would intervene and what we might do in response. By this time, Carter had lost the election and I think there was a lack of focus on the issues in the upper echelons of the U.S. government.

George Vest was the assistant secretary for EUR at the time. I was asked to become involved, once again, in this Polish issue. George and I went to the White House on a Sunday in December, 1980 to meet first with Brzezinski and then with President Carter and some of his cabinet officers. I remember most vividly the director of the CIA. After being asked for his estimate of Soviet intentions, he briefed the assembled people on what the Soviets were doing, but he would not speculate on what their intentions were. While it was probably the honest answer, it was hardly satisfactory. Of course, Brzezinski, in light of his roots, was very tough-minded about what was happening to his country of birth. I was always concerned with this tough approach. During all of my experiences in Eastern Europe, I was always concerned with the willingness of the United States to send other people into the streets to be gunned down, as in Hungary. I think we came perilously close to doing the same in Poland.

As I said, we were meeting in the cabinet room. At one point Carter came in. I have never seen anyone as diminished as Carter was in December, 1980, after his election loss. He was wearing his cardigan and looked gray and quite out of it. Brzezinski recommended that we issue a statement of warning to the Soviets so that they would at least understand the depth of our feelings on the subject. We did issue a statement, which was similar in substance, but was phrased a little more diplomatically and did not threaten to go to WWII.

That was really the last substantive action in which I was involved as counselor. In January, 1981, I tried to explain to the new team what we had done on the Polish situation. Rick Burt was going to become the director of the Bureau for Politico-Military Affairs. Paul Wolfowitz was going to head up Policy Planning. They viewed our stance as not being tough enough. They took my briefing book on contingency plans and actions and decided that it was just inadequate and threw it out.

I realized that I had been terribly naive in believing that I could be of some assistance to the new team. When the truth struck me, I went home and waited for my next assignment. I learned later that once you become a senior officer in the Department, you have to understand that you are going to be mistrusted by new officials coming in after an election, particularly if the new administration is of a different political persuasion than the one you served. When administrations change, you are better off just packing up and going home to await your next assignment. The new team will look upon you with concern and will not be very much interested in any continuity you might provide.

Overall, my tour as counselor really entailed working on a small variety of disparate issues: the Polish unrest, the fishing issues, and the Czech gold. I must admit that this was not a very heavy work-load. Toward the end, I generally went home at about 3:00 p.m. and waited to see whether there was another assignment for me.

Q: Then what happened?

RIDGWAY: I became the career "foil." I was nominated by the Department for ambassador to Sweden, but the White House preferred Maurice Stans, the "bag man" for Nixon. The choice was not made for a long time and the issue was not settled until a compromise was reached. Finally, Franklin Forsberg, from the Memorex company, was chosen and sent to Stockholm.

So I sat around a while longer. Then I was suggested as assistant secretary for international organizations. That really never got very far. It got to the White House, which quickly rejected it. The Department tried to keep it alive by having me meet Jeane Kirkpatrick, our UN ambassador, but it quickly became clear that we two would not really get along. She did not think that any IO assistant secretary should have any ideas about what was going on in the UN. So, obviously, the White House rejected my nomination once again.

Finally, in June 1982, Larry Eagleburger asked me what I would think about going to East Germany as ambassador. I said that was fine, as it was a good ambassadorial job. So, off I went to East Berlin.

Q: What were you doing during the eighteen months you were waiting for an assignment?

RIDGWAY: I did absolutely nothing. I had made a big project out of the Czech gold issue. I traveled here and there, and met with a lot of folks. I frequently went to the Hill to discuss possible solutions. When not doing that, I came to the office, read the newspapers and then went home. I must say that in this period I met a lot of colleagues such as Reg Bartholomew who were in the same boat. We used to run into each other at about 3 p.m., when both of us were going home. There wasn't anything for us to do; the Department may well have been trying to find assignments for us, but obviously, was not very successful. Tom Pickering was off to study Spanish; Reg was also in language training. Officers were just killing time, studying languages or something else. I think we all went home early. It was very depressing.

Q: Did you study German before going?

RIDGWAY: I did indeed. I think I did quite well, ending up with a 3+ in both oral and written skills. I was confirmed in October, 1982 and arrived in East Germany on January 15, 1983. I stayed in East Berlin until June 1985.

Q: How did you find our relations with East Germany?

RIDGWAY: They were empty. It was a very interesting period. No one liked the East Germans, especially the communists. We were very suspicious of West Germany's "Ost Politik" which had been devised by Brandt and Genscher. We thought that they were "soft" on the communists and were not sufficiently concerned with the Soviet military presence of 400,000 troops in East Germany, and the East Germany secret services. We had West Berlin as the showcase of freedom, and we always compared it to East Berlin.

We only had an ambassador in East Berlin because of a number of decisions reached in the early 1970s as a result of the Mansfield resolution, which called for bringing our troops home from West Germany. Successive administrations fought this idea; they felt that the Soviet threat was still alive and well. Furthermore, there was a question of whether the Mansfield approach would have any impact on our arms control goals.

Between 1972 and 1975, a number of agreements were negotiated. The Soviet initiative, which was initially called "The European Security Conference" much to our displeasure, later became the "Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe," began in 1975. As part of this new approach, we initiated the "Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR)." The conferees agreed to recognize West and East Germany as two sovereign states. As a result, both became eligible to join the UN. Diplomatic relations were begun between East Germany and the NATO countries. This was the total of the European package. A lot was agreed upon due to the pressures from the European left which was increasingly frustrated by the lack of progress toward a "normal" situation on the continent. In addition, there was considerable pressure from the American Congress, for a more normal situation, which would allow for the return of the American troops in West Germany to the U.S. I think successive administrations recognized that the pressure was mounting and that it needed to be channeled into acceptable propositions, lest the situation get out of control to the great advantage of the Soviet Union.

The United States recognized East Germany in 1974. The Soviet Union had recognized East Germany many years earlier and had agreed that Berlin would be the capital of East Germany. However, we did not recognize East Berlin as the capital. I was the ambassador to the German Democratic Republic (GDR), and did not reside in the country. As far as we were concerned, Berlin was under the jurisdiction of the four powers: France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and ourselves, and we refused to accept any role for the East Germans in the administration of Berlin. Our mission in West Berlin ran military patrols daily into East Berlin to underline our position on the management of the city. In the evening, there would be helicopter flights over East Berlin to underscore the same point.

Our first ambassador to East Germany was John Sherman Cooper, the former senator. He was followed by David Bolen, a career Foreign Service officer, who retired from that assignment to join DuPont. Then came Herb Okun, another career officer. I followed Herb.

I left for Berlin with a long list of actions that the East Germans were going to have to take. I presented my credentials and paid my calls. When I did that, I insisted that the East Germans take action on our list, which included such matters as the Jewish claims, the tearing down of the wall, the facilitation of reunification of German families, the reaching an agreement on arms control measures, the return to the family of the Lyonel Feininger paintings, which had been left behind when he and his Bauhaus colleagues fled Nazi Germany, etc. It was a long list.

After I made all these demands, Willi Stoph, who was the GDR president, asked what the GDR would get in return for abiding by our demands. He was one of the more ridiculous members of the communist leadership, but he was the president, not Honecker. I told him that there would be no reciprocal actions on our part as the list consisted of actions that the GDR should be taking on its own as they were the "right" thing to do.

After completing this first round of calls, I found a way to get back to Washington, where I went to see Larry Eagleburger. I told him that we really had no policy toward the GDR, only a list of demands, many of which dealt with family reunifications, which were really the business of the West Germans. We did meet periodically with other NATO members on East Germany and ran an intelligence operation out of West Germany. Those activities were far from a policy. I told Larry that if Washington wanted the list taken care of, I had to have some "carrots" to work with. If that was not possible, then the best I could do was to keep reciting the list, but that I would not expect much of an East German reaction unless there was something in it for them. If I could put the list into a package, then perhaps some forward movement might be forthcoming. For example, if the paintings were returned, then perhaps we could find a senior U.S. official to go to East Berlin and engage the GDR in political discussions. The Reagan administration, and some of its predecessors, considered such political discussions as giving the GDR something substantive and was, therefore, the last thing the administration wanted to do. I said that if we wanted the paintings, I should be allowed to explore what the East Germans wanted in exchange.

I was asked what the East Germans wanted to talk about. I mentioned arms control and suggested that someone from Washington be sent to Berlin to talk about that subject. I thought it was ludicrous that the East Germans got their information about the U.S. position on arms control from the Soviets. They should hear it from our own mouths. Eagleburger sort of rolled his eyes and said in effect that my suggestions were "very interesting." He thought that I should try to sell my idea, but he would leave it to me to hear "the sound of the saw" as the limb on which I was crawling out on was being sawed away. I told him that that was fair enough. I had already found out from my experiences in the previous few years that my career was pretty well shot anyway. Senior officials never know whether they have a future or not.

I returned to East Germany and set up a meeting with the deputy foreign minister, who was not really a policy maker, but was the front man for interaction with the us. I suggested that as a starter, we try to sort out our goals in a different way. At about this time, the representative of the conference on Jewish material claims came to Berlin. He said that his people had been working with members of Congress, who had apparently suggested or blessed the idea of proposing a trade agreement with East Germany in exchange for a satisfactory solution to the Jewish claims. The revenues that the trade agreement would generate would be put into a fund to pay the claims. There are some people who today think that this was my idea; it was not. It was put forward by some members of Congress, although, I had discussed the idea with some people on the Hill who saw some merit in that kind of trade-off, the proposition that the representative of the conference on Jewish claims brought had come from Congress. To finalize it would need passage of some kind of U.S. legislation that would meet the requirements of Jackson-Vanik, which in effect barred trade with the USSR and its satellites.

As a result, I worked on an exchange package. I discussed this with the East Germans for the next two years and it, in effect, became my agenda. While the package was intended to match our interests with those of the East Germans, I always thought that we would be getting the better of the deal in the long run. I think that when I was ready to leave, the draft agreement was pretty much done. In the Spring of 1985, it was reviewed in Washington. Colin Powell, then the deputy national security advisor, chaired an interagency meeting to discuss the package. It was an impartial draft trade agreement with East Germany, as well as a draft agreement between the GDR and the conference on Jewish material claims. The dollar values were not filled in, but the concepts were all included. There was a definite relationship between a tariff opportunity on certain items and the contribution to the fund to satisfy the claims of the Jewish material losses. I must say that the conference people were very helpful in marshaling support in Congress for this package. Despite all this support, the interagency working group shot the whole package down. One of the "respectable" reasons for this opposition was that the administration did not want to be seen as being "soft" on communism, while it was negotiating with the Soviets on other issues. Also, there was a group of people, some of them in the current administration, who could not bring themselves to deal with the East Germans, particularly since some parts of the package might free up some East German moneys, which could be used to buy weapons. This was a standard argument: if funds were made available to communist countries, they would use their own resources, which might have had to be devoted to satisfy Jewish claims to buy arms. So opposition to a mutually beneficial agreement won out and the package went down to defeat.

We did accomplish some things. Eventually, the paintings were returned to the Feiningers and we managed to reunify some families. Further, the opening for a dialogue with the East Germans enabled us to reach behind the facade of the professional ministries into the party machinery, where the important policy decisions were made. So, we did make some progress during my tour, but we never did come up with a policy towards the GDR. I was replaced by Frank Meehan, and I essentially lost track of our dealings with the East Germans.

Q: Did you get involved in any spy exchanges?

RIDGWAY: Occasionally. Dick Barkley handled these issues in West Berlin and in Bonn. He would periodically brief me on operations. I did get more involved in one situation, which started in East Germany and then spread throughout Eastern Europe. It ended when the Hungarians decided to ease border controls so that the East Germans could sneak into Austria.

At some stage of my tour, East Germans began to come to the embassy and then would refuse to leave with the result that we had people camping out on embassy grounds and in our building. We increased security to try to prevent this kind of occurrence. It was a difficult issue, but I don't remember all of the details. When the Pentecostals penetrated our embassy in Moscow and refused to leave for five years, they became a major issue in U.S.-Soviet relations. The same kind of situation was faced by our embassy in Hungary, when Cardinal Mindszenty took refuge on our premises and was our guest for many years. These events became major obstacles to any kind of dialogue with the USSR or Hungary. There were, of course, some people who thought that was just fine. But in fact, we had no leverage; these were human issues, which really tied our policy hands. Eventually, the Department issued instructions which barred any foreigner from staying in the embassy overnight.

As I said, the paintings were returned to their owners. There was considerable concern at the time that the 51 paintings that were to be shipped to the U.S. would be disbursed and would never be seen again. I thought that this might well happen, as, after all, the paintings did belong to one family and what they decided to do with the collection was their business and not that of any government. However, some of these paintings are still occasionally shown in art exhibits. And, in return for the release of the art collection, the East Germans got two visits: one from Rick Burt and one from Ed Rowney. They went to discuss political issues. That was the quid pro quo which worked quite well.

As I said, the Department's guidance with regard to embassy "visitors" was not to allow anyone to stay in an embassy overnight. But, it also said that no one should be physically ejected. I have been told that in Bucharest, for example, people would chain themselves to embassy fences or other fixtures. There, the embassy simply used cutters to sever the chains and then would put the perpetrators back out on the street.

We in East Germany had a similar problem. One day, three young men entered the compound and would not leave. I was in Washington on consultation when this happened. I immediately flew back to Berlin to deal with this dilemma. What could we do with three young men who wanted to immigrate to the U.S.? We didn't have any kind of program for East Germans that would have given us some opportunity to work out a solution. The only possible avenue was for these young men to leave the embassy and find their way to West Berlin, where they might be processed. However, we found another solution.

Soon after my return, I met with Herr Vogel, the famous lawyer who had participated in many exchanges of personnel between East and West. In attendance was also a representative of the West German government. We somehow cobbled together a plan, which allowed the three men to leave our embassy and find their way to the West German embassy, where embassy officials would process them for further travel. The West Germans had an agreement with the GDR on a process that would take care of East German escapees to the West. So, using Vogel as an intermediary, the East and West Germans agreed to a plan which would allow the three young men to escape from East Germany. Vogel took the three to his office in his car, where they formally renounced their East German citizenship and the rights to their property in East Germany. Then, they were taken to the West German embassy, and from there through the wall and out of East Berlin. All of this was very closely watched by the media and many others.

As a result of this "success," we became a focal point for people who wanted to flee East Germany. However, when people would try to enter our embassy to seek refuge, we would apply the Department's injunctions. One day, when I was not in the embassy, my staff ejected some East Germans who were seeking refuge. Our process called for some of our people to escort these refuge seekers out of the embassy to wherever they wanted to go to make sure that the East German police did not use any strong-arm tactics on them. We took this action as soon as possible after the asylum seekers sought refuge, so that the East German police might be misled into believing that these East Germans were just in the embassy to seek information or for some other benign reasons. Nevertheless, we were accused of throwing people out. In one case, a guy showed up with scissors and threaten to kill his child unless we granted him asylum. We put him out on the street, where the East Germans immediately picked him up. His children were taken away from him and given to his parents. He went to jail, but I think his wife did manage to get to West Germany, where I believe she was joined by her husband much later. I suspect that he was not treated too gently by the East Germans.

All of these incidents were most unwelcomed by Washington. The West Germans were complaining that we were cold-bloodily putting people in danger. I finally drafted a message for Washington, with Jim Wilkerson's assistance, which was intended for Shultz and Eagleburger in which I said that the Department had left us with a truly cynical policy. On the one hand, we were told that people could not stay in the embassy overnight; and, on the other hand, when we did escort them out, we were chastised for doing so. I asked the Department to make up its mind and tell us what it wished us to do. I heard that the Department became very upset with this message. Larry said that the policy would have to stand as it was, but Secretary Shultz took our side and wanted clarification. I instructed my staff that the decision of what to do with asylum seekers could not be left to junior officers, primarily to protect those officers from what might be a career-ending decision. I asked that decisions on these cases be left to me or the chargé d'affaires, if I were absent. I did not see much of a future for me in any case.

On a number of occasions, we had to tell people to leave the embassy, preferably during the day, when the East Germans might not be too suspicious. No one would be allowed to stay overnight. We did follow up on those people that we escorted out of the embassy to make sure that the Stasi or other East German governmental entity did not take retribution on them.

There was one case, though, which we very strongly felt was a set-up. Some man from Rostock came in with his fiancée, who was a minor. His passport looked like he might have had a police background. We escorted them out, after they stayed overnight. We kept someone in the room with them to avoid being charged with allowing illegal relationships with a minor.

Obviously, all these cases were difficult and increased tensions with the East Germans. However, the East Germans were looking for a solution. In the meantime, these potential refugees decided to focus on the West German embassy, which began to have lots of "campers." This was at about the time I left. It was clear to me, by this time, that the pressures on the GDR were becoming quite severe. Young people and families of all stripes were increasingly clamoring to be allowed to leave East Germany. I think it became well-known that we would not be an avenue for escape. Eventually, even the West German embassy became so overwhelmed that they began to escort people out of their chancery. There, these "campers" were called "line jumpers," because the East and West Germans had agreed on a process which would allow people to leave East Germany; the people who tried to take refuge in an embassy were trying to get ahead of those who had applied to leave by the approved process. Unfortunately, some observers saw them as "heroes" rather than "line jumpers."

That is roughly how we spent our time in East Berlin. Our debate with Washington continued. I would not accept being the "fall" guy for the Department's inability to resolve the dilemma of whether or not to give sanctuary to refugees, thereby raising tensions with the East, or kick people out, thereby giving the media and others opportunities to lambaste us for our hard-hearted policy. I told Washington that if it insisted on ejecting asylum seekers from the embassy, we would call every time an incident occurred, so that we could get instructions on whether they could stay overnight or were to be escorted out of the embassy immediately. After a while, the incident rate dropped and the issue dissipated, although it was never really resolved.

My continual harping about this unresolved policy brought me to Shultz' attention. I also came on his radar screen when the East Germans bought a large amount of bad wheat. The GDR bought wheat on the world markets through large international traders like Cargill. Agricultural trade takes place regardless of any politics or tensions. When the East Germans opened some large containers of wheat in Rostock, they found them full of mildew and rocks and heaven knows what else. That roused my interest in the wheat business.

About this time, the Canadians came to the GDR and offered it a great deal. Under Jackson-Vanik, our producers and traders could not offer interest rates below the going market. The next time I went to Washington for consultations, I attended a meeting chaired by Shultz on this subject. I pointed out that our present position put two U.S. interests in conflict with the real possibility of losing out on both. Our position was that we would not compete for the sale of wheat (by lowering the interest rates) unless there was some improvement in their human rights policies. Unfortunately, both of those goals were ours, not the GDR's. As it could obtain wheat from other sources, we had just lost \$800 million worth of wheat sales in Eastern Europe without advancing the human rights cause one inch. I asked whether this was a sensible U.S. policy. I suggested that we approach the human rights issue step by step, thereby enhancing our traders' opportunities for sales in Eastern Europe. It was a horizontal approach, rather than a vertical one that caused all U.S. interests to lose.

So my intervention in this wheat sales policy and my continual pressure on Washington to resolve the asylum seekers dilemma brought me to Secretary Shultz's attention. I think he was probably impressed by my determination to find ways to advance U.S. interests in a step-by-step program.

I can't say that I found my tour in East Germany that boring. There were just enough issues to keep us on our toes. I had plenty of opportunities to come to Washington to make my views known on a person-to-person basis.

Q: Were your officers able to move around East Germany?

RIDGWAY: Absolutely. We had brilliant political and economic officers. Alan Thompson headed a section for a while. He was followed by Bruce Clark. We had a junior officer, Walter Andrusyszyn, who unfortunately is at this time in the process of leaving the Foreign Service. He zoomed to the top and is now at the NSC working on Eastern Europe. He escorted Mrs. Bush on her trip to Paris. He would put on his "working clothes" - Army field jacket, etc. - and get on trains and visit around. He would visit coffee shops and talk to the folks there. Our reporting on government-church relations, on "construction battalion" issues (conscientious objectors), on women's rights, on the Luther year, on the Bach year, and on other important events that were taking place in East Germany at the time was thorough. These reports were important not only because they measured what was going on in the GDR, but also because they were clues to other tensions in the whole Eastern European area. The staff really got out of the embassy and did some super reporting.

Q: I don't think that too many people realize the important role of the Church in the GDR at the time. During your tour, did we recognize this important role of the Church?

RIDGWAY: Absolutely. We followed the Church very closely. We had two issues. The Church was very important in providing a haven for dissidents. I think this was probably truer for the Lutheran Church than for the Catholic Church. We maintained contacts with both. I once called on Cardinal Meisner, who is now in Cologne. When I traveled in East Germany, I always called on the local Church hierarchy. I think these contacts were important particularly since the Church was vehemently anti-U.S. They were far to the left of the Social Democrats of West Germany in our point of view. The East German Church was also very much opposed to our arms control positions. It was during this period that we were proposing to base Pershings in West Germany and had a "zero-zero" (nul-nul in German) position on arms control. There were anti-Reagan posters all over East Germany attacking him for his the "evil empire" speech. The many demonstrations against us, although organized by the government, had many church youths and leadership participating; we did not have many friends in the Church hierarchy. As I said, I met with many church leaders and submitted reports of my conversations with them.

On the economic aspects of our work, I must admit that I am very disappointed with myself and with my generation. I was not an economist and am still not so today, although I have learned something about corporate and financial analysis. As ambassador, I relied heavily on the CIA's analysis of the East European economies, including the Soviet Union's. As you know, we got that all wrong. In fact, the view that the East Germany's economy was in good shape, particularly as compared to the Soviet one, was wrong. Both countries were in far greater economic difficulties than our analysts recognized. The consensus at the time was that the "East Germans were the communists that got it right;" it was wrong.

I traveled throughout the country and visited some factories. But I really was not welcomed in any worthwhile enterprises. I never got to any of the large manufacturing plants, like Carl Zeiss Jena, which manufactured optical lenses for the Soviets. I did see some old-line factories, such as chemical plants.

The analyses that I was being given to read claimed that the USSR and the GDR led the world in such things as steel production. That may have been true, but steel had lost much of its luster with the advent of plastics. These countries were also supposed to be the leading manufacturers of cement, but by this time, did cement really matter that much? The Soviets were known for their gold production, as measured by the number of miners and machines devoted to extraction. Did any analysts raise the question of efficiencies, which might have shown that manpower and machinery were not necessarily the best indicators of production? In fact, Soviet gold production was highly inefficient and much less than was projected when only manpower and equipment were taken into consideration. The same criticism should have been made of estimated Soviet oil production. It was highly inefficient and far below what it might have been, given the resources the USSR devoted to exploration and production.

I relied on our experts who maintained that if the Wall were eliminated - and we are talking about a period close to its actual demise - the East German economy would begin to tank until it hit a level at which it would stabilize. Having reached that base, the economy would then rebound. No one predicted the implosion that actually took place. I should have; but I also missed it. I had called on all the economic planners in East Berlin. Those meetings convinced me that there were at least two sets of "economic ledgers." I could not believe that these planners were managing the economy as they were describing it to me. I was convinced that there was a second set of "books." In fact, there was not a second set. The economy was as jerry-built as it looked. There were people who spent their lives in libraries, specializing in the Soviet economy. They described the academic vision quite well and when asked whether the economy really worked that way, they said they thought so. In this way we were fed a lot analyses that eventually proved all wrong.

Our embassy's economic section was small and included people who worked on commercial issues, so we didn't really do much independent analysis. I don't think the U.S. government devoted many resources to an analysis of the East Germany economy. People would see East German trucks in Nicaragua or East German SCUDS in Syria and assume that these were visible indicators of a mighty economic power. I think our agricultural attaché probably noticed the weaknesses better than most. He noted the inefficiencies in the East German agricultural sector, which had forced East Germany to import much of its food needs.

I will never forget that at Christmas time, neither mustard or oranges could be made available to the East German consumer without a major meeting of the East German Politburo. That should have been a clear signal that the system was broken. Every Christmas, this was a major issue. When I was the ambassador, the major question at Christmas time was whether the mustard would arrive in time to be eaten with the wurst. Honecker would have to make the decision to import the mustard and the oranges, because domestic production was inadequate. It should have been clear that the command economy was not meeting demand. Consumers lived by bartering; that was a clear indicator of the state of the economy. Bananas were another indicator. One day, just before the opening of the Leipzig Fair and during it, you could see bananas in store windows. If later, you went to the Jena Musical Festival, you would find the same bananas in store windows, only a little blacker. Bananas were being shipped from store window to store window, depending on when the regime wanted to put its best "food" forward. You wonder why they didn't just manufacture or buy plastic bananas, since they obviously were for show and not consumption. So, while the GDR economy did not work, as far as I know, no one ever said so. I think it would have been very interesting to see what might have happened to the GDR if we had done the proper analysis and taken steps to bring that economy down.

Q: Were you aware of the surveillance that the East German services had placed on Americans in East Berlin?

RIDGWAY: I was aware of it. I am sure that my driver was a Stasi employee, as were my household staff. I finally got rid of the second-in-command in the house, a German among primarily Pakistani servants. He was not adding anything to the work of the staff; I am sure that his principal job was to report on me and on the other Americans.

We didn't entertain very much. We would send out an invitation and we would get a call from the Foreign Office's protocol office advising us once again that we were not allowed to send out invitations directly, but would have to funnel them through the protocol office. I refused to play that game. So I made friends in the cultural world. I cultivated opera participants and became friendly with some of them. We used to show movies at the residence. The NATO ambassadors met frequently, but that was not very enlightening or entirely useful.

We did accept invitations to speak at universities. We celebrated the 10th anniversary of U.S.-GDR diplomatic relations. Steve Mueller, then president of John Hopkins, came out to represent the U.S. on that occasion. He spoke fluent German. We went to the Karl Marx library at Humboldt University. There Steve told them that technology was advancing so rapidly that the GDR was in serious trouble. Information from the "outer" world came right through and over the Wall. The East Germans became furious when they heard this. They did not think that such a warning was appropriate as we were celebrating an anniversary. But Steve was terrific.

We had a library, which was open to one and all. Every once in a while, someone had the guts to come in and browse. There were police surrounding the embassy. Usually, when someone had been in the library, he or she would be stopped about a block away and searched to make sure that no material had been taken from the library, such as a magazine that might be circulated in the GDR.

Q: Did our embassy in Bonn or our mission in Berlin interfere with your mission?

RIDGWAY: All the time; that was constant. Bonn would send a cable to Washington describing East German political events and we would send a follow up, pooh-poohing everything that Bonn had said. We would also suggest that Bonn stop reporting on East Germany as it was not their territory and they were not qualified to comment on events in the GDR. Usually, one or two of our scorching messages would stop Bonn from reporting on East Germany. When Arthur Burns, ambassador to Germany, came to Berlin, he and his wife would sometimes travel around East Berlin and sometimes in East Germany. But the GDR was our beat. When East Germany was recognized in 1974, one of the major battles was to keep embassy Bonn out of the GDR.

The other issue that arose concerned the role of the ambassador and CIA operations. It also concerned the role of the CIA itself in its coordinating role. During the period of my ambassadorship, the CIA was told that it was a strategic asset, while the rest of the U.S. government representation was tactical. That meant that the two sides of U.S. representation were not to meet. And the CIA could not clear on activities that were considered tactical. The ambassador, who could be involved in strategic issues in his or her own country, was left out in a tactical situation of a split country, like West and East Germany. I have no idea how many people ran in and out of East Germany. These military intelligence people were managed out of Munich, the 66th MI. I had no way to clear them because the CIA had no way to clear them and without their participation, I had no opportunity to comment.

One day, I got a letter from an American citizen who told me that his sister, who was still in Germany and was married to a man who worked for the U.S. Army, had reported to him that her husband had not returned from work a few weeks earlier. No one in the U.S. Army would tell her what had happened. The American had tried to help his sister, but didn't get any satisfaction, so he wrote to his congressman. That was the letter that was forwarded to me with a congressional request for a follow-up and an answer. I looked into it and verified that the husband had been working for U.S. military intelligence. He was sent into East Germany and was "rolled up." The Army had no support system for the wife, and she was just left hanging. She, by making inquiries about her husband, blew the whole undercover operation. My reaction was that the Army had to develop a support system to take care of wives and widows whose husbands had been victims of a blown undercover operation. If it could not or would not, then the Army would have to cease its intelligence operations. So, I brought the Army's intelligence operation in East Germany to a stop. I just said that there would be no more Army intelligence operations in the country of my assignment until a better system was devised.

One day, when I was in Washington for my periodic consultations, Bill Casey, the CIA director, called me. He told me that I just didn't understand the important game that was being played. I told him that he didn't realize the terrible image the amateurish efforts of military intelligence was leaving behind. I told him that I was well-aware of the positive aspects of intelligence, but that I could not support efforts which had a negative effect on our own citizens. I also said that I saw nothing wrong with my requirement that until operations were put on a more professional level, all activities were to cease.

During this same period, I was called to testify in a classified committee hearing. I got the same treatment as Casey had given me. The senators did not think I knew what I was doing. So I briefed them on the case and they finally agreed with me that intelligence operations needed considerable improvement before they could resume. The Army just did not have a complete intelligence machine in place. When a poor operative got caught, there was nothing in place to take care of his family, nor was there any process to control the story when it became public. I said that the present process could only end up as the case in point was doing: making the U.S. look amateurish and clumsy. I think that eventually the Army changed the process. However, I can't tell for sure, because undoubtedly it started its intelligence operations again without my knowledge as that was their method of operations. But I think at least I forced the military to take another look at its operations, and hopefully, improve them.

So, despite our ambivalent policy position vis-à-vis the GDR, I found plenty to do as ambassador. I kept busy on one issue or another. I had a great DCM, Jim Wilkerson, who was very helpful. I spent time with my staff, many of whom were just starting out in the Foreign Service. I had married just before going to East Germany; my husband was in Ketchikan, Alaska, where he was the commander of the Coast Guard base. He could not be cleared to visit me in the GDR, which was still viewed as being behind the "Iron Curtain." So, when I found an opportunity, I visited him there. As a result, I traveled back to the States periodically and had the opportunity to discuss our East European policy with many people. I talked about some of the obstacles which we had built and which were impeding the advancement of our own interests.

Q: One last question about your East Berlin tour. Did you see much evidence of a Soviet presence in the GDR?

RIDGWAY: I really didn't see much of it. They had a huge embassy on the Unter dem Linden, practically next to the Brandenburg Gate and "no man's land." If you went to the Gate from the east, you would encounter groups of Soviet soldiers in uniform, and I was always amazed by how Asiatic they looked. Other than on National Days, when the diplomatic corps would pay its respects to the ambassador whose country was celebrating that day, one would never see the Soviet ambassador. I would go to the Soviet embassy for its national day and see the ambassador then. But that was about it.

If you drove around the GDR, you might see Soviet bases behind tall walls. They were not, of course, identified as such, but one just knew what was behind the walls. Otherwise, one would hardly believe that the Soviets had a presence in the GDR. Their planes flew away from the Berlin area, so that their presence in the skies was not noticeable. They did have huge airbases, but their planes just did not leave a mark on East Berlin. There were 400,000 Soviet troops in the GDR, but we certainly did not see many of them in East Berlin.

Q: You were in East Berlin until June, 1985. What was your next assignment?

RIDGWAY: While in East Berlin, I got a call from George Vest informing me that the Secretary of State would be calling me soon to offer me the job of assistant secretary for European and Canadian affairs. About an hour after George's call, I got the call from Secretary Shultz. He offered me the job. He added that he wanted me to join him to take advantage of the opportunities that would arise from the agreement President Reagan and President Gorbachev had reached to meet at a summit to be held in Geneva in the autumn of 1985.

I reported to the Department at the beginning of June, but my nomination was held up. There was great opposition to my nomination, led by Mr. Fuller, who at the time was the head of the public diplomacy panel and is now the president of the Heritage Foundation. The Washington Times and others also objected. The opposition came essentially from right-of-center of the political spectrum.

Q: I think we would call them neo-cons today; that designation did not exist in 1985.

RIDGWAY: As I indicated earlier, I had pushed for the development of a relationship with East Germany; I was proud of that fact. The conservatives were not enamored of the concept. I had worked with representatives of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims to see if we could put together a respectable package, which would meet their goals without giving the GDR undue compensation for its actions. East Germany had never recognized the Holocaust victims; they had considered themselves also as victims of Nazism, and therefore did not feel obliged to do anything about the victims of the Holocaust. There were people who didn't like my view that as long as the U.S. had diplomatic relationships with a country and it had interests involved in that relationship, efforts should be made to advance our interests. So, when I was nominated, a full campaign was mounted against it. In fact, Fuller flew to East Berlin to ask me whether I was "soft or hard" on communism. My impulse, upon hearing that question, was to ask him to leave the residence; I refrained. I told him that had he been familiar with my record, he would not have asked such a silly question.

So we became part of the Department's "29", which even included such people as John Whitehead. His nomination was blocked for some period, which meant that Shultz could not travel. Finally, the administration broke that log-jam; Whitehead was confirmed. After my return to Washington, I testified. I thought I had done alright. The questions were not hostile; they were primarily intended to elicit my views on various issues and a little bit about my history. Many of the senators, such as Kennedy, knew me from my fisheries work. I thought I had answered all the question, but a few days later, I received a telephone call from H telling me that Senator Helms was not satisfied with what he had read. He had not been at the hearing, but was relying on the transcript, which I had reviewed. He wanted me back on the Hill that evening to meet with him. I should note that I was not the only one whom Helms wanted to interview further. Rick Burt was another. Rick and I are not friends; I am sure that he does not think very highly of me. But in any case, he and I were the ones that Helms wanted to see. So Mr. And Mrs. Burt and my husband and I went to the Hill that evening. I am everlastingly grateful to certain senators (Lugar, Biden, Kennedy, Mathias), who turned up that evening to make sure that Helms did not hijack the hearings and turn them into a propaganda session. So, both Republicans and Democrats attended that evening session.

I would characterize the session as a "star chamber" proceeding, in Elizabethan England terms. It was very unpleasant, not only for Rick and myself, but for our spouses as well. Helms chaired the session. It was so unpleasant that my husband and I agreed that I would never go through a confirmation hearing again, and I did not. The Helms approach was prosecutorial. I was painted as a "communist sympathizer." At one point, Helms pulled out copies of State Department "Top Secret" telegrams. He accused me of all sorts of behaviors. However, he did not have the last page of these cables. Had he had those, he would have known that I was not in Berlin at the time those cables were written and they therefore had nothing to do with me. I did not have to tell him that he was way off base; the other senators figured that out in a hurry. I did not respond to Helms' charges because I did not want to get others in trouble. I just took the beating and told Helms that he was wrong on all counts. For example, he accused me of being the cause for some German family being put in jail. I asked if I could explain; he said flatly "No." Finally, he asked if I had anything to say. I told him that for some time I had wanted to tell him that that family was in West Germany and not in the East and that they had been released. That was the end of the hearing.

Rick Burt and I were abused that evening. It was a very nasty occasion. Nevertheless, I was confirmed. Whitehead swore me in; we were the only ones who got through. The other nominees were still being held hostage.

Q: Do you believe that Helms had some staffer who was doing his or her best to block your nomination?

RIDGWAY: There were two views on this then, as there are today. Who knows what staffer was working in which view?

The question is whether a country refuses to talk to any other, insisting only on promoting their own philosophical views or whether a country seeks alliances and negotiates differences and advances its own interests through a give-and-take process. My view, for example, is that on such issues such as human rights, Afghanistan or arms control, if you organize your interests vertically you sacrifice all the interests you have listed, because you hold each of those interests hostage to advances in the other interests. I have always thought that this was not a particularly positive approach. Interests should be organized horizontally, so that they can be pursued one at a time and whenever an opportunity arises. To say that you won't negotiate on arms control because you don't like the other side's record on human rights means that you tie your hands so that you can't make progress on either issue.

My view is not popular in certain circles, such as with those who may not want progress on arms control and for whom the vertical organization of issues is just fine because it blocks all possible progress. These people knew that I was being proposed for the assistant secretaryship. They also knew Shultz and Reagan were moving toward a summit, which they hoped would be the beginning of a dialogue with the Soviets, which, by the way, I think brought an end to the Cold War. There were people who did not want to have that dialogue take place or if it did, that it should not lead anywhere. I believe that Shultz offered me the job because he knew what my views were on the importance of dialogue.

We did get through the confirmation hearings in time to go to the 1985 Helsinki meetings celebrating the 10th anniversary of the founding on the CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) and the signing of the Helsinki Accords. The Soviets had brought a new player in their delegation: Shevardnadze, Gorbachev's foreign minister. Mrs. Shultz traveled with the secretary; for the first time, the wife of the Soviet foreign minister traveled with him. The plan was for the two ladies to do some sightseeing together and to become better acquainted.

The delegations first met in the great Finlandia Hall in Helsinki. The secretary and the foreign minister were there and I suggested to Shultz that since we were in the world's camera eye, he should get up to meet the Shevardnadzes, who were sitting several rows back. The secretary did that and the two shook hands, in front and in the midst of a lightening streak of flash bulbs. I think it was a very important moment. It was civilized; it did not give the "store" away, as some had judged it would, but it was a definite break from previous practices of talking to the Soviet Union. It replaced the standard stultified, stiff and unyielding approach that we had used in the past. Previous meetings consisted of Soviet foreign ministers reading their notes, leaving out all spontaneity and there was little chance for a meaningful dialogue. The participants were lucky not to fall asleep and fall off their chairs.

We met in the U.S. embassy, which I knew quite well from my previous posting. Shultz wanted to try to institute simultaneous translation, rather than sequential. It made a big difference to the quality of the meetings. The Soviets were very suspicious. Finally, we agreed that we would use simultaneous translation when the meetings took place in the U.S. embassy and consecutive translation when meeting in the Soviet embassy, which was their preference.

Q: In your mind, what was the biggest difference between simultaneous and consecutive translations?

RIDGWAY: In consecutive, you can't reach the person. You can't have a discussion; you can't get to the heart of the issue, or at least not in a give and take way. You don't have to wait an interminable amount of time to interject, by which time the right moment has passed and you have forgotten the vital points you wished to make. If negotiations are to make any progress, they must be much more spontaneous than a consecutive translation would allow. There have to be more inter-personal exchanges.

The simultaneous translations in our embassy did not make any major changes in the positions of the parties, but there were engagements across the table. You could ask questions for clarification purposes. It soon became very apparent that attitudes and positions would be quite different on the Soviet side. Shevardnadze had only a few aides around him, all of whom were trying their best to rein him in. He seemed to like the more spontaneous exchange that our new system allowed. His aides, on either side of him, would frequently try to get him to return to his notes and minimize the extemporaneousness of the situation. They would reach over and point to one of the papers that had been placed in front of the foreign minister.

Behind the foreign minister, was a fairly large group of additional aides, similar to what George Shultz had. But the Soviet aides kept jumping up and down trying to keep Shevardnadze shackled in the old ways of doing business with the Americans. However, we did exchange views on many issues in an effort to prepare the way for an agenda for the Geneva summit meeting.

The last time we did consecutive translation was at our last meeting at the Soviet embassy at these talks. Never again did we use that atrocious method. It had become clear to Shevardnadze that if you wanted to avoid any agreements, consecutive translations was the way to go. On the other hand, he had some issues that he wanted to advance in Helsinki, and that would take simultaneous translations. After Helsinki, all U.S.-USSR meetings were held with simultaneous translations.

We returned from Helsinki in August and began an intensive period of preparations for the Geneva summit. By this time, Gorbachev was in charge, having followed a long series of leaders, none of whom lasted that long: Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Kosygin, Andropov, and Chernenko. Gorbachev had made his name in the Ministry of Agriculture and was known by Westerners for his work in that field.

Gorbachev became the party's secretary in March, 1985. He knew, as did Shevardnadze, that the Soviet Union was failing and falling behind the West. He looked for ways to change that dynamic. People may tell you that when he became Party Secretary, he was "scared to death" of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). I don't know and I will not get involved in that debate, because it is basically ideological and theological. Whatever role SDI played, it was clear to Gorbachev that the USSR was in great difficulties. He knew he had to take some action to rescue his country. He understood that his options were greatly limited by the huge military outlays that the Cold War seemed to require.

Shultz and Reagan sounded a consistent theme with Brezhnev, which emphasized that the USSR could not make much progress as long as it had a locked-down society. They also pointed out that the only way to ensure a rise in economic power was to move Soviet brain power from military questions to more economically profitable ventures. That is how Glasnost and Perestroika came to be. Gorbachev took the Soviet Union in new directions. However, that kettle had had a lid on it for so long that when it was lifted, it just blew out. Several years later, in 1989, when the people in Leipzig took to the streets to protest the policies of East Germany, Gorbachev could not call out his troops to subdue the uprising. That was the beginning of the weaning away of Eastern Europe from the USSR. Eventually, not only did that fall entirely apart but many parts of the Soviet Union became independent as well.

Q: When you started as assistant secretary, I assume that these changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union became your main focus. Was there hope that the situation was changing or was there a lot of skepticism?

RIDGWAY: There certainly was a lot of skepticism in the Washington community. The CIA thought all of these changes in Eastern Europe were part of a Soviet plot. It didn't think that Gorbachev was any different from Khrushchev, and that the "positive" steps that Gorbachev was taking were aimed primarily at bringing down the size of our defense budget. I had had enough experience with our intelligence efforts to understand that once the CIA makes up its institutional position, it is very hard to buck. I suspect that the Agency's analysis of the Soviet economy also came to the conclusion that nothing had or would change: it was a "powerhouse." In looking back on this period, I have become more and more concerned with our failure to analyze the Soviet economy any more correctly than any of our other intelligence findings on the Soviets. Counting troops and therefore estimating military strength is not that difficult, but you need some real experts to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of an economy. The whole Agency was wrong on that task.

The people in EUR, joined perhaps by a couple of CIA analysts (rare exception) were somewhat more practical as they had to work with the Soviets and Soviet matters on a daily basis. They were not euphoric about what Gorbachev was doing, but they did note that his approach to issues was different from that of his predecessors. The embassy also noted this difference. The secretary thought it was different; he could feel something new in the air. As a result, the view in State was that negotiations did not require giving up or even jeopardizing the U.S. position on fundamental issues. Negotiations were, first of all, intended to explore the positions of the two sides, to probe the depth of the participants' feelings and to explore common denominators - if any existed. If nothing came of these discussions, that was alright; the resulting better understanding of the positions of both sides might be useful later. While State was willing to explore, Defense was not and it allied itself with the CIA. As a result, it was a battle from day one. The positions never changed.

Situations kept cropping up, such as spies in the embassy and the "bugging" inserted into the foundations being laid for the new chancery. We had signed a stupid contract with the Soviets, in which we allowed their people to do the construction of their new embassy on Wisconsin Avenue in DC, as well as supply materials, such as concrete, for our new embassy in Moscow. By the summer of 1985, when I arrived in Washington, the Soviet chancery was one great "tuning fork." The way the Soviets built the building, it allowed them to broadcast anything they wanted to send out over the airwaves. That was a red hot issue and people were demanding that we cease all discussions with the Soviets in light of their building activities. There were warnings that the Soviets would ply our young Marines guarding our chancery in Moscow with all sorts of temptations, as in the Sergeant Lonetree episode, and because of that, we should cease our dialogue with the Soviets.

Then there was the incident in New Orleans, where a Soviet sailor jumped ship. He swam to shore and in turn surrendered to the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service). They sent him back to the ship! That story hit the headlines quickly, because many people had witnessed one part or another of the story. Jesse Helms hit the roof. It was at this point that I began to see more clearly who our Soviet experts were, i.e., Louis Sells, Tom Simons, Mark Perris, and Mark Palmer. All were working on this "sailor" issue. In the middle of a raging storm in the Louisiana area, Louis Sells boarded the Soviet ship and demanded the release of the sailor; he took the sailor with him when he disembarked. Sells and his colleagues kept him on shore for quite a while, because they needed to be sure about this guy's bona fides. Finally, our people offered the sailor asylum in the U.S., but were turned down. At this point, the sailor wanted to return to his ship. This whole incident was played over and over again as televised hearings were held on the Hill. The poor INS really took a beating, first of all for initially returning the sailor and then for using a Ukrainian as a translator, which made for some communication difficulties. We held meetings in the National Command Center in the White House, because Helms and some other senators were applying pressure. When I testified, I was asked whether I thought that the sailor had probably been threatened; I said that I thought that it was quite probable, and that threats had probably also been made against his family. I also said that the basic fact was that the sailor wanted to return to his ship and that we had no choice but to follow his wishes. Then the Coast Guard was assigned to escort the Soviet vessel back out to sea, opening a lane through all the ships that were trying to stop the Soviets from returning to sea.

About three years ago, the Soviet sailor turns up in Washington. He called on Senator Helms to thank him for all his efforts. Not one word to Louis Sells who risked his own life to get him off that ship. That did not sit well with me. I should mention that after the sailor returned to the USSR, we instructed the embassy to periodically check on him to make sure that he and his family were okay.

All of these incidents happened before the Geneva summit even started. With every new incident, there was a clamor from the right to cancel the summit. They viewed the Soviets as "evil" with whom we should not have any interaction. All sorts of judgments have been made about Reagan, but I will stand firm on my view that on issues such as having dialogue with the Soviets, he stood firm against some of his supporters. He wanted to meet with Gorbachev because he saw such a dialogue as a potential opening towards a more stable world. Reagan was going to go to Geneva and did, despite heavy pressure not to have anything to do with the Soviets. He understood the importance of holding a dialogue with Gorbachev. I was lucky enough to be on the team that worked the issues - day in and day out.

Margaret Thatcher supported Reagan; she said that the West could deal with Gorbachev. She became the greatest asset for those who wanted to hold the summit. For four years, every time we had a dust up and the right wing spoke in righteous indignation about the dastardly nature of communism, Margaret Thatcher, who had excellent conservative credentials, spoke up and said that we could do business with Gorbachev. Fortunately, she and Reagan were very close and her words carried great weight. I also think that Mrs. Reagan played a major role; she was determined that her husband should be viewed then and in history as someone who, regardless of political consequences, insisted on holding a summit meeting with Gorbachev as a means of fostering peace and world stability.

So we went to Geneva. It was the first of five summit meetings. I was fortunate to be in the position of assistant secretary. I was the behind-the-scenes organizer, negotiator and recorder for all of the joint statements and other arrangements that are an essential part of such meetings. I was supported by an outstanding team of professionals. Almost every summit was preceded by some incident or some issue that would give rise to tensions. In each case, loud voices were heard, including Senate resolutions shouting opposition to holding another summit. But Reagan persevered and we went to the summits in Geneva, Reykjavik, Washington, and Moscow. After Reykjavik, George Shultz and his EUR team were the only people in the U.S. government that asserted that the outcome of that summit had been positive. It was not viewed as such by Defense and other parts of the U.S. government, or the world media.

Today, I find in various reports that there were more people allegedly in Reykjavik than I can remember being there. Today, everybody thinks that summit was historical and a great success. Of the 40 people who I know were there, only five, including myself, thought that we had made progress, particularly in the nuclear disarmament field, where a new era of arms reduction could be seen to be emerging. I think we made great progress in the human rights field, even though there was nothing in writing issued after the meeting. Today, a million people take credit for the successes of Reykjavik, which is quite a change from October, 1986.

The INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces) agreement, which was born in Reykjavik, was signed in Washington in 1987 at another summit. Then there was another summit, this time in Moscow in 1988, where Reagan gave three speeches. In between summits, there was a lot of dialogue with the Soviets about the meaning of democracy. We did not tell them how to run their countries, but emphasized the historical fact that open societies were successful societies.

Q: There is no question that these summits were of historical importance. Did you have any feeling that Gorbachev and his civilian allies were having problems with their military and their "right wingers"?

RIDGWAY: We did not detect any split in the Soviet leadership until October, 1987. Shultz was a great judge of people. As we were making the final preparations for the Washington summit, which was to be held in December, 1987, we made a visit to Moscow. There we noticed that we were running into difficulties getting the information needed to put the INF agreement into final form. We, that is, Shultz, Paul Nitze and myself, had quiet meetings with Shevardnadze and Sergey Akhromeyev, Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet armed forces. We noted that the numbers for the Russian missiles that we were given did not add up. Finally, Marshal Akhromeyev said that he did not know the numbers. He knew the number of missiles that he had in his forces, but he didn't if there were any stockpiles under civilian control, which he did not know. He added that he was having trouble getting the right numbers and asked for some time to nail them down.

The whole INF agreement was subject to numerous disputes, one of which was the entry point the inspectors going into East Germany would use to count missiles. The Soviets kept insisting on Berlin, and I kept advising Shultz that that was unacceptable because, from our point of view, Berlin was a city under a four-power jurisdiction, and therefore not part of East Germany. That led to a stalemate, which was broken as a result of a telephone call I got at home from Moscow. This call led to a mutually acceptable arrangement.

We always met with Gorbachev when we were in Moscow. He and Shultz would run down the list of issues to be discussed. In one of his debriefs, Shultz mentioned that something had happened. He said that Gorbachev appeared like a heavyweight fighter who had been knocked down for the first time. There was something different in his demeanor. That is not the kind of insight that gets the technical advisors interested. But Shultz was quite right in his observation. In fact, Yeltsin had just been added to the Politburo and he was challenging Gorbachev. By November, the Yeltsin challenge had become public knowledge. Shultz was quite prescient; he noticed the effect of the Yeltsin challenge on Gorbachev.

There were moments like that that gave us some clues that something was happening. I should note that Yeltsin was alleged to have challenged Gorbachev on the pace of negotiations with us; he wanted to go further and faster. Akhromeyev struck us as a very interesting fellow. He had risen from being a sergeant in the Soviet army during the siege of Leningrad (900 days and thousands of deaths), to being the chief of staff of all Soviet forces. He was a very literary man.

In Reykjavik, our meetings were held in the Hifigi house. The house was build so that on the first floor there was a room with lovely windows overlooking the Bay of Reykjavik. That is where Reagan, Gorbachev, Shultz, and Shevardnadze met with a couple of interpreters. Above that room was a large sitting room, which I assume was used as the gathering room for the people who lived in the two wings of the house when a family used the house. Both delegations used the house, we used one wing and the Soviets the other.

While we waited in this upstairs room for the very private leadership discussions taking place below us to wrap up, the two delegations talked and chatted. Akhromeyev embarrassed every American there with his knowledge of American literature. He knew about all the American authors. His favorite was James Fennimore Cooper with Mark Twain second. He knew the characters and the themes of all of these masterpieces. Of course, most of us who listened to him were way out of his league.

The Marshal later became associated with some military colleagues who wanted to change Soviet policy direction, and even threatened Gorbachev with a military coup. He later committed suicide, which was a tragic end. He had come to the U.S. to visit with Bill Crowe and was given a VIP tour of our military installations. We thought that a very sound relationship had been built up with him. However, in the final analysis, he could not shake his Soviet military heritage and his belief in Soviet superiority. When his faith in that "invincibility" was shaken, he could not face the future and took his life.

Q: Did you detect, as you became more involved in Soviet affairs, a new breed of Soviet diplomats at mid-career rank?

RIDGWAY: Absolutely. A story used to go around that when Shevardnadze returned to Moscow from his first UN General Assembly meeting in Sept-Oct 1985 just before the Geneva summit, he deliberately bypassed the courtesies at the airport and instead went through customs like any other passenger. I can't vouch for the truth of the story, but it seems very likely. There were, I am sure, many passengers behind him, whose mouths sprang open. I am sure they were flabbergasted by this new approach. It was the last journey in the foreign minister's group for those members of his team who did not clear customs because they were found with contraband, etc.

Shevardnadze put together a different group of advisors. They were not unknown, as a number of them, such as Sergey Lavrov, Alexander Bessmertnykh and Sergey Kislyak, had been junior officers in Washington. The last is now a very senior member of the foreign office. We began to notice that people around the foreign minister were very much younger. They were much easier to deal with, even though they were still fierce protectors of Soviet interests. They just dealt with us differently than the old apparatchiks to whom we were accustomed. After Geneva, many of the Soviet functionaries who had been dealing with us were moved aside because they were just not able to adjust themselves to the new realities.

As Shultz' book points out, a lot of work was done in the pre-Geneva period. Then Reagan put a stop to that. He said he didn't want to go to Geneva just to sign documents agreed upon by lower levels of his and Gorbachev's administrations. He wanted to personally participate in the negotiations. We know that that just wouldn't work, so the staffs went as far as we could and then stopped until we got new marching orders from the two presidents in Geneva. So, when we returned to the negotiating tables to agree upon the wording of the final statement, I represented the U.S. I was accompanied by Bob Linhard (a major general in our Air Force who died in his early 50s from a heart attack), Richard Perle, and Mark Palmer. The Soviet side was staffed by "old-timers." You have to remember that I was not a Soviet expert; I had been appointed for my management skills of being able to put a team together and make it work. The experts I needed I brought in.

We opened the negotiations at 10:00 p.m. on the last night in Geneva. President and Mrs. Reagan, President and Mrs. Gorbachev, Shultz and Shevardnadze were dining at the Soviet ambassador's residence. Our working group pulled out all the papers that had been worked on in previous sessions just to put the finishing touches on them. At that moment, the Soviets pointed out, in classic old Soviet fashion, that a public meeting was scheduled for the following day at 10:30 to sign and release the documents and that they were not prepared to continue negotiations that evening until our aviation delegation, then in Moscow, was instructed to agree to some new language that the Soviets wanted included in that aviation agreement. I told the Soviets that that was the "old" ways of doing business and that we were not buying it. I slammed my notebook shut and walked out. I went to the phone and called Shultz at the Soviet residence. I reported that the Soviets were returning to their old games of trying to get something done under a deadline which had no relevance to the issues under discussion between the two presidents. I told him that I had walked out and he was very supportive. He said he would call me back. He then confronted the Soviet side and pointed out that these tactics would only return us to the pattern of the previous forty years, which both sides had indicated they wished to break. He added that if a mutually agreed to document was not ready by 10:30 the next day, there would be major disappointment. It was up to the Soviets to decide. Around midnight, Shultz called back telling me that the Soviet delegation was returning to the table, but with a different set of negotiators. We then worked into the early hours of the morning putting the finishing touches on the joint statement.

The Geneva joint statement was issued at 10:30 a.m. as scheduled and the world was amazed. The statement began with the words, "Nuclear war cannot be won and therefore must never be fought." Many people had been wedded to this language for a long time, especially Reagan, but I don't think that anyone ever expected it to be used as the opening sentence of a summit communiqué. Reykjavik, which came very close to an agreement to eliminate all nuclear weapons, had also come as a surprise. With Geneva, we demonstrated to the disbelievers in Washington, who even to the last moment had tried to undercut the president, that the store had not been given away and that we were able to make progress on a lot of issues that had been stuck in a time warp. As a further result of the Geneva summit, President Reagan emerged with a new European attitude towards him: his reputation for dealing cavalierly with opposition was replaced by European respect for his flexibility and negotiating skills. However, Gorbachev didn't get anything that he wanted in the way of lesser interests in SDI (Strategic Defense Initiative). It was agreed in Geneva that there would be two more summits: one in Washington and one in Moscow.

The events of 1986 were so dramatic and so filled with divisiveness that the Washington and Moscow summits were not held until 1987 and 1988. Reykjavik was an opportunity in that period to make some progress.

Q: Let me go back to 1986 and the pre-Geneva period. This was to be the first Reagan-Gorbachev meeting. Was there a lot of anxiety about the outcome?

RIDGWAY: It is true that the two had not met before. Reagan had his own view on how he wanted the meetings to proceed. He wanted to start with a private meeting between the two presidents plus interpreters and that did happen. That was well-recorded, with the two in front of a fireplace in Geneva. However, there were a lot of people on our side who insisted that the president could not be allowed to have a one-on-one meeting with Gorbachev. This was not specifically said to Reagan, and by my reckoning, these people would have taken the same position regardless of who was president. When we got to Reykjavik, they really exploded even though we were working off a previously negotiated arrangement. Reagan basically believed that he and Gorbachev could identify areas of common interests, especially on issues that might avoid a nuclear war. As I said before, Reagan really did believe that a nuclear war could not be won and therefore should never be fought. He was convinced that the leaders of the two super-powers understood that their people wanted prosperity and economic development and that there was no need to resort to nuclear weapons. Therefore, he felt that he and Gorbachev could best satisfy the demands of their people.

But there were many skeptics who did not share Reagan's optimism. They of course were wrong and the summits will stand forever as models of cooperation and accomplishments.

Q: How did you find the Reagan-Shultz relationship?

RIDGWAY: It wasn't bad once it got straightened out. Shultz followed Al Haig, who had outlasted his welcome in the White House. Shultz untangled a variety of messes left behind, such as the pipeline issues in Europe. Before I returned to Washington, Shultz had to face the crisis created by the Beirut bombings and the murder of our Marines there, so he had had his "baptism of fire" early on in his appointment.

You have to remember that Shultz was surrounded by an national security team led by John Poindexter and Ollie North and Defense Secretary Cap Weinberger. All tried their best to make sure that Shultz would not be able to establish a close relationship with Reagan and the coterie close to the president. In time, Shultz managed to breach those barriers as changes in personnel were made. For example, Frank Carlucci became the NSC advisor, with Colin Powell as his deputy. Howard Baker joined the team as chief of staff, succeeding Donald Regan. Weinberger eventually resigned. I further believe that it was Mrs. Reagan who began to trust Shultz and viewed him as having the president's best interests at heart. That was a very important key to good Reagan-Shultz relations. This is not to say that it was ever a close personal relationship; it was very business-like, with both principals showing considerable trust in each other. I must say that I don't know that the Reagans had any "warm and fuzzy" friendships in Washington. Their real friends came from the California days; I think the two Reagans were quite content with just their company. They didn't need much stimulation from others.

Shultz fought long and hard to get direct access to the president. That is absolutely essential to a coherent and meaningful foreign policy. Shultz and his advisors would often meet to go over talking points on matters that he wanted to bring to the president's attention or on which he wanted support. Eventually, he was allowed to see the president with his own agenda and was able to get some decisions made outside the cumbersome NSC system. However, before that change in relationships occurred, it was "ugly." I think we have today the same kind of process in Washington as we had in 1985. When a decision is made, the loser calls the New York Times or the Washington Post stirring up the pot again and sometimes forcing a further consideration of the decision.

Q: What happened in 1986 that changed the atmosphere?

RIDGWAY: I think one factor was the bombing of Libya. That was the most important factor in raising U.S.-USSR tensions. Then there were more spies uncovered. Then there was the Nick Daniloff case; he was an American reporter who was seized and imprisoned. There was some tit-for-tat in that. The FBI had requested clearance from the Department to seize and arrest a Soviet operative in New York, who did not have diplomatic cover. We told the decision-makers that most likely there would be a quid pro quo. We were relying on history, although the last such exchange took place during John F. Kennedy's presidency. That had gotten very ugly and had placed an American at risk. It had been such a trying episode that it had never happened again.

But there were little things sprouting for the U.S. side, which always raised the question of why was it happening? Why, all of a sudden, did the FBI want to seize a guy they had been following for a long time just before a summit meeting in Washington? We all knew what would happen, but no one, including myself, was prepared to say "no" to the FBI. There wasn't anyone in the Department, from the top down, who would deny the FBI the opportunity to pursue one of its legitimate functions. We did warn the decision-makers of the likely consequences, but the FBI insisted on pursuing its course. So the New York agent was arrested and soon thereafter, the American correspondent was arrested in Moscow.

These episodes put an end to our dialogue with the Soviets - for a while, at least. This happened in the midst of our attempts to find some new approaches to arms control. Nitze and Richard Perle had led a team that went to Moscow to discuss a wide range of arms control issues. However, the bombing of Libya and the arrest of the Soviet operative became stumbling blocks. It soon became clear that no progress toward a summit would be made until Daniloff was let out of jail. No one in senior positions in the whole government was willing to contemplate that that release would result only as part of a trade: Daniloff for the Soviet picked up by the FBI. We worked night and day, week after week, on this issue. Shevardnadze came to Washington to discuss the problem and potential solutions. He suggested that if we could find a solution to this prisoner problem, then he could envisage a mini summit in Reykjavik or London or somewhere. We selected Reykjavik. We went to New York for the UNGA (United Nations General Assembly) meeting, which had always provided over-arching purpose and permission to the bi-lateral dialogue for many years. Finally, we structured a deal which had the Soviet spy, through his lawyer, plead nolo contendere, which resulted in a suspended sentence and which allowed him to get to Dulles Airport in time to board the weekly Aeroflot flight to Moscow. At the same time, Daniloff was released under Soviet law and put on a Lufthansa flight to Germany. As part of the package we also managed to obtain the release of 10 very prominent Soviet dissidents, including Yuri Orlov. That part of the package could not be made public and that meant it looked as though we had taken somewhat of a beating for giving in and agreeing to exchange a real spy for an American newspaper man.

I should mention that Shultz worked very hard once he decided to go to simultaneous translation, to get Shevardnadze to feel comfortable enough in their meetings to be able to discuss, negotiate and agree on certain actions. Shevardnadze was made to feel that Shultz was in a position to do that for the American side.

One day, I got a desperate call from Sasha telling me that Daniloff was sitting on the Lufthansa plane which was just sitting at the end of the runway waiting for take-off clearance, which would not be forthcoming because the Soviet spy had not been let of jail yet. Sasha said that he had told his minister that he could trust Shultz implicitly and that having given his word, there would be no doubt about the U.S. sticking to its part of the bargain. It turned out that the problem on our side were really Ed Meese and the Justice Department, who would have loved to have Daniloff safely out of the USSR without having to give up the Soviet spy. But, as Shultz had won that battle many days before, I told Sasha that he could tell Shevardnadze that Shultz is a man of his word and that the deal would be seen through to completion as agreed. So the Soviets allowed the Lufthansa flight to take off, even though their man was still in a U.S. jail. Finally, Shultz managed to untie that knot and the Soviet was released and taken to Dulles and put on the Aeroflot flight that afternoon.

I just mention this episode as an illustration of the obstacles we continually encountered whenever there was even an inkling of another summit meeting. In the spy case, I think Meese and his staff would maintain that they had captured a spy who worked for the U.S. enemy and who should not have been released. These obstacles were obviously intended to keep the president and others from negotiating with the Soviets on anything! The spy issue was resolved, as were most others, by Shultz going to the president to remove the obstacle.

Q: Did we believe that the KGB was playing a "blocking" role in Moscow and trying to put up obstacles to Gorbachev-Reagan meetings?

RIDGWAY: I certainly think so. However, I think that there were stubborn people on both sides who saw the great progress that these summits were making toward world stabilization, and who were willing to spend untold hours trying to overcome barriers. Eventually, these people won out, and the KGB and the anti-Soviet block in the U.S. were overcome. In retrospect, I have come to the conclusion that the obstacles in Moscow were far greater than they were in Washington. In fact, I think every step on the summit journeys was fraught with risk and that particularly in Moscow the chances of failure, i.e., of not having a summit, were very high. The American obstacles did slow down the process and required considerable additional work and perhaps some "loss of face", but I don't think the concept of summits itself was ever in jeopardy. We did have a constitutional process with the president clearly being the chief executive. The same could not be said for Moscow. I think Gorbachev, at every step, had to hold off people who did not agree with where he was taking the Soviet Union. They predicted the destruction of the Soviet Union. In fact they were right; that was all to the good as it was a ridiculous and tragic system. However, there were many who wanted to stick with it and fought Gorbachev every step of the way.

Q: Were there any warning signs from the embassy or the intelligence community about how dicey the situation was in Moscow? You seem to suggest that Soviet policy in this period was pretty much the work of a few people at the top of the government.

RIDGWAY: Absolutely. It was Gorbachev and Shevardnadze in Moscow as it was Reagan and Shultz in Washington. Those four were the architects of the new directions for their respective countries. And as it became clearer that the U.S. and the USSR were moving away from the prospects of a nuclear confrontation, more people jumped on the bandwagon. However, at the outset, it was those four who sensed what progress could be made, and who forced their bureaucracies to join in.

In the middle of all these new directions, people like Mike Armacost were involved in developing a coalition to force the Soviets to leave Afghanistan, which they did. That was a subject of tensions between the U.S. and the USSR, as were other issues such as human rights, Jewish emigration from the USSR, and many arms control issues. In other words, there were daily reminders that the two countries were still antagonists who had many issues that needed to be resolved beyond the broad one of greater stability, particularly as it related to nuclear weapons. Many of the other arms issues were dealt with by CSCE, which was meeting in Vienna. Those discussions eventually also led to mutual agreements. So the agenda between our two countries was very long, but provided real opportunities for solutions. We had a lot of naysayers on our side, but the dissent was always channeled along constitutional channels so that they presented no danger to our system of government. As I suggested, the challenges for Gorbachev were even greater, including challenges to the Soviet system then in existence.

As we know, Shevardnadze went on to become the president of Georgia, a period that, for him, was not illustrious. When he did leave the Gorbachev cabinet, he did so with a speech on democracy. I think that, over the years of dealing with us, he became a true believer. I don't know much about Georgia, but my guess is that when he returned, he encountered a Georgia filled with criminals whose power depended on corruption, and a Georgia undermined by Russian efforts to keep Georgia from joining the modern world - both of which ensured a very unsettled domestic situation, which in turn became the excuse the Russians used to keep their troop in Georgia. It was a mess which Shevardnadze was, unfortunately, never able to clean up. However, I think it is clear that when he left Moscow after the demise of the Soviet Union, he had become a devotee of democracy.

Q: Tell us a little about Richard Perle, who is still very influential in governmental circles. What role did he play in the late 1980s?

RIDGWAY: He could always have been nicknamed the "Prince of Darkness." I don't think it would be appropriate for me to pass a judgment on Richard's role. Shultz had seen enough of Perle before I ever got to Washington. Richard Perle and Richard Burt had been the main antagonists representing their bureaucracies for at least two or three years. I had no idea how many issues separated them, but I am sure it was a lot. Shultz's view was that if Perle were not in the room and part of the negotiating process, he would make sure that outside forces would make enough noise to bring any negotiations to a halt, so he "put his arm" around Perle and made sure that he was part of his team. Shultz spelled out some rules which Richard followed and so Shultz and Perle got along just fine. They had no problems as long as Richard was convinced that he was the architect of whatever policy was being developed. If the discussion veered toward an issue in which Richard had not been involved, or in his view perhaps sufficiently involved, then he was opposed to whatever was being discussed.

There were other issues that I became involved in as assistant secretary. For example, there were base agreements to be renegotiated with Spain and Turkey. It is a fact that the generals in charge of these negotiations, and the Pentagon in general, cannot negotiate. You don't get promoted for giving something up. As a result, in Spain, we could not get anything moving until we got thrown out of the Torrejon Air Force Base, because no one was in the Pentagon was willing to give anything to the Spaniards. It was the same scenario that we went through in Greece after the Cold War, when we were also told to vacate the bases.

As I mentioned, we also had bases in Turkey. The Pentagon was not going to let anybody in the Department of State get involved in the negotiations because it was well known that the diplomats always gave something away. Of course, the reason for our attitude was because we recognized that the world was changing and that governments did not find it absolutely essential to have an American presence on their territories. As sovereign governments, they would let us stay, but at a price. Finally, the negotiations were turned over to Richard Perle. He managed to get an agreement, but he also had to pay a price, but as he was a Pentagon official, giving something up in exchange was acceptable. I didn't care who got the credit; I just wanted the agreements signed. I think Shultz felt the same way. If Richard Perle got the job done, we would not stand on any kind of ceremony or worry about bureaucratic niceties. We wanted the job done and didn't care who got the credit. It was important that a new agreement with Turkey be signed, and as it was clear that no one in the Department of State would be permitted by the Pentagon to take the lead, we were glad that Richard stepped in and was successful. As I suggested earlier, this was the way we dealt with Richard: if we wanted something done which was of interest to him, we made him part of the process and often the negotiator.

In Geneva, when Bob Linhard, Mark Palmer, Richard and I were in the room discussing some issue, I found Perle very helpful and very much a member of the team. On at least one occasion, when discussions were underway and he was sitting right next to me, Richard sent me a note that suggested that we should not be in any hurry to bring the issue to a resolution, because if the negotiations moved too fast, it could be dangerous. He was quite right. We slowed it down and went back over matters already discussed and worked at a pace that was not too rapid. Overall, I found Richard a good colleague and often quite helpful. It is just that he and I do not view the world in the same way.

I should mention that Bob Linhard was the senior arms control officer at the NSC. He was an air force colonel who had specialized in missiles, and a very bright guy. He and Richard were deeply involved in the preparations for the Reykjavik summit. We had an interagency working group working on papers for that meeting. At the same time, Gorbachev was issuing statements about his position on various issues. We arrived in Reykjavik with a big, fat notebook with our various positions and our possible responses to Soviet initiatives. When people said that we were not prepared for that summit, they didn't know what they were talking about! Richard and Bob were the master keepers of that notebook. They did a lot of the support work for the president and Shultz's dialogues with Gorbachev. One amusing aspect of their work was that they put a door across a bathtub to use as a desk. They put a typewriter on the door and pounded out negotiating positions. It was very constructive. It was not clear to me that Richard ever thought that Reykjavik could be a success; but, as a team player, he worked as hard as he could to support the president and Shultz.

After Reykjavik, Linhard was assigned to the command in North Dakota. He had just been made a major general, when he suddenly passed away. It was a great loss.

Q: At Reykjavik, did matters get out of hand?

RIDGWAY: I think they could have gone further, but the president's message to Gorbachev was essentially that the U.S. was prepared to give up offensive nuclear weapons over a period of time in order to establish a relationship based on defensive weapons. On the other hand, he was not prepared to give up SDI (Strategic Defense Initiative), because that was part of his strategy towards the USSR, which was still viewed by most Americans as an enemy. If Gorbachev had agreed to give up his opposition to SDI and had allowed us to build the system, would the president have agreed to eliminate nuclear weapons? I think so. I certainly supported such an exchange.

Q: Didn't the president volunteer to share SDI with the Soviets?

RIDGWAY: That was always an interesting proposal. Gorbachev kept saying that the U.S. wouldn't even share milking machine technology with the USSR. The Soviets never believed that we would share SDI technology with them. I think they were probably right in their skepticism. I don't think we would ever have given them the technology. The president might well have been sincere, but I doubt that the bureaucracy that I knew would ever have allowed it. However, that was the president's concept. He thought offensive capacities should be phased down while defensive capacities were built up. So, at Reykjavik Reagan was willing to give up offensive weapons in exchange for increased defensive capabilities. The overture was not accepted by the Soviets.

I should note that while offensive-defensive trade-offs were central to the dialogue in Reykjavik, there were intense negotiations on the side on intermediary nuclear forces (INF). At the end of those negotiations, I think we got almost everything that we were seeking. Agreement was reached that each side could keep 100 delivery systems (or warheads); all the others were to be destroyed. When we told our allies where we were heading, they raised serious objections. I was told to call each of our ambassadors in the five countries where the INF missiles were stationed to inform them of the deal we were about to reach, so that they could inform their host governments. I told the ambassadors that the 100 missiles that would be kept would most likely be stationed in Alaska. The allies were caught by surprise, because they had not suspected that the INF missiles basing system might come to an end. They didn't believe that either the U.S. or the USSR would ever reach such an agreement. They were really upset when they heard from our ambassadors.

However, over the following six months, all parties became less emotional. The press, who had accused Reagan of having given up too much at Reykjavik, and who believed that SDI would become a barrier to peace and stability, took a much more dispassionate view of the situation. Gorbachev found out that our allies didn't want to move as fast as Reagan was willing to, so his hopes of being viewed in Europe as "that great champion of arms control" were dashed. But, six months later, we put the final touches on an INF agreement, which reduced allowable missiles to zero. I mention this because even though the press touted Reykjavik as a discussion of offensive versus defense strategic issues, there were other matters that were taken up, such as the INF.

Q: The INF agreement became the answer to the positioning of the Pershing and the SS-20 missiles, which had become a major issue in Europe.

RIDGWAY: That's right. Prior to Reykjavik, the Europeans had indicated their willingness to accept the basing of INF missiles in five of their countries, a position made clear during the Geneva summit. There were still some demonstrations against that basing agreement, but by Reykjavik, we were in fact in the process of installing those missiles in those five countries. When the opportunity to reduce the numbers of INF missiles arose in Reykjavik, we took advantage of it, and as I said, eventually never based any of them. It was a huge step forward. It was the first time any country had destroyed a whole class of nuclear weapons. People haven't recognized the progress made in Reykjavik on INF. It was primarily Paul Nitze's doings.

I was off in another room with Anatoly Chernyaev working on human rights issues. I gave him a long list of hundreds of names of their dissidents who were in jail in the Soviet Union or people who wanted to emigrate but had been blocked from doing so by Soviet authorities. We discussed how to have a continuing dialogue on human rights issues as I wanted a process established which would allow us to raise both the general issue and individual cases as they arose, without having to wait for a summit meeting. I mention this discussion because along with INF and other major strategic matters, there were many issues discussed and agreements reached in Reykjavik, which have never been given much attention. The public only remembers Reagan getting into his car at the end of the last session of the summit meeting. He looked disappointed - and I think he really was as he had really thought he could reach his goal of banning offensive nuclear weapons. The fact that he did not reach it should not be used to denigrate that summit, as many important issues were discussed that became the basis for future agreements.

Q: You participated in the other summits as well?

RIDGWAY: I did. I was present at all five summit meetings. I was also there for the "hand-off" from Reagan to George H.W. Bush. Bush, as vice-president, had not played any role in the summit meetings. It was clear that Bush, when he became president, was entirely skeptical of summits. He and Jim Baker were convinced that the whole process had gone too fast and that we had allowed Reagan to move too fast. They didn't like anything about the summits. Brent Scowcroft also didn't like anything about them, which is why it took so long for that administration to re-engage with the Soviets. In fact, the Bush team pulled back from the process that Reagan and Gorbachev had initiated. I think it took them another eighteen months before they resumed a dialogue with the Soviets.

Q: Did you have any feeling for Bush's views while he was vice-president?

RIDGWAY: No, because I really didn't see very much of the vice president during the Reagan era. I wasn't aware of his views until the day after Jim Baker was nominated to be secretary of state. He and Margaret Tutwiler set up offices in the department and met individually with each regional assistant secretary. Each of us were asked to brief them on three challenges and three opportunities in our respective regions. I did that. When I finished, Baker asked me, "Roz, don't you think you moved too fast on our relations with the Soviet Union?" I told him that I certainly did not think so. However, it was clear that he did, as did many others close to Bush. Scowcroft never liked the INF agreement. He was very critical in public about Reykjavik. I don't know what Bush's views would have been had he been involved in the summits, but all the evidence would suggest that he would have told Reagan to slow down. He certainly did that when he became president. There was no meeting with Shevardnadze until late 1989. In fact, the Wall was practically down before the Bush team met with Gorbachev.

Q: I notice a theme running through our diplomatic history. New administrations are highly suspicious of the diplomatic actions of their predecessors, even if they are of the same political persuasion. Eventually, new administrations often reach the same point as their predecessors, but it takes them many months to get there, since they feel they have to start at the beginning. They can't pick up where the last administration left off. In the meantime, you have to hope that all of the good results achieved by the previous administration will not be lost in a "new review." It must be difficult for other governments to deal with us.

RIDGWAY: As an illustration of this problem, I offer the fact that Jim Baker never called George Shultz after succeeding him. He never, ever even talked to Shultz before becoming secretary of state. He talked to me, as I described earlier. I traveled with Baker on a couple of occasions, visiting all of the NATO countries. It was clear that the new team didn't trust me one bit. In such an environment, the slightest perceived error is viewed as intentional.

There was some discussion about nominating me for ambassador to NATO, but I wasn't comfortable with the new team. I had been in the service for 32 years. I told the team that I didn't want to go overseas again, nor did I want to go through Senate hearings again. I wasn't really attracted by ambassadorial privileges: "been there, done that." I told them it was time for me to retire, which I did on June 30, 1989.

One of the interesting lessons I learned from my experiences was how to negotiate. Watching Shultz, I learned that it was important that all the pluses and minuses were included in the negotiations. He did it across the table, whether it was Canada, or the Soviet Union or Europe. He was not afraid to put tough issues on the table, nor did he bar dissenters from his point of view from being members of his negotiating team. I am sure that he learned much of his approach from being an expert in labor relations and economics. He had been secretary of labor and head of a large corporation. It was a marvelous experience to be part of his team.

One of the delights of working with Shultz was that he was willing to entertain certain non-traditional approaches to resolving issues. As I have mentioned earlier, I had had an opportunity to negotiate with a wide variety of people from all parts of the world when I was involved in the fisheries and ocean resources issues. I mentioned to Shultz that I really felt that part of the problem which we encountered after our international experiences of the 1970s was that the word detente had become part of our diplomatic language. People had built up all sorts of expectations after that word became so popular. Associated with detente was a summit style, which was the pre-negotiation of tons of agreements, as well as peripheral exchanges on this and that. All of these were accompanied by a communique^{1/2}, which tended to be multi-paged because we had to negotiate agreements on issues on which we were fundamentally in disagreement. I suggested to Shultz that we abandon the process of issuing a communique^{1/2} every minute in matters on which we and the Soviets disagreed. In the fisheries area, we called them "zebra" agreements: each side went home and explained its understanding of the communique^{1/2} so that we each would generate public support. That may have been acceptable for fisheries, but on life-or-death issues such as nuclear armaments, I thought that this was a misleading approach. For example, the Soviets had taken such phrases as "peaceful co-existence" to cover concepts such as "spheres of influence" and similar far broader policies. I think that is how they got trapped into invading Afghanistan, for example. I suggested that these very important meetings should not be followed by a communique^{1/2}, but joint statements that represented work plans. I think Shultz understood the point I was making.

Q: Let me ask you now to comment on the summits that took place in Washington and Moscow. When did the Washington summit take place?

RIDGWAY: December, 1987. It had a difficult prelude, because just before it was to convene, the Moscow Marine scandals broke out: Marines involved with Russian girls and the accompanying spying efforts. The road leading to that summit was far from smooth.

On the other hand, as I mentioned earlier, people missed and may not yet have completely caught up with the progress that was made in Reykjavik on the INF missiles elimination process. The two leading figures on those negotiations were Paul Nitze for our side and Marshal Akhromeyev for the Soviets. I mentioned that a lot of progress was made on an INF treaty at Reykjavik. One of the real challenges to the negotiators was to define what missiles would be covered and which would have to be governed by other treaties. A similar problem arose during the START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) negotiations, which took place in the Bush administrations. Definitions of various hardware were always a problem. A lot of work was done at Reykjavik on reaching agreement on INF terms; however, that got very little attention since the media focused on Gorbachev and Reagan standing on the steps of the White House, saying their farewells without having reached agreement on any arms control issues.

As Shultz often reminded people, there was in fact considerable progress being made behind the scenes on how we would deal with human rights issues between the two countries. It was the first time that the Soviet Union had ever let another country become involved in human rights issues in the USSR.

The Soviets made a last ditch effort in Reykjavik to kill SDI. After the meeting, Gorbachev went from European capital to European capital saying that it would have been possible to have a nuclear free world if it hadn't been for the American insistence on having an SDI program. Apparently, what he didn't understand was that the Europeans, shaken by the potential agreement on the removal of INF missiles, which would leave them without any nuclear defense against the Russians, all of a sudden became great proponents of nuclear weapons. To them, the stationing in Europe of INF missiles was a guarantee that the U.S. would become involved on the continent in the event of any Soviet attack or threat, and no INF missiles on European soil equated to no guarantee of U.S. intervention if Europe was threatened. Naturally then, the Europeans were quite ambivalent about the U.S. taking nuclear weapons out of Europe and Gorbachev found little support for his position.

Here at home, the foreign policy mavens of old, such as Kissinger and Brzezinski, all of a sudden were all over the TV on Sunday mornings criticizing Reagan and his team for their "recklessness" at Reykjavik, which in their view had eliminated one barrier to Soviet expansionist desires through the reduction, and in some case elimination of certain nuclear weapons, particularly those that were to be stationed in Europe. They predicted that the Europeans would view the American actions as a withdrawal from Europe, opening the possibility of an entirely new balance-of-power, one that might perhaps be unfavorable to the U.S. It was a real battle of "concepts," because in fact American critics and Gorbachev found themselves on the same side of certain issues.

This reaction in the U.S. dictated that time had to pass before any further agreements between the U.S. and the USSR could be contemplated. Eventually, Gorbachev came to the realization that he would not be able to kill SDI, and the Europeans saw that there was a real opportunity to reduce tensions by going to a "zero-zero" INF agreement. It was then that the administration felt freer to prepare for a Washington summit.

We had left Geneva with a work plan. It began with that famous statement that "nuclear war can not be won and must never be fought". It included a commitment by the two leaders to hold two additional summits: one in Washington and one in Moscow in the year after Geneva. Other international events, such as the bombing of Libya, however, interfered with this time schedule, preventing any summit meetings in 1986. So, we went to Reykjavik instead, to try to untie the knots that had been made in the fabric of the U.S.-Soviet dialogue. And, as I said, while we left Reykjavik with no formal agreements, we did make great progress on the INF issue. The rest of 1986 and much of the first half of 1987 was spent working on that INF agreement. By mid-1987, it was clear that such an agreement would be signed, so we went back to preparing for another summit.

Washington became the venue for the next summit, which was held in late 1987. Its centerpiece was the signing of the INF treaty by the two leaders, which took place on December 8. We didn't want a date that would interfere with Pearl Harbor Day. In fact, the date was picked by Mrs. Reagan and her astrologer.

I can remember Colin Powell and Ken Duberstein saying to the Soviets, who had indicated some unhappiness with the date, "don't ask us how the date was chosen!" The date could not be changed; the meeting had to be on that date at 1:00 p.m. at the White House.

There are some wonderful stories about the preparations that we went through for the summit in Lucky Roosevelt's book; she was the chief of protocol. For example, the Soviet advance team came to Washington in November, 1987. The head of the KGB, Mr. Viktor Chebrikov was there. The team stayed at the Madison. It was the last time we had any liquor in any hotel room bars, because the Soviets just drained them dry. Protocol required that the host government pick up the tab for the room which included all supplies in the room. After we noticed what was going on, we insisted that they order from room service and pay for their purchases. When the Soviets came back for the summit itself, the room refrigerators were empty.

It snowed very hard on November 11. Ambassador Roosevelt hosted a very nice lunch for the advance team at the F Street Club, where we reviewed what would happen at the summit. However, at the same time, the Soviets were trying to squeeze additional concessions into the INF treaty. The treaty itself was no problem; it was the verification issue that presented challenges. In the fall of 1985, at the Stockholm CSCE conference on disarmament, the Soviet Union accepted the concept of "on site" inspection for the first time, which threw us into a tizzy as the anticipated Soviet rejection of "on site" inspection had almost been the last refuge for those who opposed arms control. Though they couldn't publicly state that they objected to arms control, they managed to block progress towards it by finding these various issues on which it was thought we couldn't reach agreement. These proponents ended up digging trenches that were meant to impede progress on the path towards an arms control agreement, but in fact did lead to one. One of the trenches had been this "on site inspection." In Stockholm, the Soviets' agreeing to such inspections, as long as it was reciprocal, put these closet "naysayers" into a tizzy.

Reykjavik made it clear that there would be no retreat from the U.S. SDI position. NATO's understanding that we would not back off from removing INF missiles from Europe allowed us and the Soviets to spend the rest of 1987 working on verification. Right up to end, the Soviet deputy foreign minister and I continued our dialogue. Over a telephone line from my house to Moscow he and I continually haggled over the details of the agreement. I suspect that Shultz's book will have a far more accurate description of this process, because Charlie Hill kept careful notes and I didn't. I do remember that there were issues concerning the location the U.S. inspectors would use to enter East Germany to verify the removal of Soviet INF missiles from there. The Soviets initially insisted on East Berlin. When Shultz asked me, I pointed out that the East Germans had for forty years tried to make East Berlin the capital of East Germany, but that it was not an entry point into East Germany as it was just a part of a city governed by four powers; the entry point into East Germany had to be an East German city, not East Berlin. That started an endless argument, but the Soviets finally gave in and choose Leipzig as the entry point for our inspectors.

Another possible road block to agreement and internal squabble was brought to light by James Mann, in his recent wonderful book *The Rise of the Vulcans*, which is the story of the neo-conservatives. In it he describes hearing people like Richard Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Richard Perle saying things like the Soviet position was probably a plot and that Gorbachev was no more to be trusted than Khrushchev had been and that the agreement was a ploy to get us to reduce our defense budget. They threw in every conceivable road block to try to stop this U.S.-USSR INF agreement. They insisted on certain inspection modes and I think were probably disappointed when the Soviets would agree as long as we abided by the same regime.

We needed a picture of the Soviet SS-20 which we eventually got by fax. That and all the other issues were resolved just in time for the summit meeting. You will remember that Gorbachev, accompanied by his wife, landed in Washington. They stayed at their embassy, then on 16th St. The two of them really charmed the American public. At least once he stopped his car on Connecticut Avenue and strolled through the crowd shaking hands. It drove our security teams nuts! I think Vice-President Bush was in the car with him, which didn't seem to phase Gorbachev. He stopped the car and acted like an American politician.

The summit meeting in Washington was a water-shed. The discussions were good and the INF agreement was signed. There was some elaborate entertainment; my husband and I attended the White House soiree, as well as the party at the Soviet embassy. All went very smoothly.

After Gorbachev and the President signed the INF agreement, and after Gorbachev returned home, we sent the document to the Senate for ratification. Unfortunately, the Senate refused to do so. There was a lot of unhappiness about the verification arrangements, which many senators felt were still inadequate. They asked a lot of questions. So we went back to Geneva, where technical experts worked out new details. Finally, when all of their questions had been answered the Republicans in the Senate had to support the treaty, which assured its ratification.

Q: Was it at the Washington summit that the phrase "trust, but verify" was born?

RIDGWAY: Right. It was said at a press conference before the signing of the Treaty. The verification regime became incredible. We set up a whole office at Dulles airport. We had an outside testing regime and a lot of other bells and whistles. A lot of the young American Soviet specialists had a great time. They went out to the various Soviet sites, where the missiles were collected, to watch them being cut up and destroyed. It may have been a tough assignment, but it surely helped these people to improve their language skills, as well as their cultural knowledge. I assume we still have an onsite-inspection regime, although I don't know what they might be looking at today.

In 1988, we agreed to hold a summit in Moscow. I think Ronald Reagan deserved an opportunity to go to Moscow. During the preparation period, we took many trips to Moscow to iron out various issues.

As I mentioned earlier, it was Shultz alone who noticed that something was different about Gorbachev. Subsequently, we learned that he was having trouble in the Politburo with Yeltsin. In October, 1977 during one of our Moscow visits, Shultz came out of a meeting and commented that something was going on. He said that Gorbachev looked like a champion boxer who had just taken his first hard blow. I have often wondered what Shultz had noticed that all of us missed. As far as I could see, Gorbachev was still the mixture of bluster and vigor, arrogance and power that we had all known. Shultz noticed that something was different and I have always wondered what that was.

The Moscow summit was primarily an opportunity to put a cap on the four-year period of the Reagan-Gorbachev relationship. The old Soviet leadership turned up for this summit: Gromyko, Dobrynin, etc. They sat in an unsmiling fashion on either side of Gorbachev as we negotiated. We spent one night going through a joint statement word by word. The Soviets obviously had instructions to have the phrase "peaceful co-existence" included in the text. I told them that regardless of how hard they tried, we were not going down that road again. We had tried it and found that it only led to misunderstandings. We finally convinced them to drop the phrase.

Another difficult issue arose when Mrs. Reagan decided, undoubtedly upon the advice of her astrologer, to visit a dissident family while in Moscow. I don't know how she selected this particular family, but that was her wish. The Soviets threatened to cancel the summit if Mrs. Reagan did not drop this idea.

They also objected to another of her plans. As was customary, Shultz went to Helsinki first to become adjusted to the new time change. Mrs. Reagan indicated a preference to become accustomed to the new time in Geneva at the home of the Aga Khan or some other fancy home, but we much preferred Helsinki. I went to Soviet embassy in Helsinki to meet some of my Soviet counterparts. I was told in no uncertain terms that Mrs. Reagan's plans were totally unacceptable. I delivered the message; there were a number of people who said that the Soviets were just posturing. I told them that I knew the chief Soviet delegate; he and I had been working on summits for four years. I knew when he had no leeway for negotiations. This was one such instance; I was sure he was sincere when he said that the rest stop had to be in Helsinki or the summit would be canceled. Eventually, I think people came to the realization that the issue was so important to the Soviets that our failure to comply might well have spelled the end of Gorbachev's rule. Mrs. Reagan agreed not to stop in Geneva, but she was not a happy "camper" particularly so since she really didn't like Mrs. Gorbachev anyway, and these trips were not something that she looked forward to.

In the final analysis, no joint statement was signed that included the phrase "peaceful co-existence." Gorbachev was led to pontificate at one point during the conference that Reagan was surrounded by a bunch of war-mongers like me and Frank Carlucci who did not want to acknowledge in public that U.S.-USSR relations had changed. I think there was some teasing in his comments.

People interested in the Moscow summit should focus on the president's speeches. He made three of them. The first was made in Helsinki on the way to Moscow. Then he gave one at Moscow University and a final one on the way home at Westminster Hall in London. These were carefully crafted to represent a very sophisticated vision of where East-West relations were heading. Reagan emphasized the strength of the West. The Helsinki speech was given in Finlandia Hall, a huge auditorium. He thanked Finland for the contributions it was making to a more stable world; he recognized its participation in the CSCE process, and noted he felt Finland was the heart and soul of it. You have to remember that Reagan was the head of a party that historically had taken a dim view of neutrals - they couldn't be trusted, could be dangerous, and they couldn't make up their minds. In one speech, to great Finnish applause, Reagan undid that view. He then went on to Moscow University where he had a real tour de force with the students, who responded very positively. His last speech was of a different nature, since it was given in that very stately edifice, Westminster Hall. That was really the last of the Reagan speeches.

There was one last summit, which was held in New York at the end of 1988, when Gorbachev came to the UN and gave a major address. Akhromeyev was not there. The Armenian earthquake took place at about this time, requiring Gorbachev to cut his New York stay short. We did hold a last lunch, though, during which George H.W. Bush asked Gorbachev whether he thought that Glasnost and Perestroika would work. Gorbachev was just stunned; he wondered out loud on why he had been so deeply engaged in it. As it turned out, when administrations changed, George H.W. Bush, Brent Scowcroft, Jim Baker, etc. showed themselves to be very skeptical about Gorbachev and his ability to pursue those goals. As I mentioned before, this team waited for many, many months before approaching the Soviets. They did not believe that the Soviets were serious people and that the Reagan administration had moved much too rapidly in its policy toward the USSR. They felt that Reagan had been misled. In any case, the New York lunch was viewed as the fifth summit meeting.

Q: Did you ever get involved in the presidential speech writing process?

RIDGWAY: Never did. We usually saw a draft and we were usually horrified. We did not see the SDI speech. We saw Gorbachev's speech and I am still telling people that I fought the inclusion of that famous phrase tooth and nail until the bitter end. We had always thought it had been written for Soviet domestic purposes, particularly his conservative base. He may have had to say what he did, but we were concerned that his language would push back into the Politburo conflicts about policies toward the U.S. - conceding too much and not getting enough in return. Anytime such a speech was given, it was our view that it was unnecessary showboating. History loved the speech; the Republicans loved the speech, but we fought as hard as we could. The Europeans didn't like the speech, the Berliners didn't like the speech, but now that time has passed, it has become a well-remembered classic.

I have run into people who believe that it was that speech in 1987 that brought the Wall down. I tell them that I don't even want to discuss it, but will leave it to the historians. I did tell them that that speech did not bring the Wall down; in fact, in some respects, it threatened the process that eventually brought the Wall down. But I don't have much hope of making a dent in people who view history in that way. Their point of view is set and will not change regardless of the facts. Most of these observers were never involved in the process and knew nothing about what was going on, but are certainly set in their views.

Q: Did you at any time feel that we should do all we could to keep Gorbachev in a leadership position, given the growing opposition to him in the Politburo?

RIDGWAY: We never reached that stage. That situation came later, after George H.W. Bush became president. As I have suggested, the Bush team initially saw what had transpired in the Reagan administration as a great big plot. However, they ended their tour in power becoming the great protectors first of Gorbachev, and then of Yeltsin. During the Reagan years, our concerns were for arms control treaties, and a different relationship with the Soviet Union. The internal Politburo politics had not appeared on our screens; we were working from the Reagan script that said the Soviet Union was ready to fall apart. Every day, the CIA hammered on about the superior military strength of the Soviet Union, but there was certainly no indication in their analyses of a Soviet plot. Many economists continually described the Soviet market as a great success, and some said the same thing for the East German economy. They certainly saw no plot.

There was no question that the Soviet Union was in need of some substantial changes. If it wanted to become a first class power, it needed to reform. However, it could not really undertake those reforms as long as it had to carry Eastern Europe on its back, which at the time was something we did not understand. The moment Hungary and Poland began their slow and painful creep towards independence, without drawing any Soviet military interference, a new situation arose. When the East Germans began to tear the Wall down - again without Soviet interference, despite the presence of 400,000 Soviet troops in the GDR - it was all over.

Q: It has always puzzled me that our intelligence community did not see the great difficulties the Soviet Union was having with its economic program. I would have thought that anyone returning from the USSR would have noticed the poor quality and quantity of goods available in the markets. I would have thought that journalists, in particular, would have noticed those deficiencies.

RIDGWAY: I think they picked up on the poverty and the inefficiencies of the Soviet system, but they seemed to feel that the Great State was still able to provide for its people. I have an example: there was an agreement among the analysts that the Soviet Union had the capacity to produce more steel than any other country in the world. This was at a time when the world was moving to plastics. Steel was passing $\frac{1}{2}$. Then, there was the analysis which said that the Soviet Union had the capacity to produce enough gold to destroy the economic foundations of the global market, which they could do by dumping all that gold on the market in a short period of time. The analysts used the number of Soviet citizens employed in the mining of gold as their base measurement. They did not factor in the inefficiencies of the Soviet mining system which accounted for a large percentage of that employment. The same thing happened in the analysis of oil production.

Now I am not an expert in any of these activities. As my field was negotiations and trying to keep smooth relations between countries so that we could advance our interests inside such relationships, I was a customer for most of this intelligence. Sitting in East Berlin, I was receiving all of these analyses about the power of the East Germany economic machinery which was making products for the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, for the Syrians and for the Algerians, etc. I had no way to contradict the intelligence community's finding and I bought into it. East Germany was described as the 10th largest economy in the world, larger than that of some of the NATO countries. However, later we found out that the analysis just was wrong; East Germany was just not the economic power it had been portrayed to be.

There were people in the U.S. who had PhDs in the field of Soviet economics. They brought all the data and charts and were flat wrong. In fact, we fooled ourselves and fell into that well-known trap known as "group think." I think we fell victim to that syndrome. In addition, it was virtually impossible to get a balanced analysis out of Defense because it had a budget to justify. Any sign of a more modest Soviet military capability was seen as potentially jeopardizing Congressional approval of Defense's budget requests. "The bigger the threat, the bigger the budget."

Q: Let's talk a little bit about an issue that was well ventilated in the late 1980s. I refer to the Shultz-Weinberger relationship. How did you see it?

RIDGWAY: I really did not see that much of it. I attended only one meeting where both were present. Early in the Reagan administration, I went to the Pentagon with Shultz to have lunch with Cap Weinberger and Colin Powell, Weinberger's military aide at the time and a two-star general (he moved up in the ranks very quickly thereafter). We went to discuss what might happen at Geneva, a meeting that Weinberger opposed. He felt that all of our efforts to have a dialogue with the Soviets would result in an erosion of American determination to provide for an appropriate defense, i.e., large budgets. He firmly believed that when our budgets were drastically reduced, our military capabilities would suffer extensively and then the Soviets would turn on us. I have no doubt that these were his sincere beliefs. I think Weinberger descendants would make the same arguments today, using a different "enemy." I think we need to remember that Weinberger was surrounded by people like Richard Perle, Doug Feith, and Frank Gaffney - a group that I have described as "adults who still sleep with the night light on." A dialogue with that group was very difficult, because if we argued that the Soviets would not attack under certain circumstances, such as a reduced defense budget, they would maintain that that proposition could not be proven and therefore was unacceptable. But, you can't prove a negative, so they never got off that horse.

One unfortunate incident took place as President Reagan was taking off from Andrews Air Force base on his way to Geneva. The text of a Weinberger letter to the president advising him not to go and listing all the reasons was released to the New York Times. An interesting coincidence!

Eventually, Gaffney was marginalized, and Feith was silenced. Perle, as I have described earlier, became part of the president's back-stopping team. Eventually, as well, Powell became National Security Advisor, Jim Baker the chief of staff, Shultz secretary of state, and Frank Carlucci took over at the Pentagon. That was a good team and it served the president well as he continued his meetings with Gorbachev. They also worked very well together.

Q: Let's talk about some other issues that you dealt with. Let's start with Cyprus.

RIDGWAY: Negotiations were dead in the water, as they are today and have been for decades. It is an impossible situation. People from the Greek and the Turkish sides don't talk to each other; they hate each other. I have no doubt that the Turks in the northern part of the island fear what might happen to them if they were to live in a non-federated unified Cyprus. The Greeks, who are the majority, are not interested in a federated state. So we have a stand-off. Now that the European Union is beginning to apply some pressure to Turkey to agree to a solution and has agreed to admit Greek Cyprus into the Union, the reconciliation process might get rolling. I think people have to remember that some of this maneuvering is understandable because the Europeans don't like the Turks.

Q: Did you have any major issues with Canada?

RIDGWAY: Canada always causes problems, but these are like intra-family disputes. We had issues about ice-cream, cedar shakes for buildings, beer, magazines - you name it. Every issue that might arise from neighboring countries whose economies are very closely linked, but where the disparities in size and wealth are great, did arise. One issue or another - and sometimes several at once - were always on our plates. Fortunately, Reagan and Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney had an excellent relationship.

We formed a task force. Fred Jones Hall, a political appointee, was a deputy assistant secretary and our main representative on this task force. Shultz followed Canadian affairs personally. He was very attentive to these issues. Fred got involved in a large variety of issues. For example, he had learned about the Japanese and Korean content of cars assembled in the U.S. and Canada. He became an expert on both hard and soft wheat. As I said, the issues were innumerable both in quantity and scope. He tried to stay on top of all of them. Periodically, we would go to Canada and Shultz would preside at a table which was as large as you can imagine because it had to accommodate all the people who were working on this wide range of issues. His objective in these meetings was to insure that none of the issues would become so major that they would blow up and unsettle the relationship between these two good neighbors. Fred did a superb job in his role as the manager of these issues; he gained Shultz's trust, despite the very wide range of issues that he had to confront.

We had a couple of summit meetings with Mulroney, both in Washington and in Ottawa. I concluded that there was no way ever to settle all of the disputes and that at best we could just manage them to insure that they didn't get out of hand and become major fissures.

Q: I have been told that the White House staff was very nervous about leaving Reagan alone with Margaret Thatcher or Brian Mulroney. They were concerned that since he was so friendly with them, he might commit the U.S. to policies that had not been fully staffed. Did you ever hear that?

RIDGWAY: No, I didn't. I know that some of the staff was very upset during Reykjavik because he was negotiating directly with Gorbachev. He was bypassing the summit process, which had been perfected during the Nixon administration by Henry Kissinger, and which called for a meeting of the leaders only after all the staff work had been done. Then the two leaders would sit at the table, with notebooks which would be changed as the topics changed. These notebooks contained documents to be signed and would be passed from one leader to the other. The staff was horrified that the president, during Reykjavik, Geneva and Moscow, felt he could be his own negotiator on some of the broad issues, which he intended to base on his personal philosophy. So they were nervous about leaving Reagan alone with Gorbachev during these summits. I don't know why they felt that way; Reagan would certainly not give the store away. In any case, the "cat could always have been walked back" if necessary.

I am a little surprised that the staff would worry about Reagan with Thatcher or Mulroney. The views of all of them were quite similar; they were all very conservative. I doubt that any agreements that might be reached would have been out of line with general U.S. policies. I don't remember any problems with these one-on-one meetings. The staff might have been more concerned about meetings between Reagan and other Europeans or the Soviets; they may not have liked the president of the United States being the president without their input on how he should behave!

I think Reagan's style made a difference. The moment in history made a difference. The personalities made a difference. Gorbachev's decision to appoint Shevardnadze as foreign minister made a difference. In light of the many challenges facing them, such as SDI and agriculture, the two of them were willing to listen as their predecessors had not. I should add that George Shultz was a real asset in this dialogue. He was a consummate negotiator, and he really understood human nature.

Shultz had gone to Helsinki in August 1985 for the tenth anniversary of the CSCE, which Shevardnadze also attended. It was the first time a Soviet dignitary had attended an anniversary celebration of the CSCE. I think Mrs. Shevardnadze was there and met Mrs. Shultz. As I mentioned earlier, it was at this meeting in Helsinki that Shultz first suggested that we abandon consecutive translation and try simultaneous translation. During all the meetings we had held with the Soviets until then, one party would first read a statement for about thirty minutes, which then would be translated for another thirty minutes. Then the other party would go through the same routine, taking up another hour. That process led to many over-glazed eyes; it was a great system if you wanted to make sure that barriers to accomplishments stayed in place. It was a technique that had served its purpose, but by the late 1980s the aim had changed and was now to open a dialogue with the Soviets; the established process became a barrier to such a dialogue. So, when we met in Helsinki at the American embassy with the Soviets, Shultz used simultaneous translation. When we met at the Soviet embassy, consecutive translation was still used. It became very clear that Shevardnadze was not pleased with the old process; it just did not allow for the meaningful dialogue that might lead to better understanding.

When later we met at the breakfast with the Soviets during the UNGA in New York, a couple of conclusions emerged. The Soviets indicated that they liked the simultaneous translation, but hated breakfast meetings. We never held another working breakfast, but thereafter did use simultaneous translation.

When the Soviets came to Washington, Shultz entertained them at his house for the first time. The secretary cooked the dinner, which were steaks grilled in the fireplace. We all sat around eating a buffet dinner. Mrs. Shevardnadze was there; it was the first time we had met the wife of a Soviet leader. It was a very relaxed evening with no agenda, no shouting, and no speeches. It was an evening at home attended by both the Soviet and U.S. teams.

We were reaching a point when it was becoming clearer that there was potential for improved relations. Reagan's charm - good old Irish politicking - was a real asset. He had enormous confidence in himself and his convictions. When we got to Geneva, Reagan and Gorbachev held their first private meeting in front of a fire place. His message was clear: "We are the two leaders who can make a difference in this world." He dealt with Gorbachev with respect. People at home were having a fit: "How could the president of the U.S. deal with a Soviet leader as an equal? After all, he had not been elected; he was a dictator who was being dignified by being in the company of the president of the U.S." That is not the way Reagan saw it. In his eyes, Gorbachev was a leader of a very important country who could change that country's policies. That was the guy he wanted to deal with.

So I don't know why relations between the two countries changed so dramatically. Was it the times? Was it the men? Was it the historic opportunity? Was it the conjunction of the restoration of confidence in the U.S. and the arrival of skepticism in the Soviet Union? Many say that history is devoid of any human content: things just happen and the right people are accidentally in charge. Others say that progress in relations is brought on by leadership. I think it was all of the above. It would not have happened if the right people had not been in charge.

Q: Was there anyone in the State Department at the time worrying about what might happen if the Soviet Union fell apart without a war?

RIDGWAY: No.

Q: I think I raised this issue before, but I would like to get back to the issue of national intelligence. Was the analysis you got from CIA, INR and other members of the intelligence community helpful to you?

RIDGWAY: To tell you the truth, I am not a fan of consensus conclusions, which is still what the intelligence community is using. When I got a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), it was a negotiated view. I prefer to rely on flat out, bold, uncompromising differences, so that I, as a policy maker, could judge for myself what the situation was. I didn't want some bureaucrats negotiating and thereby submerging, differences that I might find important in my role.

The other problems with the process were the problems related to large tomes that were tightly bound. I received a large, bound, classified document that I couldn't leave on my desk while I became engaged in some other matter. These estimates were so tightly glued together that it had to be put face down or marked in some manner so that I knew where I had left off. I thought that, at least, these papers could be put in a spiral note book, so that I didn't have to go through such an elaborate process if I needed to answer the phone or do something else.

My preference was to deal individually with each of the country desks in my bureau. Those officers had their relationships with INR and had served extensively in the country for which they were responsible. Bob Gates, the CIA director, had never been in the Soviet Union. I was with him when he went there for the first time. Yet he was briefing senior officials on the situation in the USSR. Furthermore, his brief covered the world and therefore he could not be expected to be a Soviet expert. My people had served there more than once and spoke the language. So I preferred to deal with my staff, whom I knew to be experts in the country that they were covering. There were a couple of CIA analysts that I would meet with from time to time; one was so far "off the wall" that he was useless, but the other one was very solid and I would listen closely to him.

Shultz instituted a series of Saturday breakfasts and lunches to which a variety of people would be invited, such as Bob Blackwell from the CIA, a Washington Post correspondent, and university faculty members. We would spend most of the day discussing one issue or another; it was a think session of the highest order. I certainly preferred that process for collecting information and views, and still do today. In looking at the tragedy in which we are now involved, I recognize that the department's views were buried in a foot note, after the NIE was negotiated.

Q:. Are there any other subjects that we should cover that may have been major issues during your tour as assistant secretary?

RIDGWAY: As I was coming back from Asia last night, I was thinking of the improbable journey that I had taken through the Foreign Service: dinner at the White House, meetings with Gorbachev, going to Andrews Air Force base to meet Mrs. Thatcher and all of those meetings with these world leaders. It was an improbable outcome to a career that began with an assignment in Manila as third secretary and third person in a three-person personnel section, arriving there to learn that the rotation program for junior officers I was told about when assigned to Manila, had been stopped by the embassy as it was not about to have a female junior officer in that program! It came to me last night that the ambassador in Manila at the time was Charles Bohlen, one of the giants of the old Foreign Service and whose daughter is now one of the stars of the present Foreign Service. I have become good friends with Avis and it took me a while to reconcile her father's attitude toward young female officers with this outstanding officer, who happens to be a woman, speaking of major transitions!!!!

Q: Just to finish up. What have you been doing since you retired?

RIDGWAY: I retired in 1989. My mother was ill and I didn't really want to move her again. I did not want to be an ambassador again, nor go through another confirmation process. It was clear that the administration wanted me "out of town," since there was no job for me here in Washington, I retired.

Much to my surprise, I was offered the presidency of the Atlantic Council. I accepted that. I was then asked whether I would be willing to join the corporate board of 3-M from St. Paul, Minnesota. I accepted that with the understanding that I would reclude myself from any decisions or discussions on matters in which I had been officially involved when an employee of the USG. There was considerable publicity about my departure and my future. Vernon Jordan and Bob Strauss very kindly offered to be of assistance any time I might need some. I started with the Atlantic Council in September 1989. I had been elected to the 3M board in August of that year. Jordan had introduced me to Lou Gerstner, who has just retired as head of IBM. I also joined the board of the Nabisco group.

When I took over at the Atlantic Council, I realized that I had not looked into what my main job at the council would be with proper diligence. I found that the council had no money and that my main task was that of a fund raiser. That is a specialty which requires both skill and a taste for it. Raising money is an art form and it was not something I enjoyed, but I soon was very busy raising money to keep a staff and a program going. I also read grant proposals that I would never gone near while in government.

In the meantime, my corporate career was developing very very fast. Carlucci called to see whether I would be interested in joining the Atlantic Bell - now Verizon - board. Jordan asked me whether I would be interested in joining yet another board. I met some other board members, who apparently liked my style and asked me to join other boards. In the end, I sat on eight NYSE boards. Later, some of these companies merged, so that the work load was reduced to some degree, although even today, I sit on five NYSE boards: Boeing, 3-M, Emerson Electric, Sarah Lee and Manpower, Inc. I also belong to three smaller boards: the National Geographic Society, the Center for Naval Analysis and the New Perspective Fund, which is a new California mutual fund worth at this moment something like \$34 billion.

After three years on the Atlantic Council, I recognized it was not my cup of tea. At that stage, it was arranged that I become co-chair, as a graceful exit strategy. My co-chair was Andy Goodpaster, one of the great Americans of the 20th Century. By 1996, I had severed all my ties to the Atlantic Council and I haven't been to one of their meetings since.

Q: How would you characterize your strengths as a successful board member?

RIDGWAY: I can identify one particular one. I can make choices, I am a good briefer and I am a good listener in briefings. Let me give you an example. I remember once going to a briefing, which was to lay out the pluses and minuses of a company divesting itself of one operation and merging the remainder with another company. It was Pete Peterson and David Stockman who did the briefing. I listened and listened and looked at the charts. Finally, I had to interrupt to ask that the briefers go over what had happened between the bottom of Chart 1 and the top of Chart II again. In fact, we were supposed to get lost at that stage. The next day, I got a call from the head of the company, who expressed his delight at my presence on the board and congratulated me for picking up the intentional gap in the briefing. I told him that many years before I had sat through innumerable military briefings for Reagan on SDI, and that I swore afterwards that I would never again sit quietly when briefers flipped charts rapidly in the presentations in order to cover up logic gaps or facts. He seemed very happy to have me play that role on his board.

I can listen to a briefing and notice if it is complete. I can sense the flow of information. I have always tried to think way ahead and to consider all the possibilities. I am a great fan of publicly acknowledging what I have done and why. If you get called before Congressional committees often enough and are asked often enough: "Didn't you know" or "Why did you do this or that?" or "Didn't you consider a, b or c?" you become trained to think in those terms, which is helpful on a corporate board, where the corporation has to be able to justify its actions in public. It is that thought process that I bring to the corporate table; I understand the public's right to know the true facts so that there can be no accusation of manipulation. Full disclosure is the only right avenue for a corporation; anything else will ruin its reputation. I also brought to the table the capacity to think strategically about large issues and, as I said before, the capacity to listen to a presentation to determine if it is germane and full. I think these functions are the appropriate ones for a corporate board. I have been on enough boards in the last fifteen years to feel comfortable with my role. I chair the governance committees at Boeing and 3-M. I was the chair of the audit committee at Boeing and Sarah Lee; however, when my husband fell ill, I just could not devote enough time to those committees and had to resign. But I must say that I love working on these corporate boards. I think I am a very good, productive member.

Q: I think this is the time when the media is filled with stories about boards that are provided enormous compensations and are essentially a captive of the corporate leadership. Have you ever run into situations of this kind?

RIDGWAY: I am glad to say that I have never served on that kind of board. Howard Baker called me at one time and asked me to join the board of Berlitz, which was being spun away from Macmillan at Robert Maxwell's request. I agreed and joined the board along with Maxwell. But, by this time, I had been on enough boards to be able to spot potential problems. When I was asked to chair the audit committee, I told them that I didn't have enough credibility yet to take on such a task. Furthermore, I had come to the conclusion that the Berlitz board did not contain enough outside directors. Maxwell, through Macmillan, owned the majority shares in the company; he didn't need or want any independent powers on the board. I asked Joe Rogers, who had been our ambassador to Paris and the Republican Finance Chairman, of whom I was very fond, to join me on the board. He joined and took over the audit committee. Then issues began to bubble up to the board, such as letting the Berlitz staff take care of the overnight cash management. The board did not agree. When Maxwell died at sea and his deeds became public, Berlitz was saved. It was sold to a Japanese concern, much to the benefit of the shareholders. This was an illustration of a bad relationship which was reversed. The company was saved by Joe Rogers, myself and some others.

One issue that came up, as it so often does, concerned the compensation of senior executives. The question was how best to pay management for performance. It was decided to give them stock options. I think that after my experiences, that is the best way to compensate management for its performance.

While we are on corporate management issues, let me say a few words about Enron. It gave birth to the Sarbanes-Oxley legislation, which I hope will have some positive effects. Enron's audit committee was chaired by a professor of accounting from Stanford. Now you have to fill out a form if you want to be the chair of such a committee certifying that you are an expert on audit matters. Since I refuse to say that, I am on only one. I probably qualify as an expert, but I refuse to say it. But in Enron, you had a certified expert, but that didn't prevent a horrible accounting scandal. Furthermore, on two separate occasions, the board waived ethics requirements so that the transactions could be taken off the books to make them invisible. They were given to Andy Fastow to deal with, but he had to have the board waive the ethics and the conflict of interest requirements. The board's actions were inexcusable.

As a former government employee, any salary above what we were making jolts me. I think \$2 million per year is a huge amount, and that is only what the junior staff make. An average CEO, who runs a good company with good share/price growth for his shareholder, and who runs a very ethical enterprise, makes about \$15 million per year. That is the low end. It makes me wonder what I was doing all those years in the Foreign Service. These corporate chiefs laugh at what we made.

Q: Roz, thank you very much for a very valuable addition to our collection.

RIDGWAY: Stu, thanks very much.

End of interview