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

AMBASSADOR THOMAS J. MILLER

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: April 19, 2010

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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 19th of April 2010, with Thomas J. Miller. This is being done on the behalf of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training. And I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Do you go by Tom?

MILLER: Tom, yes.

Q: OK, Tom, let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

MILLER: I was born in Chicago on December 9, 1948.

Q: Let's talk about your family. What do you know about the Miller side, your father's side of the family?

MILLER: Well, it's a very small family. My dad was an only child, born in Detroit, had kind of an unhappy childhood. He was sent to military school in high school. Very tenacious. I knew my grandparents pretty well.

Q: What were they up to?

MILLER: They were from Detroit, and this is the hardcore, original Detroit. They moved on to Florida when I was a little kid, to St. Petersburg. My grandfather owned a hardware store. He was an accountant. He had gone to college. My dad had gone to college but never graduated; this was during World War II, so he dropped out of the University of Michigan. But my grandfather graduated from, I think, the University of Detroit. And by the time I was old enough to realize anything, they had moved to Florida and he opened a hardware store with his brother-in-law, which I am told never really prospered.

My grandmother was an extremely domineering, very take-charge, very bossy kind of person. We liked her, when we were young. I have three other brothers, and so our memories are memories of childhood. And that was basically it.

Q: How about on your mother's side? Where did they come from?

MILLER: My mom is from Chicago. She's still alive. She's 86. My dad passed away in 2000, when he was 77. My mom had one brother. She was born to a very well-to-do family in merchandizing, stuff like that. They had a really, really big company. And she grew up in Chicago, went to private schools and all that kind of stuff. I knew both my grandparents there. My granddad on that side passed away I think right before he was 60. And my grandmother passed away when she was 97, about 13 years ago. She was a very nice lady. I remember her, obviously, a lot better than I remember my granddad. But he was a nice guy, from what I remember.

Q: Did your mother go to college?

MILLER: My mom went to University of Michigan, and that's where she met my dad, and they both dropped out to get married when my father enlisted. They got married in 1944 and they got divorced in 1976.

Q: Did your father get involved in World War II?

MILLER: Yes, my dad was a tech sergeant in the Pacific. He did radio stuff. And if I can just diverge for a second, I read many, many years later—it was actually right before I went over to Bosnia as ambassador in 1999—I read The Greatest Generation by Tom Brokaw. And I remember seeing my dad, and it turned out he lived in San Mateo at the time. After he divorced my mom, he remarried—he had been in love with one person his entire life, and this was a Japanese woman, and he married her in 1977. And they lived happily ever after until they both died. But I went and saw my dad in 1999, and it turned out to be the last time I ever saw him alive, right before I went to Bosnia. And I had just read Brokaw's book, and I asked him, "Why didn't you ever talk about the war?" He was one of that generation that came back and just resumed their lives or got on with their lives. And I expected some dramatic answer and he said, "You never asked." He then proceeded for the next the hour and a half to talk, and my wife had a video and she took it all in.

He told us about the war—and he was not a hero, he was just a normal grunt in the South Pacific. The sad thing is, when he died, we went to pull the video out to look at it and it had melted. So we don't have that record.

I met Tom Brokaw in 2004, during the Olympics, and I told him that story. He did a piece on me for a feature at the NBC News entitled "Tough Guy from Chicago." I was the ambassador there, and I told him this story and he asked me to write him a piece that he would put in an additional, one of the further editions, but he never did.

Q: Did you grow up in Chicago?

MILLER: I grew up in Chicago for the first five years—actually, in the Chicago suburbs.

Q: Where?

MILLER: Highland Park, which is on the North Shore. I think, when I was born, I'm not sure we lived in Chicago. I think the family lived in Highland Park or maybe had moved there very soon after I was born. And then we moved to New Orleans for four years, so my dad could—my mom's family was very wealthy, and he wanted to make his own mark. So he set out on his own to make his own mark in the import business, and we moved to New Orleans. And he joined a company and became a vice president eventually and did very well. And then he went back to Chicago after he had done his thing and showed that he could do it himself. We moved back to Glencoe, Illinois, which is one suburb south of Highland Park. And that's where I really grew up, in Glencoe.

Q: Do you remember when you were in New Orleans? This would be when you five,

about?

MILLER: Five to nine, I think.

Q: Do you remember growing up there?

MILLER: Yes, I do. And I'll tell you, I remember snippets. I remember what a kid that age remembers. But I do remember segregation. And I remember not understanding but never questioning the white and black bathrooms and stuff like that. It wasn't something that a kid my age did. I remember that I went to public school one year—no, I went to public school two years, two different public schools and then a private school, and the private school was kind of ritzy, with all white kids. I think all of the schools were all white kids, if I remember correctly. But none of that stuff ever occurred to me.

I just remember snippets, and much later, when I was old enough to realize what segregation was, I tried to think hard about it. I remember getting lost once, in New Orleans, when I was maybe six. I remember all the details. I was chasing my older brother and he was on a bike and I was walking, and he was with a bunch of friends. Anyway, I got lost, and I started crying, and a big, very heavy African American woman found me and took care of me. And when you're six years old, all I knew was my dad's first name, which was Bob, and his real name was Louis, and they couldn't find it in the phone book. And it took quite a while to figure out. I didn't know my address because we had just moved.

Q: What was life at home like as a kid? We're talking about New Orleans. Your father—had he remarried at that point?

MILLER: No, he was married to my mom for 32 years. And he was very do-it-the-right way. I don't think their relationship was that good. I don't think it was ever that good. But I was one of four boys, and we were totally into sports, and that's all we focused on. Sports and then later girls and all of the things you did in the '50s and '60s. So I can't say that I was tremendously aware of discord or anything else at home.

I remember from the day that I can remember everything about sports. Baseball, football, all the sports. And my brothers and I, we all played and we were all pretty good. And that was our lives.

Q: In the family, what religion were you, if you were, and how important was religion, would you say?

MILLER: My family was Jewish, and it was not at all important and never was important. We went to Sunday school. I was confirmed, barely. I was kicked out for behavior problems but I think my parents paid some money—I don't know this for sure—and got me back in. The only stipulation of letting me back in was that I couldn't have a speaking role in the confirmation service, because the rabbi thought I was a jerk. I was a behavior issue, there was no question about it. But I didn't like Sunday school. My

dad, he did it because it was the right thing to do. My mom was more proper. But we never did anything relating to our religion. We never really set foot inside a temple even to get married, and haven't done so since then.

Q: What about politics? Where did your family fall?

MILLER: I think my parents probably voted for Eisenhower in the '50s. I don't know. I think they probably split over Nixon and Kennedy and then, I think, as time went on, were more and more Democrat. And I think from the '60s on they were Democrats.

Q: As kids—we'll move to school in a minute—but when you came home, were various subjects talked about at the dining-room table? Was there an engagement with the outside world?

MILLER: Yes, I remember a lot of discussion about the world, about world affairs, about what's going on, about what was in the news. And I think part of that was my dad, as a businessman, started going to Japan from the late '40s on. My entire life, he spent half the year—2-3 months at a time—in Japan. He owned a house in Nagoya.

Q: This is where the Japanese lady came in?

MILLER: Yes, he was in his mid-20s, and he started, when he came back from New Orleans—no, I'd say he was probably maybe 35. We came back from New Orleans and he started his own import company and it was very, very successful. He sold it, it was later on the New York Stock Exchange, and then it went bankrupt. But he lived half the year in Japan, and he met this woman, who later became my stepmother, when she was probably 22 and he was maybe in his early 30s. And he fell in love with her. But he was married to my mom, there was a family. He stayed married to my mom.

My brother and I met this woman when we were teenagers. It was a strange thing, because my mom supposedly never knew anything about this, which is kind of hard to believe. My dad had all of us meet her when I think I was 18. And so he was always very interested in the world. And he was the leader in the family. He took the lead, and we would discuss—well, when we weren't doing sports, sports was the biggest preoccupation in our family—we'd discuss the world. And that's how I think I got interested in world affairs and later the Foreign Service.

Q: Coming from a Jewish background, did Israel and its cause, was this a family cause?

MILLER: Yes, in a very narrow way. My dad was very passionate about the Holocaust. He wasn't passionate at all about the religion, but he would somehow remind us that if it could happen once, it could happen again. And he would never buy a German product until much, much later in life. He finally bought a Mercedes, like that was his last car. But he just would never buy a German product. And that kind of carried over, yes. He'd say things. It wasn't an obsession with him, and he's not a Holocaust survivor or anything like that, but that stayed with me.

Q: How about the neighborhood where you were in New Orleans? Could you get out in the streets and play and that sort of thing?

MILLER: Sure. But we moved twice. I was in three different schools the three years that I was in school. So I don't have many memories of the neighborhood. A little bit more of one house than the other. But I just don't have big memories.

Q: At the time you were moving, still, I suppose in New Orleans, were you beginning to be a reader or not?

MILLER: I was always a big reader. I was a very good student, always. Compared to my brothers, I was the one who always brought home the grades. And I loved to read. I still read to this day. I don't watch much TV. And yes, anything and everything.

Q: Do you recall any early books that you read that left an impression on you?

MILLER: That early, nothing particularly. I mean, Robinson Crusoe and Tom Sawyer, of course. But I have a hard time remembering, because later we read those things in school. So I have a hard time on that one.

Q: Well, then, you moved back to Chicago. You were there longer?

MILLER: Oh, yes. We moved back to Glencoe, which is the suburb of the North Shore of Chicago. And I was basically in Glencoe from fourth grade through graduating high school. So that's where the real memories sink in.

Q: Let's talk about the neighborhood. What was it like?

MILLER: It was a real neighborhood. We lived in one house for a year, and then we lived in this other house from fifth grade all the way through. I went to college, but that's the house we lived in. And that was the most permanent place and that's where most of the memories were from. We all walked to elementary school. And it was three blocks away. Everyone walked to school. You rode your bike later. I should say, we all rode our bikes to school. We always did this. And then we went to junior high, which was maybe a mile and a half away, and that was riding your bike to school. That was seventh and eighth grade. And then when we went to high school, which was a pretty famous high school, it was called New Trier.

Q: My brothers went there.

MILLER: Is that right?

Q: I was born in Chicago, and we lived in Winnetka.

MILLER: Well, you know this area.

Q: I lived there and caught the Depression, so I left there while I was about four or five years old and moved to Southern California. But New Trier…

MILLER: You know the area. It was Winnetka and then right north of Winnetka was Glencoe. Of New Trier, my memories are extremely sharp, in part because—I know I'm getting ahead of myself—in part because I met a girl at New Trier and I started going out with her junior year. That was 1965. And we are still married to this day. So we have been married for over 40 years and were going together four years before that. So that's a long time. Her memory is a hell of a lot better than mine, so during that period, my memory gets much, much better.

Q: Let's go up before you get to high school. What were the schools you were involved in like?

MILLER: Well, North School, which is where I went through fourth through six grade—Glencoe was Mayberry RFD, but it was actually where they filmed the first Tom Cruise movie, the one where he is the juvenile delinquent, Risky Business. It was a very affluent area. What I remember was the schools were good. We had a scandal in sixth grade because one of the teachers was caught with pornography, before we knew what pornography was. It was all hushed up and he was dismissed. But basically, very good memories. We went to summer camp every summer, way up in Wisconsin, for eight weeks. The same summer camp; it was great, great memories of that.

I think it was a good education. It was kind of the stuff you did. And this was '50s. And then junior high was Central School. In Glencoe, you had very original names, North, South, West, and Central. Those were the four schools. And then Central became also the junior high. And that was a fairly large class. That was a graduating class of about 240. We still have reunions. When we have high school reunions we have junior high reunions. And we just had one a couple years ago. We stay in touch with a number of those people. My wife was there, as well. She was in junior high with me. But she was much cooler, much prettier than I was. So she didn't pay attention to me.

Q: Oh, yes.

MILLER: So we didn't really hang around the same crowds, then. And I think it was a good education. Since we talk about this, since we're married and our memories go back that far, we remember a lot of spinsters. There probably were a lot of gay teachers that we just didn't think of that way. They were very dedicated. I think my teachers were very good—very dedicated, I'm not sure they were tremendously original. I was always a behavior issue. I got good grades, but I also was a showoff, and that was probably because I was pretty insecure and young for my grade. But I made it through and graduated and did OK.

Q: Elementary and junior high, was there a course or subject in particular you liked or didn't like?

MILLER: I really liked history—Social studies, I guess we called it, then—and didn't particularly like English grammar. Math, I could take or leave. I wasn't fascinated with school but I did OK. I did pretty well. Not the top of the class but pretty good.

Q: What sort of sports were you in?

MILLER: God, I liked everything back then. We played baseball every day after school until it was dark.

Q: I take it this wasn't Little League.

MILLER: No, this was just us. I never did Little League. I don't know why. Maybe it wasn't around then. Well, it was around then, and I'll tell you why: because I just saw a movie over the weekend called Perfect Game and it's the true story of Monterey, Mexico being the first team outside the United States to win the Little League World Series and it was 1957. So Little League was big time by then.

We loved football. I didn't play. Both my brothers were All-State football players at New Trier. I was just not big enough, so I played some soccer, but I wasn't that great. I wrestled in high school. Again, OK but not great. I loved basketball. I love to play everything. I still have always been a runner until my doc told me that after my second knee operation last year that I've got to do something else. So I am now big into cycling, into spinning. I work out all the time. I play some squash now, too. So sports have always been an important part of my life.

Q: Were you a White Sox fan?

MILLER: Oh, yes. Yes, I was a passionate White Sox fan. The way that I got going with my wife, the first date that we ever had, was we had had a tradition in our family where we always cut school to go to the opening game of the White Sox. And I think my dad took us when we were younger, but by high school he would write us notes saying that our grandmother died. And of course, every year he'd write the note for us. We'd always get to the game by ourselves, and that was a long way. But he would write the note and of course my mom would always get very upset because this was maligning my grandmother who finally died in 1997 when she was 97.

But I was supposed to go to the White Sox game, April 15, 1965, with a friend of mine, and he chickened out at the last second. We were going to cut school, this was New Trier. And so I turn to this really cute girl in my Spanish class and I'd kind of been afraid to talk to her. I may have talked to her, but to ask her out? And I asked her if she'd go to the ball game, and she said, "Sure." And that was my wife, and that was our first date.

Q: You were at New Trier until when?

MILLER: '66. I graduated in '66.

Q: Were there any movements? High school is a little early for it to happen. But the free speech, or the civil rights, the anti-Vietnam?

MILLER: No. All of this stuff didn't hit us until college. And we talk about that a lot, because we got to the University of Michigan in '66 and this is just when the Vietnam protest movement was really getting to be big. Remember that, as you know, New Trier was a fairly conservative area, Republican congressman, Don Rumsfeld was the congressman from that district during this time. And it was not in the forefront of protests and stuff like that. So there was a little bit of pot-smoking but it was very… And there was some sex but you didn't talk about it. This was all kind of Mayberry RFD.

Q: I remember. God knows what was going on behind the scenes, but when I was a kid, I didn't know.

MILLER: I don't think much was going on at New Trier when I was in high school. I think this was the last of the age of innocence. And then by the time we started as freshmen at the University of Michigan in 1966, it was Michigan, Berkeley and a few other places, and these were the real hotbeds of protest and everything else. It really hit us in the face. Let me just add: I will say one thing. We tutored Afro-American kids. That was the project. There was a bit of a consciousness of giving back to the community, and so we tutored Afro-American kids in Lawndale, Chicago, when we were in high school. And we thought, we were all very conscious and very supportive of the civil rights movement, of stuff like that, but I didn't do anything. I guess there were probably others who did do a little bit of protests, what have you. But it wasn't much at New Trier.

Q: Were you getting a reflection of the social changes and movements from your parents or family?

MILLER: A bit from my dad, very little from my mom. My dad would bring subjects, my dad was always interested in the wider world and he would say, "What do you think of this?" or "What do you think of that?" And these were discussions we had at the dinner table. And again, imagine four boys at the dinner table, we're constantly teasing, it was hard to have a serious discussion about anything.

Q: In high school or at home, not through college, did the outside world intrude? The Cold War, the various conflicts in Palestine or Israel or Vietnam? Did that intrude much?

MILLER: Through high school, not much. We all knew about Vietnam, but I think at that point, I remember being supportive of President Johnson, not really questioning stuff. That all changed when I went to college. As far as the Arab-Israeli conflict, my dad had a woman who used to work for him, and between freshman and sophomore years at college, was the '67 Arab-Israeli War. Anyway, she had retired and gone to live in Israel, she and her husband, with their daughter and son-in-law, and they had four kids. The short story is the son-in-law was called up in the '67 war, and they had a farm. And they

had no one to run the farm. So my dad asked, "Any of you guys interested in going to Israel to help on the farm?" I think it was just my older brother and myself were the only ones old enough. "Are you guys interested in going over there?" And I said, "Yes."

So I spent a summer, I was on the first plane in 1967 that went over after the embargo was lifted. Remember we had an embargo on airplanes? We wouldn't let planes fly to the Middle East. I was in the first plane, it was a TWA plane that went over. And I spent the summer working on a farm.

It wasn't really a religious thing. It was just helping out a family friend. They had cows, and all I did was clean shit all day. That's what I did. Clean and fed them and stuff like that. Got in fantastic shape, just hauling stuff all day in the boiling sun. So I came back with this hulking body which of course my girlfriend thought was really cool.

And that's where I kind of got consciousness, or conscious, of the Arab-Israeli thing. And then I was director of the Israeli-Palestinian Office in the early '90s and I was on the desk 10 years before that. But I think that is where I got some of the experience—and some sympathy for the people on both sides.

Q: Well, before we leave New Trier, were there any teachers or a teacher who was maybe significant when you think back on it?

MILLER: There was one, and I reconnected with him many, many years later. His name was Larry Minear. He stopped teaching probably not that long after. He was a history teacher, and I guess it was like the equivalent of AP History.

Q: That's advanced placement.

MILLER: Yes, advanced placement. But I'm not sure they had it then. Maybe it was. I don't know. But he just made it live. And I remember having this conversation with my wife 30 years later or so, maybe it was after a reunion, and I said, "I wonder what ever happened to the guy?" And the miracle of Google, you don't have to wonder anymore. So I googled him and found out that he went off and ran an NGO (non-governmental organization) in Boston, anti-war, and I reconnected with him. He was generous enough to say he remembered me, which I'm sure he didn't.

Q: One of the things in these oral histories, I always like to ask questions about some teachers, because this thing will go on the internet and so there's a smidgen of immortality. And I think significant teachers deserve it.

MILLER: Yes, Larry Minear. M-I-N-E-A-R. That's the only one I really remember.

Q: So you graduated in '60…

MILLER: '66.

Q: '66. I know you went to Michigan, but why?

MILLER: Well, actually, my dad, again, he was a businessman. And he never graduated college, and his heart was set on one of his sons going to Wharton School of Finance at the University of Pennsylvania, because to him, that was the Mecca, the Nirvana. So I remember—I think he probably even filled out the application, I don't remember doing it, but I'm sure I did—but the happiest day of his life up until then was the day I got into Wharton. And the saddest day of his life was the day I told him I didn't want to go because I wasn't sure—and this is a real '60s thing—I wasn't sure that I wanted to follow in his footsteps. He was willing to give the company, turn over the company to one of his sons and I was the anointed one. And what bothered me, back then, and I'm all of 17 years old, was that I know that I would have been very wealthy, but it really bothered me that I would have never known whether I was successful because of what I'd inherited or because of my own merit. And that really, really bothered me.

So I spent a lot of time thinking about, "Do I really want to go to Wharton? Because I know I'll be on this path." And I had applied to the University of Michigan and got in and I decided to go to Michigan and he was really upset with my decision because he thought I was just chasing my girlfriend, who was going to Michigan. And I explained to him that it was about a lot more than that and years later—not that much later—he forgave me, said, "Yes, you were right, you should have gone to Michigan."

I knew Michigan was liberal arts, the program I was in. I just wasn't 100 percent certain that I wanted to follow in his footsteps and I was 100 percent certain that I didn't want to have a legacy based upon being the son of. So I wasn't 100 percent certain what I wanted to do, but I just knew what I didn't want to do.

Q: Would you describe yourself while you were in high school at New Trier as sort of a rich kid, living off the fruits of richness?

MILLER: Not at all. My dad—this was something that he really insisted we didn't get. I think we got a real minimum allowance. We had to work for that. And we always—all of us—always had jobs, from working in grocery stores, working as a waiter, working as a busboy, delivering newspapers, from age 12 on. I always had a job, or more than one, and was very industrious and worked very, very hard. And he insisted that there would be no free rides. We were, first of all, compared to other kids, we weren't that wealthy. It was a wealthy area. But I think we were down the ladder in terms of economic standing.

But he always insisted that any money we had—you know, we all wanted cars when we were old enough to drive. A lot of my friends, their parents bought them cars. He said, "No way. If you want a car, I'll let you have it, but you have to earn every penny for it," so I did. And that's where I developed a lifelong passion for the stock market, because bank accounts were paying whatever, probably more than they're paying today, two, three percent or so, and I realized that I could take this hard-earned money and stick it into the stock market and buy things like Standard Oil of New Jersey and General Motors—Standard Oil of New Jersey became Exxon—and that's exactly what I did, as a

teenager. And I made enough money to buy a car. So when I was 16, I bought a car.

Q: That really opened up fields, didn't it?

MILLER: Oh, yes. And one of the jobs that I had as a kid was I was a messenger on the Chicago Board of Trade. I was literally, that was pre-internet, and I literally ran orders on the Chicago Board of Trade. It was a summer job. I went downtown every day and put on the special coat and ran orders.

Q: You were running between the various dealers.

MILLER: Yes. In what they called the "pits." Yes.

Q: Oh, boy.

MILLER: That was fun. I don't know how much I made. About what a caddy at golf courses. I worked my tail off as a kid and its something that I'm really glad my dad insisted upon and it's something that we insisted upon with our kids. It has embedded over generations. Our kids are really hard workers and they're grown.

Q: OK, 1966. The campus of Michigan. This is Lansing?

MILLER: No, this is Ann Arbor.

Q: I mean Ann Arbor. What was it like?

MILLER: It was big. It was very exciting. When we first got there, it was just overwhelming. 38,000 students. At the time, the big thing was to get into a fraternity or sorority, and so you rushed your freshman year, got into a fraternity. That became a lot of your life. Now, my wife—my girlfriend—and I, we were together and we decided that if we were going to get married, it would be best to date other people. So we took a time out for a while, and dated other people. And then came back together sophomore year. So we might have been apart for six months or so. So a lot of my life, except for that six months, revolved around her and vice versa.

Q: What sort of activity was there on the campus, because we're really talking about…

MILLER: This is American history. This is the '60s. There was a lot of protests of Vietnam, which grew over the years that we were there. I graduated in '69; I did it in three and a half years, because we got married in '69 and I was always a hard worker. I always kind of pushed myself and I always took an overload of courses and stuff like that. There was a Black Power movement. They closed down the campus—all of these things closed the campus for a while, for periods of time. There was a pornography thing. They were showing, at the time, some risqué movies, the campus film co-op or whatever. The police raided, and there was a lot of violence between the townies and the university. That got pretty ugly for a while, and I think that closed the campus.

I don't remember a semester—and I'm probably wrong on this—but I don't remember a semester that campus was open the whole time. I found all of this really exhilarating, exciting. I was not part of the protest movement. I was a serious student and I focused on my studies. This was Michigan, so my days as a jock were over by then.

Q: You would not have done sports at Michigan?

MILLER: I was not going to play on the Michigan football team. But I still worked out, I still ran and did stuff like that. I took life very seriously. All the behavior problems of junior high—well, actually, I think by high school they were pretty much gone. But junior high and elementary school, that was a thing of the past. My idea, and my wife used to accuse me of this all the time, my idea of a hot Saturday night was going to study at the library and then maybe going out for some coffee and serious discussion afterwards. So, in hindsight, I think I was a pretty boring guy, and I wasn't a lot of fun.

Q: Were you sampling any of the culture, like avant-garde poetry or foreign films?

MILLER: Yes, we did a little bit of that but only a little bit. And I would do it usually with someone else. I wasn't that interested. It was more to be cool than because I was intrinsically interested in it. You couldn't not do that stuff at a place like Michigan. And I think it was important to me to be one of the people who blended in in the cool crowd. So, yes, a bit of that, but not a real lot.

Q: Again, did foreign affairs intrude at all?

MILLER: Well, Vietnam—and I will say, I know there's a lot of revisionist history—I was probably more supportive of the administration's policy on Vietnam than most. And I think that probably was because of my dad, who I just deeply respected and all. He eventually turned against the war, too, but I think I turned against the war later than most because I had a lot of trust in my government. These guys, they wouldn't have gone into this if they didn't know something I don't know. But I wasn't one to make waves. I wasn't one to go out and say it.

I actually had a college roommate who was a far right-wing guy, and we're still friends to this day, and he started, I think, Young Republicans on campus. He later, I think, became the president of the student government council. He was a big guy—an All-American swimmer in high school. And then he later on became a state senator in Illinois for about 20 years. He's running for Cook County president now. He'll get his clock cleaned because this is Cook County and he's Republican (Note: He lost but the race was closer than expected).

Q: I always take pleasure in the fact that I was born in Cook County, so I know I've been voting straight Democratic for, yea, these many years although I left there at the age of five.

MILLER: Well, you know. You were asking political consciousness things. I was absolutely fascinated, in the early '60s—and this is high school, early high school—with Martin Luther King. Believe it or not, I memorized his "I have a dream" speech. I think I had the whole thing. I literally recorded it, I memorized it, I played it every night. I was fascinated with Jack Kennedy. I just thought he was the coolest guy in the world. And a lot of it was the Camelot stuff. And I was really following, when Kennedy came into office, it lifted the veil of who cares about the government and for young people, that was the period that had the deepest impression on those of us who are around 60, today. You remember it well.

Q: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." It really struck a note that hadn't been struck before, or basically since.

MILLER: Right. And we all believed it. Kennedy gave a speech on the steps of the Michigan union—it was before we got there—and there's still a little plaque there, where he first announced the concept of the Peace Corps in 1960. And I go back to Michigan all the time to give speeches and I've got all kinds of connections there. They actually gave me an honorary degree several years ago, and I gave the commencement speech. But we always go back to that spot. That's got a warm place in my heart.

Q: Did you find at any point you were aiming toward something as you were getting ready to graduate?

MILLER: Well, I think that by the time I started Michigan I knew I wanted to be a political science major. I knew I wanted to do something in the foreign affairs field. I wasn't sure it was the Foreign Service. I knew about the Foreign Service. But as time went on, I thought the Foreign Service would be very, very neat. And then I met, when I was probably in my last year, I met a Foreign Service Officer who came to Michigan on one of these get-your-Masters programs. And I guarantee you you've interviewed her, her name was Terry Tull.

Q: Oh, yes, I know her. Terry and I served together in Vietnam.

MILLER: Well, I have to tell you a Terry Tull story. Is she still alive?

Q: Oh, yes. She lives in New Jersey.

MILLER: OK. Well, this is a true story. I'm going to say this in a way where if it ever does go… Terry's got to be 75 or so, now?

Q: Yes.

MILLER: OK. Terry was there, and she was a real live Foreign Service Officer, and I went up and introduced myself. I think we were in classes together, Southeast Asia—I was very, very interested in Southeast Asia. I knew I was interested in Asia. I didn't want to do Japan because it was too close to home (i.e., my Dad). I took Japanese. I took Thai.

I took Malay-Indonesian. These were all languages I took at Michigan. I took Spanish, too. And I met Terry, and my wife was not my wife yet, but going to be. Terry totally turned me off toward the Foreign Service. Terry told me—what she said about the Foreign Service was fine, but she basically was a very traditional person, and she told Bonnie, my wife-to-be, her views on the proper role of a wife in the Foreign Service. And it really turned us both off, to the point where I decided I'm not sure I want to go into the Foreign Service. I thought I wanted to go to grad school, so I went on to grad school. I had taken the Foreign Service exam and passed it, and I let them know that I wasn't interested in coming in. I could have come in five years before I did.

I just said, "No, I'm not interested," because of having met Terry and her telling us about it. We were sensitive enough then and grown-up enough then that my wife was thinking of a career, but she just didn't want to be known as the wife of. So at that point we just took a pass on the Foreign Service.

Q: Well, about the time you were graduating, it was almost five years later that the Foreign Service really changed, when all of a sudden there were…

MILLER: '72.

Q: There was room for spouses.

MILLER: Oh, yes. And the irony, the end of the Terry Tull story, is my first job. I got my Ph.D. at Michigan and I was probably one of the very few people who was allowed to go to grad school, because you remember the draft then. They were just scarfing everyone up. But they let me go at least to get a Masters degree in Southeast Asian Studies because they figured this is relevant. And I did go in the Army and it turned out they didn't need me for the full two years, so they let me go after several months. And I went back to grad school and got my Ph.D. But the irony was I got my Ph.D. and did my fieldwork in Southeast Asia, in Thailand and Laos, and I was grabbed out of the A100 class by INR, one of your old haunts, to be one of the analysts for Southeast Asia. And who is in the office next door to me? Terry Tull.

Q: I think Terry came from a working-class family where she was expected to stay and get a job as a secretary.

MILLER: Oh, she started as a secretary and worked her way up to being a Foreign Service Officer.

Q: She didn't go to college because she had to have a job so her brothers could go. She came from that particular background.

MILLER: She told me her whole story and I understood it more later on. It's just you don't get to revisit history. I wanted to go on to grad school, I wasn't 100 percent for the Foreign Service. But I thought it would be better to go on to grad school, and it turns out it was a much better idea, because people who went into the Foreign Service and then

tried to finish a degree while in the Foreign Service—it was really hard.

Q: Tell me, you were a political science major?

MILLER: Yes. I got my Ph.D. in political science with a focus on Southeast Asia. I got one Masters in political science, which was really the Masters along the way to the Ph.D. I got a separate Masters in Southeast Asian Studies at Michigan. And I got my BA in political science.

Q: How stood political science when you were taking it? I state a prejudice, but I found it so incomprehensible, the stuff that I've seen today. It doesn't seem to have any pertinence to anything but other political science types. But I think things were changing.

MILLER: It was a real field. People used to say it's neither politics nor a science, but there is a real field. The fields that I focused on, there was theory, there was comparative, there was international relations, there was American politics. I focused on international relations and comparative politics. It was a field. Like in most of academia, a lot of the things that were sacrosanct then have not really stood the test of time too well. Some things have. I remember Graham Allison and his study of the Cuban Missile Crisis, which is still pretty apropos today, but a lot of other stuff doesn't fit today. We had a very good department, and I remember I had good advisors. I think Michigan was pretty good, and I think the field was fairly solid.

Q: I think part of the problem is that something has gone off on this quantitative side.

MILLER: And Michigan was very, very big on the quantitative side. Where I always had problems, and to this day have problems, was how the academic community didn't relate well with the policy community and didn't really have much of an interest in doing it. When I was in grad school, the professor who was my chairman, 10 years after I got my degree, he retired, and he had been at Michigan for 40 years or so, and I think I was one of his last grad students. I was stationed in Greece, my first tour in Greece, as a political officer in the mid-80s, and the university wanted to do a big do for him, to recognize his many years of contribution. So they offered to fly him his 10 favorite grad students, and I was one of them. And of course, I had an APO address, so they thought when they were writing APO New York that I was living in New York, but I said, "I'm in Greece." They flew me in from Greece for this.

My point is that the 10 of us former grad students got together, we spent a wonderful weekend together just regaling each other with stories. But I was the only one who didn't go into academia, and I remember that weekend, saying, "God, am I glad I didn't." I got a lot of pressure from my professors to go into teaching. I had superb grades; I was Phi Beta Kappa and fellowships throughout and all that kind of stuff, full ride the whole way through grad school. And I just thought, you don't study this much, you don't do this much, just to go to conferences and write papers for your colleagues. The teaching part I always thought was fascinating and in years later, I did teach. While I was in the Foreign Service, I was an adjunct professor. But I'm really glad I didn't pursue an academic

career. And as I say, nine out of 10, the other nine guys all went into academia.

Q: Before we stop, what about your field studies in Thailand and Laos?

MILLER: Well, it's actually a fascinating story. I always believed in doing practical stuff, not just theoretical stuff. And I had this wonderful professor, not the chair of my committee but a guy who was a geographer, and I had taken some courses from him. He came to me and a few others one day and he said, "We have this great opportunity, would you like to sign on?" LBJ (Lyndon Baines Johnson) had this concept in the '60s, always thinking big, that the way to end the war in Vietnam was to develop the Mekong River. And that was operationalized in this concept of building four very large dams on the Mekong. And all the feasibility studies for the first dam had been done and they were ready to go, and it was just when McNamara came over to the World Bank, in 1969. And McNamara refused to sign off on it. It was going to be four billion dollars in 1969. It was called Pa Mong, right above Vientiane. He said, "I'm not going to sign off on this thing until you figure out what's going to happen to the quarter of a million people who are going to be displaced by the reservoir that's going to be created."

Anyway, the World Bank officials were all upset, but they looked around and they found out that all the major dam projects, some in Africa, one in India, Aswan obviously, had been total disasters on the resettlement side. So they went and hired a bunch of amateurs, and I was part of that group of amateurs, and that's what I did my field research on, was designing a resettlement program for these people. The end of the story was that the dam was never built because of the war. And my contribution to that study gathered dust for 25 years, until somebody at the World Bank called me in 2000 and wanted to talk about it. They don't build many large dams anymore. One exception is Three Gorges in China—an example of how not to do it. They're not going to build large dams on the Mekong.

But that's what I did. I went out to the field in Thailand and Laos and did research for—I think I was there seven months.

Q: How did you do research? What did you do?

MILLER: I went around. I had a team of about 10 people, Thai students, grad students, what have you. And we interviewed people. We did survey research of people who would be affected by the dam, of the businesses that would be impacted and basically the results of our interviews produced our research. My Thai was good. It was pretty good. That's how you learn Thai; you go out to the field. So that's what we did. And we wrote it all up. I was part of a much larger team. There were about seven of us or so and several people were coincidentally getting their Ph.D. thesis out of this research, which I did.

Q: I think this is probably a good place to stop.

MILLER: You've got another appointment, yes?

Q: Well, you do, I know. You got your Ph.D. when?

MILLER: In 1975. And I joined the Foreign Service. I mean, I officially got it in 1975. After that I worked for the equivalent of an Ann Arbor Beltway bandit company called Bendix, which is another story which I'll get into next time. We did contract research, like some of the big Beltway bandits do here. And then I joined the Foreign Service in January of '76.

Q: Well, we'll talk about the exam and coming into the Foreign Service.

MILLER: All right. That's where my memory gets good.

Q: Today is the 28th of April 2010 with Tom Miller. Tom, in our last interview, you talked a little about you were working for Bendix and doing some surveys and things like that. What was that about?

MILLER: Well, as I was working on my Ph.D., on my dissertation—I had completed all my coursework at the University of Michigan—a number of Ph.D. candidates who were a little further than me had taken research jobs with a small in-house research division of the Bendix Corporation. Now, Bendix was a massive aerospace, automobile supplier, mega-billion-dollar corporation headquartered in the Detroit area, actually in Ann Arbor, Michigan. And the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of Bendix was a guy named Mike Blumenthal, who, about that time—well, actually a little bit later—went on to become Jimmy Carter's Secretary of the Treasury. Blumenthal, when he was CEO of Bendix in his last couple of years, decided that every unit of Bendix had to be a profit center in and of itself. And what he had done—I'm getting ahead of myself a little bit—what he had done was set up, taking advantage of all the Ph.D.s that came out of the University of Michigan and just a great place to live—and he lived in Ann Arbor, he still does. He had set up an in-house think tank, like a policy-planning unit, in Bendix.

And initially, it was to do in-house research for Bendix. But as time went on and as it had to be a profit center, they started taking contracts, government contracts, what-have-you. So I was roped into this. It was a job. It was a way to make money. And what I ended up doing was working on a project, it was a fascinating project. We were into the volunteer Army, and we found that we were recruiting all kinds of people who were really not that well qualified to be in the Army. They had mental problems, their intelligence wasn't that high, physical problems. So in the early days of the volunteer military in the U.S., we were just scraping the bottom of the barrel, but they couldn't get rid of these people because the Army only had dishonorable discharge, or a general discharge. And so these guys didn't want to leave, and so they figured they had to come up with some vehicle to wash these guys out and not make it punitive, and before they did that, they felt they needed to have a better understanding of who these people were and what their motivations were and what their qualities were and all that kind of stuff.

So they needed some research done, and I was part of this research team that went around to Army bases interviewing these young kids. And out of this, we helped develop a non-

punitive exit vehicle for people to get out of the military without having to have a big black mark against them. It was fine. It was about a year.

Q: What did you gather from this? Was this a new world opening to you?

MILLER: Absolutely. It was a new world in many ways. I had served in the Army briefly. I think I told you the story of that. So I knew a little bit about military bases. That wasn't totally new. But was new was these were sad kids. These were kids who meant well, who were trying to do a good job. They just weren't up to the military standards. And they needed help. I think the military wanted to help them, and out of this program that we devised, there was some help for them. These were kids who were on the fringes of society, and I got a chance to meet these kids. And I got a chance to interact with them. I don't think I would have ever had another chance in my life to do that, and it broke down some stereotypes that I had, and probably a lot of other people did, about who these kids were.

These were well meaning young men, and they were all men that I interviewed, who were just trying to hang on and they didn't make it. They couldn't even make it in the military. So it was an eye-opener for me.

Q: What did you call the discharge?

MILLER: The program was called 620-something. And that was like everything else. You've got a 401. You fill out your 1040. This was 620-something, and it was that part of whatever the manual or whatever it was. I don't think it ever had a name. I think it was just the 620-something program. The discharge—I'm sorry, I didn't answer your question—the discharge was something, and I forget what it was called, but it might have even been an honorable discharge. But it was a non-punitive kind of thing.

Q: You took the Foreign Service exam. It was '70…

MILLER: I actually took the Foreign Service exam twice. I took it in 1970, and I think I told you the story with Terry Tull. I passed. I had met her, and my wife and I were both kind of turned off by the way she described the life of a spouse in the Foreign Service. So we both decided to take a pass. I wanted to go on to grad school anyway. I passed the exam five years later. I think I had the oral. Yes, I did go through the oral and I had passed that the first time after I got my BA. And then the second time I took it, it was the summer of '75, or maybe the spring of '75, because I remember they called my wife and I was traveling. I was doing this Army research, this military research. They said, "We're ready to have you come in the September 1975 class," and she says, "No, he can't do that." She told me about it later, and I would have agreed. But she wanted to delay it because she was pregnant and we wanted to move to Washington together. It was complicated. And finally they called me and they said, "Look, you're either coming in the January 1976 class or we're just going to give your place up to someone else." So I said, "I guess I'm coming in January 1976."

So I actually came to Washington, I moved myself. She stayed in Ann Arbor for a couple of months, and then she moved in March of 1976.

Q: I think you'd mentioned this before, but you'd pretty well looked at the academic world and decided this wasn't for you?

MILLER: Yes, I'd definitely decided it wasn't for me. I just am not the kind of person, and my wife fully agreed. If I had decided I wanted to do it, she would have talked me out of it, probably. I'm not the kind of person who can just recycle myself. I need constant stimulation; I need new experiences. I need to constantly be learning. I thought the first year would be really interesting, as an academic. I had a real disdain for the whole tenure system, and I've seen the results of that. I had seen people who have gotten tenure and just basically retired in place. So that wasn't for me. I wanted to do something that was much more action-oriented, that had much more relevance, in my words.

Q: You came in in January of '76.

MILLER: Correct.

Q: What was your class like?

MILLER: It was great. We had 35 people, and we kind of divided ourselves into three groups, early on. There was a group of about five or six who just dressed better than the rest of us and wore three-piece suits. And this group was all guys. I think the entire class was probably about five women and maybe 30 men. Maybe a little bit different. Maybe it was seven women or something like that. And this first group thought they were the guys who were really going to advance quickly through the Foreign Service. And they let us know. They just made it clear that they were the hotshots. And then there was a group of about 25 who were just normal people, nothing special. They were just trying to do a good job. Then there was a group of about five who were kind of bums. Kind of wiseasses, and all that kind of stuff. I know it's going to be hard for you to believe, Stu, but I was in this latter group. And we hung around together. We just thought this was an interesting kick.

And I had always come into the Foreign Service saying, "I'm not sure I want to do this. I'll do it for a couple of a years and if I don't like it, I'll get out." I was not one of these guys born to go into the Foreign Service. And in this group, there was a guy I got to be particularly close to, he and his wife. And I tell this story because you'll recognize the name now. His name was Joe Wilson, and this was wife number one. We were very close to them.

Q: He was basically a beach bum.

MILLER: He was a beach bum, that's right.

Q: I've interviewed him.

MILLER: OK, from UC (University of California) Santa Barbara. You've interviewed Joe. OK. He'll tell you his story.

Q: You can actually read it in the first half of his book, The Politics of Truth, our interview.

MILLER: Is that right?

Q: He acknowledged this in his introduction.

MILLER: Oh, that's great. Anyway, so Joe and his first wife, Susan, we were really close. We used to hang around with them. I'm getting ahead of myself, but after a couple of tours, Joe and Susan got divorced. And we stayed very close with Susan, as we are to this day. We see Joe. We had dinner at his house in Santa Fe a couple Christmases ago, and we have a lot of common friends. But we're much closer to Susan. So the irony of the three groups was the self-described, self-identified high-flyers—none of them flew anywhere close to high. I don't think any of them made senior grades. I lost touch with them. And of the five kind of bums, Joe and I were the only two who ever made ambassador in that class.

Q: There's a lesson there. I'm not quite sure what it is.

MILLER: I'm not sure what it is, either.

Q: It doesn't point at something. The Foreign Service is not as much a cookie-cutter type organization as is often portrayed. You don't have to be a company man or a company woman to move ahead.

MILLER: I totally agree. At the end of the day, and I really do believe this, I really do believe it's a meritocracy. Now, that might be self-serving, because I made it to the top. But I do believe that. It doesn't mean it's a meritocracy all the time, at every stage of your career. But ultimately, the people who move ahead, by and large, are not the cookie-cutter guys who dress right, speak right, et cetera, who get the process right. It's the ones who get the substance right who ultimately make it ahead. And I found that's largely been true. I've served on two promotion panels over my career and you can quickly see the people who are good on process, that the ones who do the process move ahead quickly, early on. But they don't make it to the top unless they have the substance down pretty well.

Q: This is a thing that, in a way, I started out with a certain bias when I started this program 25 years ago, and that was to get a feel for the people before they came into the Foreign Service, where they came from. And many came from very odd backgrounds. Joe Wilson came from money, yet he went to a college where he could be near the beach and the ski slopes. Also, you seem to fall into the trap that so many people did. "I'll go into the Foreign Service and try it for a while, and then probably get out." It's an insidious

profession. Very few people who come in, except maybe on the first or maybe the second post. Then there's some attrition. But after that, there's very little attrition. It's fascinating, fascinating work.

MILLER: I agree with you. I always joke, saying how "I'll go until I have a bad tour." And I never had a bad tour. But I never could convince myself that I was a lifer. It turned out that I was a lifer, but I just couldn't identify myself that way.

Q: Well, how did you find your initial introduction to the Foreign Service?

MILLER: A couple of things come to mind. One was that everyone in those days—and I think it's still true—everyone went abroad on their first tour. I didn't. I was the one person in the class who stayed, because I had been recruited with a Ph.D. specialization in Southeast Asian Studies. I had been recruited to come in as what was then an FSR (Foreign Service Reserve Officer)—no, it might have been as a civil servant, I think. Civil service appointment—it might have been FSR. You remember the old FSR thing? But it was for a position, a lifetime in that position, in INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research), as one of the analysts for Southeast Asia. There was a division chief named Pat Barnett, and I'm sure you've never heard of her. Her husband was Bob Barnett, the China specialist. And Pat was OSS (Office of Strategic Services) and a real veteran. She was in her mid-60s when she recruited me.

And she had contacted me, and offered me a job, essentially, and I told her I'd taken the Foreign Service exam. She said, "Well, it doesn't matter to me how you come in, whether you come as an FSO or civil servant. I will make sure that I grab you." So I knew on my first day in the Foreign Service where I was going. And I was the only one in the class who knew this. I was told to be quiet about it. So I stayed in Washington on my first tour, and my first job was in INR.

Just two other quick stories I'll tell you. I also was told, I think sometime in the first week of the A100 course, right before we took the language proficiency exam, someone tapped me on the shoulder, one of these people who knew about all the things that no one ever tells you about, and said to me, "Don't let them know you have a language, any capabilities in a language, if you don't want to serve in that area." So that's cool. I had five years of Spanish and I never took a written exam in Spanish because I really had no desire to serve in Spanish-speaking countries.

I remember when I did take the exam—and I had Japanese, I had Indonesian, I had Thai, I had Spanish—and I must have taken the exam in Japanese. I can't remember which one it was. I took it in all. And the examiner says, after the exam, "I've got some good news and some bad news for you. What do you want to hear first?" I said, "Well, give me the good news." He said, "You're fluency is fantastic. I really applaud your fluency." I said, "Well, OK, what's the bad news?" He said, "I don't have a clue of what language you were speaking half the time." I was kind of mixing them all up, you know? But it was fun.

I remember one other story, which you would get a kick out of. At the time, the A100 course was six weeks, and at the end of the six weeks, we had some senior Foreign Service Officer come over and give us some inspirational speech. And I didn't know who was senior, who was junior, who was who. So we had a guy named Phil Habib, who was the undersecretary for political affairs, come in and talk to us. And you remember Phil Habib?

Q: Oh, yes.

MILLER: And he gave us this just uplifting speech about patriotism and commitment and devotion and all the things, duty and country and all that kind of stuff. And at the end of this speech, he said, "And every single one of you, someday, in your career, is going to be offered a bribe or be asked to spy on your country or something really bad." He raises his finger, he says, "Don't do it. As tempting as it might be. You'll be offered sex or you know…" And then he paused for this long, very uncomfortable moment, "Unless it's enough to retire on." Now, I tell you that story because my second job—I'm getting ahead of myself—in the Foreign Service was working as a special assistant for Phil Habib out of INR.

Q: One of the great figures in…

MILLER: He was something else. He was phenomenal.

Q: OK, so did you find your class the bums or the well-dressed? Was there a bonding, or did you all feel part of a class or not?

MILLER: A little bit. Not lifelong. I stayed in touch with some, stayed in touch with Joe, stayed in touch with a few others, got in and out of touch. I was telling you about a guy before who turned out to be my DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) in Athens, who was a classmate of mine. I didn't really stay in touch with him over the years. His kids, who are several years older than ours, had babysat for our kids when we were visiting London in the '80s. We had them over for dinner last week. He's now a good friend. We just co-wrote an article on Greece for a journal. But it wasn't a lifelong kind of thing.

Q: In my group, I didn't particularly bond. We kept in touch. What class number were you, do you remember?

MILLER: I think it was the 120th. But I might be making that up. I think it was 120. I can't tell you what I ate for breakfast this morning but I can tell you…

Q: So this is '76.

MILLER: '76. January '76.

Q: So you're off to INR?

MILLER: Right.

Q: I imagine you were being commiserated with by your colleagues and all, going to INR rather than abroad?

MILLER: No, I was pretty happy about it. It was really good, because my wife was trying to get her career, she's a social worker, she wanted to get on with her career. Our daughter was born in May of '76. And I was really thrilled with the job. I thought this was the coolest job in the world. I had a little bit of a problem when I started the job, because INR was in the old building, old State. Now, they've renovated the whole building, so it's changed, but at the time, there was only one way to get up to the eighth floor. This was the eighth floor of the old building. And the first week I was in the job, I kept on getting lost, and it was really embarrassing not to be able to find your office. But it worked out. And I really did enjoy the job.

Q: How long were you doing this?

MILLER: I was there until October of '77. And what happened—if I can just tell you two more quick stories, because they're kind of cute—I thought INR was the coolest job in the world and didn't realize it was pretty much on the periphery. And that's the great thing about being young and junior in the Foreign Service, is that you think what you're doing is really cool. I remember our division chief would go and brief the assistant secretary every morning, bring the intel down in a special locked pouch and all that kind of stuff, and basically just the special intelligence, and sit there while the assistant secretary read it. Once she was out, the deputy was out, so it fell to me—I had been in the job maybe three months—to do the briefing.

But no one ever told me what the briefing was really all about. So I got up at four o'clock in the morning to get all the intel together to sort through what the assistant secretary—this is in East Asia—should see. And I remember the assistant secretary was Art Hummel. I don't know if you remember that name.

Q: I've interviewed Art.

MILLER: Is he still alive?

Q: No, he's dead.

MILLER: OK. And I was twenty-seven, maybe twenty-eight by that time. I had grown a beard so I could look a little bit older and not like a kid. And I came in and I spent probably two hours going through this stuff, underlining stuff, but no one ever really told me what you're supposed to do. All I knew was to get the stuff.

So I go down to brief Hummel, I go down to do the thing, and I arrive in his office, and he barely looks up over his glasses, and I go, "Good morning, I'm Tom Miller." I think he might have acknowledged me. And I thought a briefing was I was supposed to explain

it to him, and I had memorized all this stuff. So I start talking and he's reading, and he looks up, first time just curious. Second time, a bit perturbed. Third time, he says, "Would you please shut up?" I'm trying to read this stuff. No one had ever told me that I was just supposed to keep my mouth shut and just wait as he read through the intel. That's one story that stayed with me.

The other one was another briefing story. I was told—and this is probably a year after I started—to bring a pouch of material to the secretary's office. Now, that was just beyond me. I mean, I don't think I'd ever been on the seventh floor. And the Secretary was Kissinger. By that time I realized that what briefing was was you just carried around intel in a pouch. You didn't do anything. You were just a messenger; you were a delivery boy. But of course here I am, a Ph.D. Foreign Service Officer and I had to tell myself I was something more important than that. So I am going down the hall and I have the intel and I'm reading it, looking very important and very absorbed. And I'm in the seventh floor suite of offices, walking down the wood-paneled area. I'm reading this thing—or pretending to read, I can't remember what—and I wasn't watching where I was going and I bumped into a guy and knocked him over. And it was the Secretary of State. I got up. And I had knocked his glasses off. He murmured something like, "Why don't you watch where you're going?" And I got so scared I ran away. And then I came back 15 minutes later. I told Kissinger that story years later and he didn't even remember. So that was the highlight of my time in INR.

Q: Would you explain—I've had various accounts of INR and some people have said, this is the one place where you can do an analysis of something and if it happens to be pertinent it will get read all the way up, as opposed to going through the bureau business where it goes through a ponderous progression. And others say nobody pays attention. How did you find it?

MILLER: I found it more the former. I really did know my subject. And I started out working on Malaysia, Indonesia. And I ended up doing Indochina. And at the time—this is by mid-'76—at the time, I was the only analyst for Vietnam, as opposed to just a few years before, when there had been over 100 people doing this stuff. So there was collective amnesia in the U.S. government and the State Department, elsewhere, about Vietnam, because this is right after we had gotten out and we just didn't want to pay attention to it.

Well, what happened shortly thereafter was massive numbers of refugees started coming out of Indochina. The boat cases, the Hmong across the Thai border from Laos, and it was a little bit later that the Cambodians started coming during the Pol Pot period. And that got to be a really, really big thing and we were totally unprepared for it. So what happens when we're unprepared? It's always, "Ask the intelligence community." Well, I was the State Department intelligence community for that, so I got pulled into the Indochina Refugees Task Force that Phil Habib chaired. That's where I got to meet Phil. That's where I got meet Ambassador Clayton McManaway (who was the task force director), who just died.

Q: Whom I've interviewed.

MILLER: Who was a great guy. He was a boss of mine, later, as well as Phil, obviously. And so, yes, I had a lot of really good experiences, and you're absolutely right. What I wrote—I had good bosses—and what I wrote had a much bigger impact than one would ever think, coming from a junior officer.

Q: I interviewed one—I can't think of her name right now—but she had banking experience and came into the Foreign Service and did a consular assignment and then INR and was writing on financial things as a second-tour officer. And her boss in INR said, "The Secretary wants to see you." And she said she nearly pissed in her pants, because she thought, "He's going to fire me." She went up there and it was George Shultz, who said, "I just wanted to tell you, I've been reading your reports and you're really doing a very good job. Keep it up."

MILLER: That's great. George Shultz was that kind of guy. When we get to a couple of years hence I'll give you some good Shultz stories. But he was that kind of guy, totally.

Q: It's an institutional thing. INR has the reputation of being the fastest on its feet and being right more than not. And I think it's because it's not as inhibited by too much layering.

MILLER: I think that's part of it. I think it's also the ethos of the organization, of the institution of INR. We were always told that we were to be the contrarian; that our job was to not necessarily go along with the NIE (National Intelligence Estimate) but to be the contrarian. And so you had to be intelligent about it and you had to know what you were talking about. But I remember taking footnotes to NIEs (National Intelligence Estimates)…

Q: That's National Intelligence Estimate.

MILLER: And these things became monumental battles. We had, up and down the line, when I came into INR, the assistant secretary was Harold Saunders, who I worked with a number of times subsequent to that. Fantastic guy. He supported you. Roger Kirk, Marty Packman—I don't remember all these names—were the DASes (Deputy Assistant Secretaries). They were tough, but if you did your homework, you as an analyst, as the lowest guy on the totem pole, were fully supported by your bosses. Herb Horowitz was the office director. Bill Rope was the deputy. My division chief was Pat Barnett. And they all supported me, and not just me. Everyone, if you did your work, if you really knew what you were talking about.

Q: Well, did you sense any change in the attitude towards Indochina? There was a real case of the whole American public—the protests and everything else—nobody paid any attention, except for the Boat People.

MILLER: Well, there were people in the Department who had spent a lot of time in

Vietnam, and they refused to let go. They were the institutional conscience. Phil was one of them. There was a guy who was the office director for Vietnam-Laos-Cambodia at the time, his name was Jim Rosenthal. He's probably passed on. The desk officers had all experience in the region.

Q: Jim Rosenthal—I think I've interviewed him—is out in San Francisco. I've interviewed him.

MILLER: That's right. There was a guy I got to be real close with a little bit after this, and we're still close today. Lionel Rosenblatt.

Q: Oh, yes. Lionel.

MILLER: Lionel, you had to interview him. I'm going to have lunch with Lionel in a couple of weeks.

Q: When you see him, please ask him—I'd like to re-interview him. I did a short interview. I knew Lionel from when I was in Saigon.

MILLER: Lionel is pretty sick these days. He has 15 days when he's bedridden and 15 days when he's better. So I'm going to catch him then.

Q: Well, OK.

MILLER: So these people, these were committed. And they were committed more to the people than the policy. They did their best to make sure that we didn't forget, that we didn't turn our backs. I think a lot of it was operationalized through our very generous acceptance of a lot of refuges into this country. We're now in the third generation of these refugees, and they've become fantastic citizens. It's the American Dream.

So I did that for 20 months or so. It was supposed to be a two-year assignment, and out of the blue I get a call from my personnel guy, who I barely knew. He said, "Don't ask me a million questions, and this is really weird, but Phil Habib is looking for a special assistant." The most junior—well, I wasn't necessarily the most junior guy. And if you remember Phil, this is classic Phil Habib. He asked the personnel system to identify the best officer at the three, the four, the five and the six levels. That's old three, so it's like today's grades one, two, three, four. And I was the six. And the guy tells me, "You don't have a chance at the job, but you go ahead and interview. You've done really well. You go and interview with Habib and you can just chalk it up that you'll have met a guy that you'll never have had a chance to talk to under normal circumstances."

So I have a big beard at the time, and I go and interview with Habib. And as I'm going in, he had a secretary who—this was way before OMS (Office Management Specialist) and all that kind of stuff—she was a secretary. Her name was Jeanette Popora. I'm sure she's not around anymore. She took an instant liking to me, because the other special assistants were full of themselves and I was so junior I couldn't be pompous. It was just not in the

cards. So she immediately liked me and I was waiting for the interview and she says, "I just have to tell you something. Mr. Habib really hates people with facial hair." And I'm going in with a big full beard. So I go in, having been told, number one, he hates people with facial hair—and my hair was kind of long, too. I had long hair. And number two, I had no chance for the job. So we talked about Vietnam for an hour. And never really talked about the job. I just figured this was neat, that I got to meet such a famous person so early in my career.

Q: Habib, you mean?

MILLER: Habib. And he was all that you remember, gruff and rough and everything else. And I went away. I went home and told my wife that I had met this fascinating guy and wasn't that neat? And she got really excited like I was. A week later, I get a call from the personnel guy and he says, "I don't know where to start with you on this one, but Habib wants you to work for him." I said, "What? I think there's probably a mistake." I really thought it. He said—and Habib told me the story when I went down there—he says, "The rest of them were all trying to impress me. You weren't. You were just a normal person." I said, "Well, I would have tried to impress you if I thought I had a chance at the job. But I was told I had no chance at the job."

So I became one of four special assistants in the office of the undersecretary for political affairs. And that was October of '77.

Q: And you did it for how long?

MILLER: I did it until January of '79. Now, what happened was I was the guy who got all the stuff that no one else wanted to do. I was the junior guy. I was really junior. And so I was the guy who came in early. Habib would make it in by seven, so I'd get in a little before six every morning, which means I got up about four-thirty or so. And this was six days a week. The executive assistant was a guy named Don Tice. Terrific guy; a really, really nice guy. He also took me under his wing. And Don said, "Look, here's the deal. This is the way we've always done it." The junior guy does the early shift three days a week and the other two mid-ranking guys cover the other three days.

I said, "No, no. I'll just do the whole thing. I'll do it every day." He says, "You're crazy." I said, "No, it's OK." So I did it every day, and of course they stuck me—you remember how P (Political), what the office set up looked like? There was a glass office right outside the undersecretary's office. And then the others are these nice wood panel private offices. They stuck me in the glass office because it had the least privacy and that was the least-cool office. And Habib was a line-of-sight-tasker. He'd come out, bellowing, and the first person he'd always see is me. And his secretary, this Jeanette, just loved me, so she'd always say, "Mr. Habib, you should ask Tom to do this." So she was my best buddy. It ended up that I took on all kinds of things because I was the first one he saw, because I wasn't a threat to the others, because Jeanette was my friend. And so I just ended up doing a lot of stuff that was not my job description. And I became, over the next several months—it was only a couple of months, maybe I started September, maybe three

months—really, really close to Habib.

He had two daughters, and no boys, and in some ways, people used to say I was the son that he didn't have. You say, "Well, just a couple of months?" It actually was a very intense thing. And I loved the guy, absolutely loved him. He had tremendously serious heart problems during this period. He had had massive heart attacks before. And I remember it was December 15, 1977, and Vance was the Secretary, and Phil had just come back from a trip to Soviet Union, Middle East. He came into the office and he just looked like shit. He was sweating profusely and just in terrible, terrible shape. I looked at him and I said, "God, you look terrible." And he said, "Don't worry about it." And I came back in a couple of minutes later to check on him and he was even sweating worse. So I said, "I'm going to call an ambulance." He starts yelling at me. "Don't you dare!" Just then, Hal Saunders, who was the assistant secretary for NEA (Near East Affairs) comes in and I told Hal, "He really looks lousy." And Hal says, "Just let him settle down. I'll go ahead and talk to him." And he went in and Phil was lying down by this time. I called the ambulance, and the ambulance was there 10 minutes later.

What happened was that he was suffering a massive heart attack, and he was told that if the ambulance hadn't come, he would have died for sure. So until he died, he always thought he owed his life to me. That sounds melodramatic. But I just called the ambulance. That's it. And we were close until he died, which was, I think, 1992. I used to always visit him in California after he retired.

Q: Have you read the book, <u>Cursed is the Peacemaker</u>?

MILLER: I helped the author, John Boykin, tremendously. My name's not there a lot because I didn't want to. I helped John when he was writing it, and I gave him a lot of information and I, more importantly, steered him to a lot of people. And I'm still in touch with John.

Q: Let's talk about a couple things. In the first place, Habib as a boss. How did he relate or whatever you want to call it, operate, within the department, in your view?

MILLER: He was a number. He would bellow, he'd yell. He'd be in your face. There wasn't a nicety about him, but it was a style that people loved, that people respected. A lot of people were intimidated by him. I remember one thing in particular, because this was another guy who went on to become a mentor of mine, and who I'm still very close to today. We had an assistant secretary in East Asia at the time who was in his mid-30s named Holbrooke. And he and Phil used to get in these massive fights. Now, Holbrooke had worked for Phil years ago.

Q: This is Richard Holbrooke?

MILLER: This is Richard Holbrooke, the same. He was the youngest assistant secretary at the time and I'd kind of get in the middle of this stuff. Just massive. If you think Holbrooke is brash now, you should have seen him 30 years ago. But Holbrooke, to this

day, will tell you how much loved Phil, how much he respected him.

And Phil was really good with people as long as they knew their stuff. Don't ever go and bullshit him, because he'll call you on it every time. That's on one hand. But he never was mean to people. He was never cruel to people, and these are all lessons I learned. He could be rough but not mean. He also was extremely respectful of the system. He would never use the system to get his way. He'd bend the system sometimes. And the institution of the Foreign Service was something he absolutely loved. He was so committed to the Foreign Service as an institution. There were a bunch of us who were pretty disgusted with AFSA (American Foreign Service Association) at the time. The president was guy named John Hemenway. I don't know if you remember this.

Q: Oh, God. He was a certified nut.

MILLER: Yes, well, a lot to be desired. And we were real turned off. We called ourselves—you know, we were very self-important because we worked on the sixth and seventh floors—and this is how I met Stephanie Kinney, you know, Stephanie and Doug Kinney. We called ourselves the Group of Forty, and we decided that we weren't going to let AFSA get destroyed—because that was the exclusive bargaining agent—so we decided we were going to take over AFSA. And this was 1979. And we ran a campaign to take over AFSA. We ran a slate. We got Phil to endorse us. We put out a newsletter with Phil's endorsement. By that time, Phil was retired. He was no longer there.

And I was the campaign manager. Here I am, a 30-year-old on my second-tour, and I was the campaign manager for this thing. And we won 12 out of 14 positions. And we were backed by Phil. I don't think we would have won that campaign without Phil's help. It's because he really loved the institution of the State Department. I think he felt the same way about AFSA and what had happened to it.

Q: It was a peculiar development. A person who was basically opposed to the Foreign Service (Hemenway) ended up as the head of it.

MILLER: It became a vehicle for some to take out their personal grievances with the Foreign Service. When they talk in AFSA, they talk about the '60s, the Young Turks, Tom Boyatt and Bill Harrop and those guys. And then they talk about '79, when we took over. The guy on our slate who became president was Ken Quinn, who was just a great guy, and we elected 12 out of 14 people. I was on my way to my first overseas assignment—it was time to go overseas—and I had made a deal. The guy who succeeded Phil in January of '78 was David Newsom. And David was one of the nicest, most decent people I ever met in the Foreign Service. Very smart and everything else. But he was the antithesis of Phil in terms of style. He used to always describe himself as a utility infielder. He would fill in where he was needed, whereas Phil would cut out large swaths of policy issues and work them. The Middle East, the Russians, et cetera.

So David was kind enough to ask all of the special assistants to stay on, and we did. I made a deal with David that I would leave the day before our second child was born, and

I did. There's a picture of David giving me a Superior Honor Award—Phil came back for it—there's a picture of David and Phil and my wife, who was very pregnant, because she delivered the next day, and me, getting a Superior Honor Award on January 3, 1979.

Q: What was your impression of Habib dealing with the geographic bureaus?

MILLER: Number one, he made it clear that he was the boss. He dealt with each of the geographic bureaus differently. It depended on who the Assistant Secretary was. Very close, collegial relationship with NEA, that was Hal Saunders. Hal was just the consummate professional, very knowledgeable. And he would be sufficiently deferential to Phil that there wouldn't be any issues. Holbrooke I've already described. I think Art Hartman might have been the Assistant Secretary for Europe. And he had always treated EUR (Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs) like it was a little bit full of itself and too many striped suits. He'd poke fun at them, but I don't think he got really, really involved in the EUR issues.

He got very, very minimally involved in Latin America, and a bit involved in Africa, because he had a special assistant who went on to much bigger and greater things but still is a good friend named George Moose. George got him very involved in African issues.

Q: How did Habib and Vance get along? Because they seem like two very different types of people.

MILLER: Everything that I saw, and let me be clear, I wasn't in their private meetings, but everything that I saw was Vance relied on him very much, had a great deal of respect for him, and he was the right-hand guy in the Department. The deputy secretary always has not been a key operational guy. The undersecretary has basically been the COO (Chief Operating Officer) of the Department, supervising the regional bureaus. And this is before we had a lot of other bureaus that we've had since then. We didn't have a Refugee Bureau. I actually wrote—I'll tell you the story if you're interested—I wrote the charter for the Refugee Bureau.

Q: Yes, I want you to say how that came about.

MILLER: So Vance liked him, respected him a lot, and Phil always, I don't think he ever called him Cyrus. It was always Mr. Secretary. And it was always "The Secretary." That's something that always stayed with me. I did it myself. Newsom, when he came in, was a very different kind of person, a very decent kind of person. We had a couple of big issues, some of which I worked on. The Cuban troop presence and the Russian troops in Cuba in 1979. Dave Newsom wrote a book on this later and a couple of other things. But the big thing that I was working on was the refugee issue, and it really, really reached its peak in the summer of '79, and there were massive numbers of Indochinese coming out. I remember from my days in INR, they would ask me, because it's always the intelligence committee who would do these estimates, they'd ask me to do a prediction of the estimates. And I said, "Well, it could approach 5,000 a month," and everyone said, "Oh, that's crazy. It's never going to be that." In June of 1979, it was 60,000 a month that were

coming out. It was massive. 60,000.

Q: Was this seen as the Vietnamese government saying, "OK, we'll let it happen?"

MILLER: No, it was not a Mariel Boat case thing. These were people who were risking their lives to get away and they were fleeing. They were punished if they were caught. And imagine, we had no infrastructure in the State Department to cope with this. There was no Refugee Bureau, there was no coordinator for refugees or anything else. It was all handled out of the undersecretary's office, and I did refugees in the undersecretary's office. So it all culminated in a massive conference in Geneva in June. Vice President Mondale led our delegation and that kind of broke the camel's back, where we, the world, decided that we had to accept a lot more these people, that we weren't going to improve conditions in the countries. We still were pretty bitter over what had happened. And we all upped our numbers significantly.

In that process, there was a guy named Dick Clark who was a former senator from Iowa. And he was appointed the first coordinator for refugees, and Dick asked me to be his chief of staff at this conference in Geneva. I broke out of Thai for a couple of months—I was in Thai language training—and I worked for Dick. A few months before, I had written the memo that created the Refugee Bureau. It was a memo from Newsom to the Secretary, saying, "You have got to do this."

Q: You were saying that you had already blocked out what a Refugee Bureau would do and all? Did you have legislation for that?

MILLER: I don't recall that we did. I might be wrong. I remember writing a memo to the Secretary with an accompanying attachment that said, "This is what it's going to look like. We ask you to approve it." I think things were a lot simpler in those days. Maybe there was legislation later. I'm sure there probably had to be. But that was what brought Dick on board, that's what got things going. We had no infrastructure to deal with this massive refugee problem.

Q: How did you find the Department dealing with refugees? Was it one of these things of we shouldn't go this way, let the social services handle it and do something?

MILLER: No, I don't think so. That's not what I remember. We had some real committed people in the Department who felt we had a moral obligation to take care of these folks. So I feel—what I remember—is these were people who had served in Vietnam, who felt we had walked out, run away, too quickly. What I remember was that there was a lot of energy. There was a guy named Shep Lowman. I don't know if you remember him.

Q: I knew Shep. Actually, I knew Shep from way back in Frankfurt.

MILLER: OK. Well, Shep was one of the key guys. There was another guy who came in from outside, from the Senate—I think he had worked on Kennedy's staff—named Frank Sieverts. And these were the core of what was to become. Lionel was involved in this

stuff.

Q: Lionel Rosenblatt.

MILLER: Lionel Rosenblatt, in what was to become the Refugee Bureau. And there were a lot of other names that I think I could probably dredge up. We did a lot of work with HEW at the time, Health and Education and Welfare, which became HHS (Department of Health and Human Services) because initially, we had big camps that we would bring the people to. I remember one in Arkansas and one in California. There were several. So there was a lot of coordination with domestic agencies. I wasn't involved in this, though. I was involved at the start and then I went off on assignment to Thailand for a couple of years. It was a group of dedicated people. It wasn't just another task. And these people really put their hearts into it.

Q: Was there anybody mentioned, at the time, or seen saying, "I don't know, these are the poor, downtrodden right now, but we're really getting a high class of potential American citizens?"

MILLER: Yes, I think all the people who were true believers were saying that kind of stuff, were saying, "We are a nation of immigrants, and if it wasn't our grandparents, it was our great-grandparents, and this is just the next wave and this is what makes us strong." So all of those arguments. And I totally internalized it. I believe that stuff to this day. I have great difficulty with all the anti-immigration stuff that you see out there. But that was pretty deeply and pretty widely felt among the people that I worked with.

Q: Of course, so many of us at the State Department had Vietnam experience. How did you find being the task-person? Can you think of any particular things you got involved in that were difficult for you in dealing with other bureaus and other entities or not?

MILLER: Well, I did a lot of the functional stuff, because the cool stuff was the regional stuff. So the other special assistants, who were far senior to me, they covered the regional bureaus. I did whatever other people didn't want to do. And I also sorted all the paper and all that kind of stuff. You know, the junior-staffer things. And I was thrilled to do it. I just thought, every day I'd walk in there and I'd say, "Boy, am I lucky to be here."

One of the functional things that I did was intelligence. And there was some very sensitive stuff which I won't talk about to this day. I remember one story, which I can talk about, because the guy is in jail, involving surveillance satellites. It was all very, very sensitive at the time. And now you've got Google Earth, which can do a better job than that back then. It was involving some of the most sensitive stuff—this was both Habib and Newsom—and discretion was the watchword.

I remember going out to a site in the Washington area and seeing all this top-secret stuff, with the undersecretary, with Habib, and with Newsom later, and seeing all this stuff. It was extremely impressive. And then, it might have been a couple of months later, and it turned out this was the KH-11. That was the satellite, the spy satellite. A couple of

months later, it turned out that a clerk sold the operations manual to the Soviets, for $5,000. His name was William Kampiles. It cost us billions. It blew the whole thing.

So I worked on intelligence. I worked on refugees. I worked on bits and pieces of some of the regional stuff. I did the Indochina stuff because I had some background. I actually did all of Southeast Asia, I think. I remember—again, my time with Habib was only three months. Well, it was more than that, because he got sick and then he tried to stay on for a while. So I don't think Newsom came in until probably March of 1978. And we were bringing stuff over to Phil, who was in his apartment. He was recovering. And he wasn't well enough to come into work, so I'd go over there every day and bring a pouch of stuff and stay there while he went through it. And that was a couple of months. I remember more things that I worked on with Dave Newsom.

Q: What were some of the things you worked on with him?

MILLER: The Soviet troop presence in Cuba.

Q: That was the missing brigade or whatever?

MILLER: That was the missing brigade, yes. And Newsom wrote a book on it, so I don't need to go into it. That was a big deal at the time. We were very concerned about the Soviet presence in Cuba. We were concerned about the Soviet presence around the world and all over Africa, and what have you. I can't even remember exactly what I did. I was a staffer. I can't remember. I do remember the intel stuff. I do remember the refugee stuff. I don't remember other stuff.

Q: OK, well, let's move to the personal side. Here your wife has just had a baby…

MILLER: Right, our second.

Q: Second. And you're living on a modest salary in Washington.

MILLER: Right. Very modest.

Q: And you have impossible hours. How is this going over on the Miller family?

MILLER: Not well. I'd get in at six and go until seven, seven-thirty. I'd get home after the kids were in bed, wouldn't have dinner with the family. It didn't go over well. You could probably script it, because it was the same conversation that was had in many Foreign Service families. I was extremely hard-working, extremely dedicated. I didn't pay nearly enough attention to family matters. My wife was hassled, with two small kids. And I'm not going to tell you there was threats of walk-outs or something like that, but it didn't go down well.

Q: Well, this is one of the side effects of the Foreign Service career, particularly when you get involved in some of the Washington stuff. Because the wife can't be part of the

team, which makes it at least more interesting than just sitting back in the house.

MILLER: Right. No, you got it exactly, particularly with the stuff I was doing. A lot of stuff I wouldn't even talk to her about. I just would say, "Busy, exhausting day." I love my kids, so she'd keep them up to see me, and it wasn't great for their sleep and all. Both of them love me, they thought I was like the candyman. You could write the rest of the story. We survived it. I made two deals with her. Number one, I would leave the Undersecretary's office (P)—because it was kind of an open-ended assignment—I would leave P the day before our second child was born. The first one had been a C-section, so we knew when the second would be. We scheduled the second one. And I did that.

The second thing is that she got to pick the overseas assignment. I pretty much had my pick of almost anything. And we had worked in Thailand during my Ph.D., when I was doing my Ph.D. research on this dam project. And so she knew Thai. She loved Thailand, and the vice counsel in Chiang Mai was one of the jobs that I could choose from. She said, "That's where I want to go." And at the time, we went over to Chiang Mai, we had an eight month old son and a three year old daughter, so it was a good time to be overseas and get some childcare and all the rest of the stuff.

Q: So you were in Chiang Mai from when to when?

MILLER: Summer of '79 to summer of '81. I thought this was the end of my career. I thought this was a dead end because it wasn't a high profile job. I had agreed to it, but I thought I would get nowhere, that my start of a real fast-track career was going to go nowhere. And it turned out that I couldn't have been more wrong, because three things happened. Refugees continued to be even bigger, and they were coming over from Laos, the Hmong and the Yao. Second was narcotics; that was the Golden Triangle and that's where a lot of the heroin of the world was coming from. So that exploded. And third is that I had—and this is a long list of my mentors—I had a fantastic ambassador. His name was Morton Abramowitz. And he took a liking to me.

I was a vice counsel. I was the number two in a two-person consulate. The number one was kind of a real academic, very withdrawn kind of guy. He let me do everything, and Mort recognized this, and I just showed respect toward the number one. So it turned out to be a fantastic assignment.

Q: How stood our military presence? Was there any at that time in your area?

MILLER: No, there wasn't much, because this is post-Vietnam. We were winding down the airbase at Udorn. The big airbases in the northeastern part of Thailand, in Korat, Udorn, Ubon—we pretty much were closing them down. We ended up closing our consulate in Udorn not too long after that. And so there wasn't a big U.S. military presence by then. This was '79 to '81.

Q: Let's talk about refugees. You were getting refugees, Hmong, from Laos. Was Cambodia emptying out on you, too?

MILLER: Cambodia was emptying out and I ended up doing a TDY (Temporary Duty) down on the Cambodian border for several weeks in 1980, when things got really, really hot. They just pulled me out of Chiang Mai and asked me to go to the Cambodian border where there was a camp that was set up. It was called Khao-i-Dang, which had 250,000 people at one point. People used to say it was the second-largest city in Thailand, after Bangkok. But most of the time, I was in Chiang Mai in the north.

I also went down and ran the consulates in Songkhla and Udorn for a while, just on TDYs. And in Songkhla, that was the boat cases coming from Vietnam, of which there were a lot. I got some interesting stories there. But I spent a lot of time visiting refugee camps. I was on the road a lot in Chiang Mai, and I would spend a lot of time in the refugee camps interviewing the refugees for political information. Because this was one of the real windows we had into what was happening in Laos, and I got an award for my political reporting.

Q: Did we have any program at the time to bring out the Hmong?

MILLER: We did. We had a big program. I went out there in the Carter Administration and halfway through my tour the Reagan Administration came in. And one of the things that I remember was that the Reagan Administration cut the numbers down a lot. It fell to me, because I had all of these relationships, to go and tell the refugee leadership that because we had had a change in administration we had had a change in policy and brothers who could follow brothers could no longer do that. We changed the criteria. And that was really, really difficult. People didn't understand it, that they would have qualified two months ago but they no longer qualified to go to the States. I think, over time, we got a little bit of a modification of that tougher policy. But that was really tough, and it was wrong. And I did a dissent message through the Open Forum dissent channel saying that this was wrong. It didn't have any effect.

Q: Had there developed, over that time, a fairly robust NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) community to deal with refugees?

MILLER: It wasn't that robust. Nothing like it is today. There were the groups that are around, Save the Children, World Vision, Oxfam, all of them were around. I do remember World Vision, which has become a much more sophisticated operation. I remember them in Khao-i-Dang with their bibles. It wasn't subtle then. It's now much more. And I think World Vision is an excellent organization. And there was much more of a care and feeding, emergency operation. Much less than what it is today. I worked much later in my life in Darfur and places like that, where it's much more focused on empowering the people, letting them make the decisions.

Q: What was your impression of the government in Laos?

MILLER: Pretty brutal. Laos is a gentle country, so not brutal in the sense of Pol Pot, but a very communist government, no question about it. It was the Pathet Lao that ran things.

There was a politburo. They would kill people trying to come over, come across the Mekong. And pretty disciplined, pretty brutal. But it was Laos. Everything went slow in Laos. Everything was a little bit gentler than elsewhere.

Q: How about the Thai officials and all? You were away from the capital and Thailand's got a lot of corruption in it. How were things going there? What was your impression?

MILLER: I wasn't struck by it. There was corruption, surely. On the areas that I worked in, they ranged from very good to very bad. The very bad was very bureaucratic. I've never bribed anyone in my life and I never tried to. It doesn't strike me as predominant, the bribery and the corruption, but a lot of bureaucracy and a lot of slowness in getting decisions made. On the other stream, there were some good people that I met. We did a lot of work on narcotics as well as refugees, and there were some very good people and there were some people who weren't that good.

Q: What sort of things were you doing narcotics-wise?

MILLER: We had a very large presence in Chiang Mai. We had two Americans at the consulate, but over 35 official Americans in Chiang Mai, and I'll just have to leave it at that. And a lot of that, most of that, was focused on narcotics. That was the center of the Golden Triangle. That's where a guy named Khun Sa, or Chung Chi Fu, was with the Shan United Army when it was operating, and he controlled a tremendous amount of the world's heroin trade. We had a massive DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) presence. We had a very large other presence. We just had a lot of operations there, and it was all focused on stopping narcotics.

Q: Did the embassy people down below support you? How were relations?

MILLER: It was good. Lionel was the refugee coordinator at the time, so we worked really closely. Lionel was my buddy, and so he used to always want to grab me, and we'd go off on adventures, which, of course, upset my boss, upset the embassy, upset my wife. But we'd do it anyway. Lionel's just a charismatic guy. I learned a lot from him.

The ambassador and the DCM were highly supportive; Mort Abramowitz, as I said, was the ambassador. The DCM was a guy named Bert Levin, who went on to have his own embassy.

Q: I've interviewed him.

MILLER: A good guy. A real good guy. The political counselor, who we did a lot of stuff with, just died a few weeks ago, Jim Wilkinson. Did you ever do Jim?

Q: I don't think so.

MILLER: You're not going to do him now. He stayed a friend through life, and he retired in 1999 and he just died in early April. And so they were all very, very supportive. I don't

remember anything that was negative about the job.

I will tell you, just a quick story, we were very aggressive on the anti-narcotics side. And this narcotics kingpin, this guy named Khun Sa, or Chung Chi Fu, thought we were probably getting too aggressive, so he hired a hit man who kidnapped the wife of the head of our DEA office and her three year old daughter. They were our closest friends there. Her name was Joyce Powers. Her husband was and Mike Powers. And long story, but there was a chase and they cornered the guy and he had a gun to her head and Mike, by then, had shown up, and he got his kid released and as he's going back with the kid—he was a real he-man, he was like an Incredible Hulk kind of guy—he had taken his shirt off to show that he had no guns or anything like that, and the guy had released his daughter. The guy killed his wife, Joyce. He just shot her. He had a gun to her head. We were never sure if it was an accident, if it was a hot day and he slipped, or whatever. Anyway, the police immediately opened up and killed this guy.

That was a very traumatic experience. The interesting story—that was very interesting, and we're still in touch with Mike 30 years later. But what had happened was 60 Minutes had come to Thailand.

Q: This is an investigative reporter program.

MILLER: Right, yes. 60 Minutes. This was right after the Iranian hostage crisis, right after the hostages were released, and 60 Minutes decided to do a special on what an embassy was like, because the American people didn't know what an embassy was. So there was this big search, big stuff from the State Department and the rest of the world didn't even know about it, about which embassy they were going to do. And it ended up being Thailand.

So they did a whole special on the embassy and they wanted to do one consulate, and they ended up doing Chiang Mai. So they came up. It was Ed Bradley. He spent a lot of time up there, and I actually was in it. I made 60 Minutes. And he asked about other people's interviews, and we said, "You should interview Joyce and Mike Powers." And they talked to him, and he said, "Too boring. They're just like the All-American family, and they love living in Thailand. We're looking for controversy." Two months later, Joyce was killed. And they never did interview her.

I ended up, in the middle of the winter, bringing her three little kids (ages one to seven) back to New Jersey. They had never lived in the United States before. They didn't have winter clothes. They had just lost their mom. It was pretty sad.

Q: Yes. Did you have any feel about if the Thais were looking at us a bit askance as far as we'd fled Vietnam? Were they looking at Americans to be undependable, or was there any sort of bitterness?

MILLER: Yes, this was when there was still a lot of controversy over the Domino theory and whether it was true or not. And I think there was a lot of hesitation. And we did what

we could to show them that we were good allies and all that stuff. We did a lot of military exercises. We gave them a lot of military assistance. And I think Mort Abramowitz did a really good job, but I think there was that hesitation. There was that doubt about us.

Q: So you left there when?

MILLER: It was a two-year assignment, and I left in August of 1981. I had gotten a letter from a guy who had been part of our slate that took over AFSA, who was coming back to head the Israeli-Palestinian office, NEA/IAI, and he had written me. This is way before email. He had written me, and his name was Charlie Hill—I don't know if you've ever heard that name.

Q: Absolutely. George Shultz's…

MILLER: Yes, George Shultz's right-hand guy.

Q: His right arm.

MILLER: Yes, well, Charlie was one of the guys on our slate, and Charlie wrote me, and as I said, I'd been the campaign manager, and he said, "I'm coming back to head the Israeli-Palestinian office." He was in Tel Aviv as the political counselor. And he said, "I'd like you to work for me as the pol-mil (political-military) officer on the desk." I thought this was pretty cool. I didn't have a lot of background in the Middle East. I had worked there one summer, when I was 18 years old. But I didn't know much about the Middle East. So, kind of in typical Foreign Service style, I said, "Yes, this will be fun." So I came back and worked as the pol-mil officer in a six-person Israeli-Palestinian office.

Q: You did this from when to when?

MILLER: '81 to '83.

Q: God, you were there during the…

MILLER: Lebanon War.

Q: During the Lebanon War.

MILLER: You got it. That was the big thing.

Q: I was going to say, "What was happening?" All right. When you arrived there, how did we view the Begin government and Sharon and all that, when you first arrived?

MILLER: Well, this is all in the immediate aftermath of Camp David, which had been a monumental thing. One of the first things that we had to do on my watch, a couple of things, immediately, was set up the MFO, the multinational force and observers in the

Sinai. Secretary Haig was very involved in that, personally, and we were very involved. In that office I think every single one of us went on to be ambassadors. It was just a remarkable office. Not Charlie, because you know Charlie's history, and not the deputy director, but there was a guy named Ted Kattouf, who became ambassador.

Q: I'm interviewing Ted over a period of time.

MILLER: A great guy. There was a woman who was our econ officer for a while, Robin Raphel…

Q: I've interviewed her.

MILLER: There was a guy named David Greenlee.

Q: I've interviewed David. He's basically a Bolivian expert.

MILLER: Yes, David was on the office, and who else was there? There was a guy named Ted Cubbison, who became an ambassador in Latin America. Every single one of these guys became an ambassador. It was an extraordinary office. We were across the hall from an equally extraordinary office, NEA/ARN with Marc Grossman, David Welch, Frank Ricciardone, Beth Jones, Jim Collins. They were all desk officers at the time and all became ambassadors. And we were positive we were the center of the world, the hotshots of the department.

Q: Well, no matter how you splice it, the Middle East has had remarkable talent with remarkably little impact. When I think about it, I've got people I've interviewed, like Wells Stabler, who was in Jerusalem by himself and waved the British goodbye when they pulled out in '48. Things were bad then and they've gotten worse as time goes on.

MILLER: Anyway, so on the desk, you had the creation of the MFO. You had the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear facility at Osirak. And that one I remember in particular because I was very involved in that. Reagan was genuinely shocked that the Israelis would do this and not tell us. I'm not so sure he was shocked that they would do it, but he just expected from such close friends to be told. And when we weren't told, what he did was he said, "Well, we have to do something." And it came down through, down the line, and what we ended up doing—I was the one who kind of operationalized it—was we held up delivering on a bunch of F-16s to Israel.

I was relatively young and pretty enthusiastic and thought, "How can the Israelis do this to us?" and all that kind of stuff, even though we all thought, "Yes, this is a bad thing, this nuclear program." And that was a genuine nuclear program, unlike what happened twenty-some-odd years later. I learned a valuable lesson, which stayed with me the rest of my life, and that is don't cock the gun unless you aim to fire it and you can sustain it. We couldn't sustain it. We held up the F-16s for three weeks, and the American Jewish lobby mounted such a campaign against it that we couldn't do it. The Israelis, they mobilized all their forces in this country and basically Reagan had to lift the embargo three weeks

later.

Q: How did this affect you? The Israeli lobby has always—not always—but had a fairly consistent campaign of labeling the Foreign Service as being anti-Semitic, when actually skeptical about Israel would be probably a more accurate way. But something like this, here you are trying to hold the line, trying to show the Israelis that they just can't run roughshod over us, and yet they're able to do this? This has to make you somewhat bitter, doesn't it?

MILLER: No, it didn't make me bitter. It made some of my colleagues bitter. It made me have a much deeper understanding of the American political process, and part of the process—remember, I worked on Greece later, and between the American Jewish lobby and the American Greek lobby, those are the two most powerful in this country. That's part of the process. It's not like these guys were doing something dirty. That's part of the political process, the fact that there is such strong support on Capitol Hill for Israel is part of the process. And it made me realize that we, the State Department, did not have exclusivity on the conduct of foreign policy. It came from a variety of directions. You might not like it that way. Of course you want to be the exclusive player, you want to have exclusivity on it. But the reality is that that's the American political system. You can berate it, you can condemn it, you can do whatever you want, but that's the way it is.

What I learned out of this wasn't a lot of bitterness, but I have colleagues to this day who are still bitter at the American Jewish lobby. That's not me. What I learned was a deeper appreciation of how the system really operates, and it's not just us prima donnas in the State Department who have 100% exclusivity over the making and the conduct of American foreign policy. So I never was bitter over this. Every group has the ability, in this country, and it's part of our fabric, to try and have influence. Now, if they're paying bribes or something else, that's something totally different. But the fact of the matter is, that's part of our system, and it pervaded the Near East Bureau, where there was a tremendous antipathy toward Israel—I mean, I can't say that I didn't sometimes feel it. I feel it today with the Israeli government and I felt it in the past with some Israeli governments. I think the advantage that I had, and I'm not sure it's a big advantage, was I could see Menachem Begin when he was saying, "Never again, we really can't trust the world, it's a hostile world. It's a Hobbesian world." I can see where he is coming from, because that was all about the Holocaust and Jews being abandoned to Hitler.

And that was all about finally, after thousands of years, a couple thousand years, the Jewish people have got a land of their own. And that's deeply, deeply felt. And you see it passed down. It's dying down a little bit because Holocaust survivors are dying. But you still see that today in this country, in Israel, obviously. And that's why there's a feeling, I think, among some American Jews and a lot of people in Israel, that you can never really count on anyone. You could count on the French until they decided to put an embargo on all the aircraft, the Mirages, in 1967. And Israel almost got swept into the sea in that war, if you remember. The first couple of days were terrible.

And I think the feeling is that it's not impossible that America could turn tail one day and

not be the great friend it's been. So that's my view of it. And it's a little bit different than most of the people I know.

Q: I always bristle when I hear "Our strategic ally," because I can't help feeling it's like the old saying that, "A wife is somebody who will stick by you in times of trouble that you never would have gotten into if you hadn't been married."

MILLER: That's true, but again, not trying to make excuses, you take the whole ball of wax. And if you want to go back far enough, this gets existential and it's getting off the subject, but I think we and all the people who are involved, who have been long dead, we have a little bit on our conscience about what happened with the Holocaust, about things we could have done that we didn't do that maybe could have saved a lot of lives. We were very instrumental, with Truman, in creating the state of Israel. So I think we have a bit of a feeling of responsibility.

Q: Oh, yes, and there's the Biblical connection, too.

MILLER: Yes, I don't get into the Biblical connection. That's someone else's thing.

Q: But it is there, too.

MILLER: Yes, I got you.

Q: We both served in Greece, and that Greek connection, as a lobby—over the years, it's sort of died out, now. But the Irish…

MILLER: Sure. You know, Stu, it's part of our political fabric. I think it's naïve to the nth degree for State Department colleagues, particularly my contemporaries, to still moan and groan and say, "This is terrible and why don't they just leave us alone and let us make foreign policy." That's part of the entire fabric.

Q: And that's not going to happen.

MILLER: I am of the school that accepts things as they are tries and to work with it.

Q: All right, well, what were you doing during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon?

MILLER: Well, I was supposed to go out with Phil Habib. Phil had been brought back as the Middle East envoy. He had recovered enough. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon was June 6, 1982. And I was supposed to have gone out with Phil on a trip. At the last second, he went. I didn't go, because Sharon was coming to town. This is now late May. Sharon had turned out to be a very important meeting. I think it was May 29th of 1982. Maybe May 27th. Somewhere around that period. Sharon came into town with his entourage and all his maps and the meeting was actually memorialized in a couple of books. I was the notetaker in it, with Secretary Haig. It was called "The Green Light Meeting;" the meeting where Sharon basically said, "If you don't do something about all these rocket

attacks and cross-border attacks from Lebanon, we're going to have to do something."

I remember taking copious notes and writing up the meeting. I think it's been declassified, but I don't know for sure. Anyway, there were 10 people on each side in the Secretary's conference room, and what happened was that when Sharon said to the effect to Haig, "If you don't do something we're going to have to do something," there was this silence. Haig giggled. I'll never forget this. He didn't say, "Don't do it." He didn't say anything else. He just giggled. And I remember that Phil was in the meeting—yes, he was in the meeting, so he couldn't have been in the Middle East. But Phil was there. Nick Veliotes was the Assistant Secretary in the Near East Bureau. And all the other people were there, and they all were aghast when Haig had giggled.

They went to Haig—and I only get this second hand—Charlie was there, Charlie Hill. And they said, "You've got to set the record straight, because you basically just gave Sharon a green light to invade Lebanon." So Haig said to the effect of, "Well, you go over to visit him at the hotel and tell him that he doesn't have a green light to go to Lebanon." So they did. And a week later, the Israeli ambassador in London was shot by—we think it was one of those Abu Nidal terrorists. And that became the catalyst for Israel invading Lebanon a day and a half later. The Israeli Ambassador in London (his name was Argov) was almost killed; he survived.

Israel invaded Lebanon. I spent my summer in the Department, as did my colleagues—we basically just went home to shower and shave. But we spent our entire summer in the State Department working on the war. And there's a lot of stories associated with that, some of which have been depicted. A lot of that is in John Boykin's book. I gave John a lot of material for that.

Q: I have an account of an interview I did with Bob Dillon, who was our ambassador there.

MILLER: Sure, he was our ambassador then.

Q: In Lebanon, in which he was saying that he was reporting that forces in the Israeli army were coming on Beirut. He could see them from his house, and Washington seemed to say, "Well, we're getting reports from Tel Aviv that it's not happening." You get the feeling that we were not paying attention, or we were paying too much attention to reports we were getting from Sam Lewis at our embassy in Tel Aviv. Did you gather there was a disconnect there?

MILLER: Totally. There was a total disconnect. Sam Lewis wasn't lying. Sam was getting this from the Israelis.

Q: This is Sam Lewis, our ambassador.

MILLER: Yes. What we pieced together, later, was that—and there is still a bit of controversy, and Sam really knows a lot more about this. But I talked to Sam about it

later on. What we pieced together was that Sharon wasn't giving Begin the full story. Begin, who was a very straight guy—very rigid, but straight—Begin was telling us what he thought was the case. Sharon was lying through his teeth. Sharon was saying, "I'm going up to the Litani River, and he'd be already 30 miles past the Litani, outside Beirut.

And of course that totally destroyed Phil's credibility. Dillon was absolutely right. Dillon was looking out his window and seeing what he saw, and he saw Israeli troops all over the Beirut area. And Sam was being told that they're not within 30 miles of Beirut. So totally accurate, and back in the Department, things got pretty hot. We were on single-side band radios in the Department's Operations Center at the time. That's how we were getting all this stuff. And it was all manned at the ops center. This is before they had all the elaborate rooms that they have now to run crises. But, yes, that's an accurate rendition.

Q: I would have thought that as this became apparent, this would have caused—I won't say a dislike. I'm not quite sure what the term is. But it would not have been positive towards what we were getting from Israel.

MILLER: Yes, there were a lot of tempers flaring. At the end of the day, the Israelis were lying to us. And at the end of the day, they were on the outskirts of Beirut, ready to go in and wipe out the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization), of which there were 10,000 heavily armed fighters in a city that would have had massive casualties. They destroyed the city, and that was the reality. And at the end of the day, that's what we were presented with, and that's the kind of situation that Phil was presented with.

Sharon was making like he was going to go in, he was going to order Israeli forces to invade. There was a great deal of confusion on our side about how much Begin was really in control and how much Sharon was basically just calling the shots here. Phil was scrambling like mad, as the negotiator, to try to get some kind of ceasefire. He finally did, and then, as you know, he worked, I think, a miracle in getting the PLO evacuation underway. I worked very closely on that. But there was a lot of deceit at the time.

Q: Were you there during Sabra and Shatila?

MILLER: I was in Washington the whole time.

Q: Yes, I know, but were you …

MILLER: Yes. Oh, yes.

Q: That must have been quite a…

MILLER: If I could just go back, before Sabra and Shatila. What Phil did, which I think was remarkable, was he did negotiate an agreement to get the Israelis to stand down, not to invade Beirut, to allow the evacuation of the PLO. My specific responsibility was finding the ships to take them to various countries. About 4500 of them went overland to

Syria, but the rest of them got in ships and went to Tunisia, Algeria, Yemen, Sudan, all over the place. And my job was to find the ships. You think that would be easy. I remember talking to Phil once, and Arafat had told him—because we weren't talking directly to him—but Phil got the word that Arafat said he had arranged for all of this. And Phil said, "Just to play safe, we better have a backup plan. And we better do all the arranging ourselves." And I was the guy who was responsible for finding the ships to take the PLO out. And that was quite a job.

And we couldn't find anyone who would furnish ships because they were all certain that the Israelis would sink them as soon as they were in international waters. So we finally found a guy on Cyprus, his name was Solomonides, and he had a bunch of old rust buckets. He rented them to us for an exorbitant price, probably the sale price. We eventually got the Saudis to pay for the whole thing, but we had to front the money, and there was later a congressional investigation into why we were spending money to evacuate terrorists. That's another story which we don't have to get into, but that was pretty heated at the time.

So we did the evacuation, and it worked. And at that time, Phil was exhausted. He came back—this is the end of August, early September—and then I think he was back here when Sabra and Shatila happened. Sabra and Shatila, I think, was around September 7, 1982. And Sabra and Shatila—if you talked to Bob Dillon, he gave you the blow-by-blow—it was a real shock to all of us. It unfolded like these things always do. There's been a massacre. There's been a lot of killings. It's more than just a lot of killings; it's a massacre. 700 people were killed. Ryan Crocker at the time was the political counselor in Beirut, and he actually did some unbelievable reporting.

Q: He got right down there, yes.

MILLER: Yes, he got down there, and if I remember correctly, he was telling us about it over the radio, the single-side band. Later the Israelis set up a commission and basically indicted Sharon for his involvement. It was called the Barak Commission. And Sharon was cast into political oblivion for years. He didn't come back until the '90s because of his culpability. He was pretty murderous, a pretty rough thug at the time. He later came back more as a guy the Palestinians could deal with. But that's another story and much later.

And because of Sabra and Shatila, and then a week later, Bashir—President Bashir was assassinated—we were supposed to pull our troops out, but felt we couldn't with Sabra and Shatila, Bashir, et cetera. We left our troops there and left them and left them and left them. There was never a good time to pull them out, until they got hit, on October 23, 1983, by Hezbollah.

Q: This is the Marine barracks.

MILLER: This is the Marine barracks. 241 guys were killed.

Q: This is the first time you'd had to deal with that tar-baby, the Middle East, Arabs, Israelis, Palestinians. Did you have any feel for how can we get out of this? What was your approach to it? Or was it basically a nuts-and-bolts one, what do we do know?

MILLER: I was working more on the nuts and bolts than the grand strategy. There are colleagues of mine who spent their entire careers working on the Palestinian-Israeli issue. You don't work on this stuff without giving it a lot of thought. I would like to say I had visionary thoughts; I didn't. At the time, the PLO was regarded as a terrorist organization. I didn't fight that. I knew we had to talk to the Palestinians and I couldn't quite figure out how we could ever talk to them if we would get tossed in jail for talking to them. But everyone told me to wink and nod. And what we actually did in the evacuation was we had other people from other agencies talking to them. And that was OK.

So I figured we'd overcome that thing. I was kind of a witness, but not a participant, in a lot of Shultz's efforts, and a lot of my close colleagues were much more involved. By the end of the '80s I had become pretty cynical about both sides. I just felt that on one side or the other, it was never the right time. The combination of Arafat—you know, Arafat would write things on the back of envelopes and then he would have to say the right phraseology about recognizing Israel. He would say something in English but not in Arabic. And it never came to pass, and I think a lot of us became very cynical about whether you could ever have a serious peace process, until the early '90s, when I went back and I was head of the Israeli-Palestinian Office. And that was with Rabin and Arafat, and I thought at the time that that was probably the most serious the peace process ever. And I thought at the time you really could have a breakthrough. Maybe it would have happened if Rabin had not been killed. I don't know.

Q: When did you leave this job?

MILLER: I left this job in the summer of '83 to take a job as head of the Middle East shop in the Bureau of Congressional Relations. So related to this, since so much had to do with issues I had worked on. It was a great job. It was a couple grades over my personal grade and I had been recruited for it. I had to serve on a promotion panel first. So I was a little bit delayed in taking this job. I actually went after the promotion panel every day and worked in Congressional Relations (H) until seven or eight o'clock at night.

And I was in this job in H, the Bureau of Congressional Relations, for a couple months, and really enjoying it, when I got a call one day. I was in a hearing, a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on the Middle East, and I got a call from Charlie Hill. Charlie had gone to be Shultz's executive assistant, executive secretary of the department. Did you ever interview Charlie? Did you know Charlie at all?

Q: No.

MILLER: OK, Charlie was a man of few words. And he said, to the effect, "Miller, get your ass up here to the Secretary's office." And I said, "Well, I'm in the middle of a

hearing, Charlie." He said, "I don't care. Get up here right now. Just drop what you're doing."

So I run over to the Secretary's office. This is October 24, 1983. And our Marines had been blown up the day before, the 241 people killed. And I get to the Secretary's office—Shultz knew me from the Lebanon War—and Shultz introduces me to this guy named Rumsfeld, who had just been asked by President Reagan to serve as a Presidential Envoy, for the Middle East and basically to figure out what we do in Lebanon. We just lost 241 people. The President doesn't want to withdraw our Marines immediately because that's giving in to terrorists. But we're pinned down, and it's one of these dilemmas, and what does the President do? When he's got a dilemma that he doesn't have an immediate answer for, he goes and finds someone famous and says, "The problem is yours."

They got Rumsfeld, who had been in private business—he had been heading up a big pharmaceutical company—to agree to take off and become Presidential Envoy for the Middle East. And Shultz had turned to Charlie and said, "Well, Rumsfeld needs an office. We've got to find him a chief of staff," this, that and everything else. And this was all from scratch. So Charlie says, "I've got just the guy," and Charlie called me.

And I should say, there was one other guy who I think also was involved in this, and that was a guy named Bob Pelletreau, who was the deputy assistant secretary. I think he was in that meeting with Charlie and the Secretary. And I think Pelletreau had somehow mentioned my name, because he told me this, later. I always gave Charlie credit for it, but Bob Pelletreau said, "No, I was actually the one."

Anyway, I was summoned to Shultz's office and Shultz said, "Look. This is Don Rumsfeld; I'd like you to help him out for a week or so and then you go back to your job." I said, "Fine." And I figured I would take a week, maybe 10 days, to help Rumsfeld.

Q: Today is the 13th of May 2010 with Tom Miller, and Tom, as you mentioned in the very end, we're going back to—first, could you give me the date, and then your connection, your early connection, with Don Rumsfeld?

MILLER: The date we're starting with?

Q: Yes.

MILLER: We're starting with October 24, 1983. And the reason I remember that exact date was that on October 23, 1983, our Marines were blown up in Lebanon. A massive, massive bomb that flattened a building and killed 241 mostly Marines. 241 service people. And it was a tremendous trauma. We've had 9/11 and other things since. But up until this time, this was the biggest loss of life we had had since World War II, in combat or through terrorism. Everyone was traumatized.

I was working up in the Bureau of Congressional Relations at the time, and I got a call, I think it was the next day. And it was a message, because this is before cell phones and

it's definitely before any of the kind of communications we have today. Someone gives me a message. I was in a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing. I was working in H in the Bureau of Congressional Relations. And I get this message saying, "Call such-and-such a number in the Secretary's office immediately." I call there and ask for Charlie Hill—I don't know if you've ever heard of the name Charlie Hill.

Q: I've heard the name many times.

MILLER: OK. Anyway, Charlie had been my old boss in the Israeli and Palestinian Office, and Charlie had gone up to work for Shultz by this time. So Charlie, in his usual abrupt way, says, "Get your self back here immediately and report to the Secretary's office." I said, "Fine. Can you tell me what it's about?" "No. Just come on back."

So I go back to the secretary's office, and there is the Secretary, Rumsfeld, who I really wasn't even sure who this was, even though I had grown up in Rumsfeld's congressional district.

Q: Chicago, wasn't it?

MILLER: Chicago suburbs. The North Shore of Chicago. And Charlie and Bob Pelletreau. I think this was the end of the last thing I was telling you about. And the Secretary, who knew me from when he had come on the year before—he had come on when Haig resigned, and the big crisis at the time was the war in Lebanon in '82. And a bunch of us just spent the entire summer in the Department. We just went home to shower and get a few hours' sleep. So the Secretary got to know a bunch of us, and he says to me, "Tom, this is Don Rumsfeld. He's just been appointed, announced, as the President's Envoy for the Middle East, focused on Lebanon but other stuff as well. And I'd like you to work with him to help him get adjusted for a week, maybe 10 days." He says, "Don't bother cleaning out your office. You can go back to your job. I said, "Yes, sir. I'd be happy to."

So I go down with Rumsfeld, and they gave us an office on the seventh floor, right around the corner from the Secretary's office. And I knew a lot about the Middle East because I had been working on that area. And Rumsfeld had a couple of his people from G.D. Searle, which was the big pharmaceutical company—he was the CEO of G.D. Searle at the time—they came out with NutraSweet and a lot of other products that were pretty famous. I think they were the first with the birth-control pill. And so his chief counsel, his special assistant, his secretary, who had all staffed him very, very well, came down, and they flew in from Chicago to help me out, to tell me what the guy is like and what are his requirements and stuff like that. And then Rumsfeld asked me to start recruiting a staff, and I did. This unfolded over the next several days.

It was an interesting staff, and then shortly after that, we started traveling. Some people were permanent and some people came on different trips with us, but included in those were Dick Murphy, who was the assistant secretary for NEA. Bob Pelletreau came on a trip. David Mack, who was one of the deputy assistant secretaries, he pretty much came

on a lot of trips. We had a guy named Alan Kreczko, who was a lawyer in the Department (L), who came on all of our trips. Chris Ross, who went on to be ambassador to Algeria and a bunch of other things; he became part of our staff. Right now, I am working with Chris again, because he's the UN Secretary General's special rep for the Western Sahara.

Q: I keep trying to get him interviewed but he's up in New York, now.

MILLER: No, he lives here.

Q: Yes, but he's been very busy.

MILLER: Well, mention my name and I'll try to remind him. I see him.

Q: We've interviewed his father, Tony Ross.

MILLER: Yes, Tony is a great guy. Is Tony still alive? I don't think he is.

Q: I'm not sure. Either he or his wife died a little while ago.

MILLER: His wife is Greek, and Chris and I have a Greek connection. Anyway, then we had a couple people from the NSC (National Security Council). We had Phil Dur, who was a Navy captain. He went on to be a three-star admiral. He was on our staff. When the work got very, very heavy, I recruited a staff aide, and I was the executive assistant or chief of staff, a guy named David Pearce, who is now our ambassador in Algeria. We had Howie Teischer from the NSC. You've heard the name from the Ollie North days. He came with us. Peter Rodman, who was the head of policy planning, joined us on a couple of trips.

Q: I've interviewed Peter.

MILLER: He died.

Q: He died, yes.

MILLER: Let's see who else. That was basically it. We had a couple of wonderful—at the time, in those days, you called them secretaries. Sue Shea, who went on to work for Jerry Bremer for years. She'd be a great person to interview. She's retired.

Q: I talk to Sue all the time because I've interviewed Jerry Bremer. She set things up.

MILLER: Sue would be a great person. She's been a fly on the wall for all these years. Sue was with the first Middle East envoys. Sue was with us, and we had a woman named Kate Milne, who was my secretary on the Israeli desk. And Kate later left, got married, and went up to Boston. I think that was basically it.

And Rumsfeld said, "We've got to get out to the region." Now, the specific task at hand from President Reagan was to figure out a way out—we were in a totally no-win situation, we had 1500 Marines basically on the beach, pinned down, receiving incoming. They weren't doing peacekeeping. They were just trying to stay alive. But Reagan didn't feel we could pull them out because if we pulled them out, that's giving in to terrorism. So he gave Rumsfeld the job of figuring it out. And I remember—and I can't remember if it was Rumsfeld who told me this story—I think Rumsfeld told me this story. Afterwards, or sometime, he was in the office with Shultz, and he said, "Well, OK, George"—he and Shultz were good friends from the Nixon years—He says, "OK, George, what do you want me to do?" Shultz said, according to Rumsfeld, "Look, I got the rest of the world to worry about. You handle the Middle East."

Q: The story that circulated was that, of course, Shultz was an ex-Marine. And he did like to bring Marines out under fire.

MILLER: I don't…

Q: I'm just saying that…

MILLER: I can tell you that Rumsfeld and Shultz had the idea that what you wanted to do was to do it now under great pressure. But you have to do it. And it really—I don't want to say it started on Capitol Hill, but I remember Senator Percy was the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and I'd say by November of '83, things started to crumble a little bit. And there were calls from the Democrats, but also even Percy, to bring the troops out, that they weren't serving a purpose. I think everyone understood. I mean, they were serving a bit of a purpose in that they were propping up the Gemayel government, and the Gemayel government was one that we were friendly with, and that we didn't want to see fail.

And the antagonist here was Syria, and their allies. I think that Rumsfeld and Shultz would have liked to see a more gradual withdrawal, and something over time, where we would gradually get out under more of our own steam. It turned out that there was a very critical NSC meeting in February of '84, where Reagan wasn't present. Vice President Bush was chairing the meeting, and the decision was made to get out within three weeks or something like that. And that was it, so things crumbled after that.

I'm getting ahead of myself. We started traveling shortly after coming to the job. And the pace was just unbelievable. We would take a commercial Pan-Am flight over to Germany and pick up our own plane in Germany, a DC-9, and that was nothing special—a bare bones plane. It was the antithesis of luxury. It was basically just a cargo plane with some seats in it. And so we were in control of our own schedule, and among the many duties that I had was scheduler. Rumsfeld would sit down and talk strategy and say, "OK, how do we get this, this and this?" And there was a tremendous amount of travel; sometimes three countries in a day. And Rumsfeld was—if you think he was energetic as the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary second time around, this was when he was in his early fifties, and I'll tell you, keeping up with him was something else.

He could be very, very tough—very tough—if you hadn't done your work, your homework. If you had done your homework and you were well-prepared, he could be the greatest guy in the world. And usually I had done my work. And if you tried to bullshit him, he'd just see right through it. I never did that, so he and I got to be very, very close.

The immediate task was figuring out a way out of Lebanon, and we spent a lot of time in Beirut, sometimes under gunfire. We stayed at the residence of Ambassador Reggie Bartholomew, another guy you should talk to.

Q: Where is he now?

MILLER: He's in New York. I've got his address. I saw him recently. He was in Rome for years. We spent a lot of time in Israel, and then Jordan. We went to Syria several times; Egypt a lot. Some of the North African countries. We even went to Turkey; Turkey a couple of times, because we wanted to put pressure on the Syrians. And one of the times we went to Turkey—again, I remember dates pretty well—was October 15, 1983. And why do I remember that date? Because that was the day that the Turkish Cypriots announced a unilateral declaration of independence in Northern Cyprus. They basically said, "We declare independence."

We get off the plane—we hadn't been following things outside of the Middle East; we're kind of in our time-warp, and this is before instantaneous communications, stuff like that—we get off the plane and the Turkish headline saying, "Rumsfeld Supports UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence)." Of course he turns to me and he says, "What do you know?" I don't know anything. He always chalked this up to poor staffing. A left-hand, right-hand kind of thing. The fact that we showed up that day was just total coincidence but no one in Turkey read it that way.

We did a total of five very extended trips from November of '83 until April, maybe May, of '84. Probably the most exhausting period of my life. I won't go into—I mean, I could go into tremendous detail. One of the trips—actually twice—we went to Baghdad, and what's interesting about that is those were footnote trips at the time, because the big focus was Lebanon. When we invaded Iraq in 2003, I got all kinds of calls from press people—I was the ambassador in Athens at the time—because they had dug up old photos of Rumsfeld shaking hands with Saddam Hussein. And they tried to spin this gigantic story about here's the guy who was the architect of the invasion of Iraq and all these dealings he had had with Saddam Hussein before. That was all just garbage. The trip to Baghdad—what had happened was we started working two other problems in addition to the Lebanon issue. One was the Iran-Iraq War, which, at the time, was a couple of years into it. And we still had, as we do today, a tremendous problem with Iran. It's not that we had any great friendship with Iraq. Iraq had basically broken off relations with us in 1967. And on one of these trips, we re-established relations. It was the second trip of January of '84. We went there in December of '83 and January of '84.

And that was a natural thing to do. It wasn't a big deal. We had a mission there; we just

didn't have an ambassador. And much later, 20 years later, the press was making this out to be a big thing. Here's Rumsfeld, having established relations and then 20 years later, as Secretary of Defense, with the invasion, totally disconnected. They would have been reestablished in any even if Rumsfeld hadn't gone. He just was the message carrier.

And at the time, our concern was around Iraq and the danger of things spreading, and a lot of people being killed. And even though we weren't great friends with either side, it was an unbelievable carnage.

Q: It wasn't going anywhere, and it was on a scale of World War I.

MILLER: Yes, very much. We did provide some modest assistance, much less than people thought, to Iraq at the time, because of the two antagonists, the lesser enemy was Iraq. This, again, is only four years after the hostage crisis, and that was still very fresh in our minds.

So we ended up doing a bit of Iran-Iraq, as well. Never went to Tehran; we wouldn't have been welcome there. And a by-product, as I said, was reestablishing relations with Iraq, broken in 1967. Then we also, near the end of the mission, ended up doing some peace process stuff. And here we are, 27 years later, and I don't think we've gotten much further along. So I think what we did was basically a very small footnote in history.

Q: I've been doing this for 25 years, talking to people who have been involved from '48 on. And nothing has gotten better. Sometimes there have been real steps forward, and Egypt's out of the equation, so there's probably not going to be a war. But the basic…

MILLER: Yes, I agree. Even though I will say that a guy who's a pretty good friend of mine wrote an article in Foreign Policy a couple of weeks ago.

Q: Aaron Miller?

MILLER: Yes, and I really took exception with that.

Q: Yes, he basically threw his hat in.

MILLER: It was basically, "Well, I'm no longer doing the peace process, so we shouldn't be doing it either." And I told him that. And the fact of the matter is—and now I'm diverging a little bit—but if you're ever going to have a serious peace process, it doesn't mean that we have to be the middle man in every single dispute around the world. The stuff I am working on now, with Sudan—it doesn't have to be the Americans. In fact, it shouldn't be the Americans alone. But when it comes to the Middle East, the Americans are fairly indispensable.

Q: Well, we have to be in it. That's the problem.

MILLER: So, anyway, we did a bit of peace process stuff.

Q: In the first place, I wonder if, as you went on these things, take your initial trip to Israel—particularly I say Israel because here you had this almost breakaway defense minister, Sharon, who had gone into Israel basically…

MILLER: Going into Lebanon.

Q: I mean Lebanon, without political support or what-have-you. There were no orders. Did you go out there, did you find—I mean, what was the atmosphere of the Israeli both military and political side?

MILLER: This is a year after the Lebanon War, and what had happened by the time we got there was Sharon had been depicted—and I actually believe it, I believe he told Begin different stuff than he was actually doing. And I talked to Sam Lewis about this, who I assume you've interviewed.

Q: Oh, we have a long interview with Sam.

MILLER: Sam's the definitive history on this. But Sharon was a rogue operation at that point. Not a rogue operation in the invasion of Lebanon. That was clearly a cabinet decision. And Begin was very much in it. But a rogue operation in terms of how far they got. They got to the outskirts of Beirut, and Sam was being told they were still 30 miles outside of Beirut. And I believe Sam, what he says.

Q: I have Bob Dillon's account of sitting there.

MILLER: You told me this before. And Bob Dillon was saying, "Excuse me, I see them outside my window." I remember Bob telling me that. And so it was something else.

By the time we got to Israel, which is a year and several months later, the Barak Commission had found Sharon complicitous, guilty. He had lost his job. Israeli troops had disengaged a bit, had pulled back a bit. They were still largely in Lebanon. It wasn't easy dealing with Israel. They were good friends and they were allies, but they had deep interests in Lebanon; they had deep roots and connections in Lebanon, much deeper than we did by a long shot. And they basically said, "Look, we want you to do whatever you can, but if you don't, we will take care of our security needs in our own way." And that's pretty consistent to this day. So the mood in Israel, it was Begin—actually, I think by this time Begin had resigned.

Q: Yes, his wife had died.

MILLER: Yes. Shamir was the prime minister. And Shamir was a nice guy, a man of few words, but a tough guy. And we dealt a lot with a guy named David Kimche, who was nominally the director general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but just extremely well-connected. And Arens was the defense minister. He had been the ambassador in the U.S., Moshe Arens. We dealt with all these guys.

Q: What was Rumsfeld trying to do? Was it just to create a situation to get the Marines out, or was it bigger than that?

MILLER: It was much bigger than that. What he was trying to do was make sure that Lebanon was a country on its own, wasn't a pawn of Syria, and that's always been the big issue in Lebanon for years. Gemayel, the president, was trying to show a bit of independence. The Syrians had their proxies, and they were doing everything they could to get rid of Gemayel, including trying to kill him. And there is a big interest in this country in Lebanon. There's a lot of Lebanese-Americans. So it wasn't just as a by-product of our relation with Israel. That was number one: a stable, moderate country in the region.

Number two was preventing another outbreak between Israel and Lebanon, and not allowing Syria to exercise the upper-hand in Lebanon. It was basically a proxy war between Israel and Syria, and Lebanon was the venue. So that was the second thing. And the third thing, I think, was a more far-reaching thing, and that was American standing in the Middle East. Rumsfeld inherited this. But you have a situation and the situation you walked into was 1500 Marines there—again, I think most of them were Marines. U.S. troops on the ground, combat troops, their mission has been undercut and this had to do with the perception of American resolve. The feeling was that if we cut and run, pulled out precipitously, use whatever term you want, that this would send bigger signals to both our friends and enemies in the region. And I think that was a big deal.

Remember that, at the time, this was the height of the Cold War and we were very, very concerned with the Soviets in the Middle East. And there was a big, big contest between us and the Soviets for influence, and a lot of the regimes were playing us off against the Soviets. We had signed, in 1981, a memorandum of understanding on strategic cooperation with Israel. It was a very far-reaching memorandum. I was on the desk at the time; I worked on it. It might have been '82. And it was very much targeted again the Soviets, and there was a Soviet threat through its proxies in the Middle East. I know it sounds crazy now, but you remember the Cold War, and everything was seen through the prism of the Cold War. So those are the three overriding concerns with Lebanon.

Q: And also it was less than 10 years since we had left South Vietnam. We had this tremendous commitment there, and there would be another pullout.

MILLER: I couldn't agree with you more. Vietnam, I believe, at the time, hung as the 600-pound gorilla, the unspoken shadow in the room on everything, because we didn't start with a clean track record. We started with a record of this was our ally, this was the argument we had made about the fate of the Western world, this was the domino theory. This was all that stuff, and at the end of the day, we got on ships and helicopters and cut out as quickly as we could in late April of 1975. So I think that was an overhang, and I think that generation—because it's the same generation—was very much dealing with that as an overhang, even though you didn't hear it come up that much.

Q: Was there any contact with the Soviets on this whole thing?

MILLER: Yes, we had contacts. But we didn't do anything on the Rumsfeld mission. We didn't go to Russia or to Moscow at all. Others in the U.S. government—it was always part of the agenda for U.S.-Soviet summits and meetings and stuff like that. The Middle East was always there. You didn't get much progress on it. The Soviets were supplying a heck of a lot of military equipment to Syria, in particular, and that irritated us. They had an S-300 missile system, anti-aircraft missile system, that really bothered us. T-72 tanks were brand new, at the time, and I remember that we were very hot to get the technology, the T-72, because it had a very thick armor that we didn't fully have. We were just very desirous of getting the technology. So, yes, it was up front.

Q: What about Assad? Secretaries of State and their crews, one after the other, have broken their lances over Assad.

MILLER: More their bladders than their lances, but go ahead.

Q: OK.

MILLER: We went to Syria a bunch of times, and we did see Assad, and you'd get there, the first day—this was a game that he played to the hilt—he really, really understood how to get under our skin. He would probably put it a different way. It was always a question, as a presidential envoy, whether Assad would agree to see us or whether he'd give us to the foreign minister and vice president, who was a guy named Khaddem at the time. I think most of the time, if not always, we saw Assad. The meeting were always pretty set piece. We heard the stories, so we went into these things not totally ignorant. They were extremely long. Assad was courteous, and so he would usually let us start out with our side, and only two people spoke in the meetings, unless possibly someone was called upon, and that was our principal and Assad. No one on their side ever spoke. And you'd say your piece. He'd say his piece. There might be a little bit of give and take, but I don't remember much. And then that would be the end of the meeting.

I didn't go to all the meetings. It was my job to figure out who went to the meetings, and we didn't want to pack our side. So Rumsfeld said to me, "You figure out who goes. You can go to any meeting you want." And I quickly learned something that's good to this day. And that was don't go to all the meetings. Being there—it sends the wrong message. If you're supposed to be the chief of staff, you're supposed to manage the staff well. So I sometimes went and I sometimes didn't go, and I remember going to a couple of the Assad meetings, and I just remember the length, and how after a while, after you've met the great man, they'd go on and on and on. And they wouldn't get you anywhere.

Q: As you say, one of the tricks in the Middle East, particularly, is bladder control.

MILLER: Don't drink coffee either before or during the meeting.

Q: Don't drink coffee. Make sure you relieve yourself before you go in. It's not

inconsequential.

MILLER: No. We used to do, when we were traveling, the other one who would do that thing—it wasn't length of meetings, but you'd be up in the air about whether you would see the king, was Saudi Arabia. Fahd, at the time. And you never knew if you were going to see the king, you never knew when. And this was the Saudis' way of telling us, "You are on our turf, you're our guest, and we'll tell you when the meeting is. You can't just fly in and expect that there's going to be a meeting." I remember waiting a day sometimes for the meeting. Of course they would wine us and dine us and put us in this fabulous guest house and give us all kinds of tremendously great food. So the staff was happy as hell; they could have stayed there for weeks. But Rumsfeld was always anxious to be on the move.

Q: Well, how about Lebanon, dealing with Lebanon. How did that go?

MILLER: Well, we had an intensive dialogue with the president, Amin Gemayel, who was an accidental president. His brother was elected the president, and was assassinated before he took office.

His brother was assassinated on September 15, 1982. And that's really the reason why we didn't pull the Marines out. We were supposed to pull our troops out after the PLO evacuation was finished.

Q: All this was instigated by the Sabra and Shatila massacre. And we put the Marines in there and we got the PLO out. And they got out, and then there was the Sabra and Shatila thing.

MILLER: Shatila was the first week of September—I would like to say 6th, 7th of September 1982—and then Gemayel was assassinated on September 15th. We should have pulled our troops out at the end of August, right after the PLO was evacuated. And I think that went through the first couple of days of September. But right after they were evacuated, right after they were put on ships and went overland to Syria, was Sabra and Shatila. And we felt we'd give it a little while longer and wait until Gemayel, until Bashir gets into office and then we'll pull them out. Then Bashir's assassinated, so his older brother, Amin, becomes the accidental president. He's totally unprepared for the job. And he basically says, "Don't pull your Marines out. I need your support." So we said, "OK." By that time, Phil Habib was literally exhausted, and Phil was my mentor and all, and he went back to California because he was just literally, physically spent. He had had massive heart attacks before. His health was terrible.

And so there was a void, and there was never a good time to pull the troops out, because there was always something happening. As we got into 1983, the Syrians and Druze exerted a tremendous amount of pressure on the Lebanese armed forces. And they were constantly attacking Lebanese armed forces. There were lines right outside Beirut. And it was like low-scale—and sometimes not so low-scale—warfare. Gemayel made the argument that if we and the Brits and the French pulled out, and the Italians…

Q: The Italians were there, too.

MILLER: The Italians. If we all pulled out, the whole thing would collapse. So we stayed. And we kept on saying, "Well, as soon as things stabilize." There was big, big fighting in the Shuf, which is right outside of Beirut, a critical pass to get into Beirut, and this was in May. And then we brokered an agreement. NSC Advisor Bud McFarlane was involved. It was called the May 17th agreement. You can guess which day it was signed on. May 17, 1983. And it was always, "Yes, when things stabilize, we'll pull the Marines out, pull the troops out." They never really stabilized, and then our troops were blown up in October.

Q: Had Bashir established any sort—was he a figure by then, more than a figure? I mean a commanding person?

MILLER: Yes, he was a very commanding person. He was seen as ruthless. He was seen as very charismatic. He was definitely the leader of the Maronite community in Lebanon. And he was seen that way. He was seen as a tough guy. And Amin was, I think, off in Paris, and no one really knew much about Amin. But Bashir was seen as the—you know, you liked him, he was the greatest guy in the world. You didn't like him and you'd do anything to get rid of him. And when he was assassinated, I can't say in hindsight it was surprising. But it just threw everything into a tailspin.

Q: How was Amin doing when you got there?

MILLER: He was pretty lost. He had just come into office. He was very honest. He wasn't full of a lot of bravado. He would speak very honestly to Don Rumsfeld and Reg Bartholomew, and I think he was just trying to cope with the day-to-day existence. Some days were better than others. He had a couple of key guys with him who were doing the same, and it was very difficult, very, very difficult.

Q: Was there a PLO presence there at all? Or had they really been cleaned out?

MILLER: The PLO?

Q: Yes.

MILLER: Well, when they left, they were gone. Arafat reestablished PLO headquarters in Tunis. We were not allowed to talk to the PLO. We were not allowed to deal with the PLO. And there have been books written, since then. Other people were the conduit to the PLO. So American diplomats, to my knowledge, didn't deal directly with the PLO at the time.

Q: And in a way they weren't a factor anymore, when you were out there, were they? Or not?

MILLER: Not in terms of what we were dealing with at the time. They were always a factor because you can't really deal with the Middle East or the peace process without this. But at the time, in Lebanon, our major antagonists were Syria and their allies, the Druze. And Syria back then had a relationship like it does today with Iran, and Hezbollah had just started. The perception—and I think the reality—was that Syria was basically pulling the strings.

Q: The Druze—was this Gemayel?

MILLER: That's Jumblatt. Walid Jumblatt.

Q: Were we dealing with them?

MILLER: We were, yes. We would meet Jumblatt; I remember Rumsfeld having a meeting with him. I know there was one that I remember in Amman. I don't remember meeting him, I don't remember Rumsfeld seeing him in Lebanon.

Q: Going up into the hills?

MILLER: I don't remember that, but maybe my memory is not good. I do believe that some of our team—the political counselor at the time, in Beirut, was Ryan Crocker, and I think Ryan might have had some dealings with him, as well. You've talked to Ryan, I take it?

Q: He's in Texas. He comes here.

MILLER: Texas A&M. He's the dean of the Foreign Service school there, whatever it is.

Q: I thought Pelletreau was doing that.

MILLER: No. Pelletreau is in New York. He's semi-retired. I should be your research guy. I stay in touch with all of them. Ryan's at Texas A&M.

Q: OK. Well, one other we haven't talked about yet, what about King Hussein?

MILLER: King Hussein—there were a number of meetings with King Hussein. A couple of them in London and a couple of them in Amman. He was clearly a very positive, helpful player in this whole thing. Respected. I don't think I have anything to say about Hussein that you probably haven't heard from a lot of other people. You listened very carefully to him. He was a man of great courage, who was caught in an extremely difficult situation in Jordan, with more Palestinians than Jordanians. And he was a real friend of the United States. And so we would go to Jordan periodically, or see him in London, I think at Claridge's hotel in London, if I remember correctly.

I don't think he was on lousy terms with Assad. The stakes were pretty much drawn up, the sides were pretty much drawn up then. This is well before Jordan and Israel ended

their hostilities and established relations. But there was stuff going on back then, where Hussein was willing to entertain these ideas. And I can't remember the details because I wasn't involved, but I think it was a little bit later on, the secret exchanges between Jordan and Israel. But Hussein was definitely a guy who we felt was a very positive force in the region.

Q: OK, well, let's talk about what Rumsfeld—I mean, how did you see him operate in this very difficult world, and what was coming out of this?

MILLER: Well, Rumsfeld was a fascinating guy to watch. He was quicker than anyone I had ever met. He just had this really, really incisive mind. He was bored by bullshit and protocol and stuff like that. And so just give him the facts, and make sure you give him all the facts. He really wanted to see all sides of the problem. And then he'd figure out what to do with it.

He didn't always make a decision immediately. He smoked a pipe, back then, and he'd be often smoking this pipe, and it was this very thoughtful kind of pose that he had. Genuine. And he'd ponder things. Sometimes you'd tell him something and you weren't certain that he was listening, but what I learned pretty quickly was that he took it all in. He was always listening. Just because he didn't respond didn't mean he wasn't getting it and he wasn't listening. And the other thing that I learned with him was don't press him for an answer.

So if I had something critical to say about a person or about something that I thought was going on or even about something he had said, I'd do it privately with him. And I think that was a style that he had developed, and maybe I just adopted it with him. But that always worked a lot better. I saw, in his relationships with the ambassadors in the region—which was difficult for these ambassadors, because he's this really high-powered guy coming out as the President's envoy, and he's not a niceties guy. He's not a small-talk kind of guy. So there were some excellent relationships and there were some difficult relationships.

Q: Was Bob Paganelli in Syria at the time?

MILLER: Yes, and that was a terrible relationship.

Q: That was with him and with Shultz. It was one of the big stories, you might say, of that era, in the Foreign Service.

MILLER: That was a really, really terrible relationship. Paganelli—I didn't know him well. I just knew him through this. But he was very certain of his opinions, and I think, "You're on my turf." Rumsfeld didn't go for that. There was also—and this is a minor story—Rumsfeld was a smoker, and Paganelli hated smokers. And he just basically said, "No smoking." This was way before they had the rules and the laws. "No smoking in rooms that I'm in." Paganelli—I can't read people's minds, but I saw him try to stop Rumsfeld smoking and walk out of meetings when he was ignored or sometimes not even

come to meetings. There was a guy who was his DCM, who I've seen a couple of times since I've been back, named Bill Rugh. Have you interviewed Bill?

Q: Yes, I've interviewed Bill.

MILLER: OK, well, Bill was the DCM, a nice guy, caught in the middle, and he could corroborate some of these stories. But it was a really bad relationship with Paganelli. Really bad.

Q: You mentioned that Rumsfeld was a no-nonsense, let's get to the facts. When you were in the Middle East, things move at a different pace. How is the family? How is the …?

MILLER: I'm talking about with his staff. With his guests, he could be charming as hell, and he wasn't pushy or anything else. Yes, and he would have the coffee and do the niceties. Remember, the guy had been Secretary of Defense, so he wasn't coming to this job cold. He said, "Let's do a little research on each of these leaders and come up with a gift for each of them that is appropriate, that is something that will mean something to them personally." We ended up doing a good deal of research, and this is before Google. And I remember he gave Moshe Arens, the Defense Minister of Israel—I think this is right—he gave him a satellite photograph of Tel Aviv or Jerusalem. And this is when satellites—this is way before Google Earth. This is when this stuff was sensitive. And if you saw it today, you'd say, "Who cares?" This is such a poor resolution. But at the time this was cutting-edge technology, and I don't even want to tell you the agency I got it from. But we got it, we got it cleared, we gave it to him, and that meant a lot to Arens. And I think we got a book. I can't remember. I'm confusing him and Holbrooke, who I worked for years later, because Holbrooke would do the same kind of thing. He'd really, really, be solicitous about the personal likes and dislikes of the leader. He'd really do research on the leaders.

And what did we get Assad? There was something. We might have given Assad a satellite picture, too. I just don't remember. But with a very different intent, which is, "We see everything you are doing." I have that—it's a faint memory. So, yes. With his interlocutor he was very calm, he was very charming. He'd listen.

Q: How did things come out?

MILLER: Well, on Lebanon, we were on a glide path where I think the troops would have come out in the summer of 1984, with an explanation that the mission has been fulfilled. They should have come out maybe, I'd say, July or so. In February of 1984, there was this real critical NSC meeting that Vice President Bush, at the time, chaired. And I don't want to pin this on Bush, because I just don't know. I remember asking Rumsfeld years later—Reagan was out in California, and I remember asking him, "Was Reagan totally aware, in agreement with this decision?" And he said, "Yes."

So it's a Reagan decision, but things were not going well. Our troops were taking incoming. The Congress was caving in and calling for our troops to come out. And what I

mean is the Republican side, not just the Democrats. The Democrats were always calling for us to get out. And there was basically a decision to cut our losses, made at this critical NSC meeting in February of '84. And we were out in Beirut at the time, and we got the word. "Go tell Gemayel that we're leaving in two or three weeks." That was a very, very difficult time. Very, very difficult. Gemayel basically was quite emotional, saying, "You stabbed me in the back, I thought I had your support. What am I to do?" Basically he had to just go and cut the best deal he could with the Syrians.

Q: Who moved in, didn't they?

MILLER: Yes.

Q: You had British, French and Italian troops. In the first place, what were you getting? I assume you talked to the Marine commander out there. What were you getting from him?

MILLER: In what sense?

Q: I would think he would say, "For God's sake, get me out of here."

MILLER: No. What I recall, at the time, it was a colonel. And he was, "Yes sir. I'll follow instructions." It was very much of a can-do. "If that's the order, if the President, if our civilian chain of command has made this decision, I'll do the best I can." Very professional. That was all that I recall.

Stu, this is 27 years ago. This is way before embedded journalists. At the time, there was still a very heavy overhang of Vietnam, which is our civilian leadership has led us down the wrong path more than once. But on the ground, I don't recall getting a lot of talk back. I recall they sensed they had a mission. They were trying to do the mission the best they could. They knew that the situation was difficult. And again, it was a situation that we all understood of you can't pull out right now because all hell will break loose. Just get to a level where it's a little bit calmer and then you pull out. It never really got to that level—things kept on going down.

Q: You kept looking for a decent interval.

MILLER: That's right, and we never got it. We never got it. In hindsight you can see all that, but at the time, you don't see it. And I must tell you that I look at Lebanon and what I recall then, and I asked some serious questions about Afghanistan, but I see a hell of a lot of parallels here. I hope I'm dead wrong, but it really worries me a lot.

Q: What about the French, German, Italians?

MILLER: Not German. French, British, Italians.

Q: I mean the French, Italians and Brits?

MILLER: It was really the French and the Italians that had the largest-sized forces. The Brits, I don't think, had over a hundred. I think the French and the Italians probably had on the order of 800 or something like that. I forgot who went first, but that was part of the thing, is that they were getting a lot of public pressure, domestic pressure, to pull out. I remember a meeting that Rumsfeld had with Maggie Thatcher, the Iron Lady, in which you think that she would have said, "We're with you until the end." But she didn't. She was saying she couldn't sustain—I forget the exact words.

So all our allies were under a great deal of domestic pressure to pull out. And we'd gone into this together, and we realized that if they left, it would really leave us very much exposed. And if we left, they would be under great pressure to pull out. I can't remember. I think it was pretty much simultaneous.

Q: Were we going to Egypt and Mubarak at all at that time?

MILLER: Yes. There were meetings with Mubarak, and Mubarak was a guy you had to check in with. He saw himself as a very constructive player. And let's remember, Mubarak was still relatively new.

Q: I was going to say, it was around '81 when he came in, wasn't it?

MILLER: '81, I believe.

Q: It was when Sadat was killed.

MILLER: So this is only two years in office. And now the wise, old man in the Middle East. But at the time, we would go to Cairo periodically, have discussions back and forth. I don't think out of these discussions anything significant in terms of policy changes came. But he was one of the guys who we had to check in with. We had to check in with the Saudis, with the Egyptians, with the Jordanians, and that was a regular check in, and obviously the Israelis. And then we also made visits to Morocco with the king, King Hassan; to Tunisia, to Algeria. We went to Sudan, believe it or not. And it was, again, one of these coincidences, go back to Google and you'll find that Qadhafi bombed Omdurman, the sister city of Khartoum, right before we got there. And of course people made all kinds of connections about it, which was not true.

We went to Turkey, as I said. We went all over the Gulf: Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, et cetera.

Q: Why were you doing this? Was this to make sure everybody knew what we were doing? Was this more for show?

MILLER: No. First of all, when we went, the agenda pretty much after the first trip morphed into three big items. One was the situation in Lebanon. The second was Iran-Iraq. And the third was the peace process. And overlaid over all this was the Cold War and the Soviet dimension there.

The Gulf states had a lot of money invested in Lebanon and a lot of ability to influence events. So you wanted to keep the Gulf states in the loop. The key ones, it goes without saying why you'd do that, because they had a big role. You know, by checking in you'd show you cared. You'd show you were interested in their views. So it would have been a big loser not to, and it was a good idea to do so.

Q: When your mission ended—you were there during the whole mission?

MILLER: Right.

Q: What was the final outcome?

MILLER: Well, Lebanon was pretty much a fait accompli. We didn't have any massive impact. We didn't have any impact on the Iran-Iraq War. That went on until 1989. And the peace process, as I've said, is a footnote. There wasn't much. Lebanon we did get out of. And it descended into Syrian domination for a good number of years. You know the history after that.

I thought, in hindsight, the Rumsfeld mission was basically a damage limitation exercise. We had an impossible situation, and if you can't figure out to do something bold, immediately, then what you do—and we've seen this happen any number of times, is you go find a famous guy or a formerly famous guy, make him a presidential envoy for X, and say, "OK, this is your problem. You go work the problem." That's what Rumsfeld did, and I learned a lot of lessons out of that. The lesson that it's nice if everything you embark on can result in spectacular success, but sometimes you end up managing a problem rather than solving a problem. And I think that's what we ended up doing.

Q: In many ways, I've heard people comment that much of American foreign policy is managing problems as opposed to…

MILLER: Well, I'd go a little bit further. I think it's basically right. We manage problems and we look for opportunities to solve them. And if we're managing smart—I mean, management is a day-to-day thing. Management is something you have to do every day. But if you're just managing, you're not ever looking for the opportunity to solve them, then, hell, I don't know what the whole purpose is.

Q: Looking at it from the global picture, here you have a festering sore, and the United States seems to be the only power, entity, whatever you want to call it, to be able to exert any influence or try to do something. If we weren't doing it, it would just get worse. Or not? Did you have the feeling that maybe we shouldn't get into this thing?

MILLER: Yes, I thought about that a lot. I mean, I thought about that in the context of the Middle East; I thought about in the context of other problems. The Balkans, Cyprus, a lot of things that I've worked on. And you don't have a definitive answer to that, because it's all speculation. My sense is, I think that sometimes we're a unique player around the

world. And it obviously depends on the specific situation. But I think we bring to the table a set of tools that no one else does. The mistake we make, Stu, is that we think that those tools that we bring are the instant ingredients for a solution to everything. That's not the case.

So my sense is that there is a role for us. We shouldn't be the ones eagerly seeking the role. And if there's others who can play the role better or equally with us, we should either share the stage or defer to them. My sense is there's been a bit of a learning curve over history on this, but you deal with it.

Q: What did you do?

MILLER: What did I do after?

Q: Yes.

MILLER: After Rumsfeld, it was interesting. It was unclear—Rumsfeld by, I think, April of '84, was going back to Chicago, and basically I would travel to Chicago once a week with material, brief him, keep him posted on things. And he just thought he could go back to his day job and manage the residual. I think he actually officially left the job in June.

What he asked me to do was to get all the records together, all the cables, everything, and to really index them well and organize them well. He was a real organization freak. And so I did this, and it took me a couple of months, and I don't think I left the job until June or so of '84. And I put all that stuff in the Library of Congress, in boxes, and it was indexed beautifully. The irony is, 25 years later, I went back to the boxes in the Library of Congress and I did the research to help him on his book.

So actually the irony was all this organization stuff that I had done actually served a big purpose. Little did I know at the time that literally 25 years later I would be going back. I knew exactly what I was looking for and everything else. It was all there.

Then I was offered a job. This is now summer of '84. And Shultz by this time had gotten real big on counterterrorism. This was one of his signature items. And he brought in a guy to take the office of terrorism, S/CT, counterterrorism, and really beef it up. It had been a sleepy little backwater in the State Department earlier. And the guy he brought in was a guy named Bob Oakley, who had been an early mentor of mine. He had been a DAS (Deputy Assistant Secretary) in the East Asia Bureau when I first started out.

So Oakley asked me to come over—have you interviewed Oakley?

Q: Tom Stern interviewed him. I interviewed his wife, Phyllis.

MILLER: Okay. Terrific people. Bob was given a mandate—basically a blank check—by Shultz, to really ramp the office up. So Oakley asked me to be the office director. There were several segments to the office. And I would be the office director of the biggest

policy side of the office. And I thought that was amazingly cool. It was several grades above my personal grade. It was a senior grade, like an OC grade, and I was a 2 at the time, the old 4. Anyway, I said immediately, "Yes." I loved Oakley and I thought this was just really great.

And what happened was the guy who was leaving, whose name was Bob Sayre—I don't know if you ever remember that name—he went on to become the IG (Inspector General).

Q: Yes, I remember him.

MILLER: I'm sure he's dead by now. Anyway, he had been there, and I only get this secondhand from Oakley. He refused to leave, and Oakley had difficulty with the bureaucracy, establishing all these new positions. So Oakley was telling me, he said, "You better cover yourself. This might be a while." And in the meantime, I had come back from overseas in '81, this is now '84, and I'm figuring I'm going to have to go overseas soon anyway. I think it was a five-year rule or something.

Q: There was five-year rule.

MILLER: And so I went to see my career counselor and I said, "Here's the story, what do you think?" And he said, "Well, here's what I've got. I've got this and that." And I had a good record, so I pretty much could chose what I wanted. He said, "I've got this really interesting political job in Athens. But it's via a year of Greek language. So you've got to make a decision by August whether you're going to try to stick with this S/CT thing or go into Greek language training." So I said, "Well, I think I'm going to Greek language training, because it was a bird in the hand kind of thing…"

So I went into Greek language training, and I think it was in November or December that the job was actually created. And Oakley calls me and he says, "Job's created, come on over," and I said, "Shit, I've already done like four or five months of Greek language." I said, "I'd like to go to Greece." Because I think we had discovered at that point that our son had learning disabilities. He was probably five. And our daughter was gifted and talented. So we knew we had school issues. So I told Oakley, I think I'm just going to stick with the Greek and go to Greece.

So I finished out the year of Greek training. I think I finished early. I was in a class with one other guy, most of the time. There were two of us. He was going to be the defense attaché and me, and we got to be really, really close friends. His name was Captain Bill Nordeen. He was a Navy captain. And our families were close friends. I only mention this story because Bill was killed several years later by terrorists. By November 17th in Athens.

Q: They killed him.

MILLER: Yes, and the circumstances of how he was killed is still used in training films

here at FSI (Foreign Service Institute). He went to work at the same time every day, so. But I'm getting ahead of myself. So I did a year of Greek.

Q: How did you do with Greek?

MILLER: Fine. I was OK as a linguist. I wasn't brilliant but I did OK.

Q: What did they teach you? Dimotiki or Katharevousa?

MILLER: That's the interesting thing. We had two teachers, a husband and wife, who had come over here in the '50s, and they taught me Katharevousa. I got a 3/3. I don't think it was good enough—I don't think I was fluent or anything like that. But when I went over to Greece—and I was so proud of my language and tried to use it every chance I could get. I was a political officer. I wasn't head of the section; I was just a political officer. And I'm talking and people are looking at me politely but strangely. And after about a week, one of the guys, who I got to be really good friends with, and we played tennis a lot. I was maybe a year or two older than him. He's now the leader of the opposition in Greece. His name is Tony Samaras. He pulls me aside—we used to always get together for tennis and coffee and stuff—and he says, "Tom, someone's got to tell you this." He says, "The Greek you speak no one speaks anymore."

Q: The Colonels had reinstituted this for a while, and then when they left… It was the fancy Greek.

MILLER: Yes, it was a different kind.

Q: Katherevousa means to clean up.

MILLER: Anyway, I had to relearn. I had to do a lot of relearning on the spot, in the street, which I did. It wasn't a massive deal. But Estia was the newspaper of the higher class. That was in Katharevousa. But no one read Estia. These teachers, who were dear old people, and I think they're still alive, but I think Taki retired several years ago—Aliki was his wife's name. They were teaching Katharevousa, and no one in Greece was speaking that.

Q: You were in Greece from when to when?

MILLER: I was there '85 to '87.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

MILLER: Keeley. Bob Keeley.

Q: How were things? What was the situation in Greece when you were there?

MILLER: Well, Andreas Papandreou had come into office in 1981, and he was a number.

He was the socialist. A deep American background. He had been a tenured professor at Berkeley, had taught at Minnesota, had an American wife.

Q: He served in the American Navy.

MILLER: Right. Yes. You know the whole story. But there was a real love-hate relationship, and he would often use the Americans, talk about kicking out our military bases. And he'd use us as a whipping boy to whip up people. I think a lot of that still is out there today. It got a lot of the start then.

He would accuse us of having aided and abetted the junta. The interesting thing was that he and Keeley had an excellent relationship, because Keeley had been a political officer in the mid-'60s when the Colonels came in, and Keeley and his wife had sheltered Papandreou and his wife, Margaret. And so they developed a close, personal relationship. And that you could see when Keeley was ambassador.

Keeley was superb. I still see him today, and he just wrote a fascinating book on that period in the '60s, and he gave me the manuscript. He was writing it when he was ambassador, and he gave me the manuscript to read in '85? Probably '86. It was fascinating, absolutely fascinating. And I said, "You have got to publish this." He said, "No, I won't publish this until everyone is dead." And this year it's being published.

Q: Wow.

MILLER: I've suggested him to the American Academy of Diplomacy. They have a $5,000 award. Since I read the book 25 years ago, I know the book very, very well, and I said, "I'll be the one to nominate you." So Keeley and I are in touch. And the book will be published. It's going to be published both in Greek and in English.

So I was in the political section. It was a five-person section. The political counselor was absolutely brilliant, but sometimes hard to get along with.

Q: Who was that?

MILLER: His name was Towny Friedman. He later became ambassador to Mozambique and then he was riding his bike in Rock Creek Park one day in the mid-'90s and had a heart attack and fell into the water and drowned. So you can't interview him. But I learned so much from Towny. And I remember, at the time, the further you were down in the pecking order the more rank and supervising people meant to you. And I had been told that I would be number two in the section, and I thought that was really cool, being number two in a five-person section. So when the political counselor's gone, I'm the acting political counselor.

So I get over there, and Towny was just extremely knowledgeable. And after a couple of weeks, he calls me in and he says, "There's you and another guy in the section, Tim Foster…" Did you ever talk to Tim?

Q: No.

MILLER: A really good guy. "And you guys exactly were promoted at the same time," he said, "But Tim has been here two years and you just got here." He said, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to make Tim the deputy in the section for the next year and then you can be the deputy the year after that." And I was really pissed. I said to myself, "I can make a big deal of this or I can just live with it." And I decided to live with it, and it was a very good decision, because I got to be really good friends with Tim. And we're good friends to this day. And I worked well with Towny. And it was a very successful first year.

I remember going to my wife and saying, "I know how the promotion system works." Tim and I were 2s at the time, old 4s. And I said, "They're not going to promote two people," and it was pretty competitive then. More so than it is now. And I said, "They're not going to promote two people the same year, so Tim will get promoted first and then I'll have to wait a year or longer." Tim and I got promoted immediately. So that was that.

That relieved a lot of pressure, and it was a really good tour. I did counterterrorism. I did New Democracy, the opposition. I did a bunch of things, internal and external. And I got to be pretty close with Keeley. Towny left after a year and he was replaced by a guy named Greg Mattson as the political counselor—have you ever interviewed him? He's around. Anyway, Greg was into tennis, big on tennis. He had been stationed in Greece before and he was married to a Greek woman. But anyway, I was supposed to be there three years and Bob Oakley had put together the office in counterterrorism, and he had really built it into quite a powerhouse and then he left and Shultz brought back Jerry Bremer from the Hague to be the new head of counterterrorism.

I knew Jerry, because Jerry had been exec sec (executive secretary) and deputy exec sec (deputy executive secretary) before. So Jerry calls me, and says, "I'd like you to come back and take the job that Bob created for you, the office director." And the office was much bigger and it was a senior job, so I went to Keeley and I said, "I'd like to take this job and bail out after two years." And Keeley said, "I understand and I know it's really good for your career." He said, "I ask one thing: you don't go until we find someone to replace you." So that was the understanding. We found someone. We found a guy who came out and we overlapped a little bit. He didn't really seem to care so much about the job.

Q: Wayne Merry.

MILLER: It was Wayne Merry. Anyway, I did my due diligence, took Wayne around for the six weeks or so that we overlapped. Just before I left Greece, I started getting some security threats. I finished the tour and then came back and went to work for Jerry.

Q: Let's talk about the situation in Greece while you were there. How did we view the Papandreou government at the time? What were the problem points and all?

MILLER: There were many problem points. It was a real schizophrenic relationship. It was a real love-hate relationship. Papandreou thought that he could play us. It's the height of the Cold War. I'm not saying that the U.S. paid a lot of attention to Greece. Greece, I think, felt that it was a lot more important.

Q: The navel of the universe, yes.

MILLER: Yes, than it actually was. Papandreou felt he could navigate between us and the Russians, or the Soviets, in the height of the Cold War. Greece was part of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). They had just gotten into the EU (European Union), so they were reaping the largesse of EU structural adjustment funds, which we have seen what's happened since then. And Papandreou was a real populist. He was a real demagogue. I can go on and on about this, because I just wrote an article with my old DCM for a new journal that CSIS (Johns Hopkins) is putting out on Greece—how it was then and how it is now. So half the article is about Greece then.

At the time, the Cold War was everything. And Papandreou actually thought he could be a big player on the world scene. He fancied himself as an expert, with good relationships in the Arab world, so he tried to play a role in the Arab world, and we basically ignored him. He tried to broker a deal with Qadhafi in 1984, and the French, and it was a disaster. He felt that he wasn't appreciated. During the PLO evacuation—I think I mentioned this earlier—we needed someone outside of Palestinians to be on these ships so the Israelis wouldn't sink them. So we finally got the Greeks to put their troops on the ships. He felt he was never recognized for this. He felt that he took a hell of a lot of heat for what were four big U.S. military bases in Greece in which there was constant tumult and strikes and demonstrations, and he didn't get recognized for that.

At the time, we had an aid program to Greece. And he, working very closely with the very influential Greek-American community and the Congress—because this was really congressionally-mandated, a ratio of 7:10 in Greek, do you remember that? The 7:10 ratio? Greek-Turkish aid? For every 10 bucks we give Turkey we have to give seven to Greece, and considering that Greece was 1/6th the size of Turkey, it was very disproportionate, and Turkey lived in a very dangerous neighborhood.

And then there was a lot of terrorism, and that was a big, big deal with this administration. There was TWA 847, that was the one where they killed a U.S. Navy enlisted man named Robert Stethem on the runway, on the tarmac in Beirut. It started in Greece. There was another plane that was hijacked, TWA 840. 847 was in '85. In '86, there was TWA 840, where, miraculously, a bomb went off on the plane when it was flying over Crete, blew a big hole in it, sucked out a couple of people, but the plane landed. So we put Greece on a travel advisory list. Papandreou thought this was highly unfair, politically inspired, punitive, et cetera. And so it was just managing the problems and the outbursts. We thought that Papandreou was not a particularly reliable guy, and so we were talking past each other a lot. The street in Athens was always pretty ugly. And, at the time, November 17th—November 17th, the terrorist group, had started in 1975,

when they killed the CIA station-chief.

Q: Welch.

MILLER: Richard Welch. December 21, 1975. And then they killed a U.S. Navy Captain George Tsantes in '81. Captain William Nordeen in '88. Then there were a lot of attacks in between.

Q: Were they doing attacks against others, other than Americans?

MILLER: Yes. It was mainly against rich Greeks, wealthy Greeks. They attacked and just barely missed the finance minister. They killed a couple of very high-level bankers. They killed some serious people, and all these other groups in Europe—the Red Brigades, Baader-Meinhof, and Accion Direct—they were all rounded up by the mid-'80s or late '80s. November 17th—nothing!

We were pissed off. We just couldn't understand why the Greek Government couldn't stop November 17. There were all kinds of conspiracy theories, which, it turned out, there was never any evidence of. But I think at the time, by the mid-'80s, it was not inconceivable to believe that maybe the Greek Government was somehow complicitous knowledgeable about what November 17 was doing. That was theory, and it turned out not to be.

Q: Now that you've had some time to look back at it, why? Was it just lousy work, or lack of interest, or what?

MILLER: On the part of the Greeks? Why didn't they get them? It was several things. Because I was ambassador when they were rounded up, and I know the story extremely well. There were opportunities. It was sloppy police work. There were several opportunities. Greek public opinion—at least the left—had turned these guys into heroes. And so there wasn't any great public outcry. The government, I don't feel, felt that this should—they went through the motions and they said it was a high priority but I don't think they made it a high priority.

The terrorists actually practiced really good tradecraft. What we found out later, and this was all much later, was the guy who was the leader—and I have my own theories; I think there might have been more than one leader early on, but I think the other ones just faded, just took a hike. But the guy who was the leader throughout, we weren't certain, but we suspected strongly that the core of November 17th, of this terrorist group, when you unraveled it, it would lead back to Paris during the junta. In other words, a lot of the exile community was in Paris, and we just felt, look in Paris in the mid-'70s, early '70s, and you'll find the leadership of November 17th. And it turned out that we were right. The guy had moved back to Greece under a different name. He had married a Frenchwoman. And he lived a very quiet life on an island. He practiced excellent tradecraft. He compartmentalized. And by the way, he never talked. He's been in jail and he'll probably spend the rest of his life in jail. But he never really talked, so this is all speculation.

But he was separated from the foot-soldiers, the guys who were actually carrying out the killings, and I think the foot-soldiers, I think 1983 was a key period. I think that's when they had a change of a number of people.

And I think the leader (named Yiatopoulos) was very patient, and just practiced good tradecraft.

Q: How did you view the left, both the Communist Party and the left during the time you were there?

MILLER: Well, there's the left and the left. There is the KKE (Greek Communist Party), which was the Communists, and they had the same leadership for years. They were hardcore. They had an allegiance to Moscow after Moscow disappeared. They were impossible to deal with, and basically we didn't deal with them. They got 5% of the vote in whatever election, and had a few people in Parliament. The threshold for entry into Parliament in Greece was 3%.

We just didn't deal with them. There might have been some in the political section. When I was DCM and ambassador, I said, "I don't have any problem if someone wants to deal with them, but I am not going to waste my time with them."

Q: They weren't really, for us, a factor. I mean they might have been a factor but not…

MILLER: They were peripheral. They were virulently anti-U.S., always at the head of demonstrations. You couldn't have a conversation with them. And I thought it was a waste of time.

Anyway, so the government was the left, and you dealt with them. That was the government. Papandreou was socialist. And they won reelection in '85. They were elected in '81. And by '85, they were pretty strong. And Papandreou was an extremely charismatic leader, and he ran that country. So you dealt with him. They were romantics from the left and the U.S. was seen as the source of all evil, but you had your day-to-day business to do, and you just cut through that.

Q: I spent a nice four years there.

MILLER: When were you there?

Q: '70 to '74. That was in the high Colonels. Actually, the Generals, too. But people would say, "Oh, it must have been wonderful." I didn't really enjoy it.

MILLER: Not during the junta.

Q: Not during the junta. And also the Greeks got to me, too.

MILLER: While, I enjoyed the Greeks. I mean, I made a lot of friends. I didn't internalize, I just didn't personalize, a lot of this crap. And I've always tried to follow a policy of if they don't agree with you, don't take it personally.

Now, my beat, on the internal side, was to follow the New Democracy Party. I did have some dealings with the governing PASOK Party (Panhellenic Socialist Movement), but it was basically the New Democracy guys. And most of them loved Americans, so my job wasn't hard.

Q: I assume you turned over to your consul general the Greek American community, did you, pretty much?

MILLER: No. You mean in Athens?

Q: Yes.

MILLER: No, we all did it. I don't know what the embassy was like back then. Were you chief of the consular section then?

Q: Yes.

MILLER: So you were the consul general?

Q: Yes.

MILLER: The Greek American community in Athens were nice people. So you'd show up. They'd like to include you in things. I remember more as ambassador and DCM, because you'd show up for Thanksgiving, you'd show up for this, you'd show up for that. The daily stuff, no. I didn't, unless you were friends with them because your kids went to school together or something like that. That was your job.

Q: Yes. How did you find the other embassies? I'm speaking about your time as political officer. Was there much analysis going on, or was everybody doing their own thing?

MILLER: No, we actually would get together, particularly with the Brits. We did a lot of internal reporting. We did a lot of reporting that you just don't do anymore in the Foreign Service. The municipal elections, set up a task force… I know, Stu, it sounds really dumb, now, but we were very, very focused on things that we just don't cover anymore. The media takes care of some of it, the internet takes care of some of it. And, frankly, a lot of the stuff is not of great interest to the U.S. government. And we were constantly comparing notes with other friendly embassies.

So we were very focused on the internal political situation. I loved the job, because you had a modest representation allowance, but you got to take people out to lunch and just talk about politics, and all you had to do was go back and write it up. I think airgrams had gone out the window by then. And I just thought, at the time, I said, "This is just a great

job. You get to schmooze about subjects you love."

I have to tell you one story because it is cute: I was going out to lunch a lot, and you'd go out and you'd have a business lunch and you'd have some wine. I'd come to back to the office, and I couldn't remember all the details because I had a little bit to drink. I wasn't drunk or anything. I don't think I've ever been drunk in my life. On a visit back to the States, I went to some electronic shop—I don't think I intended to do this—and I bought this voice-activated tape recorder. And I figured, "This is great. What I'll do is I'll stick in my pocket, I'll go to lunch with someone, and then when I reach a certain decibel by coughing, the voice-activated tape recorder will turn on and then I'll go back to the office. I'll have a tape with a whole conversation."

So I'm all set to do this. I get back to Greece, go to lunch with a deputy from New Democracy. I'm at a restaurant called Deka Okto (Eighteen) on Souidias Street in the Kolonaki district of Athens. And we sit down to order, and I cough, and I activate the thing. And all of a sudden I hear this whirr. It took me about two seconds to realize it was this tape recorder that I had in my pocket, and that it was malfunctioning. She picks up and she says, "What's that noise?" I said, "I don't know." And I started coughing. I got up, went to the bathroom, turned off the tape recorder and never used it again.

Q: Oh, God. OK, well, I'm looking at time. This is probably a good place to stop. Is there anything else we should cover about Greece, do you think? Did you fall in love with Greece?

MILLER: I did. As did my wife and kids. My kids were little; Julie was nine when we went out there, and eleven when we came back, and Eric was six and eight. So they started school. They had a really good experience. I think we all fell in love with Greece, but we thought this was a one-off tour. We thought we'd never go back again. It was a Foreign Service experience. I thought I would probably work on the Middle East the rest of my career; maybe some stuff in Asia, because that's my academic background. But I didn't think I'd ever go back to Greece, and I'll tell you the story when we come back.

Q: Today is the 20th of May 2010 with Tom Miller. And Tom, in 1987, you left Greece.

MILLER: I left Greece. For the first time.

Q: And where did you go?

MILLER: I came back to the Department. What had happened was that Secretary Shultz had built up our counterterrorism office really big time. This is when there was a lot of terrorism, hijacking and stuff like that. Shultz, as Secretary, had really given this office a lot of gravitas, and he brought in a guy to head the office named Jerry Bremer. You might know him as Paul Bremer, the guy who ran the operation.

Q: I've interviewed Jerry.

MILLER: OK. Jerry knew me from when he was the executive secretary of the department. So he got in touch with me, and asked if I would come back and be the office director. And that was a great job. It was the job that had been offered to my earlier by Bob Oakley. That was a senior job. I think I'm an O-1 by then. But it was a senior job, a big deal. Maybe 12 people in the office, or something like that. So I thought it was great.

So I went to see Ambassador Keeley, who was a pretty good buddy of mine. I said, "Can I go?" It was a three-year tour, and this was only after two years. He said, "Look, I don't want to stand in your way." You can go if you can find a replacement. So I said, "OK." So I didn't have to personally find a replacement. The personnel system turned up this guy, who I had never met before. And he showed up, and I remember that it was the summer of '87. He showed up, I guess, in August.

I had had some security threats at the end of my tour in Athens. There had been stuff written about me in the left-wing press, that I was CIA. You remember that kind of stuff. I was given some protection and an armored car. So I stayed for another two months or so. And Merry came out, Wayne Merry, the guy who replaced me, and we overlapped a little bit. I took him around and introduced him. And I went back to Washington and started this job as head of the regional office of the office of counterterrorism.

Q: You did this from when to when?

MILLER: '87 to '89. I did it for two years. And it was a great job. We had the Secretary's full support. We ran roughshod over the department. I remember, at the time, a lot of the State Department wanted to have nice relations with country X, Y or Z. We were the ones who were always raising problems, because this country or that country was harboring terrorists. So it was an adversarial position. And I remember, I had spent a good deal of my time in the Near East Bureau, and I remember one person who I think was a very serious person, telling me, "You'll never get another job in this bureau after your job in S/CT." I took that very seriously, and I said, "Well, I've got to do my job." So I figured that was probably going to be the end of my career. But as we'll get to later, it didn't end.

We did some pretty serious stuff then. TWA 847, TWA 840, Pan-Am 103, all these things.

Q: Let's pick these up. In the first place, why terrorism at this point, from your perspective, there, and then let's talk about the separate incidents in which you participated.

MILLER: Well, at the time, there was a lot of terrorism, a lot of plane hijackings. The big group, at the time, that was really deadly was Abu Nidal. And what we did was the diplomatic side of terrorism. We went after the states that were supporting passively, or even more actively, various terrorist groups. This is the time when they developed the terrorism list and the terrorism report. It became institutionalized under Jerry Bremer. We were quite active all over the world. There was a lot of terrorism.

Q: What countries would you be upsetting? If a country is harboring a terrorist, you want to get rid of them.

MILLER: We upset a lot of Eastern European countries, and, again, this is before the fall of the Wall, in which there was a struggle to have a decent relationship with Poland and Czechoslovakia and Hungary and obviously the Soviet Union. We upset a number of countries in the Middle East. Syria, Lebanon, to a certain degree. Some of the Gulf states, some of whom weren't friends of ours, but we felt they were soft on terrorism. We had evidence.

And again, the evidence was never 100% slam dunk, but it was the best you could get. And that was part of the argument we would have with some of the regional bureaus. They would say, "This is just rumor!" And we'd say, "Well, you know, it's the best you can get." So we would insist on doing a demarche to country X, Y and Z, and basically saying, "We have information that you are doing X, Y and Z, and if you don't stop, there are going to be consequences." There was always an argument over what were the consequences and could you make them stick.

Q: What was your particular slice of the action?

MILLER: My slice of the action was the world. The way we divided the office up at the time was we had the major part of the office was mirroring the geographic bureaus. We had action officers who followed each of these areas; several for certain regions like the Near East. I was the office director. It was called the Regional Office.

We also had a much smaller section that did multilateral diplomacy; in other words, stuff that you were going to do with the U.N. or other multilateral fora. And then we had a training office and an operations office, provided what we called ATA (Anti-Terrorism Assistance) program. We didn't operationally run it, but we decided who got the money.

Q: Counterterrorism assistance would be training, equipment?

MILLER: Yes, just helping police and the intelligence agencies in whatever country have a better capability to deal with terrorism.

Q: Was this a period where it was pretty hard to get a lot of these countries to respond? Were they in denial or what?

MILLER: Yes, it was hard. It was very hard. We'd get responses all the way from "What are you talking about?" to "Get out of here." And it clearly upset the bilateral relationship. Of course, my attitude, at the time, was that people who were concerned about upsetting the bilateral relationship, the only relationship I cared about was my country. But you've heard the term clientitis, and I saw a lot of clientitis at the time.

So it was very, very hard. And very rarely would you get a country—in fact, I can remember never—saying, "Oops, sorry about that!" Sometimes you'd come up with

information. Sometimes our information might not have been that good. It was a mixed bag. But sometimes you'd come up with the information and the country would say, "Oops, we'll try to do better, we'll do something about it." Then that would range all the way to the denials. "We don't know what you're talking about."

Q: What tools did we have? What would we do about it if they did?

MILLER: That's always the $64,000 question in diplomacy. We want you to do something and we sure hope you'll do it, but if you don't do it, what are the consequences? That was always a big discussion, because often the consequences—particularly with countries that we didn't have a particularly close relationship—there wasn't much we could do. We couldn't say we're going to cut off this or cut off that, we're going to cut off assistance to you, because a lot of these countries didn't have assistance in the first place. So that became an extremely important part of the dynamic when we were dealing with the rest of the bureaucracy in the State Department. What were you going to do about it? And what was real? Don't make a threat if you don't have the capability to carry it out.

It was a lot of jaw-jaw. It was a lot of trying not to make threats that everyone knew you didn't have the capability to carry out. And you had to make sure that you did have that capability, and you had to make sure that you would work the rest of the bureaucracy, where if you were going to put them on a terrorism list, it would stick. And the terrorism list had certain sanctions. So that became part of the challenge of the job.

Q: After the September 11th attack on the Twin Towers and all, we did an awful lot of soul-searching, and one was something everybody knew, that lots of agencies, intelligence agencies in the government, weren't talking to each other. Did you find that this was a problem? The CIA, the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), Immigration--were we sharing with each other?

MILLER: It could have been better. The newspaper stories at the time talked about big fighting. The reality that I saw wasn't so much big fighting but people who had a lot on their plate, who didn't always remember to press all the buttons. And again, this is the early computer era. Now there's really very little excuse for not exchanging information. All you've got to do is just punch an address in and it goes. Back then, you had to do a bit more.

And not to say that there wasn't fighting and there wasn't intentional stuff, but I found that most of the stuff was just you got real busy and you'd forget to share it with this office or you'd forget to share it with some agency like Immigration. They look at it from an immigration perspective, and they don't look at it from a counterterrorism perspective. So they might not share stuff. I think it was more lack of systems and processes and inadvertent than people were at war over it with each other.

Q: What did we see the terrorist outfits doing? Let's take Abu Nidal. What was this organization trying to do?

MILLER: Well, it was trying to totally screw up the peace process. Camp David, between Israel and Egypt, was 1979. And this was the mid-'80s, now. And they were 100% against Israel, wanted to see Israel be thrown into the sea and everyone massacred. So they were against the peace process and they were obviously very much against Israel, very much against anyone who was friends with Israel. That included the Americans and most Europeans. They were very much against any Arab state which was for the peace process, and they were very deadly. This is before the big suicide attackers. At that time, terrorism was not a suicide business. You tried to get away. You planted a bomb in a plane and you made sure you weren't there.

So we had that. We had a lot of other rejectionist groups. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command. It's an alphabet soup of groups in the Middle East. And then you literally had groups all over the world. You had groups in India, Pakistan. You had a number of groups in Latin America.

Q: Shining Light.

MILLER: Shining Path. You had in Europe, at the time, you had Baader-Meinhof, Red Brigades.

Q: Prima Linea was in Italy.

MILLER: OK, yes. Red Brigades, yes. And then you also had November 17th, in Greece. We'll get to this one later, because all of these groups were pretty much rounded up in the '80s, except for November 17th, which wasn't broken until 2002. And I have a great story to tell about that.

Q: We'll get to that. But let's talk about Greece a bit, because in my time, during the early '70s, we had a Palestinian group that ran out of the airport and attacked, actually, a plane coming from Greece. It was mainly Greek-Americans. Very sad. But the Greek government seemed extremely weak, even though it was the Colonels running it, because the Palestinians seized the ship somewhere, and the next thing you know, all the hijackers whom they arrested were released.

MILLER: Right. When I got to Greece, I got there in 1985. I got there just a few weeks after a very famous hijacking of TWA 847, which had originated in Greece. And it ended up on the tarmac of Beirut, where they assassinated, they shot, a young Navy diver. Just shot him in the head, and kicked him off the airplane. Threw his body down on the tarmac. And then when I was in Greece the next year, TWA 840, another plane. There a guy smuggled on a bomb and the bomb exploded over Crete and blew a gigantic hole in the fuselage of the plane. A big, big, humungous six-feet-wide hole. And fortunately the plane didn't crash. There was a very skillful pilot. But it sucked out four people and killed four people, including a little baby.

So we had put Greece on the travel advisory list, and of course the Greeks thought this was political and they were very upset. So when I came back and was doing the counterterrorism stuff, we had a very active account with Greece. We said, "You know, if you ever want to get off the travel advisory list—this isn't a political thing. It's strictly the safety and well-being of American travelers—you've got to do X, Y and Z." I remember one of the things they did—this was at the old airport; they now have a new airport—is they stuck an APC (Armed Personnel Carrier) right at the entrance where the passengers went in. And they thought this was really cool. I don't think it was ever manned. And I remember somebody told me that this APC had been there for a while and it never moved. So I took a coin and I stuck it under the wheel of the APC. You couldn't see it unless you were really looking hard. And every time I would go back to visit to Greece, I would look for that coin. And it was always there, which shows that the wheels had never been moved.

That went on for years, because I would go back on counterterrorism things. One of the things that I will say, when we're talking about November 17th, this group that killed five people at the American Embassy. Altogether, I think they killed 23 people over the years from '75 to 2002, wounded dozens, did unbelievable property damage and never were discovered. One of those five people was a very close friend of mine. We had been in a two-person Greek class together out here. Actually, it was before the current FSI campus was built, when we were still taking language classes in Rosslyn. We got to be really, really close friends. I left in 1987. He had a three-year tour; he was the military attaché, a Navy captain. He was to leave in July of 1988, and three weeks before he left, on June 28th, he was going to work and his car was blown up by November 17th. He was killed instantly.

Q: How were your relations with—let's talk about a couple of them—but let's say the Greek desk, when you were there? Did they say, "Oh my God, here he comes again," or something?

MILLER: When I was a political officer? They didn't pay any attention to me.

Q: I'm not talking about political officer, but when you were in with counterterrorism.

MILLER: Oh, yes, they hated me. That's a good one. They didn't like me. I thought they were trying to make excuses for the Greeks. I thought, at the time, that the Greeks could do a lot more. Personally, they were all friends, but they just thought that I was a nag and a nuisance and whatever other negative things you want to say. "Why are we picking on the Greeks? They're our great NATO allies." The Greeks would say the same thing to us, but the desk was, at the time, they thought we were just being too tough on the Greeks.

Q: Could you, in a way, sic Jerry Bremer on them? He, in turn, could sic George Shultz? How did that work?

MILLER: Actually, Jerry was a very clever bureaucrat. He talked a very tough game. But he would sic us on them. And we were a lot of bluffers. We didn't have a lot of arrows in

our quivers, really. We learned this quickly. So you'd have to be careful about how you made threats. And you couldn't go to George Shultz whenever you were dealing with one of these issues. In extraordinary circumstances, I think we did go to the Secretary on something like Syria. But in most cases, you were on your own. You just can't bring everything to the Secretary.

And Jerry was a very adroit kind of guy. He would tell me, "We're not going to take this stuff from the European Bureau or the Near East Bureau! We're going to show them!" I knew Jerry pretty well, so I'd say, "Yeah, right, Jerry. OK." I had a guy who worked for me—I don't know if you've ever interviewed him; he's a really good guy. His name was Andy Purnell. Does that ring a bell?

Q: No.

MILLER: OK. Andy covered Europe in my office. He was one of the guys who did Europe. And Jerry used to do this with me all the time. "We're the kings of the hill, we're not going to take this crap from anyone," and all that kind of stuff. I'd go, "Right, right, right." You had to modulate. That's the State Department. Don't take everything you hear that seriously.

But Andy was this literal guy. He was the most tenacious guy in the world, and he would take everything literally. You'd say, "Andy, I want you to be at this desk for the next 18 hours." He'd be at the desk for the next 18 hours. So Jerry's going through one of his rants, and the assistant secretary at the time—Jerry and I had dinner a while back, several months ago, and I reminded him of this story. He just laughed. He remembered it. The assistant secretary of the European Bureau at the time was Rick Burt. Do you remember him?

Q: Yes.

MILLER: And Jerry's going—I think it was over Poland or something, I can't remember the country. Andy and I are in the office and Jerry goes, "We're not going to take this! Poland is really doing all kinds of support for Abu Nidal." We actually put out a report on support for Abu Nidal and got it declassified. "We've got to really tell, we've got to really stick it to these guys in the EUR bureau. All they're doing is protecting the clients of theirs, these countries that are giving support." So I go, "Yeah, yeah, yeah." And so Jerry says, "I want you to go tell Rick Burt that he's full of shit." So I go, "Right." Well, Andy, unbeknownst to me, goes down, barges in the assistant secretary's office—he's desk officer, this assistant secretary is this big guy. And he says, "You're full of shit," or something like that, and the next thing I know, Jerry gets a call from Rick Burt, and he says, "What, have you got a bunch of maniacs down there?" And Jerry says, "Why?" He says, "Well, you guys just had one of your guys come in and tell me I'm full of shit." Jerry said, "He actually did it?"

Anyway, a good story. But you had to use a lot of bluff. You had to use a lot of other stuff.

Q: It reminds me of Henry II saying, "Won't somebody rid me of this troublesome…?"

MILLER: Andy was a great guy.

Q: While you were dealing with terrorism, were you getting much of the philosophy behind particularly the European terrorists? Because they weren't communist. This is also in Peru and other places. Did you pick up the ideology of the terrorists?

MILLER: You did, but you didn't get driven by the ideology. There was far-right terrorism, too, but they ranged mostly from far left, Che Guevara, righting the ills of the people. They usually started out that way. And then a lot of them morphed into criminal units. Robbing banks and knocking off people, kidnapping people to support themselves.

You had to be aware of it, but you couldn't be driven by it. If you were driven by it, you got quickly into the argument of root causes. And the root causes argument is that you can never fix terrorism until you address the underlying causes of poverty and injustice and everything else. That's a centuries-long project. And the answer to that, the reason why you couldn't get sucked in to this kind of paradigm, is that there's a hell of a lot of poor people and people who are treated unjustly who don't resort to terrorism. And now, post 9/11, what we've seen is a lot of the people who have carried out terrorist acts don't come from impoverished backgrounds. They come from fairly well-to-do backgrounds.

Q: I'm just trying to think—were there any incidents? I'm not even sure it's terrorism. Did you get involved in the KAL(Korean Air Lines) shootdown and all that? That really wasn't terrorism, though. That was the Soviets.

MILLER: No, I'm sorry, we didn't get involved in that one. I take that back. We did not get involved when the Soviets shot down KAL 007. We did get involved in another Korean one, and this is what got North Korea on the terrorism list, where a couple of North Korean agents blew up a Korean air plane. They were picked up almost immediately. They both had cyanide pills that they put in their mouths. The guy succeeded in killing himself. The girl, they pulled the pill out of her mouth. She was pretty sick. And we got involved in that. We gave a lot of assistance to the South Koreans in doing the investigation. That's a fascinating story.

Q: North Korea was continually on the…?

MILLER: They went on the terrorism list as a result of an early attack in 1983 where they bombed a reviewing stand of Korean Ministers in Burma. There were some who were arguing that we were using the terrorism list a little bit too liberally to go after our enemies. I didn't buy that. I think the one that was most controversial on that score was Cuba. Cuba was always on the terrorism list, and the question was did they deserve it? They could definitely be on an enemies list, but did they meet the criteria for being on a terrorism list?

Q: I would think that would be one of those things that's just plain political.

MILLER: Well, no. It was iffy. It was a close call. It wasn't just political. I could see it. I could see it both ways, frankly. But sometimes, as a government, would have very strict criteria. We did this with the human rights list, as well. And we did not, in my mind, always apply the criteria as strictly with some countries as we did with others.

Q: I think the most obvious case was Northern Ireland. You had the IRA (Irish Republican Army), which was sure as hell a terrorist organization, but you had all these Irish cops in Boston…

MILLER: But the IRA was on the terrorism list.

Q: But somehow or another we didn't go after Noraid (Irish Northern Aid Committee), did we, or not?

MILLER: Right. Well, talk to Teddy Kennedy. That was very hotly debated. As far as those of us who were working terrorism, we should have gone after them just as much as we were going after the supporters of Abu Nidal. I wouldn't say we didn't go after them. We didn't go after them as vigorously as we could have.

Q: You did this for what, about two years?

MILLER: I did this for two years; it was a two-year assignment. So I actually finished an assignment for once.

Q: Did you feel that people were whispering behind your back in the corridors or not?

MILLER: Yes, but you know, you get thick skin after a while. For a while, I thought it was the end of a stellar career, going down in flames. But I felt pretty strongly about the subject, so I said, "I'm going to do the best job I can and let the chips fall where they may." And what happened was there was a new guy who was coming in to the Near East Bureau as the principal deputy assistant secretary. His name was Jock Covey. Have you ever interviewed Jock?

Q: No, I haven't. His name has come up.

MILLER: You've got to. He's in the area and I can give you his contact information.

Q: Would you, please?

MILLER: Fascinating stories. Just a great life. Jock was coming into the bureau. He had been DCM in Cairo. He was a total water-walker (i.e., a great officer). He had been deputy executive secretary. A lot of very high-profile jobs. He was a buddy of mine. We had done a lot of work together. And he asked me to bid on the office director of North Africa, the Maghreb, which was Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya. That was a senior

job in a really cool bureau. So I bid on the job, and there were a lot of bidders, including a lot of senior officers. I'm, at this point, an O-1, which is the level right below senior.

Q: O-1 is about a colonel, would be about the equal.

MILLER: Right. But I'm not a general yet. So it finally came down to this other guy and me, and the bureau wanted me, but the personnel system and all of the other parts of the assignment process, said that this guy should get the job. This guy was a senior officer; I wasn't. This guy had served, I think, three tours in North Africa; I had never served in North Africa. This guy had French and Arabic; I had neither.

This guy was paneled for the job. And I get called in to the Acting Director General's office, at the time. And he tells me, he just yells at me, and tells me, "How dare you try to buck the system?" I said, "I'm not trying to buck the system, sir. The Near East Bureau has put me up as a candidate." So the Near East Bureau really felt strongly about getting me in the job, so they had appealed it, and it had to go for a final decision to the Director General. And since there was an interim, he was the acting. And he had to make a decision about it. So he comes in and he interviews me. He probably interviewed the other guy. He basically reads me the riot act and tells me how impertinent I am and how my career will do fine but just a little steady as she goes. Don't be so impatient.

So I go out of that meeting saying, "Jesus, I don't have a prayer in hell." And he calls me in a week later and he said, "You know, I've really thought on this one. This has been one of the hardest ones I've had. I'm going to give you the job because I think you'd do a lot better than this other guy."

Q: Why do you think he made that determination?

MILLER: He said, "I see something in you that you're really going to go far in this business." I had been advancing pretty rapidly as it was. He said, "And I think the other guy,"—the other guy had been in maybe 15 years longer than me.

Q: He's closer to a retirement post.

MILLER: Whatever it was. I never met the other guy. But the Acting Director General says, "I'm going to give you the job and I don't want you to disappoint me." This was a big deal at the time. And so I took that job, and I was very grateful for it, and I remember going back to him when I got promoted. The next promotion that I got was across the senior threshold. That was the biggest one. And this was a year or two later, and I was number one on the list. You can get your rank—I was number one on the entire list. And I went back to him, and I told him, "Thank you." He was pleased as punch. He said, "No one ever comes back to me. They just want things from me." We stayed in touch over the years. It worked. It worked fine.

So I was in that job for three years, and it was very active at the time. We were close allies with Morocco, pretty close allies with Tunisia. There was a lot of stuff going on in

the peace process and a lot of bilateral issues, counterterrorism, a lot of economic issues. Algeria had massive amounts of gas and oil that were of great interest to us. And of course Libya was the biggest bugaboo of all. We had no relations with them. They were number one on the terrorism list. This was right after Pan-Am 103 and we saw the Libyan complicity in that. So it was a very active time.

Q: This is from when to when?

MILLER: 1989 to 1992.

Q: So this would be George Herbert Walker Bush.

MILLER: That's correct, yes.

Q: Let's pick Morocco first. When you say we were close to Morocco, was this a new king?

MILLER: No, the new one didn't come in until 1999. This was Hassan, King Hassan, who came in in 1961. So he was a real veteran by then. He was a tough guy.

Q: He chewed up our ambassadors, and spit them out.

MILLER: Well, he actually didn't pay much attention to our ambassadors. He was a genuinely imperial, above-it-all type of guy. And our ambassadors rarely saw him. This was a post that we would often send political ambassadors to, as opposed to the rest of the Near East. I remember, two of the ambassadors were deputy assistant secretaries—my immediate boss—before they went out as ambassadors to Morocco. That was Mike Ussery and Freck Vreeland and a couple of others. I knew a whole string of these guys. They were nice guys, not professionals, and they'd quickly become apologists for the Kingdom of Morocco. In fact, if you look at the list of registered foreign agents today, it's a Who's Who of former American ambassadors.

Q: One of the ambassadors who went out there was renowned in one of his cables saying, "My king."

MILLER: "My king." That was Joseph Verner Reed. He went out there in the early Reagan years, and I think—did I tell you the story? A story that went all around the department.

Q: I don't think you did.

MILLER: Well, this is when I was on the Israeli desk in the early '80s. Joseph Verner Reed was still around. He was a nice, nice guy. He had been David Rockefeller's right-hand guy, and that's how he got the job; a political appointee. He was very enthralled with the king and all that kind of stuff. And he did write a cable that said, "Our Majesty." But he used to give speeches, a lot of speeches, around the country. And he would send in

his speeches. I remember he once went and gave a speech in Tangier, and he started out the speech, "Blah, blah, blah—and fellow Tangerines."

Well, the Near East staff aides got hold of this, highlighted it, stuck it on the door, and you wouldn't believe how this got all over the department. It became some of the lore of the State Department. But you're absolutely right. The American ambassadors were very, very much in the pocket of the Moroccan king.

Q: I've interviewed Dick Parker, who spoke fluent Arabic.

MILLER: He was career.

Q: Yes, he was career.

MILLER: But he had problems. He got kicked out.

Q: He got kicked out, because he knew the territory and the king didn't particularly like that. It's true of Saudi Arabia, too. They don't really like those who speak good Arabic, for example.

MILLER: I hear you. Yes. So you were on Morocco.

Q: On Morocco, way back we had a naval base and air bases and all. But did we have anything going in Morocco?

MILLER: We had a lot going. We had a lot of regional facilities that I can't really talk about. We had a massive VOA (Voice of America) transmitter complex that was upgraded when I was head of the desk. The military bases, I think by then had closed down. We had a string of military bases across North Africa, including Wheelus in Libya. All that stuff had closed down by then, but the bases were still used by Moroccans. This was all from World War II days. And we used Morocco as the regional hub for a lot of our activities.

Q: Also did you find, in your capacity as country director for the Maghreb, using Morocco as a cat's-paw for communication between the Arabs and the Israelis or not?

MILLER: Morocco did two things. This is very important, and this is why Morocco had a special place with us. Number one, they had a very large Jewish community, and they treated them OK. That was significant in the Arab world. Number two, when we launched the peace process from the Madrid Peace Conference, in 1991, Morocco was one of the few Arab countries that supported it. And this meant a lot to us. So Morocco we would always give the benefit of the doubt, plus provision of regional facilities, plus good cooperation on other fronts. So we always cut them some slack.

And I remember, on the human rights front, there were all these problems on human rights. We would call it as we see it, and the Moroccans got upset, because they expected

that's not the way friends should treat each other. But we would be pretty honest on the human rights front. I remember one story, in particular, on human rights. I had come to the office, and a few months after I arrived in the office, I got a letter—I believe a letter; maybe it was a phone call—from a lady, from a schoolteacher, in Nebraska. She told me this unbelievable story, and I didn't know what to think. She told me that she had been teaching in the early '60s, and we're now in the late '80s. She had been teaching English as a young lady, as a young teacher, in Morocco, and she fell in love with a Moroccan guy in the Air Force. Just a sergeant. And they got married, and they had a kid. And this was early '60s. And just after she had the kid, or maybe she was pregnant, I don't even remember, but she did have a son at some point, there was a coup against the king, and the king put down the coup. They tried to shoot down his plane.

Q: There were two.

MILLER: There were two. This was the first.

Q: This was the airplane, not the birthday party.

MILLER: This was the airplane, that's right. They tried to shoot down the king's plane. You are well-informed. And the king survived, and the king ordered that all the people, including the army chief and whoever else in the air force, all these other people, that they be rounded up and executed. And a bunch of people were executed. A real lot of people were executed. But he also ordered that anyone who had been at all involved in any way, shape or form be arrested. And this sergeant, this air force sergeant, worked at the air force base that the rebels had taken off from. I think he was in charge of refueling or something like that. They arrested this guy. And he had just gotten married to this young American.

They took these guys—and I think it was about 60 of them they arrested—they took them and they stuck them in a hole in the desert. I think it was called Tazmamart. It wasn't a town, it wasn't anything, it was just literally a bunch of underground dungeons they had dug out of the desert. And the king basically said, "I don't ever want to hear about them again. They don't exist, as far as I am concerned."

Over the years, I think about two-thirds of them died. They just were in this hole. It was a dungeon. And they were abused and mistreated and starved. In 1991 the king was coming on a visit, a state visit, to the United States. This woman who had married the imprisoned Moroccan had met me, and she told me I was the first one who had even listened to her. I did some checking, "Does anyone know, anyone in the intelligence community know about this prison?" And there were faint rumors, but no one could ever confirm that it even existed. Her husband had disappeared. We knew that much.

So I had heard this story, and I stayed in touch with her. And the king of Morocco was coming, a couple years later, on a state visit. And I inserted, on all the talking points, of which they were voluminous, a piece about this prison. And it was a one-line throwaway for the president to use. And the president used it. The king got very upset over this, and

the visit finished. I got a berating from the Moroccan ambassador, "How could you embarrass our king?" Three months later, the king ordered the survivors to be released, and this guy had survived. He was one of 19 people out of, I think, about 60, who had gone into this jail, who was still alive. I think one of the sharpest and most poignant memories I'll ever have in my life—not just State Department—was when, his name was M'Barek Touil, when he and his wife came back to the States and they stopped in to visit me. And I saw this guy.

He was just like a skinny, bald, little guy. Nancy was his wife; Nancy Touil. They just stopped to thank me, and they went back to Nebraska. I stayed in touch with them for years and then lost touch with them.

Q: Every once in a while, one can do something.

MILLER: It just stayed with me. I told my kids, when they were a little bit older, the story. And they still remember it to this day. The message is don't ever give up. The message is that people do matter. We're not just a business of a lot of paper. We are a business of human beings. And even though this episode was infinitesimal in the shape of cosmic things, it meant a lot to the Touils and me.

Q: It does bring up a point, though. I am speaking as a former consular officer, and in various countries I've been, I have had people who were arrested, Americans or relatives of Americans who were arrested. You try to bring this up. You ask your ambassador or somebody to raise the issue, particularly if there is some sort of injustice, perhaps, being done, and the extreme reluctance on the part, "Oh, this could upset our relations." We've got a base agreement or we've got this.

MILLER: I think that's a product of the times. As ambassador, as DCM, I would do it. We never got into it, and I don't want to go back, but when I was a vice consul in Chiang Mai, Thailand, way back 10 years before the time we're talking about, I used to go and visit Americans who were jailed, almost all for narcotics offenses. And there were some pretty sad stories, and I really got into trying to help them.

Most of them were guilty, but to get 30 years for buying a little bit of grass or something? It was a little bit too much. Anyway, I, like you, believe that that was something very important to do, and there's a great story that says it all. It's a George Shultz story, which I think—stop me if you've heard this one before. I was told this by Charlie Hill. George Shultz would have everyone into his office, all new ambassadors into his office—have you heard this story?

George Shultz had a custom—and no secretaries of state did it since then. George Shultz, for many of us, was like God. He was a really good guy. That's who this place (Foreign Service Institute) is named after. He'd have all new ambassadors in to his office, one at a time, as they went out for a five, maybe 10 minute chat. And he'd say, "OK, Mr. Ambassador or Madame Ambassador, you've passed all the tests. You've been confirmed by the Senate and you've passed your security investigation. You've done all

the things to get the position of ambassador, but you have to pass my test. I have one more for you." And he'd take them over in the Secretary's office to where there was this massive globe, and he'd say, "I'm going to spin the globe and I want you to put your hand on your country." Shultz would tell this story, and he said, "Every single one of them failed. But I let them go anyway." Because whenever he spun the globe and he'd say, "I want you to put your hand on your country," they'd always put their hand on the country that they were going out to. His point was your country is the United States.

Q: There's another George Shultz story…

MILLER: It's a great story, and it actually is true.

Q: Another Shultz story was that one of our ambassadors in Africa said, "These are my priorities," and it was this long list and all. All nice things, and at the end, protect American citizens. He got a stinging telegram that came back and said, "That is your number one priority. After that…"

MILLER: The rest of the stuff. I wasn't a consular officer, but I totally, totally agree with that. And I was in jobs where I would go to governments on behalf of American citizens, and make strong demarches and demands. I usually couldn't get them sprung, but I could demand fair and humane treatment, and we got them access to legal counsel.

Q: All right, let's move on to Algeria. Where stood it from the benchmark election that didn't take place?

MILLER: You are really good. I am impressed. Because that all took place on my watch. That was the big event. 1991. Algeria, it was a fledgling democracy with a lot of problems. It was not a particularly close friend of the United States. They were a leader in the third-world, non-aligned movement. Supported some terrorist groups.

Q: They had been helpful in the Iranian crisis.

MILLER: They were very helpful in helping to resolve the Iranian hostage crisis in 1981. And we had extremely important gas and oil interests there. So it wasn't a particularly warm and fuzzy relationship, but it was a relationship borne out of mutual interest. It's funny you say that, because the reason I'm late is I just had lunch with the Algerian ambassador today, and we were talking about then and now. Algeria saw itself as a very prominent member in the Arab League, in the Arab group of countries, in the Islamic conference, in the non-aligned movement, et cetera.

The big Algeria fixation was France, and there was a real animosity there, given the civil war. What happened in 1991 was that they had an election, and it was basically a fairly free and fair election. A party called FIS (Islamic Salvation Front), which was fairly moderate but at the time, everything is relative. We didn't think it was that moderate, then. But in hindsight it really was. It was the Islamic party, and they won. They won the first round of the elections, and the military came in and basically said, "There's not

going to be a second round," because FIS would have won overwhelmingly. It was a big policy dispute for us, in the U.S. government. The French immediately said, "We agree with the military. There shouldn't be a second round."

In the U.S. government, there was a real dialogue, a real difference of opinion between some people who thought, hey, we had promoted free and fair elections. And if you're going to promote free and fair elections, you really have to stick with the outcome, even if it's something we don't like. And as you recall, a number of years later we had the example of Hamas. That was a free and fair election. We just didn't like the outcome.

And so some of us, and this included me, said, "I think we should respect the outcome of the election and do the best we can to work with these guys. Others said this doesn't serve our interest, and we should support the military that's coming in—it wasn't just the military, though it was a large part.

Q: There was also an argument that it was one election, one time. As it was portrayed, if this fundamentalist party came in, there wouldn't be any more elections.

MILLER: That's right. And that was one of the arguments. The way the argument was constructed was if a party wins a free and fair election—it's the Hitler argument. He won the election in 1933 or whatever it was, but then he created this state where you could never have free and fair elections after that. And so the argument was, are you supporting this kind of system?

I didn't think, at the time, there was any evidence that the kind of state would emerge. But at the end of the day, our government decided to go with the French and we supported the cancellation of the second round and the rest is history.

Q: I've interviewed people who go way back, when they used to call it the Second Battle of North Africa between Algeria and France, as far as whether we supported the native Algerians or the French. Was there a battle within the State Department over this?

MILLER: Yes.

Q: And how did it play out? How did it work, the battle?

MILLER: Well, memos. You wrote a memo, an action memo, with a couple of options. I don't remember all the details. I remember our assistant secretary, who was Ed Djerejian at the time, another guy who if you haven't interviewed you'd definitely want to.

Q: Who was this?

MILLER: Ed Djerejian.

Q: Ed, where is he?

MILLER: He's in Houston. I hope you're writing this down. Djerejian. I'll give you his numbers. I just remember feeling passionately that we should respect the outcome of this election. It would probably be unfair, and my memory's not that good anyway, to say who agreed or who disagreed or where the parties lay.

I do remember we wrote an action memo to Secretary Baker, laid out the arguments, including the one time, one vote. And it came out that, after a lot of dialogue, that we would support the decision to cancel the second round.

Q: It sounds like an argument or a lining up of forces. That often happens in an embassy or in the State Department. Essentially, the younger guys, the Foreign Service people come up all full of piss and vinegar and want to do the right thing and all that, and the more senior people say that we've got other fish to fry and we've got to worry about the world and all. There's no real answer to this battle.

MILLER: I think you're exactly right. I think that it often came out that way. It was definitely that way several years later when Bosnia flared up. It was the young guys who wanted to change the policy and a couple of them ended up resigning because the U.S. wouldn't get involved. And the older guys, including Jim Baker and others, said, "We don't have a dog in this fight." Yes, the older you are the more status quo you become. I like to think that there are enough exceptions, because I like to think that I'm not necessarily becoming more status quo as I'm getting older. But we all think very highly of ourselves.

Q: And rightly so.

MILLER: Well, naturally.

Q: Let's talk about Algeria, the dynamics within the country. You have some different, almost tribal groups and all that feel that they are not fully represented. Were these playing themselves out there?

MILLER: No, we were at the national level. There was a million things, the many different, subplots. But I think over time, what I've seen in the State Department is we've got less and less interested in the minutiae of what was going on in country X, just because there was only so many hours in a day and you can only do so much. I remember, I think I told you, when I was in Greece the first time, we focused tremendously on some municipal elections, whereas when I went back 20 years later as ambassador, we probably wouldn't have done a cable on municipal elections. It would have all been public source anyway. So I think times changed us a lot. We got much more constrained by resources. As you recall, the '90s was a really, really rough time, resource-wise, for the State Department. So we always had to be figuring how we were going to cover all kinds of new areas but with the same number of people, or sometimes even less.

Q: Could our people at our embassy get out? This is the era of throat-cutting, wasn't it,

or not?

MILLER: This was right before throat-cutting. Throat-cutting got bad after the election, after 1991. And I left in 1992. It was starting to get bad when I was still head of the office, but it got really bad in the mid-'90s, and I left in '92.

Q: Well, then, moving on to Tunisia.

MILLER: I came in and there was a guy who had been in power forever, and his name was Bourguiba, Habib Bourguiba. And he basically had lost it, his mind.

Q: He was gaga, wasn't he?

MILLER: He was senile. And they pushed him aside, and a guy who led that effort to push him aside was a guy named Ben Ali, and he's still in power. Here we are. I think Ben Ali came in the mid-'80s, and here we are 2010. So that's 25 years later. It's kind of a democracy but it's a strong-man's democracy, and there's not much tolerance, particularly for Islamic groups. And so their human rights record wasn't great. They were a close ally of ours; they supported us. They are real moderate Arabs. And they were someone we could always count on, and I think Morocco and Tunisia were in the same category.

One of the things that happened on my watch that was a big, big deal was when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1991 and then we came back, the first Gulf War. What happened, why it was a big deal, was that the streets got real, real nasty throughout the Arab world. We had to do evacuations, involuntary evacuations, and it was a big deal. At the time—we've gotten much better at this than we were then—we had certain resistance from the embassies. Ambassadors felt that if you evacuated it was a sign of weakness, it was a sign that you had failed. And so we learned a lot of stuff then about how to do evacuations from post that I think are still used today, things that we learned back then, which is now 20 years ago.

Q: Was the PLO still in Tunisia?

MILLER: Yes, the PLO was in Tunisia. They got there in 1982. They didn't really go back—no, they didn't leave Tunisia until after the Paris Peace Process, and there was a little bit of lag. I can't remember—I'd like to say probably 1992. So they were headquartered in Tunis for 10 years.

Q: Were the talks with the PLO what you were allowed at that time? They were allowed or not? They weren't?

MILLER: No, we were not. What happened was we were not allowed to talk to the PLO. The PLO was a terrorist organization. We were not allowed to have direct discussions with them, and we didn't. There were all kinds of other channels where communications could take place, and let someone else talk about that. I was aware of it. It made life difficult, to have a discussion. And again, it wasn't that hard, because the first step—and

this was throughout George Shultz's tenure—the first step was the PLO had to agree to certain things. Renounce terrorism, acknowledge the existence of Israel as a state and accept UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, the two famous U.N. resolutions.

And that was the mantra, and we spent a good deal of the '80s where Arafat would write it on an envelope or say it in English but he wouldn't say it in Arabic, and he was a master at coming up to the line but not quite getting there. This is all before the peace process. This was to get to the starting line. And unless and until you got that, there was nothing to discuss. And then the Oslo process that happened later, that was after they'd gotten to the starting line.

Q: Did you see the PLO as being a disturbing factor in Tunisia or were they pretty well kept under control?

MILLER: Pretty well kept under control. Not like Lebanon. Not at all like Lebanon.

Q: OK, then we turn to Libya.

MILLER: Libya we obviously didn't have any relationship with. Libya was a one-dimension issue and that was terrorism. Remember, this was right after Pan-Am 103 had been blown out of the skies, and we had pretty good evidence after a long time—it wasn't apparent at the start it was the Libyans. We thought it was the …

Q: Syrians.

MILLER: Well, the PFLP-GC, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, under a guy named Ahmed Jibril. We thought, and it's a long story, and it's been written about, but over time, after an extremely painstaking effort, including finding clothes that had been purchased in Malta, and they actually found the detonator—literally a small little thing, a needle in a haystack—they found all this. It was just a fantastic forensic investigation. And the detonators came from a lot that we know the Libyans had, because I think they had given some of these detonators to the IRA. So we could trace all that stuff back. And the clothes we could trace back to where they were bought, and the clothing store owner identified one of the two people who carried out the attack.

After a long while, we were sure it was Libya. Against that backdrop, Lockerbie was the latest of several terrorist attacks by Libya. In 1985, the Libyans had blown up the La Belle disco in Berlin. And several hundred injuries, and I think a couple deaths, including servicemen, U.S. servicemen. And then in 1986, in retaliation for that, we bombed Qadhafi's headquarters and we killed his three-year-old daughter, and he never forgave us for that.

So there was a lot of bad blood there. And again, the Reagan administration, for them Qadhafi was public enemy number one. It was pretty bad. Now, the interesting thing about Libya, from my perspective, is that the Libyans always felt they never really understood us, how to work with the American government. And Qadhafi always felt that

the problem with the Americans was that he just wasn't getting to the right people. He was willing to pay a lot of money to get people to take a message to the White House. He just felt, whether it was the State Department or whatever, but the problem was the medium. It wasn't the message. So he and his colleagues started looking for prominent Americans to carry the message back about how he wanted to have a good relationship and all that kind of stuff, and some of these stories came out. One of the prominent Americans they found was Abe Sofaer, who had been the legal advisor to the State Department. He had retired from that job. And they found a bunch of other prominent Americans.

Q: Billy Carter.

MILLER: Billy Carter was another one. And it developed into a pattern, after a while. These folks would go and try to find people at the National Security Council, Congress, or whatever. They'd go wherever they could. And after a while, I was asked by some high-level people at the National Security Council to be the conduit. In other words, it was getting a little bit disorganized, and we wanted to make sure that we were on message. So whoever came in, of these prominent Americans, they were eventually directed to me. And I started keeping a log of these people. To this day, I'm not going to go into some of these people, because it's never come out and it's for others to do that. I don't know if it's classified or not, but I'm just not prepared to go into it. But there were some very prominent Americans, and as I recall, I think the going fee was about half a million dollars. So you'd take a half million dollars from the Libyan regime, I think it was up front, and you'd promise to try to get the message past.

And this went on for a long time. It became known around the department that Miller had this—I called it my "Wannabe Book." I passed it on after I left. But the Libyans never got it that the problem was over the issues, it wasn't over the messenger.

Q: Were you there during the time when our ambassador to the Vatican …?

MILLER: Yes, Bill Wilson.

Q: He just died quite recently, I think.

MILLER: Yes. I think that happened before I was there, but I know the story.

Q: It was incredible.

MILLER: He was pretty naïve.

Q: In this case, this was somebody who thought, "Well, I can bring peace."

MILLER: He was one of Reagan's real close kitchen cabinet buddies, so I don't know anything of the dynamics, the personal relationship. I got all this second hand; this had happened before I came in. But I think he was just kind of naïve. And you get naïve

people, you know? Just, "I can do it." And, "I succeeded as a used car dealer, so I'm sure I can do delicate diplomacy."

Q: Were we involved at all with military operations against Qadhafi? He was messing around in Chad and elsewhere…

MILLER: We weren't. The French sent troops to Chad. There was a real messy war going on in Chad between a guy named Hassan Habré and Idriss Déby. Déby is still in power. And Habré who had taken refuge in Senegal or some other West African country, was just indicted as a war criminal for some nasty stuff he did. And I don't remember the details, but we were not involved militarily.

Q: Having this area, the Maghreb—there's always a lot of stuff going on in the rest of the Near Eastern Bureau. Arab-Israeli thing, and you had a war going on between Iraq and Iran, I guess.

MILLER: Well, the war was over by '89.

Q: And you did this from when to when?

MILLER: I did it from '89 to '92.

Q: OK, then, well, how about the Gulf War?

MILLER: Again, the Gulf War—our big play on it was what was happening in the streets of those countries.

Q: To keep mobs from…

MILLER: Yes, and it got pretty nasty. I don't remember people being killed. But it got pretty nasty.

Q: Did we feel that the governments were getting the mobs going?

MILLER: No, I think what happened was the governments lost control. The governments in all three countries (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia)—they didn't want to see this kind of action. They were a little bit afraid. It's like the Arab street today, where governments are afraid of the street, and they were a little bit afraid of the street. Again, Saddam Hussein, in much of the Arab world back then, was seen as a real hero because he stood up to the West. People kind of looked the other way that he had invaded Kuwait, a sovereign country, and just destroyed the place and killed a lot of people. That was an Arab country, too. But Kuwait was seen as a bunch of rich guys and not one of the guys on the street. Whereas Saddam Hussein was seen as a man of the people. And he cultivated that image.

Q: Did you get any feel from your countries that they were watching how the Gulf War,

which was a very short war, and there was a lot of technology, and it was a very, from our point of view, a very successful war. Probably poorly done—we didn't finish it off—but did this have an effect on your clients?

MILLER: Yes. What happened was that they were—I can't remember specifically—but they were very on the fence of whether they should support Saddam or not. And it was more a fear for the safety of their own regimes than any kind of strong kinship for Saddam. And they were very fearful of the street. The Arab street really came to prominence then. And it's been very prominent since then, and I think what you see, in much of the Arab world, is a great focus on the street, and what could happen. Unlike other regions and countries, back then you just would call out the military or the police and they'd put it down and that would be it. But these guys didn't want to do that.

Q: Coming from your anti-terrorism job, I would have thought you'd have been, particularly as you're looking at these three countries, looking at them and the rise of fundamentalism. Was this going on?

MILLER: This was. This was big stuff. And you had seen it in Algeria. We were very concerned about it in Morocco. The king was a pretty repressive guy, so he kept a lid on it and arrested Islamists for any kind of small thing. Tunisia, pretty much the same thing. Those were both pretty repressive states. And after the second round of the election was cancelled in Algeria in 1991, it was also a pretty repressive state.

So they wouldn't hesitate to go after and arrest, without trial, Islamic figures who they saw as opposition. What they would hesitate on is the spontaneous or supposed spontaneous riots on the street. They would be much more hesitant about firing on large crowds.

Q: Did the collapse of the Soviet Union have any particular effect on your area?

MILLER: Nothing cataclysmic, other than the collapse of the Soviet Union changed the whole dynamic in the Cold War. The Cold War was over, and the Algerians had a little bit of the gain. The Moroccans and the Tunisians were always very strong pro-West. They never really did much with the Russians, with the Soviets. So I would say probably less so on the area I was covering. The Libyans obviously got a lot of material from the Soviets, but they ended up owing the Soviets a lot of money.

The Libyans were not too good at paying, and part of the reason was they weren't nearly able to pump as much oil out of the ground as they had the capability to do, because their equipment had deteriorated over the years. Their oil industry was really pretty much in tatters, because they couldn't get the replacement parts. A lot of this was Occidental Petroleum, was U.S. companies, and they just couldn't get the replacement parts for it.

Q: This is because of the controls we put on it.

MILLER: Yes, it was the sanctions. We had just an increasing set of sanctions on Libya

that went back to the early '80s, maybe before that. I can't remember.

Q: Did you have any American oil interests that would come to you at all?

MILLER: By the time I came in, they were no longer pressing hard. I'd see occasionally I'd get someone just saying, "As soon as you lighten up, let us know." But by this time, this had been several years of documented terrorism. Oil companies were not coming in, saying, "Oh, Libyan behavior is really not that bad." It was really bad. And so maybe earlier they had done it, but by the time I came in, few companies were coming in to see.

Q: With Libya, were you getting reports about trying to set up nuclear or biological weapons and that sort of thing?

MILLER: The big thing then was chemical weapons, and there was a place where we thought there was a large chemical weapons facility. It was called Rabta. And we got all kinds of special information that talked about Rabta, and I actually led an interagency team out to the Maghreb to brief the Moroccans and the Tunisians and the Algerians about the dangers of Rabta. This was a big, big deal, and until you mentioned it, I had forgotten about this.

It was a very well put together team of various agencies, and I led it, and I remember the meeting with Ben Ali. I don't believe we saw the king of Morocco. I think we probably saw the prime minister or something like that. And I think we saw the president of Algeria. We had some pretty good information about Rabta and about the chemical weapons facilities that they were constructing. We basically exposed it and got the Libyans to shut it down definitively. Shut it down or move it elsewhere, we never knew.

Q: Did you see any light at the end of the tunnel with Qadhafi, that maybe he could be brought around? Or was this just wait him out?

MILLER: I think we all thought he was hopeless. We thought he was just crazy. I remember, a big deal at the time, Barbara Walters—I think she was with 60 Minutes.

Q: A television interviewer of some renown.

MILLER: Yes. You guys know Barbara Walters? Barbara Walters got an interview with Qadhafi, and she came in before, to see me, to get briefed up on Qadhafi. I was just over the moon on this. I get to meet with Barbara Walters and sit down and talk with her. So she came in, and I briefed her on Qadhafi, and what was going on. I really tried to be well prepared. And I was extremely impressed with how prepared she was. She was a real professional. And at the end of talking to me, she says, "Is there anything I can do for you?" And I said, "Yes, I'd love to get a report on what your impressions were like." And she said, "Fine."

And I don't remember if it was she who called me, or one of her associates, but they did call back, after the interview. The interview was on 60 Minutes. And he was just an

enigma. People like to say he's crazy, and maybe he is. I never met him. But he just operated on a different plane from other people, and she found it a pretty curious interview.

Q: Well, then, by '91, you left?

MILLER: '92 I left. '89 to '92.

Q: Then what did you do?

MILLER: Well, I had just been promoted sometime in that period. I think it was just maybe '91 I was promoted. And I was number one on the promotion list. So being number one on the list, you got to pick whatever you wanted. I had never done any long-term training. I always had a little bit of language. What I really wanted to do was I wanted to go to something called the Senior Seminar, which was the most senior thing, very selective, for up-and-coming senior officers. This is now equivalent to a military general—I was made a one-star general equivalent. And this is for the guys who are going to make several stars.

Anyway, so I said I want to do that, and it was in the bag and done. And I was approached by the assistant secretary of the Near East Bureau, Ed Djerejian, the guy who runs the Baker Center now. And he was a good buddy. He and I really liked each other. And he put his arm around me, he says, "Tom, I'm going to spoil your day but I'm going to make your life," or something like that. And he says, "I want you to take over as director of the Israeli and Palestinian office." I had been in that office 10 years before as a desk officer. And I really didn't want to do it. But it's hard to say no to a boss who you respect. So I hemmed and hawed. I went home and talked it over with my wife. She's always been just a super advisor. There's just enough distance where she always has some good thoughts. So I think it was she who came up with the idea. She said, "Well, you're going to do it anyway, because you've got this loyalty thing." She said, "But let's at least get something for it."

So I said, "What have you got in mind?" And she said, "Well, get Ed to promise your next assignment." I said, "Great idea." So I go back to Ed and I said, "I will take the job on one condition, and that is if you will promise me, and I'll give you two choices, that I can either go as DCM, the number two, in Tel Aviv, or as the consul general in Jerusalem." Ed said, "Frankly, this is at the start of the peace process. It's really heavy-duty stuff." He said, "This is actually above my pay grade. I've got to go talk to Secretary Baker about it." So he goes and talks to Baker about it and he comes back and he says, "OK, you've got my word on it." It was a handshake. There's still some personnel stuff, but it was basically, "I give you my pledge that it will happen."

So I said, "Great." So I took the job, and it was a fascinating time. It was the summer of '92. And this was the height of our election, we were going to have an election just a few months later. And Bush was doing really bad. He had done his "No new taxes" pledge that he had broken, and in the middle of all this, he got really pissed off at the Israelis,

because we had given them $10 billion in housing guarantees, and I forget what they did, but it was maybe on settlements. It was something.

Q: It was all settlements, insurance on settlements.

MILLER: But anyway, he got really ticked off, and he decided to suspend the housing guarantees. In other words, to suspend this loan to them. And of course I had just come into the desk, and of course the American Jewish community was really, really upset and up in arms. They were going to help Clinton anyway, but they really got on the bandwagon with Clinton. I think it's Bush's memoirs, though it might be Clinton's, I don't recall. But somewhere I've read that they feel, either the winner or the loser felt that the involvement in the American Jewish community at this critical time, right before the election, was very, very important.

So, anyway, by this time, Baker has gone over to the White House to run the campaign, and Larry Eagleburger is the new Secretary of State. And so I come in, and they basically tell me, "We've got to suspend the loan guarantees," and there was a lot of work behind it, to justify it; a tremendous amount of work with the Congress. And that was the first big project that I got into, and we eventually turned the loan guarantees back on. I'm a little bit sketchy on some of the details here, but it was a big, big deal at the time.

Q: Was the idea behind the whole thing to cut the number of settlements? Because it seems like there's a continuum which goes on today, of promising not to put up anymore settlements and then they put up more settlements.

MILLER: It was a little bit different. There was a lot of work that was done on the ground. Our consulate and others were tracking the housing that was being built, and making sure that none of our money was going to build housing in the territories, settlements. And that was being done. I don't remember all the details, but we were pretty thorough on the ground. And of course there were all these NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) that were also looking at stuff pretty carefully. So the information base was actually pretty good.

Q: Well, how stood, you might say, the various relationships. In the first place, what were essentially your responsibilities?

MILLER: Like any office, anything having to do with the bilateral relationship. I think by this time, we had carved out in our department a separate peace process office. So we got involved in a lot of aspects of the peace process, but we weren't the main driver of the peace process. This was Dennis Ross and Aaron Miller. We worked very closely with them. Any aspects of the bilateral relationship with the Palestinians—it was a very strange kind of thing, because we basically, in the field, had the embassy in Tel Aviv and the consulate general in Jerusalem. And the consulate general in Jerusalem was unlike any other consulate general because it had an independent status. The consul general was the link to the Palestinians. By this time, the Palestinians were moving back. The leadership was moving back to Ramallah.

Q: This is after Madrid, right?

MILLER: Yes, this is after Madrid. So the nexus of action for the Palestinians became through Jerusalem, our consulate general in Jerusalem. So it ran the whole gamut. The military, the intelligence relationships with Israel, were extremely robust. The economic relationship was extremely robust. They were always our biggest aid recipient, but that wasn't tremendously robust because we just wrote them a check, unlike most other aid programs. The whole gamut. The relationship was probably the most intense relationship we had with any country in the world, bar none. I didn't say the biggest, but most intense.

There are a lot of issues out there; a lot of issues. You can take nuclear issues, the stuff they're talking about in New York today at the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty). There's always an Israeli dimension to all of this stuff.

Q: Let's talk about that for a minute. What's the mantra, whatever it is? Everybody knows Israel's got a fairly substantial nuclear arms program, yet we are going after Iran for developing this. How did we treat it at that time?

MILLER: It was not talked about. You just didn't discuss it. It wasn't something we talked about in the bureaucracy, and whenever Arab states wanted to raise the issue—Egyptians, for years, have had the idea of having the Middle East nuclear-weapon free zone—we would always just come up with reasons to shoot it down.

When the peace process got started, one of the things that I ended up spending a lot of time on was we set up five different multilaterals on the peace process. In other words, issue areas, big issue areas, where we got the Israelis and the Arabs all together working on them. One was one water, one was on refugees, one was on economic development. One was on the environment, and there was a fifth one which I will think about in a second. I was asked to head the U.S. side to the environment working group—these were all working groups. And I remember the Egyptians tried, in the environmental working group, they tried to raise nuclear waste as an issue, and it was a backdoor to get the nuclear issue on the table. My instructions were, "Don't go there."

And I remember one meeting—I think it was in The Hague, where we had this working group—and it was a very active thing. We actually did a lot. And the Egyptians brought up the nuclear free zone in the Middle East. And they had a very interesting twist on it. I can't remember very much of the details, and they also had a very good representative, a guy who later became their ambassador to the United States, Nabil Fahmy. And I agreed with him. I agreed with the Egyptians. And this Israelis were just beyond themselves. They said, "How can you?" They saw me as a friend. But the Egyptians, they just had a valid point. I think it was putting an item on the agenda for discussion. And I said, "You know, you can't say you won't even discuss it. You can't say it can't be on the agenda." It was something like that; some procedural thing. And I agreed with the Egyptians. The Egyptians were just beyond themselves. They were so happy. And the Israelis—I remember they had an Israeli delegate who was a friend of mine. He came up and he said,

"Look. You're going to get fired. We're going to go back to the foreign minister on this." And the foreign minister was Peres at the time. He said, "You've really overstepped your instructions." He probably knew my instructions better than I did. And he said, "We're going to complain about you. This is really unconscionable."

Well, I called my immediate boss, a guy named Dan Kurtzer, who's another guy you should interview. Have you interviewed Dan?

Q: I've had one interview with him. He's a great guy. He's up at Princeton.

MILLER: Yes. Well, Dan is a guy who you just have got to spend time with. Dan is also a real good friend. So I called Dan, when I heard this threat, and I said, "Man, you've got to cover my ass. I think the Israelis are really going after me." He says, "Don't worry about it." He says, "You did the right thing. Don't worry about it."

And it wasn't like I was opening up Dimona, which is where the nuclear weapons are. It was like I said, "Yes, you can put this on the agenda." So Dan says, "I've got you covered." Well, sure enough, Shimon Peres calls Warren Christopher, our Secretary of State, to complain about me. Luckily, Dan had gotten up there before, and Dan was always extremely highly regarded. And he had briefed the Secretary on this, and he said, "If you get a call from the Israeli foreign minister, here's the real story." So Christopher gets the call—Dan told this story, later. Christopher gets the call, and he says, "Tom did the right thing. End of subject." And that was the end of it. The Israelis were very sensitive about the issue.

Q: Of course, and not only sensitive, but it does show that there's this operation of "We'll go over your head and we have political clout."

MILLER: Oh, yes.

Q: It has a terribly inhibiting effect on diplomatic matters.

MILLER: Well, the fact of the matter is the Israelis had unbelievably fantastic links everywhere in Washington, at every level, everywhere on Capitol Hill, everywhere on the executive branch. And they were exceedingly effective. Most of my colleagues in the Near East Bureau railed. They just tore their hair out, so frustrated over this. And I just said, "Hey, it is what it is."

Years later, I got a better perspective, even with the Greeks. The fact of the matter is that that's part of our system. And I've always believed it was part of our system. They're not doing anything illegal. And I spent a good deal—probably half—of my career working on the countries that have the two most powerful lobbies in this country, Israel and Greece. And the fact of the matter is that anyone has the right in our democracy to do that.

Q: The Irish, Northern Irish.

MILLER: The Irish were pretty good, too.

Q: It's sort of gone now.

MILLER: Well, they don't have an issue anymore. You've got to have an issue if you're going to be powerful. Israel will always have plenty of issues. And it was very, very interesting, because, as I say, a lot of my colleagues in the Near East Bureau would just tear their hair out and rail against this and say how terrible this was. I always accepted it as part of the dynamic, as part of the system. People are free to organize themselves and lobby and do whatever they want. Neither side was ever doing anything illegal.

Q: I can't help but go back to two things: one, the Liberty...

MILLER: Yes, that was a massive stroke, and the second the AIPAC (American Israeli Public Affairs Committee) guys.

Q: The other one was the Pollard case, Jonathan Pollard.

MILLER: Both valid points. If anyone was surprised that the Israelis spied on us, I sure as hell wasn't. And I think I'll just leave it at that. You can finish the conversation if you want. And the Liberty, where they deliberately attacked and killed a lot of our people—massive screw-up. I don't think…

Q: It doesn't make sense.

MILLER: Well, you know, there's books written about this. The fact that that happened—I mean, I still, until this day, regard Israel as a good friend. I don't particularly like their policies these days. But I think in my mind it runs much deeper than that. But the point is that your point is absolutely accurate. They had unbelievably good connections all over Washington, in every branch of the government. Yes, that was just the way it was.

Q: But as I said, you have to have almost the right attitude of mind. In other words, what's the point of fighting?

MILLER: Well, no, I disagree. I always saw my job clearly as representing and pushing for U.S. interests. I never saw in my job that our interests were 100% parallel. And I saw there was a lot of convergence between what we were trying to accomplish, but there were certain areas that there wasn't convergence, and there were certain areas that we had the same end goal but we had very different ways to get there. Iran is a good case today. And you just had to work this stuff out, and luckily for me, all these things were worked at a much higher level than myself. And every once in a while there were things where we really did clash. We clashed, as I told you in a previous interview, over the Iraq war.

Anyway, as I was saying, we clashed over the bombing of Osirak, of Tuwaitha, in Iraq in

1981. So it is what it is. You do the best you can. I never threw my hands up and said, "Why bother?"

Q: Did you have a problem or duty to get your officers working under you to understand what they were doing—the ocean in which you all were swimming—and not to spend an awful lot of time railing against the tide or something?

MILLER: I think most of the people who were working for me got it immediately. They were savvy people. There was one guy, I remember, the first time I was on the Israeli desk. He was a desk officer who did rant and rave a lot, and just thought this was so useless. I'm not going to say his name, because he actually is still a friend. And he got to be an ambassador later. But I think he was frustrated a lot of the time in the office. And then he did serve most of the rest of his career in Arab countries, where I think it was easier for him.

Q: Did you run across the Arabists in the Middle East? I mean people who were dedicated to the Arab cause?

MILLER: Yes, absolutely. And you could see it very clearly. They fell into gradations. There were some who just vehemently hated everything about Israel and were pretty clear about it. And they retired and worked in organizations and publications where that was pretty clear. There were some who were in the middle of "It's such an unbalanced, such an unfair thing," and the conspiracy theories of the power of the American Jewish lobby. But most of the people I found were professionals who just said, "OK. This is part of the dynamic and you do what you can to work the process, to work the policy." So, yes. But those who had served—we used to have an expression. "Served a long time in the sandbox." You knew those people, and a lot of them were friends. I would say particularly the Gulf countries. It was hard to serve in the Gulf or hard-line Arab states like Syria and others and then come and do Israel, and a couple of people did.

I remember one guy who did, who was a friend. And I'm sure you've talked to him. If you haven't you should. It was Ryan Crocker.

Q: We're working on him.

MILLER: Oh, yes, we talked about this before. Ryan came back. He was our last ambassador in Baghdad, just a phenomenally talented person. Ryan came back during one tour—he had spent his entire career outside of Washington in the Arab world. It was all Near East stuff. And at one tour, he was deputy director of the Israeli-Palestinian office, the one that I was director of. I think this was several years before I was director. And I just remember talking to Ryan. It was a hardship post for him. It was tough.

Q: What were the main issues? In the first place, what did you think of the Palestinians, Arafat and company? Did you feel that this was an effective group, or what?

MILLER: No, I never met Arafat, and so this was all hearsay from people who dealt with

him. It was an old guard group. It was a group that was more concerned about battling among themselves. And they came in with a great deal of hope and promise, and they never failed to disappoint. And I think that became clear, and that became clear to the next generation of Palestinians. And I think, at a certain point in time, with all of the near misses and Arafat writing on the backs of envelopes and doing this—it became pretty clear that Arafat just could not come across, could not make it across the finish line. And that it had to be some others who would finally get to yes.

Q: But as you were watching this, were you—the whole organization, the State Department—concerned about the Palestinians—they had this militant wing—really turning into a cohesive dangerous group? I'm not saying this well, but in other words, of them turning into what had been, with the exception of some nasty terrorists and some ineffective leaders, sort of a passive group, I understand. But then all of a sudden becoming much more the Arab street…

MILLER: Their entire mission changed, and this is something that we've seen around the world, not just with the Palestinians. But to go from basically a liberation army or a liberation force or whatever you want to call it. If you were in Israel you would call it "terrorist force." But to go from armed conflict—to running something, demands a very, very different set of skills, a very different mindset, and it's not coincidental that a lot of these groups, where you had a leader of the military, a leader of the liberation, the war of liberation, they can't make that transition. I'm wrestling with that right now in my current job, because one of our clients is South Sudan. And they have been fighting wars on and off for 50 years. They are really good at military stuff, but they're going to vote on a referendum for independence in seven months, and they've got to prove to the world they're not going to become the next failed state. And that's a totally different set of skills, running an operation, setting up municipal services and police services, and this and that, is very, very different than waging a war, or waging a conflict or carrying out terrorist actions.

This group had great difficulty—they're still having great difficulty 20 years later—doing that. And it's not that there aren't people who can do it. It's just that the first generation is refusing to give up power and to bring in that next generation of people who could do it. That's not particular to the Palestinians. That's a phenomenon we see around the world.

Q: If we want the Palestinians to be effective—well, could we even think of a Palestinian state during the time you were there?

MILLER: Sure. We had great hopes. Peace was just around the corner. The next formula Arafat would say yes to. Hindsight is real cheap on all this stuff. Hindsight, you can get very cynical and my buddy Aaron Miller, who I've told you about, just wrote an article in Foreign Policy—basically, after working 20 years in the peace process; he was there at the start—saying, "It's over. There's nothing to do." I couldn't disagree with him more but at the time, we thought and we kept on thinking that just a little bit more here, just a little bit more there, just a little bit more of a nuance here…

And a lot of this culminated in Bill Clinton's pretty frenetic efforts over Christmas of 2000, after the election, to try to get a deal between Arafat and Barak, and Arafat walked away from it. But that's all history. At the time, going into this, we thought there was great promise.

Q: How did you view the Israeli government when you were there in this job?

MILLER: Well, the government when I was there—Rabin had just come into office. So we were very hopeful, we were very optimistic. Rabin—I think he was shot in '95, if I remember right. And that's when you started sobering up and getting more realistic. You remember that. And I left in '94. So it was Rabin. We thought we could do a lot of business with him. We actually did do a lot of business with him. There was a good deal of promise. And things were looking pretty good, so when he was assassinated the next year, in '95, the bottom fell out. We thought we had a real partner that we could deal with, and that he could deliver.

Q: What was your view of the religious element in Israel? This seems to be the spoiler or something.

MILLER: Well, the spoiler or the necessary ingredient, depending on if you want to look at the glass half full or half empty. Significant players in the political dynamic—and the Israeli political system is one that you have to have coalitions. No party can ever get anything close to the 61 votes it needs in the 120-seat Knesset. So, yes, you often had to put together these wide coalitions of several parties, and you basically couldn't do it without the religious parties. And that became a problem, because you had to make deals with the religious parties, and they got all kinds of special favors and dispensations. All kinds of economic benefits, exemption from military service, this, that—the list goes on and on and on. And that all came out of the deal-making that you needed to get these guys on board. And it was extremely expensive to the Israeli state, which means it was extremely expensive to the U.S., because we were paying several billion dollars a year for it.

Q: How stood immigration to Israel during the time you were there? Was it the Russians?

MILLER: The Russians were coming in in tremendously large numbers. Massive amounts. The wall had fallen. It took a little while to get this thing organized, but once it was organized, the Russians were coming in, I think, hundreds of thousands a year. We also worked—I think this was earlier. A fascinating thing—I think this was earlier, when I was on the desk, involving the Falashas, the lost tribe…

Q: Coming out of Ethiopia.

MILLER: Coming out of Ethiopia; black people who said they were the lost tribe. And, you know, it was never really proven but they said, and Israel accepted them, because that's been the Israel policy.

Q: The Russian Jews were smuggled out.

MILLER: Yes, it was a big smuggling operation, so you might be right. Anyway. But there was a hell of a lot of Russians.

Q: In the first place, did you have anybody on your team who had been a Moscow hand? Because I would think that they might be Jewish, but they're Soviets. And they're Russians. And they're a different breed of cat.

MILLER: The answer to your question—I mean, remember what our job was. This was the Israeli-Palestinian office. Our job wasn't to resettle these folks. That was the Israelis' job. Our job wasn't to screen them for intelligence value. Frankly, they didn't have much.

Q: Yes, I wouldn't think.

MILLER: Our job wasn't to help them readjust to Israel or anything else. That was all the Israelis' job. Our job—this was Jackson-Vanik Amendment—was to help them get out. We were a big believer in pushing very hard on the Russians to allow emigration. And literally, it was a lot of people who came into Israel.

Q: I would think if you're looking at Israel, and all of a sudden you've got this big, maybe not indigestible mass, but a whole different group of people coming in, a whole different way of looking at things…

MILLER: Right.

Q: Coming out of a communist country, Russia, under the intolerance of the Russians…

MILLER: Well, it became part of the Israeli political mosaic. It wasn't our problem. It was an Israeli problem. And it led to the rise of parties based upon it; Sharansky and those guys. And the Russians became a powerful force in the Israeli political dynamic. And they had to accommodate the Russians, as they do today.

What I remember is a lot of the Russian population over time, particularly second generation, they integrated very well in Israel. A lot of them ended up coming to the U.S. For many, Israel was just a way station. Those who couldn't make it directly to the U.S., they'd go to Israel, hang out in Israel for a while, and then get over to the U.S. And if you don't believe me, just take a taxi in New York any day you want.

Q: During the time you were there, was Sharon a factor?

MILLER: The first time, Sharon was a major factor, which we talked about. He was defense minister. The second time, no. He came back as the agriculture minister, and I can't remember when that was. He was basically cast into political oblivion after Sabra and Shatila and the Barak Commission. They basically said he was complicitous. I think

he was still in the Knesset, but he just receded into the background. I don't think he had any further positions in the Likud party for some time.

At some time, at some point, they rehabilitated him, and he became agriculture minister. I want to say late '80s. And what happened, as agriculture minister, is he became the point guy on settlements. And this he rode back to out of the political wilderness and back into the political center stage. And it was there where he became the darling of the settlers' movement. It was only later that he, as head of Likud, did the Sinai evacuation—or, I should say, the Gaza evacuation—and that was a big, big, tremendously big deal. It was only when he was prime minister and then Kadima later, that he got seriously engaged in the peace process. And now, even though he still lies in a coma, as he has for years, he would be, in hindsight, regarded as someone who was pretty serious about the peace process. Whereas, if you had said that to me 25 years ago, I would have said you were crazy.

Q: Maybe this might be a good place to stop. Is there anything more we should cover about this particular time?

MILLER: Let me just tell you one interesting story, because it says a lot about a lot of stuff, plus it's a neat story, plus we have an audience. One of the things I was asked to do—the Israelis trusted me and liked me a lot—and one of the things that Israel places an extremely high premium on is they will never leave a person on a battlefield, even the dead. They absolutely insist upon recovering all bodies. So in the war in 1982, six Israelis had never been recovered, only six. And three of them were missing from a tank battle. One was a dual citizen; he was American as well as Israeli. His name was Zachary Baumel.

One guy named Ron Arad was shot down, and he was allegedly taken alive by his Hezbollah and ended up in Iran and tortured and probably killed. Anyway, Israel was very desirous—I think this is 1991—to see if there could be any progress on recovering the remains of these people, and what happened to him. So I was asked to lead a team over to Lebanon, and we went into the Bekaa Valley, which was total no man's land. This is where Abu Nidal was based—this was terrorism central of the world, and Americans didn't go there.

So we got in touch with the Syrians, and the Syrians said, "Yes, we'll facilitate this. We'll help out." The Syrians were trying to get on better terms with us. I had a couple of guys along with me from the Congress, a couple of congressional staffers, and we went over there, through Damascus, into the Bekaa Valley. Probably the only American government officials anywhere near there any time around this time period. It was a couple days, and we talked to a lot of people and we felt some of the people we were talking to were probably Abu Nidal, which, at the time, was scary as shit. We never succeeded, but it was an absolutely fascinating experience for me, and I think an example of the very close relationship we had with the Israelis.

Q: Was there a basic change? You were in the job between when Bush left and Clinton

came in, weren't you?

MILLER: Yes. The last couple of months. Well, remember, the Bush administration had brought you the Madrid peace process. It was Bush and Baker who opened up the whole process. And they deserve the credit for it. Clinton comes into office, and his effort was to build on it. He thought this was great, and so he set up all the mechanisms in establishing this peace process team. So, no, it wasn't really anything different. This was pretty much continuity. What Bush and Baker had done was excellent, and Clinton thought it was good, and let's just build on it. And so the time that I was there was really the real golden age of the peace process.

Q: Today is the 21st of June 2010, first day of summer, with Tom Miller. And Tom, you just finished talking about business in the Bekaa Valley. And now what?

MILLER: Well, and then after that we were talking a little bit about the peace process and about the whole peace process got started. And I was director of the office of what was then called Israel and Arab-Israeli Affairs, which is Israel and the Palestinians. I was director of that office, which was about the coolest office director job in the State Department at the time. And it was the change in administration. Bush lost; Clinton came in, the peace process had started under Bush and Baker, with the Madrid conference and all, and you were asking how Clinton changed things. And the answer is, he didn't. He basically saw that this was a good thing, and decided to build on it. This was an extremely euphoric period in American diplomacy working in the Middle East.

Things were going great. Rabin was the prime minister of a government we could work with. Arafat was obviously still around. He would come up, as we saw subsequently, many times later, he'd come up close to saying yes and then always say no. It was very, very frustrating. But I'm getting ahead of myself. We set up all kinds of infrastructure, mechanisms, working groups, peace process teams at the time, and there was a great deal of optimism, that by 1995, peace would break out in the Middle East, and everyone would be happy and go home winners.

One of the interesting things, obviously the main thing, was the Palestinians and Israelis. Obviously peace had been made with Egypt in 1979, but also peace with Jordan, and that was a big, big deal at the time. King Hussein was around. And then something else we did, which was intended to build peace throughout the region, was we set up five what we called multilateral working groups, to work on key areas of controversy, key issue areas.

I headed the U.S. delegation to the environmental working group. And you say, "Well, this has got to be win-win," but actually it, like everything else, got very controversial. We did a bunch of useful things to get environmental practices throughout the region adopted, and the basic idea here was our message, and the message of the rest of the West, the Europeans, et cetera, was we were willing to put substantial funding into this. And the message to the Arabs was, "You've got to do business with Israel." And that was a useful way of building peace.

Q: Tom, I wondered, did you have any hand in the matter or know how it was dealt with, with the recognition of Israel by Jordan? I don't think I've had anybody talk about the actual—you know, Hussein had been talking to the Israelis for years. But how did that come about?

MILLER: Well, the short answer is that I was not directly involved in that. I was close to the people who were directly involved. By this time, we had set up a peace process team consisting of Dennis Ross and Aaron Miller. And Dennis is still around, still in this administration. Aaron has gone on to the Wilson Center and has published some good books. This was always part of the quid-pro-quo, was that recognition, peace, what have you. And there had been discussions with the Jordanians, between the Jordanians and the Israelis, over many years. This goes back to the '70s, and there are stories now that have come out about people wearing disguises and meetings and all that kind of stuff.

But it turned out, that wasn't that hard. Making peace between Jordan and Israel wasn't that difficult. It was to the interest of both sides. King Hussein just had to cover his bets in the Arab world. And remember, in 1970, he had almost been overthrown during Black September by the Palestinians, because there were more Palestinians in Jordan than there were Jordanians. It was something that, in terms of heavy lifting in the Middle East peace process, was probably one of the easier ones.

Q: Well, how did the environmental, aside from the nuclear thing, how did it go?

MILLER: Pretty good. All the working groups actually went pretty well. I remember water—water and the environment, we worked very closely together. Water is a critical issue in the Middle East. On the environmental side, we came up with a number of feasibility studies, different things, to get the countries of the region more environmentally sensitive. None of these things ever got to the stage where there were large amounts of money that were going in. That was the premise, and probably would have happened if they had continued. But the intifada started. First, the intifada started in 1997, and that was the end of working groups and the peace process, and the rest is history.

Q: How did the intifada, how did it hit you all?

MILLER: Like a ton of bricks. There was always frustration on the part of the Palestinians, that things were not moving quickly enough, that they were never going to get back territory. At the time, the kinds of things that even a right-wing government like the Netanyahu government now, are just conceding. None of that stuff was conceded at the time. And I was well gone by then. By the time of the intifada—which I believe was '97, I was in my third year in Athens. I left the Israeli desk in the summer of '94, and I went out to Athens.

Q: Well, let's cover the period you were dealing with. Were there any other developments? I mean, you went up on these negotiations, or getting acquaintances or working together or something? Was that going on at that time?

MILLER: Yes, what was happening then was it was multidimensional diplomacy. There were so many different negotiations. There were so many different interactions between Arabs, Israelis, outsiders like us, the Europeans, what have you. And a lot of the stuff that was set up, that exists today—things like, it wasn't called the quartet, but the idea that we'd take the lead in the peacemaking, the Europeans would pay a lot of money to help support it; somehow the UN had to be involved, somehow the Russians had to be involved—all that kind of stuff came out of this time period.

Q: Was Norway and the Scandinavian countries, were they trying to take an active role at that time? Because they had initiated this, in a way.

MILLER: Well, the secret talks had happened in Norway. One thing that I found—and I've done a lot of work with the Scandinavian countries on various issues—is they're pretty modest. They don't insert themselves. They make themselves available, and they're cool in that way. They don't want to be seen as being pushy. And so the Norwegians facilitated the talks that led to the breakthrough that led to Madrid, but they didn't insist upon a big role afterwards. They were much more comfortable. They had a peace research institute. They do a lot of stuff, quasi-governmental, and they are much more comfortable being called upon than inserting themselves.

Q: You left this job there—it was really a desk, essentially—when?

MILLER: In the summer of '94. I think I left it in July of '94, maybe August of '94, and I went over to Athens as DCM.

Q: Were you seeing any change during this period, of the Syrians? Assad has been pretty consistent in saying no, basically. But how did you read the Syrians during that time?

MILLER: Pretty constant. Pretty consistent. Pretty absolute on what their bottom line was. There was always this schizophrenia towards Syria by us, by the Israelis. In some ways, the Syrian track was the easiest one to solve. And in some ways, it was extremely difficult. Basically, the Syrians wanted Golan back, and over time, where the Golan in 1967 had been very strategic territory, because you had artillery and the weaponry, then, was very dependent on the geography, over time this weaponry developed so that the geography became less important. And so the discussion became less of the commanding heights, where you could stick artillery and rain it down on settlements, Israeli settlements, or Israeli kibbutzim and stuff like that. It was more a question over the Sea of Galilee, and that's where it's hung up today.

The Sea of Galilee—as I said before, water is exceedingly important in this negotiation. It's extremely important. People don't really understand that. And the Israelis insisted upon having control over the Sea of Galilee. They were petrified that the Syrians could just cut them off. And as you all know, water flows down, except for the Nile, which flows up. And so he who is more northern has tremendous control. So Turkey basically calls the shots over most water in the Middle East, if they want. And so to this day, it's

more of a water thing than it is a commanding heights geography thing.

We dabbled back and forth. And I think that was throughout the Clinton years. Back and forth—let's just do the Syrian thing quickly, and that will be an impetus for the Palestinian track, which is much, much more complicated. And then the Syrian thing wasn't available to do. It just wasn't there. So we moved off of it. And that's what's happened since then. And then Assad, Senior—Hafez al-Assad—died, and his son took over, and we thought there might be opportunities there but not really. And that's now 15 years that have gone on since then. It's not a hard one to solve. It never has been, whereas the Palestinian thing, with refugees, with Jerusalem, with settlements, with God knows what else, that's really difficult.

Q: Is there something behind both the Israeli and Syrian side that makes it hard to solve, even though there probably are answers?

MILLER: Well, on the Syrian side, they have to get back every square inch of territory they lost. And that's never changed. They have to get back everything. On the Israeli side, it's vacillated. It has vacillated, depending on who's in the government. And the fact that the Turks were the latest to take the lead on trying to facilitate an agreement, which is off the table these days because of subsequent events… It's doable. It's all doable. But the underlying atmosphere has got to be OK.

Now, you know, what the Israelis have always been interested in, and I forgot to mention this, is the Syrians want their land back and the Israelis want water, want access to the water, and the Israelis also want the Syrians to stop supporting all these groups that are real hard-line anti-Israel, Hezbollah, Hamas, all the Iranian stuff. All of that, or a lot of it, is based in Damascus, and that's always been the card that the Syrians have retained, and said, "We can make life miserable for you unless and until. So we can make the lack of peace, the absence of peace, cost you." And that's always been part of the equation. And I don't think Syria is entirely a free agent on this, because just to turn it off, after all these years of ideological fervor and support, that's hard to do, even in a fairly totalitarian society.

Q: How about the politics during the time you were dealing with them, the politics within Israel?

MILLER: There was a great deal of euphoria. Rabin had just come into office. People were very optimistic. People thought, "Here is this old warrior, who is willing to take the risk for peace." And as we learned, subsequently, not everyone agreed with him, including the guy who killed him. But there was a great deal of optimism at the time. It's really hard to describe that, now, after 15 years of a lack of optimism. But at the time, people were really thinking that there will be comprehensive peace in the Middle East, it will spur economic development, all kinds of win-win formulations. And, as I say, that collapsed.

Q: Well, then, so '94, '93, you left?

MILLER: ’94. I left in the summer of ’94.

Q: So you’re off to be DCM?

MILLER: I’m off to be DCM in Athens. What had happened—I think I told you the story—my arm had been twisted to take this job as head of the Israeli-Palestinian office, because I really had wanted to do something else. And that was to go to the Senior Seminar. But I had made a deal with my boss, the assistant secretary, a guy named Ed Djerejian, that I could name my next assignment if I took this job. And so I had wanted to be either consul general in Jerusalem or the number two in Tel Aviv, which was a logical follow-on. Both good jobs. And what happened was I was taking the elevator one day—the lesson here is State Department elevators are really important, because that’s where things get done.

I was taking the elevator one day, and I ran into an old friend who was the deputy assistant secretary in the European bureau. This was Mary Ryan. You remember Mary? She was a wonderful lady, one of the most senior people in the Foreign Service over the last 50 years. She died a couple of years ago. And she says, “Tom, have you ever thought about going back out to Athens?” I had been political officer there in the mid-‘80s. I said, “No, I hadn’t.” She said, “As DCM, as deputy chief of mission?” And she said, “Well, think about it, and there will be a lot of competition, but you’ve got my support if you want to do it.” She was the DAS, the deputy assistant secretary, who did Greece, Turkey, Cyprus.

So I went home, and I always had a deal with my family, that on outside assignments, they had a big say. So I went home and I said, “OK, guys, here’s the deal. We could do Jerusalem, we could do Tel Aviv, or we could do Athens.” Well, my kids had spent two really wonderful years in Athens in elementary school, and they said, “Athens.” And my wife said, “Athens.” So being the dutiful, loyal, submissive guy that I am, I went back and said to Mary, “I’ll throw my hat in the ring for Athens.” I’m not giving up on the other two, which I had in my back pocket. Well, I’ll spare you all the details, but it was one of these State Department shootouts. I got Athens.

Q: Yes, I’m surprised you did, because…

MILLER: Well, I had Greek, and I had served there before, so it wasn’t like there were 70,000 people. But there was some serious competition for that job. And it was pretty highly sought after. So we got Athens, and I went out there as the number two in August of ’94.

Q: And you served there until when?

MILLER: ’97. For three years.

Q: Three years. Who was the ambassador?

MILLER: Tom Niles. He had arrived a year before me. Tom was one of the most senior Foreign Service officers—you remember the name, don't you?

Q: Tom's first job overseas was a vice consul in my consular section.

MILLER: You've got to be kidding me.

Q: In Belgrade, yes.

MILLER: This is really incestuous. Anyway, Tom was a great guy. He had been the assistant secretary for Europe. He had been ambassador to the EU. He was a very senior guy. And so he had come out to Athens the year before, and he stayed my whole time. We left pretty much together. Can I tell one more story? This is a good one.

Q: Sure.

MILLER: This is a good one. I was doing peace process stuff in '93. It was November 15, 1993. And I went to Cairo for—I think it was multilateral, the environmental working group. I went to Cairo for some meetings. And I had just gotten the Athens DCM job. I had just been paneled into the job in Athens. So I arranged with Tom, coming back from Cairo, to stop in Athens for a couple of days on the way back. It was all set up. So it's November 16. I had gone out and done a couple days' work in Cairo. It's November 16, about midnight, and I get a call from Tom, who I didn't really know that well. I mean, I kind of knew him. He had selected me.

And he says, "Don't come to Athens." I said, "Well, hold on. It's a TWA plane." TWA used to be an airline. "And we're stopping in Athens, so it's not any…" He says, "Don't get off the plane." And my first thought was, "This guy doesn't want me in the job. I'm toast before they even put me in the toaster." So I don't get off the plane. I literally got on in Cairo, stopped in Athens for refueling for an hour or so, stayed on the plane, and came back to Washington. He said, "As soon as you get back to Washington, call me from a secure phone and I'll explain." We stop in Athens, and I can read Greek, and they are distributing newspapers, and the headlines of this thing are "CIA Agents Exposed in Athens." I can't acknowledge that this happened, but the story was that a couple of people dressed in disguises had been arrested by the Greek police with their disguises on, and exposed as CIA agents, and they were booted out of the country. And Tom Niles had just arrived three weeks before. He was called down to the Foreign Ministry and read the riot act.

And I called him when I got back, and it turns out that what he was doing was that he knew this was happening. If I had showed up—and Athens is like this really gossipy place—if I had gotten off the plane right after these guys were arrested, it would have totally, totally blown me out of the water for my whole tour there.

Q: And also the date was not great.

MILLER: Oh, November 17th, yes. That was the other thing. November 17th was the anniversary of the uprising of when the police in the junta opened fire on a lot of students and killed a lot of students in 1974. And so every November 17th there would be a big demonstration, always in the embassy, throwing bottles and causing a lot of damage. So yes, that was just coincidental.

Anyway, it turns out that Tom was protecting me, was helping me a lot. Because if I had gotten off the plane—and my first tour in Athens, some of the left-wing press had said I was CIA and stuff like that. So I was pretty known quantity around there. If someone had seen me in Athens, it just would really have been bad news. So it was very fortuitous that I didn't get off the plane. Anyway. Back to 1994.

Q: OK. So then, you did get out there.

MILLER: I did get out there.

Q: And you were there for three years.

MILLER: Right.

Q: What was the political situation in Greece at the time?

MILLER: Well, Andreas Papandreou had just come back into office, and he was a force to be reckoned with. He was a left-wing socialist. He played the American card very skillfully. He was the son of the prime minister, and his son now, Andreas's son, is now the prime minister. So you have three lines, grandfather, father and son. He had really made himself in the United States. He was chairman of the political science department at Berkeley. Really, he established himself.

Q: He had served in…

MILLER: Served in the U.S. Navy, that's right, during World War II. Married an American from Minnesota. And so he felt he knew America better than we did, and he would constantly use that. He would whip up, for very populist, demagogic reasons, real frenzies about America being responsible for this or that problem. He would be externalizing all kinds of stuff. And he saw himself as a romantic socialist. He tried in a way that didn't work, to broker peace between us and Libya in 1984. You might remember that, with Mitterrand. Anyway, he had been prime minister from 1981 to '88 or '89. And then he lost. And then he came back into office.

So he was this really serious, serious heavyweight in Greek politics, who was back in office. He was also a notorious womanizer. He had dumped his first wife, married a flight attendant for Olympic Airlines, who was something else.

Q: She was the original Barbie, wasn't she?

MILLER: She was something else. I got to know her well, and I'll tell you that story later. But when he went into the hospital, never to emerge again, she was calling me. This was in '96. We got to know both of them very, very well, much more than your typical DCM and prime minister stuff. But yes, he was a force to be reckoned with.

Q: Outside of dealing with the Greeks and the Turks, did we have any particular issues at the time?

MILLER: Again, the closer you were to it, the more humongous it seemed on the big scope of things. There was the Cold War, and everything was under the optic of the Cold War. Greece was part of NATO, but Papandreou saw himself as having a special relationship with the Soviet Union. They did gas deals. They did all kinds of stuff. And it was irritating for us that a NATO ally would be this close to the Soviets, and he thought this was a way for Greece to punch well above its weight. And there was a great deal of hostility between Papandreou and the Reagan administration. He comes back in office, it's the Clinton administration. I think there was an attempt on both sides to have a better relationship, but we had a number of outstanding issues. The Cold War was over by then. And that left Papandreou a little bit a drift, geostrategically.

We had issues over the bases. Some of that—well, most of it was over by the time I got back, because we had had four major bases, which were a source of massive contention in the '80s. By the time I got back, we had closed three of them. And the fourth one is still around today. That's at Souda Bay in Crete. And it's still very, very critical. We had issues over terrorism, big issues over terrorism. There was a group in Greece called November 17th, which first struck in 1975, when it killed, assassinated, the CIA station chief on December 21, 1975.

Q: Richard Welch?

MILLER: Richard Welch. And throughout the '80s, as other terrorist groups in Europe had been rounded up—Red Brigades, Baader-Meinhof, and Accion Direct—November 17th, there was never any arrests. There were never any penetrations. They just continued to kill, and very, very deliberatively, not overstretching themselves, not doing spectacular all the time. And they basically carried out terrorism for 25 years, from '75 to 2002. 27 years. And there were five people at the embassy who were killed, including my closest friend, the guy who I had gone through Greek training with before my first tour in 1984. He and I were a two-person class for 10 months, and he was the military attaché. He was killed on June 28, 1988. I had left. I think I told you that story before.

So this was very personal for me. And Niles, the ambassador, said, "OK, knowing how much you know about this"—I had been the counterterrorism coordinator at the embassy when I was a political officer. He said, "You go ahead and take this and you've got my support fully." And he was extremely supportive. So I coordinated the different agencies in the embassy and our efforts to try to use carrot and stick with the Greeks, to get them to be more active on the anti-November 17th front. There were also all kinds of terrorist

groups that we felt were using Athens as a safe haven. When I was in the counterterrorism office we would get rumblings of this periodically, and go to Greece. Greece is an extremely porous territory. If you look at the coastline of Greece, I think including islands, it's a bigger coastline than the entire United States, if you include all the islands. So it was hard to police.

And I think most of us who worked the subject for years felt it just can't be this much ineptness. There has to be some Greek government complicity. But it was more an intuitive feeling than any hard evidence. As it turned out, we never found any evidence of that. When the group was finally broken up in 2002 and we got most of the story, we never found any evidence of Greek government complicity. It doesn't mean it wasn't happening, it just means we never found any evidence of it.

So that was a real, real big issue for us. As I said, there were five people at the embassy killed. We had the maximum security package for a lot of people. I think at that point, it was the most expensive security program in Europe. A big, big source of contention. Greece and Turkey were always at loggerheads with each other. That was a big source of contention. Both of them being NATO allies, both of them being good friends of ours. And we got pulled into refereeing between them. And things would sometimes get real, real bad, usually in the Aegean, where they would conduct overflight exercises, or exercises with their air forces, and they would get very close to each other and do all kinds of things that would irritate the other. We had a real crisis in 1996 over a small island of land right off the coast of Turkey in the Dodecanese islands called Imia.

What had happened was a Turkish journalist got involved, and a bunch of Turkish journalists went and planted the flag and said, "This is a Turkish island." And of course, for Greece that was tantamount to a declaration of war. So the entire Greek navy, or most of the Greek navy, starts in that direction, and there's aircraft on both sides, at very high speeds. It got pretty ugly, and it looked like they were really going to go to war. And we got very involved at the embassy, but more importantly, our Secretary of State got very involved. And I'm just trying to think—I think this was still Christopher, and Dick Holbrooke, who was assistant secretary for Europe, got very involved. And of course we were working the phones throughout the night. We got both sides to deconflict and calmed that one down.

And they didn't go to war. At the time, Papandreou was in the hospital, so his acting was a guy named Costas Simitis, who took over for him later. And Simitis did the right thing. He thanked us, and he got blasted in Greece for thanking us. He had just come into office, and he just said, "Thanks for your help." And of course, my friend Richard Holbrooke made a statement along the lines of, "Just another example of while Europe slept, the United States was doing aggressive diplomacy, and we resolved this." It pissed the hell out of the Europeans, but he's been doing that for years. Anyway, that was an issue. Cyprus was a big issue. It had been 20 years before that the Turks had invaded, and they're still on the island today.

Q: Did you get at all involved in the Cyprus thing?

MILLER: I did. But I did much more a couple of years later with Holbrooke—I'm getting ahead myself. But in 1997, my tour in Athens was coming to a close, and Holbrooke had just negotiated the Dayton peace accords to stop the war in Bosnia and was really flying high, for good reason. Holbrooke was asked by President Clinton to be the presidential envoy for Cyprus, which was going to be a part-time job. And of course Holbrooke needed someone to do the full-time job, so he calls me up and says, "I want you to be the Special Cyprus Coordinator." Again, another example of one where I really didn't want to do it. I had another job lined up. But it's really hard to say no to Dick Holbrooke, particularly when Madeleine Albright, who was then the Secretary of State, sends me a message saying, "Jeez, Tom, I sure hope you'll take this job." So I took the job and did that for two years. So I got deeply involved in it.

Q: We'll come back.

MILLER: We'll come to that.

Q: What about the political parties, was it PASOK?

MILLER: PASOK and New Democracy.

Q: What was your reading on them?

MILLER: Well, I had left Greece when PASOK was in power, and I came back when PASOK was in power. New Democracy was in power during Bush I, some of Bush I. A very, very skillful guy, who still is alive, though I think he's about 90-something, 92—I see him every once in a while, when I still go back to Greece—named Mitsotakis was the prime minister. His daughter was the mayor of Athens, and just lost recently, I think last year, for the leadership of the party. And then she got booted out of the party just a couple of months ago, when she voted for the debt package with PASOK. They kicked her out of the party.

Anyway, Mitsotakis was always a close friend of the U.S., kind of right of center, but not crazy right or anything like that. A very sensible guy; a guy who had very good instincts in making peace with Turkey. And he always was out ahead of the Greek population on that. Good ideas on Cyprus. An easy guy to work with. And a guy who I saw, when I was DCM, and when I was ambassador. I used to go over and just see him privately, quietly, just to get advice, just to listen to him on that kind of stuff, because I valued what he had to say.

Q: How did we view the Greek army at that time? Were they a political force?

MILLER: No. What had happened in Greece is after the junta, the army was totally discredited as a political force. Very, very different than the army in Turkey. And they didn't try to play in politics at all. They weren't particularly that strong as an army, either, as a military. But they stayed strictly out of politics.

One of the most defining periods in modern Greek history was the junta, which all took place before my first tour. Basically, you're dealing with the residue of the junta period today, and that the military was very discredited. And they never have had a political role since then. Civil liberties, in the extreme, were held in a real high premium. For instance, a university is sacrosanct. During the junta, the military had gone in and shot students and done all kinds of terrible things. That was November 17th, 1973. And as a result of that period, people made universities sacrosanct. No one is allowed, police are not allowed, to carry weapons, military. No one is allowed. So I would go and visit universities and meet with students, and my bodyguards were not allowed to be armed. It was an issue. We just agreed to look the other way. My bodyguards did come, and they did have their weapons, but they just kept them hidden. So the Greek military is just not a player in political life at all.

Q: Was the American Congress still a major factor?

MILLER: Yes.

Q: Because Greece, for those who might not know, Greece is second to Israel. Next to the Israeli lobby, the Greek lobby, politically, in the United States, is the most effective.

MILLER: I would agree with that. And I have one unique claim to fame, and that is I spent probably half of my career working on the countries with the two most powerful lobbies in this country. It's a very interesting dimension, because most people in the State Department don't think that the lobbies should have so much power. But when I was around, they looked at the lobbies as an irritant over the making of foreign policy. And I've always considered the lobbies part of American political life. Whether you like them, whether it's the Israeli lobby or the Greek lobby, they're strong, they're powerful, they're well-organized, because they have taken the time and the resources to do so. There's nothing Machiavellian, there's nothing sinister or illegal here. But a lot of people in the foreign policy establishment would ascribe very sinister motivations and all. I've just always felt you deal with them. They are a player, like there are other players and they have a right to be a player.

The irony of that—as I say, I spent more time working on Israel and Greece than any other two countries in the world—is interesting.

Q: During the time you were DCM, what was the Greek lobby, the Greek influence in the United States, pushing towards?

MILLER: Well, they were pushing for several things. They thought that we should be much more on the Greek side in the Greek-Turkish dispute. They felt that the Aegean was essentially a Greek lake, and that Turkish claims in the Aegean were not something that we should be equidistant on. We tried to take more of a neutral nuanced stand as a broker, as interlocutor. They felt that Cyprus was a total disaster, that Turkey had invaded, and the only resolution to Cyprus was they should get out, and it essentially

should be one-man-one vote, which would be 80% of the Cypriots were Greek. And the Turks were saying, "Well, we've got to have some protections for the minority," because the events that lead to the invasion was that the minority was really taking it on the chin from the Cypriot majority.

They thought that we were unfairly singling them out for terrorism. I think I mentioned we had, in the '80s, slapped several travel advisories on Greece as a result of plane hijackings, TWA 847, TWA 840, a few other things. And the lobby felt that we were unfairly punishing Greece. For years, many, many years—this is later on—we instituted something called the visa-waiver program, where we gave waivers to most of the Western European countries. You don't have to apply for a visa if you are from the UK or France or Italy. Well, the one Western European country that didn't join the visa-waiver program was Greece. And that was for some technical reasons, that they didn't have a refusal rate under a certain percent, and that they didn't have enough physical control over the issuance of passports and there was room for shenanigans.

We always described it that way, and the Greeks always thought this was a political punishment, and the lobby would get involved in that. So those are the big issues.

Q: What was your impression, during that time, of the Greek media?

MILLER: Pretty irresponsible. In Greece, they just took it as, "That's part of the landscape, be careful." It would range from totally outlandish, make it up. There were very few in the Greek media who were sympathetic to the U.S. during this period of time, and a lot were pretty hostile. But it was pretty irresponsible.

Q: How were your relations with, my particular concern, the consular section? How did it work?

MILLER: Good. Normally in an embassy the day-to-day stuff, the person who writes the efficiency report for the consul general, is the DCM. I can't even remember if I wrote and the ambassador signed it, but I wrote it for sure. And I had a good relationship with the consular section. They worked hard. They were good people. Professionals. It was a place where we sometimes would have first-tour officers go. We sometimes would do rotational tours with the first-tour officers. They'd do consular and then econ, or consular and then political.

Ninety percent of what they did, they did on their own, and I never had to know. And that other 10 percent was the stuff I got involved in. Where I gave them a lot of freedom was on referrals. Greece is the kind of society where it's who you know that makes a big difference. So you'd constantly be besieged. The ambassador and I would be besieged by people saying, "Write me a letter of recommendation. I don't want to wait in line for a visa. I am a real serious Poobah." I played it pretty straight, as did the ambassador, because if you start playing these games, you create an impossible situation for your consular folks. We were pretty good, and that's the difference I think, sometimes, between political ambassadors and career folks.

Q: Tom Niles learned his consular training at my knee. When you have two people, you understand the name of the game. It's very hard, because dealing in a place like Greece is a little like dealing with Chicago or Boston politics.

MILLER: Very much so.

Q: Everything is very personal and these parties are not—they're really personal clans, or what have you. Like the Papandreou group. (If someone notices, from time to time, in this interview, that we seem to be expounding a little broader, we have six interns listening to us.)

MILLER: Yes, we're really cleaning up our language because of the interns here. (To the interns: Stu told me that with these oral histories—when we first met, I asked him how it's going to work with so much volume. And he said, "Well, key words." So if I start using swear words, and people punch in those, I'll get a lot of attention. I'm trying to avoid that happening.)

Q: I have worked in our collection, which is now on the internet, and I searched using the search things for "bitch," which does not refer to a female dog, ever—it's "son of a." I had 120-something hits.

MILLER: I'm trying to watch my language. Anyway. So yes, consular section relations were good. I can't think of anything that really came up that was controversial.

Q: One of the things I noted when I was there, but it was a different time—the Cold War was on, the Colonels were there—was that with our military program, the military advisory program…

MILLER: It was military assistance, yes.

Q: We had a lot of Greek-American colonels. They spoke Greek and all. And they were pretty happy with the Colonels. How did you find the military assistance group?

MILLER: Well, during my time, we had a couple of Greek Americans, in both the defense attaché's office and the office of military assistance. It was called ODC (Office of Defense Cooperation). Guys who spoke fluent Greek, much better than the rest of us who had gone to FSI. But they were professionals; they knew where their paycheck came from. So I didn't see anything. And this is all post-junta, and so their relations…

Q: It wasn't an issue.

MILLER: It wasn't an issue. Their relationships with the Greek military were their relationships, but it wasn't a big deal.

Q: Did you have much of a problem—this would be more in the consular segment—but

did tourism and visitors to Greece. Did this keep you and the ambassador busy or not?

MILLER: Not at all. No. We'd get a lot of tourists. You've got your share of stolen passports, lost passports, people running out of money. Not too many people in jail. When I was in Thailand, my first tour, there were a lot of Americans in jail. That was a big deal. Yes, we had a couple, and of course those who were in jail were not necessarily in Athens, so people had to go and visit them wherever they were. But no, it wasn't a big problem. I just remember competent people in our consular section.

We had a philosophy in the embassy, and the ambassador really started this: empower people. Empower your subordinates. So the ambassador gave me a tremendous amount of flexibility, which was just a godsend. I loved it. He was not a micromanager. This was not a guy who had to be involved in everything. He'd say, "Take care of it, and let me know what you've done, and if you run into a problem, let me know how I can help." And I tried to do the same thing with the section heads. I didn't try to micromanage their business. I think consular was probably the most where they were pretty much on their own.

Q: How about the Macedonian and the Balkan problem while you were there?

MILLER: That's a really interesting one. Let me talk about Macedonia. When I got there, the previous government, the New Democracy government, had fallen on the Macedonia issue. It was so controversial. And basically, the issue was this country, part of the former Yugoslavia; when Yugoslavia broke up, it broke up into five separate countries. And one of them was Macedonia. And the Greeks felt very sensitive about this, because they regarded Alexander the Great as Greek, and they felt that the Macedonians were appropriating not only their name, but also they had territorial aspirations. And it got really, really sensitive. And it has to do a lot with Greek psychology. It has to do with some of the actions of the Macedonians.

By the time I got there, there was a total blockade. The entire border had been closed between Greece and Macedonia. It's a big border, right here. The entire border had been closed. Northern Greece was just decimated, as was Macedonia, which is a land-locked country. And it was over a number of things. It was over the name. It was over the constitution. It was over the flag. There were a bunch of issues. So in 1995, as Holbrooke was in the middle of the shuttle negotiations which lead to the Dayton Accords—this is September, I want to say about September 4th of 1995. Holbrooke is shuttling back and forth between Belgrade and Sarajevo. And he calls me, and I was the Chargé at the time. The ambassador was gone. So I was the boss. And he says, "You know, let's take a stab"—he had been following things. He said, "Let's take a stab at trying to broker peace between the Macedonian and Greek prime ministers." And I said, "Sure."

So he flies down. Papandreou is in office, and Papandreou was not in good health. He had to take a nap during the afternoon. His health was not good at all. Holbrooke arrives, and we go up to Papandreou's house in the suburb of Kastri and had a discussion. Holbrooke was joined by Chris Hill, who is our ambassador in Iraq right now—he later

went on to be ambassador to Macedonia—and myself. Papandreou was joined by his foreign minister, a guy named Papoulias, who is now the President of Greece. Anyway, long afternoon spent there, and we basically negotiated settlements to everything but the name issue. To the constitution, to the border, to the flag, to all the other stuff, all the stuff that was out there. And most importantly, we got Greece to agree to take away the embargo, the closure of the borders. And then Holbrooke—and this is just classic diplomacy, classic shuttle diplomacy. We finished this long afternoon. Holbrooke has his own plane. He says, "OK, I've got to go up to Skopje now and get the president there to agree to all this stuff. He tells me, "You stay here." I think we had taken from the morning into the early afternoon.

He says, "You stay here and wait by the phone and I'll call you as soon as I get the Prime Minister of Macedonia to agree." He's sure he's going to get it. So he goes off to the airport and gets in the plane and goes up to Macedonia. And, about five, six hours go by. And Papandreou is so nervous and so anxious over this thing. He's supposed to take a nap because his health was terrible. And he keeps on coming back into the room, "Can I get you this?" And his wife keeps on coming in. "Can I get you sandwiches, can I get you this?" You know, I'm just a lowly DCM, and I've got the prime minister waiting on me.

Lo and behold, it must have been about seven o'clock at night and the phone finally rings. It's Holbrooke. He says, "They agree." That's great. That's fantastic. The embargo is off, the other stuff is settled. And the lesson here, from a diplomatic perspective, is if you can't get the whole loaf, go for as much as you possibly can. Others might have said, "No, unless you can agree to everything." And that basically made the relationship, at least economically, between the two countries, something that was bearable. Before, it was totally unbearable.

And there was just massive TV and press camped outside the Prime Minister's residence. And Papandreou says, "You know, this is such a great thing that the Americans have done. Why don't you go out and make the announcement?" He didn't want to do it. However, I can't argue with the prime minister, even if he's not my prime minister. And I knew that this was a setup. I absolutely knew that this was a setup. So I go out and I make the announcement and of course, the next day in the press, besides the substance of the thing, is "This is another example of how the Americans have forced this down our throat, and here's this arrogant Miller…" blah blah blah.

I was always seen as the tough guy, who forced Greeks to do things that they didn't want to do. Poor Papandreou knew the whole story was totally different. And most politicians knew that the story was different. Even some of the press knew it was different.

So that was a big deal. That was a really, really big deal.

Q: How did the Macedonian name end up?

MILLER: It never did. It's still out there. They're still arguing over it. It's still an outstanding issue. And there's a guy who, when this first became an issue, the UN

secretary general—I think it was Boutros-Ghali—asked Cyrus Vance to be the special envoy for this issue. And Vance was the special envoy—you all remember Cyrus Vance?

Q: (Intern): Secretary of State?

MILLER: Yes, he was the Secretary of State in the Carter years. He was the special envoy on this issue much later. He got sick, and he had a deputy named Matt Nimetz, who had been the number three or four person in the State Department. Very close to Vance. Another lawyer. And Matt took over, and Matt has held this position—he's a lawyer in New York, that's his day job. Matt has had this position for the last 15 years, 16 years. And I see Matt periodically. He's a good friend. I was just with him a little while ago. "How is it going?" "Well, you know, trying this…" This is the oldest negotiation in the world. That's still out there. They haven't solved it yet.

Q: You were going to tell us about Papandreou and his wife and his deathbed, or whatever it was?

MILLER: Well, what happened was right after that negotiation, that was really the last big thing that Papandreou did, because he took sick in—I think it was—October, 1995. This was September. And in October he took sick with multiple physical problems. He had a weak heart, he had kidney failure, he had all kinds of problems. And he went into the hospital and, of course, here's the prime minister of the country. And he just brought umpteen specialists in. And I think it was counterproductive, because they'd bring a heart specialist in to work on his heart stuff, and then they'd bring a kidney specialist and a lung specialist and this and that. And there was no one really overall in charge of the entire case. And I know a lot more than probably a person in my position would, because his wife, Mimi, the second wife, she went into the hospital and she said, "I am not going to leave the hospital until I leave with him."

So she literally was in that hospital—I think he was there maybe 90 days total. I don't remember the exact time. It was several months until he died, and she would call me, periodically—sometimes pretty often and always at night—just to talk. And I would talk to her. I'd be at a dinner party and the phone would ring at 11 o'clock at night. It was Mimi. I was just listening to her. I think she just had a need to talk to someone. That day that I spent at her house we had talked a lot, and I think she saw me as a friend. And so I just would listen. There was nothing I could do. I couldn't give any kind of medical advice. And I just would be the voice at the other end of the phone, or I should say, the ear at the other end of the phone. That was it.

And he died. He died, and sometime after he went into the hospital, a guy named Simitis, Costas Simitis, took over as prime minister. And sometime right after that was that incident with Imia, the small island, with Turkey. And Simitis had literally been in office a couple of weeks, and thanked us for our help and got blasted by the Greek press for doing so. But Papandreou died in early '96, if I remember.

Q: It's hard, I think, to have a very positive view of the Greek political process. Maybe

I'm overemphasizing that.

MILLER: Well, it's hard to have a pretty positive view of our political process. One thing I've learned in this job, is not to be tremendously judgmental about other governments. In Greece, one thing I will say, when you have elections, they have a system where the largest party almost under every circumstance gets the majority in the parliament, and there is parliamentary discipline. A 300-seat parliament, so you need 151 to carry the day. And rarely do you have any defections. And so you do get bills passed, and when you talk about dysfunctionality I think we would probably rank higher in some ways than they would.

Q: Looking at it, for now, in 2010, Greece is the problem child of the whole European Union because of its debts and the supposed irresponsibility and pension and budgets and all. Was this a factor or a concern to observers when you were there? Or was this not?

MILLER: Some of it was known. Our input was minimal, because it was basically the running of the Greek state, and we didn't get involved in telling them what to do. And we all knew that you could retire from the Greek civil service in your early 50s and get a pension of 80, 85 percent of your salary. Well, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that that's going to eventually break the bank. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that with the demographics changing, with more and more people living longer, there were less and less people to support that kind of system. All of that of course we knew. But Greece was just the extreme example of much of Europe, much of Western Europe. What we suspected but didn't really know was the double bookkeeping, this other stuff that came up later. We knew by the Olympics—I'm getting out a little bit ahead of myself—when I was ambassador, that they were spending just gobs of money, untold sums of money on the Olympics. I used to say, where the Volvo or Chevy would have done fine, they insisted upon the Mercedes all the time.

And there's only so much that you can spend when you're a country of 11 million. I think the entire Olympic bill was about $10 billion. And we knew that it didn't all add up, and we knew that there were a lot of state enterprises. Again, this was a pretty much of a socialist state. There were a lot of state enterprises. And the premium was on saving jobs, not turning a profit or making money or being productive or any of the rest of the stuff. So all of that stuff we knew, but what were we going to do about it? This is a sovereign country. We weren't going to march in there with the troops and say, "You've got to get your finances in order."

Q: Was there any particular problem with immigrants, illegal or from North Africa and all? In other words, you had an awful lot of Somali maids and that sort of thing?

MILLER: Yes. Let me just mention one more thing on the economic side. I had forgotten to mention that in the '80s, we had a substantial aid program with Greece and Turkey, and the Greeks, one of the manifestation of the strength of the Greek lobby, was they insisted on what was called the 7:10 ratio. For every $10 we gave Turkey, we had to give

$7 to Greece. You look at Turkey, a nation of 70 million, and Greece, a nation of 11 million—you wouldn't have done it that way but for the politics. And this was always written into law every year.

Immigration—tremendous amounts of immigration, illegal immigration. All you had to do was look at the streets of Greece and Athens then or now, and you could see it. And coming from all directions. Coming from Africa, that's pretty obvious. But also coming from Afghanistan, Iran. And a lot of this was through the islands in the Aegean. Once you got to the islands, you were in Greece, and the Greeks, of course, accused the Turks for years—this is one of the irritants in their relationship—they would say to the Turks, "You're just sending them on and they end up here." And of course, when Schengen—the common border came into effect, the rest of Europe woke up and said, "Jesus, when you're in Greece, you're in Europe." And they got really exercised over this.

The Greeks tried to do what they could. It never really worked that well, because there was so much territory to police. And they would periodically roust people. You see it even today. The police come by, and the guys who have the sheets with all the goods, the phony Gucci bags and all that stuff, the police will be walking by and leave them alone, and then every once in a while they'd do a sweep to show that they are doing their jobs. These guys then gather the sheets up with the phony Gucci bags, phony Rolex watches and scatter and then 10 minutes later they'd be back where they were. And that's always, that's just the landscape of an Athens street today.

Q: How did you find the social life there, this time?

MILLER: As DCM?

Q: Yes.

MILLER: Pretty demanding. I'm not a social butterfly, and that wasn't what really turned me on. But we were out just about every night, and by this time, our son was in high school. He was happy that we were out nearly every night. And our daughter was in college, so she wasn't in the picture. But it got to be a lot, and the problem with Greece is they entertain very, very late. So you're invited for something that starts at nine-thirty. You show up at 10, you don't sit down to eat until 11, and then you're finishing your meal by one. So when I was DCM, I got into a drill with my son, and my bodyguards, where I would arrange for them—this is early days of cell phones—I would arrange for them to call me on my big, humongous cell phone, and I would pretend like, "Yes, oh, Washington? OK, I'll be right there." That was my ticket out. And I rarely finished dinners.

Another cute story I'll tell you guys. So, one night I'm at the British embassy. The British ambassador is leaving, and he invited a bunch of us over for dinner, and I get a call from my son. My son, he's just a real character. He's 31 years old now, and does IT (Information Technology) as a Beltway Bandit for the State Department. He goes and does installations around the world. Anyway, he calls me, and he's in high school, and he

says, “Dad, DEFCON 4.” I go, “Yes, right.” He says, “No, really. The embassy has just taken a rocket.” I said, “OK, yes, thanks. Appreciate it. I’ll be right there.” I figure he’s playing games. But a minute later, one of the British embassy officers comes up and says, “Do you know your embassy just got hit by a rocket?” And I go, “Are you in on this, too?” I thought the whole thing was a joke.

So about two minutes later, I get a phone call from my bodyguard. “The embassy just took a big, a big mother of a rocket.” I said, “Hold on, is this serious?” He says, “Yes.” The terrorist group November 17th had hit us. They had come in a van, to the street at the back of the embassy. And they had aimed a rocket, and it was a big mother. It was about six feet long. They aimed a rocket at the top of the embassy and they unfortunately for them, it clipped a wall. We had big walls around the embassy and it clipped the wall, and so it didn’t hit the embassy but it hit the wall and nearly destroyed the wall.

I tell this story because my son was always giving me ways to get out of these things, because I came in early. Ambassador Niles—I don’t know if you remember—but Niles would get in by seven, and I’d get in about seven or maybe a little before. And I’ve always had early work habits. And I thought it was the right way to do it, because I hated the idea, when I had been a political officer, the ambassador at the time, who was a tremendously good guy, he had done all the entertaining stuff. And he wouldn’t breeze in until after nine o’clock, because he had been at a dinner party until one or two. And so the rest of the embassy couldn’t get really started. You couldn’t have the staff meeting until 9:30 or 10. And then I wasn’t even senior enough to go to the staff meeting, so I couldn’t get my instructions until mid-morning. I always thought this was a lousy way to operate. So I said, “If I am ever in a position of responsibility, I am going to get in real early so people aren’t waiting for me.” And Niles, the ambassador, was the same way. So we came in quite early.

Well, the end of the story on the rocket was Niles was at the same party, and the two of us got in our cars and went over, and there’s this big, smoldering hunk of metal that had clipped the wall. And there’s nothing stupider than a bunch of senior officials hanging around right after an incident. We’re sitting there, kicking the dirt and acting like—you know, we didn’t know what the hell to do. The rocket had already hit. So the RSO (regional security officer), our security guy, comes up after about three minutes, and he said, “I want to be respectful with what I am going to tell you, but would you please get the hell out of here? Because if they can shoot one rocket, they can shoot another. You two are sitting ducks. So would you please leave? There’s nothing you can do.” We said, “Yes, OK.”

So that’s how I handled my social life.

Q: OK, well, then, you left there in ’90…

MILLER: ’97. What happened was I had set up—remember I mentioned my friend Dan Kurtzer? He had moved on to be the principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and I was going to replace him, and that was the biggest

bureau in the State Department, with 300 to 400 people or so, and I thought it was a cool job. And that was all set, until Holbrooke intervened, and Holbrooke bent my arm and got Madeleine Albright involved, to get me to take the Cyprus negotiator job, and that's what I went and did for two years.

Q: And with great success, I might add.

MILLER: Not really. It's still a problem today. We actually came pretty close. It wasn't my first choice, but it turned out to be a great choice, and I really did enjoy it. Holbrooke and I did a lot of traveling together. We came relatively close to solving it. The problem, when we were doing it, was the Turkish side, the head of the Turkish side, was not interested in one country. He was interested in two countries.

Q: Was this Denktaş?

MILLER: This was Denktaş, Rauf Denktaş. He's still alive today. And we tried every clever thing you could do in the book. The Greek side was totally on board. The irony is that five years after I left—I left in 1999—in 2004, they actually had a referendum. My successor continued this effort. And they had a referendum, and the Turkish Cypriots voted for the referendum, voted for the deal. And the Greek Cypriots voted against it. So the sides had totally flip-flopped. The Greek Cypriot president was a hard-line guy, and the Turkish Cypriots thought that this was a pretty good deal.

But we tried a lot of stuff. It was a pretty frenetic pace. It was a lot of fun. Richard Holbrooke is one of the most skillful diplomats I've ever met in my life. I have known him for 30 years, 20 years at hat point. But I had known him back in the Carter years. I got a chance to work very closely with him. He was phenomenal.

Q: Would you talk a bit about how he operated, as you saw him?

MILLER: Well, he was a guy who would always be looking over the horizon. And I think the stuff I'd say about him back then would be true today in the job he's doing. He was always not thinking about just the next step, but several steps ahead, based upon the reaction of the other side. And it's what some people would call multidimensional diplomacy, or he would call three-dimensional chess. And that takes a phenomenal ability, something I don't have. Something I tried to learn a little bit from him. And I've never seen anyone better at that than him. He was tenacious, he just wouldn't take no for an answer. But he would do it in a charming way. He combined the best in humor and arm-twisting. The stereotype of him isn't quite the person I know. The stereotype is a relentless, in-your-face kind of guy. I've seen that, too. But he had an amazing ability to connect dots that others couldn't see. He had a fantastic ability to work several issues simultaneously and know where the trade-offs were, and do it in a way where he wasn't always putting the trade-offs on the table, but he would do it in a way where others would come up with what the trade-offs were.

Tremendous stamina. He just could go on forever. Charming as hell, and would size up

the other side, and not necessarily through briefing papers or anything like that. But just size up the other guy, the other side, and know how to appeal to them. And sometimes it was a very personal thing. I remember when we did some of the negotiations, little gifts he would bring. He would bring meaningful gifts to the people we were negotiating with. He'd learn that one was a collector of a certain kind of book and he would invest time to go out and get that thing, just to show the person that he cared about the person he was across the table from. He was fantastic working the bureaucracy. It was just really hard to say no to him. But it wasn't necessarily just through being a bulldozer. It was through charm and a bunch of other things, and logic. He wasn't tremendously ideological. He was a problem-solver. And if you solved the problem and it was something that had a different ideology than he might expect, so be it. He knew how to cut a deal, and we saw this with the Greek-Macedonian negotiations, too. He knew that if you couldn't get the whole thing, that it was worth going for what you could get.

Q: Let's talk a little bit about the Greek side and the Turkish side of Cyprus. You mentioned it was the Denktaş…

MILLER: Denktaş on the Turkish side and Clerides on the other side.

Q: These two—I think they went to school together, didn't they?

MILLER: They knew each other from the early '60s on. They were both lawyers, and Clerides would tell a story about in 1963, when there were anti-Turkish riots, how he saved Denktaş's life. Clerides told us this story any number of times, and I remember asking Denktaş about it and he said, "Yes, kind of." He didn't really want to say, "Yes, that's true."

Denktaş was a true ideologue, and you just knew that he didn't have a mindset outside of two states. It had to be two states. Now, what those two states would do after they were given, each of them, sovereignty was another issue. And he would argue that they could agree to unite. And that would get us to where we wanted to go, which was one state. But there was always that suspicion that once they got sovereignty they would say, "OK, we've got our sovereignty and we're going to keep our sovereignty." So that was the hurdle that you could never get over, and the Greek side could never agree to even a time-limited sovereignty for the Turkish side. And the Greek side, frankly, had the UN and the international community pretty much on their side, because the mantra of the Cyprus negotiations forever has been, "A Single Sovereignty." And that has never changed.

Q: I remember going to a conference called, I think, at the time, 25 Years of Turkish Tyranny…

MILLER: I went to plenty of those.

Q: Yes. I found that the Greeks took me aside and I had been there when the thing happened, and just left, and knew what happened. The Greek Americans, anyway, were

pushing this thing. They seemed to completely disregard what had precipitated it.

MILLER: No, you're right. The Greek side has got their dimension, their perspective on it, and when you talk to Greek Americans as I have over the years, and you say, "You don't excuse the invasion, you understand the reasons for it." When you have these conversations they say, "Well, they should have gotten out." And I said, "Yes, you're right, they should have gotten out. But to protect Turkish Cypriots who were getting murdered—and they were, there was a guy who came in as the strongman on the Greek Cypriot side…"

Q: Sampson.

MILLER: Sampson, Nikos Sampson. He was a pretty ruthless guy, and he was doing some pretty nasty things.

Q: He was a hired assassin or something.

MILLER: Let me mention, if I may: every assignment or every story I tell you about, there's always a human dimension, and there was a very interesting one to this. I only think about it because I'm going to Detroit this week and the family was from Detroit. During the Turkish invasion in '74, it all happened very suddenly, and there were a bunch of dual citizens that were caught in this thing, and I think about—I can't remember the exact number—but a handful of them were missing and they never were found and were presumed dead. And most of them were pretty elderly. These were Greek Cypriots who had moved to the States, worked in the States, and then gone back and retired in Cyprus.

So by the time I got involved, this is 25 years later, you'd have to presume that most of these guys would have died anyway. But there was this one kid; his name was Gus Kasapis, and he was about sixteen in 1974. And he was taken by the Turks, and he was taken alive and never heard from again. And that was always the rallying cry for the Greek-American, Cypriot-American community. It was, "Remember Gus Kasapis!" And his parents were nice people. This became the human dimension of the whole Cyprus thing, and the terrible thing is that the Turkish troops had done all kinds of bad stuff.

Anyway, I met the Kasapises, as did my predecessors. Nice people from Detroit. He had a couple of sisters and they had all grown up—this is now 25 years later. And the parents were in their 60s, maybe 70s. At some point they had gotten some news, and it was all very iffy, about the bones of this kid Kasapis, where they were buried. It was literally like a treasure map, five paces from the tree and this tree, seven paces this way. It wasn't coordinates or anything like that. So, by this time, the technology with DNA, with mitochondrial DNA, had gotten good enough where you could take mitochondrial DNA, which is a different type—there's two types of DNA, which, after I went out to Bosnia, I got to be a real expert on all this stuff with DNA. There's the DNA from fresh bodies that if someone's a murder victim, within the next day you can get all kinds of DNA. And then there is much longer DNA from years later called mitochondrial DNA. I'm not going to go into all the scientific differences, but we had finally developed—and this is

our folks in Hawaii working on Vietnam missing and dead—we had finally developed the technology to pick up mitochondrial DNA, and it's always traced through a matrilineal line. It's from the mother.

So the story is that they got some information about possible remains. They went and dug. They found some remains, and they were little snippets of bone, just real small stuff, nothing close to a whole skeleton or anything like that. And they said, "Do mitochondrial DNA," and this is all when I was around, and they found a match. Twenty-five years later, the parents finally knew with certainty that their son was dead. At that point, it was a great deal of relief. And I remember going through this with them, spending some time with them at the lab, spending time with them and explaining to them—I mean, I had to learn enough to be able to do some explaining.

And it was just the human dimension, and every story—and I think every story I've told you—I have always given you the human dimension of it. That was the one that stays with me on Cyprus. They all knew that he was dead, but, like most families, they wanted to know that there were remains and that there was some certainty, some closure, to the whole thing.

Q: How did you see, during your time, how had the two states evolved?

MILLER: Well, over time they opened up the Green Line separating the two. There was a hard and fast Green Line and there was no interaction, or very little interaction, between the two for many years. When I was negotiating, over time, they opened up the Green Line and now it's pretty open. There's a lot of exchanges, a lot of interchange. The south, in 2004, got in the EU, and that was always a card that I think should have been played much more adroitly than it was. I always felt that the EU just gave away that card, and I always felt that the Republic of Cyprus should have been expected to do some stuff in terms of getting to yes on a negotiation, particularly given that the same year that they got into the EU, they voted in a referendum to say no. In fact, I think the referendum was April and then they got into the EU in, I think, about June. I just thought that was a tremendously wasted opportunity.

Q: Well, this is probably a good place to stop, Tom, don't you think?

MILLER: OK.

Q: Is there anything else we should talk about on this particular topic? What was the atmosphere? With the European Bureau, were you that guy off on the periphery?

MILLER: No, one of my closest friends was the assistant secretary for Europe, Marc Grossman. He couldn't have been more supportive. I got tremendous support. The Greek desk, the Greek-Turkey-Cyprus desk, there were two Cypriot desk officers, and they were my staff, essentially. And they were excellent. There's a whole different dimension to talk about someday, probably not with me but with others, about the role of special envoys.

In this case, we were very much part of the European Bureau, and well-integrated in it. Right now, I'm in a job with an NGO where I do a lot of work on Sudan. It has nothing to do with my Foreign Service experience, but with Sudan you've got a special envoy who was appointed by Obama, who is very much out there on his own, you know? They don't even have a Sudan desk in the Africa Bureau anymore. That's been seconded to him, as part of the special envoy.

Holbrooke is doing Afghanistan and Pakistan. He's carved off a big chunk, and the bureau is administratively supportive of him, but he has built a big, big staff. It's like the Sudan guy, but the Sudan is even more compartmentalized. We were fully integrated in the European Bureau, and I think it was much easier because Marc Grossman was the assistant secretary, so I got whatever support I needed. Marc had an open door with me anytime I needed to see him.

Q: OK, so you left there in …

MILLER: Well, I left the Cyprus negotiation in 1999, and that was an open-ended assignment. That was never, "You're going to do it for two years." What happened was the guy who was our ambassador out in Bosnia was a good guy, a real good guy, Rich Kauzlarich. You probably know Rich. And I had known Rich for years. He had gone out there, and it was pretty rough. And he called in one day to our Balkans special envoy—we had a special envoy for the Balkans named Bob Gelbard, who was a pretty good friend of mine. And he called in—I don't know, I forget. This is probably November of 1998. And he said, "You know, I want to leave next summer." He says, "I'm leaving, and you're going to have to find someone to replace me." And he was expected to stay for a third year. So Gelbard goes down to talk to Marc Grossman, the assistant secretary, and Tony Wayne, who was the principal deputy assistant secretary, all pretty good friends of mine.

He says, "I just got a call from our ambassador in Sarajevo." He says, "He's not staying past summer '99, and we've got to find someone." And I wasn't there, obviously, when they had this conversation, and so Tony says, "How about Tom? He'd be great!" I have no Balkans experience whatsoever, none. Zero. And Marc said, "No. His wife Bonnie will never go for it." Bonnie is my wife, and Marc knows Bonnie really well. So Marc and Tony had a little discussion, and they said, "Well, let's ask him." So Marc asked me, and I said, "Yes, well, I'm interested. It's intriguing. Let me talk to Bonnie." And we got on the phone with the Kauzlariches, the ambassador and his wife, who I knew. And my wife, who is a true sport and trooper and everything else and a wonderful person, said, "What the hell. Let's give it a shot. It will be an adventure, and we don't want to miss this opportunity."

So I went back to Marc, and I said, "OK, I'll do it." I don't know shit, but they were looking for a troubleshooter. Or perhaps, a troublemaker. So I said I would do it, and here I am with some background in any number of areas but nothing in the Balkans. So I wrapped up the Cyprus job and took a few weeks of Serbo-Bosnian/Croatian language

training. None of it stuck. And then I went to Sarajevo in August of '99.

So I went out to Sarajevo in August of '99, having done a crash course in Bosnian, but still totally ill-equipped to do the job. And the lesson is, if you're ever in the Foreign Service, if you really want to get the most out of the Foreign Service, don't restrict yourself to one narrow area. Now, just to kind of telescope, much later, to the think tanks in town, I'm now a Bosnia expert. I'm called periodically to serve on committees and panels. So it's amazing how you can gear yourself up fairly quickly.

Bosnia was a fascinating experience, it was one of the real highlights of my life.

Q: You were doing it from when to when?

MILLER: I did it from August of '99 until August of 2001. And I was also supposed to go out for a three-year period but the administration changed. And I think in March or April of 2001, new administration, Colin Powell, new Secretary of State comes out, pulls me aside, and says, "I've checked you out"—he didn't really know me, and I knew him a little bit but… And he says, "You've done a terrific job, where do you want to go next, anywhere you want to go?" I said, "Well, this is the Secretary of State. You don't get these kind of shots often." So I said, "Well, anywhere, sir?" And he says, "Yes." And I say, "Well, I'd like to go back to Athens as the ambassador."

So he says, "OK, let me check it out." He had only been in office a couple of months. So it happened that I was going back to Washington the next week. He says, "Just come into my office and see me." "Yes, sir." He was just a wonderful, wonderful man. So I go into see him, and he says, "Tom, we have a problem here. Karl Rove (President Bush's close advisor)—do you know who Karl Rove is?" I said, "Yes, I know who Karl Rove is." He says, "Well, he's promised the job to a wealthy Greek American." I said, "OK." He says, "But I'll fight for you." I said, "That's really nice, man." So he says, "I'll go over and fight the battle for you." So I said, "OK."

And he says, "You can help, a little bit, in this thing." He knew that I had worked for Rumsfeld; he knew that I was pretty close to Rumsfeld. He says, "Get your buddy." This is before. This is when he and Rumsfeld were getting along and Rumsfeld was Secretary of Defense. He says, "Get your buddy Rumsfeld to weigh in, too." So separately, Powell and Rumsfeld both went over to see Bush and said I was the guy, and Bush decided to send me. Usually, the president doesn't get involved. I mean, you are a presidential appointee, but the president doesn't know who the hell you are. But in this case, the president did get involved, because I got the feedback from both Powell and Rumsfeld, and I wouldn't have gotten the job if it wasn't for their efforts. And as it turned out, at the time, I was the only career guy in what was the EU, the European Community. At that time it was 15 countries. And we would get together periodically and there would be 14 political appointees and me. That's how I went back to Greece as ambassador.

Q: I really think we should cover Sarajevo.

MILLER: Not now.

Q: Not now, no. So we'll pick this up the time you were in Sarajevo.

MILLER: Let's try to do, if we can, let's do Sarajevo and the rest of Greece next time, can we do that?

Q: Yes, next time. Yes.

MILLER: OK. And then that's the end of my career.

Q: OK.

MILLER: The last thing of my career was my retirement party, where Powell and Rumsfeld, who were, at that point, not talking to each other, they both showed up, as did Jerry Bremer, another guy who I had worked for. He was our guy in Baghdad. So you had three guys who were not on the best of terms but who all showed up to my retirement ceremony.

Q: Today is the 30th of June 2010 with Tom Miller. OK, Tom, you know where we were.

MILLER: We had just finished the Cyprus stuff, I think. Holbrooke and I had taken a run in Cyprus and it didn't work. I went through all the reasons why it didn't work, largely because the Turkish Cypriot side and the Turkish side, they were just unwilling to take the steps that were necessary to get to yes. Several years later, it was the Greek side that voted against it in the referendum. But I had been doing this for two years when, one day, I got a call from our assistant secretary for European Affairs, a very close friend of mine, and he asked me to stop into his office. And I came down and there in his office are he and his principal DAS (Deputy Assistant Secretary) Tony Wayne, who is also a friend of mine, and Bob Gelbard, who was the presidential envoy for the Balkans.

They told me the following story. Gelbard said that he had gotten a call from our ambassador in Bosnia just a few hours before, and our ambassador—his name was Rich Kauzlarich, a good guy, also a friend—had decided that he was going to end his tour this coming summer—it would have been the summer of 1999—rather than stay for an additional year. I think it was a three-year tour that would have ended in 2000. He was calling Gelbard to let him know, and Gelbard had come down to talk to European Assistant Secretary Marc Grossman about who they would get to replace Rich. As the story was told to me, Tony Wayne was there, and he says, "Well, how about Tom? He's really good at these kind of troubleshooting things." Marc says, "No way," because he knows my wife really well. He says, "Bonnie would never go for it." They had a little discussion and they said, "Let's ask him." So Marc agrees to ask me and I was intrigued by the whole idea. I called Bonnie and she was less intrigued, but as we got warmed up she said, "Let's talk to the Kauzlariches."

Q: And Anne.

MILLER: And Anne. It happened they were back in the States on leave, anyway, so we called them that night and we had about an hour conversation. The result of the conversation was there were a lot of positives and a lot of negatives. I knew nothing about the Balkans, or virtually nothing. Bonnie turns to me and says, "Well, let's give it a shot."

So I go back and I say, "Yes, I am interested in doing it." So we went through the whole process. I continued in the Cyprus job until the summer of '99—this was the fall of '98 when this had all transpired. And we did not solve Cyprus. We had some tantalizingly close episodes, but we did not get there. And then we went out to Bosnia in August of '99.

Q: Before you left the Cyprus thing, what were the stumbling blocks? Was it leadership personalities, or were there some major issues or what?

MILLER: One word sums it all up: sovereignty. The Turkish Cypriots in the north wanted to have a sovereign entity. I am not going to say country. And then they would make a decision as to whether they wanted to join with the Republic of Cyprus in the south. Every game plan we had ever worked on, every formulation we had ever worked on, had always assumed single sovereignty, not two sovereignties. In other words, a federation, not a confederation. And that was the hang-up. We got into some very detailed formulations, and since this thing isn't solved yet, I am not going to go into details because they might end up using some of these formulations at some point, of how you would address the sovereignty concerns of the Turks.

There was a lot behind it. In a nutshell, the Turks were saying, "We can never negotiate as equals if we don't have at least an opportunity to be equals for a while. And then we can make a decision to subsume ourselves in a larger entity of federation." That was the hang-up. There were other issues that were very difficult, including property, Turkish troops presence, the boundary between the two entities, how much territory would be in each of the entities, the status of certain areas—Kyrenia, Famagusta, et cetera. But sovereignty was the one that really hung us up.

Q: OK, let's go on.

MILLER: I think I told the very interesting human interest story—remind me if I did. Did I tell you the story of the search for the missing kid, and finding him?

Q: Yes.

MILLER: I did. OK. Well, let's move on to Bosnia. I did as much as I could in a very short period of time to try to prepare for Bosnia. I said I knew virtually nothing about Bosnia. It recalled a very emotional time that had taken place five years, six years before, early in the Clinton administration, when I had been head of the Israeli Office, and I had been invited to a lunch at the State Department hosted by the undersecretary for political

affairs, Peter Tarnoff, in honor of Elie Wiesel, the Nobel Peace Prize winning Holocaust survivor. I only mention this story because that morning in 1993, President Clinton had presided in a very rainy ceremony over the opening of the Holocaust Museum, and Elie Wiesel was there. President Clinton delivered his remarks and he sat down, and Wiesel gets up in this rain and turns around and wags his finger at President Clinton and says, "Shame on you, President Clinton. Here we are dedicating the Holocaust Museum and a Holocaust or something like that is happening in Bosnia right now. And you are doing nothing."

If you read Clinton's memoirs, this was a very, very poignant moment for him. It really made a deep impression. As you all know, he did change the policy. We got involved. Well, right after that ceremony, they hosted Wiesel on the eighth floor of the State Department and I was at a table with about eight to 10 people, honoring Wiesel. I was brought up because I was head of the Israeli desk, and Wiesel was Jewish. I was the only non-Balkan expert there, and it turned out that a bunch of the people around the table later resigned over our Balkans policy. So it was a very, very active discussion, debate, in which I think the administration really took a shellacking for being so passive.

That stayed with me. That stayed with me for a long time to come, and I remember just being so deeply impressed and wondering why we were being so passive, why we were being like the Europeans, so-called neutrals, as one side was just annihilating the other. I remember, five years later, reflecting back then, saying, "God, I don't know much about this, but it really sounds like a lousy policy and we really should be doing something." As I say, a year later, President Clinton decided to change the policy. We got very involved and it all culminated in the Dayton accords. And the rest is history.

So as I was getting sworn in, as I was going through various things, I always think back about that lunch and the very heated debate over our policy then. A couple of people around the table were trying to defend it, but it was being attacked by a number of people, State Department mid-grade officers. A couple of them later resigned over it.

In a curious way, I was very happy that I was going out to Bosnia. I had spent my career doing crash courses on things that I knew nothing about. So I wasn't too daunted about it.

I knew I was a quick study and I took a little bit of Bosnian language here, none of which took, and even if it had, you know, I think I would have had to use translators or interpreters at the embassy because you've got to be at a certain level that I wasn't close to.

So I got out to Bosnia in August of '99, ready to start on my next adventure. It was difficult. It was extremely difficult. It was a very strange place. The only country in the world that had three presidents, 13 interior ministers, 13 education ministers, et cetera.

Q: You were there from when to when?

MILLER: I was there from August '99 to August 2001, for two years. It was originally a

three-year tour, but I had the opportunity to go to Greece, which we'll get to a little bit later. And so it was two years. You want me to just talk about?

Q: Oh God yes. Can you say when you got there in August, '99, what was the situation in—well, I'll say in the Balkans basically?

MILLER: Well, when I got there Kosovo had heated up in a big, big way and Bosnia had never cooled down. Kosovo, we did go into. We bombed Serbia. That was all a backdrop so our relationship with Serbia was extremely tense. And Serbia was kind of playing out. Milošević was still in office. Serbia was playing out a lot of these tensions in Bosnia, the Republic of Srpska—the Serbian part of the two entities of Bosnia, the Republic of Srpska and the Bosnian Muslim-Croat Federation. And so the situation when I got there was very, very tense. The dominant party in the Republic of Srpska was the Social Democrats, the SDS, and, and they were the dominant party, but not exclusive and there were a lot of less nationalist parties in the Republic of Srpska that we worked much more closely with. I mention this because there's a reoccurring theme in my career, and that's Richard Holbrooke. He just keeps showing up. And by the way, I told you the story of how I got the job. If you ever interviewed Holbrooke he would say that he had a lot to do with me getting the job in Bosnia. And maybe he was there in the background. I just wasn't aware of it. But he decided he was going to really get me off to a great start, so he got Joe Biden, who was then Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and the two of them decided to take a trip to Bosnia and they arrived five days after I had gotten out there. And Holbrooke really was trying to be helpful to me. And it was a big, big deal for Bosnia because here's the guy who put together the whole Dayton agreement who's coming four years later, and I think it might have been the first trip he had made since Dayton. Anyway, he was treated like a conquering hero. And it's funny, Biden's kind of second fiddle, you know, at that point. And Holbrooke gets up and gives his speech and basically calls for the High Representative who was the internationally appointed tsar in Bosnia, to use his powers, and he had something called the Bonn Powers, to basically disband the SDS and the SRS, Social Radical Party, which is even more radical than the SDS. And that immediately set off a firestorm within the international community, among the Bosnians over should you do something like this or not. The Americans obviously pushing for it, or most of Americans because there were some people I found out later who disagreed with this. And much of the rest of the international community, mainly the Europeans who thought this was kind of usurping the whole democratic ethos, these guys had been elected in a democratic election. So that made life difficult. Immediately the Serb president of the tri-presidency tried to get rid of me. At one point several months later I had two of the three presidents (the Serb and the Croat) who actually tried to have me recalled because they thought I was too activist. And it turned out that the Croat later was indicted for all kinds of crimes and fled to Croatia where he is today. So, their efforts never succeeded. Obviously that made me a real hero among the more moderate elements of Bosnia, and that helped a lot later because about a year later it became clear to me not long after I arrived that everyone had said this was an ethnic conflict. But what became very clear to me once I was on the ground was it was an ethnic conflict but at its base it was driven by economics, by money. And the three hard line parties, the Bosniak, the Serb, and the Croat, who had killed each other during the war,

they could do deals. And they were doing deals to basically split up Bosnia, like mafiosa. You know, you stay out of my territory and I'll stay out of your territory. And Bosnia has got a lot of natural resources and was the center of Tito's Yugoslavia in terms of heavy industry, in terms of minerals, in terms of hydroelectric power. It had a lot. And even though in some ways it was a lot poorer than other parts of Yugoslavia, the potential was there. And it became clear to me that these guys, that these three dominant parties who had been dominant during the war, who were dominant after the war, who ran things, and who cooperated, were going to just keep on doing deals to stay in power and the moderates were going to be shut out. And because I had a lot of credibility with the moderates I got together with my British colleague and we hosted a series of dinners of all the different moderate parties, many of whom had never even dealt with each other before. Kind of small, there were about nine people from all three ethnic groups. And these dinners were quiet off-line affairs which became known as the "secret dinners." And out of these several dinners they created a coalition and in 2000 they actually ran in the national elections and between them they took over the government.

Q: OK, let's talk about the nuts and bolts of these secret dinners. I mean how—what do you do at something like this? Just put them in a room or --

MILLER: No, you give them good food first. What you do is we had—if I remember correctly I think we had nine people, three Serbs, three Croats, three Bosniaks, Bosniaks were Muslim. And we kind of set the framework and we said the purpose here is to see if you guys have enough in common that you might be able to have broad cooperation. And that might lead to some cooperation. It wasn't trying to create one party or --

Q: Did you get up and say this or --

MILLER: Yeah.

Q:—did you have your officers --

MILLER: No. No, this was pretty explicit. And it was the British ambassador and I. This was my idea, but I just did it—I needed a coconspirator here. I didn't want this to be a strictly American thing. And the Brit was just a terrific guy. He was an activist, like myself. And so, we conspired to this together. And we had two dinners at my house, one or two at his house. It was maybe three or four dinners over the course of long, long evenings. And it was basically—it wasn't "You will do this," because that doesn't work in any kind of context. But you know, this is an opportunity, is the potential there that you guys will see enough in common to cooperate in the form of a broad coalition, because individually none of them had came close to bringing the numbers that they needed to form a government. But collectively—it was just barely—collectively you could do the arithmetic and figure that they conceivably could have the numbers to form a government. And they did. They formed a government. And in fact just a month ago I had lunch with a guy who took over as prime minister. I still stay in touch with a lot of these guys. Unfortunately, you know, because they took so long to put the government together, and this is June of 2010, a lesson for the Iraqi coalitions, they're still arguing

today, and there were serious economic problems and other problems. Basically the vote was not so much that everyone in Bosnia was wanting to throw the rascals out. They just voted like most voters around the world vote, focusing on the issues that affect them on an everyday basis. They were the bread and butter issues, the economy, jobs, nothing different than in most—and four years after the war you still had a couple hundred thousand people who were refugees or internally displaced. They hadn't returned to their homes. A lot of homes had been destroyed, tremendously high unemployment rates. And so the vote in 2000 was as much a repudiation of the guys in power as it was support for these guys. And unfortunately these guys didn't get their act together so they had another election in 2002. They've now shifted it to four-year terms, but in the 2002 election people threw these guys out and they brought the hard liners back in. And that's how it's been ever since then.

Q: Well, what was sort of the structure? I mean you talk about the European tsar, but you're an ambassador and you've got a tsar. How the hell does this work?

MILLER: The bible for how much of the international community set itself up was the Dayton Peace Accords. And coming out of Dayton there was an agreement that the Americans would lead the military side. We have a four-star general there leading our force, you know, leading all the forces. It's called SFOR, stabilization force. And the Europeans would have the top position on the civilian side. So the military side was pretty simple. The military when we first went in was 60,000. And I think by the time I got there it was 20,000 of which a good number—I forget the number of Americans but it was substantial, probably half or so. And on the civilian side they set up something called the Office of the High Representative. And the High Representative was given real powers to dismiss officials, I mean serious, serious powers to overrule the government, and to get rid of the government people who were acting against the Dayton Accords. This was internationally agreed, blessed by the UN. The Europeans got to appoint this guy and the first couple were pretty active. One was Carl Bildt who went on to be prime minister and he's now Foreign Minister of Sweden. By the time I got in there was a Austrian diplomat, career diplomat named Wolfgang Petritsch who had arrived right before I did. And he was pretty timid. He was pretty timid and so we found we always had to kind of push him. He was reluctant to use the powers that he had been given. And he wasn't my boss. We'd get together the key countries. There was something called the PIC (Peace Implementation Council). It was the PIC ambassadors and it was the big countries: Germany, France, UK, Russia, I think Turkey was on it, and a couple other countries. So we'd kind of be the council that would advise and urge him to do things. I found him very, very timid and we did clash. And the British ambassador also found him very timid. A number of the other Europeans thought that we had to go much slower, Bosnia was their country. We all agreed it was their country, but when you have crooks running the country and people who are acting more out of their own self-interest than the interest of the country and you had made such an investment in it I thought it was wrong not to be activist. So we obviously had differences along the way.

Q: Well, OK. Let's talk about—you said crooks. I can recall during the time you were there, before and after, but you know, headlines about the corruption there that this was

an exceedingly corrupt state.

MILLER: Right.

Q: How did you find it and who was doing what and who was trying to do something about it?

MILLER: Well, we found various things happening. There are a lot of natural resources and in the name of privatization the people in power were selling these natural resources to private entities. But the entities they were selling to were their friends and at ridiculously low prices. This is the kind of stuff that happened a lot in Russia after the fall of the wall. That was one thing. There were people in key positions who would, for instance, control real estate. And remember that Bosnia—Yugoslavia had been a socialist state and then it goes into this terrible war and emerges, and the system hadn't changed at all. It was still pretty much a socialist state and so there is a tremendous amount of statist control over physical assets and resources including real estate (apartments). I remember there was a big, big scandal involving Elektroprivreda, the state electricity company. And it goes on and on and on. And it's all of the above. There's a fantastically large aluminum mill in Herzegovina in the Croat section and basically the Croats just took this over. They wouldn't allow non-Croat workers and did deals with some international aluminum companies and it was very a efficient mill but they had a policy of not hiring non-Croats. And then there was all the international aid that was coming in, hundreds and hundreds, billions of dollars at the time. And you know, the opportunity to misuse that aid—I mean I'll just tell you one story involving us. And again, I'm not implying there's any corruption on the American side, but our Congress had decided—and this is just one example—our Congress had decided that, probably in consultation with the administration, but this is before my time, that really what needed to be done was not only to get Bosnia back on its feet again, but to transform it from a socialist demand drive economy to a market-based economy. Well, that all sounds good. Everyone would agree with that. So we came up with a very, very large loan guarantee program where we would give loans to private businesspeople to start companies, and that all sounds good. The problem was that we had all this money but there weren't that many private businesspeople and there definitely weren't that many who qualified for the loans because Bosnia still had a socialist economy.

Q: Was there any return? I mean you had all these people who'd gone to the States and picked up entrepreneurial skills and all.

MILLER: Not that many. Some were coming back, but very few. And you're absolutely right, there's a tremendous number of Bosnians, couple hundred thousand in the States and, you know, large numbers throughout Europe and most of them stayed outside Bosnia. And you've now got this second generation and they're Americans.

Q: Well, there is that feeling that hit the Baltic States where there was patriotism for their home state, a lot of Americans went back, but you didn't have that going on there.

MILLER: Those from the Baltics went back to something. Bosnia was still kind of a mess and, I mean a lot of them were conflicted and a lot of them we met when I would come back I remember meeting with large communities in Chicago, in Washington, New York, very large Bosnian communities. They had family back there, they'd send remittances back, but from what I recall most of them, definitely at the time, most of them were not going back. Larger numbers are going back now and you've still got a very high unemployment rate. We've stayed in touch with some young people, kids of others. We were just at a party a couple of weeks ago with some of our Bosnian friends and they were just talking about the conditions. It still is extremely hard for a young person to find a job there. We had this loan guarantee program and we had an extremely committed USAID (United States Agency for International Development) director there. He had been there and he was just 100% dedicated. And I remember before I was going out being briefed by him on this loan guarantee program. And I asked him what the default rate was and he says about 5%. That's not good, but bearable I guess or acceptable by certain standards. Well, it turns out I get out there and I found out the default rate is really closer to 25% and I just absolutely hit the ceiling. And I'll spare you all the details. He left after a while. And I'll spare you the details on that too, but I pushed hard to get 40 million dollars of that loan program back to the U.S. Treasury because I didn't feel we could spend it properly. And we did. I obviously was not the most popular guy at USAID for doing this, but I think we ended up getting most of the money back in other programs, and I think it was the right thing to do.

Q: Well, did you find that the officials, not only the elected ones but the people who held office, were they generating corruption? Was this the main driving force or not?

MILLER: They were pretty dominant. I mean again, you know, it's hard to generalize. I mean every rule has its exception and I'm not going to say everyone in Bosnia was a crook, but the corruption was pretty endemic and it was pretty tough. I felt 100% since we were making such an investment in Bosnia that we had a right to be involved. Near the end of my tour there was a bank that was basically laundering a lot of dirty money in Herzegovina. It was a Croat bank. The High Representative's staff raided the bank and it was kind of violent and then we brought in a person who we funded to go start leading an effort to go through the books. We thought it'd be 90 days. She was there six years later. Just fighting massive amounts of corruption was tough because it was pretty endemic.

Q: What about Russian influence there? I mean this is still a time when the Russian state was—still does—but then particularly it had a lot of corruption problems.

MILLER: Right.

Q: And the Russian representation, fellow Slavs and all that, what was happening in that arena?

MILLER: Well, the Russians—the Russian ambassador wasn't tremendously active. They were always defending the Serbs, as they are to this day very much against the creation of Kosovo. And we didn't find many areas to cooperate on. The Russians did

have a true presence there but they worked under an SFOR (NATO forces) general, an American SFOR general. I never got any terrible reports about Russian activities. I did hear through some of the NGOs (non-government organizations) that there was a good deal of trafficking in women that took place in the Russian zone in which the Russian troops were part and parcel of the problem, not the solution. But that was kind of more anecdotal stuff than anything else.

Q: How did you find the groups? You know, from the simplicity point of view, Bosniaks are Muslim. The Croatians are Catholic and the Serbs are Orthodox. I remember I had a young Muslim man—claimed to be a Muslim—and he was telling me as we drank our beer and ate our pork chops, I asked him if he'd ever been to a mosque. He said no, but he was a Muslim. I mean, it wasn't—and this is a younger generation and all. I mean how did you find the religiosity or if that's a word of the area?

MILLER: I mean there's a difference between then and now. When I was there not a lot of people were wearing burqas and veils and that kind of stuff. The Saudis were building massive mosques all over Bosnia (they built one that cost many tens of millions of dollars). That was kind of a part of their foreign aid program. There was money, a lot of money coming from the Middle East and some of it was coming in to fund activities that we found anti-U.S. and anti-Western. I can get to that later. But, at the time you'd go through the key streets in Sarajevo and there's several blocks that are just beautiful. Literally there was a Turkish section called the Baščaršija and then there was kind of an Austro-Hungarian section. It's like you're in two different worlds and you're literally walking down the same street. But you'd see a lot more mini skirts than scarves. That's changed a little bit now. But you know, the religiosity, as you call it, wasn't that people were deeply devout in terms of the traditional indicators of devoutness. But people had been killed in the name of religion even though, as I said before, when I got there I found that economics was more at the root of a lot of the hostilities than religion. But I think that's changed a little bit now. I think it's changed around the world.

Q: Well, were we concerned about the Islamic influence, particularly in Saudi Arabia and all? I mean this is before 9/11.

MILLER: Right.

Q: We were beginning to have our problems.

MILLER: We were concerned about some fighters who had come from the Arab world to fight during the war—and I think it was called the Mujahideen Brigade. We were concerned because they never left and were anti-Western.

Q: Yeah.

MILLER: And they had stayed—they had come in to help the Bosniaks who were getting—literally getting massacred by the Serbs, and they had stayed—they had married Bosnian women. A lot of them were living in a town north of Sarajevo, a couple hours

north of Sarajevo. And there was a bit of concern about their activities even before 9/11. It was something that was kind of on my agenda as something I did raise with the government from time to time. We later found that those concerns were valid. There was good reason for them. A couple people were arrested and the rest is history. They had been targeting the U.S. Embassy. So yeah, some concern. Did I do it every day? No.

Q: You mention the major powers that were there and that Turkey had opted out at some point. What was behind that?

MILLER: No, I didn't say Turkey had opted out. I said Turkey was a key player. The Turkish ambassador was relatively active. The Ottoman Empire had gotten as far as Sarajevo. It had gotten as far as Bosnia and hadn't gotten any further. So they were a player.

Q: There's a great book by Ivo Andric called <u>The Bosnian Story</u>.

MILLER: Oh yeah, sure.

Q: Or <u>Bosnian Chronicles</u>.

MILLER: Mm-hmm.

Q: Which I read while I was—back then. Very illuminating. How about the problem of the Srpska Republika and Mladić and Karadžić? I mean, you know, one had the impression from newspaper accounts and all that these certified war criminals and their ilk were wandering around the Serbian enclave.

MILLER: Right.

Q: And some are protected by the French.

MILLER: Mm-hmm.

Q: Or at least the French were—how did you view it?

MILLER: Well, I heard those stories. The stories that I heard, including the French protection—I mean I heard that Karadžić was, you know, in Pale and other places right above Sarajevo from time to time, that Mladić was largely in the eastern part of the Republic of Srpska. And the stories that I've heard about French protection were stuff I heard. I can't comment much further on that because I just can't at this point. The general view was you had this massive NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) force and if they really wanted to they could have picked them up. By the time I got there I think they really did want to. I think that it wasn't quite that simple—a couple things weren't easily understood by an outsider. Number one, these guys went around with plenty of security and their security practices were very, very good. So they wouldn't have been taken without a big firefight and there would have been a bunch of casualties. And I think that

concerned people. Number two, it wasn't—at least from my knowledge—that you ever knew where they were at any point in time. You might have known or you might have had some information they had been in a place several days or several weeks before. But that wasn't actionable intelligence. And the lesson that I learned was it's a lot of rugged land and if you have good security practices and you have the support of the population, which these guys did in Republika Srpska, you can hide forever. And so all the conspiracy theories about, you know, we could have picked them—that might have been true before I got there. By the time I was there, I think it was hard. I think it was very, very hard. I heard all kinds of stories. I know of all kinds of special efforts to go after them, which I can't get into. But at the end of the day the big conspiracy theory of we could have gotten them very easily when I was there, during the time I was there. I just never found it to be valid.

Q: What was your impression of the state of Croatia and its rule in Bosnia?

MILLER: Well, the dominant party in Croatia was the HDZ (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica (Croatian Democratic Union)), of which there was an HDZ dominant party in Bosnia. And these guys were pretty hard line, you know, Croat nationalist types. And the HDZ—and the HDZ leader in Croatia was Tudjman, you know, until he died.

Q: Yeah.

MILLER: And there's very close linkage between the two HDZ parties in Croatia and Bosnia. I can't remember when it was, but when I was in Bosnia the HDZ had been thrown out of office and some more elements who didn't particularly get along that well with the HDZ in Bosnia came in. So it made it much harder for the HDZ in Bosnia. Not impossible, just made it harder for them to practice their hard line policies. Because that umbilical cord with Croatia was less so. But the HDZ in Bosnia was still dominant. And the HDZ in Bosnia made it very, very difficult for any kind of Croat party to—or any party that included, you know, multi-ethnic party to take root, particularly in Herzegovina, which was the main area that they controlled.

Q: Did you have much contact with our ambassador in Zagreb?

MILLER: Yeah, I did—partly because he was a friend. And I was real close friends and former colleagues in Athens with our DCM in Zagreb. We used to stay at their place because often the airport in Sarajevo would be snowed out or fogged out so we had to go out through Croatia. We had to drive about five hours up to Zagreb to get out, and I would stay either at the ambassador's house or the DCM's.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

MILLER: Bill Montgomery, and the DCM was Chuck English.

Q: You had good connections with the ambassador in Serbia?

MILLER: Yeah. Yeah, we all talked. I didn't have a lot of interaction with our ambassador in Serbia, much more with our ambassador in Croatia just because there was a lot more business going on.

Q: Well, did you have the feeling that Serbia was—well, how stood things vis-à-vis Kosovo when you were there?

MILLER: I was so focused on Bosnia and there were so many people focused on Kosovo that I knew it was a big issue and it was heating up. The Serbs were taking heavy pressure from the west, including the bombing. I expected them to retaliate in Bosnia, but since there were so many other people focused on Kosovo I can't say I have real strong memories of it.

Q: Just sort of completing the bounds, how stood things with Montenegro?

MILLER: You know, that wasn't an issue for us. That was a Serb issue. Montenegro and Kosovo were kind of a Serb issue. There were others working it. We did start a small liaison office in Podgorica when I was there. And we'd go down to Dubrovnik. That was kind of where we would go to chill out for a weekend. And in Dubrovnik I'd see the people from the U.S., people at the liaison office at Montenegro. We'd talk. But it wasn't integrally involved in what I was doing and so, you know, I'd just try to be supportive.

Q: Well, was there a viable port or exit to the outside world?

MILLER: Bosnia had 18 kilometers of seacoast. And you can see—you can see it here on the map.

Q: We're looking on a map.

MILLER: There it is right now, you can see that little piece. And there is a port called Neum, N-E-U-M, and extremely small. And you know, I mean Croatia, all stuff came through Croatia. They tried to build Neum into something. It didn't work that well. Dubrovnik was real close by and that was a great port. And you could see the ports, the Croatian ports further—further up. And so Bosnia really struggled. It was essentially like a land locked country.

Q: All of us who are old Yugoslav hands and I mentioned I went back to the early '60s, thinking that wonderful bridge on the Mostar and all.

MILLER: Yeah.

Q: How stood things when you were there?

MILLER: Well, the bridge had been blown up by Croatian forces during the war. It was a very historic 16th century bridge. It was called Stari Most. And it had blown up and it was the symbol of interethnic cooperation, because both Bosniaks and Croats live in the city

and that bridge was the kind of symbol of the cooperation. So it was blown up by artillery. That was quite a symbolic thing. The international community thought it was extremely important to rebuild the bridge and it cost a humongous sum of money. I remember when Holbrooke was there after I first arrived, we went down to Mostar, and Holbrooke, as only he can, stands on the river bed pointing up to the bridge, and of course all the cameras are angled up so you can see Holbrooke's face and the remnants of the bridge, the destroyed bridge there, and you could see all these big, big blocks of concrete that had fallen to the river from the bridge. And Holbrooke gives some kind of dramatic speech about Bosnia won't be whole until this bridge is rebuilt. The bridge was rebuilt well after I left. God knows why it cost so much money. It was a difficult engineering thing. It's not that big a bridge.

Q: No, it wasn't.

MILLER: Now it's there and it was rebuilt to spec, to look like the original bridge. And so it's a big deal and between that and the shrine right outside Mostar, big tourist attraction, Medjugorje, with the shrine.

Q: This was where the Virgin Mary is supposed to have appeared.

MILLER: Well, yeah, according to some teenagers. Great movie starring—God, who was the guy in West Wing? The president. What was the guy's name?

ANNONYMOUS: Martin Sheen?

MILLER: Yeah, starring Martin Sheen. [Gospa: The Miracle of Medjugorje]

Q: By the time you were there would you say that the interest in Bosnia had—within the State Department, the government, had diminished considerably?

MILLER: Actually, I think the time I was there there still was a great deal of interest. I think it diminished with the change of administrations. We still had a lot of AID (Agency for International Development) money, we had a big presence there. We had a special envoy for the Balkans. Interest was waning, but it was still pretty high during the time I was there. I think the watershed was when the administrations changed in 2001.

Q: We're still talking about the Clinton --

MILLER: Yeah, I mean I was there when the administrations changed and I remember—I remember in the campaign Condi Rice made a statement about we're not going to have the 82nd Airborne escorting kindergarteners to school. And that was kind of a big deal in the campaign. And I think, specifically talking about places like Bosnia, which by the way, to this day there has not been one U.S. peacekeeper killed in action in Bosnia.

Q: Well, one was killed handling the mine or something like that.

MILLER: Well, anyway that's something that people have always said. I can't swear to—anyway, so it did—the campaign I think, you know, the Clinton Administration, which had been the parent of the Dayton Accords, obviously felt like we had to continue with the job and I think if Gore had been elected I think we probably would have. And the Bush Administration thought we shouldn't have troops doing peacekeeping duties. And that was kind of a mini controversy during the campaign. I remember I was there during the election. I was supposed to go to the University of Sarajevo the next day. My wife was teaching there. I was supposed to speak to several classes about the U.S. election, and obviously the results of the U.S. election. Well, I never made it because it would be many weeks before we knew the results. And I have a lot of funny stories to talk about. Because the Bosnians had had elections several months before, and it took them several days to get the results and we in the international community said this is unacceptable that you take so long to get results. Then we had our election and it took us several months and of course the Bosnians got a tremendous kick out of this.

But the administration—we finally did have a new president and we had a new secretary of defense, and were very fixated on trying to focus our troops on what their real mission should be, which is fighting wars. And I, as I had told you at an early iteration, had worked for Rumsfeld before. I stayed in pretty close touch with him. I had actually invited him out to Bosnia when he was a private businessperson. And this is a story that most people don't know because when he came into office and the Bush Administration was highly critical of our troops doing peacekeeping, most people thought Rumsfeld had never set foot in the Balkans. I had invited Rumsfeld. We'd stayed in touch and I had gotten a message from him that he was coming to Europe for some business board meeting. And I said well, why don't you come spend a couple days in Bosnia. This is a couple months after I had come in as ambassador. And he did. This is December of '99. And I introduced him to all these important Bosnians. He's a private citizen and I kind of wasn't—I didn't think he'd ever have another job in the federal government. And I introduced him to all the leadership, I gave a dinner that night—the one night when he was there. I think he was only there two days. And he got to meet all these guys. And they were kind of squabbly and stuff like that. And I don't think they made a great impression on him. But the interesting thing is a lot of people when Rumsfeld came in said he had never set foot in the Balkans. He never said a word about this. And I never said a word because I wanted to respect his privacy. But there was a lot of criticism, you know, how can you make decisions about something you don't know about—and he had actually met a lot of leaders and knew something. Just a little footnote. Anyway, I somehow sent a message to him and I said, "I think your administration, *my* administration," because I was working for them, "I think they're misdirected. I think we've had a big success in Bosnia and if American troops start pulling out then the rest of the foreign troops will pull out shortly thereafter."

And he says, "OK, next time you're back in Washington let's talk about it." And I must have sent this message maybe in February or so, maybe March of 2001. I was back in April of 2001. But shortly after he'd come into office. And he invited me to come in and talk about it and present my arguments. I don't think he agreed with me. And so I thought I was just going to go over to the Pentagon and have a talk with the guy who I had known

for 20 years. And I get over to his office and they usher me into his office. The Secretary of Defense has a dining room right adjoining the office. We talked for a little while and he said, "Well, you know, your arguments sound interesting. You can make them to my colleagues," and opens up the room. And there's the entire civilian and military leadership of the Pentagon. And he says, "OK Tom, you're on."

And I don't remember eating lunch that day—that was over lunch—but I remember making the argument. And I kind of felt I'd gotten my day. The argument was basically U.S. leadership is indispensable and if we start pulling our troops out others are going to pull their troops out, and it's just a little bit too early and it's not costing us a lot. So let's kind of a do a slow trajectory rather than an abrupt trajectory. There was no question that our troops should leave at some point in the not too distant future. And that was basically my argument. And I used the Lebanon argument, you know, as I told you in an earlier section. Basically something that he had experienced when I worked for him when we were in Lebanon; do it on a controlled trajectory, rather than an abrupt trajectory. And so, I felt good that I got to at least make the argument. The fact of the matter is the troops weren't pulled out for several years. And that was good. I'm modest enough and I honestly don't know—I'm sure there are many, many other reasons that were far more compelling than that day, but I'd like to think that perhaps my arguments had some impact on him and others.

Q: It appears that although Rumsfeld was certainly well plugged in to things, there was a whole almost philosophy within the new Bush Administration of "Let's change things around."

MILLER: Right.

Q: The Bush administration philosophy was, "Let's get these troops out. They shouldn't be nation building."

MILLER: Right.

Q: And he had a concept of a leader military, which made very good sense for the time.

MILLER: Right.

Q: But it got caught up in the Iraq thing. And I think—I mean it was a mindset.

MILLER: Yeah, well, you know, in the State Department they used to say that the early Bush years the foreign policy was an ABC Policy, Anything But Clinton. And it was, you know, you could look around in the peace process. Bush didn't want to put the prestige of the presidency on the line. He thought Clinton had gone too far and gotten too personally involved in the Middle East peace process. Peacekeepers around the world, U.S. troops peacekeepers, and there are a number of, not being hard enough on the North Koreans, and the list goes on and on and on. And—and I think from my little corner of the world the stuff that I was paying most attention to, it kind of rang true that it was ABC,

Anything But Clinton.

Q: Well, were there any significant sort of stories?

MILLER: I got two great stories.

Q: OK.

MILLER: I was hoping you would ask. That's what I wrote down.

Q: (laughs)

MILLER: One—two interesting stories. One involves war criminals. Obviously the big fish were Mladić and Karadžić, and Karadžić obviously who was found many years later. But there were a number of other fish out there that were indicted as war criminals. Now the way it worked was The Hague Tribunal would issue these secret indictments. And they were secret. And I can't get into all the stuff that I knew, but as the American ambassador I was fairly well plugged in. At the time the commander of NATO was Wes Clark and I had developed a pretty good relationship with Wes and I still see him to this day. And I told them that—I said, you know, this is a hearts and minds thing as much as a criminal justice thing. And there was one person in particular who I kind of sensed was going to be indicted or was already indicted and I found out later was, who had been briefly the president of Republika Srpska when some of the worst stuff happened during the war. And she had formed her own party. Her name was Biljana Plavšić. That's P-L-A-V-S-I-C. Biljana was the first name. She had formed her own party, which was part of this group of relatively moderate Serb parties.

Q: I remember seeing her name on the ballot.

MILLER: Yeah.

Q: In one of the elections.

MILLER: I would see her as one of the Serb-Bosnia political leaders when I went up to Banja Luka, which I did every month or so. And I learned that she had been indicted. There was a secret indictment and the order was going to go out for NATO troops to pick her up. And NATO troops, when they're arresting someone, don't do it delicately. And I just kind of said, you know, this is going to really be a PR (public relations) disaster. And I said if she's ever indicted let me take a stab at getting her to turn herself in. So I'm going home. My wife and I were—Sarajevo was snowed in as usual, or fogged in. And it was Christmas of 2000, December 21st. And we're driving up to Zagreb to go out to Washington from Zagreb. And it's about midnight and I'm staying at the DCM's house, Chuck English, who is our current ambassador in Bosnia today. And I'm staying with Chuck and Patti English and it must have been about midnight and I get a phone call from a senior official in the Department saying, "OK, you know, I know what you've been pushing for—to take a stab at Plavšić to get her to turn herself in. You've got 24

hours."

I believe that Secretary Albright had been involved in this process, but it wasn't her call. It was one of her staff. I had bronchitis. I just had kind of worn myself down and I was really not feeling good. So I'm asked—instructed. My wife goes back to the States from Zagreb and I'm asked to turn around and go back to Banja Luka, which is maybe two hours away and try to convince Plavšić to turn herself in. I got on the phone at about one in the morning with my security guys in Sarajevo, woke them up because you couldn't travel—if you were the American ambassador you couldn't travel anywhere without your full security package. So they had to come up to Zagreb to get me with the armored car. And so they immediately get in the car, they get up there about eight in the morning or so, and we go back to Banja Luka and we get there about 10 or so. I had called Plavšić and told her I wanted to see her. And she's like, 75-years-old, a grandmotherly type, looks like a grandmother. She could see I wasn't feeling well. So I spent a whole day literally in her apartment trying to convince her to turn herself in. She spends the whole day making me tea and putting her honey in it and doing all this grandmotherly stuff. We leave late and depart about 6:00 or so, go back to Zagreb. She says, "I'll give it some serious thought." And in fact, about a month or so later she did turn herself in. She was tried, she was found guilty, she got 11 years and she's was recently released. She's probably 80 now or so. I'm really glad I did that. The fact that she turned herself in voluntarily prevented this from being a big PR negative for us. I think it was win-win all around.

The second story I wanted to mention was Srebrenica. Srebrenica, you all know was the worst massacre in post-World War II Europe. 8,000 Muslim boys and men were killed by the Serbs, just massacred. The international community had focused for a good number of years on trying to get Muslims back into Srebrenica. And it was kind of a slow haul to get a cemetery established there and memorial so people—because they had found over the years a lot of remains and there was a wonderful institution, organization called International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP)—that had done all the DNA research on remains. And they really kind of set the standard that's been used in many countries since then. And so you had a lot of remains that had been found and DNA had been taken. And so the fifth anniversary of the Srebrenica Massacre was coming up in 2000 and the High Rep, who I said was kind of a timid guy, pulled us all together. I think it's July 11th, if I remember correctly. The High Rep had pulled us all together and said, "You know, there's a lot of volatility, there's a lot of crazies out there." So he said, "I don't think we should go out to Srebrenica to commemorate the massacre. I think we should do it here at Sarajevo where the security will be much better."

And we're all sitting around the table and we say yeah, I guess so, including myself. And then I walked out of the room and I said, "You know, that's really sending the wrong message. That's a terrible message to send." So I called Mort Abramowitz—there's always been a guy, who you might have interviewed, who was my first ambassador when I came in the Foreign Service. And he's one of the most ethical, moral people I've ever met. And he's still around and his name is Mort Abramowitz. So I called Mort for advice.

Q: I haven't. Somebody's interviewed him.

MILLER: And I call Mort. Mort had retired by then, but he was kind of always a moral compass I looked up to. And I said, "Mort, let me do a sanity check with you." And I said, "It just doesn't feel right." I said, "I think as the American ambassador, even if I'm going myself, I should go to Srebrenica to commemorate the fifth anniversary." That was a biggie.

He says, "You're absolutely right."

So I called Petritsch (the High Rep) back, or I went and saw him and I said, "Wolfgang, I know I agreed to do this thing in Sarajevo, but it's just wrong and I'm going to do it in Srebrenica." And he was just pissed as hell. He said, "But you promised to do it in Sarajevo." I said, "Look, you know, it just doesn't sound right. It not the right thing to do just because we're concerned about our personal security. These were people who were massacred and what kind of message are we sending?"

So my colleague who was in charge of all the UN (United Nations) stuff, a guy named Jacques Klein, who if you haven't interviewed --

Q: I've tried to get Jacques, he says he'll do it sometime, but …

MILLER: Sometime, OK. Anyway, well Jacques has got more of a UN story than he's got a Foreign Service story, because he went to work for the UN years ago while he was still a Foreign Service officer. Anyway, Jacques hears about this and he says, you know, "I'm with you, Tom." So Jacques and I are going to go out there. Well, the rest of our ambassador colleagues kind of had second thoughts and they all decided that they really needed to go out there. And that was an example of one of the things where Petritsch and I, our relationship, which was rocky, got worse as a result of that. But it was absolutely the right thing to do. And, by then the story was out and I was a real hero among the families, Srebrenica families, survivors. And it was absolutely the right thing to do. And we went out there. It was a very emotional ceremony and tens of thousands of people showed up. The Serb hard liners had threatened violence, but it never was pulled off. Clearly, SFOR was out in large numbers and it turned out okay. But it's an example of sometimes you make a decision in a group and you kind of go along with others and then your conscious kind of gets the best of you. And I'm really glad that I did act on it rather than just feeling bad and going along with the group.

Q: Yeah, well sometimes say, second thoughts—I mean there is a sort of what is the right thing to do. And when you start thinking about it all of a sudden it becomes rather clear.

MILLER: Absolutely. And you know, I mean the bottom line is as an American ambassador your instructions only go so far. If by the time you've become an ambassador you haven't figured out the basic texture of what you're out there for, what you're representing, you shouldn't be an ambassador in the first place. I know this sounds really kind of simplistic, but this has to do—at its core what distinguishes us from other

countries' values is other countries look at their interests. We all look at our interests, and I'm not saying we don't, but our values and the core of what the United States is all about. So you know, I'm a throwback in that respect and it just was one example where I thought—and the American ambassador in Bosnia did have a special place, as he or she does in many countries. People look at you and they look at what you're doing, not just what you say but what you do, and if you're doing stuff different from what you're saying that's all noticed. The word is hypocrisy.

Q: What was happening while you were there in Srebrenica? Had there been any returns?

MILLER: Yeah, there had been some returns. And Srebrenica I kind of made a special project. I was out there a lot, and the international community, including the Americans, funded a lot of the returns because you had to have housing. I mean the stuff was expensive. The feeling was if you can't fix Srebrenica you can't fix anything in Bosnia. And Srebrenica was the worst example of all the atrocities that had happened. So there had been some returns. By the time I got out there the mayor was actually a Bosniak and they were cooperating with a number of the Serbs on the city council. It was the only place that I got really involved in local municipal politics. I mean it was an extremely sad place. A lot of minerals in the general area. There was a massive battery factory right outside Srebrenica and that's where they had brought a lot of these people after the Serbs came in. That's where they separated the women and the men, women and children on one hand and the men in the other. And they sent the women and children in buses to Tuzla and then they basically massacred the men. You know, they divided them up. A lot of the men tried to escape and they were killed because what they were doing was they were following the power lines between Srebrenica and Tuzla. Tuzla was another real big city in Bosniak territory. They set out to walk about 100 kilometers along the route of the power lines. So the area beneath the power lines was cleared, the ground was clear and it was pretty open. So these guys started following the power lines and there were Serb paramilitaries in both sides in the woods and they just—it was a turkey shoot. They just massacred thousands of these guys. And then the ones who'd given themselves up, they loaded into trucks and took them to spots and just shot them. And that was many thousands more. Over 8,000 altogether. They are still finding mass graves.

Q: When you were there were the Dutch making any extra effort for Srebrenica?

MILLER: Yeah. There was a Dutch battalion in Srebrenica when it fell and the Dutch always felt bad about this. I mean the reality is that they had tried to resist. My opinion was they would have gotten massacred. But they didn't try. And I think there was a lot of finger pointing at the Dutch and there is a big national debate in the Netherlands. And I think a lot of recriminations and we should have tried to do something. So the Dutch had one of the biggest AID programs per capita. I think they have probably the largest per capita AID program of any of the western countries in Bosnia. And you know, to this day they feel a special responsibility.

Q: Yeah. Did you find much reconciliation on the part of the Croats, Bosniaks, and

Serbs? But particularly the other part of the Bosniaks and to a certain extent the Croatians?

MILLER: Well, cooperation between Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats was easier, but not easy, than Bosniaks and Bosnian Serbs. A lot of the Serbs ended up in Republika Srpska and they kicked a lot of the Bosniaks out of Republika Srpska. The problem with Bosnia, unlike many other countries, is the populations were mixed throughout. It wasn't like you had any of these groups living only in enclaves. They were all living throughout the country. Even Sarajevo you got a lot of Serbs. It was dominant Muslim—predominant Muslim, but there were a lot of Serbs and some Croats there. The Croats were more ethnically distinct because a lot of them were in Herzegovina. But they were also in other towns throughout the federation. So did I find a lot of reconciliation? A lot of that was with the international community was putting a lot of money in and we would put money in—like for instance, schools. We would say we will not build schools or rebuild schools that will stay segregated. So we're not going to put money into schools where in the morning Bosniak kids would go to school, in the afternoon it would be Croat kids at the same school. And we just said—and I was very big on this. I said, I'm not going to tell you how to write your ethnic policies, but I'm sure as hell not going to put U.S. money into reinforcing this kind of stuff. And it was a mixed bag. I remember there was one town where my wife did a lot of work where they just actually said well, keep your money; we're just going to do it this way. This was Bosniak and Croat. And some places it worked. It worked much better in Sarajevo than elsewhere. And in some places it was really tough. To do returns in Republika Srpska of Bosniaks probably was the toughest thing of all. And to do them in Srebrenica was probably the toughest place in Republika Srpska.

Q: How did you find religious leaders?

MILLER: We don't have enough time to talk about this. The Muslim cleric, the Reis, (head of the Bosnian Muslims) Mustafa Cerić we call him, was a guy I got to know—I mean the head Muslim cleric lived in Chicago for a good number of years, and I was born in Chicago. So we got along famously. He was basically helpful, basically positive. They had formed a reconciliation council, the Catholic Croat cardinal, the Serb Orthodox Patriarch, and the Reis. One of the guys who was most involved was a guy named Jakob Finci, who was the Jewish leader of Sarajevo. And there's a fantastic story—there's a lot of fantastic stories about Jakob Finci and—specifically and the Jews generally who had come over from the Spanish Inquisition and had been living in Sarajevo in Bosnia since the late 1400s. And so Jakob was very, very involved in this reconciliation effort, and he got a lot of money from the Soros Foundation for these efforts. The Serb patriarch was not particularly helpful and the Croat cardinal was also not particularly helpful. I mean they went through the motions.

May I tell one more story here?

Q: Please.

MILLER: There's a great story that you guys will really appreciate. There the lore and legend of every place. And one of the great stories of Sarajevo—you've probably heard this story—the Haggadah?

Q: Tell it.

MILLER: There was a story that in the early 1500s just when the Jews started immigrating to Sarajevo from Spain, as a result of the Inquisition, that a number of wealthy families had come and there was to be a wedding. And as a wedding present back then a very wealthy bride and groom from wealthy families, they were presented this—it's called a Haggadah. It's like a bible with—it's not really a bible, but it's a holy book used for the Passover Seder ceremony, in Hebrew, with a lot of pictures and all that kind of stuff. Beautifully inscribed and beautiful pictures. This is all before the printing press. So the Haggadah of Sarajevo had over hundreds of years kind of assumed mythic proportions. And it was always there and it was always guarded and it became like a national treasure until World War II and the Nazis came in and it ended up in the National Museum. The Nazis immediately came to the National Museum and they wanted more than anything to get their hands on the Haggadah, because this is the way you break the Bosnians, or you break Tito's back, and go after Jews. And so a Nazi officer bursts in and says, "I know you got the Haggadah here," to the museum curator.

And the guy says, "You know, it's funny you ask. Someone just took it a couple days ago." And he makes up a description of the earlier guy while in fact he had it hidden in his desk. And so they saved it from the Nazis and it kind of disappeared. And the story grew bigger and bigger about the Haggadah of Sarajevo and no one ever really knew if it was true or not, but then the book resurfaced sometime I think in the '60s and was put back in the National Museum. And this became the biggest symbol of the country. And it was extremely prized by all sides. Then the war in Bosnia breaks out and of course the Serbs go after the Haggadah in the museum. And it just disappears. Serbs did—I think they did get into museum, but it was gone. And by then people thought it was just gone for good. And the war is over. The Haggadah does not reappear. And here we are—I get there four years after the war is over, five years goes by and it's 2000. And my UN colleague, Jacques Klein, had taken a real interest in this. And it was kind of a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) treasure so he had gotten money to look for it and to restore it if it ever surfaced because the thing's now 500-years-old or so. But no one has any idea where it is. And it's just kind of assumed that it did disappear.

One day I get a call from Jacques. I think this is about 2001, early 2001. He's very excited and he says, "You got an hour?"

And I said, "Yeah, sure."

He said, "I can't talk over the phone. I want you to meet me at so and so, and I want to show you something you're not going to believe. You can bring your wife, Bonnie, too." We meet somewhere and he takes us down to a bank vault several stories underground in

Sarajevo, one of the local banks. And we get there and he has told us that we're going to see the Haggadah, that they have found it. It had been in this bank vault for all—for however long—and we put on gloves, special gloves, and Jakob Finci's with us, the Jewish leader, and we went and they pulled it out of a safety deposit box, and there it is. And it's absolutely gorgeous. Just a great story. There had been books written about this story. [Geraldine Brooks The People of the Book] And there's probably going to be a movie. I know there's several people who want to do a movie on this. And it's back in the National Museum now.

Q: Wow. You left there in 2000.

MILLER: 2001. What happened was Colin Powell came over in April of 2001 and Colin Powell even then was a rock star, you know. He came over and he knew that we needed to pull out gradually. So he pulls me aside. And I really didn't know him, you know, I mean I'd met him before, but he wasn't like a lifelong buddy—he pulls me aside. He used to call me Tommy, you know, he's just a great guy with people. And I don't think I was anything special, but he just kind of made you feel like you were the most important person in his life. So he pulls me aside, he says, "You know, you've really done a good job here. I'm really, really pleased and very proud of what you've done. Where do you want to go next?"

And I said, "Well, God, Mr. Secretary, I'd go anywhere." I always knew I wanted to get out of the Foreign Service and do another thing, but you know, I figured the one post that I wanted to go more than anything else was to return to Athens. I'd been a political officer, I had been the DCM, and I wanted to return as ambassador. So I said, "I want to go to Athens, if you can do it."

He says, "Well, let me check into it." He says, "You know, I know you're coming back to Washington next week. Come and see me."

"OK, Mr. Secretary."

So I go home and tell my wife and she's like, "That's so cool. I can't believe it."

And so I go into Washington—I go to see him next week, the next week and this is like April of 2001. And he says, "Got a problem. He says Karl Rove has promised this job to a wealthy Greek American. And you know how our system works."

And I said, "Well, OK."

And he says, "But I'm willing to fight for you. I'll go see the president on your behalf."

I said, "Well, that's cool."

He said, "Well, why don't you get your buddy Rumsfeld to go weigh in as well."

So I said, "Sure." So I called Rumsfeld and I said, you know, "I'd really like to do this."

He said, "Well, I'll see what I can do."

This is a time when Powell and Rumsfeld were still on speaking terms—this is early in the administration. So they were cooperating. Powell goes over—and this is all from him, I mean I wasn't there. And he goes over to see the president, makes the arguments about how they should send me, a career guy. And Rumsfeld weighs in as well, because he told me he did. Well, lo and behold, I got the job. There's a lot of twists and turns, but I got the job. And I was thrilled and made a decision then and there that this would be my last post so I could get out and I'd go out on a high—go back to the country that I knew so well and where we had a lot of friends and acquaintances. So we left Sarajevo in August of 2001, came back, took a quick trip to Alaska just as a vacation from Vancouver to Alaska boat trip cruise. And came back here in early must have been about September 4th of 2001, maybe a little bit later. And I came over to FSI (Foreign Service Institute) just to do a little brush up Greek. I didn't think I didn't need that much. And I was really surprised with how it was in my second day of class they set up a tutorial for me at FSI and I was just shocked that I had retained as much as I had. And I was just feeling good about my learning curve and I had this wonderful teacher. And this is like I think a Tuesday morning, September 11th. And I'm in class with her and we're just zooming along, and I don't want to take a break. I kind of hear this commotion. Stuff that was out in the hall and I figure maybe it's a fire drill or something like that. And you know, it's about 9:30 or so or somewhere around there, between 9, 9:30. And so I said to Elaine, I said, "Just let's go on."

She says, "Want to find out what's going on?"

Said, "Nah, I don't care." So that was obviously—you know what was happening then. You know, the planes had hit the towers. So I was probably the last person on the FSI campus to know what had happened. And by 10:00—my wife in another Greek class, they just closed down FSI. And we got in our car and we were staying with some friends in Old Town (Alexandria, Virginia). And the Pentagon had been hit and the Pentagon's only two miles away. And we figure we'll just go to Old Town. I mean FSI was closed, the government was closed. None of us knew what was happening. All thought there might be another attack. You know, there was actually a false report that a bomb at the State Department had gone off. I don't know if you remember all this stuff.

Q: As a matter fact, I was on a bus, a shuttle bus, pulling into the State Department.

MILLER: OK, well --

Q: And all of a sudden the State Department—all of a sudden all these security guards came out looking around, you know. So, I walked back across the river and I was going to an interview. But we decided …

MILLER: Everything stopped. So we got in the car and were just trying to get back to

Old Town. It took us three hours to get from here to Old Town, only a few miles. It was just total absolute gridlock. We finally got to Old Town. We went walking later. It must have been early afternoon. And we walked—downtown Alexandria, Old Town. It was like a ghost town. There was just nothing there but the stores were kind of open. We were staying with friends. It was years later with these friends we bought a place in Old Town, which is where we live today. But we walked to the airport. And the airport's about four miles away. There was literally nothing to do and everyone was feeling devastated. We walked up to the airport. It was a pretty warm day. And we get there and National Airport is closed. And it's just flooded with police and guys who, whatever they were, but you know, they weren't police, military, what have you. And as soon as we got there someone stops us and asks us for ID and I said, "Well, I'm a diplomat."

And he says, "I don't care what you are. Get the hell out of here." Very rude and all kind of stuff. So we realized—and there were no planes flying in and out of National at the time. So he said, "Just get out of here." So we just turned around and left.

Q: I want to just go back. When you left Bosnia in your mind whither Bosnia?

MILLER: When I left I was much more optimistic than I am today, because we had helped this coalition of moderate political parties get into power. They were still arguing about who was going to do what and they were slow in putting together a government. But I kind of thought they could pull it out, they could do it, it would be a struggle. And it turned out they got turned out of office the next year after I left, and they never got back in again, and the hard liners have been in there ever since. So I was a lot more optimistic then. Now that I come back to Washington I kind of stayed in touch with people in my various jobs. And people would write me and now that I'm back in Washington I've been asked to kind of get involved in a couple working groups having to do with Bosnia. And I think people kind of reflect back on a decade ago when there was so much hope, there was so much promise. But it didn't come to pass. There was one point where a number of NGOs got together and they took me out for coffee. There were about three or four different NGOs. They asked if they could kind of bandy my name about. This was start of Obama now, or was it—I'm just trying to think—2009. Yeah, it was start of Obama Administration. If they could use my name, you know, put forth my name as kind of—they were pushing for a special envoy for the Balkans. And I said no, I didn't think the position was necessary and I wasn't interested. But I've kind of been involved and stayed involved in things having to do with Bosnia. And as I say, the latest thing was this lunch at NDI (National Democratic Institute) about a month and a half ago with Zlatko Lagumdžija, who had been the prime minister, the leader of this coalition of moderates, and still has a decent chance of actually doing pretty well in the upcoming elections. (Note: His party did well and, at this writing, he is trying to put together a government.)

Q: OK. Well, do you think maybe we can go on here?

MILLER: I can't—I think we should probably break here because the—I'll tell one more quick story.

Q: OK.

MILLER: And then we can get me out to Athens. And then Athens is my last tour, so stay tuned guys. So 9/11 happens, no planes are flying, everything's kind of at a standstill. You all remember that. And I'm supposed to be sworn in on September 21, 2001. I had had my hearings, my Senate hearings. Just a cute story about the Senate hearings, which were kind of really nice and somewhere I've still got the text of it. The way they do Foreign Service officers for Senate hearings for confirmation is usually we're not that controversial so they don't have each of us go up individually. They have us go up in groups of four. And there were actually two groups of four that went up in the summer of 2001 when I went up. I was still in Bosnia. I had come back for my hearings. And I get up before the SFRC (Senate Foreign Relations Committee) and there's seven other people. Biden was chairing this thing. Biden knew me pretty well. And my kids were in the audience, and this is why I love to tell this story. My wife had stayed in Sarajevo, but my kids were there. And I had a lot of friends there as well. And Biden gets up and he says, "We got eight candidates here today and I'm sure they're all fine." And some were political, some were career. And he says, "But we have this one guy, Tom Miller," and he just starts going on about Tom Miller. And he concludes by—and you know, Biden likes to go on. And he's just saying all these wonderful things about me. It's all me in the transcript. And he concludes by saying, "As far as I'm concerned, Tom, you can just leave right now. You've already got mine and everyone else's vote and you're confirmed." And, you know, the place kind of erupted in laughter. Obviously I didn't get up and leave. I took a couple softball questions. But that was always kind of a fun thing. So I had my swearing in, which is a big deal. Swearing ins in the State Department are kind of like—they're a lot of fun because you get to invite all your friends and colleagues. And it's kind of almost like, you know, it's like a funeral but you don't have to die for it because they say wonderful things about you. But the problem with a funeral when they say wonderful things, you're dead. And you don't get to hear it. But here you get people. And Colin Powell presided at this one and I mean, God knows he had to work to get me the job. And so swearing ins are just fun and cool and this was my third swearing in. But the problem was this was September 21st and planes weren't flying and it was still kind of a difficult time. So there's all kinds of questions about how many people are going to show up, is the family coming? Well, it turned out that a lot of the family, some planes were flying by then, my brother came from California. A lot of the family drove in from Chicago. And it was all great. And Colin said wonderful things. And so, it was fantastic.

Well, then I had to get out to Greece. And it turns out that the Greek foreign minister, I learned at the last second, is coming to Washington. And the foreign minister was a guy named George Papandreou, who you might recognize is now the prime minister. So I'm asked to stay in Washington for his visit, which is totally appropriate and I would have suggested it myself if someone hadn't asked me. So he's coming in early October. So the idea was—I said, you know, OK. To Bonnie I said, "We can wait." And she said, well, we're just kind of at loose ends about how we do this logistically.

I went out for lunch somewhere around then with a friend of mine who has a private

plane. And he was going over to Greece. He had a Gulfstream and I told him about this thing. And, he said, "Well, let me do this. Let me take Bonnie and all your luggage." But anyway, the idea was he was going to take Bonnie and all of our luggage several days before on this private plane, which took off out of Manassas. National is still closed. Dulles is very, very limited, I mean if it was flying at all. And of course, you know, you have this tremendous backlog and you couldn't even get a reservation. So that's what he did. We loaded 21 suitcases or some humongous number on his Gulfstream with my wife. She goes over on a Gulfstream. She's picked up. And I arrive several days later with a briefcase. And you know, my clothes are in the closet. It was great. So I got off to a good start in Greece when I finally got there.

Q: OK, well we'll pick it up there. One question I'll ask to start with, did the Greek lobby—I mean Greek interests, did you meet with them before you went?

MILLER: A lot.

Q: And I mean because this is, you know, when we talk about this, this is for general consumption. The Greek influence in politics, particularly as it pertains to the Greek American influence, particularly as it pertains to relations to Greece --

MILLER: Right.

Q:—is only—it's number two and probably not far behind that with the Jewish-American influence on our relations with Israel.

MILLER: Right, mm-hmm.

Q: And anybody that dealt with Greece discovered—they don't think about this—the sheriff in small communities is Greek, the lawyers are Greek, the dentists. I mean it's very cohesive.

MILLER: Right, yes. The answer is I had gotten to know a lot of the leadership in the Greek American community when I first went out there as a political officer in the '80s. And then renewed this acquaintance when I was DCM in the '90s and then when I was Cyprus Coordinator. So I knew a lot of these guys quite well and they knew me, and I think they trusted me pretty much. I think if you talk to them they'd say oh, he's a straight talker, that I understood their concerns. I tried to listen more than just lecture. And you know, another conversation, another time, and we talked—we touched about this a little bit when we were talking about Israel. But I spent a good deal of my career with these two constituencies—Jewish and Greek Americans. I accept this as a part of the American political system.

They work hard on the issues that are important to them. I've never found any Greek Americans who weren't Americans first, of the leadership. But they're passionate on issues like Cyprus, on some of the bilateral issues. Most of the issues have become less contentious. Some are still passionate on we give Turkey more of a pass than we should.

But that's largely less emotional now thanks to the rapprochement between Greece and Turkey over the last decade. So when I went out there as ambassador I think I had strong support—if you had looked at the guest list—from the Greek American community and the Cypriot American community. If you looked at the guest list for my swearing in it was sprinkled with people who were from the communities. And just yesterday I had lunch with some buddies. And I mean the truth of any kind of these relationships, and this is kind of a truism of the Foreign Service, when you're ambassador everyone loves you. Everyone wants you to come to their parties or go to lunch with you. And sometimes it goes to people's heads and they actually start to believe that it's because of a force of personality or some other personal attributes. It's not true. You know, everyone loves you, everyone wants your attention. You get your phone calls returned immediately. You get invited to whatever. It's after the fact, you know, when you no longer can do anything, where the perception you can do something for them, you'll find out if there was a relationship there or not. And that's kind of where I am now. I still stay in touch with a good number of the members of the Greek American community. I consider them friends. There's nothing that I can do for them now. I'm not going to be like some ambassadors, American ambassadors who even when they leave office have been a spokeswoman or advocate for the issues of the country to which they were accredited. That's not the way I operate. I'm an American. I'm an American diplomat or an ex-American diplomat and, you know, I look after what were America's interests, not what are Greece's interests.

Q: Yeah.

MILLER: So and I'm kind of at that phase now. And the good news for me is that with most of these people I still have a very good relationship.

Q: OK, well we'll pick this up when you go to Greece—when did you go to Greece?

MILLER: Well, I got there October 5th of 2001, and I left on December 21st of 2004. And I retired from the State Department on December 31st of 2004.

Q: OK, we'll pick it up then.

MILLER: OK. Thanks guys (to interns who have been listening). You make it worthwhile.

Q: We'll—today is Bastille Day, the 14th of July, 2010 with Tom Miller. And we're off to Greece.

MILLER: Right.

Q: You were there from when to when?

MILLER: I was there as ambassador from October 5th, 2001 to December 21st, 2004.

Q: OK. What was the situation in Greece? The government, the economy, what was going on in Greece when you arrived?

MILLER: OK, well the big things going on then were there was a socialist government that had been in power since 1993. Not the same guy. Papandreou Senior, Andreas Papandreou, had died in '96 and then he was succeeded by a guy named Costas Simitis. So Simitis had been in power from '96 'til when I arrived. And he was in power for a while longer after that. The country's kind of stumbling along. The big deal was the preparations for the Olympics. They had been awarded the 2004 Olympics in 1997. So Greece was very, very absorbed with getting ready, getting all the sites and everything else, security, ready for the Olympics.

The big immediate fixation was 9/11 and how it impacted, literally around the world.

Q: OK. Well, let's talk about 9/11. The Greeks have always, I mean by my observation, have always been, I won't say ambivalent about terrorism, but they've wanted to do everything they can to avoid making any commitment or doing a damn thing about terrorism if they can help it, which has allowed their country to—but how stood it? How did they treat this?

MILLER: Well, there were two variants of terrorist. One was international terrorism, 9/11 type, and then there was domestic terrorism. And you really have to talk about them in kind of separate categories. The international stuff, they were not as sympathetic as most, but sympathetic to what had happened. There were some left wing elements in Greece that kind of said you deserved it. But the world at that point in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 well before Iraq heated up was pretty sympathetic to us. And we had always had a big effort to try to have greater cooperation with a lot of countries, including Greece, on stopping bad guys coming through Greece with watch lists in airports. I think we always felt that Greece could do a better job. This goes back many years, it goes back at least to the '80s and probably before.

Q: Certainly in the '70s too. I was there in the '70s.

MILLER: It probably goes back a long time. And you know, in the '80s there were a couple of very high visibility hijackings that had a Greek connection, TWA-847 where the Navy diver was killed on the tarmac of Beirut had a Greek connection. There's another, TWA-840. I think I talked about these before. So we always felt that the Greeks could be doing a better job. The Greeks always felt we were picking on them, that we were denying them entry into the visa waiver program, for instance. To understand Greece you have to understand the Junta period. And there still is to this day such a visceral reaction against the apparatus of a police state. So they would go the opposite. You know, they'd go to the other extreme of we don't ever want to have something that looks like a police state with a lot of people in uniforms around airports and stuff like that.

So there was always that kind of suspicion that we had that they could be doing more and

them feeling they had. That we were just picking on them. That carried through for decades. It really carries through to this day. Greece had a coastline—I think someone once told me the coastline of Greece, including all the islands, was bigger than the combined coastline of the rest of the EU (European Union) when you include each island. So, it was an extremely porous coastline. A lot of people could come over from Turkey through the Middle East through Turkey, coming up through Africa. And it was just very, very hard to police. And so that was an issue that was always out there. It manifests itself in that we wouldn't put Greece on the visa waiver list for many, many years. They just got on it this last year.

And then domestic terrorism was something else. There was a group called November 17th, which I think I talked about a little earlier and I won't retrace my steps. But they basically first struck in December of 1975 when they killed the American CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) station chief in Athens.

Q: Welch.

MILLER: Richard Welch.

Q: Richard Welch.

MILLER: And subsequent to that they killed a lot of people. I think the total number was 21 or 23, including five people at the American Embassy. One of them was my closest friend, Captain Bill Nordeen, June 28th, 1988. I think I talked about that before. They also killed a bunch of other Americans before, all military, the other four. And, and then they killed a lot of influential or wealthy Greeks, a couple Brits, et cetera. They were kind of the left wing terrorist group variant of Greece, just like Baader-Meinhof, Red Brigades, Acción Direct in the '80s. All of these groups finally got wrapped up, but November 17th never did until 2002. By the time I went out there I was passionate on this subject because Bill had been such a close friend. And I remember when I gave my swearing in speech I said I have a couple of really specific objectives, and one was November 17th, to make sure that they were broken up on my watch. I think a lot of us felt that 26 years is just too long for this to be—there had to be something else going on.

Of course, this fed into the mutual web of suspicions. Many of us felt that either the government was looking the other way or certain people in the government were looking the other way. And the Greeks just again felt we were just picking on them. So this was a big irritant between us. We just didn't feel they were putting enough time, attention, resources into it. And we had a bunch of things that happened. When I was DCM, for instance, we had been providing a lot of training to Greeks, counter-terrorism training to Greek police. And we found out when they were coming back after training they were being transferred to other non-counterterrorism jobs. And for a while—and I did this on my watch—we just cut out the training. And of course they were saying who are you to tell us where we should assign our police? Our response was why should we train people who were going to non-counterterrorism jobs? So you can see the kind of mutual suspicions. We always thought they could be doing better and they just felt we were

picking on them.

And so November 17th was a big deal. Because the Olympics were coming up, that kind of served as a backdrop. I mean, the worst thing in the world that could happen to Greece was to have suggestions that the games be moved elsewhere. The biggest thing that had ever happened to them in modern Greek history was getting the Olympics. And so you take the twin issues of international terrorism with the backdrop of 9/11 and a Greek concern about that and the fact that this was the biggest single event coming up. So if you're al-Qaeda and you're trying to plan for a nice juicy target and you don't want it to be a one-off like an inauguration or something like that, where you can bring all your resources to bear. But the Olympics are 16 days and multiple venues. So it's a perfect terrorist target, you just can't do everything. You got that and then you got what we felt was they could be doing a better job on November 17th. And this kind of stuff came together and it created a lot of concern, not only in the U.S. Government, but with other governments in asking the question was Greece really up to it on the terrorism side? We communicated this to Greece, and of course this made them even more nervous and defensive.

Q: How did you communicate? I mean during your time?

MILLER: Pretty directly. By mouth, you know *(laughs)*. It's the way I usually communicate. Sometimes I use my foot. But we were pretty direct about it. And you know, we wouldn't say we're not going to do the Olympics, because I didn't have the power to do that and that really wasn't even a U.S. decision. But, you could say things like there are real questions in my government about whether we feel we can recommend it's safe to travel to Greece. It wasn't our decision about whether you have the Olympics. That's the International Olympic Committee. And it wasn't really our decision about whether American athletes go. That's the U.S. Olympic Committee. But it was our decision about whether we issue a travel advisory or some kind of advice. That would have had a massive impact. So we use that as a vehicle to get the Greeks to really focus on security. And it wasn't just us. It was all the major governments. And it didn't take us long. What we did was we formed a group. There were seven governments and we got together figuring we all had the same concerns. Rather than all work in stovepipes in our individual lanes; let's work together and try to address these kinds of problems. So it was the Americans, the Brits, the French, the Germans, the Australians, the Japanese, and I think the Italians, if I remember correctly. Maybe it was the Canadians. We coordinated our training. We all kind of took areas of expertise. We sat down with the Greeks and said we're here to help you. We're not here to just lecture you and bawl you out. We all have the same interest; we want to have a safe Olympics. Because I mean it wasn't in our interest to try to do anything that would put off the Olympics, because that just sends a message to terrorists, you know, you win. And so I think that was appreciated. I think they got that. From the Greeks' perspective, it wasn't so much in words—and this is where knowing a little bit about Greece was helpful—it was clear that they just didn't want it out there in the public that we were giving so much help. And so they were happy to take the help, but they didn't want us to be so visible. That was reasonable. We tried to do things in a not so ostentatious, not so visible way. And it was, it was aided by an

excellent public order minister on the Greek side. His name was Michalis Chrysohoidis. He's now the public order minister again as we speak. And he totally got it. We worked exceedingly well together and closely together. We did a lot. And basically it worked out pretty well.

Q: Well, one of the things you mentioned before, the Greeks were inclined to think that we were picking on them. I mean more than any other country in which I've served I was struck by this attitude of the Greeks to think that there were big powers out there trying to make them do things.

MILLER: Right.

Q: I mean, very defensive.

MILLER: Right. Yeah, I mean, you got it. And this goes back. We replaced the Brits who replaced the Ottoman Empire who replaced this and that. I mean this goes back hundreds of years. And you know, when you're the little guy surrounded by big guys and you don't feel like you're in as much control as you feel you'd like to be, this is not a strange attitude to have. So now the latest is: it's less and less the Americans as we speak today, and more and more with their financial crisis the Germans and others.

Q: Yeah.

MILLER: I think this is pretty deep seated. And I think just understanding it and dealing with it—not necessarily accepting it.

Q: No. But—but --

MILLER: I mean but the fact of the matter is if you look at the U.S. record, and some of this has come out in the Foreign Relation series—you know, now that they're publishing the cables from the '70s—and you see, we were much closer to the Junta than kind of revisionist history we would like people to believe. Not everyone, and there were arguments in the U.S. Government on this kind of stuff, but again, I think Greece is one of those many examples where the Junta were anti-communist and if you were anti-communist that was good enough for us. And so a little bit of their paranoia I would say is justified. I mean today the post-Junta governments in Greece were vehemently anti-Junta. And that experience of seven years have scarred them deeply. They saw that the Americans, number one, could have done more and number two, were closer to these military dictators than many Greeks thought we should have been.

Q: OK, well what happened—let's talk about November 17th. How did that work out during your time?

MILLER: Well, it worked out very well. I'll tell you the story. And this is probably the most interesting story that I have to tell of all these hours we've recorded. Even to this day I can't get into great detail. But we all had our theories. Many of us thought that the

origins of November 17th, the people who started it, somehow were connected together in Paris during the Junta years where a lot of the anti-Junta force were. We had a bunch of names, but we didn't have specifics. There were just general theories out there. There was a lot of work that was being done, again which I can't get into in any kind of great detail. In 2000, November 17th killed the Brigadier General Saunders, who was the British military attaché in Athens, just on his way to work. And his wife was extremely eloquent and she kind of made this public pitch on TV about how these guys were really terrible and her daughters were there. You kind of saw the human face of the victims of terrorism in a way that you hadn't before. And I think that was a significant period. That was in the summer of 2000. I wasn't there yet. And by the time I got there, November 17th was still—they weren't carrying out killings every week, but they were just kind of slow, steady, attacks. A lot of their attacks weren't fatal. A lot of their attacks were just property destruction. Anyway, in the summer of 2002 I was getting an honorary degree from the big American college called Deree—you remember Deree—in Athens. And Senator Olympia Snowe had come over to get an honorary degree as well. And we were up there at the graduation ceremonies getting our honorary degrees. It was June 29th of 2002. After the ceremony I was told by my security team that there had been an explosion. A guy had blown himself up, was very seriously injured at a kiosk in the Port of Piraeus. And I—the only reason I got—I mean I got the call because Senator Snowe and her husband --

Q: She was the senator from Maine.

MILLER: She's a senator from Maine, still is. And she had Greek background, but she had never really come over to Greece. I think this was her first visit. She was an orphan when she was about nine years old. Her aunt raised her. There was a lot of emotion in this visit of hers. And the next day she and her husband, who was a former governor of Maine, were due to go to one of the islands and they were going to take the boat from Piraeus. And I got a call that night saying a guy had exploded—had blown himself up. I mean it wasn't—not suicide, but just like an accident most likely. Right next to this kiosk where you buy the tickets for the boat that she was going to take. So our security guys were kind of concerned that maybe this was dangerous for her. There wasn't much about this guy. Well, the guy was pretty seriously injured. His face was pretty badly disfigured and his hands were damaged a lot. They brought him to a hospital. His name was Savas Xeros. His face was damaged really badly. I mean he's really hurt. He's got what we call a taftotita (ID card). He has identification with him, which was a big mistake. The suspicion was he was a terrorist who had kind of bumbled it. And he also has this big set of keys. But the police had no idea. They run the name and no check, nothing came up. So not a big deal. Anyway, so the police were pretty—you know, the minister of public order who I think was excellent, Michalis Chrysohoidis, and his top police were quite good. They didn't know what they had here either. And they start questioning this guy. And he's kind of delirious. Later he alleged that CIA were in the room and tortured him. There were never any Americans in the room. I can tell you that right now. Anyway, they took his identification card and—because they had a photo from the identification card. They couldn't take a photo of his face because it was all blown apart and they gave this photo to a centrist newspaper that was pretty well read called To Vima. Now normally

the police had always given the picture to the leftist newspapers who were kind of cheerleaders for the terrorists anyways. So people who read the leftist newspapers were pretty much supporting the terrorists, November 17th. Anyway, they gave this photo from the identification card to the centrist newspaper and they didn't know what they had with this guy. He still was kind of semiconscious. And the newspaper publishes the photo somewhere in the inside pages. No one has any idea that there's this connection to November 17th. Well, as the story goes, these two grandmas are having their morning coffee reading To Vima, the centrist newspaper. And one says to the other, "You know, that picture, that guy looks like the guy who's down the hall kind of coming and going weird hours in the morning."

And the other says, "Why don't you call the police and tell them?"

So she does call the police and the police were getting a lot of tips and so it probably took them a couple days to check it out. But they come by. She says, "You know, I think that picture is this guy who's kind of coming and going at wee hours of the morning." And police say OK, show us the apartment—well, the other piece that the police had, and this was kind of critical, was they had a whole slew of keys that this guy had on him. But what do you do when you find keys and you have no identification? You can't do anything. You've just got a lot of keys!

Q: Yeah.

MILLER: And there wasn't anything on any of the keys saying this belongs to such and such. So the police get this—and this is one of dozens of tips that are coming in. So they get this lady, this grandma who's saying I think this guy, that apartment down the hall, whatever floor it was, and the keys. So the police take the keys, go to the apartment, try all the keys, one of them fits. And they open it up and voila, it's the safe house. And in the safe house is all kinds of material, including weapons that had been used in some of the assassinations.

Q: They'd been using sort of the same --

MILLER: Yeah, there were a couple signature pistols. That was part of the signature of November 17th. They would use signature weapons. And the forensics go back. So everyone knew the kind of weapon you were looking for. And a couple of these weapons fit. And so they go back to this guy. Now they realize that they got a big fish, that this is really something big. This is the first November 17th guy they've caught in 27 years. And he's alive, this is like really big. So they go back to this guy and he's kind of come out of his semi-coma. And he was pretty badly hurt. And they do some interesting police work. I was not there, there were no other Americans there. And they basically say, "Well, we got the whole thing. We got the whole story. We found the safe house, we know the whole story. You might as well talk and maybe this will help reduce your sentence."

And so he opens up. He wasn't too smart. And he immediately implicates two of his brothers who were co-conspirators in this. And these were foot soldiers. These were the

assassins. And then as time goes by they implicate—there's a guy kind of in the middle who I would say would be the operational head, a guy named Dimitris Koufodinas. And one thing leads to another, but they still are having a hard time finding the head, you know, because it's clear that Koufodinas and none of the rest of these—and they implicated a bunch of other guys too. And so the ring spread to probably a dozen or so. But they're still having a hard time finding the head. And there's stuff I can't talk about even to this day, but one thing led to another and they finally know that the head of November 17th had really maintained a good deal of separation between him and the foot soldiers. And the only link was Koufodinas. Koufodinas takes off. No one can find him. They know who he is, they know he's in Greece. He becomes the most wanted man in Greece over the course of the summer of 2002. And there's stories and there's all kinds of articles about him. Where is Koufodinas? I'll get back to him in a second. But they finally found the identity of the guy who was the leader of November 17th, and his name was Giotopoulos. And he was a Greek who had been living in Greece under an assumed name on an island, married to a French woman. There's the Paris connection, just like we thought. And there was a Paris connection for all of these years. And they go to the island and they arrest him. And to this day, after he's been on trial, after he's been sentenced to multiple life terms, he still maintains that he's not Giotopoulos. But there's so much evidence that says he is. So they got Giotopoulos, they're charging Koufodinas. They got a lot of the foot soldiers. And this all takes place over the course of summer. But the key guy who's still on the lam is Koufodinas. And this goes into July and August. And in early September—and every day there's major stories about where is Koufodinas. It's almost like the guy who hijacked the plane in Oregon and bailed out, D.B. Cooper.

Q: Oh yeah, the man with a lot of money and --

MILLER: Yeah, and they never found him.

So Koufodinas becomes the D.B. Cooper. Anyway, in early September this kind of smallish guy walks into police headquarters in Greece. And he had gotten in a cab. He tipped the cab driver 100 Euros. And the cabdriver was obviously a little bit surprised. And he said, "Why?

And the guy says, "Well, you know, where I'm going I'm not going to need this."

He walks in to Police headquarters in Athens and he says to the policeman at the desk, he says, "I believe you're looking for me. My name is Dimitris Koufodinas." And that was it. So they arrest him. There's a trial. It goes on forever. They bring back some of the family members. We hosted a bunch of the family members, sons, and daughters, and wives of people who had been killed and as some of them testify, a lot of the Greek family members testify as well. After the trial the leadership are sentenced to multiple life terms, many, many life terms, and the rest of them got varying sentences. The key guys, Koufodinas, Giotopoulos, the Xeros brothers, and a few others, they all got multiple life terms. And they're in jail to this day. And every once in a while something comes up about, you know, let's free them and all that kind of stuff.

Q: In Korydallos prison or not?

MILLER: Yeah. Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

MILLER: I can't tell you they're in Korydallos still. They were there for all the time I was there. They could be in a different prison. And they'd go on their hunger strikes from time to time. But to this day they're all still in jail in Greece.

Q: Uh-huh.

MILLER: Yeah. So that's a fantastic story. Much of that was captured in a Vanity Fair article written by Nick Gage. And it's very well sourced, it's pretty accurate. There were a couple things that I would say. Number one was this a Greek success story. Was it an American success story? And I'd say it's largely a Greek success story. We and the British did give them some technical assistance, and that was helpful. I can't get into details of that. But we gave them some assistance. But to say that this wouldn't have happened without the Americans is I think too much; that's not true. It was good police work. It was a lot of luck, a lot of coincidence and stuff like that. But luck is only useful if you have good police work to follow it.

How about the conspiracy? The stuff that I've talked about all these years. Well, I can't tell you—I don't know to this day if whether certain Greek Government officials might have known of the identity of maybe Giotopoulos or other—I have no evidence—no evidence has ever come to my attention that Greek Government people were hiding these guys, were hiding the identities, or anything else. And in that respect some of my suspicions on the basis of what I know now were wrong. I think there's a lot of sloppy police work in the past. There were times when they came very close to November 17th people. It was almost like a cops and robbers, Keystone cops car chase in the early '90s when they tripped up on a van of November 17th people. This is right before I came back as DCM. And they gave chase to them and the November 17th people started lobbing grenades out of the back of the van. And the police just gave up on the chase, they didn't want to get blown up. So there were a lot of opportunities that were just missed in the past. But do I have any evidence knowing what I know now that Greek Government officials knew of the identities or were hiding these guys? No, I don't have anything.

Q: Was there any tie with these people that you know of to the left? Or was this pretty much a separate operation?

MILLER: Well, the far left was clearly sympathetic. November 17th (N17) was pretty compartmentalized from what we saw, and that's why they managed to stay, to operate all these years. They were compartmentalized from other groups, they were compartmentalized within November 17th themselves. As I say, Giotopoulos, we don't believe he had much contact with the foot soldiers. We believe it was all through Koufodinas. And if I remember correctly, there were generations that kind of came and

went in November 17th. I think in the early—1983, if I remember correctly, it was a critical year for November 17th. I think that's when Koufodinas joined. I think it was shortly after that that they recruited a lot of the other foot soldiers who were arrested. And I think some people dropped out. Now, there's always been a question in my mind, could there have been other leaders who dropped out? And the answer in my mind is yes. Do I know who they are? No. Could they be living in Greece today? Sure. Is anyone talking? No.

Q: Yeah. What about—while we're on the terrorism thing—what about Middle Eastern terrorism in Greece while you were there?

MILLER: Well, I think our concern was more the porosity of the borders, the fact that there are so many different ways to get into Greece that if you were a terrorist group and you needed a place that was less tight than others, Greece wasn't a bad place to operate out of. I just remember small things like going through metal detectors when you're going to government buildings. And even if you rang the buzzer, if the alarm went off, they'd just wave you through. And you know, some people would say well, they'd wave you through because you were the ambassador or the DCM, well they don't wave anyone through in this country or other countries. And it's that kind of stuff that if you're a terrorist you're going to do your homework and you're going to see where the vulnerabilities are. Greece always had good relations with the Arab states. By the time I was ambassador I didn't think there was any policy to go light on people in the Middle East. I felt it was much more of a driver in the '80s when Papandreou was the prime minister and he was really actively trying to establish very good ties—or maintain very good ties or enhance very good ties with Arab countries. I felt less of it when I was ambassador and Simitis was the prime minister.

Q: Were there any major or even minor terrorist Middle Eastern type activity in Greece while you were there?

MILLER: The main focus was November 17th. When I was there earlier Abu Nidal was a big, big focus. But by then Abu Nidal had kind of vanished from the scene. There were things that came up. But I can't say that they were anything—al-Qaeda after 9/11 was the big focus in terms of Middle East terrorism and November 17th in terms of domestic terrorism. Other groups kind of paled by comparison.

Q: What about something that's not connected particularly to terrorists, but the flow of—well, like the Somalis, the Ethiopia—

MILLER: Right.

Q:—you know, North Africans into Europe. I would think Greece would be an ideal place—

MILLER: Absolutely.

Q: Were they what was happening and were they having an impact on sort of the employment scene and—I mean in other words what was that like?

MILLER: Well, there were a real lot of people coming from—and particularly Nigeria, you know, you mentioned Somalia and Ethiopia, but also Nigeria. Lots of folks would—and they were basically, a lot of them were on the street, were not part of the official economy, were just selling stuff on the street. And you'd see a kind of a game going on and it goes on to this day where the folks who were selling knockoff Gucci, this kind of stuff, they're all—most of them are from Africa. And they set up on main streets near tourists and others, and every once in a while the police kind of roust them about. And you can just see the game. They're running 50 meters ahead and the police are kind of walking at a leisurely pace. That took place then, that takes place now.

Q: Yeah, I've seen movies. Not movies, but newsreel shots showing this going on. Were we involved, you as the ambassador, in what are they called intellectual piracy?

MILLER: Yes. That was a big issue when I was both ambassador and DCM. I don't remember all the details. I know we threatened to put Greece on a watch list. I think we did. I spent a certain amount of time on this because there was a lot of piracy and copying of CDs and various other things, movies. I remember having the Motion Picture Association come and see us. All kinds of pirated goods. And you know, it added up to—I mean Greece is a country of 11 million, so I can't say that it was China or anything like that, but it was enough for us to get involved, for companies in the U.S. to be concerned. There was kind of an umbrella group that I used to deal with. There was a guy who kind of ran it as the executive director, and he was a very good guy and I can't remember his name. But we would periodically go to the Greeks. And again, the only leverage we had was the watch list, you know, just say we'll put you on a watch list, and that has certain repercussions.

Q: What were you getting from your economic reporters in your embassy and all—about—or you yourself on Greece and running up debt and all that?

MILLER: Right.

Q: Because now we're talking about a horrendous problem.

MILLER: Right. Well, you know, any country unless you're in the bowels of the ministry itself, you have to go on the basis of what the figures they put out. And when they're putting out phony figures, as it turned out was the case in Greece, you know, it changes the whole dynamic. Did we know at the time they were phony figures? No. Am I surprised now? Not particularly. But even the figures they were putting out were pretty horrendous. You know, the phony figures were twice as good as they actually are, but even those phony figures were not that good, you know, were pretty bad. The debt was massive, the debt service was quite large, the deficit was quite large. And other things we knew, like for instance the fact that Greek banks were buying so much Greek debt. And so, it was like a house of cards. If the Greek banks are buying all the debt and the debt's

value is called into question, then the value of the banks is called into question. But the reality is this was happening around the world. And there was basically a credit pyramid that was going on around the world—including this country, just done in different ways—that I don't think any of us were focusing on until things imploded in 2008. And you know, Greece was just one of the worst examples and one of the most extreme examples of what was going on. And then what happened, what we've seen happen since then was a total loss of confidence in Greece's ability to service this debt. And really underlying that was the kind of stuff we see on the streets of Greece, and that is the fact that the labor unions are so powerful that the kinds of austerity measures that would have had to be taken that are now being taken if they're indeed enough, which are the kinds of things that no prime minister could carry through it. You know, he would lose support; he'd be tossed out of office. So things got so bad. Prime Minister Papandreou thus far has been able to sustain it. But it was a different time then. And again, I want to emphasize one point. When I was there—most of the time I was there it was the build up to the Olympics. So in Greece and elsewhere around the world in terms of the Greek economy there wasn't a focus on deficits. You know, the feeling was like past Olympics, you spend a lot, but you get a lot more back directly through the tourism that comes through the Olympics, but indirectly through the infrastructure that you would have had to build anyway. And this was true in Sydney, this was true in Atlanta, this was true in Barcelona. You go back and—you know, in Seoul—every Olympics, the same kind of story. There was a bit of concern that the Greeks were spending just a tremendous amount relative to the GDP (gross domestic product). And I remember saying to the Greeks in many cases, often on security issues or security purchases, procurements, you don't need the Mercedes; you can get the Chevy—and my feeling was they were often buying the Mercedes. They bought a security system that was put together by an American company that was what, 800 million dollars. And you know, at the time it struck me that they didn't need all the bells and whistles, they could have gone with less. But I think they felt a need to go with all the bells and whistles so that no one would doubt their commitment on the security front. So you see the dynamic that's happening.

Q: It was 2002—I mean when was the Olympics?

MILLER: 2004.

Q: 2004. And of course Greece being the place where the Olympics started.

MILLER: Oh, this was massive.

Q: Yeah.

MILLER: This was gigantic. This was the biggest thing that had happened. I mean the Olympics is coming home and Greeks were full of pride, and this was their coming out to the world. And I mean you just can't begin to understand unless you were there how significant this was for them.

Q: I would think that this would mean that because we could see all the problems that in

a way you were having to keep the lid on, on your staff at the embassy not to say too much to the American reporters and all that about the ability of the Greeks to produce and all that.

MILLER: Not really. I mean the staff at the embassy, number one, were super. Number two, they were a well-disciplined group. And you know, in the Foreign Service, long ago that's part of the job. You don't have this felt need to go and brag about things. Everyone was pretty cool about just doing their job, doing it quietly, helping the Greeks look good. And if at the end of the day the Greeks look good then we were doing well. And we didn't have to get credit. I mean, my bosses and the President of the United States, President Bush, they all knew all that we were doing behind the scenes. You know, we spent a lot of money and put a lot of effort in and we had hundreds of people over there TDY (temporary duty assignment) to help in the run up to the Olympics. There was never any issue that I was aware of in the embassy of people feeling the need to leak to the press and tell people what we were actually doing.

Q: How'd our teams do at the Olympics?

MILLER: Teams did fantastic. I mean that was Michael Phelps. Everyone did great except for the basketball team. Our basketball team came in third. And that was pretty much—that was a real sad moment. I went to all the basketball games. I got to know the commissioner, David Stern. I got to meet a lot of ballplayers, including LeBron James. And Allen Iverson was one of the real spark plugs back then. Carmelo Anthony, you know, we had a lot of guys who were—Kobe Bryant wasn't there. We had a good team, but we could have had stronger. And they lost I think to Argentina who eventually I think won the gold. And that was kind of a letdown. They also lost to Greece in one of the opening rounds. They made it to the knockout round, but lost to Greece—and that you wouldn't believe what happened when the house went—I mean just went—

Q: Oh, I can imagine.

MILLER:—totally crazy then. So yeah, I mean in track and field, in swimming, in a lot of other stuff, beach volleyball, and it goes on and on, we did pretty well. But basketball was kind of not great. Baseball, I love baseball. We actually won, as we always do, women's softball, but we didn't do that well in hardball. One of the cute stories of the Olympics was the host team; the host country has the right to field a team in every sport. That's the rules of the Olympics. So Greece in baseball. And this actually started way before I came on the scene, started with my predecessor, Nick Burns, who was also a baseball nut. But I very much continued it. We helped engineer a deal with Major League Baseball to give the Greeks training and to identify Greek players in the United States, people with Greek surnames who would qualify to play in the Greek team. And they actually put together a halfway decent team. I did a lot of stuff to support them. I'd go to their practices and this and that. And there was just a tremendous groundswell of support in the Greek American community for the Greek National Baseball Team. They got wiped out in the games. They might have won one, I can't remember. But it was kind of one of these feel good stories. And at one point there was talk of doing a movie on the

Greek National Team. And a friend of mine and I actually—a guy who's a movie producer—conspired on a treatment, you know, which is the first thing before you write the script. And he tried to sell it around right before the Olympics but it didn't get any takers. We still stay in touch. So that was kind of one of the cute stories.

The Olympics themselves were terrific. They were phenomenal. They went off pretty much without a hitch. I mean there are always some things that happen. But and I just remember that as a blur for me because my wife and I had badges that got us into everything. You know, we could just walk in and go sit anywhere. And I mean this is like the little kid in the toy store. I'm a sports nut and so I was working my tail off during the day because there was still a lot to do, and then at night we'd go off to the events until 2:00 in the morning and then get up at 5:00 the next morning and did this for 16 days. And I was literally a walking zombie, but I'll never get this chance again. I got to run the torch again, for the second time, I ran it in 2002 when the torch was going from Ancient Olympia to Salt Lake City for the Winter Games through Athens. But I got to run it again in Athens and, you know, got the uniform and you get to buy the torch. Everyone has their own torch and if you want to buy it, it costs like $280 or something like that. So I've still got the torch in my house, kind of fun. Of course my wife made me put all my mementos in the basement study. Anyway, yeah, it was a fantastic set of events.

Q: OK, well moving on to a completely different matter. How stood things with Greece and the European economic—European Union when you were there? I mean was it --

MILLER: OK. Nothing—none of the stuff that we see now. I mean Greece had come into the EU in 1981 and now there's comments from some EU members saying, we shouldn't have let them in, we should have looked at the books a little bit more carefully. Greece got—particularly in the '80s and '90s they got a tremendous amount of EU support funds, I mean billions and billions and billions of Euro-equivalents or dollars, whatever at the time. And this enabled them to build a lot of their infrastructure, roads, what have you. I think in hindsight a lot of that money was probably wasted. But you know, Greece was always seen in most instances as kind of one of the smaller countries, not necessarily an irritant, but not necessarily a big guy. The Greeks always resented that the big guys kind of ran the show, you know, the French and the Germans and the Brits to a large degree. And you know, they were never really happy that they didn't have much of a say in things. I don't recall that there was a lot of focus on their economic situation then. I mean there were a number of countries that people would kind of roll their eyes when they were talking about the situation. But the feeling was that Greece had a number of very healthy years particularly in the lead up and after the Olympics, and that somehow, in a Spain kind of way after the Barcelona Olympics in 1992—that somehow you'd grow yourself out of these problems.

So now, there were a couple of areas that were irritants between Greece and some of the EU countries. Kosovo was definitely one. The whole Bosnia—the whole Serb connection. To understand Greek foreign policy you just have to understand the importance of orthodoxy, you know, and sticking by your orthodox brethren. Even though the Serbian Orthodox and the Greek Orthodox were different, orthodox segments

or parts of—they would stick by them. And so Greece was always on a different side from us and most of the Europeans on Kosovo, on Bosnia. Even though it didn't stop them from sending peacekeepers to Bosnia.

The other irritant was Turkey. And that was a big, big irritant because Turkey was a member of NATO. And there was always an increasing need to overlay NATO and the EU because basically they have the same membership except for a few countries, and one was Turkey. Turkey was in NATO but not in the EU. And so efforts to have an EU military capability always suffered with Greek vetoes because they didn't want Turkey to have any role in this. And that kind of continued through the '90s. What happened in 2000 was there was a very significant earthquake in Turkey and then shortly after that there was a very significant earthquake in Greece. And largely through the efforts of the current prime minister in Greece right now, George Papandreou, and his Turkish counterparts, they sent a lot of humanitarian help to each other. And that kind of broke down a lot of the hostility. It's still there to certain degrees but no longer is Greece acting as the veto on Turkey for getting in the EU. In fact, Greece is often the biggest cheerleader saying it's better to have these guys inside the tent than outside. Other than that their relationship with the EU was, they were a small player in a bunch of big guys.

Q: Did Albania play any role?

MILLER: It did in the '90s, it did in a couple of ways. In the '90s there were, first of all understand that the southern part of Albania has a lot of ethnic Greeks and they always felt that they were being discriminated against by the Albanian authorities. And that would come up periodically. There is a very famous case in the '90s when I was DCM of the Omonia 7. And these were seven people who—I think the number was reduced later—who had been arrested by Albanian authorities. They were of Greek background. The allegation was they were being unfairly treated in prison. That was a big, big deal. And those kinds of things were stoked periodically by reality and by demagogic politicians on both sides. There were a lot of Albanians, particularly in the buildup to the Olympics, up to 500,000 who were working Greece. And much of the construction industry were Albanian laborers. And you know, the Greeks wouldn't have been able to do a lot of what they did without this Albanian labor. But they were definitely treated as second-class citizens. They were regarded by some as responsible for rising crime and stuff like that, even though I never saw any real figures that supported those allegations. And they were kind of seen as second-class citizens, many of them there illegally in Greece. And there were efforts periodically to patch up things between the Greek and Albanian Governments, and that kind of continues to this day.

Q: Did consular matters intrude upon your work at all?

MILLER: I wouldn't use the word intrude. Consular matters were important in several respects. Number one, I wasn't the kind of ambassador who kind of said you just do your own thing and I don't care, you know, just keep me out of it. I didn't micromanage, but I was very interested in what was going on in the consular section. We didn't have a lot of American citizen prison cases. We had a lot of people who lost passports and got ripped

off, stuff like that. And that was pretty much handled like it would be in any consular section. I rarely would get involved in that. I remember one case I did get involved in, a young lady lost her passport. It was on a weekend and her aunt and uncle called and they asked to speak to the ambassador. And I get on the phone. The receptionist puts me through. And the woman, the aunt, gets on the phone and she says, "My name is Rita Wilson."

I said, "Oh, it's nice to meet you." Didn't mean much to me. And she explains that her niece had lost her passport and she had to go back to the States. And so I said, "Well, we'll do what we can and I'm"—there's a punch line, which I'll get to in a second. She dropped the name of her husband as well, whose name was not Wilson. And later I got our consul general and we were ready to open up the embassy. No, I guess the girl was going to come back on the first flight Monday morning and we were going to see her quickly, you know, we weren't going to open the embassy on a Sunday.

And later that Sunday I get a call from the husband saying, "We found the passport." And then the next day I get this vase of 50 white roses sent to the residence from the husband and the wife. Now, you know who Rita Wilson is? She's married to Tom Hanks.

INTERN: I was going to say, she sounds like an actress.

MILLER: And it was Tom Hanks who called me to thank me. And I said hey, you know, I'd do it for anyone.

Q: Tom Hanks being sort of the major movie star of the era.

MILLER: I think everyone will know that one, you know, even if people are listening to this 50 years from now they'll remember Tom Hanks. And you know, I got a chance, I mean one of the things about being the ambassador—that was just kind of a cute little story—but during the Olympics I got a chance to meet all kinds of cool people that I would never have met but for the fact that this was the Olympics.

I think I told you this story. Did I tell you about the profile that was done on me by Tom Brokaw?

Q: Do it again. I'm not sure. You guys hear this one?

INTERN: I don't think so.

MILLER: OK, so you know during the Olympics, as you know, all of the major TV networks just move their entire evening news operations to the Olympic sites. They did in Beijing and they did in Athens and elsewhere. So NBC, which was the sponsor of the Olympics—NBC did it because they basically have the rights to the Olympics. So it was CBS maybe—I think they had people there, but NBC made the big deal of this. So Tom Brokaw, who was the anchor until the last couple years when he was replaced by Brian Williams, is sent over there for a couple of weeks and to do the evening news from

Athens. And I get a request that he wants to hit—someone had done some research and wanted to—he wanted to do a feature on me for the NBC Nightly News. And they come over and the name of the feature was, "Tough Guy From Chicago." And it was basically—I went back to the Department and asked permission to talk about all the kind of stuff you do as a Foreign Service officer. And it was basically kind of more of a profile of the Foreign Service, you know, that a guy who doesn't have a lot of connections makes it to the top, can you know, by force of whatever, personality, manages to bring all these forces together at the Olympics to do the job, and was very complimentary. And I remember, he set up—they came to my office. They set up humongous amounts of equipment and they spent the entire day filming. And that was at most a five-minute segment --

Q: Yeah.

MILLER:—on the evening news. Five minutes forever on the evening news. Might not even have been that. And I remember having the opportunity—this is just an interesting story kind of sociologically—I had just read couple years before, Tom Brokaw had written a book that was about your generation, Stu.

Q: Yeah.

MILLER: The Greatest Generation.

Q: Mm-hmm.

MILLER: And it was the group of young men who went out—young women, some women who went out and fought World War II and came back. And they didn't want to talk about the war. They just wanted to get on with their lives. (To the interns who are listening:) This is your grandparents, your maybe great-grandparents, whatever. And his book was called The Greatest Generation. It was a bestseller. And I had read this book and I had talked to my dad about it right before I went to Bosnia. So I read the book in '99 and I went and saw my dad. It's the last time I ever saw my dad alive and I had asked him—he was a veteran from World War II. And I said, "I just read this fantastic book." He had read it as well. And I said, "Why did you never talk about the war?"

And he said, "You never asked." So he proceeded to fill me in on his war experiences—that part I told you earlier.

So I told Tom Brokaw this story after we finished filming, and he was very touched by it. And he said, "Write me an email and I'll put this in the next edition of the book." So I did. And I got an email back from him maybe six months later saying, "The next edition's coming out and they don't want to change a word in it, so I'm sorry, it won't appear."

I said, "That's OK. It was nice talking to you anyway." But he was very touched by this, by the story and everything else.

So yeah, got a chance to—I have a picture of Michael Phelps with my daughter. You know, we invited the entire team over to our house.

Q: Michael Phelps being a truly outstanding American swimming star --

MILLER: Right.

Q:—for—including the last Olympics.

MILLER: Right, 2004 and 2008. And he says he's going to go for 2012.

Q: Yeah.

MILLER: But we had the entire U.S. Olympic team over to the residence, which was a lot of fun. And you know, the Olympics was such an intense period that what I did was I invited the CEO (chief executive officer) of the U.S. Olympic Committee, a guy named Peter Ueberroth, who had been the guru, had put on the 1984 Olympics in L.A. I invited him and his wife to stay with us for three weeks, the whole time of the Olympics. Because we had so much work to do together that I figured it'd be best to have him right down the hall than in a hotel somewhere. So they stayed with us the entire time and it was great. We'd get together, you know, often at night and just kind of compare notes and do the coordination we had to do. And it worked out really, really well.

Q: What about the Balkans during your ambassadorial time? How stood things?

MILLER: The Balkans, I mean I was very interested because I'd just come from ambassador in Bosnia. But the Balkans was not a major issue. Kosovo was kind of a mess, but it was no longer a conflict as in '99. There was one issue that was big on our plate, and was with the Republic of Macedonia. This goes back to the early '90s when Yugoslavia broke up into five different countries, one of which was Macedonia. And at the time they took the name Republic of Macedonia. The Greeks took great umbrage because they said Macedonia is actually a Greek name. Alexander the Great, who was Macedonian, and his father Philip who was Macedonian, were actually Greeks and so this became a very symbolic, very emotional issue for them. And in fact, over this issue a government fell in Greece in the early '90s. This was the Mitsotakis government. And it fell because the foreign minister at the time, who's now the head of the opposition, the New Democracy Party, did some things that disagreed with the prime minister. So what had happened, and I went through this before when I was DCM, there are all kinds of contentious issues in the early to the mid '90s between Macedonia and Greece to the point where there was an embargo, an economic embargo that Greece had on the border with Macedonia, which was a big border. And I told the story about how Holbrooke and I—really Holbrooke assisted by me—helped solve all of the issues, except for the name of the country. And that one was kind of just put on ice. And this was a great characteristic of Richard Holbrooke. He knew when—what to go for and how much to go for, rather than insisting on the whole package. And so the main issue was never solved,

and to this day it hasn't been solved. And so what Greece has done—in other words, Greece is saying we absolutely refuse to recognize you as the Republic of Macedonia and not only do we refuse to recognize you, but we will veto your membership in the EU and NATO under that name because you're basically expropriating our culture and our history. OK, you can have a long discussion of does this make sense, and that's another time, another day, another venue, but we're not going to do that here. The fact of the matter is it's a very emotional, contentious issue in Greece. There's been a UN—the UN negotiator, the guy who was appointed I think by Boutros Ghali, to try to solve all of these issues with Cyrus Vance way after he was Secretary of State. This was in the early '90s. And Vance had a deputy named Matt Nimetz. And when Vance got older and retired, Nimetz took over and to this day Matt is still the UN representative on the name issue. And I talked to him every once in a while. I just saw him. And I saw him a lot when I was living, working in New York. And I've seen him a couple times since. And Matt still is trying to broker a deal between Greece and Macedonia. The name issue was a very destabilizing issue in Macedonia. In Greece as well, but some would argue even more so in Macedonia. So while I did my best to alert people back in Washington, my bosses, to how sensitive this issue was, there was a decision made near the end of my tenure in Greece that we were going to recognize the Republic of Macedonia as the Republic of Macedonia, and no longer as FYROM, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which is what Greece calls it. And today when you talk to Greece they'll talk about FYROM. They won't talk about Macedonia. And I remember when I heard that this decision was being made and—I said well, let it happen on my watch, let it be the last thing on my watch rather than be the first thing that the new guy does, my successor will do, because my successor didn't have any background in Greece and it wouldn't have—he's a good guy and it wouldn't have been the right thing for him to start off on that issue. He would have been identified with that issue and I think would have had a difficult time in an already difficult environment. So in November of 2004 I gave the Greeks the word that we were going to recognize it as the Republic of Macedonia. I did this with the foreign minister who was a wonderful guy. And yeah, he wasn't a happy camper but, you know, that was just the way it was.

Q: Did our bases on Greece, they were down to a precious few, weren't they?

MILLER: One.

Q: Which was where?

MILLER: Souda Bay in Crete. They had gone from four to one. The big high visibility ones that had engendered demonstrations was Hellenikon Air Force Base, which was co-located with the old commercial airport in Athens. But we also had one, a naval base, Nea Makri right outside of Athens, and then we had another in Iraklion in Crete as well. That was an Air Force base. Souda Bay was a naval base. And that's open to this day. It would come up in the press periodically. The left would try to make an issue out of it, and there'd be kind of sensationalist stories and they would die down.

Q: Well, what was Souda Bay?

MILLER: Souda Bay is a naval base. It's a deep-water port. And it's basically a fantastic place to do a lot of transshipment. It was never a large base in terms of numbers. There were many hundreds of people there, military people commanded by a Navy captain, not a flag rank officer. And it was a place where planes would land and refuel and ships would dock. And as I say, it was a fantastic deep-water port. And it was very, very central in the Iraqi operations, which started under my watch. And we should talk a little bit about Iraq. But we tried to low key Souda Bay as much as possible. And it was to the Greek Government interest. The Greek Government had an interest in maintaining it and making sure that it stayed. They co-located one of their air force wings there. And so it served both of our interests, but we also both had an interest in making sure that things were as low key as possible.

Q: How really integrated was Greece into NATO?

MILLER: Well, I mean Greece is a small country. Two things I'd say. Number one, it's a small country, so in terms of integrated, I mean they had their representatives in NATO headquarters and stuff like that, and they had people there. They weren't a big player. And so I wouldn't say that they were one of the key determinants in decision making, number one. Number two, there were—my memory is not 100% clear—but there were NATO subdivisions that had Greek components kind of stuff, including headquarters elements that were located in places in Greece. Not a lot of people, but important symbolically. The second thing I would say about Greece is that they still saw as their major external threat Turkey. And their defense doctrine was predicated on Turkey being the major threat. And so much of their defense spending was based upon an attack from Turkey, as improbable as that actually would seem. And so therefore kind of hard to integrate your forces when they're arrayed against an attack from another NATO member. So those were the two limitations.

Q: Yeah. I remember when I was consul general in Naples, CINCSOUTH—our NATO commander was located there.

MILLER: Right.

Q: Admiral Crowe used to talk about the Greeks spending most of their time keeping an eye on the Turks.

MILLER: It's absolutely true. And that's largely true in terms of Greek defense doctrine to this day. I would say while most Greeks would say it's kind of ridiculous that Turkey would ever do something—there aren't any really big external threats to Greece like there were during the Cold War. And Greece has done some relative modest peacekeeping operations in various countries—in Bosnia, in Afghanistan. I don't think they had anything in Iraq, but they've participated in a number of peacekeeping operations and I think they did some stuff off the coast of Somalia on the piracy stuff. I think they had a ship there as well as a ship in the Gulf.

Q: OK, well what about after 9/11, our involvement in well, particularly Iraq and Afghanistan?

MILLER: Well, 9/11 tremendous—there was a great deal of sympathy in the streets for what happened to us, and over the course of 2002 and 2003, that morphed into great hostility toward our Administration's policy on Iraq that they thought was arrogant, was unilateralist. And these are the words that I would hear from them, and greater toxicity was the perception. And of course, we were not that inclined as an Administration to kind of consult closely with those who were violently opposed to what we were doing. So, my focus was Olympics and terrorism. And I didn't do a lot of work on the Iraq War because frankly, having Greece on our side wasn't a major deal.

We did have an incident at the embassy that I think is worth mentioning, and that is our political counselor who had served in Greece before, not with me. But he had been in between my tour as political officer and DCM when he was a political officer. Our political counselor, his name was Brady Kiesling who—well, he resigned over the Iraq War. I'll give you the back-story in just a second. He wrote a letter to Secretary Powell resigning in protest over our policy in Iraq and I can't remember exactly what it was, if it was before or after hostilities. And he went quite public with this. And I think a lot of us in the embassy—we were asked by the Department just to low key it, not to make any comments. There were actually a couple people who resigned over the war.

Q: Yeah.

MILLER: There was a woman in—a DCM in Nepal I think --

Q: Actually Ulaanbaatar.

MILLER: OK, in Mongolia.

Q: Ann Wright, who I've interviewed.

MILLER: OK, anyway, I never knew her and from what I heard, you know, she resigned, issues of principle and conscience and --

Q: Yeah. She was also a colonel in the Army.

MILLER: Right, right. This guy, Kiesling, I think we all had pretty negative feelings toward because he had also been very, very sloppy in his security practices and he had gotten many security violations. We were asked not to say anything about this at the time. And a lot of my colleagues at the embassy, a lot of the people who worked for me were kind of upset because I was led to believe that his security clearance was going to be lifted shortly anyway. And so he would have been out of a job. And so he kind of took the high road rather than the low road that he was on. And people knew about this and they kind of thought if this was really a matter of principle and there weren't these other circumstances. Anyway, he resigned and kind of with a big blast toward the

Administration. He later gave interviews in the Greek press saying negative things about me. We didn't particularly—I mean professionally we got along, but I always kind of found him to be a bit of a whiner because he wanted me to go see the head of the Communist Party, and this is the Moscow, the hard line Communist Party. And I said, as the American Ambassador, I don't think I should be doing this. And he kind of never would give up on the subject. I said, "You can go see her; but I'm not going to waste my time." Anyway, I didn't have a great deal of respect for him, and I don't think he particularly liked me. But the mantra from the Department was just stiff upper lip and don't say anything about it, so we didn't say anything about it and I didn't say anything for years about it.

Q: OK. Well, then what was your impression of sort of ending this, but of the parties there? I've heard it described sometimes as the parties being almost tribal in Greece. I mean they have leaders and everybody holds allegiance to the leaders.

MILLER: Right, right. Yeah. I mean there was much more party discipline there than there is in this country. Not because there is great loyalty, but because you could lose your job and no longer be a parliamentarian. I mean the fact of the matter is we have the Kennedys and the Bushes and they had the Papandreous and the Mitsotakises. And, and that continues to this day. Andreas Papandreous founded PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement, the left wing Socialist Party) in the early '80s. He was prime minister throughout most of the '80s into the '90s, part of the '90s. And then his son was foreign minister for several years in the early 2000s. And now the son is prime minister. And on the other side, New Democracy, that was started by Konstantínos Karamanlís, you know, the great Konstantínos Karamanlís, who had kind of been the father returning home after the Junta. His nephew later became the prime minister and one of his closest followers, Mitsotakis, Konstantinos Mitsotakis became prime minister in the '90s in that period between Papandreou. And Mitsotakis's daughter, Dora Bakoyanni, was kind of the chief rival to Kostas Karamanlis for the prime ministership several years ago. Interesting footnote about her: she was also the chief and the inside favorite to succeed after Karamanlis lost the election and kind of took a dive, left office and left political life. Dora Bakoyanni was the odds on favorite to succeed as leader of New Democracy. And she lost out to the guy who had been the foreign minister to her father, the guy over the Macedonia issue that caused the government to fall. She voted with the government on the bailout package and she was kicked out of the party. So she's kind of in a political wilderness. But you're right, it is tribal.

Q: Well, this is probably a good place to stop except could you say a little of what you're up to now?

MILLER: Yeah, let me just wrap up by saying I left Greece and retired ten days later from the State Department on December 31st, 2004. I thought it was going to be the last time I was in the Department because, you know, you have this dramatic vision of "I'll never go back to the Department." They had a nice retirement ceremony for me in early January of 2005. Secretary Powell, Donald Rumsfeld, and Jerry Bremer who I had worked for in counterterrorism, all came. The three of them were there and none of them

were really talking to each other, but they were all very pleasant and nice there and all smiles. So I left the Department. Actually, I answered an ad in The Economist for a job as CEO of Plan International, which today is a 750 million dollar NGO children's charity working on behalf of poor children in 66 countries around the world. I did that outside London for four years and it was fantastic, great job, and I loved every minute of it. And we did a lot for the organization to make it grow and do better things. And then I came back to Washington after being away for so many years in part to give my wife a chance for her career to take off because it was difficult for her.

Q: What does she do?

MILLER: She's a clinical social worker. But she's also an educator, a university professor, she's written a bunch of books, parenting manual, teacher's manual, stuff like that, that have been adapted widely overseas. And we came back and I worked for a year as President of the United Nations Association (UNA) of the U.S., which is the largest grassroots organization, 128 chapters in this country, educating the American people about the UN. Good news/bad news story there. The bad news was it was in terrible financial condition when I went in. It was terrible fundraising environment. The good news is I managed to engineer a merger with the United Nations Foundation. That's the one that Ted Turner gave a billion dollars. And so UNA will continue to thrive and do its stuff as part of the United Nations Foundation.

Q: Well, just without getting too much into it, you know, there has been a very strong isolationist or damn, damn the United Nations and all that movement in the United States. How did you find it during this time?

MILLER: Very strong isolationist, damn the United States movement. You know, our job wasn't to be a cheerleader for the UN. What I found, and again, we were grassroots. We had 128 chapters all over the United States. So we had people that were situated around the country. What I found is that there is a tremendous amount of ignorance about what the UN does. And that once you put some information out there, people's minds would change. There's been a lot of polling done on the UN over the years, many years. And basically Americans, when you ask them about the UN, they're actually fairly positive. About two thirds of Americans say positive things about the UN. Then you bore down and you ask them questions about how about the conflicts in Africa? Well, why can't the UN stop—so the UN gets a lot of blame for things. And then when you tell them how much we give and their expectations are that we give a lot more. And you know, it's the old foreign aid question. And at the end of the day information is very, very important, because people come out of this—you know, the great middle, not the far right who's never going to like the UN and not the far left who think the UN should be the precursor to World Government. But kind of the great majority in the middle. I think once they learn a little bit more about what the UN can and cannot do, that the fact that countries control the UN and that the UN is—that the secretary general is more of an administration head than he is a secretary general. He doesn't have the powers of the president and the stuff like that. I know people come out much more positively. That's a decades long enterprise, which we don't have enough time to talk about here. But it

definitely validates the use of organizations like the United Nations Association. I was with them for a year. I engineered this merger, which had been tried before and failed. So I felt really good about that. And to make the merger go well I said take me out of the equation, I'll go find something else to do because we were not to be the successor organization. The other one, United Nations Foundation, was. So and that was a very useful piece for the negotiations. At about the time that these negotiations were picking up, which was last December, I was approached by a relatively small NGO, non-profit called Independent Diplomat, which is where I am today. And they asked me to head their Washington office. Independent Diplomat is a non-profit that advises small and poor countries and disenfranchised people on their diplomacy. We don't lobby, but we advise the guys who don't have the capabilities themselves. We as Americans assume everyone can do it because we've got this massive Foreign Service. But a lot of countries don't. So we have as clients places like South Sudan, which is due to vote in referendum in less than six months. And I was asked shortly after I came on to be the project manager of South Sudan. So I'm doing almost exclusively South Sudan right now. That's where most of the oil is, and eight million out of the 40 million people in Sudan that live there, that's the black Christian part as opposed to the Muslim Arab part that's kind of dominated them in pretty cruel ways in the past. So that's what I do. We also have the POLISARIO (Frente Popular de Liberación de Saguía el Hamra y Río de Oro (Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro) in the Western Sahara dispute as a client. We had the Burmese democratic opposition. We had the small island states on climate change. We had until recent elections Northern Cyprus, the Turkish Cypriots, which was kind of an interesting one. I didn't do anything with them. And so that's kind of what we do. And then we have a couple of other projects that we do. And headquarters is in New York. I run the Washington office. We're small. We have an office in Brussels. We have one that we're going to be opening shortly in Juba (South Sudan), in London, and that's it. And it's interesting. It's seeing diplomacy from a totally, totally different perspective.

Q: Well, I mean just to give me an idea, what's the difference?

MILLER: *(laughs)* The difference, you develop a tremendous appreciation for the capabilities of the Americans. The Americans wherever we are, are the 600-pound gorilla. When we walk in the room—I don't care who you are; you can be an incompetent boob—but if you're an American diplomat, until people realize you're an incompetent boob you're a 600-pound gorilla. And we have an infrastructure, we have a capability, we have a system. And it all works. Now, maybe we don't agree with the policy, but I'm just talking about the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. It all works. In other countries, like the Brits or the French or the Russians, you know, the big guys, they all have their systems. And from what I've seen, ours is pretty good and it works. And we have this massive place called the Foreign Service Institute where we train our people. And you know, these guys don't have that kind of stuff. And so if you want training you go to university or something like that. If you want to have a communications system there's a lot of countries where the people's accounts are Yahoo accounts. You know, they're not state.gov. And so there's all kinds of stuff that until you've been on the other side you don't begin to develop an appreciation for how much

we've got in terms of infrastructure and capability in the State Department. And now I see it, you know. I'm taking off for Sudan and Kampala, Uganda on Sunday. I just came back about a month ago or so. As you know, we've been scheduling these things. And I'm no longer an American ambassador. I just get off the plane, I sit in line, go through Customs like everyone else, get hassled. I don't have a diplomatic passport. And I see how the other side lives. And I don't have cars to pick me up at the airport or any of the rest of that stuff. And because the guys who we have as clients don't have any of this kind of stuff. And I'm not talking about creature comforts. I'm talking about doing business. And it's a very eye-opening experience. And you know, enlightening for me and I enjoy it.

Q: Great. Well Tom, I want to thank you very much for this. Do you have any questions? I mean I don't know how much time you got, but.

MILLER: That's OK.

INTERN: I have a few questions. The middleman for November the 17th named Dimitris Koufodinas, did he ever have a reason why he just walked in and turned himself in?

MILLER: I think he knew the dragnet was kind of closing around him. I never had a chance to talk to him, so this was all kind of second hand. He knew that there was such a massive attempt to find him that I don't think he felt he could evade it forever. He also had a family and I think he wanted to make sure that the family was not going to be totally smeared in the thing. I remember he had a son that he cared about a lot. The family obviously wasn't implicated in this job. But I just think he figured since they're going to get him rather than die in a shootout he might as well go under his own way, his own power.

INTERN: And under what name would Greece recognize Macedonia?

MILLER: There's a lot of combinations. It wouldn't be Republic of Macedonia. There could be something about a locale indicator in Northern Macedonia. There's all kinds of possibilities out there. You could even use parentheses very creatively. But it can't be Republic of Macedonia. It's not through lack of creativity and ingenuity that people haven't come up with a solution.

INTERN: I just have one more question. Sorry.

MILLER: That's all right.

INTERN: Does the company that you work for now, do they have any like lower level positions?

MILLER: We have intern positions. We're—I mean you wouldn't believe. I mean it's a cool organization so you wouldn't --

INTERN: It sounds pretty cool.

MILLER: Go look it up on the web. And the guy who started it was actually a British, middle grade, kind of the upper range of the middle grade officers in the British Mission of the UN. And he was doing all the Iraq stuff. And he increasingly got disenchanted and finally quit and wrote a book about it. And he's just coming back today from testifying at the Chilcot Commission, which is the big British commission on the Iraqi War. And he gave damning testimony about how—I mean really damning toward the UK government. We get a lot of people who are interested in working for us and our business model is such that most of our clients can't pay us. So we just ask for a nominal amount. And we get most of the money from foundations. And so it's small. But it's a fascinating concept. It's kind of alternative diplomacy. You know Marc Grossman?

Q: Yeah.

MILLER: Well Marc actually told me about Independent Diplomat way before—Marc was our Undersecretary for Political Affairs and a terrific guy. He's a real close friend of mine. And he actually has been teaching a course at Georgetown for the last couple years and he has a segment on Independent Diplomat in his course as alternative forms of diplomacy—and he wrote this course before, way before I started at Independent Diplomat. It's kind of the diplomacy of the future, the fact that you've got to come up with creative non-traditional mechanisms for doing diplomacy in the future from the way that Americans do diplomacy and other kind of big powers, but also for options for how other governments which don't have capabilities. And Independent Diplomat is one of those options. It is still a work in progress. But I would say definitely go online. Internships, yes, and we get a really fantastic group of interns. Most of them up in New York. In my office I have one deputy and one intern. There's three of us. That's it.

INTERN: Wow.

MILLER: You know? And that's fine. The whole organization is probably with interns maybe 30, but it's small, you know?

INTERN: I actually applied to Independent Diplomat about two years ago.

MILLER: Did you?

INTERN: Yeah.

MILLER: What did we say, no?

INTERN: They didn't answer.

INTERN: I had a question.

MILLER: Yeah, sure.

INTERN: You mentioned about the U.S. being a 600-pound gorilla and then you mentioned something about in Greece not talking to some political leaders. What are the criticisms you get when you're the 600-pound gorilla? What are the criticisms—kind of criticisms that you got maybe, or you may get? Such as trying to say, interfere in internal matters of a certain country when you work in a small country?

MILLER: Well, that kind of goes with the territory. I mean as a 600-pound gorilla you can step as lightly as you want, but you're still 600 pounds. And so that footprint's going to be big. You actually posed a couple of questions there. I never said to anyone you can't—that we won't have contact with x or y. My question was there's only so many hours in the day, number one. And number two, a meeting with the American ambassador has a symbolic—it sends a message. And I didn't particularly want to send a message after this woman, the leader of the hard line Communist Party would lead violent riots or demonstrations against the American Embassy. I just didn't believe that I needed to sit down with her and give her the legitimacy of a meeting. And I told our political counselor, I said you are welcome to sit down with her if you think there's some valuable information you can get. I had my doubts that there was any. But I never stopped anyone in the embassy from seeing people who didn't like us. And the only prohibition as an ambassador that I would have—I can't say all ambassadors would agree with this—was if someone was on a terrorism list, like right now American officials are prohibited from meeting with Hamas. It's against the law. I never had to face that kind of—well, I guess I never had to. You know, that's a no go area. The 600-pound gorilla thing, just be aware of it. Don't conduct yourself like a 600-pound gorilla. Conduct yourself with modesty. And a lot of that has to do with the same things you do with people, you know? Don't feel you should be lecturing people all the time. You might have brilliant things to say, but it doesn't go down well. Listen. You never learn anything when you're on the sending end. You always learn a lot of stuff when you're on the receiving end. So it's that kind of basic—but then that's the same stuff you do every day with people. And it's just some very common sense stuff. Be open to criticism. I never got defensive.

I mean I thought the question you were going to ask—and I was kind of half expecting it from you guys, so I'll ask the question myself—is what do you do—I mean you guys asked this question in an earlier session—what do you do when you're wrestling with a policy you don't particularly agree with. And I wasn't too keen on what we were doing in Iraq, not because I knew stuff about—I mean back then when I was there there still was an assumption on weapons of mass destruction and all that stuff. And Colin Powell had gone to the UN. So none of us—when our secretary of state who has that kind of great credibility goes publicly and says that we all assume—I just thought it was the wrong war. And then as the intelligence failures came out, that just reinforced my view. Now, what did I as an ambassador do? Well, I focused on the issues that were most important on my portfolio at the time, and that was terrorism, that was the Olympics and all that kind of stuff. Sure, if there was a demarche that would come out from the Department that would go to a lot of countries on Iraq, yeah, I'd deliver it. But I'd just deliver it.

INTERN: Just one more question on Sudan?

MILLER: Mm-hmm.

INTERN: So South Sudan will vote for independence, is it --

MILLER: Oh, absolutely.

INTERN: Absolutely. What are the sticking points? It's like a territory dispute, say—is there a territorial dispute?

MILLER: Oh yeah, this is a Foreign Service—you know, when you come in the Foreign Service you go to something called the A100 class. It's like the intro—this is like the A100 class classic case in anything that can go wrong. There is a dispute over boundaries. There is a dispute over oil revenues. There is a dispute over citizenship. In other words, there's anywhere from 500,000 to three million southerners living in the north and should those people have a right to vote in this referendum? And the referendum is do you want to be part of the Government of Sudan or do you want to be a separate state? And for decades the north—the folks in the north would always say there's only 500,000 southerners because they wanted to minimize. Now they're saying there are three million because they want the numbers to be jacked up because the higher the number is you have to have 60% of registered voters saying yes in this thing. So they have a tremendous incentive to register as many people as they possibly can in the north if they want to screw it up, and then make sure that those people can't make it to the polls.

INTERN: And what do you do about refugees who are living --

MILLER: It's a big issue. How about --

INTERN: In Chad or --

MILLER: Well, I thought you were saying southerners living in the north.

INTERN: Or out of Sudan entirely.

MILLER: Well, you know, that's the same question of what do you do about refugees from Iraq, what do you do about refugees in Bosnia. You know, the ones in Chad or Darfur and that's a --

INTERN: Separate issue.

MILLER:—separate thing, massive issue, but it's a separate issue. This is the north/south negotiation. And there are linkages between the two. Many Southern Sudanese in the Diaspora are not just living right across. You have a couple hundred thousand in this country, and many of them are doing pretty well. Are they going to go back? I don't

know. I mean they'll kind of check it out. They're like Palestinians, they're like others. They'll check it out and see, is it worth going back. You got citizenship, you got boundaries, and you got oil. And mostly oil is in the south, but the only way to get the oil out is a pipeline that goes to Port Sudan. But some of the oil sits in areas that are very contested. So that's five billion dollars a year, which is 90% of their revenues.

INTERN: What about international recognition immediately from neighbors? Do you think they will recognize Southern Sudan?

MILLER: Some will, some won't, and it depends on the circumstances. A number of the neighbors will recognize them under almost all circumstances: Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda definitely will. Egypt, the Arab states in Africa, more problematic. Now, the gain here is the north—if the north could have their druthers what they would do is they'd get rid of the south; they'd let them become an independent country, but they'd figure out some way to get all the revenues. Because they just really want the money and they don't want to be bothered by these guys. But, that's very hard to do. So what they're going to do—and these guys are really, really good and they're very manipulative—the southern guys are pretty smart, but they're just not in the same league as the northern guys. They are masters at this kind of game. So what they really want to do, I think, and this is all speculation, is they want to provoke the south into declaring independence unilaterally. And what they're doing is they're supporting a number of groups in the south, militias, to fight the government. They're funneling them arms secretly. Not that secretly really. To just create chaos. And what they'd really like to do, I think, is they'd like to provoke the south saying we better declare independence unilaterally even before the referendum. Then the north can say there is no legitimacy to this. You see the game? And of course the south knows all this so they were trying to be real cool about not declaring independence unilaterally. This is a massive chess game and to talk about the international players involved, I mean, we've kind of gotten much more involved than I ever expected we would because—I mean I'm not trying to say this in a bragging way,—but because of me, because I have a lot of contacts and I know a lot of the players. And so we're often a useful conduit for stuff with the south. And you know, so it's complicated. It's really complicated. The difference for me is I'm really developing a tremendous appreciation for something called the American Foreign Service and all that we have. I mean, to support our diplomacy and the fact that when you start at zero, literally at zero, there's not even a Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the south. It's called the Ministry for Regional Cooperation because they're not an independent state. And they've got, as best I can tell, less than 10 people there. And they all have Yahoo accounts. And you'd better believe that the northerners are listening to all the phone conversations, are reading all the accounts. So it is a monumental challenge.

INTERN: Does Khartoum see you or your organization as a problem as --

MILLER: Yes.

INTERN:—like a difficulty?

MILLER: Yeah, yeah. They're real hostile to us. In New York they sent a diplomatic circular around to all the UN missions. Their ambassador in New York is a real, real hard liner. I mean he's crazy and he sent a diplomatic circular saying that we were terrible and no one should deal with us.

INTERN: Wow.

MILLER: And there are security issues here. I mean it's big, big time. And our security folks don't ever want me going to Khartoum. The negotiations are going on at Khartoum right now between north and south. But some of my former colleagues at the State Department don't want me in Khartoum because they're not too certain what would happen to me.

INTERN: Wow.

MILLER: So on that light note, sir.

Q: OK.

MILLER*:* It's been a pleasure.

End of interview