

## Interview with William J. Dyess

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

AMBASSADOR WILLIAM J. DYESS

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*Q: Ambassador Dyess entered the Foreign Service in 1958. His career includes his foreign posts included Belgrade, Copenhagen, Moscow, Berlin, The Hague. In the Department he served on the Czech and on the Soviet desks, and he was Chief of US Soviet Bilateral Affairs. He also served in Public Affairs and was spokesman for Secretary [Alexander] Haig. William Dyess was named Ambassador to The Netherlands in 1981 and served there until 1983. He retired in late 1983.*

How did you happen to get interested in foreign affairs in the beginning?

DYESS: I bummed around a lot of schools here and in Europe on fellowships. I had a series of fellowships. Let me tell you, that's a great life. I was at Oxford and I was getting drafted. I had to get deferments and I got a deferment at the last moment. It was too late for me to make plans to stay at Oxford another year, so I came back to the US and I got a teaching fellowship at the Maxwell School in Syracuse.

I went there to study primarily under W. W. Coolski, who had been a career Polish diplomat before the war. He was the Polish minister to London during the war. I had studied under him in Alabama and I wanted to do some further work under him. So I went

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to Syracuse and he encouraged me, I think, toward the diplomatic life, saying it was a good life.

I was there for a year and then I went into the military. I was three years in the military intelligence when I served in Berlin. I had a lot of contact with the State Department people at the time. I learned to speak German at the time.

I went back to Syracuse to complete my work on the Ph.D. and I did everything except for the dissertation. I was working on that at the Library of Congress and I asked for three deferments to work on it. When I asked for the third, the Foreign Service told me either to come in or to forget about it. So I said that I would go in and complete the dissertation after I got in. Famous last words! Of course, the dissertation—1,200 pages of a rough draft and it's still 1,200 pages of a rough draft after 30 years—I never completed it, but I had high hopes at that time of doing it. I came in and, in fact, I gave up the Ph.D. I'm glad I did. I have no regrets, but that's how I got in.

I first was assigned to work in the Far Eastern Branch of the Leaders Program. I was debriefing government officials who were visiting the US on official program right after the war. That was an interesting job.

*Q: Was that an intelligence—*

DYESS: No, no. It was purely cultural. Cultural Affairs was still at State Department.

Then something happened over in the Intelligence Bureau, INR. They lost two or three people all of a sudden who were experts on East Germany. At the time I suppose that I knew as much about East Germany as anybody in the US. I would say I was one of the four or five experts in the West on East Germany because I had worked in East Germany in Berlin, where I worked the intelligence and I was doing my research for my dissertation on East Germany. Twelve-hundred pages of rough draft was on East Germany, soup

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to nuts, everything about it, the legal system, the military, intelligence, labor unions, government, etc.

So I was plucked out of the Cultural Affairs section and sent over there to hold the fort until they could get some more senior people to fill the slots.

I stayed there for a while and then, all of a sudden, I was picked for Serbo-Croatian language training. That was a bit of a surprise. When I joined the Foreign Service I said I was interested in further language training. I was advised to volunteer for eight or ten different languages because the one that I wanted, quite likely, would not be available. First of all, I wanted Chinese and, secondly, I wanted Russian. Then they had other languages on down. I put Serbo-Croatian—I don't know where it was. It was way down the list. Next thing I knew, I was picked for Serbo-Croatian language training. This was in the spring of 1960.

I learned that, indeed, there had been an opening for Chinese language training, but it was difficult to find people who wanted to study Serbo-Croatian. Since I had made the “mistake” of putting that down, I did not get the Chinese training. I got the Serbo-Croatian training instead. I went over to complain to a person, and they told me—I did complain and I thought I had a good case—they said, “Now, Dyess, we don't know whether or not this will influence your view or not, but you are slated for the junior political slot in Belgrade.”

Of course, that did influence my view because I wanted to be in a political section, so I said, “Yes, I'll postpone the Chinese training and I'll go ahead and take the Serbo-Croatian.”

This was in the late spring or early summer. I went in in August to language training, and then in December of 1960, I got my first assignment which was to Belgrade, but it was to the visa section rather than to the political section. I was furious and I raised hell. I got a run-around and, I must say, this was amusing because the person whom I felt had not dealt fairly and honestly with me later ended up on my staff and worked for me when I was

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Ambassador to The Netherlands. It was an amusing thing, but we never mentioned this. We never mentioned it. [Laughter]

I went ahead there and I was in the visa section. I was wrong. I was mistaken in wanting to avoid consular work, particularly for a junior officer. It's the best kind of work you can have because, if you're in a country like Yugoslavia, like Eastern Europe, it brings you into contact with the local population. I went out on welfare and whereabouts cases, deaths and shootings, kidnappings, and God knows what. I had, I suspect, the most interesting job in the embassy. I was wrong in trying to avoid this. It was the very thing I should have done, and I'm so happy that I was able to do it.

*Q: I have you listed there as political officer. Did you later...*

DYESS: Yes, then I later moved to the political section. George Kennan was there. He's a remarkable man, but I will have to tell you, frankly, he is not, in my view, one of our outstanding diplomats. He made some serious errors in Belgrade which we can go into at some point, if you want to.

I was picked out and I became the editor of the Joint Translation Service. This was something run by the British and the Americans, mainly, and a number of the embassies that cooperated. This was an operation in which we got up around five o'clock in the morning and began to translate the Yugoslav press into the English language. Of course, the Serbians who did this did not speak English well enough. So a British colleague and I had to edit all that they translated because Kennan loved the English language so much. He was not willing for it to go in this substandard English. I would start to work about five o'clock in the morning, maybe have a little coffee and breakfast around seven o'clock, and then I wouldn't break for lunch until around three or three-thirty in the afternoon. It was a terrible job. When I left there, I had ulcers all down my throat. I was going to Belgrade and I got as far as Hamburg when I was put in the hospital with pneumonia. It was really an awful time, and I think it was unnecessary.

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First of all, I think the officers should have been able to read the language themselves—Serbo-Croatian. They shouldn't have had the translations. If we had to have the translations, all you needed was to know basically what the article said and not have it polished English. That's the way that George Kennan wanted it. Maybe we can come back to Kennan at some point, because I was there during that period when he was—this was the beginning of the Non-Aligned Conference. September 1, 1961, was the opening of that and the Soviets broke the nuclear moratorium that day, the day it opened. So this is very interesting story and I had a ring-side seat.

*Q: Why don't we go into that right now.*

DYESS: The Non-Aligned Conference was organized by several of the so-called non-aligned states, but Tito and the Yugoslavs played an instrumental role. The first conference was there, as I recall, September 1, 1961. President Kennedy had sent to Tito a letter congratulating him on opening the conference and wishing him success. I didn't see the traffic but I'm sure that Kennan advised him to do this, otherwise Kennedy wouldn't have done it.

On that day the Soviets broke the moratorium on nuclear testing, and Tito got up and excused the Soviets and slapped us in the face, in effect. If I had been the ambassador, I wouldn't have let my shirttail hit my backside before I got over there to let them know what I thought about this. After all, we were making favorable noises about the opening of the Non-Aligned Conference, and the Soviets just rained on their parade.

Kennan chose to do it differently. He boycotted the Yugoslav officials and he did that for two or three months—that was a long time. It was as if—here are these three great entities. It's Tito, President of the United States, and the American ambassador, and if any one of the three is not in sync, then things won't work. The Yugoslavs could care less whether he boycotted them. They were quite happy not to have to have this thorn in their side. It was a serious error. The Yugoslavs did not come back with hat in hand

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and said they did anything wrong, or so and so. So Kennan developed the theory that the Yugoslavs were going to rejoin the bloc. You know they left in 1948. He said they'd be going back in.

I thought that was the craziest thing that I had ever heard, because I have spent a lot of time in the study of Eastern Europe because of Coolski. I knew this was one of the countries that had been liberated, not so much by the Red Army but by the Yugoslavs' own efforts. I knew that they were not going back in. This was the craziest thing I ever heard.

*Q: Did you have a chance to report to weigh in to—as a junior officer—*

DYESS: I did. Once Kennan called me to his office privately. He said, “Dyess, how old are you?”

I told him, and he didn't say anything. I don't know whether he thought, “Well, Dyess, you're old enough to know better,” or what. He did not particularly appreciate it.

There were a couple of officers who made fun of him privately. I did not do that, but I did oppose him publicly to his face. There were four or five other officers there and they supported him. They found examples to support him. They didn't amount to a damn, the ones who did this. There were several who became ambassadors from that group that was there then, but they were keeping their mouths shut. Larry Eagleburger was there but he was in the economic section, and Larry was not in these little political meetings that we would have. Some of the guys began to joke about the arguments between Kennan and Dyess. Here is Kennan, this famous ambassador, and Dyess is a junior FSO at his first post. It was rather funny, except that I was sure that on this particular point, he was wrong. I began to see that the problem was his ego. That was why he couldn't see clearly. The US military didn't buy this, because the US attach#s did. They told me this at the time, because they heard what I was doing since it had leaked out. They came and told me what

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they were doing. They were using one-time pads to send messages back to Washington, but they were saying it was not true.

I saw other examples that Kennan—he was a very able man in many ways, an eloquent man, but his ego was something that I had never encountered before in an individual.

To give you another anecdote—this was when Mrs. Meyer, the Washington Post lady, was down there with her yacht and de Gaulle was there as well as Adlai Stevenson, Chief Justice and Mrs. Earl Warren, Ambassador Atwood and his wife, Drew Pearson and his wife, and there were a few more. De Gaulle was supposed to have a meeting on Brioni with Tito. They were having difficulty making contact with him, so Kennan—I guess he didn't have anything particularly against me for standing up against him, or maybe he felt I was one of the ones who was expendable—picked me out and sent me down to the coast to make contact with the governor. I was to let him know there was an embassy here and we'd like to talk with him. Also, Kennan had been invited to go down and join the yacht to sail up and down the Adriatic. I got down there and everybody was going all over creation.

Mrs. Meyer was sitting on the deck. She asked me to join her and I told her what my situation was and what I was there to do. She said, “Mr. Dyess, let me tell you what I have on my hands here. I have a circus of untrained fleas and they are bouncing all over creation. I cannot make contact with them. Maybe you can. Where would the governor be? I don't know whether he's with Drew Pearson, looking at some church Drew Pearson built 20 years ago, or whether he is off with Earl Warren, or what.”

Finally, I found him and made contact. Then I went out to meet the ambassador who had come down. In the meantime, the yacht had filled up and so the ambassador was disinvited. There was not room for him. “Sorry, George, we'll do this some other time.”

He said to me, “It didn't make any difference. I've been on Bill Benton's yacht and his yacht's bigger than this one.”

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It was very interesting. I didn't know what to say until we got down there. I began to see that this man, who was in many ways a brilliant man, required some special handling.

There were some young ladies there. I guess they were granddaughters of Mrs. Meyer, and they asked me to join them at lunch. I was about to say yes, but then I thought, "I had better check with the ambassador."

I checked with the ambassador and he said, "No, I shouldn't join them," and so I didn't.

He wanted to maintain a very clear distinction. I have associated with generals and admirals and saw how they treated young officers, and that is not typical. It is not necessary.

This also helped me to understand the problem that he had with Tito. In other words, if he was mixed up in it himself—his own personality—his judgment was cloudy. If he was not mixed up in it, then he had no problems.

*Q: That's an interesting view of a man.*

DYESS: I could give you half-a-dozen other examples of this. The same thing got him in trouble in Moscow. He came out of Moscow—

*Q: You weren't with him in Moscow, were you?*

DYESS: No, I was not with him in Moscow. I was there with Foy Kohler and with Tommy Thompson.

But Kennan came out. He'd been there only about eight months. He gave an interview and said that the situation in Moscow was worse than Berlin in the 1930's. Now people didn't understand what—all that George Kennan was doing was calling attention to the fact that he had been in Berlin in the 1930s when the Nazis came to power and now he was in

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Moscow. That's all he was doing. The Soviets did not take lightly to this, and they PNGed him.

*Q: That's right. I remember he didn't last long there, did he?*

DYESS: An ambassador should not, no matter whether what he said was true, should not say it. He claimed he didn't know he was going to be quoted, but I'll tell you, if you talk to journalists at press conferences and you don't think you'll be quoted, that's rather naive.

He was a remarkable individual, but whenever he himself was wrapped up in the problem, then his judgment was cloudy. He later resigned and he was telling people there that he didn't know whether or not the President was going to accept his resignation or not. They were, because his resignation wasn't decided in the White House. It was decided in the State Department and they just decided he was . . . more of a liability than they could. . .

*Q: Back to Belgrade now. About this time the Djilas business began to erupt. Did you have any—*

DYESS: I never met the man. I followed it. I followed some of his writings, but I never met the man. I felt great empathy and sympathy for him and I thought, "Now here is a man for the future of Yugoslavia." But he did not seem to have the political sense to be able to manage the very heavy intellectual and philosophical burden that he was carrying.

I traveled a good bit over the countryside, mostly as a consular officer and then on special missions for the ambassador later on. I was amazed at how the country managed to stay together at all. In Montenegro you've got a culture and a populace that is so totally different from Slovenia. The Serbs and the Croats are—I'm amazed that it has stayed together as well as it has for so long.

*Q: A number of people have commented on the impossibility of that group of people—*

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DYESS: I had a lot of Yugoslav friends, first because in the consular work, I moved out a lot. Then when I was running the JTS, we had 18 to 20 Yugoslavs working for us on that. I've heard stories that they would tell. During the war, for instance, a knock would come on the door at night and you know there were armed people outside, but you wouldn't know which side they were on. You wouldn't know what to say. They could be any one of five or six different armies. If you said the wrong thing, it meant your life.

I remember hearing people talk about seeing young German soldiers slaughtered, not only Yugoslavs of the opposing political views slaughtered, but German soldiers, too, just slaughtered.

*Q: Now you were there during the great earthquake, or were you?*

DYESS: No, I was gone. Fortunately, I was down in Macedonia before the earthquake and I saw the famous church there, the one with the wooden carvings. I've forgotten what that is called right now. I did not see it after the earthquake.

*Q: The Cuban missile crisis came along while you were there. Was there impact there? Did that have any effect on your career?*

DYESS: No, not really. It did not seem to impact upon US-Yugoslav relations.

*Q: I did a little research into your background, so maybe I can ask a few intelligent questions as we go along. I guess while you were there, Gromyko and Brezhnev visited. That was in 1962. Then [Nikita] Khrushchev came in 1963. Did these impact your career at all?*

DYESS: No. When was—what time of year—I left. . .

*Q: I think they were trying to shore up the Yugoslav—*

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DYESS: What Khrushchev was doing was, in effect, he was hinting very strongly that there could be separate roads to socialism, and that the Yugoslavs could go their own way. The Soviets were not going to try to crush them.

The only thing I can remember about any of these visits was that it just created a lot more pressure on the translation service. I did not, in my junior position, ever go to the foreign ministry or call any senior government officials. I was not, at this time, a notetaker. That's important because, in subsequent posts, I was a notetaker and that's very important. The only thing I could do was to see the traffic. I guess I saw practically everything except "eyes only." I had not really a first-hand view and it wasn't a second-hand view. It was something in between the two.

*Q: Let's go on, now, to Denmark. You were in Copenhagen then from 1963 to 1965. How did that assignment come about?*

DYESS: They were looking for a specialist in Eastern Europe for the number two political slot in Copenhagen. That's how I got picked. I was very pleased because, when I was there, the Danish prime minister was acting as a go-between between Khrushchev and Lyndon Johnson. As the resident Soviet and East European expert at the American embassy, I was the one who went along with the American ambassador or the charg# or whoever it was, to debrief the prime minister, the foreign minister or whoever it was who had most recently seen the Russians.

*Q: Now you became the notetaker?*

DYESS: Then I became the notetaker. I became the writer. I'd go back and I'd write up this stuff and I would draft the cables. That was really fascinating. That was a ring-side seat.

*Q: Vietnam became a big issue in Europe about that time.*

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DYESS: Yes, as a matter of fact, I didn't realize how close I was to going to Vietnam. I was told that, since I was not married then, I was a prime candidate, but for some reason they wanted me in Copenhagen at this time. I was told later by folks in personnel that they had to hide me behind the door. Otherwise, I would have been plucked out for Vietnam. But I didn't lift a finger to get to Copenhagen or to stay out of Vietnam. The assignment came very early. It came by regular mail pouch early in March of the year that I moved in the summer. Oftentimes, people don't know where they're going until a few weeks before they go. This came early in March of 1963. This was when I was working on the JTS and then I got my car in the summer and, as I said, I got as far as Hamburg and had pneumonia. I was in the hospital for a while, but then got up and drove on to Copenhagen.

*Q: Let's see, you also had presidential elections then in 1964. That was Johnson vs. Goldwater. Did the Danes hit you up on that?*

DYESS: My undergraduate major was domestic politics. I predicted elections. In the 1960 election, for instance, I won the first color television set I ever owned by predicting the winner of the 1960 election and his popular vote. I was about 5,000 votes off. I flew back for the election. I was here for the last four or five weeks of the election, then would send reports back to the ambassador and to other members of the staff. I called the states, I was very close on the electoral vote. I missed one state. I miscalled South Carolina. The rest of the states I called. After the election was over, I went back.

*Q: Whose idea was it for you to come back?*

DYESS: My own.

*Q: And management went along with it?*

DYESS: Yes. I had some personal business I wanted to conduct at the same time, but I made it so that I could—this was personal leave. The government didn't pay for it. I paid

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for my trip back and I took personal leave. I came back to watch it. I just love American elections. [Laughter]

*Q: That probably winds up Denmark unless you can think of any highlights there.*

DYESS: No. A delightful place to live. I was married there. My wife is an American, but we were married there because our families were scattered around the world and that's a storybook city. So we were married in Copenhagen. I made friends there that I've been friends with throughout life. There are still Danes that I have contact with, and there are Americans that I still have close contact with.

*Q: You went from there to Moscow and were there from 1966 to 1968.*

DYESS: At the time, Copenhagen was a stopping-off place for the American ambassador, so Foy Kohler was by there a couple of times. I told him that I wanted to study Russian and I wanted to go there. I guess he asked around Copenhagen. Anyhow, the first thing I knew, I got Russian language training. I came back and I was back here for a year for Russian language training. Then I went to Moscow and Foy Kohler was there. He was there for about a better part of a year and then Tommy Thompson came back for his second tour. I was there only two years. At that time, that was the standard tour. We have since lengthened it, but then it was a standard tour.

*Q: Was that a tough job? Was it difficult doing business there?*

DYESS: I found it difficult to live there because I found the place terribly oppressive. The first year was almost a repeat of my experience in Belgrade. I wanted to be in the political section, but I went there as the Assistant Administrative Officer.

The assistant administrative officer in Moscow at that time—I don't know how it is now—was a language officer. He was usually a political officer. He could be an economic officer, but usually he was a political officer who dealt with the Soviets to keep the embassy alive.

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You had to go to the Soviets for everything, for theater tickets, travel, just everything. It's not like any other place that I think you and I might ever live or hope to live. You had to go through the Soviet administration.

So I dealt with the Soviets and I felt that I was wasting my time at first. My boss, Sandy Benner, who's a good friend—we've been friends for many years—belonged to the poker circle that Tommy Thompson had. For me to be down on the ground floor doing the administrative work when all the political types were well above us. Like I told Sandy one time, it's like being out in Las Vegas and being out front checking the bags, helping people get settled in the hotels, while you can hear the roulette wheels spinning inside, the cards being shuffled, and so on. You feel you're missing the action. I was missing the action.

I was wrong again. For my level, it was the best job that I could have had in Moscow because I got to see inside the Soviet bureaucracy. I was the only one who did at this time because relations were not particularly good. We were not in the thaw. I was looking inside. I could see how the Soviet bureaucracy operated.

For instance, we needed a new elevator in the embassy and there was a Soviet official who ordered the elevator without clearing it with us. We did not want the Soviets to put in this elevator. We wanted it to be American because we knew they would use the opportunity to bug the embassy. I fought with this guy for months and months and months. We came to very harsh words. Finally, one day I knew I had won because I went over to call on him again delivering a new protest, and I learned that this particular Soviet engineer had been transferred. I knew the thing was over. They gave it up and they had an elevator which they could never use because they couldn't put it in any other hole. It was built expressly for that particular shaft.

I dealt with the Soviets a lot and that was a very useful thing to do. When I became a political officer, subsequently, I did very little. I went over to the Foreign Ministry a few times and took notes and so on. Basically, all I did was what the other political officers

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did which was to sit there and translate the press, which you could do back here in this country. So it was the first job that was the good job at that time.

*Q: I guess that's often true. As you say, the consular job, the administrative job can often get you wider and broader contacts.*

DYESS: Particularly if you are a new officer, and almost certainly if the society is not an open society, if it tends to be closed at all.

*Q: Svetlana defected maybe while you were there in 1967.*

DYESS: Yes, she did. It was a very touchy thing. I guess about the most interesting thing that I did in the Soviet Union, other than my official work, was making contact with artists. You see, these are mostly Russian paintings here—avant-garde, underground. We got to know a number of artists and bought things from them, and went to the theater, went to museums looking for little pieces of protest. At one time it looked as if Khrushchev was going to raise the curtain a little bit. It was a thaw. Some of these paintings were exhibited, but they didn't stay up very long. They were taken down. It was clamped down again. I followed this community and, as I say, I had some friends there, but tried never to play games with the Soviet authorities. I traveled a fair amount and we were always tailed, but again I tried not to—with one exception where we did play a game. But I tried never to play games. We would just let them go with us.

The only time my wife and I played, we were down in Tbilisi and they just had their new subway system installed. We thought we'd take a ride on it. We got on—it was very, very cold—and we rode from the city out to the outskirts in the suburbs. Then it comes out from under the ground and it's on top—elevated system like ours here in Washington. We were being followed. We got out and crossed under to the other side to go back in town, because all we wanted to do was just to ride on this thing. This guy followed us over. The train pulled up, and everybody got on. To this day I don't know why I did it, but I didn't get on. I stepped back at the last minute and pulled my wife back. That poor guy had to

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step back. The train pulled out and we went to the end of the platform where there was a little glass enclosure. We stood inside this glass enclosure waiting for the next train which must have been 20 minutes away. That poor soul was having to stand out on the platform freezing to death. He was not in adequate clothing. He just had to wait. Finally, the train came and we did the same thing again. Then we got on. He got on and he sat down. So we sat down right across from him. Everybody in the car was looking at us, staring at us, staring at our clothes, our shoes. The shoes are the way they tell that you're a foreigner. Everybody was staring at us except this one guy, and he couldn't look at us. He was looking at everything else in the car but us. I have about a dozen stories about being followed, but I never played a game except for that one. I wished I hadn't done it because, if you play games with them, they can get angry with you and make it unpleasant.

*Q: Let's go on to Berlin. You had a long stretch of foreign duty there. You were in Berlin from 1968 to 1970. Again, how did that assignment come about and what was your job there?*

DYESS: They needed, again, someone who was an East European-Soviet specialist. I was the chief of liaison dealing with Soviet authorities in East Berlin. The four-power thing was my job. There were the Americans, the British, and the French. The British and the French had their spokesmen, too, their chief of protocol. Chief of protocol and liaison was what he was called. Actually, in fact, the American did the talking. This is the way it was before I got there.

I would go over frequently to East Berlin to see Soviet authorities and I had a Soviet counterpart. He was quite ready to speak Russian, and I was quite ready to speak English, and each of us insisting that Berlin was not a Russian city or an American city respectively. We compromised and spoke German. So all of our official dealings were in German.

I once went over fourteen times in two days to the Soviet embassy because the East Germans had arrested a young American lieutenant who had been caught smuggling

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people out of the East. Two people were found in his trunk and one of them was a ringer who turned him in. Unfortunately, he was doing it. Unfortunately, he was caught. Additionally unfortunate, he was caught by the East Germans rather than the Russians so he was in East German hands. Fourthly, it was unfortunate because he was doing it for money, not doing it for altruistic reasons. We were insisting that he be turned over to the Russians and that he be turned over to us and we would punish him. I went over again—over, over, over, and over, and finally they agreed to bring him to us. I met him at “Checkpoint Charlie” and brought him out. I sometimes think that they turned him over just to get rid of me, because they were tired of seeing me come. I camped outside. They did it for me because I had helped them out in the West. They have somebody over in the West, they get drunk or whatever, and they didn't want him to be turned over to just anybody. So I'd go—maybe three or four o'clock in the morning and rescue him and get him back to “Checkpoint Charlie” to turn him over to the Soviets.

*Q: They would appeal to you for a little help?*

DYESS: Yes.

*Q: The left hand washes the right. . .*

DYESS: Yes, that's right. So I was well known there. I'll tell you another little anecdote which I found amusing. This is after I left Berlin. As I said I went back and forth without any trouble, frequently. There was a male individual who belonged to an intelligence organization, and he was over in East Berlin and had an accident. The East German police came to him and they demanded identification. Do you know what he did? He told them he was Bill Dyess and refused to give them anything—and, he got away with it.

My boss back in West Berlin was furious when he heard about it. I had just left. I wasn't even there then. I thought it showed a great deal of presence of mind because this person

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didn't want to be caught, didn't want to be interrogated or taken in. That's how he got around it.

It was a fascinating time in Berlin. I went to the theater there a lot because I spoke German and my wife spoke German. It's one of my favorite cities of the world.

The first time I was in Berlin when I was with the Army. I was not able to go to the East. This time I could go over to the East freely. I enjoyed the theater life, the opera—both sides. A great time.

*Q: How about the other Allied powers there? Were the relations good?*

DYESS: Yes, relations were good. We entertained each other back and forth. There was a lot of entertaining.

*Q: How about the US military?*

DYESS: Yes. My boss was the American commandant. One was George Segnias and we've been friends through the years—a nice fellow. Then Bob Ferguson was there. We got along well. I didn't entertain them but they entertained me socially a lot. They were two stars and I was still down about the level of a full colonel. I guess I was a light colonel in a full colonel's billet. It was a socially active post. We had nice houses and we lived very well. It's a beautiful city.

*Q: How about relations with other US agencies there. I suppose we shouldn't talk too much about it, but with CIA—*

DYESS: CIA in Berlin? I didn't know that. [Laughter] I was not aware they were there.

USIA was there. We got along well with them and with the military—after all, I had been part of the military intelligence there. I knew Berlin inside out when I went there the second time. Berlin was a very happy place for me to be. I enjoyed the assignment enormously.

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*Q: Then you had to pay for your sins, didn't you? You came back home.*

DYESS: Sooner or later you have to come back home.

*Q: Then you were in the Department from 1970 until—*

DYESS: Just before I left I spent some time in Prague getting ready to come back to be Czech desk officer. That was interesting.

We skipped over the invasion of Czechoslovakia. We ought to go back to that a minute. That was in 1968. I was on leave then after leaving Moscow and before going to Berlin—I had been assigned there. I had decided in May of 1968 that the Soviets were going to invade Czechoslovakia. The reason they were going to do it was because the Czechs had done two things which were not permissible. They were saying that you have more than one pope which, in effect, is more than one party. They were having a multi-pope system. That's the best way to express it. That is just not thinkable. They were also saying that Marxism and Leninism is an interesting theory, but it is not a science. That's like saying God is dead. So the Czechs come up here and they say, "You can have a multi-pope system and God is dead."

Soviets couldn't tolerate that. I knew they had to quash it. The question was when. There was going to be a party Congress in early September so I said, "They're going in before September."

I pushed that and I got nowhere with it. I came back to the States in July. Helene Batjer was the Czech desk officer and she was very busy. I went to see her. We were old friends so she broke off from a meeting and came out to see me. We said, "How are you?" and so on. I just wanted to tell her the conclusions I had reached that this was already July and the Soviets were going in before September.

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She was nice to me and she explained, "Bill, you don't know. We have this thing well in hand. We're on top of it. The crisis is abating now. Don't worry about it."

I said, "All right."

I told whoever else would listen. I went to some relatives in Miami and there I had lunch with Roy Decoler (phonetic) and his secretary who had been in Moscow. This was on August 20. I told Decoler what I told Helene Batjer and the others. He listened patiently—he's a nice man. He told me more or less what Helene Batjer had said, "We're not out of the woods yet, but it looks much better."

I told him I didn't think so, and I tried to explain the reasons why. You can't have multi-popes and God can't be dead. This congress is going to solidify that, if they don't do it in stone, in early September. We had a nice luncheon. I went home and watched the news at about six o'clock or so. Six o'clock Miami time was already past midnight Prague time and the tanks were already pouring across the border. I had left Roy Decoler not more than four hours before this. I called him on the telephone and asked him if he's watching the television. He said he was. His voice dripped icicles. We've never spoken since.

I found one other person who predicted the same thing that I did for the same reason. He is a Czech and he is now at the School of International Affairs at Miami. We first came across this maybe ten or twelve years ago. Then I saw him again within the last two or three years and we renewed our recollections on it. I have forgotten now whether he learned that I had delivered this interpretation or whether or not I had learned that he did. I do recall that, when we got together the first time, I was saying something and he was agreeing and taking the next step. Then he would say something and I would agree and take the next step. We both agreed they simply could not tolerate a multi-party system, and they could not have Marxism and Leninism not to be scientific, and they could not have the congress taking place and solidifying that. Therefore, the invasion had to take place before that September conference.

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*Q: Did you put this in the record?*

DYESS: What record? These were just conversations I had, but I had them with a lot of people. I didn't hide my light under a bushel. It was an interesting time. I don't think the Soviets had a choice at that time. They did not have a choice. I could never quite see clearly why we thought otherwise, but I was not privy to all the intelligence flow on it or what the Soviets were telling us. I had left Moscow in late June or early July. I just went out and spread the word.

*Q: After Berlin you came back to the Department and you were Czech desk officer. You told me something about port security officer.*

DYESS: Another job I didn't want. Three of the jobs in the Foreign Service that I had and I didn't want all turned out to be good jobs. This is the third one that I in my wisdom said that I didn't want. I was stuck with it because I was the newest member of the East European office—Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, etc. They said, “Dyess, you're going to be port security officer.”

I said, “What the hell is a port security officer?”

I had to meet periodically with members of about six or eight different Washington agencies including Coast Guard, Justice, Treasury, CIA, military. We set up the rules and regulations governing the entry of communist flag vessels into US ports and waters. I said, “How often do they come? Do we have it once a year, twice a year?”

They said, “Maybe three or four times a year, maybe sometimes a half-dozen times a year.”

Then came Dr. Kissinger's weaving of the web of economic interests with the Soviets and trying to influence their behavior through economic goodies. The great grain scandal came which was atrocious. All this required ships, a lot of ships. So suddenly we began

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considerable traffic between the United States ports and communist flag vessels. We were meeting almost weekly for a while. Then we went to negotiate with the Soviets to insure that a certain amount of the grain would move on American bottoms. I became the senior State Department representative on that. Bob Blackwill, who was the Maritime Administrator, headed the delegation so I went to negotiate with the Soviets several times a year over about five years.

*Q: Where would those meetings take place?*

DYESS: In Moscow or Washington. In fact, once in Moscow I was harassed there. That was quite a story. If we have time we'll get to that.

That turned out to be something that was quite fascinating because it was the most protracted negotiations I've ever had with the Soviets, even more so than when I did my work there every year in Moscow. The reason for this was because the Soviets, since they were the buyers, could say which bottoms the grain would have to go on. There was no way that we could force the grainhouses here, who had the grain, to put them on American bottoms. The only way that we could insure that American flag vessels got a certain percentage of the haul was to get the Soviets to agree to give it to them. Now we had to have something to give it to them. I came up with a scheme of facilitating the entry of Soviet flag vessels into US ports in return for the Soviets guaranteeing of getting us a percentage of the traffic. When I proposed this first of all to the Maritime Administration, they poured cold water on it. Then within ten days, they discovered this was the only lever we had. So they bought it. We went with it and I was picked to be on the delegations. I stayed the senior State Department person. We worked out a maritime agreement with them which guaranteed us a certain amount of the traffic. We didn't always use it because we had vessels that would do other things, finding it more profitable to go elsewhere.

We monitored that. It was quite fascinating. On occasion we had to turn vessels down. Ned Cook is a cotton merchant out of Memphis and he did a lot of international trading.

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He had three Soviet vessels coming up into the Great Lakes. He consulted me and I was always available to be consulted by people night or day as to whether or not we would allow these vessels in port. I said that I could see no reason for keeping them out. Legally they should be allowed in under the agreement. The Nixon White House, though, was engaged in some negotiations with the Soviets and they suddenly decided that they were going to use every lever they could to knock the Soviets around. They found out about these ships coming in. So they sent word over to the State Department that I was to turn them down. I went in to Dick Davies, who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary in European Affairs. He had responsibility with the Soviet Union. I told him that I couldn't in good conscience do this. In fact, I wouldn't do this. I said, "If the White House wants to do it, you let them order it be done in writing."

He thought this was a good idea. He wasn't afraid. Dick had backbone. So he told the Nixon people that they had to order it in writing. They did, and then they classified it. I turned it down. Poor old Cook lost about \$250,000-\$300,000 on this deal and he was very, very upset. I had hoped that I would see him somewhere over the years. I never have. I wanted to explain to him that I did not go back on my word. I didn't turn him down. It was the White House that turned him down. It was only in my name and they classified it so I couldn't tell him why. I felt very badly about it.

*Q: You went on to the Soviet desk.*

DYESS: Yes. I took the port security affairs with me. I stayed on that about five years. At first when I went there, it was about eight or nine people. Jack Scanlan, who later was supposed to be ambassador to Warsaw and the Poles wouldn't take him—had nothing to do with Jack. He was an outstanding officer. Then he was ambassador to Belgrade. The first year Jack was the chief and I was the number two. He left after one year, and then I was the chief for a couple of years.

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That was an interesting period. The one who is head of bilateral affairs is usually considered to be “the desk officer,” so in effect I was the Soviet desk officer, but I was not. The Soviet desk officer was Henry Kissinger because he decided what was going to be done.

I disagreed with a number of things that he did, particularly the thought that he could build up these economic ties with the Soviets and thereby influence them. I felt he made several basic errors. He's a brilliant man, but the errors he made were in areas with which he was not familiar. He was making assumptions about the Soviets, that they would let economic incentives influence their political actions because they talk all the time about economic determinism. I was sure that they would never do that except in a very superficial way. That's the first error.

Secondly, there was an assumption that you could tell the American farmers to plant grain, corn, wheat, etc., fence post to fence post. Then if the Soviets misbehaved, you cut off the sales. The thought that you could tell American businessmen to put in a few score million dollars into the Soviet Union as seed money—up front money—and then if the Soviets misbehaved, tell them you're going to bring it out. This is a complete misunderstanding of the American farming industry, a misunderstanding of the American business. You cannot fine tune American business in that way.

While I was there I went to one of Averell Harriman's “do's” up in New York. He would bring people in from all over the country—government, business, etc. I was there and Hal Sonnenfeldt was explaining Kissinger's economic web. He did it quite eloquently because Hal is an eloquent guy and very bright. It was just about quitting time but something had not come up. I was sitting in the back row and I was there as one of the panelists—I shouldn't have been participating this way. I said, “I'd like to ask a question.”

Hal said, “Sure.”

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I said, “Hal, I don't think these people really understand what you're going to do when the Soviets don't behave, how you're going to have to turn off the spigot. Maybe you ought to explain that to them.”

He said, “Oh, yes. All this is not going to be all sweetness and light. There are going to be times that it's going to be difficult.”

We had a new meeting, because this had not occurred to these businessmen that this was going to happen to them. Of course, it did happen. It's why it didn't work.

When I was ambassador in The Hague, there was a former senior American official who came to The Hague and gave a lecture. He explained how the idea that we could influence the Soviet Union through economics did not work, that in fact it worked just the opposite way and that the Soviets were able to influence us. Here, we had the grainhouses all competing against one another. Businesses all competing against one another. They control it. It's united there. Here it's diffused.

The card was stacked against it. This individual explained, in effect, why you can't do that. What this individual did not do was to say that ten years before, we tried it and it didn't work. You know who the individual was? It was Henry Kissinger. He gave the lecture and I have examples of both speeches—the one he gave in 1982 saying why it does not work with the Soviets and how they'll turn it against you and make it work against you; and the one back in 1970, 1971, 1972 in which he was advocating the very thing be done. Fascinating.

*Q: You made a big switch then to public affairs.*

DYESS: Let me mention one more thing. Do you remember the case of the Lithuanian seaman who tried to defect to the US? I went to the Soviet Union to bring him back.

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I was on the Soviet desk. One of my predecessors, not Jack Scam. Jack Scam's predecessor was a guy who got burned because, when the coast guard alerted him to the problem, he did not follow through the way some people felt he should have. My own feeling was that the problem was the Coast Guard's. The Coast Guard had gotten in the practice of calling the Soviet desk officer when the least little problem would come up. I could always know when the Coast Guard was calling. It might be two or three o'clock in the morning. I might be at the beach. I might be at my home. Wherever I was, I knew the Coast Guard was calling, because the first thing I heard was "beep, beep." They were recording the message. Anyhow it was the Coast Guard problem that got the poor seaman thrown back to the Soviets. He was there for a long time. These Americans, some of them rather rightish in their views, were trying to get him out. I felt very sorry for the guy. They were coming up with all sorts of schemes. Then one of them, Shaffley. Do you know Shaffley? Phyllis and her husband came up with the idea that he had a claim to American citizenship because his mother was born in the United States. This was the craziest thing that I had ever heard of in my life.

I had a young lawyer on my staff write a very polite but firm letter to them, telling them that they were full of mud, they were crazy. I signed it and sent it away. They wouldn't give up. They kept pushing, kept pushing. They said, "Not only was his mother born in this country, she was born in Brooklyn and she was baptized in St. Mary's Church."

I have seen priests lie. In fact, I saw it in Yugoslavia. Certain priests will lie if they think the cause is right. They began to write congressmen and we had to get them out of our hair because we had other things to do. I came up with a bright idea. I said, "What we will do is, we'll have some experts from the State Department who are experts in documents go up there and expose this thing."

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So they went up there and examined—took them weeks to get up there—the birth certificates, and it came back in a very routine-like memorandum saying, “The birth certificate is genuine.”

We had a new ball game. We got down the immigration law, read that thing. Because his mother was born here, she had citizenship by birth. She was taken back to Lithuania as a minor. When she reached her majority, she was not able to come back to the US because the Soviets had then taken over the damn place. He was born out of wedlock. He was never legitimized. When he reached his majority, he did not have an opportunity to make a decision on citizenship. The guy had a valid claim to American citizenship. I could not believe it!

The Soviet ambassador was away. We got the Soviet charg# to come in. He set down in Jack Armitage's office. Jack Armitage was in the DAS in charge of Soviet affairs, and we went over the law with him. We said, “This is not a new book. This is an old law.”

We went through it line by line to explain to him that we were not fabricating something. This happened to be the way it is. He was as dumbfounded as we were. He said, “Let me think about it and see what I can do.”

He went back and we got word from the Soviets that things were going to be taken care of. We just had to be patient. Of course, the Americans weren't being patient. There were some problems there with his wife, because while he was in prison, it looked like she had separated from him. There were lots of different matters there. He had two children.

We really had to hand-carry this thing. He was released from prison. He was sent back home. Finally, we got the word that he had come home. I went to the Soviet Union to bring him back. I brought back the seaman; his mother, who is the real heroine of the whole story; his wife; and his two children. They were coming back on election day. Everybody wanted them to fly into their home district, their home state—Chicago, New

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York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington. I got orders to delay my arrival in the US So we lay over for a day in Frankfurt so that we would arrive the day after. We got him back here and he was well received. It was a highly emotional thing. The Paeglies (phonetic), who were his great friends up in New Jersey, looked after them for a long time. It was the single, most moving experience I had in all my years in the Foreign Service. He's very kind to me in his book, and he told the New York Times that I was the one that taught him how to be an American. The only reason he said that was because, when we were checking out of the Soviet Union, the KGB types were around there. They were very heavy-handed. They examined his books, examining this, etc. I don't realize I did it, but he said I just folded my arms and scowled at them. He said he took heart from that—that I wasn't the least bit afraid or upset or nervous. He said he learned from that what it meant to be an American. We've kept up over the years. I have not had contact with him in the last few years, but for many years we did. He never learned to speak English very fluently, but he's very proud of being an American. He was given American citizenship. So that was a great time.

*Q: How did your position in public affairs come about?*

DYESS: I think I told you earlier that I loved American politics. I was a frequent speaker. I went on the circuit a lot, speaking all over the country. I was looking for a place to go. I said to myself, "What is it you really like to do?" I had been in the European bureau all my career, and I needed an assignment out of bureau. I decided this is what I ought to do—public affairs.

I consulted some people I had worked for, and most of them advised me against it saying that it would be the end of my career. I talked to one or two others and they said, "No. Henry Kissinger thinks this is very important and he's put Carol Lays over there to rejuvenate the place. Then he put John Reinhardt to follow on, and they've gotten some very able Foreign Service officers there and they want some more. You might find it very

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useful. Also, the job that you would go to is director of plans and management and it is a very good job.”

So I went there and it was almost double or triple the area of responsibility in terms of supervision. I loved it. I was Director for about a year or so, then I became an acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, then the DAS, then the senior DAS. When Hodding Carter left, I became Assistant Secretary. I was appointed that under Carter and then when Reagan came in, he didn't accept my resignation and I stayed on. Then I was Department Spokesman for a while for Al Haig though I was told that I could not continue in that job. The White House was very up-front with me about it. I have no complaints whatsoever. They said, “Even though you are career, you played too prominent a role in the previous Administration.”

I had made about 2,000 speeches on various subjects. Most of them were on SALT, and I was on television a lot. They said, “You just can't do that. We have no objection to the work that you're doing as spokesman, but we can't have it. You pick where you want to go.”

It wasn't quite that clear, but that was almost what it was. I was told by the State that I should pick five countries with the hopes that I would get one of the five. I decided I wouldn't do that. I picked only one. That was where I wanted to go—The Netherlands.

*Q: You picked that? That was my next question. How did you get there?*

DYESS: Oh, I picked The Netherlands because my wife and I felt it was about the best post in Europe. Life was the most pleasant, most enjoyable, and the Dutch were into everything. At that time they were the largest investors in this country. Now the British are, but they were the largest investors. They are into everything. They were in the Sinai and various peace-keeping forces. They were in the U. N. They were on the Security Council, the Common Market. You name it, the Dutch were in it. It just looked like a very good place to be. I thought that it was not possible for me to get London or Bonn, Rome

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or Paris. After those four, obviously, the best one is The Hague. That's the one I pushed for and I had to work at it, because a lot of folks were after it, including a lot of political types. At the very end, it was the political folks that I had to beat out because all the career people had given up. They thought it was going political, so they just gave up.

I made sure my base in State was all right. I went to Larry Eagleburger and I said, "Larry, if I can get this, do you have any objection?"

He said, "No, Bill, I don't think you can get it, but if you can, I have no objection."

Of course, I had Haig's backing. Then I got the backing of Judge Clark, the Deputy Secretary of State. I went to see him and I said, "Listen, the biggest issue that we have now with the Dutch is the deployment issue, the deployment of INF. What you need is someone there who has credibility when he speaks about the Soviets. I speak Russian. I've lived in the Soviet Union. You need somebody who knows public affairs, someone who can appear on television, who can make a speech, who is tireless in getting out and moving and running for county sheriff because you've got to stop a negative decision."

That's the first thing you've got to do. Stop a negative decision. The way we were getting, the Dutch were going to say no. In fact, one of the first pieces I had when I got there was advising me to forget about it and go on to other things because the cause was lost.

Anyhow, that convinced him. Over at the White House I ran into a problem because there were a couple of guys over there that said my wife and I were very good friends of the Mondales. Now I had never met Mrs. Mondale. I had never formally met the Vice President. My wife had never been in the same room with either of them, but that would just not go away. People wanted somebody else to have the job, so they were trying to find a way to disqualify me.

Clark said, "Listen, Bill, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I want you to go over there and have a meeting with Lynn Nofzinger. You can have ten minutes. You go over there and

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you tell him your situation. Tell him your story and tell him you are not bosom buddies with Mondale.”

Which I was not. I later met Mondale and told him about this. He thought it was very funny.

I went to see Lynn Nofzinger and we both sat there. I love cigars and he did, too. We both smoked a cigar. Instead of ten minutes, the meeting went on for nearly an hour. He said, “Bill, I'm with you. I'm going to see what I can do.”

He went to Meese, who was the one who was sitting on my nomination over there, and he got him to move on it. It moved right through and I had no problems. That's how I got there. It wasn't easy. The biggest thing was having to beat out the political appointments.

In fact, one of them came by to see me later when I was in The Hague. He said, “This is the post that I thought I was going to get.” He was very nice about it, but . . .

*Q: You had this INF problem there in The Hague—*

DYESS: Yes. When I got there, the prevailing view was that it was a lost cause and that we should forget about it and go on to other things. It was a thorn in the side of US-Dutch relations and we shouldn't keep beating a dead horse. There were one or two who said, “The best we could possibly do—it was really in the US interest—was to push hard and try to postpone a decision.”

I said, “Don't do anything until I have a chance to survey it.”

I looked at it carefully for three months. Then I decided that the odds against an affirmative decision was no worse than 65-35—65 against, 35 for. So I said, “We're going to go for an affirmative decision.”

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That was not appreciated by some members of the embassy, but the thing is, if you're the ambassador, only one vote counts. I had the backing of two people, Peter Koromilas and Dixon Bocks. They said, "We think you're right."

That's the way we pitched. To make a long story short, in the end the Dutch did come up with an affirmative decision, and that may have been the straw that broke the camel's back for the Soviets and caused them to give up the ghost.

I worked at a long, detailed argumentation for both government and public. I presented these every opportunity I had. I have never had to talk to any foreign government official the way I once had to talk to the minister of defense in The Netherlands. I was doing it under instructions. I was sent these instructions and the meeting would take about 20 minutes. The first ten minutes was going to be very, very rough. The last ten minutes was to try to repair the damage.

He had to go out to a meeting which I didn't know about, so the meeting lasted only about ten minutes. He only got the negative part and we really got off on the wrong foot, although later we became fast friends—a very bright guy.

I worked with all parties except, finally, the socialists. I could see they were a total loss. I instructed the staff, "Stop wasting time with them. We've got work to do. You map it out so you spend your time with people who might support us, either in the organizations outside in the society, inside a government, or in the parliament. Don't waste your time."

Some of the Foreign Service officers had never seen an American career person who was so willing to become involved in the domestic scene. I was quite willing to do it. Oh, God, we had threats, demonstrations, attacks against us in the newspapers. These didn't bother me. We had to be careful the way we did it because we were foreigners, we did represent a foreign government or a friendly government, but we had a very legitimate point of view, one which represented the interests of our own country, the Alliance, and

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also The Netherlands. I felt that the opposition was coming from all different sides. They were advancing arguments that were contradictory and the case wouldn't hold water.

We had to be careful [because] you can wear out your welcome mat and you can do things that are inappropriate. I do believe, however, that we do have the right—and it is appropriate for us—to express our point of view. If we find the forum—and I found the forum—then we should do it. I was usually treated politely although I was heckled quite a bit. Heckling didn't bother me.

*Q: You were addressing groups?*

DYESS: Yes, at universities. I visited every university in the country at least once, and sometimes more than once all on this issue. I got a lot of heckling, but as I say—

*Q: You had big rallies, 400,000 or more in Amsterdam.*

DYESS: Oh, yes, in Amsterdam and in The Hague. It doesn't necessarily mean, though, that they have the majority of the country on their side just because they can turn them out. The very fact that we had conservative governments . . .

What really turned the tide there, though, was when the Prime Minister stepped down and Ruude Lubbers replaced him.

*Q: Did he step down or did the government fall?*

DYESS: No, he stepped down and Ruude Lubbers became the Prime Minister. They were both extremely able people but their personalities clashed. The only reason the personalities clashed was because their ambitions clashed. They tended to agree with one another a lot and they are both very able, although I think that Rude Lubbers was probably the better politician.

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Rude came up with a device which turned the argument around. This is what we had been waiting for and this was after I left. It was taking place as I left, but it's what won the day. He said, "All right, we don't plan to deploy. However, we are going to watch what the Soviets do. If they continue to deploy their SS-20s, then we are going to deploy. If they will stop now, we won't."

This is telescoping it too much, but that was it in essence. What he did was to focus public attention away from The Netherlands and away from the United States, Germany and Britain and the other host countries and onto the Soviets. Of course, the Soviets didn't stop. They couldn't stop because they had this thing going and they simply couldn't bring it to a halt. We had pictures, etc., showing—then the Soviets decided to deploy.

*Q: You deployed all the troops, USIS, the attach#s, everybody who was working on this thing, I suppose, in one way or another.*

DYESS: Yes, in one way or another. I did most of the speaking because I was used to appearing before the public.

*Q: The attach#s must have been working on that one, the military leaders. I'm sure the Agency was working on it.*

DYESS: Yes, they were all for it. We had the left all against it. Some left were for it but most of the left was against it. We had most of the government for it, the military, intelligence, etc. The battleground was this undecided middle and the public and that's who I went after. I kept up the steady representations with the prime minister, defense minister, foreign minister, members of parliament. I just kept pushing them.

*Q: I picked up a New York Times item saying, "The US Ambassador Is About To Be Removed For Pushing Too Hard." Do you recall that? What happened?*

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DYESS: Yes. It was not true. We get into personalities here, and I'm not sure that this is the place for it. There was an individual back here who was having to move out of the job he was in. He had been promised something. About the only way the promise could be fulfilled was for him to get the job in The Netherlands. They made some other promises, too, and they were removing ambassadors after two years—same in East Berlin—only career people and no political types.

I was very shocked when I heard about this. I raised some objections and the people in the White House didn't like it either. The deal was already cut and made before I knew anything about it. When I objected to it, then some things began to be leaked out from State. We don't know who, but obviously the only people who had an interest in doing it were the ones going to benefit from this move. This was one of the things that was said, that Dyess is too hard on the Dutch. Did you know that the foreign ministry released the statement saying that that was not true? They did—a written statement. The prime minister had a question planted in his press conference so he would have a chance to comment on it, and he said it wasn't true. The Queen said it wasn't true. So if the Queen, the prime minister and the foreign minister say it was not true. The Queen didn't say it publicly. She said it privately. If two of it say it publicly, you know there's no problem. The only people who ever would say that would be—certainly, it was not the former defense minister with whom we had become fast friends. It was only the left, people who did not have our interest at heart. It served the interest of someone else. You could never find out one of the unnamed sources.

*Q: How about Queen Beatrix? Did you have contact with the royal family? Did you have contact with Bernhard?*

DYESS: Yes, I had a lot of contact with her as well as with Bernhard. I admired them very much. They are remarkable people. I think it's the right sort of government for The

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Netherlands. She is a very gracious, noble, and distinguished monarch. She's just the right person for the job.

*Q: That switch came about while we were in The Hague.*

DYESS: Yes. Her mother is, as far as I know, still alive.

*Q: Bernhard, of course, always thought of himself as more of an American than anything else.*

DYESS: Yes, he did. He's very Americanized. The contact that you have with the royal family is primarily social. All the business that you do is with the prime minister, the foreign minister, the defense minister, or members of parliament.

*Q: As you pointed out, Dutch-US commercial relations are really vast and broad.*

DYESS: Yes. At the time the Dutch were the leading foreign investor in the US—direct foreign investment.

*Q: Did you get a lot of pressure from US business interests in any way?*

DYESS: No. I spent a lot of time in the business community. In fact, one of my senior career Foreign Service officers told me—because I invited the officers to sit around and tell me, privately or in a group, what they thought I could be doing differently to improve my effectiveness. One of them told me I was spending too much time with the business community. I didn't feel that way at all because I felt it was very important since we are the largest foreign investors in The Netherlands, and at the time, they were the largest foreign investors here. We also had a favorable balance of trade with them. The business community there was quite large. I had 70- to 80-hour weeks. I spent a lot of time in the business community as well as with the military. I would visit the military posts regularly. I would go to church there, or watch ball games, or attend ceremonies, etc.

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I flew an F-15 and broke the sound barrier twice while I was there. I didn't take off and land. I took over the controls only after we were in the air, but it is the sort of thing I would do with the military.

Q: *Susteberg?*

DYESS: Yes, Susteberg.

Q: *Were you bugged by a lot of congressional delegations?*

DYESS: Yes, we had a lot. I developed two approaches for handling visiting delegations, whether they were congressional or gubernatorial—we had those, too. We would have a working breakfast in which we would include the wives at the residence. We would have separate tables. We could seat 50 or 60 people in the main dining room. We would have the key officers of the embassy come and brief the Americans before they went to meet with the Dutch.

This made sense for two reasons. First, we would give them the briefing before they went. Second, we wasted very little of their time because you have to eat breakfast. We would serve them a Southern breakfast with grits, ham and eggs, etc. Then we would do the briefing. We had it down until it was almost scientific. We would give them a chance to ask their questions, etc., plus we included the wives. It was their opportunity to be in—the briefings were unclassified. We would have a separate briefing if it was classified. We did have a lot of congressional visits.

The other thing I worked out for distinguished visitors, and we had several of those, is I would have a stag dinner. Women might be there but it was not spouses. After dinner, we would go into the main living room and the distinguished visitor and I would sit side by side. He'd be there and I'd be here, the fireplace is in-between, nice roaring fire if it was wintertime. We would start off chatting. I would have three or four things, fairly provocative enough to start the thing going. Then the other eight, ten, twelve, fourteen people sitting

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around would chime in. This worked out beautifully. The thing would go on for an hour and half or two hours.

One of the most successful was Sam Nunn. We had people from both the government and the legislature. I won't name individual ones.

I will name two more visitors we had. We had George and Barbara Bush, and Dan and Marilyn Quayle. I had never met Bush before. I hadn't been around him 15 minutes before I said to myself, "I have misassessed this guy."

My only impression of him was from television. I became a fast and firm supporter of his after his visit. He was there for two or three days. I saw him deal with the Dutch. He was very effective. He's easy to be briefed. He remembers what he's told. I was really impressed.

Also, when people were attacking Danny Quayle for not being on the ball and bright, etc., people asked me and I said, "Well, any guy who can talk Marilyn Quayle into marrying him has to have something on the ball, because she is a very bright lady, very, very bright."

In fact, whenever she came into the room, I'd say the level of the conversation rose. It's not that he wasn't bright. The only criticism that I had of Quayle—he's a very nice fellow—he didn't seem to be all that serious. She was serious, and he would defer to her a lot of times on the weightier matters. I didn't detect any lack of intelligence or lack of brightness. His purpose was just not as serious as other senators that I had seen come through. We had a lot of senators coming through.

*Q: How were press relations in The Hague, both the Dutch press and American press?*

DYESS: I got along well with the American press with the exception of the New York Times. The reason I didn't get along well with the New York Times was because we were having some trouble with leaks. I told the staff, "Listen. You are big people. You are

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grown, adult, experienced officers and I'm not going to tell you what you can and can't say or whom you should and should not meet. So we're going to have this rule. You can meet with anybody you want to, and you can say anything you want to—assuming it's not classified. There has to be a ground rule. The ground rule is that, if whatever you say is used, it is used for attribution and you are identified as the source of the statement.”You could have heard a pin drop. So that's the rule that we had and it stopped the leaks.

The only problem we had was with Johnny Apple, a reporter with the New York Times. He wrote in the New York Times that I had gagged the embassy. I sent off a cable stating what the policy was, that they were free to speak with anyone. The only thing was, they couldn't speak off the record. They had to speak on the record for attribution. They had to be identified. The New York Times did not see fit to print my little rejoinder. I had a lot of trouble with the New York Times. It's not a paper that I admire.

Other than that, the relations with the American press was good. Relations with the Dutch press was exceptionally good with the exception of one paper.

*Q: That was the Catholic paper, wasn't it?*

DYESS: No, it was the Socialist paper. I had some trouble with him. In fact, I had an exchange of letters with him when I left. He gave me some advice and I gave him some. It was nice, civilized. I didn't step back for them. If they wanted to tangle, I tangled with them. If they didn't want to tangle, it would be fine. Pieces would come out about me in a magazine and I wouldn't bother to read it. My wife would read it in Dutch. She could read Dutch. The people would find out that I hadn't read it, so they would translate it and send it to me. I still didn't read it. You get to the point you don't worry about those things. If you do, you don't sleep well. When any of the little left-wing intellectual types would attack me, I'd just ignore it.

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*Q: Were you satisfied with the way your consulates worked? You had Rotterdam and Amsterdam.*

DYESS: Yes. I felt that, even though it was a small country, we should continue both. They wanted to close one or both and I felt that we should continue. I said, "Rotterdam is the largest port in the world. You cannot not have a consulate in the largest port in the world." It's about two and a half times as large as the next largest port, which is Kobe, Japan. The Soviets are dying to get in there.

Amsterdam is the intellectual, financial and commercial capital of The Netherlands. I said, "The only reason we are here is because this is where the seat of government is, but we need consulates for these other reasons." They kept them there and I was happy that they kept them.

*Q: I know that there was a threat to close one or the other when I was there.*

DYESS: They closed one. They closed Rotterdam. They tried to close one or both when I was there, but I fought it. I think it was useful for us to be represented in both places.

*Q: That brings us to 1983 when you left The Hague. Was that your idea that the tour was up?*

DYESS: No. I left to make room for somebody else. I was recalled. When the President called me up and asked me if I would go, he asked me if I would serve for his term, which at that time was almost four years. I said, "Yes." I made plans on that basis. I saw him later and Reagan did not know that I was being recalled. I would have like to stay another year because my son was in the twelfth grade. I had to find a school for him to graduate from high school—one year. Financially it was very bad. There were some things that I wanted to see through. I had laid the groundwork for the deployment of the INF thing and I wanted

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to see that through, but this other person was walking the halls and creating a great deal of trouble and pressure. So they said, "No, you've got to come."

*Q: Is there anything that I've missed about The Hague?*

DYESS: I don't know. I could talk about The Hague for the next two days. [Laughter] There were so many wonderful experiences that I had there.

*Q: Do you make an annual trip to Leiden for the Thanksgiving Day affair?*

DYESS: Yes. I opened I don't know how many museums or special exhibitions, the flower shows, played tennis.

One thing I might mention, I had to move around in an armored car.

*Q: In The Hague, of all places?*

DYESS: Yes. Not long before I got there, the British ambassador was assassinated. The Turkish ambassador's son was assassinated. They think they mistook him for the Turkish ambassador. The French embassy had been occupied for three or four days by terrorists. While I was there, the French ambassador who lived directly across the street from me got a threatening letter from Carlos. He signed it with his thumb prints. There was an attempt on another Turkish diplomat while I was there.

The problem is that the country is wide open. You don't worry about the Dutch. You worry about the foreigners coming in and getting out scot free.

So I had an armored car and two security drivers. They switched off. In front, the one security driver and one plain-clothed policeman armed. Behind me was a second armored car with three plain-clothed men in it. That was my normal to-ing and fro-ing. If I went to a public event and it was announced ahead of time that I was going to be there, then quite typically we'd be met on the outskirts of The Hague by another police armored car. I just

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didn't think about it. That's why I haven't mentioned it before. I think it bothered my wife some and bothered my son a bit. I had associated with several secretaries of state and they had heavy security, so it was not foreign to me.

*Q: What do you feel was your greatest accomplishment in your Foreign Service career?*

DYESS: I suppose the best one is getting the Dutch on the right track on the INF. I think the most satisfying one was bringing the Lithuanian seaman out. I did some other things in Berlin that I thought were useful. I revised the port security regulations and got inter-agency agreement on that and had it as the basis for negotiations with the Soviets. That was significant at the time. I've rescued people who were in dire straits when I was a consular officer.

*Q: On the other side of that coin, what was your greatest disappointment or frustration?*

DYESS: I guess the greatest disappointment I had was leaving The Hague a year earlier than I had planned. It was terribly inconvenient.

*Q: That's right. When you brought INF that far along, you wanted to see it through.*

DYESS: Yes. They were not the usual frustrations of moving. They'd say three moves were equal to one fire, losing furniture, losing paintings, etc. I thoroughly enjoyed my Foreign Service career. I was in for 25 years. I was in military intelligence for three years, so I had 28 years of government service.

The reason I got out was that there were things that I wanted to do with my life while I still had good health. If I had worked these 60- to 80-hour weeks on up until I was 65 or I had a coronary, then I wouldn't be able to do what I wanted to do.

What I want to do now—I have to work some because my annuity is not enough to pay all the bills—is to study physics, energy physics. I want to know as much as I possibly can know. I'll never know all the answers, but I want to know as much as I possibly can know

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about how creation came about, the first three minutes. This is how I got into it—the first three minutes. I've expanded into some chemistry and biology, but primarily it is still high-energy physics. My math is weak. I have no science background. I'm self-taught. I have read now about 50 or 60 books on it by the seminal thinkers, close to Nobel Laureates, etc. Most of them I can get through. There are one or two that I have had difficulty with. I've had some difficulty with the James Glick book on chaos. That is a bit difficult.

Also, I find it easier to accept quantum theory, quantum mechanics, than I do certain aspects of relativity. It was the longest time before I could see how space and time cannot be separated. They are really the same thing. It took me forever before I—

*Q: You're getting into deep water for me now. [Laughter] That's fascinating.*

DYESS: I'll tell you what fascinates me most of all, and I don't think we will learn anything in my lifetime. I want to know whether or not it is possible for anything to travel faster than the speed of light. There is some suggestion that that is possible because it is only if we are able to do that can we hope to make contact with any other intelligent matter in the universe. That's the main thing I'd like to know.

Also I'd like to know if the universe is open or closed. The denouement for that, whichever way, is going to be long after I am gone. The most difficult thing for me to grasp of all was perspective in numbers. I had no idea how small things could be and how large things could be. We dwell here and deal with things only on a human scale, and the human scale is nothing in the universe. We keep going down now to breaking down particles and sub-particles, and sub-sub-particles. This is fascinating to me. I'm also interested in the superconductor and the supercollider and if they are able to build that.

*Q: They're going ahead with that.*

DYESS: Yes, they are. Whether or not they have the money, I don't know. I was at a conference on that last week and a member of Congress spoke there. He says there's

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going to have to be a lot of foreign money. The trouble with foreign money, though, is that if the Italians, the Germans, or the Japanese help with the construction, it's going to cost \$4-\$6 billion. They are not going to want to give money. They will want to give technology. If we have these foreigners giving technology, I can conceive how it would end up. We'd do nothing but dig the damn ditch where the thing is going to go. That's not going to be satisfactory here. Texas has said they were going to pay maybe twenty per cent of it. Maybe we can get five or ten per cent from foreigners, all right, good. But, basically, we are going to have to build it ourselves if it's going to be built. What worries me is that in the past, grandiose schemes that take more than about five years to complete, usually don't turn out well. I don't care whether they are military weapon systems or nuclear power plants, if you string them out, there's something wrong with them.

*Q: What is your feeling about the shape the Foreign Service is in now? Is it going in the right direction? What about the organization, the structure, the young people they're bringing in. Do you have some comments on that?*

DYESS: I think the Foreign Service has suffered considerably in recent years because there have been so many political appointments. Political appointments not only to ambassadorships but even in the Department going down to the deputy assistant secretary level and below. This has been very bad for the morale of the Service.

Also the percentage of appointments of political people—the percentage is much worse than the figures make it appear because this past administration's policy of bringing many of the career people back after two years and appointing somebody else in their place—let's put it this way. You have country A and country B. Country A you have a political appointee. Country B you have a career person. In country A the political guy goes on for six or eight years. In country B, after two years you bring the career person back, put another career person in. Two more years, you bring him back, put another one in. So after six years, you've had three appointments over here in the career path and only one in the political path. It looks like you're making three times as many career appointments

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as you are political appointments. The fact is, under this past administration, the political people have stayed in there six and eight years, and the career people have turned over. Therefore, the figures that they're showing are not truly indicative of what is taking place.

We need a professional diplomatic service. All countries do. I'm afraid that ours has been going downhill. We've had this problem. We've had the problem of affirmative action. I grant you that we need to try to get a representative sample of the American public to serve and represent us overseas. I am fully in favor of that, but when you began to play around with the test scores and lower entrance qualifications, you are going to get people who simply don't have the same qualifications as you had earlier. This is not beefing. This is one of the problems we have.

Secretary of State Shultz seemed to me to simply reign—he didn't rule. Things were swirling around him. The Iran-Contra business—if we'd had a Secretary of State who was confident of his position and knew what he was doing, he would have stopped that. This guy didn't. He said, “Woof” one time and then let it go. He threatened to resign on three administrative matters which were not nearly as important, but on this he did not. He should have threatened to resign, but he didn't do it. He should have known better. He let Reagan stray off the reservation in Reykjavik. He was the one who insisted on putting the Marines into Beirut without a clear, definable mission. There's damn little that I can point to over the last six or seven years that the State Department has done in foreign policy. Very little.

We haven't talked about the INF Treaty. I have problems with the INF Treaty. It's not the treaty itself that is so bad. We can accept the risks in the treaty, but the treaty is out of sequence. It came too early. We should have had other treaties to precede it. What this treaty is going to do, I'm afraid, is to decouple us from Western Europe. This is what the Soviets have been trying to do now since NATO was formed. We recoupled—we used the opening they gave us through their mistaken deployment of the SS-20s, a mistake on their side. We deployed our missiles which, in effect, re-established the coupling because

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there would be American missiles from our one to protect Soviet territory. That reinforced the coupling. I'm telescoping this, but that was the big—now we've given that up. We are now going to insist that the Germans, the Dutch, and others modernize the nuclear weapons that they have. These are weapons that are going to explode on German soil. I don't blame the Germans for objecting to it. Don't blame them at all—the Germans, the Dutch or the others.

I bring up the INF Treaty because that's the one thing that's usually put in as the feather in the cap of this administration going out, and I think that it was a mistake. The timing was wrong.

*Q: They sort of backed into it, didn't they?*

DYESS: Yes.

End of interview