

Interview with Chas W. Freeman Jr.

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

AMBASSADOR CHAS W. FREEMAN, JR.

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Can you tell me a bit about your background, when and where you were born and then something about your family.

FREEMAN: Sure. I go by Chas W. Freeman, Jr. And the reason for that is, first of all, Chas is an old abbreviation for Charles in my family. But George Bush, when he sent me to Saudi Arabia as ambassador, knew me as Chas, and somehow that ended up on the commissioning certificate. So, since I've never been called Charles, I simply decided that that was a better solution. Legally, I'm still Charles, but for all other purposes, I'm Chas.

My background. I'm a typical product of centuries of American miscegenation. The Freemans came to this country in 1621. And there is a family tradition (which may or may not be correct) that the reason for this is recorded in a famous English law case called Freeman vs. Freeman, in which, as I recall, my putative ancestor was a rake and a ne'er-do-well in London (the family was originally from Devon), and was persuaded by a wealthy uncle, having lost all his own money in gambling and drinking, that he should marry a very ugly, overage young lady who was the ward of this uncle. Being a scoundrel, he naturally insisted on a written contract. In return for marrying this girl, he got an annual income and a lump sum. The uncle made it clear to him, orally, that the contract was dependent on his

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refraining from drink and gambling, and his behaving like a gentleman. He didn't live up to the terms of the contract, needless to say. And this resulted in a lawsuit, in which he tried to enforce the contract against his uncle. He lost. When he lost, he abandoned his wife, went to Holland and became a Puritan, repented of his sins, I reckon, and then moved to the Plymouth Colony. One brother went to the Massachusetts Bay Colony and remarried, bigamously. So that's the start of the line.

The family has been around in the United States long enough so that I can count thirteen European nationalities and one American Indian tribe in my background, and some illustrious ancestors — John Adams and John Quincy Adams among them, and Governor John Winthrop, in an earlier period.

My great grandfathers were eminent men. John Ripley Freeman was the leading hydraulic engineer of his time, at the end of the nineteenth century. He was the only man, in history, I believe, to be president of both the American Society of Civil Engineers and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. He was a successful entrepreneur in addition to his engineering prowess, which lives on hydraulic tables that are still used. It also lives on in China, where he taught (he taught also in Tokyo), in the Three Gorges Project, the flood control project on the Yangtze, which he essentially designed. This is alluded to briefly in a book by Jonathan Spence called *To Change China*.

My other great grandfather, whose name was Charles Wellman, after whom I'm named, was apparently one of the inventors or perfecters of the open-hearth steel process, he was a wealthy businessman in Cleveland who was killed at an early age in the wreck of the Twentieth Century Limited.

My mother's grandfather, my great grandfather on that side, was Robert Ezra Park, who was one of the founders of sociology in the United States. He took a doctorate at Heidelberg and was instrumental in starting the University of Chicago's social science program. His book with Burgess was the classic sociology text for much of the early part of

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the twentieth century. And his writings on race are still referred to in the literature. He was, among other distinctions, Booker T. Washington's private secretary, and ghost-wrote a lot of Washington's books. He was the companion of Washington on a visit to the Belgian Congo to investigate atrocities that King Leopold of Belgium had carried out in his private fiefdom.

The other great grandfather was from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, and struggled all his life to hold together a plantation, which he ultimately failed to do.

Turning to subsequent generations, my grandfather Hovey Thomas Freeman succeeded his father as president of the Manufacturers Mutual Insurance System, now known as the Allendale System, and lived in Rhode Island.

My grandfather on my mother's side was Edward Cahill Park, who was a well-regarded attorney in Boston for many years, and had a role in the defense of Alger Hiss, not the principal role, but participation in his defense, among other distinctions.

So that's that generation.

My father, Charles Wellman Freeman, was a graduate of MIT, served in the Navy in World War II, and following that, declined to join the family business and struck out on his own, with a G.I. loan, and did exceedingly well at business.

My mother was an artist and architect from Boston, Carla Elizabeth Park. The two of them ended up in Nassau, the Bahamas, initially running and then later buying a hotel of some antiquity and distinction called the Royal Victoria, which had been built during the Civil War for the gun and cotton runners of the South.

Q: Oh, yes, for their R & R.

FREEMAN: For their R & R. So I grew up in the Bahamas.

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Q: But your parents were American citizens.

FREEMAN: Yes, of course. My mother died when I was nine, and my father remarried.

Q: You were born in 1943.

FREEMAN: I was born March 2, 1943, in Washington, a few blocks from here on Woodley Avenue.

At any rate, I went to a school in the Bahamas that was an experimental Presbyterian school, and I was in the class that set the bow wave for the school; we were the oldest. Because there was no curriculum, and because the teachers were drawn from eclectic backgrounds (I'll discuss that in a minute), it was a superb educational experience.

When I was thirteen, however, my father thought that I should be re-Americanized, because I spoke with a British accent in school and a Bahamian accent on the street. He insisted on an American accent at home. So I was sent to Milton Academy.

Q: That's outside of Boston.

FREEMAN: Yes, Milton, Massachusetts, where my mother had gone to school. I passed the secondary education boards for the 12th grade, which was a testimony not to me but to the quality of the education.

The teachers at that school in the Bahamas included, as I say, quite an eclectic lot, many of whose backgrounds I didn't know at the time. A history teacher was arrested, in the course of one of my classes, as a war criminal by the British authorities, and returned to Germany for trial. I never knew quite what happened to him. The Latin and Greek teacher, who was an RAF ace, turned out to have been drummed out of the RAF for egregious homosexual behavior. The geography teacher was a South African Communist in exile. My scripture teacher later defected to a job at BOAC as a stewardess, which probably

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lowered the standards of beauty in that organization, but certainly improved our scripture teaching.

Q: Sounds like the Bahamas after the war was Tangier II or something like that.

FREEMAN: It wasn't quite that exotic. The only connection to Tangier was the presence of Ambassador Villard as consul general. Of course, he had had a very distinguished career in North Africa.

Q: You graduated really at a very early age from Milton, did you?

FREEMAN: Well, I dropped back to the 9th grade, which was emotionally the right thing to have done, but intellectually rather boring. It led me into quite eclectic reading — a great deal of science fiction and French novels of one sort or another that were lying around my grandparents' house.

I should say that there is a family tradition, on my mother's side, going back at least to the time of my great grandfather, which would be the late nineteenth century, of conversation twice a week at the dinner table in a foreign language. And each generation chose its language. For my grandfather's generation, it was German, although my grandfather was also bilingual in French, having lived in Strasbourg for a while. For my mother's generation, it was French, although she also knew Spanish. Having Robert Redfield, who was an anthropologist, as an uncle, she had spent a year with the Redfields in Guatemala while they were doing field research. For my generation, the language was French, again. And for my children, it was Chinese.

In any event, Milton was boring. I was certainly a student who did very little work and got good grades, and was regarded as a troublemaker and a bender of the rules, which led to my graduation with distinction rather than cum laude.

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The experience there was an interesting one, though, because Milton is just outside Boston, and Boston, in those days, was a pretty raunchy place.

Q: Scolly Square.

FREEMAN: Exactly. I remember it well. It was possible to climb down the fire escape, in the middle of the night, from the dormitory and go into town on what is known now as the “T”, it was the MTA at that time. And I did that a number of times without getting caught.

In any event, I graduated from Milton in 1960. I was seventeen. I was admitted to both Harvard and Yale, but was tired of Boston and went to Yale, which distressed a rather significant number of people in the family who had gone to Harvard or MIT.

Q: Sometimes, going out to the Newtons is about as far as the people from Boston go.

FREEMAN: That's right. And there's very little reason to go beyond that, actually.

At any rate, I went to Yale, and several things happened.

First, I should say that my father had succeeded magnificently in business in the Bahamas and had multiple interests — in addition to the Royal Victoria, another hotel, a rental car agency, a recording company, a nightclub, a restaurant, some supermarket investments in Cuba, which proved to be a bad thing as Castro came along. In 1958, there was a general strike in Nassau, which started with a dispute over taxi service to the airport, but escalated into a racially based, labor vs. management dispute. I remember being present when the leaders of the strike came to my father and apologized for having to include him in the strike, because we were one of the few households that had black Bahamian friends frequently around for dinner, and there was no racial element in his management style. In any event, he was overextended at that time, having just renovated the two hotels, and this brought him down financially. He ended up staying on in Nassau as a real estate

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agent for several years while he paid off a few million dollars in debt, and then moved to California.

The result of this was that the last couple years of my time at Milton Academy were paid for by my grandfather, Edward Park. And when I was at Yale, I was a full-scholarship student. That gave me an incentive to try to get through quickly.

And the incentive was added to when, shortly after I arrived there, I met a girl, whom I courted madly, even dropping out of the swimming team in order to pursue that courtship, got her pregnant, and had to marry her (well, at least I thought I did). I had a quite happy marriage of thirty years with her, which broke up only in the summer of 1992, in a very nasty way.

So the result was that I took a double course load; I took ten courses a semester instead of five. I had enough credits after two years to graduate. I actually graduated in '63, although I was Class of '64. At that time, I was twenty.

Q: Where were your interests? You came from both the more scientific side and what you'd call the intellectual side.

FREEMAN: My major was actually Spanish literature. I dropped out of taking classes in French after attending one seminar with Henri Peyre, who began by extolling the enormous creativity and originality of French literature, citing Don Juan as the example of this. It happened that I'd read Lope de Vega's Don Juan, and realized that many of the lines that he pointed to as most original in fact were straight plagiarism from the Spanish. So this said something to me about the French, which I'd long suspected.

I took quite a range of courses: history, political science, economics. I took a full accounting course, enough to have probably gone for a CPA if I'd wanted to. I did biology. I did not do any of the physical sciences other than that, though I did some biochemistry. I did sociology and found it inane and didn't pursue it. I took a course in linguistics. I

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taught myself, outside of school, some strange things. I had gone to Europe when I was fifteen and met a Danish girl, and I taught myself to read and write Danish to carry on a correspondence. I learned Anglo Saxon in order to read the poetry, although I didn't take very many English courses at Yale. I took a fair amount of philosophy. So it was a very diffuse experience.

Q: Well, you were obviously involved with a young lady, which can take away... But what was the atmosphere? This was just on the brink of the '60s generation, which was a generation of almost revolution in American society. But you were coming out prior to this, weren't you?

FREEMAN: Oh, Yale was politically quite a placid place. The principal political activity, aside from the core group that eventually founded and became the Young Americans for Freedom, which really wrote much of the conservative agenda that triumphed in the '80s,...

Q: This was Buckley and...

FREEMAN: Buckley was long gone, but there were young conservatives, passionate politically. I had very little to do with them. I was much more involved with the left than with the right. I was not a political person. Aside from that, there was a monarchist party, which was something of a joke.

Q: Who were they pushing?

FREEMAN: They had no specific candidate, as I recall, but they argued against the Constitution and in favor of a monarchy. This is a longstanding Yale tradition and somewhat absurd. Politics, in other words, was an extension of college high jinks, which were still alive and well. Aside from the intellectual activity that one carries on and the occasional attendance at sports events or film festivals and whatnot, the principal activity was stringing surgical rubber between window casements in courtyards, to make a huge

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slingshot that could fire water bombs over the roof of one college and into the courtyard of another. That was something that I participated in, occasionally.

I was married in May of 1962, and my daughter, Carla Park Freeman, named after my mother, was born at the very end of December 1962. Because I was married, I had to move, obviously, out of the then all-male college system (I was in Trumbull College), first into an apartment over a bar downtown, and later into graduate-student housing. One of the neighbors across the way was Jack Danforth, who was pursuing a divinity degree at the time, but later became a senator, until his conscience got the better of him. So I lived off campus and was really more absorbed in my family for the last bit, than I was in the campus, to the extent that, in the spring of '63, when I was invited to join several secret societies, I had to inform them that I was about to leave.

Not knowing what else to do, being twenty and under some pressure from my mother's father, my Grandfather Park, to follow in the practice of law, I went to Harvard Law School. I would have been Class of '66. That was an interesting experience. I think I was too immature and lacked the self-assurance, really, to be an effective participant in a process that does require participation. Ironically, I did exceedingly well at moot court, and I enjoyed advocacy very much. But I did not enjoy most of the classes, and as time went on, I began to conclude more and more that I didn't want to practice law. So I attended fewer and fewer classes, and spent most of my second year, actually, in the Widener Library reading history.

I read systematically around the world. I started with European history, which I was fairly familiar with anyway from the St. Andrews School in Nassau and then subsequent reading on the side at Milton. I continued through Russian history, and then read on Japan and Southeast Asia. In the meantime, I read what was then available on Africa, which was very little. I knew Latin American history well from my time at Yale. And then I rediscovered family China, which I had known very little about, which is a sad commentary on the curriculum, really.

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Q: Yale's had a proud tradition of involvement in China, with its Yale in China... It had.

FREEMAN: It still does. However, that tradition has really not translated into anything in the core curriculum that familiarizes you with that civilization.

So I started reading on China, and the more I read, the more fascinated I became. It was at this point that I discovered China connections going back to the 18th and 19th centuries, when various Freemans had been ship captains and ship owners, trading with China. I discovered that John Ripley Freeman had taught at Qinghua University and at the Imperial University in Tokyo, and that Robert E. Park, my other great grandfather of renown, had taught at what later became Beijing University, then Yanjing, and also at Lingnan University in Canton.

In any event, I decided that really what I wanted to do was join the Foreign Service. The motivations for this were multiple, some of them self-indulgent. Obviously, I enjoyed languages and foreign cultures and histories. It seemed to me that the Foreign Service offered a career that was in some respects the antithesis of the law. Whereas lawyers are like oysters who have a free-swimming polyp phase, but then soon settle down on a rock and grow a shell of clients and flap their jaws in the tide for a living, in the Foreign Service, every several years, one has a complete change of scene, not simply colleagues with whom one is working, but physical location, cultural location, and linguistic location. Therefore, it seemed to me that it, as a career, offered a perfect escape from boredom and monotony.

But the larger motivation was that this was the Kennedy era, and I was bitten by the bug of public service, not something that anyone in my family had ever done, except as an ancillary thing. John Ripley Freeman was instrumental in founding the National Bureau of Standards, for example, and Hovey Freeman, my grandfather, had been very involved with government in World War II in various activities of a pro bono nature.

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I think I was going through an identity crisis. I had, for some time, been torn between the Bahamian experience and the American one. And it was about that time that I emphatically decided, rather in the manner of an immigrant to my own country, that I was an American, that that was what I wanted to be, and that therefore any thought I'd earlier had about floating around the world in some other capacity was not right.

I was looking for a profession and self-definition in those terms. And, of course, I was very concerned to get to work, because I didn't enjoy at all being dependent, as a married man by that time with two children. My son, Charles Wellman Freeman III, had been born in August of 1964.

So I looked for a way of defining myself, and public service seemed the answer, in the sense of being able to take satisfaction in serving a cause larger than my own selfish interests. And in terms of public service, the Foreign Service was by far the most appealing, because it corresponded to my own personal interests.

Q: Had you known any Foreign Service people?

FREEMAN: Well, I had known, of course, as I mentioned, Henry Villard, slightly. Actually, my primary encounters with Foreign Service people had been unfortunate.

In 1960, after I graduated from Milton Academy, two friends and I decided to hitchhike to Tierra del Fuego. At the very outset of this adventure, which ended in Guatemala, as we went south in Central America, things got gloomier and gloomier, and we turned around and went back to Mexico. In fact, I ended up a year later going to the National University of Mexico for a while, when I was supposed to be at Yale (something I should have mentioned). In Tampico, where there was a consulate, which I didn't know about, of course, I was sleeping peacefully on the beach one night. I was awakened with a flashlight in my eyes and a prick in my throat, which was a bayonet. It turned out that I was sleeping in a maximum-security zone just in front of the oil fields and refinery in Tampico. So the

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Mexican Army rounded me up, and I was taken off to the brig. Somehow the local consul was awakened from his slumbers and came out and got me and my two friends out of the custody of the Mexican military and allowed us to sleep on their kitchen floor (we were fairly scruffy) for the remainder of the night. They gave us breakfast, very kindly. But what was most notable about them was that, while they had spent their entire career in Latin America, his Spanish was dreadful, and her Spanish was kitchen Spanish, no verb conjugations and the like. I thought to myself, as I reviewed that experience, "My God, if that's what is in the Foreign Service, I can surely excel."

That was probably the most important, not terribly encouraging, encounter. But it did lead me to believe that if I went into the Foreign Service, despite my background in Latin American studies, and I knew Spanish and French, of course, and Portuguese I'd learned while doing work for a professor at Yale, I didn't want to be in Latin America, particularly.

And I conceived the idea of focusing a career on China. My reasoning for that I will explain.

This was now 1965, my second year of law school. I should say that to go to my grandfather and say that I'd decided not to be a lawyer and to leave the law school was quite a traumatic experience, since I loved him very much and was grateful to him, but essentially couldn't accept the burden of obligation that his continued support for me in law school imposed on me. But I did that.

I took the Foreign Service exam. I called down and said that I would come down on 24-hours notice if the Board of Examiners had a vacancy for the oral. Which they did, in the course of the summer. I was working at a law firm. I came down, took the oral, and passed. I insisted on taking the security interview and preliminary medical the same day, which caused quite a ruckus. But I managed to do it.

While they did the background check, I took off in the fall with my wife and two children in a VW bus, and drove, camping, across the United States and down to Mexico City, where

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I had lived when I was in university there. And then back up. I got back to Boston just in time for the security clearance to come through, and relocated to Washington.

Q: Talk a little about the oral exam. What were they after? You were a pretty young man, and there were still people coming out who had military service and all that.

FREEMAN: At that time, I guess I had just turned twenty-two. I was young, but reasonably self-assured. There was one fellow on the panel who was a Lincoln buff (I had never read anything very much about Lincoln, for some reason, but I subsequently did), who asked me all sorts of questions about Lincoln, which, of course, I couldn't answer. I suppose this was intended to put me off, but it didn't, particularly. It did resolve me to read about Lincoln. The other focus was a series of questions on international law, which I didn't have any trouble with, the Dardanelles and some other issues, as I recall.

It was a stimulating experience, with all of the predictable tricks of trying to break your poise and that sort of thing. I wasn't terribly worried about having passed it, and indeed I did.

I think the result of the Lincoln buff was that there was an entry made in my record saying that I needed to brush up on Americana. And indeed that was dutifully suggested to me by Alex Davit, who ran the A-100 Course when I came in.

In any event, I was talking about the desire to work on China. I had several motivations. First of all, the subject fascinated me. I knew nothing of the language, but it sounded very interesting. The people, from what I had read, sounded terribly interesting. I really didn't know any Chinese, even though, at one point, apparently Sun Yat-sen had stayed with my maternal great-grandparents while he was in the States.

But more to the point. I had a theory about statecraft and diplomacy, which was that they are most valuable not during periods of national ascendancy and preponderance of power, but during periods of decline. It seemed to me that the United States was somehow, in

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the '50s and '60s, at the apogee of its power and influence internationally, and that my career would be spent in circumstances in which that power and influence would decline, relatively speaking, which would make diplomacy a great deal more interesting.

To put it a different way, those who can't live by their wallets or their muscle have to live by their wits. And I thought that the requirement for wit, meaning intelligence in foreign affairs, would rise rather than decline.

I had a hero who to me exemplified this, the military diplomat and statesman of the Byzantine Empire, Belisarius.

Q: Justinian's right arm.

FREEMAN: He probably prolonged the life of that empire by four hundred undeserved years.

It seemed to me that that would be one important factor in the course of my career.

In that connection, it also seemed to me bizarre that the world, as constructed by the United States during the period of our hegemony in the '50s and '60s, was one with a large hole where China was physically located, and that it was only a matter of time before we would have to come to grips with the reality of China. I felt that if I were lucky, I might be involved in that process, but that in any event, having read Henry Kissinger's Ph.D. thesis, "A World Restored," which talks about Metternich's efforts to integrate a revolutionary power, France, into the international-state system in Europe, something similar would have to be done with China, and that it would be very interesting to be involved in that.

So, for reasons of personal interest and professional philosophy and ambition, I thought China would be a good focus.

I came in the Foreign Service with the firm intention of working on China, but with a sense of awe at the difficulty of really mastering the language and history and complexities of

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the culture. And since I didn't want to plunge immediately into this until I knew whether diplomacy was in fact the career I wished to follow, I asked to be assigned to any country on the rim of China, other than India.

So, naturally, I was sent to India. When I was told that I was assigned to Madras (which I think was pronounced "Madress" by the fellow who announced it), I knew it was somewhere in India, but didn't know whether it was on the east or west coast. I remembered that it was on the Coromandel Coast, but I didn't know where that was. Of course, I immediately started reading about India, and found my experience in Madras to be very fulfilling though somewhat tumultuous.

Q: Before we get to Madras, could you talk a bit about the A-100 Course, which is the basic officers' course. Maybe personify the type of officers who were coming in, what they were looking at, and how well you think you were introduced to the trade of diplomacy.

FREEMAN: That's several questions. The average age of the class was probably somewhere toward the late twenties or early thirties. I was by far the youngest. Well, there was one other very young man in there. I was also the one with the most children, and probably the least experienced in some respects, maybe more experienced in others.

It was a small class, and the predictable has happened over the course of the years, very few remain in the Foreign Service. Tex Harris, who is now the president of the American Foreign Service Association, was in the class, a very large presence both physically and otherwise even then. David Ransom, who is now ambassador to Bahrain, was there. And George Trail, who subsequently was ambassador to Malawi, was there. There was one staff officer in the course, which was an experiment, I gather, who later became a full-fledged officer. And there were several USIA people (it was then a combined course), some of whom lasted, and some of whom didn't.

The nature of the training I found disappointing. That brings me back to the remarks that I made before you turned on the tape recorder, when I commented to you on the

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work I'm currently doing on statecraft and diplomacy. I had expected something really rather different, having read some memoirs of European diplomats. I expected a bit more emphasis on what I would call professional knowledge, and was quite surprised to see that a great part of the course was taken up with explaining the organization of the U.S. government, very little with tradecraft, which was what I was most interested in. I found the A-100 quite spotty, as a course, and quite disappointing.

The only thing that I found really satisfying was the consular segment of it, because that had some meat and substance, and, by god, you had to know that stuff or you were going to flunk on the job.

There was one other segment that I enjoyed, but which there was not enough of, and that consisted of going over to the Department of State and impersonating a foreign diplomat and writing some reporting tables. I recall I chose to go to INR's Latin American Section. I don't remember the name of the fellow who headed it, but he was quite a character. He had in his office, behind his desk, a map of the Western Hemisphere, upside down. He explained, quite insightfully, that when you put the Western Hemisphere upside down, you suddenly see strategic relationships between the Caribbean Basin and the Gulf region of the United States, and between Africa and Brazil and the United States. You see the importance of the Panama Canal in a way that you don't when you look at the map as it is familiarly arrayed. That's something I learned and have subsequently used. I've found maps to be a very good stimulus to thought, when I've given lectures and talks and the like.

Anyway, I wrote a report; it wasn't a very good one. But that was really the only element of tradecraft on what I subsequently ended up mainly doing, which was political and economic reporting. So I wasn't impressed with it.

Q: Were there any minorities, women, in your class?

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FREEMAN: There were several women. I don't believe there were any African Americans. There were a couple of people who were about half American Indian, I guess. (My percentage of American Indian blood is nowhere near that.) But there wasn't any great consciousness about minorities at that point. There was very much a sense, in that course, some of which I probably dismissed as guff and self-congratulatory nonsense, about the Foreign Service as an elite. There was very definitely a sense that we were joining an elite organization, with an elite esprit de corps. I think, in the course of my career in the Foreign Service, the loss of that sense and its erosion under the leveling instinct of American society has been a great tragedy. But that was the main psychological lesson that was inculcated, that it was a meritocracy and an elite. There was no reference to women or other groups in society—other people with various irrelevant ascriptive characteristics—as being appropriate for singling out.

Q: One of the things I'm hoping from these interviews, and I've already started to work on it, is to begin to get the junior Foreign Service officers to be exposed to the careers of officers who've gone before, to give them some idea of what their tribal elders have done. And out of it also maybe to extract some lessons, but also some feeling of belonging to a group that is important. It's an uphill process, but I keep plugging away on it.

FREEMAN: It goes to a fundamental point, and I gave a talk at the Foreign Service Association in January, which was excerpted in the March Foreign Service Journal, on the question of whether diplomacy is a profession. My view is that it ought to be, but is not. And if I may speak to that for a moment, because it's directly related to the A-100 Course, I will do so.

Professions have certain common characteristics. One of them is, by the way, tutelage by elders, a period of apprenticeship. That has now been substituted, in the military, the legal profession, and the clergy, by specialized schools. West Point was the first for the military; the Harvard Law School pioneered professional legal education; and divinity schools, which existed from the outset of the university system in this country, have taken

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over the function for the clergy. There is no comparable thing for the Foreign Service. Therefore, elders teaching new entrants the rules of the game and the ropes of the trade is essential. And what I found most missing in the A-100 Course was exactly that. It was very interesting and useful to know about the organization of the CIA and how it related to the rest of the government, and the NSC structures that then existed, and the organization of the Pentagon, as well as, of course, the Department of State. But the lore of diplomacy, the tradecraft of it, and its relationship to statecraft were not addressed.

A second characteristic that a profession has is a self-certifying process. That is that professional competence is certified over the course of the career. The Foreign Service has that, in the form, now, of commissioning in tenure boards and promotion panels and selection in and out of different grades. So that it has this in inchoate form.

Another characteristic is a code of ethics. The Foreign Service has such a code of ethics, but it's inchoate and unwritten. There are certain rules that we all learn in the course of our careers. For example, the protection of confidences, which is an ethical principle just as much as the attorney-client privilege is in the law.

Then there is a set of defined skills that must be acquired. In my talk at the Foreign Service Association, which I won't recapitulate, I identified twenty-five such skills for diplomacy.

The importance of all of this is that self-consciousness as a member of a profession leads to better training. It defines what is being trained and stimulates training. Second, it leads to tutelage and apprenticeship relationships in the profession. And third, as the profession is recognized as such, entry by unqualified people is barred. Sometime around the 1840s, it became unthinkable for anyone to be appointed a colonel in the U.S. Armed Forces without having had a professional military education. That was violated in the Civil War, but the basic principle has stood. No one would imagine that a politician with distinguished credentials in that field, or a businessman with distinction in the field of business, was

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qualified to run a carrier battle group or to command a division. In the clergy, similarly, you cannot now aspire to serious status professionally without credentials.

Q: Well, I'm thinking of the Episcopal Church, where I think that has kind of slipped a bit.

FREEMAN: It's being eroded.

Q: For politically correct principles.

FREEMAN: That says something about the devaluation of the idea of the learned profession by our society.

In the law, the last state to admit lawyers to practice without a law degree, but through apprenticeship, abandoned that practice several years ago. And no one would imagine that a judge should be someone with no legal training. I'm not saying that the process of selection is particularly good.

So the problem of the U.S. Foreign Service is that, whereas the United States pioneered the development of professions of the military, the law, and the clergy, the Foreign Service, for various reasons, failed to acquire those professional characteristics and to formalize its professionalism. And therefore it is vulnerable to the placement of friends of politicians in positions where they exercise great responsibility on behalf of the nation without understanding the simplest elements of what goes into discharging those responsibilities well. The United States is now, to my knowledge, the only significant country, and may be well on the way to being the only country, that continues to value amateurism over professionalism in diplomacy.

And I thought the A-100 Course, in its absence of attention to professional skills, at that time, was symptomatic of this. Well, I should say, I have thought that subsequently; I don't believe I had thought this all through well enough at that time to think this.

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My own view is that the Foreign Service is going to be vulnerable to grotesque political manipulation for as long as it fails to follow the military, the law, and the clergy in professionalizing itself.

Q: I agree. Your first assignment was to Madras. You were in Madras from when to when?

FREEMAN: I entered the Foreign Service in December of 1965. Sometime around March of 1966, I departed for Madras, and I was there until September of 1968. I had a variety of assignments there. That was the period when junior officers were rotated between sections, so that much of the first period there was spent in three- to four-week stints, rotating around what was then a very large consulate general. I did consular work throughout, but after a period of doing it full time at the outset, I rotated to the economic section, then to the political section, the administrative section, and to USIS.

There were several things that happened that convinced Ambassador Bowles that I was a very poor consular officer, but had other talents. So this resulted eventually in my being thrown out of the State Department and given to USIS. And I'll describe those incidents.

Q: Before we get to that, could you talk a little about your impression of India, from the southern point of view. What was the situation in Madras within the consular district, and how did you all deal with it?

FREEMAN: Well, that's an interesting question. Madras (then the State of Madras, later renamed Tamil Nadu to take account of Tamil linguistic self-expression) was very much at odds with the north, on many fronts. Specifically, the issue of adoption of Hindi as a national language, in part to overcome what was perceived as the unfair advantage of Tamils in the Indian administrative service and Indian foreign service because of their superior English, was stoutly resisted by people in Tamil Nadu. Just before I arrived, there had been riots on that subject.

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Every time there were polls done in India at that time on matters related to the West and the United States and American viewpoints, there was a clear pattern. The most virulent anti-Western sentiment was in the Calcutta consular district, in the eastern part of India. In Delhi and the central region, there was a somewhat more favorable, but still strongly anti-Western, feeling. In Bombay, there was more neutrality, a split 50-50 between the anti-Western, pro-Western side of it. In Madras, sentiment was overwhelmingly pro-Western.

For some reason, southerners have traditionally been outward looking. And I think the reasons for that probably have to do with history. Most of the South was never subjugated by the Mughals, and not subject to the forced imposition of Islam. There are very large Christian communities, some of them dating from the earliest days of the apostles. Saint Thomas was supposedly martyred just outside Madras. And there were colonies of Nestorian Christians established, with subsequent connections to the Syrian Maronites, in Kerala. Later, during the Portuguese and British and, to some extent, French periods of influence in the South, very large numbers of Harijans (untouchables) converted to Christianity. Others converted to Islam, but they did so voluntarily, for the same reason they converted to Christianity, either out of crass motives of wishing to do business with Arab traders, or, more likely, because of the attractions of the nominally egalitarian spirit of Islam and its emphasis on communal prayer and solidarity.

So the South was, at once, more authentically Hindu, since Hinduism had not been subject to foreign (meaning Islamic) influences, less virulently torn by what the Indians call communal tensions (meaning sectarian tensions), and more comfortable with India's past and then relationships with a world still dominated by European powers and North America.

And so it was a congenial environment in which to work, which, however, had its shocking element for someone from a Puritan background in the United States. Indian society is fiercely hierarchical and greatly divided by caste. And while Islam and Christianity abjure the idea of caste, both, in the Indian context, end up respecting it and, to some extent,

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practicing it within their own ranks. It is a society in which one can feel comfortable talking with local people, but at the same time, one is never far away from the recognition of difference.

One example. In the district of the city called Adyar, which was at that time very much a Brahmin concentration, I developed a number of friends, just ordinary Indians. And they did me the great honor, on several occasions, of inviting me over to their house to dinner. A Brahmin may serve food to anyone, whereas he may not receive food from anyone but a Brahmin. And in the South, Brahmins can be polluted merely by contact with the shadow of someone of no caste. Well, obviously, Westerners have no caste, so to be invited to a home for a traditional meal, in a very traditional Hindu household, was quite an honor. The second time that I went to dinner with Mr. Ramanathan and his family, I had forgotten to recover some books that I had loaned to him. So on the way home, I turned the car around, and my wife and I went back to his house to collect the books, only to discover a Brahmin priest spreading cow dung and cow urine over all the places in which we had been, and chanting various incantations to purify the household we had polluted.

So one had friendships and contacts, and Indians were people with whom I developed a great rapport and for whom I developed a great affection, but at the same time, one was always conscious of the barrier of caste and nationality.

The South, however, I would say, was, at that time at any rate, for someone who arrived knowing no Tamil (although I did manage to learn a fair amount, enough so I could get up and introduce a speech in it). I was very careful never to test in it, because I had no desire to spend the rest of my career floating between Colombo and the Deccan, but for someone who didn't know an Indian language, it was probably the most congenial of all environments.

Q: What about, at that time, '66-'68, the problem, as we saw it, or did we see it then, of Kerala?

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FREEMAN: Kerala had a Communist government that was very unfriendly to the United States. Politics in south India, as elsewhere, and I actually demonstrated this very convincingly in the 1967 election, is largely caste based. In Kerala, the Communist leadership was essentially Brahmin. On a working level, we had a satisfactory relationship with them. They didn't cause us the sorts of problems that were caused by the Communists in West Bengal, for example.

The issue of caste. Let me just digress for a minute. The '67 election was coming along, I think it was in the spring, and I decided to do something that you never could do these days and that was probably quite improper, which was to use my visa interviews for a random sample of educated Indians, with a view to ascertaining the political and economic conditions of various camps. I developed a twenty-question little form that I could, I thought, quite discreetly run through with every fifth visa applicant and then file. I tabulated the whole thing and cross referenced and whatnot, and I built what was in effect an electoral model based on caste.

In '67, Howie Schaffer was then the political counselor for internal affairs, or perhaps he was first secretary dealing with internal affairs. Tony Quainton was then dealing with external affairs in Delhi. The embassy and the consulate general in Madras, which was headed by a man named Albert Franklin, who had learned Tamil and later became quite a scholar of things Tamil after his Foreign Service career, had reached a series of predictions based essentially on the normal Foreign Service reporting style, which was a combination of interviews with eminent people and reading the press, with which my results did not agree, because I thought there was a real sea change going on.

A party named Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which was a Tamil nationalist group, I thought was going to win the election in Madras. I thought that there would be quite different results in Kerala than were predicted. And I thought they weren't far off in what is now called Karnataka, what was then called Mysore. In Andhra Pradesh, I thought

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they were off, too. These were the four provinces we dealt with. Pondicherry was then a separate entity as well.

So I wrote, not knowing the term because it hadn't been invented, through what was in effect the dissent channel, an airgram, taking issue with the embassy and my own consulate general's political section's estimates of the forthcoming election.

I made a mistake in the airgram; I didn't put a summary in, which was duly noted by the inspectors later.

But other than that, I had the pleasure of being entirely right, and also suffered the pain of it, since my consul general had introduced this airgram by saying, "Here's this piece that some young man on my staff has done, with which I totally disagree, but nevertheless it may be of interest, and so I'm allowing him to submit it." He was quite embarrassed when I turned out to be right and he turned out to be wrong.

So, on that basis, probably incorrectly, I gained some minor reputation in the embassy as an expert on south Indian politics, which stood me in good stead when Ambassador Bowles found me wanting as a consular officer.

Q: How'd they find you wanting as a consular officer?

FREEMAN: Well, let me say, first of all, that I greatly enjoyed consular work. I enjoyed it for many reasons. It gives you access to elements of society and the authority structure that you don't gain any other way — visits to prisons, dealings with the police, dealings with the court authorities, ship captains and the like.

Q: Hospitals.

FREEMAN: Hospitals, hotel management, all of these really rather essential, real elements of a society that most of the Foreign Service doesn't come in contact with. And so I

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enjoyed it greatly. The visa-interview business frankly paled after a while, but I did find, as I said, a way to put that to some use.

Let me talk a little bit about the consular experience, a couple of anecdotes, since those are always fun, before I get into the question of why Ambassador Bowles took a dislike to me as a consular officer, correctly.

I had been in Madras about three or four weeks, and I was made the duty officer for the consulate general. In the middle of the night, around one o'clock, I got a call from the captain of the USS Manhattan, which was a supertanker engaged in the grainlift to India. At that time, we were supplying enormous quantities of surplus grain to India. And he said that his cook on the ship had died. He had chugged two bottles of vodka, on a bet, and had died of alcohol poisoning. The captain wanted me to come down and pick up the body. And so I asked him where he was. Was he anchored within the harbor or within the harbor jurisdiction?

He said, "Yes."

And I said, "Well, in that case, I'm afraid you'll have to report this matter to the harbor authorities, because there'll have to be an investigation. Furthermore, I don't have at home any facilities for storing a dead body, even if I could gain access to it. And, finally, the consulate does not have any cold storage."

So he said, "What should I do?"

I said, "Well, stick him in the meat locker overnight, if you can't get the harbor authorities to come out."

So he did.

The Indian medical profession, which did an autopsy on this poor fellow, was just thrilled. Madras was a dry state. Chronic alcoholism probably existed, but was seldom seen. So

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they called doctors from all over south India to observe the advanced effects of alcoholism in this corpse.

This delayed the autopsy for some time. Finally, the Manhattan was allowed to sail, even though the autopsy hadn't been officially completed.

In the meantime, I was in touch with this man's estranged wife in Baton Rouge, through the Department of State, and ascertained that he had always wanted to be buried at sea. Well, that posed a bit of a problem, because the Manhattan had left, and he hadn't yet been released by the Indian authorities.

So I investigated and found that I could hire a tug boat for this purpose, if his estate were willing to pay. And that was agreed.

So, one afternoon, I arrived with my Brahmin consular assistant (and you have to realize that touching corpses is deeply polluting) down at the dock, where the Indian police promised to deliver this corpse, suitably fixed up for burial at sea. We waited and waited. Half an hour after the police were supposed to turn up, up came a taxi with a police officer in the front seat next to the driver, and sticking out of the back window were two bloody white feet. I opened up the back, and there was this man, wrapped in a sheet, but much the worse for having been autopsied all over the place. I had hired some coolies to carry the body aboard and provide the due ceremony. They took one look at this and ran away. My consular assistant, of course, would not touch the body. I took it out of the taxi and laid it on the sidewalk, and sent my consular assistant to buy some iron rods and rope. I had with me an American flag and a Bible. And I carried the thing myself onto the tugboat. The tugboat captain was none too pleased. I put it on the transom of the boat, put the bars in the sheet, with the body, and then tied the whole thing up with rope. And we set sail.

Well, I had read the regulations, and as they then read, I realized that when you do a burial at sea, you're supposed to provide the exact latitude and longitude, taken from a real

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sighting. You have to do it with a sextant. The captain assured me that he had done that at the Merchant Marine Academy, thirty years before, in Bombay.

So we got underway. And the whole experience was too unnerving for the captain. I discovered then that, whereas you cannot drink in Madras Harbor, because it's under the jurisdiction of the state authorities, once you passed the then three-mile limit, you were on the high seas and you could drink. And the captain proceeded to get absolutely smashing drunk.

In the end, my Brahmin assistant wouldn't touch the corpse. I laid the flag over it, read the ceremony, and gave it a good, solid kick with my foot. It went tumbling overboard, and I watched it sink into the depths.

The captain then took a sighting, which turned out later to be somewhere in downtown Singapore, about 1,500 miles away. But I went home and recorded the moral equivalent of our position.

And of such things was consular life made.

However, in the Madras jail was a notorious smuggler, a man of some distinction, a University of Virginia graduate, a Korean War ace, who had been arrested before in India. This was his second arrest. The first one was when he was operating a B-24 out of Abu Dhabi.

Q: Which was the Liberator, a large, four-engine bomber.

FREEMAN: He used this to bomb the beach south of Bombay with gold ingots, which his confederates in India would then pick up. Gold in India at that time was twice the international price.

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Q: And Abu Dhabi was one of the crucial states, a smuggler's paradise. They used to watch the people loading dhows, you know, small box, bent over, as they shuffled off to the...

FREEMAN: Exactly. So he did this successfully for quite a while, and then one day was spotted by Indian radar. MiGs scrambled, and he was forced south, in the direction of Goa. And as he went, he bombed the beach with these ingots, the evidence. He made a lot of villagers very happy, I'm sure. But he was forced down in Goa, arrested for various charges: illegal entry, illegal use of airspace, illegal operation of aircraft. It turned out that the aircraft somehow had a lien on it, or was owned perhaps by the Tata group. So that became an exhibit in yet another series of suits.

Q: Tata being a big shoe...

FREEMAN: No, Tata being a great Indian industrial steel and iron combine.

This was long before I was around, '64, '65. He was taken to New Delhi and put in a minimum-security prison. He managed to persuade the authorities that the engines of this aircraft had to be turned over, due to its age, every day, or they would freeze up. He disconnected the gas gauge in the aircraft, which was in a hangar. He would turn the motors over, adding a little bit more gas each day, until he had a full tank. And then he simply took off, right across Palam Airfield, and flew to Pakistan, hugging the ground in such a way that the much faster MiGs were unable to get him.

This was ten days before the outbreak of the '65 Indo-Pak War. And it became a cause celebre in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament. It was charged that he was definitely a CIA agent and that he had taken the Indian war plans to Pakistan, which was why the Indians got a drubbing. So he was quite something.

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He was arrested in Bombay sometime in 1965, again, having entered with a false passport from Ceylon (Sri Lanka now), with jewels taped between his toes.

Since his port of entry was Madras, he was eventually sent to Madras. He was in the central government prison. And he was very badly abused, partly because of the political controversy surrounding him, I am sure. In any event, he was beaten frequently. He wasn't given a good diet. And, of course, I assumed the duty of visiting him and getting him some food, which I paid for myself, and lending him books, since he was a voracious reader, and got to know him a bit.

I was deeply disturbed by the discriminatory treatment he was being subjected to, since I think national treatment is a basic principle of consular affairs. So, after going to see the local authorities in the central prison system, I wrote to the embassy an OM (operations memorandum, a form which doesn't exist any more, I think), detailing this and asking for intervention by the embassy, preferably the ambassador, at a sufficiently high level to gain appropriate treatment for him and end the abuse.

I got back a very nice note from Ambassador Bowles, which said something to the effect that he couldn't believe that his beloved liberal, democratic, constitution-minded Indian friends could really be doing any such thing, and that he didn't propose to do anything about it.

Being a hot-headed young man with a legal background, although not yet a law degree, I took issue with this. So I slapped another OM on top of that, detailing further abuse, referring to Bowles's note and enclosing it, and sent it to the Department. It went up to Dean Rusk.

And then I went on R & R in Hong Kong. While I was in Hong Kong, Dean Rusk reprimanded Bowles and insisted that he go in and see the prime minister on this subject, which clearly didn't make him very happy.

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That was one transgression.

A second was the niece of the Dalai Lama, who had been issued with something short of a passport, and obviously there was high political interest.

Q: A Dalai Lama, I might say, who had escaped from Tibet when the Chinese came in and took over Tibet. And so he was a major political figure as well as a religious figure at that time.

FREEMAN: That's right. In the 1950s, the United States, through the CIA, had played some role in fomenting insurrection in Tibet, which led to the events, since the Dalai Lama actually was in Tibet for some time after the Chinese recovery of Tibet. This series of events, revolt in Tibet, led to his fleeing to Dharmasala, and that was where he was in residence. But he was of great political interest in a Cold War, anti-China context.

His niece turned up at the consulate with a travel document issued by the Indian authorities, which described her as a stateless person of Tibetan origin.

I went to the local passport authorities and asked some questions, obviously looking for a way to give her a visa to the United States, but doubting that this document met the definition of a passport, since a passport must give you a right of reentry into the country where it is issued, or to somewhere, or it is not valid. And I was told that no such right was conferred by this document. Obviously, as a matter of practice, she would be readmitted, given the nasty state of relations between China and India at that time, since they'd fought a war in 1962. But I could not, in good conscience, rule that this was a passport, within the meaning of U.S. law and regulations, and I ruled that it was not.

I was then asked by Bowles to reconsider that and reverse it. And I declined to do so, which did not endear me to him, either.

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Finally, on the plus side, I had been involved in Madras with various youth groups, students and the like, and got involved with the All-India Youth Congress local branch. This resulted in my being the co-keynote speaker, the first foreigner, certainly the first foreign diplomat and American, along with the Indian vice president, V. V. Ghiri, at a mass meeting of the All-India Youth Congress in Madras.

So Bowles looked at this and decided that I was an absolute disaster as a consular officer, from his perspective, but I was all right at public relations and political reporting. While I was in Hong Kong, he reassigned me to USIS, which turned out to be one of the kindest things that anyone has ever done for me, because I enjoyed that experience enormously.

In fact, I think one of the things that has gone wrong with the Foreign Service is greater separation of USIS from State over the years. USIS offers opportunities, at very young ages, for officers to run programs, manage things. And this is something at which many in the Foreign Service don't get a chance to try themselves until they are in a very senior position, and often they're catastrophically incompetent as managers. It's particularly true with political and economic officers.

At any rate, I became the university programs officer. We had a very active program of outreach and use of American Fulbrighters, visiting scholars, and Indians with university degrees from the United States. I helped to perfect something called an Interdisciplinary Seminar on American Civilization, which was a four-day program for Indian graduate students and faculty on that subject, which also included in it a segment on the Vietnam War. And I'm remiss in not mentioning that.

In 1966, the first year I was in Madras, someone in one of the youth groups that I was involved with told some friends that I was very interested in China. This led to an invitation to address the university at Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, on the Vietnam War, in defense of U.S. policy.

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Before I entered the Foreign Service, when I was in law school, I was a minor, somewhat active, but not terribly prominent, participant in what became the teach-in movement against the Vietnam War. I thought the war was a mistake. (I believe that we entered the war for the wrong reasons, stayed there for the wrong reasons and got out for the wrong reasons. So I find nothing ennobling about the experience.)

Suddenly, I was confronted with the question of how far I was committed to the advocacy role of the Foreign Service. I thought there were three ethical choices. One, I could duck the invitation to speak, by saying that I was unavailable, sick, or something, but I felt that would be both morally incorrect and fruitless, because sooner or later, someone else would invite me. Two, I could refuse it, in which case, having taken Uncle Sam's nickel, I would be untrue to the role that I was embarked on professionally, and really should resign from the Foreign Service. Three, I could accept it and be, like a lawyer in a courtroom, an advocate for a client whose moral and political judgment I privately questioned. In the end, I decided that the only proper course, consistent with remaining in the Foreign Service, was to accept. And I did.

I used maps, drawing from the INR Latin American director's inspiration and my own legal training, to draw up a pretty powerful presentation, which, without saying so, left the audience with the impression that the only reason we were in Vietnam was to defend Mother India against godless Chinese communism.

And this was a resounding success. Indian views and knowledge of Southeast Asia were so narrow and shallow that this presentation shifted campus opinion, overnight, from ninety percent against the war to ninety percent in favor.

So Ambassador Bowles, when he assigned me to USIS, also had this in mind.

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Q: I think we might point out for the record, Ambassador Bowles was one of the preeminent public-relations types. That was his background, so this was an important factor for him.

FREEMAN: I think he was an extremely fine man. I don't blame him at all for getting rid of me. I think I probably would have done the same thing as ambassador. And I consider it a stroke of good fortune that he thought of USIS, rather than exile to some less relevant place.

But at any rate, as a young man now of twenty-three or twenty-four, I suddenly found myself with dozens of Foreign Service nationals to supervise, a large budget, programs to run, recruitment of speakers to do, and my own speaking program, under circumstances in which I was essentially left alone to do what I wanted to do.

There was, in fact, a political appointee, oddly, as cultural affairs officer in Madras at that time, someone who had been a museum director, who, for one reason or another, he just never really took hold and ended up getting a doctor's certificate that stated that, for his health, he had to spend at least half a day at the beach, resting each day. He would occasionally call in and ask me whether anything was going on of note. And I would tell him no, I had everything under control. So, in effect, I ended up running a good deal of the cultural operation, which was much larger than the university outreach program.

Q: What was your impression of the Indian educational system, at the university level, of knowledge of the United States? Were there courses?

FREEMAN: The Indian educational system, at that time, was running on fossil knowledge from the British era. Professors tended not to do independent research of any consequence, and would often use the same lecture notes for thirty years without significant change. The Indian educational system put tremendous emphasis on knowledge of British literature, British history. The whole English prism through which India

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saw the outside world was reinforced by the educational system. Knowledge of the United States was poor. Attitudes toward the United States reflected British condescension. And while there was, thanks to USIS, the Ford Foundation, and others, some effort being made, which I think later bore fruit, to introduce American studies more widely into the Indian university system, they were essentially nonexistent, except at a few places. There were two centers: one at Poona, in Maharashtra, which was in the Bombay consular district; and the other, Osmania University, in Hyderabad, in Andhra Pradesh, which was under the Madras consulate general. The Osmania University Center was a library of American studies, in which USIS was involved. But basically Indian education was not even really directed very much at India, certainly not at Southeast Asia, or Asia more broadly. It was, to a good extent, a relic of the British Empire, with all of the narrowness of focus that that implies.

Let me digress here. When the British took over India (the British East India Company, initially), in the eighteenth century and nineteenth century, they were faced with the question of how one should administer such a vast domain. And to do this they invented the idea of the modern civil service by drawing on the writings of the French philosophers, who had drawn in turn on the Jesuit Matteo Ricci and other reporting on the Chinese system, including the civil service system in China. That is a system that, for millennia, has been based on a written examination, of some difficulty, in the classics, and which has ranks and grades through which one progresses, on merit and by further examination. The British decided to adopt a variant of this system. They looked around for the classics that might be the subject of the examination process they were initiating. Clearly, Latin and Greek, which were the classics in Europe, were not relevant to the Indian situation. They didn't wish to adopt the Sanskrit classics, for obvious reasons. Therefore they decided they would have to find English classics. Well, no one thought, at that time, that there were any classics in English. It was a vernacular, spoken on a small island that had become prominent through trade and conquest, but it didn't have classics. The anointment of Shakespeare as the classic playwright and poet, along with others like Donne and so forth,

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and the recognition of the British novel as a classic were really done for the invention of what became the Indian civil service.

Q: That's very interesting.

FREEMAN: So the Indian civil service examination was very heavy on Shakespeare and British quotations, Dr. Johnson and the like. The university system was directed at training people to pass this examination. So all Indians came out of university able to quote prodigious quantities of Shakespeare. The educational system emphasized rote memorization, which is actually quite a useful thing, although our system doesn't appreciate it. And so the whole focus was British India and consistent with the imperial tradition.

So I tried to introduce the thought that the United States was not just a wayward group of British colonists, but something different and new. That the American Constitution was not the atrocity that they had thought. That there was a war of independence, rather than a rebellion. That this rather strange country, which had emerged after World War II as the dominant power in the world, had its own interesting history and cultural characteristics, including some which were quite opposite to the Indian common view of them.

For example, Indians believed firmly that the United States was an irreligious country, when one of the most notable things about America is the extraordinary practice of religion (I won't say adherence to religious principles).

Q: But compared to others...

FREEMAN: Compared to others, we are churchgoers. And we are very much influenced, even American Catholics, by the Puritan heritage.

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So it was possible to present these seminars and have quite an effect. Since the base of knowledge was so low and the presuppositions were so demonstrably false, one could make quite an impact.

I think probably the seminars were fairly superficial. But then a wise man from the East, somewhere in Massachusetts, I think, said once that if something's worth doing, it's worth doing superficially. So that was the approach we took.

Q: Did you feel the hand of the Soviets down there, as far as their program there, what they were pushing? Was there much soil in which to flourish?

FREEMAN: The Soviets were very much a presence in Madras, with a large consulate general, a KGB resident, who was nominally the cultural attaché, funneling money to the Communist Party and quite effectively infiltrating the educational system. India's economy, beginning in the '50s, began to be tied more and more closely to the Soviet economy. There were ruble-rupee trade arrangements, which tended to skew Indian trade in the direction of the Russians. The Indian government was Socialist by inclination, inclined to central planning, and followed many Russian models. I say the Indian leadership was Socialist by inclination; their socialism was British Fabian socialism. But since the Fabians had never managed to produce anything practical, the only model they could see was the Russian one, and that was the one they followed.

But, yes, the Russians were there and active, politically, culturally, and economically. They were the major source of military technology for the Indians, for example. In the south, because of the fact that the south was out of strike range from Pakistan or China, at that time, the Indians have concentrated many of their munitions plants, a major tank factory, for example, at Avadi, outside of Madras, and at Aradi Bangalore.

Q: Did you find yourselves going head-to-head with the Soviets on things, with the students or with other groups? Or did you do your thing and they did their thing?

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FREEMAN: We did our thing; they did theirs. They actually had most of the cards, I would say, given the favorable disposition of the central government toward them. But we didn't cross swords with them very often.

Q: Was the Indian bureaucracy difficult to deal with? I've never served in India, but Indians I've met, I think, could be absolutely insufferable in bureaucratic things. But maybe it's a different...

FREEMAN: The Indian bureaucracy is a rigidly stratified one, very rule bound. I remember that, for example, to gain customs clearance and admission of goods through the port required fifty-seven signatures. I discovered this because the expediter, whose name was Hamid, a South Indian Muslim, appeared to be taking a terribly long time carrying things through the port. So I decided to walk through the process with him, and at this point found out why things did take a long time.

Attitudinally, however, the Indian administrative service, as a service, is an elite civil service, with terribly bright people, who, if you are able to deal with them as intellectual equals, respond.

So I found them, yes, a bit preachy and self-righteous and sanctimonious, but then this was the era of Lyndon Johnson in the United States, so they had no monopoly on sanctimony.

Q: You left there in 1968, is that right?

FREEMAN: That's correct.

Q: What were you looking toward when you left?

FREEMAN: I should say that my wife, when we went to India, was pregnant with our third child, Edward Andrew Freeman. He was born in Madras and quickly developed some

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medical problems that the local medical system was unable to handle, so he died after a short time.

Q: Oh, what a tragedy.

FREEMAN: She was pregnant again when we left, and the timing of our departure was related to getting her out of India before the anticipated November 1968 birth of my fourth child, Nathaniel Trenergy Freeman.

So I left, very much focused on getting into Chinese studies. I had continued to pursue reading on China and on other subjects related to China — Russia, as well as India, of course, and Southeast Asia, and fought hard to get into the Chinese-language course, which there was some reluctance to put me into, since I spoke quite a number of other languages. I think the Foreign Service wondered why they should spend the training money on me. But in any event, I finally was admitted to Chinese, and I left India anticipating entry into that. But the course didn't start until just after New Year's, 1969.

In the interim, I was assigned to the Office of Regional Affairs in the then Bureau of East Asian Affairs, and worked for Louise McNutt, a great fixture of the Department, who, together with Ruth Bacon, who had left by the time I arrived, had performed quite a heroic role in keeping Communist China out of the United Nations. So that was my job, to keep them out of the UN, which involved various shenanigans, including getting the U.S. Navy to pick up the Maldivian delegation and fly them to New York in time for the vote on the Albanian Resolution. We prevailed in this unholy cause. And I certainly learned a lot about the UN from working with Louise.

Q: This was, in many ways, the main task of straight American diplomacy, keeping China out of the UN.

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FREEMAN: It was quite interesting to participate in. Again, I didn't agree with the thesis, particularly, but I found it technically a very interesting and educational process to be involved in.

I reported for Chinese-language studies at FSI the day after New Year's, 1969. There were two other starting students, both of whom had graduate degrees in Chinese studies and Chinese language from the University of Michigan. However, the linguist in charge, George Beasley, who later joined the Foreign Service and is having a distinguished career in USIA as the area director for East Asia, tested them and found their grammar and pronunciation greatly wanting, and decided to start them again at the beginning, which was quite humiliating for them. And I found it embarrassing for me, because I thought I would hold them back and would, to some extent, destroy the utility of this experience for them. So I determined to work hard and to try to catch up with them. And I worked very hard. And the result was that, within about three months, I passed them, and within six months, I had a two-plus two plus in Chinese, which I think was unprecedented. So rather than continuing for the full year at FSI Washington, they sent me to T'ai-chung, to the language school there.

I arrived there August of 1969. The school in T'ai-chung was deliberately separated from the embassy in Taipei in order to prevent the embassy from raiding the student body, as it would have. And I continued to work exceedingly hard. I managed to talk my teachers into allowing me to have nine and a half hours of class a day. I'd start at 6:30. The result was that, several months after I arrived there, I got a three-three, which was supposedly the objective of the two-year course. I kept grinding away, and I ended up eventually with a four plus-four plus in Mandarin.

But along the way, some things happened. I decided to learn Taiwanese, which is as different from Mandarin as Dutch is from English. I ended up with an S three plus in that.

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But as 1970 unfolded, the Department was casting around for an interpreter to replace Don Anderson. Paul Kreisberg was the country director for China. That office was then called Asian Communist Affairs. I suddenly got a call, March 1970, asking me whether I would go to Warsaw, where the talks were held with the Chinese Communists, as interpreter, to go first in a subordinate role, and then succeed Don Anderson. I went up to the embassy in Taipei and read the record of the Warsaw Talks. Of course, I'd read Kenneth Young's book and some other things on that.

I should say, one thing I did at T'ai-chung was exhaust the library. And I ended up producing an annotated bibliography of the library for the student body. So I was still reading, even though I was getting up every morning and writing a thousand-character essay for the 6:30 class.

I cut back on Taiwanese and began to concentrate on Mainland usage, reading plays from the Cultural Revolution and reading *The People's Daily* and so forth, which I had no interest in. Probably alone in the student body in T'ai-chung, I think absolutely alone, I had no interest in going to Communist China. I wanted to go to Taipei. I figured Communist China would come later, but that Taiwan was an interesting place, and that learning Taiwanese would make me a valuable participant in the political section.

But, anyway, I agreed to do this interpreter bit. I was all set to go to Warsaw, when President Nixon decided to have an incursion into Cambodia. And the Chinese canceled the talks in protest.

Q: This was May 1970.

FREEMAN: May 1970. The talks were to have been the 20th of May.

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So I hung on in T'ai-chung, resumed Taiwanese, pleaded with the Department, really spuriously, that I needed more time, and began to learn Hakka. And then was pulled out, in early '71.

Q: I'd like to get a little more about the school, because I think the training is always interesting. Were you getting any exposure to ideology, both of Taiwan and of Mainland China?

FREEMAN: Yes, of course.

Q: What were your impressions at this time?

FREEMAN: Well, mainly we were, of course, exposed to Kuomintang ideology. The faculty, drawn from the Mainland community in Taiwan, included retired generals and professors of one sort or another (retired dilettantes, I should say, as well, some of them of quite notable family lineage), and all quite committed in one way or another, at one point or another in their lives, to the Kuomintang cause.

There were two Kuomintang Party cells operating clandestinely in the school, I discovered as I got to know things better, one reporting to the provincial level and one to the national level. There was extensive reporting, by the teachers, of biographic and other information to the authorities. Some of them were dissidents, but subjected to blackmail and forced into this role. All of this, as I got to know them, I discovered. In fact, at one point, I was even asked by one of the KMT stalwarts whether I would like to join the Party, which I didn't find consistent with my Foreign Service status. This was a recruitment attempt, obviously.

I should say, politically, I had been a Democrat, a member of ADA. I resigned from ADA during the Vietnam War because...

Q: ADA is Americans for Democratic Action.

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FREEMAN: Right, Hubert Humphrey's legacy. I resigned from it because I didn't agree with the way in which they were handling the Vietnam War. I also resigned from the American Civil Liberties Union for the same reason. And I disaffiliated with the Democratic Party on my entry into the Foreign Service, on the theory that a civil servant should not have a party affiliation, a theory which I still strongly believe, but which is not widely held in the Foreign Service, I find. So I have consistently registered as an Independent. And the Kuomintang was not an attractive alternative.

The school was able, at that time, to accommodate me and a few others with special requirements with classes one-on-one, which was marvelous.

I also was aware that classroom environment is not Chinese. My wife, who was from New Jersey, learned Chinese. We gave up English and spoke nothing but Chinese at home. My three children all became proficient in it. My youngest child, Nathaniel, who was an infant when we arrived, left Taiwan knowing no English, only Chinese. I sight-translated the entire Lord of the Rings trilogy, Tolkien's book, into Chinese for my children. I'm probably the only person who's ever done that.

I also engaged in some extracurricular activities: I emceed bingo parties at local churches; I went bar hopping and had bar girls sit on my lap and feed me various seeds and other concoctions; and I did some public speaking in Chinese, in an effort to try to broaden my proficiency in it, all of this with the tolerance or support of the school.

When George Beasley reported as the director of the school, from Washington, he also arranged for some of us to attend the local normal university. So I took a course in Chinese history, with Chinese students, at the normal university.

Being involved as intensely as this obviously took its toll. It was really quite a monastic existence in some ways, but it paid off in terms of reaching the objective.

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Q: Did you have any impression of how our embassy, particularly the political section, viewed the Kuomintang government on Taiwan at that time? You were one removed, but at the same time, this gives you a more objective site for looking at it.

FREEMAN: Let me put it this way, I once went to the embassy, not to the political section, but this might equally be a metaphor for the political section, and sat in the administrative counselor's office while the senior locals, who were Mandarin-speakers from the Mainland, would talk in English to the admin. counselor, and then among themselves, in Mandarin, very disparagingly about him and what he was doing. While they were doing that, the Taiwanese locals were talking equally disparagingly, in Taiwanese, about the Mandarin-speaking locals. Then there were two Hakkas who were carrying on a disparaging conversation about the Taiwanese.

I think the embassy was a strong embassy in terms of political reporting, but, probably inevitably, skewed toward the Mainland or Mandarin-speaking environment.

That was something that was aggravated by Walter McConaughy's tenure as ambassador. Walter McConaughy had made a career, essentially, in China and in Taipei, but never learned a word of Chinese, and was quite, therefore, manipulable, I think, by the Chinese authorities there, who are, like all Chinese, very good at manipulating people.

Q: He was also, almost by reflex, coming out of the right-hand part of the American political sector.

FREEMAN: That's correct. But the saddest thing to me, at that time, was that, as I got to know the Mainland more (and this was strongly confirmed to me when I finally went to the Mainland with President Nixon as the principal American interpreter on his trip in '72), neither the embassy nor certainly the United States nor even the people in Taiwan understood what was happening in Taiwan, which was that, for the first time in history, a modern, capitalist Chinese society was emerging. This part of China was developing

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modern characteristics. All of the seeds for the good things that subsequently happened in Taiwan, which make it by far the most prosperous and best-governed and, in many ways, the most admirable society in the long sweep of Chinese history, were sprouting then.

But the Kuomintang ideology stressed that it was the Kuomintang that was true to Chinese tradition and that represented that past, while the Communists, by contrast, were breakers of that tradition. In fact, what the Kuomintang inadvertently was producing in Taiwan was something that broke quite thoroughly with the Chinese past, while the Communists, despite all their efforts at reforming Chinese society on the Mainland, in many ways reinforced that past.

Q: The Mandarin class, the elders structure, and all that.

FREEMAN: Well, the clan structure, the traditional extended family, the traditional way of doing things, the orientation toward government rather than commerce as a career, the disdain for science and technology, the disparagement of the military profession. Many of the characteristics of Chinese society that historically have been there were perversely reinforced on the Mainland, even as they were torn apart in Taiwan by modernization. Taiwan, during that period, began to experiment with local elections and a process that eventually produced the democratic system that Taiwan now enjoys.

I believed then, and I believe now even more strongly, that Taiwan is the laboratory for Chinese modernization, that what Taiwan has accomplished, the Mainland is also accomplishing, with a thirty-year time lag. And therefore it is not the Mainland that is the “new China,” as it called itself, but it was Taiwan that was the new China.

Q: Were you seeing the transition then? Because now, from what I understand, Taiwan has become much more Taiwanese, and the Mainland group has moved to a different level, an egalitarian society. Did you see that sort of thing developing then, or were you

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looking upon this as the Mainlanders still sitting on top of the Taiwanese and probably trying to do that for the rest of their time there?

FREEMAN: It was apparent that the trends that have now produced a Taiwanese-dominated society were in progress, that the Mainlander hold on Taiwan was a wasting asset, and that Taiwan would emerge, if it remained separate from the Mainland for a sufficient period of time, as quite a distinctive, largely Taiwanese-oriented society. But this was in the early stages of happening, and it was a trend, and one could make guesstimates about it, but not be sure. Demographically, it was obvious there was a large aging Mainlander population and a much younger and more dynamic Taiwanese one. Industry was largely in the hands of the Taiwanese, and increasingly so. The Kuomintang, which had been a majority Mainlander party, began during that period to be a majority Taiwanese party. And the degree of intermarriage, the acculturation of the Taiwanese by the Mainlander-dominated public school system, and other factors were blurring the distinctions between the two, assimilating the Taiwanese into greater Chinese culture, but also assimilating the Mainlanders into something new that was Taiwan culture. So these things were obvious.

I should say one other thing about the school before I forget it, since you were asking earlier about professional education, and that has to do with area studies. I think one of the things that the Foreign Service Institute does best is the brief area-study courses that it offers. At least I've always gotten a lot out of them. Yet, I think that, from the point of view of diplomatic professionalism, there is something missing in the focus of that effort. There was an area-studies program at the school in T'ai-chung that was somewhat perfunctory in character. And it bothered me enough so that when Howard Sollenberger, who was then the head of FSI, came out, I had a discussion with him, and I ended up writing a paper for him, proposing a different approach to area studies.

Basically, my thesis is this, that the requirement for diplomats in the Foreign Service is not theoretical knowledge of the sort that scholars require about foreign languages and

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societies, it is the ability to apply that science. Foreign Service officers are not scientists, they are engineers.

And what this means specifically is that the object of area studies, particularly in-depth area studies of the kind that go along with extended language study, should be to equip a diplomat with essentially the same knowledge that an educated local national possesses, with a sense of the formative experiences and myths of the culture in which he or she is operating, so that, when confronted later with a situation where a diplomat has to predict the behavior of foreign leaders, using this body of knowledge and adding to it some knowledge of the personality involved as a decision maker, the diplomat has a fair chance of predicting correctly how that leader will see the situation and what options he will see before him and how he will choose. The ability to predict decision making, whether it's political or economic or military or administrative or, for that matter, activities of the local government related to consular work, is absolutely crucial to diplomatic professionalism.

But that is not the focus of the area-studies program. I thought it ought to be. And my contention was that what was required was a syllabus paralleling one that Ashley Montagu, a British anthropologist, had written. I think he called his *The Cultivated Man*. It was a set of questions and, not answers, but source materials for answering the questions, which he said any cultivated member of Western civilization should know. So it ranged over history, language, the arts, music, economics, math, some science, and so forth. And it was my contention that a similar syllabus could be developed for an Arab civilization, or for a Chinese civilization, or for a Russian culture, or a German culture, those traditions where the body of knowledge we've inherited from our own culture may be misleading, and that students could be put through a program of self-study, and that there could be examinations that certified levels of competence in area studies, and that this, too, could be professionalized.

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That was a concept that Howard Sollenberger rather liked and tried to work toward implementing, but, of course, was unable, given the rigidities of the bureaucratic system here, to carry out.

But I continue to believe that one of the elements of professionalization in the Foreign Service that has to occur is a rethinking of the purpose of area studies and the manner in which it's taught, with much more emphasis on self-learning. And, since I also do some computer programming, I happen to believe that interactive computer programs lend themselves brilliantly to this sort of idea.

Q: Next time, we'll pick up after you left Chinese training and came back to the Department.

Today is July 6, 1995. We're picking up 1971. You've left Taiwan and you're back in the United States. What were you doing?

FREEMAN: The reason for my transfer was to serve as interpreter, but I was assigned as a sort of factotum on what was then called the Asian Communist Affairs Office, headed by Al Jenkins. Bill Brown, later ambassador to Thailand and to Israel, was the deputy in the office. Actually, there were two deputies, Bill Brown and Roger Sullivan. And I did, initially, mainly political work, which involved writing a lot of briefing papers and briefing foreign diplomats on different aspects of relations with China. This was, of course, right around the time of ping-pong diplomacy, so there was a great deal of interest in what might be going on in the relationship.

Q: Could you explain what ping-pong diplomacy was and how it was viewed in the Department of State, in the East Asian Bureau, at that time?

FREEMAN: I think we have to back up a bit, because there are layers and layers and layers of foreign policy. When Kissinger and Nixon were in charge, in this early period, the Department of State was sort of on a steady-as-you-go course on China. For most

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people in the Department (Al Jenkins was an exception; he had been essentially co-opted by Kissinger and was working with Kissinger directly, behind the back of Marshall Green and the Secretary of State, Bill Rogers), ping-pong diplomacy was minor but interesting evidence, from the Chinese side, of an interest in pursuing a relationship with the United States.

In fact, it was the culmination of quite a bit of diplomacy, some of it known to the Department, to a few people, and much of it unknown.

The last Warsaw Talk, in the series of Warsaw Talks that had gone on since the mid-'50s, first in Geneva and then in Warsaw, between the U.S. and the Chinese Communists, had seen the essence of what later became the creatively ambiguous phrasing on Taiwan put forward by the U.S. And while the Warsaw Talks for May of 1970, as I mentioned, were canceled after our incursion into Cambodia, the final Warsaw Talk had sown some seeds. The U.S. had reached out to the Chinese, through the Romanians and the Pakistanis, in particular. And we on the Desk, without knowing quite what we were doing, were producing papers for Kissinger's secret visit to Beijing on July 9th or thereabouts, 1971.

For my part, I had read the record of the Warsaw Talks, as I had had to do in order to prepare for interpreting, and being aware of Kissinger and Nixon's proclivity for grand strategy. I understood that a geopolitical geometry in which there were three powers, each hostile to the other two, but with one of those powers having no relations with one of the others, was an unstable situation. I saw that the U.S. would have to move to establish some sort of dialogue and a strategic understanding with China, if only to introduce some ambivalence into Soviet strategic calculations. Although in that spring of 1971, through June and July, Al Jenkins kept his counsel, I, and a couple of other people in the office, had the sense that something fairly momentous was going on behind the scenes. I didn't actually know about the Kissinger trip per se, however, until it was announced on July 15, 1971, by President Nixon.

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There were a great number of other things going on, of course. Part of the business of attempting rapprochement with China was the dismantling of a series of niggling but longstanding trade and investment barriers, resisted fiercely by different elements of the bureaucracy that had acquired a vested interest in these things over the course of more than two decades.

I can remember a discussion with the then head of foreign-assets control at the Treasury, over lunch, somewhat later, when the president had made an announcement about doing away with the foreign-assets control regulations on China and relaxing various barriers to non-governmental intercourse with the Chinese, and hearing Stanley Sommerfield say to me, "Well, that may be the president's policy, but it's not Treasury's." And that was generally the attitude, I think. Turning the ship of state even a few degrees requires an awful lot of work by the crew, and the crew generally doesn't want to do it. So it's a fairly creaky process.

But that period of 1971 was an exciting one in U.S.-China relations, in terms of managing the details for the Desk, in terms of managing the details of the opening. After the July announcement of Kissinger's secret visit, through Pakistan, to Beijing, I shifted fairly steadily into the economic-commercial side, which was where the principal action was, bureaucratically.

Q: You'd been in Taiwan, more or less from that perspective. When you came to East Asian Affairs, there were people there who had been dealing with the problem of the two Chinas all that time. What would you say the attitude was, prior to the president's announcement, about relations with the People's Republic of China?

FREEMAN: There were generational differences in the Foreign Service, if that's what you're asking about.

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Those of an older generation who had survived being scourged by the McCarthy purges, by and large, were true believers in the cause of one China, centered in Taipei. And, of course, right through 1971, we continued the effort, which I had earlier worked on, to keep the Security Council and General Assembly seat for Taipei rather than Beijing. So there was a very strong bias generally in that older generation in favor of the existing policy of anti-Communist confrontation and containment.

There was a middle generation, which had grown up doing China-watching largely in Hong Kong, but sometimes in other places, a very talented group of mainly men, but a few women, who had a kind of romantic fascination with the PRC, which, frankly, I didn't share.

One of the great ironies of my subsequent career is that, as I mentioned, at the language school in T'ai-chung, I was the only member of my class who had no interest in going to the Mainland immediately. I wanted to go to Taipei and use the Taiwanese dialect that I had learned. I found Taiwan a very fascinating place.

So on the Desk, I think there was a sort of policy of nonintercourse, unwritten and unsanctioned really, between Asian Communist Affairs and the Embassy of the Republic of China.

I quickly developed a number of very good contacts and friends at the Taiwan Embassy, some of whom have since gone on to very, very great things in Taiwan. I tried to speak candidly to them of what I understood the evolving strategic thinking in the United States to be, without giving away any secrets or providing any detail.

I tried to do the same with the Japanese, and I can recall Sato Yukio, who later became a great figure in Japanese diplomacy, coming to me, just after the Kissinger announcement, and saying, "If I had only listened more carefully to what you were saying, this would have not been the surprise that it was."

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Of course, there was a group of people in Hong Kong and on the Desk who were desperate to get into China, having spent, as we all had, years studying it, and naturally wanted to go there. I think that they felt, as all this proceeded, particularly the people in Hong Kong, quite annoyed and even bitter that they were bypassed and their expertise was not directly called upon.

The way in which Kissinger manipulated, co-opted, and used the bureaucracy, without using its formal structure, was quite interesting to watch. As we got closer to the Nixon visit of February 21 to 28, '72, this was very much in evidence. There were layers of secrecy.

There was a small working group, headed by Roger Sullivan, that worked on the advance trips to Beijing, Al Haig's trip, and some others that were technical in nature. As we got closer to the event, I think sometime in January, I was pulled up into the Ops Center, with Harvey Feldman joining me later, basically to do the briefing books for the trip.

But, quite interesting, as we did these briefing books, we would send them over to the NSC, and they would retype the first page to replace the Department of State letterhead with NSC letterhead. Nick Platt, who was then, I think, deputy executive secretary and, of course, himself a China specialist, and I invented the stationery, which is still in use, "Department of State Briefing Paper," because it was much harder for them to purloin. They had to retype several pages. We felt we should get credit for our work.

In the end, I was told that more than forty percent of the Nixon briefing books had been written by me.

Q: Let me ask a question here. You had not gone through the traditional route. You had become a language specialist, and then, whammo, you're out writing briefing papers. But Taipei was really your area. We had people who'd been spending an awful lot of time looking at China, through a lens of Hong Kong. Why you?

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FREEMAN: Well, I think that's an excellent question. As I said, it was somewhat astonishing to me. As for the preparation that I had done for that, it was true, I hadn't been involved in political reporting out of Hong Kong. My last year in Taiwan was, however, focused on the Mainland, because it was clear I was not going to Taipei, I was going to be interpreting.

As I mentioned, I had devoured the holding of some 2,000-plus books, literally read them all, in T'ai-chung. I had read all of the revolutionary plays and operas, I read The People's Daily, daily, and I was pretty well versed in Chinese history, the general outlines of politics and economics in the system. And I had an advantage that very few of my colleagues had, namely, I could read Chinese as easily as I could read English. So a great deal of my reading was in original sources, rather than in FBIS (Foreign Broadcast Information Service) tape.

And I continued to read when I was on the Desk. People popped out of the woodwork, refugees from China, who had written various things. I remember somebody who worked at Voice of America who had done what turned out to be an extraordinary book on the Chinese taxation system, which he gave me and I read. He'd done this in Chinese; it had never been translated.

So I felt, intellectually, well prepared. And I suppose I had a reputation on the Desk for being a quick, glib drafter. And I didn't have any senior function; I was a junior officer and invisible.

So this is what happened, and I ended up writing a great quantity of briefing materials for the president.

At the last minute, probably less than a week before we left, it was decided that Mrs. Nixon needed a briefing book. So I did a briefing book on China for someone who was not interested in statecraft, but interested in the arts and history and language and culture and

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things of that nature. I did little squibs on each of the cities that we were to go to. As we got closer to the event, I contributed some language, although not key language, to what became the Shanghai Communique.

Q: Was there a concern within the bureau and maybe elsewhere, from either the old China hands, new China hands, or whatever you want to call them, that in the flush of going to China, which was very exciting, that Nixon and Kissinger might give away the store?

FREEMAN: Indeed, there was that concern, embodied, I think, most professionally in Marshall Green, but others as well. Of course, grave concern on the part of Taipei and its representatives, with whom I severed my relationships during this period, and Taiwan-independence advocates, and because I spoke Taiwanese, I knew a lot of them. So it was a moment of apprehension for people on Taiwan, whether Mainlander or Taiwanese, and for their longstanding friends and supporters in the bureaucracy. But the trip had a momentum and strategic logic and drama behind it that swept everything away.

I think those of us who worked directly on the trip, myself in particular, because of my age and because I hadn't paid my dues in Hong Kong, were the subject of some envy and resentment.

Q: Oh, I'm sure.

FREEMAN: That was compounded later, as I took a fairly central role in a number of events in China, where others who had labored long in the vineyards were not given that opportunity.

In any event, the visit itself, I think, is often recalled as a political masterstroke, in terms of domestic politics, by Nixon. But it didn't seem that that was necessarily to be the result when he set out. It was a gamble. I don't believe that he had fully grasped, or his political advisors had fully grasped (I knew from talking to them on the trip), quite what an impact it would have.

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It was conceived, strategically, as a repositioning of the United States to introduce some uncertainty into Soviet strategic planning. It was understood that this would require some sort of adjustment in relations with Taiwan, eventually, but it was hoped would avoid any immediate deterioration in that relationship. And, of course, there was great interest, as there always is, on the part of the business community, much of it terribly misguided.

Q: Oil for the lamps of China sort of thing.

FREEMAN: My favorite letter, as economic-commercial officer, was from a casket maker in Texas who had heard that the Chinese revered their ancestors, and that people had the habit of preparing for death by buying a casket in advance, all of it true. Of course, modern China uses cremation, but he didn't know that. In any event, he foresaw one-point-something-or-other billion in caskets being sold, over the course of his lifetime, and was salivating at that.

But the short answer to the question is that this was very much directed by Kissinger personally, and the NSC staff, which was John Holdridge and Dick Solomon, at that time. Kissinger and the NSC staff were very much in charge, but very dependent on this small group of State Department people who were doing the real work.

Q: Could we talk a bit about John Holdridge and Dick Solomon and how you perceived them. We always try to go back to the time. Here you were, working for State, but sort of being co-opted by almost a rival agency. It's a difficult place; you're a fairly junior officer. How did you view Solomon and Holdridge, as far as expertise? Did you feel that they knew what they were doing?

FREEMAN: They're two very different personalities. John Holdridge is a superb briefing officer, but not particularly a thinker. Dick Solomon is a thinker, who is not very strong on detail or organization. In a way, they complemented each other. I had very little direct

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interaction with them, but from our perspective, they were quite high-handed. But then, they were in possession of detailed information that we didn't have.

For example, I did not have an opportunity to read the transcripts of the Kissinger meetings in July of '71 as I wrote briefing papers. Therefore, we understood that there was a layer of information that they had that they would have to add for the president. And I think we all understood, or at least I understood, that while, in effect, they were diplomatic scabs, they were in charge, and there was a requirement for secrecy because of the sensitivity of the maneuver, and that there really was a requirement for the need-to-know principle to apply. I have never had any difficulty with that principle. If I believe I don't need to know something, I don't ask.

So I personally was not terribly uncomfortable. I was rather entertained by the whole thing, in terms of watching the bureaucratic politics of it, and the constant one-upmanship game that they were playing, and the response of the Department of State, to which, as I said, Nick Platt and I contributed one innovation.

Q: With the need-to-know (I'm just trying to catch the spirit of the times), did you have the feeling that there were forces prowling around, political and media forces, sniffing around, looking for a way to destroy this initiative? Although Nixon came out of the right wing, there were still right-wing forces very uncomfortable with this, or maybe even from the left. Did you get any of that feeling as far as this all being kept secret, that you had to keep it closed, not for tactical reasons with the Chinese, but for domestic political considerations?

FREEMAN: Very definitely, yes. The interest of the media, I think, was innocently professional. It's their job to ferret out stories, but this is inherently destructive. Many enterprises cannot prosper if they are prematurely revealed. And this was, as I said, a very sensitive diplomatic maneuver, and revelation of details would have been catastrophic.

Politically, Nixon was from the right wing of the Republican Party, yes, but he was not a right-wing populist, which is the wing of the party that has since come into the ascendancy.

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He was a strategic thinker and an anti-Communist as much out of concern for American interests as from ideological conviction. And, yes, there were efforts being made within his own party, and from some others, a few who were partisans of Taiwan independence, to screw this thing up.

Obviously, the Russians were intensely interested, and that was another factor that had to be an argument for strict secrecy.

Q: What was the coordination or interface with the Soviet side of the European Bureau?

FREEMAN: During this period, Kissinger very much dominated that as well, so whatever interaction was going on, on that side, was also orchestrated by Nixon and Kissinger and not by the Department of State.

This was an odd period in American foreign policy, because, in effect, the National Security Council became the bureau for great-power affairs, and the State Department became the bureau for details, relations with lesser states, administration, and the support of grand enterprises launched out of the NSC.

Q: In all this talk, a name that doesn't come up is William Rogers.

FREEMAN: Yes, a man who focused late on the China issue. I spent hours with him on the way out to Beijing, before I was sort of brought off in the other direction. A very nice man, a lawyer whose proudest achievement was some product-liability suits that he'd engaged in to defend Bayer Aspirin and other miscreants of great renown, and who was intensely loyal to the president on a personal level.

I can remember him, after one of the numerous humiliations that he suffered on this trip, I think it was when he was excluded from the sudden visit to Mao by Nixon, after our arrival in Beijing, saying, "Well, the president needs this, and he can decide who he wants." He was obviously angry, he was humiliated, but he never wavered in his recognition of who

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was in charge. And he never asserted himself with Nixon or against Kissinger on a large level. There were many petty moves by his subordinates to defend him.

Q: ...despite all...

FREEMAN: I think that there was institutional concern in the Department of State, well founded, over this subordinate role, which really was unprecedented, since World War II, when Franklin Roosevelt had run much of foreign policy out of his hip pocket, with results that some question at Yalta.

But Rogers himself could not engage intellectually with Nixon and Kissinger on grand strategy, and didn't attempt to do so.

Q: Did you find yourself, or maybe your colleagues or anybody, in the position of trying to protect your putative boss, the secretary of state? Was this a rallying around, or was it almost pro forma of keeping him up, but you realized where power was and you had to go over, you were serving the greater purpose? How would you say it was?

FREEMAN: Well, I can't speak for others, but for my part, I felt deeply troubled by this, because I do believe in chain of command. But there was no alternative. There I was, in the Ops Center, doing this work, which had been sanctioned by the secretary of state, obviously, or I wouldn't have been in the Ops Center. As to how informed he was of the progress of the work, I can't say. Whether he even took much interest in it, I cannot say. I would judge, from the briefing session that we had in Hawaii, that he had not followed it closely, and that he had recognized that this was a game in which he was not a player, and had chosen to let it go forward.

Q: I've been doing an interview with Dick Ericson, mainly on Japan and Korea, and he talks about trying to brief Rogers for a summit meeting in Hawaii with the Japanese on trade matters, in which he was just not interested. He played golf prior to going in there and, in a way, did not really master the subject.

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FREEMAN: He was not an intellectually highly charged man, and did indeed enjoy his golf. In fact, some of the more ridiculous moments of my life as an interpreter were interpreting for him and Ji Peng-fei, the acting foreign minister in Beijing, and trying to explain the game of golf to Ji Peng-fei, who was a longstanding Communist operative who had been a veterinarian, and, of course, like most Chinese at that time, had no experience with the outside world and hadn't a clue who Sam Snead was. Sam Snead was Bill Rogers's great hero, and he told endless stories about Sam Snead, to the complete bemusement of Ji Peng-fei. And, of course, as interpreter, I couldn't do a damn thing about it. I could see this was disastrous, but had to go along with it.

Q: Before we get to the trip itself, this was obviously a very important period, and so I'm interested in the bureaucratic workings of how the Department of State responded to this. What was your impression of Marshall Green, prior to and after the announcement and in the preparations for the trip?

FREEMAN: I had very little personal contact with Marshall Green prior to the trip itself. That was partly because of the delicate role that Al Jenkins had to play. He was both Kissinger's factotum and Marshall Green's subordinate, and had to compartmentalize what he did. Much of what he did with Kissinger he was enjoined not to share with Marshall Green, and did not.

Marshall, of course, is a man of extraordinary charm and wit, a great professional, but not a China specialist or indeed very knowledgeable about China, much more concerned about Japan. He was very much on the sidelines during all of this.

I think the principal means by which the secretary of state may have kept himself informed, if indeed he wanted to, was through the Secretariat and Nick Platt, who came and checked up on what we were doing from time to time, and was very helpful in handling numerous bureaucratic snafus with the NSC.

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But we were basically sequestered up there and enjoined to stay in the Ops Center and not to emerge. I mentioned writing the book for Mrs. Nixon. I did that in about twenty-four hours, and it was about seventy pages of briefing papers. Literally, during that period of preparation, I probably got two or three hours' sleep a night, if I was lucky. I would often find myself writing papers in my sleep, and awake and write down what I had written in my sleep, and find that it actually held together. With problems, I would review what I had written, and I would go back and know exactly where the structure could be simplified or the language improved or a point should be added.

So, for me, it was a time of obsessive involvement in preparation for the trip, with no assurance that I would be on it, since it was not at all clear, right up until the very last moment, who was going on the trip.

Indeed, the way in which I found out that I was going on the trip was to receive a set of baggage tags from the Operations people in the Administrative Bureau, who were, under John Thomas, running the visit.

John Thomas had to go out on a special trip to undo various catastrophes that had been wrought by the senior White House advance man, Ron Walker, who was used to shoving people in Peoria around, and tried to shove people in Beijing around, with not very good results. In fact, the cause of the breakdown was something to do with the housing of the press, as I recall. Ron Walker told Han Xu (later ambassador here but then acting chief of protocol, although at that time in China, it was the Cultural Revolution and there was no formal head of any office), "I don't give a rat's ass what you say, we're going to do it this way. We always do it this way."

At which point, Han Xu said, "What's a rat's ass?" And as it gradually dawned on him that he had been insulted, he broke off communication.

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It was at that point that John Thomas had to be air-dropped on Beijing to straighten everything out.

For me, that period of a couple of months, I guess, six weeks, felt like a year. It consisted of time in the Ops Center, with occasional forays out to libraries to collect material.

Nixon wanted to do some reading, and I loaned him a bunch of books, which he never returned. In fact, I had some correspondence with him subsequently, trying to get them back. I had, at that time, quite a collection of books that I had accumulated. I believe he did read them, but he certainly never returned them.

So I would commute in on my motorcycle, spend twenty, twenty-one hours a day working in the Ops Center, and then stagger home. I didn't eat much, either, and lost a lot of weight.

Q: Just to get somebody ready, was it part of your task to do the sort of thing that statesmen love, these little bits of information that help carry on a conversation?

FREEMAN: No, not really. It should have been, because one of the peculiarities of Nixon's personality, as I observed it, was his total inability to make small talk. He was a man totally lacking in personal grace, with no sense of the proper distance to keep in human relations. When we come to the trip, I'll give you a few examples of that.

Q: Sometimes you want these little bits of things that people can do, but you were not charged with, say...

FREEMAN: No, we should have been.

Q: ...odd moments of Chinese history that he could relate to, and then say, you know, we've had this.

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FREEMAN: I did the first draft of his toasts for the various occasions, in which that sort of thing came in, but that was about the size of it.

Q: Well, going to the trip, when you got your baggage tags, did anybody tell you what you were going to do?

FREEMAN: No, and that led to an extraordinary set of events. I got my baggage tags, and I packed. Meantime, I think Time magazine had done a little profile of people who were on the trip. They actually apparently knew I was on the trip before I did.

Q: That's not unusual.

FREEMAN: They got my affiliation and my academic career all wrong, but anyway...

So we got on the plane and went to Hawaii, at which point, out at Hickam Air Force Base, I had an opportunity to brief Bill Rogers, who was able to sustain some interest in the trip for a while, but, as others seem to have remarked, did not have a great attention span for such matters and quickly drifted off and went off to play golf.

I didn't know what I was to do, and I thought surely someone would tell me. But when, by the time we had left Hawaii, I had met Brent Scowcroft, whom I hadn't known previously...

Q: At that time, he was what?

FREEMAN: He was running the Air Force operations for the White House staff. He was on active duty in the military, a very mild-mannered, pleasant man, whom I just happened to meet on the beach. And I asked him for advice, what do I do about finding out? He said, "Well, you ought to go ask..." and he gave me a whole bunch of names: Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Ziegler, Chapin, and so on. So I started going around and asking people. I remember asking Pat Buchanan, who was then a speech writer, because I was very

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concerned about the toasts. I knew they had been modified in the White House, and I knew something about the modifications. But I couldn't find out anything.

We got to Guam, and I still couldn't find out anything. We spent six or seven hours sacked out prior to going to Shanghai.

We entered China at Shanghai. I was on the backup plane, which arrived first, so I actually saw the arrival of Air Force One in Shanghai, from the miserable little airport there.

I remember I had written some advice for Mrs. Nixon, which was not to wear red, a color associated in China with weddings or prostitutes. Of course, she got off in a brilliant red overcoat. So much for that advice. But it was photogenic, which was the main concern.

We got to Beijing, and I watched that arrival ceremony. I still didn't know what I was to do.

Q: In Shanghai, did you do anything?

FREEMAN: I talked to a number of Chinese. And I sidled up to various people and asked them what I was to do. They didn't know, and they said, "You'll be told in Beijing."

Q: Did anybody in this party, outside of, obviously, the president and Kissinger, seem to be in charge, sort of a majordomo of some sort?

FREEMAN: There were people who were very much in charge of different elements of it, but the prime fixation at that point was the domestic political spin. And Kissinger, whatever his merits may be, and they are, I think, numerous, is not a manager and is very poor on detail. The sort of logistics of the thing were being run by a White House staff that was concerned about the president, obviously, and not about anybody else, which is the way they're meant to be.

At any rate, we got to Beijing. We went from the airport arrival ceremony to the Diaoyutai guesthouse. There were three interpreters: myself, as the senior interpreter; Cal Maehlert,

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who had excellent Chinese, who had been pulled out of Saigon for this purpose; and a fellow named Kovenach, who had been recruited by somebody or other for the purpose. We were an odd group, because Cal Maehlert was rabidly pro-Kuomintang and in fact a great personal friend of Chiang Ching-kuo. And right after the trip, he went off on a hunting trip in Taiwan with Chiang Ching-kuo.

Q: Chiang Ching-kuo being the...

FREEMAN: The son of Chiang Kai-shek. And probably told him everything. He also lost his entire, I believe, at least he couldn't account for, his copy of all the briefing papers. Paul Kovenach was a Taiwan-independence advocate. So we were an odd group. Paul and I rode in together from the airport. I still didn't know what I was to do. There was a brief preliminary meeting with the Chinese at the guesthouse, where essentially they did the interpreting.

It wasn't until later that I was suddenly called over to the president's villa in the Diaoyutai guesthouse, with the assurance I would be told what I was to do. Cal and Paul came along, and we were all put into a side room. The president came out, and I noticed he was wearing pancake makeup, and there was a large glob of Max Factor hanging from a hair in the middle of the groove at the end of his nose. But all he did was shake hands, say he was pleased to meet us, and not tell us anything about what we were to do. So we went back to our villa, on hold.

There was to have been a banquet early in the evening, but Nixon went off unexpectedly to see Mao, excluding Secretary of State Rogers and everyone from the State Department.

Suddenly, a little after eight o'clock on the evening of February 21, the banquet having been moved down to about nine-thirty, I was called over to the president's villa again. There was a bunch of people milling around, a couple of Chinese interpreters, Ji Chaozhu

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and Tang Wensheng ("Nancy" Tang), and a number of other protocol people, including some I've since gotten to know very well on the Chinese side.

Dwight Chapin came out and said, "The president would like you to interpret the banquet toast tonight."

And I said, "Fine. Could I have the text, please, so that I can work it over?"

He said, "Well, I don't know. There may not be a text."

I said, "Well, I know there's a text, there's got to be. Chinese is not French or Spanish. One has to consider carefully how this is done, if it's to be done well. I'm sure there's a text, and I'd appreciate your getting it for me."

He went into the president's office, and came out and said, "There is no text, and the president would like you to interpret."

I said, "Well, I happen to know that there is a text. And really I must insist on having that text. I have something approaching a photographic memory; I just need to read it once."

Q: Dwight Chapin was...

FREEMAN: Dwight Chapin was the gatekeeper, the appointments secretary, I believe, for the president, later convicted of perjury.

At any rate, he went back in again, and he came out, and he said, "There is no text, and the president orders you to interpret."

And I said, "Well, it might interest you to know that I did the first draft of the toast tonight, and while I don't know what was done to it, in detail, at the NSC and by the speech writers, I do know that some of Chairman Mao's poetry was inserted into it. And if you think I'm

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going to get up in front of the entire Chinese politburo and ad lib Chairman Mao's poetry back into Chinese, you're nuts. So, either..."

He said, "All right." And he took the text out of his pocket and gave it to the Chinese. And so they had it. Later, Ji Chaozhu, who did the interpreting, consulted with me on a number of points before he did it. Indeed it did contain some of Chairman Mao's poetry, and it would have been catastrophic for me to do it.

So my first act as interpreter of Chinese (this was my debut as interpreter; I had never interpreted except in a classroom) was to refuse to interpret.

As we sat through the banquet, I was at the head table with Nixon and Zhou En-lai and Kissinger and Ji Dengfei and Li Xiannian, later president of China, and, I think, Qiao Guanhua, who was, in fact, the brains in the Foreign Ministry, and Bill Rogers, of course, and Mrs. Nixon, interpreting for them, I could see the president glaring at me across the table, with his jowls down and a grim expression on his face, obviously mighty annoyed that I had pulled this stunt.

I have thought a lot about why he might have wished to conceal the fact that there was a text. The fact is that he had a habit of memorizing speeches, and he liked to appear to be ad-libbing them, giving them extemporaneously, which is what Dwight Chapin had told me he planned to do. And I think he was afraid I would stand up there with the text, which I wouldn't have done, of course. In any event, he also had a predilection for using the other side's interpreters, because they wouldn't leak to the U.S. press and Congress. So all these things came together.

Two days later, after some other things had happened, he apologized to me. He called me over and said, "I'm sorry. I made a mistake. That was wrong. I shouldn't have done that." And there were tears in his eyes. Then he did some other things that were by way of making amends. It was odd.

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I did not smoke at that time. I had given it up nine years previously, when I was in law school. I remember Li Xiannian, then the sort of economic planner of China, later the president, offering me a cigarette. I took it, and I have smoked ever since. I was terribly nervous.

Q: I want to keep this chronological, up to a point. What sort of conversation were you getting involved with, as the person who was translating the small talk at the banquet?

FREEMAN: There was this ridiculous Sam Snead story-telling session that Bill Rogers pulled. Mrs. Nixon asked a number of questions, which were of a sort of personal, trivial nature.

Q: How many children do you have?

FREEMAN: That kind of thing. The president and Zhou En-lai hardly talked at all. Nancy Tang was covering them, and I was covering the others. As the evening went on, since there was no discussion going on, I started talking with Qiao Guanhua and several of the Chinese, in Chinese. We were just chatting about various things; I asked some questions about the schedule and this kind of thing. It wasn't a very substantive conversation, as I recall.

But I must say that I was both proud of what I'd done and vindicated by the nature of the toast, and also numb with shock at what I'd done, figuring that my career was over and that that was it.

As it turned out, I did all of the interpreting for the meetings between the foreign ministers, which very much fit the mode. I think Averell Harriman remarked once that the diatribe is left to the foreign ministers, while the chiefs of state have a pleasant conversation. We had several lengthy sessions with the foreign minister.

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Of course, I was fatigued out of my mind. Such an intense experience was it that, for probably a year after, I could have replayed all of those conversations verbatim. I could also read the Chinese briefing book upside down across the table, since I had taught myself to read Chinese upside down, thinking it might be useful someday. And that helped a bit.

Q: Did the foreign minister follow his briefing book?

FREEMAN: Very closely.

Q: How about Rogers?

FREEMAN: Yes, very closely, with Marshall Green prompting him at every step.

Those discussions were essentially on the level of detail and exchanging complaints and interpretations of history and the like, some of which I think astonished Bill Rogers, as it turned out that he wasn't terribly familiar with some of the details of history, such as the precise origins and course of the Korean War and various U.S. statements. The Chinese pulled out a whole series of news articles, to try to show that the United States was hegemonical. And we got into great arguments, their interpreter and I, over the translation of a few key concepts, like deterrence, which they had translated as intimidation, which I took exception to. Of course, they had their own highly prejudicial vocabulary. They had not been subjected to the influence of positivism. They saw nothing wrong with making statements that were value laden, and they did so. In fact, they used language prescriptively, rather than descriptively, much unlike us. So it was a lively, but rather inconsequential, venting of views.

Q: While you were preparing yourself for this, what was the impression that you were getting, from whatever sources, about the two principal Chinese, Mao Zedong and Zhou En-lai?

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FREEMAN: About Mao, very little. He was so heavily screened from his own people that he was quite a mysterious figure.

Of course, I should have mentioned that, in the fall of 1971, the Lin Biao incident occurred.

Q: You might mention what that is.

FREEMAN: Lin Biao was the head of the military, and, at various points, had been Mao's sort of right-hand man. For a variety of reasons, having to do with military objections to the Cultural Revolution and with objections, I believe, to the opening to the United States, Lin attempted a coup d'etat, flew out of China, and crash-landed in Mongolia when his plane ran out of fuel.

I actually was probably the first person in the U.S. government to spot this. And I did it quite by accident, reading an article in the Szechuan press. Suddenly, they had started a campaign against Confucianism, and the press was full of this. I read this article and tried to abstract from it the underlying logic, and deduce what it was that might have happened to do this. And I concluded that a military coup d'etat had been attempted. I wrote Marshall Green a memo to that effect. No one believed it. Subsequently, we did in fact learn of the Lin Biao incident. At any rate, this showed that there was dissidence below Mao.

Zhou En-lai was always the urbane, loyal implementer of Mao's policies - implementer in the best sense: he would take broad concepts and translate them into something that could work. I had, of course, read much about him. I remember a remark that Dag Hammarskjold had made, to the effect that, when he first met Zhou En-lai, as he did, I believe, during the effort to compose a truce in Korea, for the first time in his life he felt uncivilized in the presence of a civilized man. There was this enormous grace and charm about him. Indeed, at one of the dinner conversations on the second night, Zhou En-lai engaged me in conversation across the table, asking about my background, where I had

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learned Chinese, what I thought about this trip, and so forth, with the Chinese interpreter interpreting for the president.

I can't remember the exact day, but I snuck out (snuck out is the wrong word, because one couldn't sneak anywhere in China) but, with Chinese connivance, I got out to the New China Bookstore on Wang Fujing Street in Beijing. I was looking for a copy of the Twenty-four Dynastic Histories. Each dynasty in China writes the history of its predecessor. And there is a tradition of considerable objectivity and really great professionalism in the writing of these things. They go back well over two thousand years, and they are the most complete record of any human civilization that exists. They contain information on everything from the amount of rainfall in a given year to the court dress to events in foreign relations to domestic political and economic policy changes to the life of the court and so forth. I wanted to see if I could buy these, and I had brought a pile of money with me. I had read, actually, in an intelligence report, that they had been published. The book store told me that scholars were still busily preparing these. I was told that they were not published yet.

Zhou En-lai, obviously well briefed by his staff, on our last day in Beijing, at lunch, spoke to me across the table and said, "I understand you're interested in the Twenty-Five Histories." I didn't know that they had written the history of the Republic of China, the twenty-fifth dynasty on the Mainland. We talked a bit about those, and he sort of explained to me, for the benefit of Nixon, what these things were. And he said the work in publication had not yet been completed, but that, as a response to my interest in them, he was going to give two sets of the original eighteenth-century edition of these things to the United States, one to the White House and one to the State Department. And indeed, in the State Department Library, there is this boxed set of the Bo Na Ben, which he presented through me. And he also gave me, separately, three books of literary criticism on a favorite poet and writer, by someone that Mao was very fond of, an intellectual that Mao admired, who was the father

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of one of the Chinese interpreters, someone who was then having an affair with the foreign minister and who later married him.

In any event, that conversation then led, in Hangzhou, to Nixon calling me over, as I mentioned, to apologize. And he said several things. I did some interpreting between him and Zhou. Then he said something to Zhou En-lai that I found grossly embarrassing. He said, "Mr. Premier, I want you to take note of this young man." I interpreted that. Then he said, "Because very likely he will be the first American ambassador to China." I was 27 or 28, and I thought to myself, "My God, he's either saying that they're going to have to wait thirty years for an embassy, until this fellow grows up, or he's saying they're going to send the least consequential, youngest ambassador ever to China." I was just terribly embarrassed. I didn't interpret it; Nancy Tang did. Zhou En-lai muttered something like, "That'll be the day," and that was the end of that.

But Zhou then asked me to stay on, and we talked some more. He asked more about our diplomatic service and various things. After that, I was feeling fairly good, having been apologized to by the president and praised by Zhou En-lai.

There were two military officers from the military region in Eastern China where we were. This was the first visit by Zhou En-lai to the region since the Lin Biao incident, and the military were all on tiptoes. Anyway, I started talking to these two guys about the Korean War, in which both of them had participated. We got to drinking, and, as you know, in China, you never drink without toasting someone. Well, I sort of concentrated on these two fellows, and pretty soon they were very happy and glowing with pleasure. They got up and went around the table, and in a terrible *faut pas*, said to Zhou En-lai, and I could hear this, "Since that unfortunate incident, we've not seen you down here. We want you to know that we're personally loyal to you, Mr. Premier." There was great embarrassment on the Chinese side at this maneuver, which they attributed, probably in part correctly, to my having gotten these two guys drunk.

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So Qiau Guanhua, who was a famous drinker, in effect turned on me and started getting me drunk.

Q: He was a Chinese designated drinker.

FREEMAN: He was the designated drinker. We had, I think, twenty-three glasses of Maotai. By the end of the evening, I was feeling no pain whatsoever. But, fortunately, Maotai passes through the system quickly, so it did no permanent damage.

In Hangzhou, Kissinger and company were sequestered, with Nixon closely looking on from a distance, dealing with the Shanghai Communique. The State Department was excluded from that.

You earlier asked about the role of Marshall Green. He played a crucial role there in rejecting and insisting on a revision of some of the language on Taiwan, which would have given away a point that we didn't need to give away. It's for him to say exactly what he did.

Q: He has remarked that essentially we excluded mention of that, which harked back to Dean Acheson's remark about Korea, which we had not included in our defense...

FREEMAN: It was not so much that, though that was an issue for him.

Both Taipei and Beijing, the two regimes which have been in a civil war since the '20s, regarded Taiwan as part of China and believed there's only one China. At that time, they simply disputed which one of them was entitled to represent China and be the legitimate government of China.

So the United States, in effect, by the language of art in the Shanghai Communique, took note of this agreement between them and said we didn't challenge it. That was the basis for the framework by which we were able to manage, and have been, to this day, able to manage, relationships between Taipei, Beijing, and Washington.

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As I recall, Kissinger began to accede to language that went beyond stating that we didn't challenge this view, and appeared to endorse it more directly. And it was that to which Marshall Green objected and on which he got Bill Rogers to weigh in. At any rate, he played a very important role at that moment.

The Shanghai Communique, so called, which was issued February 28, 1972, on our departure from Shanghai, which was our last stop, was actually agreed in Hangzhou.

I didn't see the text until we were in Shanghai, when I was asked to review the Chinese text, which I did with Ji Chaoghu. As is always the case between two languages there is no complete coincidence of meaning, there is an overlap, and there are several possible renditions of words, some of them key words. I found, to my very pleasant surprise that the Chinese translation had bent over backwards faithfully to render the reservations of the United States and really required no polishing at all. I did make a couple of suggestions, some of which were accepted and some of which weren't. But it was a very artful piece of very professional translation that they did.

I mention my review of the communique because it's sort of an article of faith that no one did review the text, and I think Kissinger isn't aware that it was actually reviewed by an American interpreter. But it was, and after that, it was put in final form and released.

The original language on Taiwan, as well as the language that I had crafted, establishing various mechanisms for interaction — economic, cultural, and continuing diplomatic dialogue — was essentially accepted in the text.

It was an unusual communique, in the sense that it began with a lengthy recitation of differences, and then, in effect, said that notwithstanding the foregoing, we have a common interest in opposing the hegemonical ambitions of other powers. Neither of us seeks hegemony, we do not wish anyone else to have it, and therefore we will engage in this relationship.

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Q: In the context, what do you mean by hegemony?

FREEMAN: This was a word that the Chinese had used for some time, and that I think maybe I had picked up on originally and used in some of the briefing papers.

Hegemony, oddly, is a concept that appears at more or less the same time in the Greek city states and in the warring-states period in China. The hegemon is a participant in the international-state system who exercises dominant control over that system and who is in a position to dictate policy to lesser states. Macedonia assumed that role in Greece after Philip asserted it. And in China, the hegemonical authority was exercised by the Qin, which later, of course, unified China in its own right and founded the Qin Empire. So it is a concept of predatory dominance that was common to both Western and Chinese history, and we both have terms that mean more or less the same thing.

Q: But basically we were saying that the Soviets are the problem. Is that what they were talking about?

FREEMAN: There was a minor subtext in the Asian context which was that neither of us would allow the Japanese to achieve hegemony, which, of course, they had attempted to do in the '30s and '40s.

In other words, what we were endorsing was something rather dear to Henry Kissinger's heart, and I think to Nixon's as well, and that was the concept of balance of power, very much along the classic European balance-of-power lines, in which any challenge to the existing order can be met by a coalition. No state is so powerful that it can determine the course of events without being opposed effectively by a combination of other states. Balance of power is a system in which fluidity and maneuver substitute for war. Balance of power is the system in which diplomacy comes to flower.

This was, of course, exactly Henry Kissinger's thesis in his doctoral dissertation, which he later turned into the superb history of Metternich's concert of Europe, called *A World*

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Restored. I mentioned that I had read that book and was both impressed by it and encouraged to believe that Kissinger and Nixon intended with China to do much the same as Metternich had done with Revolutionary France; namely, to pull the fangs of the revolution and to entangle the revolutionary power in the status quo so thoroughly that it no longer thought of overthrowing it.

So this was a congenial concept. The renunciation of hegemony, by implication, is the endorsement of a balance of power. And strategically it accomplished exactly what both the Chinese and we wished to accomplish, which was to establish an ambiguous relationship that would give pause to the Soviet Union.

Q: Before you went to China, and while you were in China, what were you getting about the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward before that? They'd had this enormous, horrendous, man-induced famine. Did you have any feel about Mao and the impact of Maoism on China?

FREEMAN: I, frankly, was less obsessed with Mao than many of my colleagues.

The Cultural Revolution was still in progress in 1972, when we were there, and Beijing was a cultural desert. One of the first things that I always do when I go to a new place is to look at what people are reading, or, indeed, whether they're reading anything at all. And here was a city, a large city, probably at that point six million or so, in which nobody was reading anything, and in which, in the bookstores, aside from the dogma, there was virtually nothing for sale. I found that the former edition of the Little Red Book of Mao's quotations, which was the Bible of the Cultural Revolution and had a foreword by Lin Biao, had been removed from circulation. I managed to get a copy in Shanghai by browbeating a shopkeeper to take one out from under the table. It may have been the last such copy left in China.

Everybody was wearing Mao badges. Very much in my mind was the image of this cultural desert, like deserts elsewhere, occasionally bursting suddenly into bloom, with vast

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demonstrations in Tiananmen. But Beijing was under very tight security control. There were veterans of the Korean War in China, who had no cause to love Americans; there was the residue of the Lin Biao incident, and the place was buttoned down tight.

In Hangzhou, I went out on the street to go shopping and had one of the eeriest experiences of my life. When I went into a department store, there were thousands of Chinese in there, none of them speaking. You could only hear the swish of clothing contacting and cotton-soled shoes rubbing on the terrazzo.

Of course, we were shadowed by security people, several layers of them. The basic theory of security in China, as I knew, is very similar to ours; that is, there should be three layers of security. And I was able to spot the three layers, to the point where, in Hangzhou, when I wanted to buy some records of the Chinese Revolutionary operas, which I had read in the libretto but had never heard, I didn't have enough reninbi, Chinese currency, so I went to one of the fellows who was in the inner perimeter, a plainclothes fellow shadowing me, and I said, "I think you're with me. I don't know if you have any money, but I need to borrow some money. I'll pay you back when we get back to the guesthouse." He was shocked, but he gave me the money, and I bought the records, as well as some other things, some chopsticks and things like that. On the way back, walking on the street, I saw the tension revealed when a couple of these security people, who now had come out of their effort to conceal themselves and were preceding me on the sidewalk, literally knocked people off the sidewalk to make way. They were terribly nervous, and probably for good reason. And I'm sure that their paranoia was increased by our Secret Service, which, of course, is pathological on the subject of security.

In any event, it was not the period of the Cultural Revolution when starvation was at its peak; rather, that was after the Great Leap Forward. And, you know, time marches on. I was astonished on the Great Wall, when I dropped back and started talking to a couple of the local Chinese guides. Since the president was interested in being photographed and didn't want me in the photo, I turned the job of interpreting over to the Chinese and went

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back to talk to some of the ordinary little girls who were serving as guides, and I asked one of them, "What did you do during the Cultural Revolution?"

And she said, "Well, I was too young."

I meant at the height of it, which was only a few years before. But, of course, she was right, and it suddenly dawned on me that time does march on. This event, which was one of the great events in history, had come while she was still a child.

I also remember asking her whether she was aware that men had landed on the moon. And she said she didn't know that. So we talked a bit about that.

But later I discovered that in fact the Chinese were terribly well informed, in many ways, about the outside world, that there was something called Reference News, which any Chinese could subscribe to, not then but later, which rather faithfully selected and reprinted articles from the Die Zeit and the New York Times and the Washington Post and the Times of London and so forth. So, someone a bit older than she certainly would have been aware of the whole Apollo series. She was not.

Q: At this time, we were pulling out of Vietnam, but we were still very much involved in the war.

FREEMAN: In fact, we were phasing down; we were in the Vietnamization period. The president had given his speech at Guam, the Guam Doctrine, which was welcome to the Chinese, because it clearly implied the United States was pulling back into a support role, not just in Vietnam, but generally in Asia, playing more of a balancing rather than active and aggressive role.

In the talks with Bill Rogers, which I interpreted, Vietnam and the whole question of Indochina figured very prominently. We spent hours and hours on this, to no particular avail. The Chinese had the position that they were not a direct party. They obviously

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agreed with the Vietnamese and not with us. I don't believe that much was accomplished except perhaps explaining to them a bit more about our reasoning, such as it was.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover about the trip?

FREEMAN: I'd just say that, during that trip, I met a number of people in the Chinese foreign service, including some who had been rusticated and were literally hauled out of the pig farms to participate in the trip.

Q: This was because of the Cultural Revolution.

FREEMAN: Yes, I didn't know that they'd been hauled out of the pig farms. Some of them later became good friends, and when I went back in the spring of '73 to open the liaison office, the fact that I knew these people and they had a reasonably good impression of me, I think, helped considerably to get work accomplished.

Q: When you left Shanghai, you were still on the backup plane, I take it.

FREEMAN: Yes.

Q: What was the mood?

FREEMAN: Euphoric. We had accomplished our purpose, which was a strategic one. We had not given away very much on Taiwan. We had held our ground on other international issues. We had established the framework for a relationship. The one item that was unclear was the precise mechanism for future diplomatic contact. We had agreed on the channel, through the embassies in Paris. I didn't know it at the time, but Paris had in fact been a point of contact, through Vernon Walters, with the Chinese, primarily on the Vietnam War. And Kissinger had found it convenient during his contacts with the Vietnamese there to also maintain contact with the Chinese. So there was a certain logic to that.

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Subsequently, Don Anderson, who was the China-watcher there, played the role of intermediary with Huang Zhen, who was the Chinese ambassador to Paris. And that channel was where some of the details of the opening of a commercial relationship, the initiation of cultural exchange and the like, were worked out. It was also a place where information could be passed. And we began there to try to negotiate a number of very contentious issues, or lay the basis for doing so, such as claims by private Americans for property that had been lost at the time of the Revolution.

But that channel, as the year proceeded, became more and more overloaded. In the State Department, many people argued for the establishment of some more direct form of relationship. There had been a proposal, which had been floated before the Nixon visit, for something called a liaison office, but nobody knew what that was and it hadn't been defined. Kissinger was against it, because he thought he would lose control of the relationship if the State Department had its own people in it. And it was not until early 1973, on his last trip prior to the Gang of Four seizing control in China and Nixon getting bogged down in Watergate, that we were able to persuade him to advance the cause of a liaison office.

I wrote the paper on that, and I think Al Jenkins was initially quite skeptical. Roger Sullivan, however, was very supportive and added some ideas.

The basic idea was, no one knows what a liaison office is; there's never been one. It doesn't imply anything. It may lead to diplomatic relations, if we wish that. It could lead to consular relations, if we wish those. It is a form of liaison with no diplomatic precedent. And that's its merit. And here are the things that we can do, through the liaison office.

Finally, a reluctant Kissinger accepted this concept and put it to the Chinese. And when he started to go through the logic of the proposal with the Chinese, Zhou En-lai said yes, and what about this, this, this, and this, almost as though he had read my point paper for it.

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So it was agreed, and in March of '73, a small group, led by Al Jenkins, who was to be the DCM of the liaison office (interesting problem, however); Bob Blackburn, administrative officer; myself, as sort of factotum and interpreter; a communications person... At the last minute, a CIA person was added, at the insistence of the White House, to establish a White House channel of communication. (Also at the last minute, John Holdridge was added as a second DCM, junior to Al Jenkins, to represent the NSC, even though John, of course, was a Foreign Service officer.) We flew to Hong Kong, crossed over the bridge at Lo Wu, carrying our suitcases, and ended up in Beijing for a very intense period of contact with the Chinese.

Q: Before we move to that, did Japan, as a subject, come up? The Japanese, of course, were very put off by the fact that they had what they called the Nixon shokku, the announcement of talking to the Chinese without informing the Japanese, and it caused a real rift in our relations, which probably continues to this day. It hovers there. Did Japan come up?

FREEMAN: In the discussions with the Chinese?

Q: In the discussions that you were familiar with.

FREEMAN: Of course. The Chinese were, and remain, deeply concerned about what they call Japanese militarism, by which they mean unilateral Japanese security policies. At that time, I think they were torn between their opposition to the American dominance of the Asia-Pacific region, on the one hand, and their desire not to give the Japanese an excuse to follow independent policies and thereby resume an independent role in defense, which would have brought them into conflict with the Chinese. But the issue of Japanese militarism figured in the talks, of course.

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I think, for Bill Rogers, who had never considered this possibility and who probably saw the Japanese in their post-World War II, rather than their World War II and preceding period, roles, this was a novel and rather incredible thought.

In fact, to this day, the Chinese remain obsessed with the danger of the Japanese breaking out into an independent, especially military, role of leadership in Asia, and I think fundamentally mistake the nature of modern Japan.

Japan, in the early part of the century, was a dissatisfied rising power, not given an equal place at the international table. And it eventually felt it had to shoot its way to a seat at that table. It was animated by the spirit of Bushido, the Way of the Warrior, and this led it to approach its problems in a military way, in accordance with the Samurai spirit. Of course, now, Japan is a satisfied power; it is at the table. And it is more animated by pacifism than it is by Bushido. Furthermore, of course, the United States has assumed the responsibility for managing Japan's strategic defense.

So I had found Chinese concerns about this understandable in terms of the tens of millions of Chinese who perished at the hands of the Japanese, perhaps forty million, from '31 to '45, but not credible in terms of modern Japan.

Unfortunately, now, in 1995, the state of U.S.-Japan relations begins to give a little bit of credence to those in Japan who believe that Japan must resume responsibility for its own destiny, and who therefore would downplay the relationship with the United States and extricate themselves from our dominant role in that relationship.

So perhaps the Chinese concerns, in the end, due to poor management of relations by both Tokyo and Washington, will prove to be well founded.

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Q: I thought we might stop at this point, because I think we want to talk about the opening up of the liaison office in some detail. You were put on the team that went to open the liaison office when?

FREEMAN: That was March of '73. But, actually, I should discuss some of the follow-up to the Nixon trip. There were several National Security studies done, on which I worked, and a number of initiatives taken, which perhaps require a little bit of explanation, which has not been made public.

Q: And one of the things I'd like to throw in is your impression of the role of the CIA, at this time. Okay?

FREEMAN: Up to a point.

Q: Today is the 18th of July, 1995. Chas, you wanted to talk about some studies that were done after the Nixon trip was over.

FREEMAN: Obviously, part of the process that led up to the Nixon visit was signaling the Chinese by the removal of restrictions on trade and travel and exchanges of one sort or another. But that process was far from complete, and there needed to be major adjustments made in American law and regulation to accommodate the new relationship with the Chinese.

As I recall, within a week or so of the president's return from China, Dr. Kissinger commissioned two National Security studies, one on economic relations and one on cultural relations with China. And he set about a one-week deadline for the conclusion of these, imagining, I suppose, that there was a vast army of bureaucrats below him who could now fill in the details of what he had done.

Well, that vast army of bureaucrats for both studies was basically me. So I spent a week, often a whole night at the office, now out of the Ops Center, drafting two National Security

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study memoranda, and then circulating these drafts on an interagency basis, and spending much of the following day negotiating with other agency representatives in an effort to get some kind of agreement. The bureaucracy was especially recalcitrant on the issue of relaxing export controls, and the difficulty of coming up with agreed language was quite considerable.

I discovered a number of things about the culture of Washington bureaucracies.

For example, if you called a meeting for five o'clock in the afternoon, by about six-thirty, the Department of Commerce representatives were desperate to go home and have their martinis and dinner, and would begin to make major concessions. So the first lesson was always to call meetings late in the day when there was a controversy with Commerce.

The second lesson was that the Department of Defense, unlike the Department of Commerce, would sit there all night and obstruct. But their bureaucracy was so cumbersome that if you stayed up overnight and produced a redraft and then scheduled a meeting for the early afternoon, they would not have had time to coordinate their position, and you could rule them out of order as not having a position, and push forward.

Treasury was the wildest and most insistent of all the bureaucracies we were dealing with, partly because the subject matter in which they had real expertise was minimal. They had opinions on many things, but their expertise was quite limited.

Q: Was it limited because China had just not been in their orbit? Or was it limited because they were limited?

FREEMAN: Treasury historically has professed some sort of a major role in trade policy. But Treasury doesn't promote trade in any way. It has no direct involvement with the business community, as opposed to bankers. And there is a real question as to whether bankers are an intelligent life form or not. So it was Treasury speaking as the custodian of

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national interest, as it saw it, even though it had no effective role in the issues that it often addressed.

There were a number of things that I remember with particular satisfaction from that period.

One of them was the proposal to form an organization that became the National Council for U.S.-China Trade. As trade began to become possible with the Chinese, there began to be a proliferation of trade promoters and associations. And it was quite apparent that, left untended, this field would eventually be filled by some sort of Chinese front group, which would be an advocate not for American interests, but for Chinese interests.

So I had the idea, and a young man at Commerce named Driscoll worked with me very hard, to produce a proposal whereby the U.S. government would sponsor, but not fund, the creation of a prestigious business council that would preempt the field.

In the event, this organization was approved, and there was a meeting at the Department of State auditorium to kick it off. I helped recruit the first vice president of it, Gene Theroux, who had been the legislative assistant to Hale Boggs and who is now a prominent attorney here in Washington. Then I helped to recruit the editor of their publication, the China Business Review, which has become the premier journal in the field. But its first edition was written almost entirely by the consulate general in Hong Kong and me, on the q.t., trying to ensure that this organization got off to a good start.

Eventually, Chris Phillips, who had served at the U.N. with George Bush and who later served as ambassador to Brunei in the Bush administration, became the president of this organization, later renamed the US-China Business Council.

I spent hours and hours and hours over the succeeding period trying to help this organization get organized, recruit personnel (I interviewed most of them), and trying to produce a commercial library for them and publications and the like.

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Of course, following the Nixon trip, as I mentioned, and even before, there had been a great outburst of misguided interest in China trade on the part of people throughout the country. After I switched over pretty much to economic-commercial work on the Desk, suddenly I found myself besieged by people with tape recorders who had come in to receive wisdom from the font. I had the wonderful experience of having somebody come in, ostensibly just to ask me about how to do China trade and interview me for about fifty minutes, and then he said, "Well, you know, this was so interesting, I'd like to come back. Could I do that?"

I said, "Sure."

He came back and did another fifty minutes.

And then I found the tapes of our conversation on sale for \$1,500 apiece, which was a good deal more than I made in a month at that time. That was a nice lesson.

I also found myself the subject of recruiting efforts by major companies. I've forgotten what I made at that time, but it was probably something below \$30,000, and I was being offered \$300,000 and so on. And I realized that, in business, if the result is large enough, any price, in terms of salary or commission, however astronomical it may seem to the individual concerned, is worth it, because it's a small percentage of the total.

So it was an interesting time.

The Nixon administration had been essentially unable to send any speakers to campuses, because of Vietnam protests and the like. Suddenly, however, China became an acceptable topic, a politically correct topic, on campuses, and I found myself doing a great deal of public speaking. I think, in the first year after the Nixon trip to China, I did more than a hundred public appearances, including a few that were rather odd. I remember standing in for Nixon at his alma mater, Whittier College, on some occasion, anointed by

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this great but rather strange man to represent him. There was great curiosity in the United States about China, and it took me all over the country.

Q: Did you find yourself in the position of trying to throw a little cold water on these flames of enthusiasm as you went around to colleges? China has always excited people, right from the beginning, in the United States.

FREEMAN: I don't know that I was trying to douse the enthusiasm. Perhaps I was trying to direct it in more realistic directions. There was so much ignorance, it's hard to recapture that moment, but the spectacle of this Red-baiting president going off to China and then to Russia was quite difficult for people to understand. It intrigued them greatly. So I tried to concentrate on putting the events and the various issues, which had been, if not resolved, at least addressed with creative ambiguity in the Shanghai Communique, into some sense of perspective, rather than to talk about the internal workings of Chinese society.

There was a very interesting phenomenon, however, which I found rather appalling, and that was when the American right wing began to go to China, politicians of one sort or another. They discovered a society in which students sat straight upright in their chairs and had short hair and respected their elders and adhered to family values of a sort that were then already nothing but a matter of nostalgia in the United States. They found no theft or significant crime. There was order and what appeared to be a measure of progress, although terrible poverty. And there was this sudden, strange fascination by the American conservatives with this really very conservative society, which Mao had attempted to radicalize, but had failed to radicalize. I found this very, very interesting. Liberals I had expected to be a bit woolly minded on the subject of revolution and the like; I was surprised by the conservative reaction.

Q: As both a bureaucratic and an American attitude when something new happens, we kind of discard all the experience of other people and we go ahead. This goes from the individual bureaucrat up to the government. Here you're working on economics and

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trade with China. There's a vast pool of experience on trade with China, by the British and French particularly, but others. They'd been doing this for a long time (much to our annoyance). Did we start from the beginning, or were you able to tap into the British and the French experiences?

FREEMAN: We basically made our own way. And it was a different way. Even as we were fascinated by the Chinese, the Chinese were greatly fascinated by us. There are many elements in the Chinese character and the American character that are mutually appealing. There are also many elements that are the subject of misunderstanding, so there were mistakes made. But, generally, the process of opening trade relations went rather smoothly.

Of course, we were dealing with a society in which there was essentially no commercial code, no legal system to enforce contracts, and in which trade was done by a sort of law merchant. The law merchant was the customs of trade, initially in the Mediterranean and the wool trade in the Hanseatic League, eventually incorporated into the common law and into the Napoleonic Code, but initially enforced by merchants themselves, in tribunals or arbitration panels on which merchants would interpret contracts in terms of the customs of their trade. And we were thrust back into this sort of medieval environment.

I should say, this law merchant in the Mediterranean was the bridge between Arab and European traders, and it was the Arabs who took the system that later became the Canton Trade Fair to China initially. It was a system in which foreigners were expected to live in hotels, called funduq in Arabic, and to regulate themselves. The national state didn't want to be bothered with the quarrels of pesky foreigners, so it essentially allowed them extraterritoriality. And this medieval system evolved into the Canton trade system in the nineteenth century. Oddly, the Communists, in their own strange way, resurrected it with a semiannual, or annual, depending on the period, trade fair in Guangzhou (Canton). And it was this that was the initial introduction of Americans to the China trade.

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Q: That's when Shaw went out there and all that. Just a historical note, that the idea of this separate compound goes back to Egyptian times. The Pharaoh, in about the year 1000 BC, set up a little island in which Greek merchants had to take care of themselves, but didn't step off the island.

FREEMAN: I didn't know that. But it's something that really does have Mediterranean roots and which found its way to China.

There were great adjustments to be made. The Chinese essentially had the attitude of Henry Ford: "You can buy a shirt, any shirt, as long as it's white and it's got our label on it." The Americans, obviously, specialized in going in and buying things for the American market, which meant that the shirts had to be specially designed and had to have the Bloomingdale's label. So the process of persuading the Chinese not to insist on their brands and their designs was a very difficult one for the Americans.

And there were wonderful jokes about Chinese brand names that had a different connotation in English than they did in Chinese.

For example, elephants are powerful beasts, and those that are white are pure. So the largest-selling brand of batteries in China was the White Elephant brand.

Shoes in Chinese are pee-shyeh, and in the Chinese Romanization, that comes out as pixie. So we had Pixie brand shoes for men.

And so forth and so on. It had its moments.

There were also differences of culture and a lack of understanding in financial arrangements.

Boeing told me this story (I don't know whether it's true or not) that, as a direct follow-up to the Nixon visit, they sold ten Boeing 707s to the Chinese.

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Q: Large passenger airplanes.

FREEMAN: Exactly. These are jet aircraft that were the workhorse of international aviation at the time.

That when they had consummated the deal, which I think was \$40-some million, the Chinese said, "How would you like to be paid?"

They said, "Well, what do you mean?"

The Chinese said, "Would you like cash or a check?"

And they said, "What?"

So the Chinese went into a back room, pulled a curtain, and there was \$40 million in cash sitting there.

There had, of course, been no banking relations.

But generally I think it was a very interesting process of mutual discovery, made all the more exciting for both sides because each side had created vast myths about the other. Everything about China, in the period of our separation, was evil, and China was the Empire of the Blue Ants, and the Chinese were faceless, anonymous, collective-minded persons. Well, of course, the Chinese are consummate individualists, and when Americans finally encountered them, they discovered this. The excitement of discovering that your assumptions had been wrong led to an excess of good feeling, I think, at least on our side, and distorted our image of China much more to the positive than was justified.

In other words, this was a period when, once again, the United States, as it had done before in history, swung the pendulum and oscillated toward an unrealistically positive view of China. There is something about the U.S.-China interaction that is almost unique,

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because it does seem to swing between unrealistically positive and unrealistically negative views.

Q: Right now, we're going through quite a negative view.

FREEMAN: Equally inaccurate.

Q: You might say, at this point in '95, it's sort of our designated potential enemy.

FREEMAN: You have to have illusions in order to be disillusioned. And that's what we have become.

Q: Did Dr. Kissinger look at this swing and see what was happening? I can understand the euphoria of the politicians, because, if you're Nixon, you get a lot of credit for opening up and doing this great thing. But Dr. Kissinger has a reputation of being a much more analytical, cold-blooded looker at things. Was he saying that maybe we better damp this down, let's not go to extremes? Or did that ever come up?

FREEMAN: I don't think that his forte was the handling of American public opinion. Personally, however, he remained relentlessly realistic, I think, although he was much charmed by the Chinese.

The Chinese have a political culture that puts an emphasis on strategy and the long-term view.

I can remember interpreting once for one of the first visiting Chinese scholars, I'm sure the first one to visit the Senior Seminar at the Foreign Service Institute, who gave a lecture on the objectives of Chinese foreign policy, in the course of which he remarked that the essential purpose of Chinese foreign policy was to redress past wrongs and overcome past humiliations. And he stressed that he was speaking of the recent past.

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The first question after the lecture was, of course, “What do you mean by the 'recent past'?”

And he said, “Well, some people would argue that this means everything since the Yuan Dynasty,” which was the Mongols in the twelfth century. He said, “I don't agree with that. I think it's everything since the Treaty of Nerchinsk,” which was in 1689. So the “recent past” was the last, roughly, three hundred years.

This kind of long view and sense of strategy was greatly appealing to Kissinger. Once, after interpreting for him at a meeting in New York, when he was secretary of state, with his Chinese counterpart, I can remember him commenting afterwards that if these people ever become powerful, they would bury us, because of the adroitness of their strategic thinking. I don't think I agreed with that at the time, and I don't agree with it now, but it is an indication that he was aware of the need occasionally to correct the admiration that one tended to feel in the presence of very able men, on the Chinese side.

Q: Before moving on to the liaison office establishment, I have two questions. There are two men I've interviewed, actually one I'm still interviewing, and I'd like you to comment on their roles, because they were in the NSC. One was Peter Rodman, and the other was Richard Kennedy.

FREEMAN: I can't really comment directly on either of them during this period. They were very much staff people in the NSC. My dealings, to the extent I had any, were with Dick Solomon and John Holdridge, who handled East Asia. They did not. Peter Rodman is what I call a securocrat, meaning a Washington national security policy official, not an area expert, and very much at that time bound up with Vietnam, which was the principal obsession of the country. I know Kennedy quite well, but I don't know what he was doing at that time. I'm sure I didn't encounter him then. I saw him a great deal later, in other incarnations, dealing with nuclear issues.

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Q: Okay, why don't we go on and talk about the establishment of the liaison office. We're talking about something you've written some textbooks on, on diplomatic things. I don't think a liaison office was in the vocabulary until you all invented it.

FREEMAN: As I discussed before, by the fall of 1972, the infirmities and inadequacies of occasional contact through our embassies in Paris became quite apparent, as we began to try to deal with more technical issues. Consular questions arose on the Mainland. There was a desire for more regular contact directly with decision makers in China. This led, in the view of those of us who were working day to day, to a need for the establishment for some sort of office in China.

We clearly couldn't have an embassy, because we had one in Taipei, which was accredited to the government of China. We could have had a consulate, I suppose, but that would have been complicated because it had a precedent in international law. So we came up with this concept of the liaison office. As I mentioned, the two authors of this were Roger Sullivan and myself.

Q: Roger Sullivan?

FREEMAN: Roger Sullivan was then the deputy director of the Asian Communist Affairs Office.

Kissinger was most reluctant to see this happen, because it meant that some measure of influence, control, and transparency to the bureaucracy would be ceded, and that he would no longer have the exclusive management of the China relationship. And so the initial effort to persuade him was quite soundly rebuffed by him.

On the eve of his travel in early 1973 to China, however, I drafted a paper that made the argument for a liaison office really quite compelling, I thought, and that argued that the merit of a liaison office was that no one knew what it was, and therefore we could allow

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events to define it, rather than worrying about it setting a precedent or raising questions of diplomatic recognition and the like.

The proposal was for the reciprocal exchange of liaison offices. And, leaping ahead a little bit, when we actually reached agreement on liaison offices, in January or February 1973, Kissinger, not being a constitutional lawyer, or indeed any sort of lawyer, and being rather contemptuous of domestic legal process in the United States, frankly, stoutly resisted the idea of legislation to confer privileges and immunities on the Chinese liaison office. And yet it was perfectly apparent that we, in dealing with a society as lawless as China, where arbitrary and capricious decisions were a fact of daily life, required reciprocal privileges and immunities to operate, and that, to do that, we needed legislation. Because we could not confer diplomatic privileges and immunities on the liaison office, since it didn't fit any category of American law, we had to go for legislation. I think Kissinger was correctly concerned that this legislation might be taken hostage by Congress and various elements added to it. But, in the event, we got the legislation we required.

When Kissinger presented the arguments, the point paper that I had drafted for him on the establishment of liaison offices, it was as though Zhou En-lai and I had read the paper in advance. Before Kissinger could complete all the points, he essentially went down them. And so there was easy agreement that this moment had come.

It was a good thing, because this was just before the spring of 1973, and it was a moment at which the authority of the leadership in both the United States and China began to collapse.

Q: We're talking about Watergate in the United States.

FREEMAN: We're talking about Watergate; we're talking about the Gang of Four in China. And the institutionalization of the relationship, which was not terribly appealing to Kissinger, was very appealing to me and to some other people who believe that entangling

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bureaucracies with each other is a good way to create inertia in a relationship, and therefore preserve it against adverse times.

In any event, in early March, [see page 23] six of us, led by Al Jenkins, who became the first acting chief of the liaison office; myself, as interpreter and factotum; Bob Blackburn, who was an administrative officer, and a very senior communicator, who turned out not to be familiar with the one-time pad, so I ended up as a code clerk. It was below his pay grade, I guess, or above his practical knowledge and technical skills.

Q: As an old consular officer, I know that if you want to really find out how to do something, you never go to the top person.

FREEMAN: Absolutely not. He was a splendid fellow, but not well versed in the work of his minions.

At the last minute, a seventh person was added, who was a CIA communicator. The Chinese made quite a point of putting him at the seventh seat at the seventh table and sort of snickering about the CIA turning up. The purpose of this was to give Kissinger a private channel outside the State Department, and it was perfectly obvious. Indeed, he appointed John Holdridge as a second DCM, also with the title of DCM, to serve as the NSC representative in Beijing.

Q: I must say, you do have the feeling of a person (Dr. Kissinger) not wanting to give up his baby.

FREEMAN: I think that's right. But I would also say that there really is a period, when you are tacking the ship of state in a new direction, when the captain has to call the shots. He was the captain on this, and it's probably a very good thing that he did hold onto the details, although many of us found him somewhat lacking in an adequate grasp of the details as they became more complex. Still, I think he was right to do this. But it was also right to institutionalize the relationship as we did.

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Q: We had quite a weak State Department, partly because of Kissinger, at the time, under William Rogers, who was not...

FREEMAN: Was not terribly interested in foreign policy. We had an arrangement that I would say made the NSC the foreign ministry for great-power affairs, and the State Department the ministry for dealings with petty barbarians and the like. [See Freeman.1, page 83.] This was a workable, if somewhat novel, arrangement.

This group set off into terra incognita to open an office. We flew to Hong Kong and then walked across the railroad bridge at Lo Wu into China, where we were greeted by people from the Chinese Foreign Ministry. We went on up to Beijing, staying in the Beijing Hotel, which was then the only hotel worthy of the name in the Chinese capital.

The first days were spent in introductory meetings with senior Chinese officials. We ended up spending a great deal of time with Qiao Guanhua, who was, in effect, the acting foreign minister; Ji Pengfei, who was the nominal foreign minister; Zhang Wenjin, who was the assistant minister in charge of American and Oceanian Affairs, an extraordinarily able diplomat; and Han Xu, who was the acting chief of protocol, since this was during the Cultural Revolution and no one had formal titles.

It was interesting, there was cordiality and cooperation from these people and from the Diplomatic Services Bureau. The Chinese, in the true Soviet style, had established an office to manage and control and staff the offices of foreign barbarians in their capital, and everything — the buildings, electricity, car registration, and, of course, local staff — came through this office.

There were many occasions for contact with Chinese officials outside the immediate America-handling and administrative crowd.

Of course, this was the Cultural Revolution, and people had been taught in China not to reveal their identity or their work unit or whatever to foreigners. This was a matter of

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national security. The papers would routinely identify those who attended meetings as “responsible persons of the department concerned,” and you really couldn't get much more identification out of people.

So one of the things I did, which wasn't easy but became a good move in terms of opening up these officials, was to go out to the local printing press, where calling cards could get printed, and after about six days of negotiation with them, I succeeded in getting them to print a card that said, on one side, in English, “Responsible Person of the Department Concerned,” and on the other side it said, “Youguan Bumendi Fuzeren,” in Chinese. So when they would ask me who I was, I would say, “Allow me to present my card.” They would look at this thing for a minute, and some of them would just break down laughing. It was a good introduction.

Q: I would assume that, because of this, in a way, in military terms, one of your prime jobs must have been to try to develop the equivalent of an order of battle. In other words, to find out who did what to whom. Otherwise, how do you work?

FREEMAN: Absolutely.

Your mention of the military reminds me that one of the things we did was to put in Marine guards, Marine guards not in uniform, because the Chinese insisted that the Marines had had a history of uneasy relations with the populace.

Q: Oh, absolutely, in the Boxer Rebellion and then the concessions.

FREEMAN: Exactly.

I became the sort of custodian of the Marines. There were several things that were quite interesting about that. I ended up measuring for the curtains in their apartment. Nobody could speak Chinese in the Marines, of course. I ended up taking them to get their hair cut. I can remember the barber, a very old man, saying to this Marine, “Are you really a

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Marine? Oh, I'm so glad to see you!" So there were some in China who remembered the Marines fondly.

But the most embarrassing element of that was that the Chinese had not only great sensitivity to the Marines, but they also had great sensitivity to anything overtly sexual. They had claimed, and probably they had more or less succeeded, that they had eradicated venereal disease in China. And indeed, as I say, maybe they had. One of the Marines turned up with the clap, which his girlfriend had given him.

Q: I might just say, for the tape, since language changes, "the clap" refers to gonorrhea. On that wonderful note, let's stop and flip tapes.

FREEMAN: In any event, this unfortunate young man had gotten gonorrhea from his girlfriend, and the question was: What do we do with this? You know, this is rather embarrassing. The Marines are remembered ambivalently because of their sexual prowess, and here is the first Marine to set foot in China after a quarter of a century, turning up with the clap. We debated whether to send him out for treatment, and concluded that that was too expensive and that we couldn't do it. So we took him to the Chinese for treatment. The medical people we took him to were delighted; they hadn't seen a case of gonorrhea for years. They called an all-North-China medical conference to examine this, so that everyone could see this strange disease. This poor, poor young man was thoroughly humiliated and I'm sure was much more careful in the future. But he was cured, and life went on.

Q: While we're on that subject, one of the great problems, which was a terrible problem for us when I was in Yugoslavia a decade earlier, was the Marines and young ladies. What did you do with the Marines and young ladies?

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FREEMAN: There were many alternatives in Beijing. The Polish Embassy rather specialized in providing nubile young creatures to horny bachelors in Beijing. But they were out of bounds, because those young girls were probably KGB controlled.

Q: That was one of the horrors of the Cold War, I think.

FREEMAN: The Marines found a warm welcome in the ladies of the diplomatic community support staff.

Establishing the office, we leaned very heavily on advice from our British and Canadian colleagues, and the Canadians were especially helpful. But we had to locate office space. In the end, we were shown a site that was under construction and had been intended as the Embassy of Brazil. But, of course, the Brazilians had not come through on diplomatic relations, so the Chinese offered it to us. It was a small cement residence, with a very small office with a quaint cupola, rather an odd octagonal room at the top, which they explained was for signals. Well, obviously, our communications gear isn't put in such places and requires special handling.

I can remember going over to the Diplomatic Services Bureau one afternoon with Bob Blackburn and explaining that, indeed, we needed more office space on the compound.

And they said, "Well, what do you want?"

So I drew a building and explained that the top floor should have no windows, and that this should all be built to vault specifications and whatnot. They said, "Well, let's take your drawing."

Two hours later, they called us back and showed us a completed architectural drawing. They broke ground about six o'clock that evening, and they built that structure. I've never seen anything like it. They worked around the clock. They basically used workers and threw them away when they were exhausted. They built the whole thing in sixteen days,

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and most beautifully. The upper story, where the communications were to be, had false windows, so it looked perfectly normal from the outside. And inside, it had beautiful walnut paneling.

Of course, the first act that we committed when we got into it was, for security reasons, to rip out all this beautiful paneling. We were so embarrassed by this desecration of Chinese craftsmanship that we sawed up all the pieces of walnut and sent them out in the diplomatic pouch, rather than bring them out of the building where the Chinese could see what we were doing. We never found any evidence of bugging or anything of that sort in that area.

At any rate, it was quite a performance.

Q: Just to nail it down, when were you in Beijing for this liaison office?

FREEMAN: I think it was probably about two months, March through April, maybe early May, '73.

During this period, I was, as I say, a factotum. I was interpreter. I was sort of a GSO (General Services Officer). I was a political officer. I was the code clerk. I was doing trade and economic work, contacting business people on both sides. Of course, I was also, because I was interpreter and because I was doing all these things, having a great deal of contact with senior Chinese officials.

I was asked whether I would stay on at the liaison office, whether as a political officer, economic officer, in the administrative section as interpreter, or, because of my previous USIS experience, as the manager of cultural and information programs.

And I declined, on what proved to be the very well-founded grounds that probably, in this initial period of setting up the liaison office, I had had more contact with Chinese officials than the entire office put together would have in succeeding years, and that to be in China

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at that time was to be under house arrest. It wasn't that the surveillance was particularly intrusive, although it was there.

I can remember going one day with a British diplomat on a picnic to the Ming Tombs. We were driving along in his car, and there was a motorcycle behind us. He said, "Just wait a minute." He stopped the car, and we sort of looked at the scenery. The motorcycle stopped, and the driver began to pretend to repair the motorcycle. So he walked back to the driver and said, "Is there a problem with your motorcycle?"

And the man said, "Yes, I don't know what's wrong."

He said, "Well, let me see if I can help," and he started taking apart the motor. He pocketed the spark plug, without the other fellow noticing it. Then he said, "I think we better go on ahead, and I'll try to send someone back to help you." And then we took off, leaving the poor fellow stuck there.

But it wasn't intrusive; it was social control, not police control.

I can remember walking near Tiananmen Square, which is not far from the Beijing Hotel, late one night, and being accosted several times by what we called the granny police. These were senior ladies of a neighborhood whose responsibility it was to make sure that no stranger wandered into the neighborhood and that nothing untoward was done. This was a responsibility that was theirs as citizens, not as officials.

When snow fell in Beijing, there was no municipal snow removal. Neighborhoods pitched in together and cleared the snow.

There was a great sense of neighborhood cohesion and defensiveness, all organized by the Party, of course, but really quite spontaneous, and now remembered by the Chinese with some nostalgia, because a lot of this cohesion has broken down as rapid urbanization has taken place and the market economy has come to the cities.

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In any event, I was not enthusiastic about house arrest in China, and said to myself that I would return to China for an assignment when one of two conditions was met, or both: either China had changed, to open up a bit, which I thought it might, or I had reached a sufficient level of seniority in the Foreign Service where I didn't really care whether my freedom of movement was restricted.

In the event, both those conditions were met when I went back as charge in the summer of 1981.

Q: While you were there, where would you describe this as far as the Cultural Revolution? The high Cultural Revolution, the start of it, the end of it?

FREEMAN: The worst excesses of the Cultural Revolution had occurred in the late mid-'60s. The Lin Biao incident and attempted coup d'etat, which I mentioned, occurred in 1971.

China was in a period of lull. Mao was failing. Jiang Qing, his wife, whom I met and saw many times, was using her nominal position as his wife and her access to him, along with a number of other women who were around him, to build her own political authority. The cultural artifacts of the Cultural Revolution, such as they were — revolutionary operas and this rather dull, highly polemical repertoire of literature and art that the Cultural Revolution produced — still had a monopoly. The streets were still renamed in revolutionary style: The street in front of the former American Embassy in the old legation quarter was named Anti-Imperialist Street; the one in front of the Soviet Embassy was named Anti-Revisionist Street, and so on and so forth.

But there was no overt unrest. There were no demonstrations. The Red Guards were a thing of the past. There was lingering political tension and a sense of oppressiveness from ideology. It turned out that this period was indeed the moment at which the Gang of Four

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began to emerge as the de facto leadership of China. So that, by the fall of 1973, early 1974, U.S.-China relations began to become much more tendentious.

Of course, Watergate was going on in the United States, and Nixon was in the process of falling from power. There was something similar going on, with Zhou En-lai greatly hampered, in China. Both sides, for strategic reasons, in subsequent visits by Kissinger to China, continued to put much the best face on the relationship, but inside, it was rotting, because of the ideological and power struggles in the United States and in China.

Q: When you were dealing with the Chinese, I was wondering whether you saw a parallel to what I observed slightly later when I had dealings with the South Vietnamese bureaucracy, which I was told was based somewhat on the Chinese one. One of the things I found there was that there really wasn't an awful lot of power down. In other words, the bureaucrats had a lot of power, which was usually to say no; whereas, at the top, maybe they would understand what the problem was and try to get something done, but the mid-level bureaucrats... We can call in the president or the equivalent, and things happen, usually, not always.

FREEMAN: That was very much the case. This initial period of the liaison office was one of great Chinese cooperation, in part because the senior leadership was directly engaged. We would have lunch with them once in a while, and problems would get solved.

But all bureaucracies tend to behave in the manner you describe. Bureaucracies, like the one in China or those in Eastern Europe or, I suppose, in Vietnam, don't delegate much authority down the line, and, where the consequences of mistakes can be quite severe, tend to be very reluctant to innovate.

And there were some odd things that happened, due to the rigidities of the Chinese.

For example, I helped to negotiate the lease for the liaison office, which, by the way, is now the ambassador's residence. That rather small, quite inelegant place that we

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accepted in 1973 remains the residence of the American ambassador, and has been quite off-putting to a number of politicians who otherwise would have sought to go to Beijing as ambassador (and therefore maybe a good thing).

In negotiating the lease, the Chinese initially put in a clause that the lease would be renewable after five years, on different terms, and that they reserved the right of price escalation.

I said to them, "You know, this I don't understand, because China's very proud, and correctly so, of not having any inflation. So, if there's no inflation, how could there be a justification for a price increase? So I think that we should put in a clause that says, 'Inasmuch as there is no inflation in China, there will be no price increase.'"

And they agreed.

Subsequently, they had second thoughts, and I think the next lease did not contain that language. But it was possible, occasionally, to hoist them by their own bureaucratic and ideological petard.

Q: Both when you were dealing in the NSC, looking toward economic matters, trade and all, and when you wore the commercial trade hat a little bit while you were with the liaison office, did the problem of intellectual properties come up? We all knew what had happened in Taiwan, where they stole our intellectual property right and left. They copied everything that you can think of. It was a long problem.

FREEMAN: It came up primarily in the context of concern by the export-control community about reverse engineering of what would be sold to China. Indeed, there were attempts to do this. The Chinese took the Boeing 707, studied it carefully, and built something that we dubbed the "Boeing 708," which turned out to be a rather awkward flyer and never went anywhere.

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They were famous for copying things generally.

There was a story, which I think is correct, that when the Russians shipped some MiG-21s to Vietnam, by rail across China, the rail cars somehow got lost, and some of the MiG-21s didn't turn up for quite a while. And when they did turn up in Vietnam, some of the dials in the cockpit were upside down. Obviously, the whole thing had been disassembled. And, indeed, the Chinese began to produce an aircraft quite similar to the MiG-21 a couple of years later.

But I think the general answer to this was that Chinese technical capabilities were so limited that, by the time a commercial product had been reverse engineered and they were in a position to produce it themselves, one or two further generations of technology would have been introduced in the United States, and it wouldn't be a threat to the market position of companies. So they didn't worry about this very much.

And in the area of music, literature, and the like, China was a society that banned the distribution of any foreign literature, except through controlled channels. They had this marvelous publication, to which I referred the other day, Reference News, which distributed, in some twenty-odd million copies, articles from the New York Times and whatnot, for internal use only, which meant only Chinese could see it, although, of course, I did, too.

But that was essentially the extent of it. So there wasn't a terribly great concern about that issue.

That issue, which had been at the center of our relationship with Taiwan for many years, as you indicate, is one that is typical of the relationships between advanced societies and developing ones. In the nineteenth century, the greatest violator of copyright was the United States.

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Q: *Oh, yes. Gilbert and Sullivan had long stories about the problems.*

FREEMAN: And Charles Dickens. That is why, in the used-book stores here, there are so many crummy editions of Dickens from the nineteenth century and knockoffs of his books. It wasn't until the United States emerged as an exporter of ideas that we became strict on this subject.

So it's normal for developing societies to regard intellectual products as the common heritage of mankind, rather than as entitled to protection for the benefit of their originators.

But this wasn't an issue with the Chinese at that time.

It became an issue later, largely because we did succeed, as Taiwan became an exporter of technology, in persuading Taiwan to clamp down, at which point they simply relocated all of their factories to the Mainland. The great crisis that we had with China a year ago over intellectual property was caused by Taiwanese investors relocating plants to the Chinese Mainland to produce CDs and the like.

But at that time, it was not a concern.

At any rate, I traveled several times to China with delegations, but remained on the Desk. I continued to interpret, but I made a real effort to get Language Services at the Department of State to recruit a proper professional interpreter, since I had no interest in making a career of interpreting, and did not want, in fact, to be pegged as a China specialist. I thought of myself as a professional diplomat and believed that there were more fields in which to exercise whatever ability I had than just China.

In the fall of '74, something rather odd happened to me. I had been approached in the spring by the East Asian Legal Studies Program at Harvard Law School to lead a seminar or two and possibly teach. And I replied that I couldn't really see how I could do that, since I didn't have a law degree, having left law school at the end of my second year. So they

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offered to allow me to complete my third year while I did some teaching. I managed to persuade FSI that this was relevant training. So I went up there on a university study program basis and finished my third year, which I enjoyed enormously and did extremely well at, while writing a series of papers, basically for policy planning and also for the Harvard Law School. Those papers dealt with a number of topics.

For example, I wrote a paper on the law merchant of the China trade, which I've just mentioned, tracing it back and drawing the analogies with Mediterranean and European and Arab tradition.

But the major focus was on the question of Taiwan. And the legal research I did became the basis of the Taiwan Relations Act. It was obvious to me that, at some point, we would have to find a basis for maintaining an unofficial relationship with Taiwan. And to do that, there would have to be major changes in U.S. laws and regulations, since we didn't have the capacity, as a country, that some other systems do to act outside the rule of law. Therefore, I worked hard on the major issue of how to deal with Taiwan in a political-legal sense, and the details of how to manage an Ex-Im Bank relationship with a non-country, and how to ensure that Taiwan's foreign-exchange reserves in the United States were secure, and how to deal with the issues of embassy and consular property, privileges and immunities, and how to ensure that full faith and credit was given to court decisions by a place that didn't legally exist, and so forth. And, as I say, this work later became the basis of the Taiwan Relations Act.

I had wanted to publish some of it, but the sensitivity about this possible abnormalization of relations with Taiwan, in the context of normalization with the PRC (People's Republic of China), was such that that was denied.

Subsequently, since I was concerned that there was inadequate understanding on the part of the legal community about the requirements for all this, I allowed Victor Li, a lawyer of Chinese origin who was later director of the East-West Center, to read my papers, not take

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them, but read them and make notes. And he subsequently published a book that was essentially based on my work, with some interpretations of his own.

The key question he addressed, although he came to a slightly different conclusion than I had, was what to do about the defense relationship. That was his focus, how to continue selling weapons to a province in rebellion, what to do about the defense treaty, and the like.

But that work, which was produced over the '74-'75 period at Harvard, sat for several years, because, of course, the Nixon administration collapsed, Ford lacked the authority in his brief term in office to do anything about normalization, and, subsequently, it took the Carter administration some time to come to grips with this issue.

I went back to the Department in the summer of 1975 to become deputy director for Republic of China (Taiwan) Affairs.

Q: While we're on the Harvard thing, this was the time, in the spring of '75, when we collapsed in Vietnam, we collapsed in Cambodia and all. Were you affected? The campuses had been violent on the subject until the American troops got out. Was it much of an issue then?

FREEMAN: It was a pervasive underlying issue, but not, by then, a terribly active one. The period of student activism had crested.

I was quite disappointed with many of my classmates, much younger than I, of course, since I'd had nine years between my second and third years in law school, disappointed with them in the sense that I found them trade oriented rather than intellectual. I did not share their elation at the fall of Saigon.

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My own view of our adventure in Indochina was and remains that we entered that fray for the wrong reasons, stayed in for the wrong reasons, and left for the wrong reasons, and that our role was essentially inglorious from beginning to end, as well as misguided.

But what I found most disturbing was the unwillingness of people there to recognize that indeed some of the consequences of the collapse in Indochina that had been predicted were being played out. There was a bloodbath, if most evident in death at sea by hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese who were fleeing. There was a literal bloodbath in Cambodia. It has always struck me that we need to reconsider what the lessons of that adventure were, from a more dispassionate distance than we've been able to do so far.

It can be argued that the intervention in Indochina did achieve important purposes, while it failed in others. It allowed time for what became ASEAN, a group that coalesced in response to that intervention, to establish the newly independent states of Southeast Asia as viable entities that could survive in their own right. It had the usual effect of war in stimulating economic growth in the region around it. And it had a great deal to do with East Asian economic success and the pattern of stable relations between Southeast Asian countries that emerged.

Still, if its objective was to preserve the division of Vietnam and to prevent North Vietnamese empire in Southeast Asia, it ended, with a whimper, in the wrong way.

Q: John Fairbank was a preeminent Chinese scholar. There's often a split between the academic view of things and the professional diplomatic view — the theoretical versus the practical. Did you have any contact with those, including Fairbank, who were studying China?

FREEMAN: Of course.

Q: What was your impression of their approach and their view?

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FREEMAN: John Fairbank and his wife, Wilma, were practical-minded people, not at all in an ivory tower. One of the merits of being at a law school, studying things Chinese, is that lawyers tend to be concerned about results as well.

But, you're right, there is a sharp distinction between social scientists, as they call themselves, and diplomatic practitioners. Diplomacy is applied social science. It has the same relationship to social science as engineering has to science. Engineers are often impatient with the theoretical maunderings of scientists, and diplomats tend to be quite impatient with the theoretical maunderings of scholars.

I found, fortunately, in the field of China studies at that time, some of the worst atrocities of modern political science had yet to be committed. Numerology and other strange quantitative analysis had yet to intrude. This is a sort of pseudo-science that leads to no useful conclusion, in my view. But the people who were looking at China were trying to look at questions that were not dissimilar to the questions that a political or an economic reporting officer in Hong Kong was looking at. They had access to information with a significant time lag. Hong Kong, and Beijing, as it began slowly to emerge as a center of analysis on China, tended to be almost a real-time operation.

One of the things that happened to China studies, as the '70s proceeded and contact between Americans and Chinese thickened and was enriched, was that some of the more bizarre theoretical or romantic constructs that scholars had formed of China began to crumble in the face of contacts with Chinese realities. And it was a healthy process. And perhaps people like myself, plunked into the middle of the academic community, played a role in this.

But there was a very poignant and useful reminder of Chinese realities in our midst. There was a man, who was a Yale graduate about the time that George Bush went to Yale...

Q: We're talking the 19...?

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FREEMAN: Late '40s, early '50s. Named John Downey. John Downey, like many at Yale at that time, joined the CIA, and was captured during a night operation in Manchuria.

Q: His plane was shot down.

FREEMAN: Exactly. He was nineteen years in solitary confinement, and emerged sane. In fact, he's one of the sanest people I ever met, a man of enormous inner resources, someone who had experienced a different sort of China than it was fashionable then to recall. And he was there, John was at law school. One of his classmates at Yale, Jerome Cohen, who was my sponsor at the Harvard Law School, had assisted him, after his release, to enter law school. This was a man who had missed all of the events of the '50s and '60s, and who was suddenly, in the middle of the '70s, plunked down into this environment. He was a constant reminder, as I said, of a harsher Chinese reality than it was then fashionable to recognize.

Q: You had your law degree, you'd done some papers dealing with the future relations with Taiwan, and you'd done some classes, too, I take it.

FREEMAN: I'd led some seminars.

Q: So what happened when you got out in '75? This was, of course, the end of the Nixon administration.

FREEMAN: I went to work on the Republic of China Desk, the Office of Republic of China Affairs, which dealt with Taiwan. The director was Burt Levin, a very great China specialist, someone with a real affinity for the Chinese and great common sense and wisdom, who later was ambassador to Burma.

Q: You were there from when to when?

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FREEMAN: I was there only a year, '75-'76. I left because, although I was what was then called an FSO-4, which would be a sort of FSO-1 now...

Q: It's kind of a major.

FREEMAN: Yes, well, FSO-1s claim they're colonels, but one never knows.

Anyway, I was mid-rank, and yet, because of all the public speaking that I had done and continued to do, John Reinhardt, a very distinguished career officer from USIA who had served as ambassador in Nigeria and was the assistant secretary for the Bureau of Public Affairs, and Charlie Bray, who was his deputy, asked me to come over and become director of the Office of Public Programs in PA. That was the office that managed the secretary of state's, and everyone else's, speaking engagements, and programs like the Scholar Diplomat Program, which brought scholars in for a week's internship in the Department of State and gave them some exposure to the practicalities of international relations.

So I did that; in effect broke my assignment to the Taiwan Desk and became director of Public Programs, and reorganized it and did quite a bit of innovation. I introduced computers and word processing, which the Department of State was very slow to recognize as having any potential, and in effect tried to organize that office as a sort of U.S. Desk, with officers specializing in regions and cultivating public-affairs organizations.

I was there for about a year, and the Ford administration then went down to defeat. Hodding Carter came in to succeed John Reinhardt. John Reinhardt was named head of the U.S. Information Agency, and took Charlie Bray along with him as deputy.

I had, I guess, developed a reputation for management innovation, so I was made the head of something called Plans and Management, which was both the executive office for the bureau, meaning it managed the budget and the administration personnel and

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other administrative functions for the bureau, and the policy planning and overall planning organization.

Q: This was still part of Public Affairs.

FREEMAN: That's right. This is 1977 now. In that role, which was essentially a bureaucratic role but a very interesting one, I learned several important lessons about the limitations of what's possible in government. I managed to bring off a number of reforms.

For example, the State Department Bulletin, which was the record of foreign policy at that time, was a weekly, sort of brown-wrapped thing that went into libraries and nobody ever looked at. We were losing money on it. Not that anybody gets to keep the money they make in government; it goes to the Treasury. But we were losing money. I worked on reorganizing that, making it a monthly and sprucing it up. And we began to make a bunch of money on it.

We worked on the reform of the Foreign Relations series of the United States, to introduce, with David Trask, who was then the historian, microfiche packets to both provide more material and slim the volumes, which were getting out of control, and to speed up the process of release.

I reorganized public correspondence. It had taken six weeks, and I calculated it cost 27-dollars-per-letter to answer the mail at the Department of State. By dint of a ferocious bureaucratic battle with then Assistant Secretary for Administration John Thomas, someone I admire enormously (we had a battle that both of us enjoyed and that ultimately I won; I'm probably the only person who took people away from John Thomas in his entire career), we managed to arrange to answer mail in three days, print it by computer at a remote location, sign it with roto-pens, and do all this at a cost of 27-cents-per-letter.

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So I actually managed to cut the operating costs about in half. But then I discovered that, in the government, what happens if you save money is that your savings are taken away from you.

Q: *Oh, yes.*

FREEMAN: Furthermore, you cannot do what managers in the private sector must do to gain efficiency. You cannot trade people for money or equipment. They are apples and oranges in the government budgeting system. Personnel feelings and systems bear no relationship to operating costs. Salaries and expenses are centrally allocated, and you get no benefit by reducing them. The limitations of efficiency are obvious. And I concluded from that that what is most needed in government is the introduction of market mechanisms in which services are sold — sold, of course, for cash.

I'll give you an example of the sort of thing that went on. I needed some office space in order to reorganize the public-correspondence section. The office space I required was in the hands of the Economic and Business Affairs Bureau, run by a formidable lady who had been there forever and was sort of the grande dame of the administrative cohort in the Department of State. It cost me \$100,000, under the table, in operating funds to get that office from her, which, of course, she didn't own. But at any rate, this is how things are done.

Q: *How did this work? You had money transferred within the system?*

FREEMAN: I just bought her a bunch of stuff that she needed, and charged it to my account. But I got the space.

The office of the spokesman at that time was in the secretary of state's office. We wanted to make the Bureau of Public Affairs more relevant. And we succeeded in amalgamating the two offices, with somewhat mixed results. But it was a time of innovation.

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Public Affairs had, of course, been a zone of repose for people who had come in from previous administrations and wormed their way into career status. There were several of these characters around.

Without naming names, I'll just mention that one of them, I discovered, was running a radio station, including a radio talk show, from his office in PA. He did no other work, but collected a government salary.

There was another one I was asked by Hodding Carter to remove. I went to his office and said, "I'm sorry, we need your office. We don't have any space for you, so you'll just have to sit in the corridor." And we moved his desk out into the corridor. He took his Persian rug, wrapped it up, put it in his safe, and moved the safe into the corridor. He had no phone. He just sat there, totally unembarrassed by this. And so eventually I went to him and said, "I need the corridor. You can sit down in the basement somewhere." And he went down and sat in the parking lot. But essentially he spent his time in the cafeteria, reading papers.

There was no way to get rid of these people. So that was another lesson of the infirmities of government.

At any rate, I was in that job for about a year, and then John Reinhardt called from USIA to say that they were reorganizing USIA, and asked if I would please come over to run what was then their sort of central office, almost a bureau called Program Coordination and Development.

Q: This was in 1978. I'd like to just backtrack two places. You were in Republic of China Affairs from when to when?

FREEMAN: It was from '75 to '76.

Q: Can you just give a feel for some of the problems. Here was somebody we'd been with, seems like forever, a very close ally, with strong congressional support. Obviously,

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they were being cast adrift. What were some of the dynamics you observed during this important year?

FREEMAN: The most important was an instruction from Kissinger, who was secretary of state by then, not to speak honestly to Taiwan representatives about what the future might hold.

This was an unspoken instruction, of which I learned when I had lunch once with the Republic of China ambassador and said to him, "You know, I don't know when it's going to happen, but there will be a switch in relations. And you need to think about how to handle various problems, because the United States will not wish to see you damaged by this."

And I talked to him about a number of things that I was pushing on the Desk, such as trying to reduce the visibility of arms sales by shifting, to the extent possible, to technology transfer and local manufacture, trying to make this issue more manageable, recognizing that normalization with China would not come for years, and that we should use those years to try to reduce the impact on the ROC, since none of us knew what the details of the normalization agreement might be.

I was roundly chastised for talking to him about this. Of course, I then followed discipline and did not. But I felt that it was improper, with a government that was a friend, not to help them to come to grips with emerging realities and to adjust themselves so that they would not be adversely affected by what was going to come.

Q: The Taiwan government must have known this was coming. Was it sort of a head-in-the-sand attitude?

FREEMAN: There was deep denial in Taiwan. It was unacceptable to question the heritage of Chiang Kai-shek.

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I can remember, in December 1970, having a conversation with Ch'ien Fu (Frederick Chin), who is currently, but not for long, the foreign minister of the Taipei government, in which I said to him, "You know, you will lose your U.N. seat eventually, and maybe it will be next year." (As it turned out, it was.) And I said, "Or it'll be the year after. But you will eventually lose. And the reason you will lose is not because people don't like and don't believe that you are a political entity, it is because you are impersonating a great power, sitting in the Security Council. Why don't you recognize the inevitability of loss, and adjust to it by withdrawing voluntarily from the Security Council, but retaining your General Assembly seat?"

And I got the predictable response from him, several Chinese sayings, "Han Zei Bu Liang Li." "The righteous and unrighteous cannot live under the same sun." "Ning Wei Yucui, Bu Wei Wa Quan." "I'd rather be a piece of broken jade than a whole brick." Etc.

And this was very much the atmosphere in Taipei, which was still, at that time, a very ideological, benevolent dictatorship. So, unpalatable realities were not welcome and were not discussed.

Q: Even by diplomats on informal occasions here in Washington?

FREEMAN: Oh, there were younger diplomats, some of whom have become very senior, with whom one could have, and I did have, many candid conversations. What they were able to do with them, in terms of reporting, I can't say.

There was certainly awareness in Taiwan of the peril of their position.

For example, during this period, I used to commute on a motorcycle to and from Northwest D.C., where I lived, and the Department. One night, the night before I was to leave on a trip to Taiwan, I was coming home. And just in front of the British Embassy, on Massachusetts Avenue, in the rain and cold and dark, a car suddenly pulled out of a stalled lane of vehicles, hit my motorcycle, and knocked me off. I went twisting through the

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air and came down, shredded my gloves down to the skin, and then was run over by my motorcycle, breaking a rib in the process. I was so hopped up with adrenaline that I picked the motorcycle up and moved it to the side of the road. Normally, I couldn't begin to do that. Finally, a truck came along, and the driver kindly took me home.

I got on a plane the next day and arrived in Taipei in the morning. I went to the embassy and worked all day. And then, in the evening, the then political counselor, Leo Moser, later charg# in Laos, a very scholarly man, asked me if I would like to join him at a reception the foreign minister was giving. So I said sure, and I went with him to meet his wife at the MAAG (Military Assistance and Advisory Group) compound, to switch cars. I sat in the back of the car, and it suddenly felt as though an alligator had bitten me. I got up, and there was part of a sideview mirror from a car sticking out of my behind. It turned out that Mrs. Moser, Helen, had had an accident in which this mirror had sheared off. It was on a long piece of chrome, which had split in half. It was a sort of dagger, and I had stabbed myself in the ass with it. So Moser said, "Well, you know, do you want to go to the hospital?"

And I said, "No, it doesn't seem to be doing anything too bad. So why don't we just go to the reception, and I'll go into the john and have a look and see what it is."

We walked in, and I was trailing blood on the foreign minister's tiled entrance, and he noticed this. I went into the bathroom, and, sure enough, there was quite a puncture wound, and a hole in my pants as well.

So I got a cab, and I went down to the U.S. Navy hospital clinic. A corpsman kind of probed around and lost a Q-Tip in the wound, so it was evidently fairly deep. The Q-Tip had to be retrieved by a Chinese nurse using chopsticks. He asked me whether I had had a tetanus shot recently, and I said that I didn't know whether it was up-to-date or not, my health card was in my hotel room, but I was going to T'ai-chung by train the next morning, and I would check, and if I needed one, I would get one in T'ai-chung.

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So I went back to the hotel. It was a hot night and muggy. Taipei is usually that way. As I went toward my hotel room, I noticed that the room next to mine had the door open, and there were four Chinese in there playing cards, with a large tape recorder, with a wire leading into my room, sitting next to them. So I sort of looked at this, and I went into my hotel room.

I was feeling probably a little giddy because of the operation, and I felt like having a drink of something. So I said, "You guys next door, why do you sit next door? Why don't we all get together and have a drink? If you want to hear something from me, just ask me, and I'll tell you."

There was no response, so I went next door, knocked, and said, "You heard that, didn't you?"

"Yes," they said.

So we all went and had a drink.

This was surveillance.

I got up the next morning, went to T'ai-chung, and rode up, in a cab, to the provincial hospital there. It turned out that the nurse on duty was the wife of a very good friend of mine, who'd been a teacher at the language school there and who had died recently. And she said, "No problem about the tetanus shot, but I have to warn you that the doctor on duty is Dr. Wu."

Well, let me back up a little bit. When I lived in T'ai-chung at language school, Dr. Wu was the landlord of my house. It developed that he had been an architecture student. This was his thesis, this house. It was covered with wrought iron musical notes and had various peculiarities — a refrigerator in the dining room, and urinals all over the place — a really strange house, with many problems. So I had a really quite nasty relationship with him. He,

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on the basis of this thesis, the house, had flunked out of architecture school and become a doctor. As I said, I did not have an easy relationship with Dr. Wu.

One Christmas, we decided, for some reason, that we would have a suckling pig for Christmas dinner. We went out in the countryside and found a farmer who'd sell us a piglet. We brought the piglet home, and I slaughtered the piglet in the garage. This was a skill I had acquired as a child in the Bahamas. This was watched by the neighbors.

Well, in China, traditionally, and in Taiwan, there is a pig-slaughter tax. And I was not paying that tax. So I was a little apprehensive that all the neighbors, who were watching this horrible spectacle of the pig dying, would squeal on me to the police.

And, sure enough, on Christmas day, just as we were sitting down to dinner, there was a ring at the garden gate and a loud knocking. I went out, and there were four policemen. I thought, "Oh, my god, they've come to get me for tax evasion."

But it turned out they were looking for Dr. Wu, whom they planned to arrest for draft evasion. And I very happily gave them Dr. Wu's address.

So I was not happy to be treated by Dr. Wu.

But he was delighted to see me, and he asked me whether I had any allergy to horse serum. I said no, I didn't think I did.

Q: This was part of the tetanus...

FREEMAN: Yes, the previous form of tetanus was horse serum, and many people had reactions to it, some of them rather strong reactions.

But I wasn't aware of any allergies, so he pulled out the largest needle I have ever seen and pumped me full of this horse serum. Of course, it did turn out I had a reaction; I developed hives and itching and whatnot.

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After leaving T'ai-chung, where I gave some lectures, I went down to T'ai-nan. And in T'ai-nan, I was accosted at a restaurant by someone who appeared to be a Taiwanese-independence advocate and activist. We had a conversation about this over lunch. Then, as I got in the car to leave, he held onto the door of the car, and he yelled, in Mandarin and Taiwanese, "Never forget Taiwan!" and so on.

Well, when I got back to Washington, I heard that he was a police plant, and he'd gotten a medal for his performance.

So there was certainly awareness of the dangers. There was surveillance, there were efforts to influence on an individual level, but there was no honest official dialogue. And this, I thought, was a problem.

The other major issues we had during that period? Well, for example, Taiwan has something called the Chung-shan Institute. Chung-shan was the nom de plume, or the political nickname, of Sun Yat-sen. This is the military research and development facility in Taiwan. They were busily building various things. They had a cooperative program with the Israelis in which they were producing a version of the Gabriel anti-ship missile. They also had a program to develop longer-range short-range ballistic missiles and medium-range ballistic missiles that could hit Shanghai and other places on the Mainland. We discovered that they had, very cleverly, one by one, inserted their entire missile-design team into MIT, one student applying, apparently with no connection to the others, to study nose-cone design, another one doing guidance, another one doing rocket fuel, another one doing metallurgy for fuselages, and so forth. So, from nose cone to afterburner, they had it covered. And they were engaged in a series of things of this sort.

There was also quite effective espionage going on from Taiwan. They were not asleep; they were alert. And I think this probably was stimulated even more by the official lack of candor that characterized our relationship. So there were repeated problems of this kind.

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Then there were the usual issues of book piracy and trade issues and whatnot.

One thing that I can remember doing on the Desk was looking at the rate of growth and the structure of economic growth in Taiwan, and concluding (correctly, as it turned out) that, in 1984, Taiwan would likely surpass the U.K. in living standards, or at least Taipei would. And I wrote a paper for Phil Habib, who was the assistant secretary, pointing to this. I think it was greeted with disbelief in many quarters, but it turned out to be one of the earlier discoveries of what later became widely known as the East Asian economic miracle.

So it was an interesting period, one in which, as I say, I made a number of friendships with people in Taiwan, who later rose to prominence and with whom I've maintained contact.

Q: What about whatever would pass for the China lobby? There were many people within Congress, and not necessarily just from the old China lobby, who had strong ties to and feelings for Taiwan. What role did that play, from your perspective?

FREEMAN: There was some aftermath of McCarthyite innuendo, repression, and intimidation from the political right. But essentially, during this period, the American body politic was confused about China, including Taiwan. Conservatives who had supported the anti-communism of Chiang Kai-shek saw the utility of China as a counterweight to the Soviet Union, which was the enemy. And that silenced all but the most ideological. Those with any strategic sense saw the merits of what Nixon had done. The liberals could hardly sympathize with Taiwan, because Taiwan was, at that time, a dictatorship, with labor reform camps and the like, a society in which the Taiwanese identity was suppressed by the Mainlander ruling class. So it was less contentious than one might have thought.

Q: Hodding Carter was one of the directors of Public Affairs who stands out. He's still on network news, but he came out of a rather liberal local southern political movement. What was your impression of his role in Public Affairs when you were there?

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FREEMAN: Hodding is probably one of the best assistant secretaries for public affairs that we've had. What he brought to the job was a sense of the news and relations with journalists. Hodding was the one who opened the daily press briefing to television cameras, which has had both good and bad effects, of course. He was articulate, bright, knowledgeable. And the main thing about him was that, although he took very little direct role, he did not neglect the more important constituency-building, public-affairs, public-information role of the Bureau of Public Affairs, even though he obviously had to spend most of his time dealing with the press room. And that has not been a pattern that has been replicated in his successors. I found him decisive and insightful and interested in some of the budgeting and other processes that I was trying to establish.

For example, we had a budget process with our own hearings and justifications within the bureau. And he would preside over these quite usefully.

So he was a sober and intelligent leader for that bureau.

He was assisted by a number of people who were also really of very fine quality: Bill Dyess, later ambassador to The Netherlands, briefly the press spokesman himself for General Haig; Bill Blair, of the Maryland Blair family, a gentleman of enormous warmth and experience in the public-affairs area.

So it was a congenial bureau in which to work, one in which I was left to carry out my programs and innovate, in the confidence that I would have strong backing from the most senior management, which wasn't at all afraid of innovation and which was interested in things.

We did a number of things, for example, that were quite innovative, in terms of organizing conferences and public outreach.

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I must say, John Reinhardt and Charlie Bray had had much the same spirit, and Public Affairs was a very congenial place to work at that time.

There were things going on that took a great deal of our time. For example, the selling of the Panama Canal Treaty.

Q: I was just going to ask about that one.

FREEMAN: One of the things we did, which was innovative and has now been undone, I think to the detriment of the Department, was to establish in my office, as part of my policy-planning role, a small unit that analyzed polls. Often, when we looked at the raw data in polls, which Gallup and others were willing to share with us on a professional basis without any charge to the government, we could get real insights into the sources of opposition or support for administration policies, and help policy makers to articulate their policies in more persuasive ways that really responded to the interests of the concerned public. Occasionally we were able, working with these organizations, to help them formulate a question on foreign policy in a way that actually had some relevance to policy makers, as opposed to just being of interest.

So this was one thing that we did, and it was terribly useful in the Panama Canal Treaty fight, most of which was really conducted out of the American Republics' Area (ARA), rather than PA, where they established a special unit. Our concern was to support them, and also, frankly, to try to prevent them from crossing the line into lobbying, which is not appropriate for government Executive Branch officials to do. That is, to stimulate public interest and awareness is appropriate; to go beyond that, to actively encourage the organization of letter-writing campaigns and the like directed at Congress, is not appropriate. Sometimes ARA seemed to us to be crossing the line. We, of course, participated primarily as implementers, but occasionally as shapers of arguments as well.

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Q: Although you weren't dealing directly, everything must have permeated the relationship with the media, and I'm thinking particularly of those correspondents and others who dealt with foreign affairs. What was your impression during the Carter years of the media and the foreign-affairs mavens?

FREEMAN: The administration's relationship with the press was really pretty good during its first year and a half, which is when I was in Public Affairs. In my job, I had very little direct contact with the press. I've always strongly held the view that, for career officials, there is nothing the press can do for you, and very much they can do against you, and that to seek publicity, or to leak, is ultimately both improper and injurious to one's career. And so I didn't. That was not my function; I was not directly involved in dealing with the media. We, of course, did analyses of editorials and the like. But, you know, only seven percent of newspaper readers actually read editorials.

We did some interesting polling work. I recall that we did a study of the effects of foreign travel on presidential standing in the polls. And what it showed was that presidents who traveled to First World countries, allies, got a boost in the polls of a modest nature, which lasted. Presidents who traveled to Third World countries got a dip in the polls, which also lasted. The focus of the Carter administration on the Third World, and the mad theoretical gyrations of Mr. Brzezinski in particular, had something to do, I think, with the administration's perceived failures on foreign policy, even before the Iran hostage situation developed.

But I didn't deal directly with the press.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point, and then pick it up when you were with USIA, from '78 to '81.

FREEMAN: I should say, before I left, one thing I did on China. The administration was not dealing with China, and it was not preparing public opinion for normalization. And its

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standing in the Congress was questionable on this; Carter was not a strong leader, in terms of congressional relations.

I wrote an article for the Open Forum, the dissent-channel magazine in the Department of State, essentially arguing that, if we didn't prepare the public for normalization, we probably could not accomplish it; if we did not accomplish it, we would have to live with an abnormal state of affairs, and I explored some of the implications of what that might look like and some of the consequences for the United States.

In a way, it was an argument for normalization, but it was one couched in terms of what happens if we don't do it. And it drew a savage reaction from the stronger partisans of normalization in the Foreign Service. But it also attracted Dick Holbrooke's attention. He was the very young, very ambitious former FSO who had served as Carter's foreign-affairs advisor during his campaign.

That was a position, by the way, that I had been offered and turned down, on the grounds that I was a career officer. I saw Carter, to coach him for his debut at the Trilateral Commission in Tokyo. This was when he was a perpetual presidential candidate. It's when I was at Harvard, and I got a letter from Hamilton Jordan asking me if I'd come down and do this. I replied that I was a career officer, and I'd be happy to serve him if he were elected, but I had no intention of quitting public service to do something so political.

Anyway, Dick Holbrooke was attracted to the article and asked me to lunch in the cafeteria, and over inedible hamburgers or hot dogs, we talked about China. And that later turned out to be important, since I had not known Holbrooke before and was pleasantly surprised by the quickness of his mind. He evidently thought I was all right, too, because he later asked me to work for him.

Q: Today is the 26th of July, 1995. Chas, you're at USIA, '78, mid-Carter, John Reinhardt is the head of the agency. As you went into USIA, how did you see its role?

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FREEMAN: John Reinhardt and Charlie Bray had quite a theory for what USIA ought to become. They saw it as a facilitator of two-way communication between the American people and foreigners, and laid considerably more emphasis than USIA had traditionally done on feedback from foreign visits. They saw themselves as being, in short, a source of information for policy makers in Washington, as well a purveyor of policy makers' views.

That theory sat very poorly with the traditional culture in USIA, which has very much emphasized managing programs that put out American views, in all of their diversity, and has never been terribly interested in reporting back what foreigners say.

In any event, I arrived there as the agency was becoming USICA (United States International Communication Agency). And the purpose of this unfortunate name was to symbolize the shift toward a more two-way flow of information. ICA, of course, became confused with CIA.

Q: I was in Korea at the time, and everybody was just aghast, saying what the hell are we doing!

FREEMAN: It was also a moment at which USICA separated itself more thoroughly from the Department of State. The Bureau of Cultural and Educational Affairs at State (CU) was taken out of State and put into ICA, as part of a reorganization. This essentially severed the last substantive connection between USIA and State, I think to the detriment of both.

Along with this, various maneuvers in the personnel area, notwithstanding my own detail to USIA, began to curtail opportunities for FSIOs (Foreign Service Information Officers, as they were then known) to have details to State.

So you had a situation in which the sort of synergy that is possible between an agency that is engaged in program management in foreign affairs and one that is engaged in more individual collection and writing activities, policy input, was lost.

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Having served in both USIS and State, I used to joke that, if you asked the average FSO to get four people to the men's room at the same time six weeks from now, he couldn't manage that. The USIS officer would get them all there at the same time, but he would have forgotten why they were going to the men's room.

The two cultures were really quite different.

Immediately, I confronted two difficulties: the first was a professional and intellectual and personal one; the second was a problem of this subculture in USIS that had no particular regard for FSOs from State.

I walked into USIA innocently, having been told that I was to design a program-management system for all of USIA's programs, which would radically alter the way in which business had been done.

This was explained to me by Hal Schneidman, who was the associate director of USIA (a position somewhere between an assistant secretary and an under secretary) in charge of programs. He explained to me that Allen Carter, who was his deputy associate director, would explain to me what they were trying to do and what I was to do. So I went to see Allen Carter.

I had a mild history with Allen Carter, because he had turned up once in Madras, when I was a junior officer with USIS, and gotten very drunk and made a really rather obnoxious pass at my wife, and I had decked him. So when I went in to see him, I was somewhat apprehensive that he would recall this and take it amiss. If he did recall it, it was in a forgiving way. I don't think he recalled it.

In any event, I went in to see him, and he explained that he had a theory of how communication ought to work and how the agency should program, but he had no idea how to implement it, and implementing it was my job.

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Essentially his thought, which I think was a sound one in principle, was that the agency should be a production and coordination mechanism, directed from the field. That the public-affairs officer (PAO) in the embassy, who was in touch with foreign cultures and views, should be the one to determine what aspects of the American experience and culture and information were most needed to fill gaps in perception and understanding on the part of his foreign clientele. And that he should be able to direct that the agency produce X, Y, or Z — a speaker, a film, a TV program, a magazine article, an exhibit, a performance of some sort, a musical or the performing arts more generally, which would serve to remedy whatever misconception foreigners had about the United States.

So he explained that this was what we were going to do, and I was to figure out how to do it.

So I sat down and busily designed a system, called the Program Design Management System, in which, for the first time, country plans, which are written annually by public-affairs officers, would have some meaning. That is, in the country plan, they would explain what their objectives were, and then say what they needed to carry them out. This would be vetted by the area office (the equivalent of a geographic bureau in the State Department), and if it accorded with overall U.S. policy and guidance, it would then be passed to my operation, of some 67 officers and some 30 support staff, to produce an agency-wide plan for producing and delivering these things, in some coherent manner, to the field.

And so the design of the agency's work, of purchasing products that were available in the United States, whether they were the services of an individual or some piece of writing or art or something of this sort, or actually contracting to produce something or doing it in-house, all this would be directed by the common denominator of field requests.

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We actually designed a system and put it into practice, by the end of the summer (I had gotten there in the spring), and it worked pretty well, in terms of at least producing some guidance for USIA to follow.

Q: You were breaking an awful lot of rice bowls back in Washington. In any normal organization, I don't know USIA, but people in the capital always have wonderful ideas that they want spread out all over, whether they pertain or not. This has been the method of bureaucracies everywhere.

FREEMAN: Of course. And this was an effort, a really radical effort, to turn that on its head. Of course, it was deeply resented, as you suggest, by all of the production units in USIA — the exhibits people, the motion picture and television people, the wireless file, the magazine producers, all of whom felt that their mandate from the American people to decide what the American people wanted told abroad was being usurped by this bunch of FSOs overseas called public-affairs officers. So it was deeply resented, and I think even more resented because the fellow who was implementing it was not a USIS officer. And so I had to walk down the corridor with my back to the wall, to be sure that I was not done in.

Q: Could you talk a bit about the difference in culture. Technically, U.S. Information officers and Foreign Service officers come out of almost the same recruitment process, and they work intimately abroad. Could you talk a little about this, because this is pertinent to what you were trying to do.

FREEMAN: USIS is, in a sense, a purer form of the Foreign Service (although my former colleagues at the State Department wouldn't agree) than the State Department, in that its meaningful activity is almost entirely abroad and in interaction with foreigners. USIA, the headquarters, is a dull, uninteresting, boring place to work, generally. The people who run USIA won't agree with that opinion, but it is commonly the opinion among those who must serve there.

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Whereas, at State, there are really two kinds of FSOs. There are those who glory in overseas work. Most consular officers and many political and economic officers fall into that category. A lot of admin. officers love the scope that they have, to do things overseas, which they don't have in the vast bureaucracy at the State Department. But there also are FSOs who see their role as policy formulators, and who are desperate to be where they think the action is, which is in Washington.

In USIA, you don't find that sort of person. Or if you do, that sort of person is attracted to details to the State Department and not to the USIA headquarters.

But the interesting thing is, as I said earlier, during my tour in India with USIA, I got incredible management experience, at a very young age, managing budgets, people, activities, programs, a sort of experience that, frankly, State does not offer, except perhaps in a few areas of consular work and refugee programs, at any point. Even the administrative function does not offer program management in this sense, experience that USIS officers get early on. They see themselves as doers, and they see the people at the State Department as twiddlers. This mirrors, I think, the image that many administrative officers at State have of those in the political and economic business. They don't perceive the difficulties or the arcane nature of that work, and deny its professionalism. So I think it's a profound difference.

Then there are other differences. Overseas, State officers work closely (or should, and most do) with colleagues from the intelligence services, whether they're civilians from the CIA or military from the defense attach#'s office. They are collectors of information and reporters of information as much as presenters of it. To the extent that they are purveyors of information, they purvey an official line, rather than their own opinion, although they may use their own method of presentation, and they may embroider the official line with their own supporting views. But they are not free to express individual opinion.

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USIS officers see themselves as presenting the diversity of American opinion. They don't take easily to the official line.

And so there is a certain tension always between the mentally free-wheeling and, frankly, irresponsible USIS officer (irresponsible in the sense of not being responsible for the formulation of policy) and the State officer, who is responsible for the implementation of policy, and contributes to its formulation, and is, in a sense, always an official spokesman for the U.S. to the government to which he or she is accredited.

Now that exaggerates the situation quite a bit, but it is a description of a chasm that exists between the two, which makes the relationship very uneasy and leads to some mutual disrespect, I think, again, to the detriment of both.

In any event, I was in USIA, and I set about doing what I had been asked to do. As it began to be implemented, I got the most astonishing responses from people, many enthusiastic.

Public affairs officers came into my office and asked for this, that, and the other in the country plan.

And I said, "It shall be provided."

But others came in and said, "Well, I didn't ask for this, but I want it."

And I said, "Tough shit. You had your shot. You can revise your plan in six months, but in the meantime, we've gone into production on the basis of..."

"You mean I'm going to get what I asked for, and I'm not going to get anything else?"

I said, "Yes, that's what the plan is about."

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So there was, I thought, an air of pretense, self-congratulation, and perhaps exaggeration on the part of USIA officers about how rigorous they were as managers. They certainly didn't take the country-plan process terribly seriously.

I should mention one other cultural difference, which was very striking and quite difficult for me to adjust to. At State, I had worked on the China Desk and in other contexts where there was a 12- to 14-hour day. When you went home, you were never sure if you were going to have to go back, and you were constantly working under tight deadlines. When I went to USIA, I suddenly found that if I stood in the doorway at quitting time, I would be trampled by my staff, who rushed out the door. By 5:45 or so in the evening, I'd be all alone in the office. It was very difficult for me to adjust to a more abbreviated, leisurely work style; much more a sort of Civil-Service type of work style than that at State. I think USIS officers also react the same way when they come back from overseas, where they have a day that is in the office, but then in the evening are usually involved with activities of one sort or another. When they find themselves in an organization where, frankly, the workload is not what it is overseas, they also have withdrawal symptoms.

In any event, by the fall of '78, the system that I'd put in was up and running.

And then China normalization happened. December 15, 1978, Jimmy Carter and Hua Guofeng announced the impending normalization of U.S.-China relations and the corresponding abnormalization of relations between Washington and Taipei, and Deng Xiaoping's visit. There was a working group established immediately by Secretary Vance at the State Department. And I got a call asking me if I would please come back to the State Department, to be on that working group. I think Vance may have personally called John Reinhardt. In any event, I was released, and on December 16, which was a Saturday, I reported for duty at the China working group.

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Q: Before we leave USIA, could you give me an example of, let's say, South Africa. How would a South African program be tailored that would be away from what had been the normal sort of blanket mailings and things?

FREEMAN: The difference, in a sense, would not be all that great, except that the Public Affairs officer in South Africa would have the ability to look at, let's say, affirmative action programs in the United States and ask for articles or speakers on such a subject.

Q: We're talking about a period when South Africa had strong apartheid going on.

FREEMAN: Yes. Or he or she might ask for a speaker on U.S. naval strategy, to debunk the widespread thesis that somehow Simonstown and the Cape were a major factor in U.S. strategy (which they weren't, but that was an article of faith for white South Africans). So he or she would have the ability to look at the local scene and determine what was necessary, rather than accepting a speaker on U.S. global strategy who was not going to address something of particular interest to South Africans, or having a speaker on the U.S. civil-rights struggle, when that was not the issue in South Africa but something quite different, where different elements of the U.S. experience were more relevant.

Of course, after my departure, this system was first mellowed, and then, with Allen Carter's departure, reversed, by the bureaucracy. But it was potentially a system that allowed the man on the ground to call in air strikes on specific targets, rather than to be carpet-bombed with information by Washington.

I mentioned the dismay of some PAOs who found that they would not get things that they hadn't asked for. One of them, the worst one I recall, was someone from a West African country (which I will not name, although I remember the name of it) who wanted a film on what he called "penis interrogatoris," which was some sort of deformation, in the form of a curve, in the male genitals. This was apparently a condition that the president of that country suffered from, and he wished to have films on plastic surgery for fixing this

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condition. This was not something that we had anticipated or were particularly prepared to respond to, so I referred him to the CIA.

Q: Back to the normalization of relations. Any layman knew that the shoe was going to drop at some time. Had you and your fellow colleagues who dealt with China sort of looked at this guy Carter and figured out he was the guy who was going to do it? How did this hit you?

FREEMAN: As I mentioned, in the spring of '78, I had written an article that argued that, without adequate public preparation, normalization would be very difficult and maybe impossible. This had led to a meeting between me and Dick Holbrooke, who was then assistant secretary for East Asia and Pacific affairs. I had followed the China business at some remove, not at all involved in it but obviously interested. And by the fall of '78, there were some very clear signals that things were moving, behind the scenes. But there was, as usual, great secrecy surrounding this. I made no effort to inform myself; I heard of normalization just a few days before the announcement.

At any rate, I was suddenly yanked back to State, as an interruption of my tour with USIA, which had only lasted seven or eight months. The purpose of the China working group was to prepare for Deng Xiaoping's visit, obviously, to work on what became the Taiwan Relations Act, the issues of which I had looked at earlier.

Q: This came out of your time at the law school, didn't it?

FREEMAN: The papers that I wrote at law school inspired and informed those who wrote the basic document; I did not do it. They essentially cut the Gordian knot that I had tied, by inserting a provision that said that, notwithstanding any other provision of U.S. law, Taiwan would be treated like a country even if it wasn't one, and by handling the defense treaty with a one-year termination notice and so on, which is something I had discussed as the way to do it. But it also meant that we had to have negotiations with Taiwan on the

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abnormalization of relations, the replacement of an official relationship with one that was nominally totally unofficial. And in all of these things, I was involved.

I remember I was asked in at the last minute to check the interpreting provided by both sides at Jimmy Carter's meeting with Deng Xiaoping in the White House. I went over the text of the communiqué, with the Chinese, in Mike Oxenberg's office at the NSC. He was then the senior director for East Asia.

I also worked on the language of the Taiwan Relations Act, including drafting a compromise on defense relations and security relations with Taiwan, which was slipped to Senator Kennedy, who introduced it (over the administration's somewhat insincere objections) and produced a bill that everybody, as it turned out, could live with.

Q: Usually, Congress is a burr under the administration's saddle, but sometimes it can use Congress to do what has to be done, and then say my hands are tied. Was this what happened?

FREEMAN: It was a bit of both, actually. I think the administration would have preferred to have been less forthright about the American interest in peace and security in the Taiwan area, and certainly would have preferred less definitive language on arms sales to Taiwan. But, in the end, faced with congressional demands for language that might have queered normalization, it was necessary to compromise. And I played a role in producing that compromise.

I was also in close touch with people both from the PRC and from Taiwan, and probably played a minor role in helping Taiwan to adjust psychologically and administratively to the requirements.

I was the one who drew up the list of potential names of the Taiwan organization here. In sort of a malicious joke, I did it in three columns, like the infamous American Chinese restaurant menu, and said they could have one name from column A, one from column

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B, and one from column C. In the end, they picked “The Coordination Council for North American Affairs.” The idea was to avoid any geographic reference to China or Taiwan, and to avoid the words “United States” or any implication of what they called “officiality,” a word that they invented. Elements of officiality were what they were seeking in the negotiations.

Taiwan's negotiations were run by one of the most distinguished and able diplomats I have ever had the opportunity to observe, Yang Hsi-k'un; he was, of course, castigated for achieving less than Taipei wanted. But, in my view, he came to the negotiating table with virtually no cards, and he manufactured cards. It was an extraordinarily skillful performance: on the level of rhetoric, tugging at the American heartstring; at the level of practicality, devising solutions; at the level of tactics, integrating intelligence with negotiation.

Taiwan, it turned out, had a mole in the Sit. Room at the White House. And the most infamous example of Ambassador Yang's ability to use this came one day when Roger Sullivan, who was heading the U.S. negotiating effort, was to have met, I believe at 10:30, with Yang, to present a specific proposal that Jimmy Carter had personally reviewed. There was a handwritten note from Jimmy Carter to Roger Sullivan that instructed him what to say. As it happened, that meeting was postponed by the State Department until 11:30. At eleven o'clock, Senator Dick Stone of Florida called Roger Sullivan and protested what he had just said to Yang Hsi-k'un, though, of course, he hadn't said yet. This handwritten note, in one copy, had somehow found its way from this mole in the Sit. Room directly to the Republic of China Embassy, and had been promptly acted upon in terms of invoking congressional opposition.

Q: It sounds very much like the situation we're dealing with, with Israel in the United States, where you have strong partisans, with good political credentials, who get into places and have no compunction about leaking anything to their supporters in Congress or the press. It seems comparable, doesn't it?

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FREEMAN: There certainly are some similarities. There was a strong ideological bond with Taiwan. Years of cooperation had created personal bonds of some importance. Taiwan has an intelligence service that was initially trained by the Russians, later by the Nazis, and then by us, which has its own competence, and which has worked very effectively in the United States, and which, when this crunch came, had people in the right places to do what had to be done.

I later discovered (this is jumping ahead a bit, to when I was country director for China from July of '79 to July of 1981) that my weekly written reports to Dick Holbrooke were being read in Taipei. A friend in Taipei sent me a copy of one of these highly classified reports, after urging me to tone it down, because I was sometimes quite flip. The FBI never was able to identify who it was who was providing this and getting it into Taiwan's hands.

Taiwan is comparable to the case of Israel, in the sense that the partisans of Taiwan, like the partisans of Israel, believe that they have the right to act to protect the interests of their second homeland or their much-admired foreign counterpart, and that they can exercise this judgement independently of the rest of the government, because there is a higher cause involved, whatever it might be.

But there are differences, radical differences, in operating style between the Israelis and the Taiwanese. Israel has many, many, I would say, clandestine, closet enemies in Washington, because it tends to get what it wants by the exercise of raw political power and threats.

I can remember (again jumping ahead), in Bangkok, once being approached by the Israeli ambassador. The PLO representative in Vientiane had gone to Bangkok, and this man heard about it and came trooping into my office, with his gun in his pocket (and he had good reason to be concerned about security), and demanded that I immediately do something about it. He said, "If you don't, you're going to hear from Senator Such and Such, such and such and such."

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And I said, "Well, I had planned to something about it, but you've just given me second thoughts. I don't respond well to threats. I will do what I consider right. Thank you and good day. I'll see you out the door."

You would never have that sort of blatant approach from Taiwan. Taiwan makes very few enemies and many friends, because it relies on patient cultivation of relationships, and does not overburden those relationships, except at moments of dire need. It relies on inducements, whereas the Israelis often rely on threats. This is a central difference that, in the end, I think, serves Taipei considerably better than Tel Aviv.

Q: Just one more thing. I've never dealt with the political level, but by doing these oral histories and just by observation, I would assume that if you're dealing with American-Israeli affairs at the highest level, anybody who is identified as being of Jewish origin would be somewhat suspect, fairly or unfairly, as being a potential leaker. But with the Taiwan business, obviously we don't have many Chinese Americans in the NSC at this time. Maybe at a later date it will be different. Were you able to sort of, in your own mind, say, "Oh, Sara there, she's overly sympathetic to the cause of Taipei. I'd better keep her out of the loop."?

FREEMAN: Very difficult. There has been, historically, a sense that it's better not to put ardently pro-Israeli American Jews to the test by putting them in the middle of U.S.-Israeli relations, where they will anguish over where their duty lies.

Actually, it is a mistake, I think, to believe that Israel's principal well of support in the United States is the American Jewish community, although they are certainly the most active. Fundamentalist Christians believe that God gave Israel to the Jews, and that's the end of the issue. Very often, the most committed pro-Israeli Americans are Christian fundamentalists, for this reason. So that Israel's sources of sympathy are usually, I think, religious, but are not limited to Jews.

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Taiwan's sources of sympathy are multiple, and there is, as you say, no clear identifier for these sympathizers. They may be people who have studied in Taiwan and come to have an affinity with that Chinese culture. They may be anti-Communist ideologues. They may be people who, simply out of venality, have accepted a financial relationship with Taiwan's intelligence service. Therefore, I suppose, it's much harder to impose stereotypes on people who sympathize with Taiwan than it might be with Israel.

But I should also say that one of the most interesting things about the American-Israeli relationship is the extent to which Israelis distrust American Jews, because, for example, American Jews may be identified with a political line which is that of the opposition party. Part of the reason, I was told in Israel, for the secrecy of the opening of dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) through Norway was that Israeli decision-makers were concerned that the American Jews, who do now occupy all of the positions concerned with American-Israeli positions, were pro-Likud, and would leak any information to Likud, which had been intent on sabotaging the version of the peace process favored by Mr. Rabin and Shimon Peres, the foreign minister. And so, rather than go through the United States, they felt they had to go around the United States, to avoid this complication. So that is not as simple a relationship as many people imagine.

Q: Back to your time working on the Deng Xiaoping visit. What were our concerns at the time?

FREEMAN: Among other things, it was clear that China was about to administer a lesson (actually an entire curriculum) to Vietnam, in response to Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia. Indeed, one of the motives for Deng Xiaoping's compromises with the United States on normalization was to clear the American flank before addressing the issue of Vietnamese imperialism and the occupation of Cambodia.

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At one level, I suppose, there was a malicious delight in some quarters about the prospect of the Chinese administering a drubbing to the Vietnamese, which they did, though at a huge cost to themselves.

On another level, there was apprehension about the implications of this sort of Chinese activism in Southeast Asia. This issue was a very ambivalent one.

There was considerable concern about the prospects for U.S.-China relations, in terms of congressional shenanigans on Taiwan, which centered on the Taiwan Relations Act.

There was a lawsuit, by Barry Goldwater and others, to set aside the president's termination notice for the mutual defense treaty with the Republic of China, and to claim that the Senate, having consented to the making of the treaty, had to consent to its unmaking. That ultimately produced a Supreme Court decision that reaffirmed the president's power.

There was the Jackson-Vanik freedom of immigration issue to address. Indeed, Deng Xiaoping, as has been widely reported, did say to Jimmy Carter at one point, when he mentioned freedom of immigration, "I'd like you to speak with Senator Jackson and ask him how many Chinese he would like for the State of Washington. Ten million? I can give him that many tomorrow." And that rather disposed of that issue, which, of course, had been generated by concerns over Soviet Jewry, rather than over Chinese immigration.

There was a mad scramble to get a series of basic framework-setting agreements for cultural exchange and other things in place.

We had to do an enormous amount of administrative work to upgrade the embassy.

There was the issue of who the ambassador was going to be, although it was fairly much a foregone conclusion that Leonard Woodcock, having been the liaison office chief, would be the first ambassador, as indeed happened.

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It was an extraordinarily busy and complex time, without even mentioning the corresponding negotiations with Taiwan, to which I referred.

At any rate, this work on the China working group was essentially completed by the middle of February 1979. I was preparing to return to USIA, when I got a call from the under secretary for management, Ben Read, asking me if I would come see him. And I did. He said that there was a terrible management problem in refugee affairs. At that time, we faced a terrible crisis of Vietnamese boat people, and first asylum in the Southeast Asian countries, and African refugee flows, and Afghan refugee flows, already, although the Soviet invasion didn't occur until the end of '79. This matter was under the control of Pat Derian, Hodding Carter's wife, who was the assistant secretary for human rights and humanitarian affairs. She had already, five times, been in violation of the Anti-deficiency Act, which is a provision of law that says you can't write Treasury checks in excess of appropriations. In other words, you can't bounce checks on the U.S. government. Mr. Read said that this all needed to be reformed and straightened out. And he asked would I please head a working group to do this, and to prepare for the establishment of the position of United States coordinator for refugee affairs, who would have broad oversight over the function, and also design a reorganization of the manner in which it was conducted.

And I said, "You've got to be out of your mind. I don't want to have anything to do with that," because I could see that it would be a totally thankless and extremely difficult job, involving alienating the Bureau of Consular Affairs; obviously Human Rights Affairs; probably International Organization Affairs, which had UNRRA, the Palestinian relief organization; the various geographic desks; the Bureau of Administration; the under secretary for management's office, not to mention Health and Human Services, various state governments, and so forth. So I said, "I really don't want to do it."

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Well, I went away, and I got another call from him. And he said, "I've talked to the secretary, and he really wants you to do it."

And I said, "Well, he'll have to call me himself and tell me that's he's drafting me for this. I will have to speak with him, because there are some guidelines I need if I'm going to do this."

So Secretary Vance did call me, and I did speak to him. And he said, "I want you to solve this problem, but I don't want Pat Derian on my case."

So I said, "Yes, sir."

And I went back to the Ops Center and started figuring out what had to be done.

Q: Can we stop here for a minute. I keep going back, but I don't like to leave things unplugged. When we were preparing to have the Chinese vice premier, Deng Xiaoping, how did we view his position within China at that time, from your point of view, and what were we trying to do? Was this a pure bread-and-butter type visit, or did we have things that we wanted? And a little about the interface with the White House, which always wants to get somebody down on the peanut farm, or the LBJ ranch. What were you after?

FREEMAN: This was Deng Xiaoping's third coming. He had, at the age of 23, been secretary general of the Chinese Communist Party. He had been purged for anti-Soviet sentiment. He was purged a second time, during the Cultural Revolution, for anti-ideological sentiment, for pragmatism. He had arisen again, and he seemed to be in an increasingly unchallenged position. There had been, in 1978, a plenum of the Communist Party that basically embraced his aspirations for reform of the economy and an opening up of China.

I suppose the White House, in looking at this, had several considerations.

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In terms of foreign policy, wanting to consolidate the China relationship and give it some momentum, thereby increasing leverage on the Soviet Union and on others, such as Vietnam, to whose activities, both internal and in Indochina, we strongly objected.

There was, as always, some aspiration by the administration for the business opportunities that a normal relationship with China, especially a China that was opening its doors, might bring.

In domestic terms, Deng Xiaoping's visit was seen by the administration as something that could turn the atmosphere, excitingly, in the direction of a favorable American view of relations with China. Indeed, it did, and it was a remarkably successful visit in those terms.

There was a desire for direct communication between the de facto leader of China and our own president on many issues, ranging from those that I mentioned, the broad global strategic picture, to regional issues in Southeast Asia and South Asia. And there was a very good dialogue.

But it was an opener, an ice breaker, and that was the purpose of it.

Q: What was the situation, as he was coming and you were doing this preparation, between China and Vietnam? From your observation, had we seen how things were developing? At one time, they were as close as lips and teeth. We always saw Vietnam and China as being part of one big Communist conspiracy. When were we seeing the real split and the war that went on there? How did that develop?

FREEMAN: It really developed over the course of 1978. The relationship between China and Vietnam was always a great deal more complex and nuanced than what we perceived.

I might say a couple of things about that.

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First, it is an article of faith for many American specialists on Vietnam that the Chinese played a minor role in the war. On one level, that's correct; on another, it isn't.

For example, I have spoken with Chinese generals, including one who was present in Da Nang when the Marines landed in 1965, and watched the battle with the Vietnamese, as an advisor. The current Chinese defense attach# in Washington, who is a very fine man indeed, went down the Ho Chi Minh Trail at about the same time. There were Chinese all over the place, intermingled with the North Vietnamese, not with the Viet Cong. There were Chinese in Cambodia. And, of course, there were Chinese defenders of the railway system in North Vietnam, and so forth. So the Chinese were strong backers of Vietnam, in terms of advice and support and providing a sort of secure rear area for the Vietnamese.

On another level, of course, there was no affection between them at all. Vietnam's main partner was the Soviet Union, not China. China and the Soviet Union were in a virtual state of war, so it was an uneasy relationship. Ideologically, the Vietnamese were Soviet-oriented, not Chinese-oriented. China had little appeal to anyone, except the Khmer Rouge, in the middle of the Cultural Revolution. The Khmer Rouge, who had a connection with the Chinese Gang of Four and who fell out of favor with China after the fall of the Gang of Four, were in a terrible relationship with the Vietnamese. I know some Chinese military men who were with the Khmer Rouge, who described firefights with Vietnamese units even back in the '60s and '70s. So this was a difficult relationship.

In the spring of '78, as events in Cambodia took their course, and as Vietnam began to become more and more threatening to Cambodia, and as the Vietnamese lock on Laos got stronger, the Chinese-Vietnamese relationship began to deteriorate substantially. And it was very clear, as I say, that, after the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, the Chinese would react. Which indeed they did, shortly after Deng Xiaoping left Washington.

That Sino-Vietnamese interaction, I think, is poorly understood. The purpose of the use of force is not to avoid casualties on your side, and not to inflict damage. It is to make

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a political point. The political point the Chinese wanted to make to Vietnam was that they could take Hanoi, if they wished. They demonstrated that. It cost them more, and it revealed more weaknesses in their armed forces, than they anticipated. Indeed, it provoked a thoroughgoing reform of the Chinese military, as those lessons were digested.

But the Vietnamese themselves, in talking about these battles, describe a level of ferocity and level of casualties on their side that was vastly greater than anything they experienced at the hands of the Americans. The political point was made.

China also learned some lessons, which were reflected in later reorganizations of the Chinese military.

It is said that that was a defeat for China. It was not, any more than China's advance into India in '62 and subsequent withdrawal was a defeat. It was a demonstration of Chinese power. And once they had demonstrated what they wanted to demonstrate, they called it off.

The Chinese, for a long time thereafter, in what we would consider to be a remarkably cynical fashion, used the Vietnamese border as the live-fire training ground for their troops. It was real live fire. They rotated entire divisions through there on a regular basis, to give their military a taste of combat. The Vietnamese obviously are a very skilled infantry, perhaps the best in the world, and they were used by China to good effect.

As I said, the point was somewhat lost, when China said it was administering a lesson to Vietnam. It was not administering one lesson, but a whole curriculum. And the basic point of the curriculum was to demonstrate to Vietnam that it could not afford a hostile relationship with China, and it could not exercise a regional imperialism in disregard of Chinese interests. And that point was made.

Q: Do you think this was understood by the China watchers, yourself included, at that time?

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FREEMAN: Oh, I believe so. I believe so.

At any rate, this issue was, in public perception, a background issue, but in official perception in Washington, it was very much a central issue during the Deng Xiaoping visit.

Q: One last question on this. I keep coming back, but while I've got you here, I'm going to milk you for everything I can. What was the impression of the people dealing with China at that time about Leonard Woodcock as ambassador? He came out of the American automobile union, almost an unlikely figure, yet automobile union people are pretty tough, and we were up against some pretty tough people in China. What was the undercurrent of feeling among the China professionals, yourself included, about Leonard Woodcock's time?

FREEMAN: Leonard Woodcock is a man of strong will and excellent, seasoned judgment, and personable. He was very much in charge, presiding over the liaison office. I think he had the respect and admiration of his staff, in part because he didn't pretend to expertise on China that he didn't and couldn't develop, not speaking Chinese and not having studied it. What he was was an excellent judge of character and a fine negotiator. He deferred on most questions, I think, to Stape Roy, who was the deputy chief of the liaison office and later DCM in the embassy. He had a very fine staff of officers, quite gifted, reporting on China, and he used them well.

I want to just make a point that is probably forgotten, but it was an obvious point at that time. Prior to Deng Xiaoping's visit to Washington, which followed normalization, no Chinese official of any senior rank had come to Washington. And the reason was that there was an embassy purporting to represent China here, and we had a semi-official relationship with Beijing, not a formal one. It was only when the Republic of China Embassy was being converted into an unofficial presence that Deng Xiaoping was able to come.

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The normalization of relations set off an avalanche of American official travel to China. And not just official travel, but travel by Cabinet members. For a period, the relationship was trip-driven. That is, it was driven by the requirement of senior officials, on both sides, but especially in the United States, to produce results from visits that they made. And this was something that, when I was country director for China, I used, I hope, skillfully, to...

Q: But these trips were mainly for people who wanted to go see the other side of the moon, weren't they?

FREEMAN: They were motivated by many factors. There was serious business to be done. There was a scramble by bureaucracies to establish relations with their Chinese opposite numbers. There were people, like Mike Blumenthal, the secretary of the treasury, who had been born in Shanghai and who wanted to go back. There was a natural curiosity. There was an element of tourism. There was prestige associated with a visit, and publicity and public prominence. And there was the possibility of achieving things — which is not the case on every trip — because the United States and China suddenly faced the requirement to establish, in short order, the sort of relationship we might have developed over decades had we had relations.

Indeed, when in 1979 I became country director for Chinese affairs (I'm again leaping ahead), one of the first things I did, with the encouragement, indeed the stimulus, of Dick Holbrooke, was to sit down and write out a five-year plan for where we wanted U.S.-China relations to be. And the basic premise was that we wanted them to be what they would have been if we had not had thirty years of their absence.

So you could go to China, and if you succeeded in producing a program of cooperation or an agreement on some area, you were pioneering and pathbreaking in a way that you couldn't very well do in any other country. Everything was new, everything was innovative and creative, and it was a very exciting period.

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But I think I've gotten ahead of myself.

Q: All right, let's change the scene quickly. Here you are, up against Pat Derian and the whole crew of Washington, trying to bring order out of the chaos that was the refugee program. Had the Mariel boatlift happened at that point?

FREEMAN: No.

Q: Anyway, it was how to deal with this refugee thing, which was something somebody had to do, and you didn't want to do it, but you were told...

FREEMAN: In the refugee area, there were then many issues. There was a series of policy issues that had been unresolved. The United States did not, at that time, adhere to the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) definition of a refugee. And we had no basic legislation on refugees. They were handled by a process of parole by the attorney general, outside the immigration framework. And that legal and policy vacuum obviously had to be filled.

So one of the first things that we set about doing was to begin the drafting of what became the Refugee Act of 1979, actually passed in 1980. So that was one thing.

The second, the Vietnamese outflow from Vietnam, reflecting the bloodbath, I suppose you would have to call it, in Indochina after the Communist takeover in South Vietnam and in Cambodia and in Laos, put a strain on us and other members of the international community that was simply intolerable. We were admitting Vietnamese at the rate of hundreds a month. Over the course of my time in Refugee Affairs, which went from February 16 (again a weekend) to early July 1979, Dick Clark, a former senator from Iowa who was nominated and later confirmed as U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs and who headed the office I created for him, I worked very hard with the others that I recruited to staff the office, and succeeded in getting the numbers of admissions up to previously unimaginable levels. In fact, by the time I left, we were admitting 14,000 Indochinese a

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month. The rate had gone up incrementally, with the president's approval, and a lot of hard bargaining by Dick Clarke.

We also had launched an international effort to deal with the crisis, which culminated in the Geneva Conference in July of '79, attended by Vice President Mondale for the United States, which established a diplomatic framework with UNHCR for dealing with all of this.

Then there was a series of management issues. How should this function, which had clearly become a fairly permanent fixture of American foreign policy and foreign operations, be handled? That issue was the one on which I probably spent the most time.

I tried to go around quietly and listen to people in all of the organizations that had bits and pieces of the refugee problem — in AID, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and others who dealt with refugee developments in International Organizations at State, the UNRRA Palestinian issue, which they had; in Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, the entire refugee picture, particularly the Indochina and African refugee pictures; the Bureau of Consular Affairs, where consular officers were drafted into dealing with refugee matters — and see if I could, in the course of questioning and cajoling over a month and a half, two months, discern any basis for a consensus on what ought to be done, and then shape that consensus so that the process of doing it would be less painful than otherwise.

The result was that I produced a reorganization plan. I discussed it, in broad terms, in advance with Pat Derian, who I think was exasperated and frustrated and aware that she was over her head. Essentially, I placed a series of shaped charges around the bureaucracy, and took the document proposing an organization up for approval to Ben Read, who had been deputed by Cyrus Vance. Cyrus Vance had given Warren Christopher, the deputy secretary of state, the principal responsibility, in part, I think, because he found it difficult to deal with Ms. Derian. In the morning, Pat Derian had several hundred people working for her and a couple of billion dollars' worth of budget, and in the afternoon, she had fifteen people and a several-hundred-thousand-dollar budget.

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Everything snapped together. The shaped charges went off, and two new organizations were established.

One was the Office of the United States Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, which was in the secretary's suite as S/R, with Dick Clark as ambassador-at-large for refugee affairs, having an oversight role over HHS and the welfare agencies, the Social Security Administration and others, who were dealing with refugee affairs, and over INS. I had responsibility for coordinating a coherent policy, focused mainly on the passage of the Refugee Act of '79, and involving a painful process of negotiating a mandate for Dick Clark with the White House, which, of course, immediately confronted bureaucratic resistance to having anybody not in the White House, but rather at State, have this kind of oversight role vis-à-vis very powerful domestic departments and agencies.

Within the Department of State, in addition to creating this office, I created the Bureau of Refugee Programs. The concept that I had, which I think worked rather well, was that the focus of the Bureau of Refugee Programs should be on planning, budgeting, and administration. And that, while it was difficult to plan and anticipate refugee flows, it was not entirely impossible, and that we could engage in planning for emergencies. And indeed we did a great deal of planning, which, of course, in the way of the bureaucracy, as personnel turnover occurred, might have been, but was not, applied to the Cuban refugee crisis.

Q: That's the Mariel crisis.

FREEMAN: Yes. We had anticipated the arrival of a very large boat, with tens of thousands of Vietnamese refugees, at Guam, which would have posed many of the same challenges that the arrival of the Cubans in south Florida did.

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In any event, to my knowledge, the Bureau of Refugee Programs did succeed in regularizing the budget and administration of this vast program, recruiting officers to do refugee work without burdening consular officers per se. And I felt rather good about it.

But I had had a condition when I talked to Cyrus Vance. I said, "If I can do all this by the summer, and if it is the case that Dick Holbrooke wants me as country director in China, I would like to be released from Refugee Affairs to do what I really want to do, which is to work on China." That condition had been agreed to. I don't think anybody thought I could do it in the brief time that I had, and I certainly doubted it. But I busted a gut, and I managed to get it done.

I think it was probably best for everyone that I left, because the anger, to the extent there was any, and there was some, despite my efforts to do this in the least injurious fashion possible, was focused on me. And when I left, a lot of it went with me.

Q: It's easy to blame the son of a bitch who's in somebody else's office.

FREEMAN: Exactly.

Q: Just a couple of questions about this. Talking about denuding Pat Derian of power. She was very much a loose cannon in the foreign-affairs field, but, like a loose cannon, a very powerful person. She had a constituency; she had close ties to the president in human rights. But she'd been burned because of the problem of money. How did you deal with her? How was this accepted? How did this come about?

FREEMAN: I think she came to realize that she was not a manager, and her failings were not failings in the area that she cared the most about, which was policy, where she did have a powerful voice, often exercised, I think, in unfortunate ways.

Q: But she was very influential.

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FREEMAN: But she was accepting. I managed to talk her into thinking that this was very much in her interest. Perhaps she would have come to that conclusion anyway. But one of the keys to the success of this reorganization was eliminating her opposition, which I did, basically through a series of lunches and discussions.

The primary resistance from within her office came from her executive officer (I think his name was Carter), who relished the power, but also had clearly failed to exercise it responsibly. He was the principal opponent. I tried to work with him and found it difficult, and so, basically, I outflanked him.

In any event, I don't think there was a great deal of rancor. I think, by the time I had done the consensus-building I tried to do, there was in fact some sort of general agreement that this function badly needed to be the subject of major surgery. I played Dr. Frankenstein constructing a new creature out of the pieces.

As I say, I think the Bureau of Refugee Programs has in fact proven to be a competent and valuable organization.

Now there was one thing that was strange. In my naivete, I should have... I conceived of the Office of the United States Coordinator for Refugee Affairs and the position of ambassador-at-large for refugee affairs as temporary. I saw these as institutionalizing the policy and the framework of consultation between those who actually carried it out, and then disappearing, so that the assistant secretary for refugee programs (initially the director, but made an assistant secretary by the Refugee Act) would become the senior person responsible within the Department of State for the coordination of this, at least the foreign-affairs aspect of it.

However, once you have created a Schedule C political-plum position, it is very hard to get rid of it. Dick Clark later, I think in frustration, left, and was succeeded by a number of other people in this job, which only disappeared fairly recently.

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Q: Dick Clark was relatively a moderate, wasn't he, within the political spectrum?

FREEMAN: Dick Clark was a very active liberal, whose principal mark on foreign policy had been the curtailment of the U.S. assistance to Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi in their opposition to the Communist political movement in Angola, which then became the ruling regime after Cuban intervention occurred. And he was very proud of having untangled us from that. Frankly, I didn't admire that particular American withdrawal. But he had had a number of other major achievements in the humanitarian area. He was very much on the American left, associated with McGovern and others, and somewhat uncomfortable with the odd political philosophies of the Carter White House.

Q: I misspoke, then, he was not a moderate. When you appoint a former senator, you're trying to co-opt the Senate establishment, to help you get the refugee law. Did Clark bring or detract from getting the Refugee Act?

FREEMAN: I think he brought a great deal. He did bring, as you say, congressional connections and credibility. He brought credibility as someone concerned about international humanitarian issues; genuinely, sincerely committed to the alleviation of human suffering. He brought experience in public affairs and a sort of credibility and name recognition with very angry state officials who were dealing with the consequences of the influx. He, however, was much more interested in his ambassador-at-large role than he was in his domestic-coordination role, and indeed suffered some setbacks in his efforts to get a strong mandate for domestic coordination, because of the bureaucratic opposition that I mentioned. But I think he was very much the right man for the job, and I think he did well.

I should mention that, in the staff that he brought in, there was a young woman from the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency who had had a career in congressional staff positions, including the Senate Intelligence Committee, who was the principal coordinator for legislative and public affairs for Dick Clark in his office, a woman of great talent and

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drive and ability whom I admired enormously as a professional colleague, named Margaret Carpenter. Subsequently, after Saddam's war in the Gulf cost me my marriage of thirty years, as I was thinking rather negatively about women, in general, this one woman stood out in my memory. I'm now married to her, much to my delight. She is assistant administrator of AID for Asia and the Near East. So it was, on a personal level, an unexpected bonus fifteen years later when we reencountered and developed an amorous attachment, which we had not had earlier.

Q: You finally got back to where you really wanted to be. Or is China just a tar baby, and once you get into it, you can't get away from it? Or is it a narcotic?

FREEMAN: It may be, for others. For me, I think I have been driven throughout my career by some relic of my Puritan ancestors' philosophy, which says to me that those who have the capacity to be, have the duty to become, and that the significance of a life in public service is measured by the contributions one can make. Those contributions depend on when and where one is. And so, to be country director for China, with the opportunities that normalization presented, was to have an opportunity to shape a relationship of enormous strategic importance not just to the United States, but globally, and to guide it, because it was a relationship in motion that could be deflected; whereas, relations that are well established and have some inertia to them are hard to move. So, to my mind, this was an enormous opportunity to be creative and innovative, to resolve old problems and to find new opportunities. And that's very much what attracted me to it. Less China, in a way, than this aspect.

Q: Policy.

FREEMAN: The professional fulfillment that might come, and which did come.

Q: We're talking '79 to '81.

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FREEMAN: That's right. In the two years that I was there, we were on a bit of a roller coaster, by 1980, because of the election in the United States and some things that I'll mention. I either personally negotiated or oversaw the negotiation of some 36 treaties and agreements. Really, within two years, using the availability of Cabinet officers whom I recruited to travel to China and the people whom I recruited to come from China, I had overseen and helped to drive the U.S.-China relationship into something very much like what it might have been had we not had the thirty years of nonintercourse and unofficial relationships we had.

But I think that whole chapter probably should be the subject of another discussion, because it'll go on for a bit.

Q: All right, why don't we stop at this point. So we're going to pick up '79 to '81, your time on the Desk. One of the questions I want to ask, I'll put it on here only to make sure, I'd like you to talk in depth about your dealing with Richard Holbrooke and your impression of how he operated at this time.

Today is the 2nd of November, 1995. We're talking about your time in Washington. You were talking about getting deeper into a matter.

FREEMAN: In the last conversation, which was some time ago, I was beginning to talk about my time as country director for China, and you asked about Dick Holbrooke and his role.

I think I would broaden that to say that we were very fortunate during that time also to have Mike Oxenberg, now an academic, a very imaginative, enthusiastic, positive person, with a great deal of creativity, at the National Security Council staff. I was able to work very effectively with Mike.

Dick Holbrooke has the most brilliant policy mind that I have ever encountered. He is someone with enormous quickness to see the political realities of Washington and

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understand how to use those to create results. So he's a very driving personality, with acknowledged brilliance.

He has succeeded then and subsequently because of that brilliance, not because of his charm. He began his tenure, before my time, in the East Asian and Pacific region by throwing out a great number of older people and bringing in people with whom he felt more comfortable. He paid a great deal of attention to personnel. I think he created, in the end, a more dynamic bureau by doing that, but he broke a lot of rice bowls and made a lot of enemies.

And he's infuriatingly distracted always. He would often have a meeting, with two television sets going, on different channels, and while he was reading a newspaper, he would be discussing a policy issue. He has a notoriously short attention span, but somehow the sheer power of his intellect compensates for all of that.

I think he was personally very frustrated, for the first two years of the Carter administration, by his inability to move on Vietnam. In effect, he was told, and the rest of us sensed, that the guidance on Vietnam was that it was not timely to think about Vietnam and that we should refrain from doing so.

Q: At that stage, we had no relations with Vietnam.

FREEMAN: Exactly. This was the period in which, in retrospect, drift in the relationship allowed the issue of the missing in action and the suspicion that there were still prisoners of war held by the Vietnamese to achieve the strange salience it later achieved in U.S. views of Vietnam.

It was also, of course, the period in which Vietnam's misbehavior and miscalculations about the United States, its continued insistence on reparations when that was obviously inappropriate, and its actions in Cambodia paralyzed that policy.

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I think Dick Holbrooke really looked to China in part as an outlet for his creative energy, and he certainly applied it very, very effectively.

Now I was country director for China from July of 1979 to the beginning of July 1981. So my tenure was three-fourths in the Carter administration and one-fourth in the new Reagan administration.

Of course, normalization had, as I indicated, been accomplished, and it was really my task to lay down a plan, a strategic vision, of how to take advantage of that, which I did. And that was something that Dick Holbrooke encouraged.

I think it was probably best reflected in a speech that I wrote for Dick, which he gave on June 4, 1980. That speech, which he has described as the best speech he gave during his tenure as assistant secretary, I think probably is still the best single statement of a positive vision for U.S.-China relations and the future of China.

The genesis of it was this: Sometime in the spring of 1980, there was a gathering at the Woodrow Wilson Center to discuss China in the year 2000, twenty years thereafter. I joined this meeting, and I was so disgusted by the pedestrian, straight-line projections that were going on, that I went back, literally, on my motorcycle, from the meeting to the office, and I stayed up all night and wrote a paper on China in the year 2000 that laid out a very different vision, a vision that was subsequently, I must say, derided by everyone in the intelligence community. And there was a great meeting at the consulate general in Hong Kong, which at that time was still the center of China-watching, to discuss it and critique it. It was provocative.

I projected that China would grow, economically, at the rate of seven or eight percent a year, and that Chinese agriculture would grow at five percent, and I had various other projections on the economy. And I drew some conclusions from that about the nature of

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China. I also made some predictions about the political system, military posture, and so forth, all of which were derided, as I say, as wildly over-optimistic.

Well, as it happened, Chinese growth, over at least the first fifteen years of that period, averaged around ten percent, not seven, and agriculture actually grew by fifteen percent. So, if anything, I turned out to be pessimistic.

But it was symptomatic of the view of the time, which was that China was a sort of economic and political backwater that could not hope to achieve very much, that the projections I made were greeted with such disdain.

In any event, Dick Holbrooke was somewhat taken by the paper, and that paper eventually turned into the speech. I guess the occasion for the speech probably was the meeting of the U.S.-China Business Council, then called the National Council for U.S.-China Trade.

In it (in retrospect, with some prescience), he outlined the emergence, for example, of China's contribution to global environmental pollution as a looming issue. He referred obliquely to corruption, by speaking about the Chinese bureaucracy as an issue. And he looked forward in a way that didn't, of course, capture everything that happened in the Deng Xiaoping revolution, which was just beginning then, but that captured a great deal more of it, I think, than anyone else did at the time.

So he was the kind of person who inspired subordinates who were willing to take risks, whether in making predictions or outlining policy objectives, to do so.

Q: I'd like for people to get a feel for how things work. A speech by an assistant secretary for a regional bureau usually is not just somebody getting up there and making a speech. It's a policy statement.

FREEMAN: That's correct.

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Q: So you looked at this and you made your projections, saying basically China is going to loom a lot larger than most of us think. This went against the traditional straight-line projections of most other people dealing with the subject. How did Holbrooke come out with this speech as far as within the State Department, within the administration, the White House and all that?

FREEMAN: I think the speech itself had some resonance with the National Security Council staff — Oxenberg, in that time, Brzezinski. It was, of course, cleared around there. I don't believe it was cleared at the CIA, which, at that time, in the pre-Bill Casey era, was not regarded as a policy agency.

The basic points that the speech made were an extrapolation from, or consistent with, those that Vice President Mondale made in August of '79 during his visit to China, when he spoke at Beijing University. That speech, largely drafted by Mike Oxenberg, but with some input from me, was a very strong statement of an American willingness to pursue a relationship with China, which went well beyond the strategic triangle of Washington-Moscow-Beijing relations that had dominated the relationship in earlier days.

And so I think the main points that Holbrooke's speech made were that our relationship with China was not simply a function of our relations with the Soviet Union, but should be pursued on its own merits. That we didn't see our relationship with China as coming at the expense of others. That we saw a national interest in a friendly and modernizing China. That we had an interest in China's territorial integrity and security, which was important. And, finally, that we would adhere strictly to the normalization understandings we had reached with regard to Taiwan (and I'll come back to that).

There was actually a last point in addition to those, which was that we saw China as a partner in the resolution of global issues, whether they were environment, food, population, energy, and the like, and that we intended to pursue those relationships with the Chinese. That was a reference to a process that, as of 1995, is still incomplete; that is, integrating

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China into the world system of states, the international order, and doing so without disrupting arrangements that have been very congenial to the United States, which China, if left outside, could eventually challenge or overthrow.

So the basic themes were these.

Now I think none of us really recognized, on June 4, 1980, that over the course of that summer, George Bush, who was the vice presidential candidate for Ronald Reagan, would be enmeshed by Reagan in a frontal challenge to the normalization understandings, encouraged, I believe, by Jim Lilley, who was at that time principal advisor to Bush.

Ronald Reagan essentially proposed, over the course of 1980, to reverse two elements of the normalization understandings with regard to Taiwan. First, he felt that an official relationship, of some sort, should be reestablished with Taiwan. And, second, he did not agree with the formulation that the Carter administration had carefully preconcerted with the Chinese on arms sales to Taiwan.

That formulation was that the United States would continue to sell carefully selected defensive weapons to Taiwan, on a restrained basis; that is, the weapons would be defensive, they'd be carefully selected, and there would be overall restraint in the level of sales. And he objected to that.

To jump ahead a little bit, when he came into office, both issues immediately arose. The issue of official relations arose in the context of invitations to officials from Taiwan to attend his inauguration.

As country desk officer, in a situation where the Carter administration, of course, had departed and the new administration was not in place, I was the most senior official in the U.S. government dealing with China. And I really had to scramble, with Bud McFarlane's help and Al Haig's help, to persuade the Reagan White House not to, in effect, restore an official relationship with Taiwan at the inauguration.

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Subsequently, Reagan thought better of this, when he began to realize the importance of China to our overall international strategy, and specifically the things that the Chinese were doing with us with regard to Afghanistan — the collection of intelligence on the Soviet Union and the like. And he backed away from that.

But, on the arms sales issue, he persisted in his view. It found expression, over the course of the early part of 1981 and subsequently through the summer and early fall, in the so-called F-X issue, the F-X being a fighter bomber aircraft, but basically an interceptor, that the Carter administration had authorized. This would have been the first such major-weapons system produced by the United States specifically for export, rather than for acquisition by our own armed forces.

This issue was a very political one. There were two companies competing for it: Northrop, which was based in southern California, and General Dynamics, which was based in Texas. The General Dynamics aircraft was a downgraded version of the F-16. The Northrop aircraft was a newly designed aircraft, in effect, major re-engineering, based on the old F-5.

Q: Which had been our principal export fighter.

FREEMAN: Exactly. That competition was left open during the campaign, because, of course, Carter wanted to appeal to the voters of both southern California and Texas, and didn't want to alienate one or the other. And he bequeathed this decision to Ronald Reagan.

In the event, Reagan, Solomonically, decided not to tear the baby in half, and to let both of them compete, which meant, in effect, since everyone knew what the F-16 was, that General Dynamics was likely to get the business. And that, of course, is what happened. It also meant that Northrop, which had put a huge amount of money into developing the

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F-20, as they called it, their version of the F-X, was going to be in deep financial trouble if it couldn't make a sale to Taiwan. Taiwan was the key to Northrop's corporate strategy.

So there were powerful economic interests and political interests involved. The conjunction of Ronald Reagan's sympathy for Taiwan and his gut feeling that it was wrong to deprive a former ally and a friend of access to this very potent weapons system with the economic and political muscle that was behind it from Texas and California meant that he strongly favored selling this aircraft to Taiwan.

This was a clear challenge to the normalization understandings with Beijing, and ultimately, in the fall of 1981, resulted in the Chinese demanding a clarification of U.S. policy, setting off a negotiation from which, frankly, both sides lost, resulting in a joint communique# on the issue of arms sales, which was issued August 17, 1982.

At any rate, when Holbrooke gave his speech, all this was, in a sense, before us. Ronald Reagan had begun, however, to make his rumbles about Taiwan, and although he wasn't yet the nominee for the Republicans, it looked very likely that he would be. So one of the motivations for Dick giving his speech was to put a cap on and define the Carter administration's policies on China clearly, which the speech did.

Q: Brzezinski, the national security advisor at that time, was of Polish extraction and renowned for hating the Russians. Did you find that Brzezinski had the same abhorrence for the Chinese, or was this pretty much a Polish-Russian thing? Did you find that he was looking realistically and helpfully at the China relationship?

FREEMAN: Brzezinski was, as you said, viscerally anti-Russian, and his anti-Russian sentiment led him to be quite pro-Chinese. In other words, his concern about the Soviet Union was a geopolitical concern, not primarily an ideological concern. In fact, on occasion, his anti-Russian sentiment, as in his, I think, ludicrous capering at the Afghan border, firing a rifle over into the Khyber Pass and so on, was sometimes embarrassing. During his visit to China, he remarked to his Chinese hosts, when he went to the Great

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Wall, “Last one to the top gets to fight the Russians in Ethiopia.” He had a sort of schoolboy-like, almost appealing, naive enthusiasm for sticking it to the Russians. And he liked the Chinese for that reason.

I'm sure the Chinese found all this entertaining. They are a very sober-minded people, and I'm not quite sure what their reaction to Mr. Brzezinski was. On the other hand, they clearly knew that Mr. Brzezinski was a very strong supporter of the U.S.-China relationship.

During the period from '79 to '81 in which I was country director for China, there were several different currents. There was a deep current, I would say, in U.S.-China relations in which state governors, congressional delegations, business delegations and the like, and provincial delegations and business delegations and scientific delegations crossed the Pacific between China and the United States and began to really build a deep and cooperative relationship, and to explore the potential for trade and investment, although investment was not yet really possible directly, and for cooperation on science and technology and the like.

Many of the agreements that were negotiated during this period, and subsequently, came under the heading of science and technology cooperation. I'm now talking about a second current, if you will; that is, knitting the two bureaucracies together, the bureaucracies in Beijing and in Washington. They had two motives. One, the Chinese record and Chinese achievement in some areas provided unique data and insight.

For example, in the area of astronomy, Chinese records are the longest and most complete on astronomical events. And access to these records was very important to astronomers and physicists studying interstellar events.

If you look at the public-health area, there are records in China of very large populations that have been subjected to consistent environmental stress (for example, elements in the

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drinking supply), which allow you to study the impact of the environment on the human body in a way that can't be done easily elsewhere.

Chinese geology is vastly interesting.

Zoology. The Department of Agriculture had, in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, essentially created the U.S. ornamental plant and nursery business with plant stock collected in China. Much of the rhododendron and azalea stock, and many, many other things that we now take for granted, was originally collected by USDA employees in China. They were very eager to get back into such a relationship. The payoff was potentially enormous.

For example, I remember one of the reasons for seeking cooperation in this area was that the Chinese sow, although very fat, which is not desirable, has a litter of a dozen piglets. Whereas the American sow, which tends to be lean, has a litter of six to eight piglets. Well, if you could breed the two and collect the germ plasm from China and introduce it here and produce a larger litter of lean piglets, you could instantly make a hell of a lot of money for American farmers.

Soybeans originated in China, and many strains were of interest. And so on.

So there was real scientific interest.

But I have to say that, politically, the motivation for doing all this was very clear, and that is that those of us charged with promoting U.S.-China relations wished to ensure that the relationship was sufficiently broad and engaged a sufficient number of bureaucracies and special interests on both sides so that it would be insulated, to some extent, from political cross currents. So that was what we were doing.

Finally, as I mentioned earlier, to a great extent, the relationship during this period was trip-driven, meaning that the travel of high-level officials from either side has a tendency

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to concentrate the mind of the bureaucracy, and to lead to instructions from the top that appropriate achievements be produced for the visit to consummate. So, trip-driven diplomacy accelerated the negotiation of framework agreements and the like.

This process continued until the Taiwan arms sale controversy arose in 1981 and derailed it temporarily. It resumed, at a slower pace, later.

Q: Were there any trips of particular note, either way, that you can think of? Every time you have one of these trips of a major personage, things go right, things go wrong. As you say, it concentrates minds and also events.

FREEMAN: There were so many that it's hard to single out any in particular. I suppose I remember most vividly a visit by the first delegation from the Peoples' Liberation Army. Being new to military matters at that time, I was pleasantly surprised, indeed astonished, to discover that, through reminiscence about old battlefields on which people had faced each other, veterans of the Korean War on both sides found they had something in common, and that this common experience quickly established camaraderie, rather than reinforced ancient enmity.

Q: It happens every time.

FREEMAN: I gather. But also by the extent to which intelligent discussion focused largely on the Afghan issue, which appeared to both China and the United States to threaten a general Soviet advance.

Q: We're talking about the December 1979 attempted takeover of Afghanistan by the Soviets.

FREEMAN: The Christmas coup and occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. And the threat that this posed to Iran was of particular concern.

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In fact, the Holbrooke speech of June 1980 had foreshadowed the fact that the U.S.-China relationship could expand to meet challenges to common interests. It held out an implication that indeed the relationship could move beyond friendship into what Holbrooke called alliance (what I would think you'd more accurately call coalition), namely, that if there were a frontal assault on our common interests, such a relationship could expand rapidly. And that was referring to Afghanistan.

Q: You're sitting there, you've obviously got your antennae out, how did the Chinese respond initially, and then subsequently, to the Afghan coup and invasion?

FREEMAN: Their initial reaction, rather similar to ours, was quite panicked, for several reasons, I suppose. China and the United States have long shared a relationship of alliance, or at least patronage, with regard to Pakistan. In the case of the United States, that relationship's been quite erratic and had its good and bad moments. In the case of the Chinese, it's been very steady. And the Afghan invasion was an obvious threat, immediately, to Pakistan, to its territorial integrity, stability, and perhaps to its very existence, especially given the Indian-Soviet collusion on many matters. So I think the initial reaction was one of very great concern.

But the Chinese, rather quickly, I think, within a matter of a month or two, concluded that in fact the Soviets were more likely to become bogged down and regret their Afghan adventure than to use it as a springboard for further advance.

Indeed, U.S.-China cooperation, conducted primarily through intelligence channels, with money from many sources, was absolutely central to creating the mujahideen resistance to the Soviet invasion. And that program cemented relationships between the United States and China in yet another dimension.

Q: The great crisis of the Carter administration was the overthrow of the shah, the Iranian Revolution, particularly the seizing of our embassy and the hostages, who stayed there for

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444 days. We were seeking support everywhere, to do something about this. Did we find that there was a China card?

FREEMAN: No, there was no China card, really, for the simple reason that the Chinese, like the United States, had earlier embraced the shah as the gendarme of the Gulf, and looked to Iran as the principal bulwark for stability to the south of the Soviet Union and to the north of India. Therefore, they had exactly the same sort of relationship with the overthrown regime, although on a lesser scale, that we had had.

Second, I suppose, there was no natural affinity between the religious radicalism of Khomeini and Chinese secularism and agnosticism or official atheism, although, I must say, the Chinese noted eerie resemblances between their Cultural Revolution and the chaos that descended upon Iran, which tended to make them quite disdainful of Iran as a society, which, as they had done earlier, was going through a sort of nervous breakdown.

So they were not able to be particularly helpful. I think they would have been, had they been able to be. Of course, one of the things that happened in the Cultural Revolution was that they had their own instances of sacking of embassies and besieging foreign-government establishments, which should have been entitled to protection by the government.

Q: The Boxer Rebellion.

FREEMAN: The Boxer Rebellion, at the beginning of the century, but during the Cultural Revolution, the sacking of the British Embassy in particular comes to mind. There were other instances.

I think, in fact, the two matters — the Chinese experience with their xenophobia and the Iranian lapse into xenophobia — are related in terms of psychological reactions to colonialism and the humiliation of proud non-western civilizations by the period of western ascendancy. But this is not the time to go into that.

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Q: Going back to the Holbrooke speech. When there's a speech, essentially you write it, Holbrooke plays with it. Did it get passed around?

FREEMAN: He did something that I didn't at all expect him to do, and never would have done myself, and would have recommended against, and that is, he actually showed the speech in advance to the Chinese Embassy here, which, of course, had to object to the language on Taiwan, which was balanced language, saying, on the one hand, we would adhere to our understandings on normalization, but on the other hand, we would continue to insist on a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue. It referred, of course, to the Taiwan Relations Act, which the Chinese had found to go well beyond what they had expected, in terms of authorizing the unofficial relationship with the people of Taiwan.

So that is the only element of clearance difficulty that I recall. I don't think he was trying to clear the speech with the Chinese, but I think he was trying to gauge their reaction to what was a rather more comprehensive and forward-looking statement than any that had previously been made.

Q: Obviously, the Chinese would be happy with the rosy predictions of their economic future. But on the Taiwan business, after they objected, what happened? Did they come to you and say no, no, no?

FREEMAN: They just sort of made a stink. Holbrooke's motivation for doing it, I believe, was in part to ingratiate himself with the Chinese. And, of course, it had precisely the opposite effect.

Q: It doesn't work.

FREEMAN: That sort of technique does not work, so that was, I think, naive on his part. But I think in part he was proud of the speech and wanted to trumpet it and make sure

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that it got attention in China. That part of it, I think, might have been handled in a slightly different way.

Q: Not just in your speech, but before, you sat down and asked yourself whither China. And you were moving away from the straight-line projection of China's like this and it will grow at a certain rate and everything will sort of remain static, which is very easy to do, rather than to see major changes. How did you see China, as you were looking at it back in 1979 to '81, politically?

FREEMAN: China, in that period, had just emerged from the combined ravages of the Cultural Revolution and the Gang of Four. I believed that what was likely to happen was the continuation of an autocratic system of government over the twenty years forward. I did not believe that there would be a frontal challenge, on the national level, to the control of the Communist Party, but I predicted, as I recall, that there might well be local disturbances, including some in Beijing, which would be brutally repressed.

I thought that, in effect, China was beginning to recapitulate the East Asian model of development, in which autocratic government liberalizes economics, economics booms, and political reform follows, with a significant lag, behind economic reform. I think probably that thesis, which was central to my paper, was what was least acceptable about it, in the context of the time.

And I continue to believe that is exactly what has been happening in China. If you look at, particularly, economics and growth rates, and compound them over a sufficient period of time, you begin to get results that are very startling to people and that they don't want to accept.

Q: You're talking about a quarter of the population of the globe.

FREEMAN: Exactly.

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In the military area, as it turned out, I was wrong in some respects, because I imagined the continuation of Sino-Soviet rivalry over this period. Of course, the Soviet Union collapsed halfway through it.

Q: You're talking about particularly '89ish.

FREEMAN: Yes. I thought that, by the end of the '90s, the Chinese would have deployed submarine-launch ballistic missiles (SLBM) in the eastern Mediterranean and the northern Indian Ocean. If you have an intermediate-range SLBM, there are two areas from which you can successfully launch on European Russia: one is the Arctic, which I thought was a bit far away from the Chinese, and the other is the Mediterranean. And I had noticed a pattern of Chinese assistance in port development and the like that appeared to be designed to meet the requirements of operations in the Mediterranean. To operate in the Mediterranean, you need one base outside and one inside. And it was clear that the Chinese, in Mauritania and in Malta, and in their relationship with the Egyptians, in the submarine area, were covering their bets for such a venture.

Submarines are vastly expensive, and in the end, as the Soviet Union collapsed, I think the Chinese abandoned this plan, if they ever had it. I don't think we'll ever know whether my speculation was correct and simply overcome by history, or whether it was just wrong from the beginning.

Q: There are two trends in China: one is centralized government, which you have, the other is a breakdown, when it gets too big, into warlordism and all. As you looked at it, again going back to the time, how did you see this other trend?

FREEMAN: I did not believe then, and I do not believe now, that China is in danger of breakup, or that the military, which is a strong, centralized, national institution, would develop warlordism. I think we know a lot more now about China than we did in 1980, because it's a vastly more open country. And what we now understand is that China was

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never anywhere near as centralized as many imagined, and that provincial governments always had a fair amount of latitude within the general guidance of the center. Deng Xiaoping's revolution enhanced that flexibility for provincial governments, and economic growth has buttressed their authority.

But there is still, after the past 150 years of tortured Chinese history, a strong sense among Chinese that the country cannot be allowed to fall apart, that unity is all important, and that the maintenance of social and political order has to take priority over virtually everything else. The Chinese have this conclusion because, literally, over this period, something on the order of one hundred million of them have died in disorders either caused internally or by foreign invasion.

So I believed that these psychological and political factors would outweigh others, and I continue to believe that.

I think Tiananmen is a perfect example...

Q: We're talking about the shooting of students in Tiananmen Square. This was when?

FREEMAN: June 4, 1989. I think that is a perfect example of the sort of local disturbance, albeit in the national capital, to which I was referring. The only thing that surprised me about it was that the government did not move quicker to put this down. And I wish, in retrospect, that they had, because the loss of life would have been far less if they had been more resolute early on, rather than allowing the students to, in effect, get out of control and pose a direct challenge to their authority.

Q: Again going back to this '79 to '81 period, did Tibet raise any political problems? We're talking about the Chinese takeover, as many people feel, of Tibet. And this has become sort of a cause.

FREEMAN: Not really.

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The background on Tibet, as you know, is that, in the 1950s, the CIA spent a vast amount of money to produce a rebellion in Tibet. And that rebellion was the precipitate cause of the Dalai Lama's flight over the border to India. That is, we attempted, as part of our general policy of destabilizing China, to destabilize Tibet and, if possible, detach it from China.

I think we were all very sensitive, in the 1980s, as perhaps people are not now, to the way in which American maneuvers on Tibet might be viewed in Beijing, given this history, which the Chinese are well aware of, even if Americans have forgotten it. So Tibet and the Dalai Lama loomed as an issue in the realm of religious freedom, but it was not a political issue.

Subsequently, the issue of Tibet has been embraced by quite a range of people in the United States: some are simply drawn to exotic cultures and favor primitive peoples out of some sentimental impulse; others, for one reason or another, as the United States has become more anti-scientific, are more drawn to mysticism. There is a significant portion of the American public now that is avowedly dedicated to what is, in my view, superstition and mystical malarkey, and Tibetan Buddhism is about as mystical a malarkey as you can find.

Q: What are sometimes known as the New Age people.

FREEMAN: Exactly. So there is a natural affinity between Tibetan Buddhists and this segment of American opinion.

There is, of course, in the post-Soviet-collapse era, a sense that, well, if the Soviet Union broke up and various nationalities that had been incorporated into the Russian Empire flew out of it, why shouldn't Tibet do the same?

I think this is a cause of considerable friction now between the United States and China, because every Chinese, whether he is a dissident who participated in the events in

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Tiananmen Square in 1989 and is in jail or has been in jail, or whether he is a high official of the government, agrees that Tibet is and always has been and always will be part of China. There is absolutely no sympathy for separatism, or any willingness to tolerate it. Therefore, gestures that, in terms of American politics, seem innocent and noble and perhaps are seen as free shots in the political arena, like congressional resolutions proposing the recognition of Tibet and independence and the sending of an ambassador there, are seen by the Chinese (and technically they're correct) as justifying a declaration of war in response, since the initiatives proposed to sever a portion of the country from central control, and promote rebellion and secession. Well, of course, Americans don't see that, and therefore are somewhat puzzled by the strength of the Chinese reaction to all this.

Finally, I think Tibet is a very different issue from what is often presented here. It is not so far the case, as is often charged, that China is deliberately populating Tibet with Han Chinese. To the extent there is economic opportunity in Tibet (and that is not a wide extent), Chinese who want to make money will and do move there. But most Chinese with whom I've spoken, who've lived in Tibet or been there, find it an exotic, but very harsh, environment. It's a nice place to visit, but they don't want to live there.

The Tibetan population is quite distinct, quite resentful of Han economic and political dominance, very much devoted to the Dalai Lama, and chafing under Chinese rule. All that is true. But it is also true that Tibetan culture was a primitive and remarkably unsuccessful culture, in terms of producing a decent lifespan or state of public health or economic opportunity or engagement with the outside world by Tibetans. And Tibetan association in the broader Chinese family has brought the Tibetan people all of those benefits. There is some sort of tradeoff, I suppose. Tibet is not viable as an independent country in the modern era. It is viable as an independent country only if it is prepared to live at medieval standards of living, which I don't believe anyone is.

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So it's a complex situation. And because Tibet is so far away from the United States, it's a blank screen on which you can project your own mystical fantasies with great ease.

I think we were better served when we dealt, as we did in the '80s, with that issue with some caution and some sense of the inflammatory potential that appearing to sponsor secession by a part of China from China might have.

Q: We're going through a sort of Republican revolution in Congress now. Tibet is one of those things that is very visceral; anything that's anti-Communist sounds good, and this sometimes comes up.

FREEMAN: Generally speaking, countries, including the United States, are well advised not to sponsor causes that are hopeless. Tibetan independence can only succeed if there is massive foreign intervention. In other words, a war with China. And I don't see the United States or the American people being willing to make that sort of sacrifice for that cause.

Q: I was a Balkan hand, and I must say, Bosnia was a hopeless cause. And we're still dealing with it.

FREEMAN: And we have not yet, to this date, been willing to commit our blood for that cause, much as we may sympathize with it.

Q: Again going back to this early period, we now have established diplomatic relations with China. Could you talk a bit about your relations with the Chinese officials who came over, because I would imagine that, speaking Chinese and all, you would be somebody whom they could turn to, to say, What is all this about so and so — the press, the Congress, the presidency, the academic world. I would have thought they would look to someone to give them some ideas of the importance, how people react in the United States. Did you find yourself in that position?

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FREEMAN: In fact, I did. And I think it was assisted by the fact that, as the Deng Xiaoping miracle began in China, many officials who had been incarcerated or rusticated in the earlier regime were brought back, and while they were, of course, extraordinarily cautious in their contacts with foreigners, including Chinese-speaking foreigners, for the first time, they could begin to engage on a truly personal level. And I began to find that friendships were forming between myself and people who later became quite senior in the Chinese establishment. I mean, by friendships, personal relationships that went beyond the official friendship that diplomats always have to espouse.

One of the things that I was trying to do was to strengthen and broaden strategic dialogue between the United States and China on a variety of important regional issues, some of them remote from Asia, on the grounds that it was important for the Chinese not to misunderstand what the United States was doing, as they had tended to do in the past. That, conversely, we needed to be able to influence the Chinese in the direction of policies that were at least not contradictory to, and hopefully, in fact, were tacitly supportive of our policies. So we began quite a range of dialogue. And this brought experts on a variety of areas remote from East Asia to Washington, or it took us to Beijing, to discuss this with them. Certainly, the broadening of contact between us I participated in.

We had some very difficult negotiations during this period, the civil aviation agreement perhaps one of the most difficult, because we insisted, correctly, on maintaining our air links to Taipei. After all, the arrangements that we had agreed to with the PRC for post-normalization relations with Taiwan included economic ties, and aviation is a principal such tie. But the Chinese regarded, at that time, aviation as a state activity, and the state airline (a miserable excuse for an airline), CAAC (Civil Aviation Administration of China), wanted to come to the United States. They saw Pan Am as a sort of functional equivalent of the official U.S. airline. Of course, we were in the process of beginning the deregulation of airlines. We saw the promotion of air links as a legitimate state activity, but we saw their actual management as a private one.

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In any event, eventually we were able to reach an agreement with the Chinese. We reached a parallel understanding with Taiwan, through the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), and we were able to inaugurate air service. This was, however, as I say, one of the many rather contentious, difficult negotiations.

There was a series of other issues that began to emerge during this time. For example, the longstanding issue of financial and property claims resulting from Chinese confiscation of property, or the repudiation by earlier regimes, including the Sun Yat-sen 1911 Revolution, of ancient railway bonds and the like. And I later had to deal with these issues in Beijing.

Finally, this was a tumultuous period on another level, because Taipei was obviously highly dissatisfied with a circumstance in which the only relationship it enjoyed with the United States was unofficial. Earlier, Taipei had enjoyed a privileged, official relationship with Washington. So the unofficial representatives of Taiwan throughout the country, and their many, many offices, were constantly engaging in petty moves to demonstrate the officiality, as they put it, of the relationship. This would include arranging with local officials to fly the flag of the Republic of China over the mayor's office, or, in some cases, to acquire consular license plates from the local officials, since there's no federal regulation of this, or to list themselves, as they did in many telephone books, including in Washington, as the Embassy of the Republic of China. They took out ads in the Yellow Pages, portraying themselves as an embassy, and stressing that they were the Republic of China and so on. All of this entirely understandable from their perspective, but enormously irritating to the State Department and to the PRC, as they were endlessly ingenious in the way in which they sought to score these political points.

Q: I've talked to Nat Bellocchi, who is with the American Institute in Taiwan, who said that the Nationalist Chinese, a Taiwan group, are remarkably adept at networking in the United States. They have developed contacts not just within the Chinese community, but all over, as opposed to the PRC group, who tend to be more dour and more unto themselves.

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FREEMAN: I think that that's absolutely correct. I might speak for a minute about that, because it was very striking in 1980 what the consequences of this were. That is, it's now 1995, and Taiwan now has forty, fifty years of experience lobbying in the United States. If you remember, in the 1950s, there was the Committee of One Million, which was a right-wing, Chiang Kai-shek operation. As time went on, Taipei got increasingly sophisticated about lobbying, publicity, public relations, and the courtship of interest groups.

I remember, in 1980, U.S. trade with the Chinese Mainland was booming. In fact, in that year, the Chinese were buying one out of every seven bales of cotton produced in the United States, and had emerged as a major factor in some key American economic sectors.

But no one was aware of this. It was as though the Chinese found this embarrassing and they wished to keep it secret. I knew it, as country director, and presumably the Board of Trade in Chicago knew it, and the cotton traders knew it, but no one else knew it.

But if Taiwan bought a Q-Tip cotton swab, that little bit of cotton would be trotted out by a congressman, who would say, "I have with me my dear friend Mr. Lee, from Taipei, who has just bought this bit of cotton. This was grown in our district, and it will increase employment. And you can see how important this relationship is." Taiwan, of course, very cleverly, understood that allowing a congressman to announce that sort of deal, however small it might be, ingratiated the congressman, who then owed one to Taiwan. This helped the congressman's reelection. It gained publicity for Taiwan, of a favorable nature, in the district. And no official had to be there. So they did this with great skill.

They courted governors. President Clinton, prior to becoming president, when he was governor of Arkansas, was in Taiwan four times. The lure, to a governor, of being able to take a trade delegation over to Taiwan, do some business, and get some publicity back home as a promoter of state exports, was simply irresistible. So they did a great deal of this.

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They had a really very subtle and effective publication, which I have always enjoyed looking at, both for what it contains and for the technique that it embraces, called The Free China Weekly, which is a sort of tabloid that comes out every week, with a bit of information about Taiwan and cross-Strait relations (Taiwan Strait), Taiwan versus the Mainland, and interaction between all of the above. It very skillfully flogs three to five different themes in each issue, written in colloquial American English. They have a very slick publication on trade that they put out.

They have what I consider to be by far the most professional and skilled congressional-relations staff of any foreign regime represented here. They are much better than the Israelis, who are usually regarded as the best, because, whereas the Israelis gain their way by threatening political retaliation through Jewish or right-wing, Christian, pro-Israel supporters, Taiwan threatens no one. Everything is done by inducement. In the long run, courtship is more effective as a tie that binds than ultimata and threats.

So Taiwan has brought to bear on diplomacy all of the skills of interpersonal relations that Chinese culture embodies, and they've done it supremely well because, as a small place overshadowed by the rest of China, they've had to try harder.

The PRC, by contrast, is much more similar to the pre-modern China of the Emperor Qian Long, who told George III to take his trinkets and buzz off, because China had no need for intercourse with barbarians.

So Taiwan, island China, if you will, has developed an outward-looking philosophy that has caused its influence in the United States to prosper, whereas Mainland China has a continental and inward-looking approach that has left it essentially disarmed in the battle of propaganda, influence, and ideas.

Taiwan has developed what I consider to be a truly admirable society. It has successfully modernized. It is a China that has achieved the dream of Chinese reformers in the

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nineteenth century; namely, wealth and a measure of power, such that people in Taiwan can stand on the same level with foreigners and look them in the eye, confident that they are, technologically and economically and politically, quite as sophisticated as the foreigners with whom they are dealing.

Ironically, this dream of all Chinese, which is very much the dream on the Mainland as well, has been realized in Taiwan. So as Taiwan's economic prosperity has advanced and its democratization has proceeded, it has had an easier and easier task of selling itself in the United States, since it has, in fact, become increasingly admirable as a society, and its natural affinities with Americans have grown, rather than diminished.

So the contrast that Nat Bellocchi points to is a very real one, and it's rooted in the small size of Taiwan and in its economic and political modernization. I suspect that this path will be followed by the Mainland, although at a far slower pace, because it will remain, as the United States is, primarily obsessed with its own affairs, rather than with affairs abroad. Taiwan, of course, as a small place, pays more attention to foreign events.

Q: What about, again going back to the Carter period, your connection within the State Department as you dealt with the American Institute in Taiwan? In other words, essentially the Taiwan Desk. Here it was, unofficial, but official as all hell, in practical terms, wasn't it?

FREEMAN: Smoke and mirrors, perhaps. The contrivance of elaborate forms can make something that might otherwise be official appear very unofficial.

I would say, referring back to those petty moves by Taiwan, that they led to my spending an enormous amount of time doing what I did not want to do; namely, prescribing rules for the U.S. bureaucracy in dealing with Taiwan, shutting doors.

For example, the design of the license plate that would be issued to Taiwan's unofficial representatives. Issued by whom? Well, issued by the American Institute in Taiwan. Well, how was anyone to recognize that that was empowered? Also, the design of the identity

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card. All of these things took on extraordinary sensitivity because of the fact that Taiwan was constantly pushing the envelope. Had it accommodated, we probably would have been able to do far better for Taiwan than we were able to do.

I had learned Taiwanese and always had a fond spot in my heart for Taiwan, yet I found myself in the ironic position of being the ogre on Taiwan policy. I think Taiwan came, during this period, to regard me personally very much as the evil genius behind all their distress, which, to some extent, I suppose I was.

Bureaucratically, the necessity to keep the Taiwan operation somehow related to the China operation, but separate. In bureaucratic terms, what does this translate into? It translates into the usual thing: How can I get the Taiwan coordination staff moved so that they're next to my office, so that they're not up on another floor, doing their own thing, out of sight, out of mind, and making mistakes, since everything they were doing had to be measured against what we had agreed with the PRC. Often, Taiwan would come in and want to do something, and it was eminently doable, but they would insist on doing it in a way that made it impossible. And then, if it was desirable, we had to find a way to do it that preserved the appearance of unofficiality and didn't breach the normalization understandings with Beijing. This took a great amount of time and was an endless irritant.

I can remember, in the fall of 1980, as Ronald Reagan prepared to be inaugurated, speaking with a very senior official from Taiwan's foreign ministry, who was a longstanding friend, and going over all these items with him, and saying, "Look, you now have a much more sympathetic regime coming in, which has not experienced this. If you continue this pattern of behavior, you will very quickly alienate this new group, which will find you irritating. Don't do it. Try to remember what the larger picture is. And don't push too far on arms sales, because if you do, you will pay a price in terms of restrictions. In the end, the United States, if forced to choose between its strategic imperatives of a decent relationship with the Chinese Mainland and its sentimental imperatives with you, will always choose the strategic over the sentimental. Don't force that choice on the new administration,

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with which you can work and from which you can gain a great deal, if you do so with sensitivity.”

Well, of course, they did continue exactly what they had been doing, with precisely the result that I predicted. They soured the new administration on them. And they did, in the August 17, 1982, communique, find their access to arms restricted.

You asked about friendships with Chinese officials. Throughout this period, indeed throughout my entire career, I have maintained friendships and relationships with people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. And I've always been accessible to people from Taipei, providing the context was not a violation of my official position. Of course, since I'm no longer in the government, I don't give a damn about that, and I feel free to go to Taiwan, and have done that several times. But I could not, in that earlier era.

By the same token, I've been very open to and accessible, informally, to many, many people from the Chinese Mainland.

I think both of them have respected the fact that I have not concealed these relationships from either. They're each aware that these are going on, and no one has objected.

In fact, ironically, to jump ahead a bit, when I was stationed in Bangkok, all three of my children were studying Chinese in Taipei, and I wished to go visit them, en route back to the United States. I checked both with the Taiwan representative in Bangkok, to make sure that I could visit Taipei with no publicity, and I checked with the PRC Embassy there, to make sure they would have no objection to my doing this. The PRC had no objection, and Taipei assured that there would be no publicity.

My trip was then vetoed by the State Department, on the grounds that it was excessively sensitive, that I knew too many people in Taipei, that Beijing probably would object, etc.

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I was then confronted with the irony of arriving in Hong Kong with my wife, to meet with the publishers of a cookbook in Chinese that I had helped to write earlier, who were Communists, who said, "Well, aren't you supposed to be going on to Taipei?", and seemed very surprised when I said no, that I wasn't doing that, and that my wife was going on alone, since the State Department couldn't really control her.

The rules that produced that perverse result were, ironically, formulated by me, in an earlier era, precisely because there were all sorts of abuses and problems, in which Taiwan was complicitous. I have always regarded that period and those antics with a sense of disappointment.

Q: Just to get very bureaucratic, where was the American Institute in Taiwan located? Who was doing it? Just the day-to-day checking back and forth, how did this work?

FREEMAN: There was a small Taiwan coordination staff in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, which, as I indicated, I eventually succeeded in having moved down adjacent to what was then the Office of Chinese Affairs, now renamed the Office of Chinese and Mongolian Affairs. There is an internal corridor connecting the two (called the Taiwan Strait, of course). That move greatly facilitated cooperation within the Department.

The American Institute in Taiwan has its Washington offices in Rosslyn, Virginia, and it is responsible for day-to-day contact and providing a venue for meetings, of an unofficial character, with officials from Taiwan. It is also the body that is responsible for the post-management and other administrative support functions for the American Institute in Taiwan offices in Taipei and Kaohsiung, in Taiwan. So if a delegation from Taiwan came here, it would be received by AIT, and AIT would arrange appropriate meetings with American government officials, outside of U.S. government offices, in appropriately informal settings.

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Well, it turns out, of course, that appropriately informal settings are far more productive than the usual formal settings, and that to insist that all business must be done over a working lunch or over a drink in a hotel lobby produces far better results than making people come to your office. So I don't think Taiwan lost, in any respect, by this, and maybe even gained.

Q: Ronald Reagan started his run in early 1980, and he was seen by many as being an extreme right-winger, devoted to the cause of Taiwan. It was a major point of concession of his political persona, you might say, at the time, where he was coming from. As he gained more and more power and was coming in, this must have put quite a bit of strain on you to try to explain the American political system and how things worked to the Chinese Embassy and their officials. Could you tell me about how you dealt with this.

FREEMAN: Indeed, I did spend an enormous amount of time, and I had to take the initiative, and I spent a fair amount of my own money, having Chinese officials, visiting both from Beijing and from the embassy, over to my house for dinner or lunch.

All of this culminated, I recall, in a terrible evening in November 1980, when I invited everybody from the Chinese Embassy, I guess the ambassador was off somewhere else, but everyone else from the Political Section, the ambassador's office, the DCM, the military attaché, the whole bunch, over to my house for an election watch. I remember my son was tossing pizza in the air, making it. My wife had produced copious quantities of hors d'oeuvres and the like. Just as this group was walking in, around eight o'clock, Jimmy Carter was on the television, conceding to Ronald Reagan. It was a highly depressing evening, as it became apparent that Reagan, who'd really campaigned, apparently, for Taiwan, against the PRC, had won a sweeping victory in the election.

So I found, throughout the course of 1980 and certainly after the election, that I was spending an enormous amount of time cautioning the Chinese not to overreact, to recognize that what's said on the campaign trail may get altered, and that they should build

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bridges of communication, rather than be standoffish or be aloof to the new forces taking charge in Washington.

You're right, this role of sort of counselor, if you will, to an embassy that at that time still had a rather shallow and ideologically constrained vision of American politics was a very important one.

Q: Coming now to the transition, where you almost have to put your other hat on and try to explain to a new administration coming in the facts of life in the world. It happens with almost every administration, but the Reagan administration came in with more, you might say, international ideological baggage than most others, particularly regarding Latin America and the Soviet Union, but also China. Could you talk a bit about what you were doing?

FREEMAN: The transition was a somewhat bizarre experience, because it went in two phases. First, there was a group of congressional right-wing types who landed in the State Department.

Q: These are the staff people.

FREEMAN: They were ostensibly representing the president, before he had really selected a new secretary of state officially, although Al Haig was rumored. This group arrived, and they were hostile. I was told that Senator Helms had a list of seventeen people who had to be purged, and that I was on that list. And various other statements were made. So there was a very nasty atmosphere. These people went around and interviewed the different Desks, including the China Desk, and tried to get some sense of what the state of play on the relationship was. They were writing papers for the secretary-to-be.

But the instant Al Haig was named as secretary, he thanked all these people for their good work, sent them packing, and brought in his own people, who were a great deal more strategically sensible and less ideological. So there was a sort of sigh of relief.

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As we went toward the inauguration, we had, as I've mentioned, problems with various Taiwan officials, who had pretty much managed to insert themselves under the reviewing stand at the inaugural parade. We had difficulty persuading the president-elect that this was not the way to start off, with a crisis with China, and that if he wished to pursue this matter of official relations with Taiwan, he should do it in a more deliberate manner than that.

So it was a difficult transition, although I must say, in retrospect, despite the change in political parties and philosophies from the Carter administration, which in many respects was ideologically quite on the left, to this far-right administration, it was a friendlier takeover than the one between Bush and Reagan in '88-'89, which was a very unfriendly thing indeed, as different wings of the Republican Party succeeded each other.

But China was obviously at the top of the right-wing hit list. I found myself writing a great deal and working with, particularly, Secretary Haig, who was a strong supporter of a good relationship with China, and who had maintained close contact with the Chinese when he was at SHAEF as SACEUR, and who had, of course, been involved with the opening of the relationship with China as Kissinger's deputy back in the early '70s. I found myself working very closely with him in a series of efforts to educate the president, writing short little memoranda for him, providing him with briefing material, making suggestions for points that he should raise with the president, and the like.

He did gradually gain ground with the president on these issues, and convince him that the enemy was the Soviet Union, not China, and that there were merits to maintaining a good relationship with China, and that that meant that we had to go through a certain level of contortion in our relationship with Taiwan to demonstrate that it was unofficial.

So that all worked, thanks to the, I think, genuinely heroic willingness of Al Haig to impale himself on this issue.

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At any rate, as 1981 proceeded, I was selected to be DCM in Beijing, and in June of 1981, I went with Secretary Haig for his first visit to Beijing as secretary. Then I came back, packed up, and returned to Beijing July 17, 1981, to become charg#, my predecessor, Stape Roy, having just departed. Subsequently, he was deputy chief of mission in Bangkok, then ambassador to Singapore and, of course, most recently, to China.

Q: I always like to get the dates. You were there from when to when?

FREEMAN: I was in China from July 17, 1981, until the beginning of November 1984, just about three and a half years. The new ambassador, Arthur Hummel, did not arrive until September 24, 1981.

I started off with a bang, right in the middle of what was building toward becoming the Taiwan arms-sale crisis with the new Reagan administration.

Q: What was the situation in China at the time, as you saw it?

FREEMAN: When I arrived in 1981, we were two and a half years into Deng Xiaoping's revolution. In fact, one of the first things that I did as charg# was to take Warren Burger, chief justice of the United States, and Charlie Wick, who was the head of USIA, over to see Deng Xiaoping. As I recall, Jimmy Carter also arrived during that period. Deng was very clear in stating at that time that he believed, when the history books were written, people would see the real revolution in China, the real march to modernization and restored wealth and power for the country as beginning in 1978 with his third coming. So it was a time of considerable hope inside China.

It was also a period of mounting crisis in U.S.-China relations, as the undertaking of the United States, at the time of normalization, to sell to Taiwan carefully selected defensive weapons on a restrained basis was ignored by the Reagan administration, which was

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intent on saving the Northrop Corporation's investment in the F-20 fighter, one of the two versions of the F-X.

So, as the summer proceeded, I began to get signals from Chinese contacts of, really, two things. First, a renewed effort by them to engage Taiwan in peaceful reunification.

I was able, in fact, on the basis of those contacts, to predict pretty accurately, well in advance, the statement that Ye Jianying, a Chinese leader, made to what he called "Taiwan compatriots," a very detailed proposal on reunification, with major new elements of flexibility in it.

And I anticipated, but not adequately, I think, in retrospect, that this indication of flexibility by the Chinese on the Taiwan question would be accompanied by a ratchetting up of the pressure on the United States to readhere to the commitments that we had made at the time of normalization.

In the event, as I recall, Huang Hua, the foreign minister, went to Canc#n and then came to Washington.

Q: An economic conference of world leaders, held in Canc#n, Mexico.

FREEMAN: He went to that conference and then came to Washington, and essentially threw down the gauntlet on the Taiwan issue. So that, in the fall of '81, it appeared, first, that the sale to Taiwan would go through, and, second, that its consequence would be a break in diplomatic relations with China.

Ambassador Hummel arrived right as this began. I can recall the first series of quiet meetings that we held with Ambassador Zhang Wenjin, who was the vice foreign minister at the time, to explore the Chinese position and lay out ours.

By the end of 1981, I think the two sides had concluded that we had to attempt a clarification and restatement of this issue in the form of some sort of document.

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Those negotiations had a number of nasty twists, including a visit in January 1982 by John Holdridge, the assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific affairs, and subsequently, visits by many others, including George Bush, as vice president, making efforts to find a basis for compromise.

By the early part of 1982, we were engaged in intense negotiations. The first phase of these was really quite memorable, in that we were thundered at by the then Chinese vice foreign minister, Mr. Pu. In the best Mandarin tradition, he lectured and hectored and put us in our place, seated in a high seat, with us in low seats, in the room. When it was clear that that was going nowhere, the Chinese then switched interlocutors, and we got Han Xu, who was assistant minister for American and Oceanian affairs, who had been here in Washington and was very well known, and passed away late last year, 1994.

As the negotiations proceeded, they developed effectively two tracks: first, a series of formal meetings, chaired by the ambassador, and, second, far more productive and detailed, a series of informal lunches at my house, with two of the senior, but subordinate, members of the Chinese delegation, Zhang Zai and Zhang Wenpu, in particular, with some others, and the political counselor from the embassy, Jay Taylor, as well as a couple of other people, talking ostensibly totally on an ad referendum, off-the-record, theoretically not official basis, trying to explore the basis of a compromise, on a sort of what-if basis — What if we said this, what would you say to that? What about this set of words, would that do it?

Although informal, these discussions were very closely controlled from Washington. The president was personally reviewing every account of these discussions, and they were conducted with meticulous care on both sides. These discussions proceeded and ultimately began to produce the outlines of a communiqué.

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Q: Just to get a flavor for this, when you were doing the negotiating and you got somebody lecturing you, # la Mandarin, trying to put you in your place, what was the American riposte?

FREEMAN: That initial set of meetings was very much a set of set pieces, with both sides stating, for the record, positions that were obviously very far apart and appeared almost unbridgeable. The American reply to this, through Art Hummel, who is a consummate diplomat, was tough, but not strident, reasoned, and refused to allow us to be put on the defensive, as Mr. Pu was attempting to do.

But, as I said, this exchange of set-piece statements clearly wasn't going to go anywhere. The informal discussions over at my place were conceived, by both sides basically, as a kind of off-conference method of producing something that could then be fed into the conference, which is what happened. There actually were very, very few formal meetings, until the precise end. But, between formal sessions, we worked on communique# language, as I said, tightly controlled from Washington and from higher levels in Beijing.

I think the Chinese had not been accustomed to this kind off-site, informal session. They, however, quickly grasped the ground rules and played very fair in the course of this rather intense and often quite unpleasant set of exchanges, over lunch, good Chinese meals, at my house, which tended to make things a little more civilized. However, I think people on both sides came to have increasing respect for each other. That helped subsequently in rebuilding the relationship, once we were able to get past this bad moment.

Q: The Chinese have had their embassy or liaison office for some years now. Did you find that there was a growing expertise or knowledge about the American political process and how things worked? As Americans, we know the possible and impossible in our political world, and where we can and can't go. Did you find that there was some understanding of these?

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FREEMAN: I'm sure there was some understanding. Both sides, frankly, postured. The Chinese would say that they could not ignore the feelings of 1.1 billion Chinese (at that time; now more). By which they meant that they couldn't ignore the feelings of the handful of people who really mattered in China. We would cite congressional sentiment, on our side, as a constraint on what we could do. I'm sure both sets of statements did reflect some sort of reality, but both of us, I think, were aware that we were posturing.

Q: You say this was tightly controlled. The Reagan administration was quite new in office. Ronald Reagan came as a strong adherent of Chiang Kai-shek and Taiwan and all this. There is always a learning process. Alexander Haig had sort of gotten his political teeth in the Nixon White House; he'd been commander of NATO. I would think that you would not have a very knowledgeable White House, and perhaps not even a knowledgeable secretary of state, at this point, in Chinese affairs.

FREEMAN: I, of course, was not in Washington, although we kept in extraordinarily close contact with Washington. Much of the most important sort of scuttlebutt that we received came in exchanges of official informal telegrams. This was a device that the Soviet Desk had originated for communication with Moscow, to kind of give the embassy in Moscow a bit of a sense of what was going on bureaucratically or politically back home. It was something that, as country director for China, I had picked up. We actually communicated mainly in Chinese, written in Roman letters, in order to keep prying eyes from being able to read the comments that we were making about the state of play, and it produced candor.

Bill Rope, who was the country director for China, I think performed valiantly, and in fact was so strong in arguing the case for good U.S.-China relations and for a measure of compromise on the fighter sale to Taiwan issue that it set back his career, I think.

Q: How do you spell his name?

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FREEMAN: William F. Rope, currently, I think, director of the Johns Hopkins SAIS Nanjing Center in China.

Al Haig was passionately committed to this relationship, and personally undertook to educate President Reagan. Even before I went out to China, he did something extraordinary, early in the Reagan administration. He brought Ji Chaozhu, who was at that time still a mid-ranking Chinese official, but who had gone to Harvard and was actually on the ship of Chinese students who returned to China at the time of the Chinese Revolution and the Korean War, and who had served as Zhou En-lai's interpreter, a very personable, fluent English speaker, in to spend some time with the president, which was rather unusual. Haig's motive was very clear, and it worked, and that was to show the president that the Chinese might be Communist, but they were also decent human beings, and that you could talk with them. I think he did everything he could to try to help President Reagan get a more sophisticated understanding of China.

So there were huge battles going on back in Washington, the precise details of which I didn't, of course, entirely know.

But this resulted, as I say, in very, very specific instructions with regard to wording changes and different approaches that we might take. Now we, in Beijing, made many of the suggestions that resulted in those instructions. We were occasionally overruled on our suggestions, but often they were accepted, although, I gather, not without a battle.

The break point in these negotiations was a personal communication from President Reagan to Mr. Deng, saying, "I just can't go any farther." That was the essence of it. And that came in about July. Mr. Deng, I guess, at that point, and President Reagan, both decided to hold their noses and call off the fight.

We had a series of rapid plenary sessions between the ambassador and Han Xu that wrapped up the communique# text in mid-August.

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In the event, I think both sides ended up losing from these negotiations, which I considered, from the time they began, to be a really tragic and unnecessary exercise. Had we simply adhered to the understanding that we had had with the Chinese about arms sales to Taiwan, we could have, in my view, finessed the issue and never would have had to make an explicit statement about it.

The core of the compromise was that the Chinese had to accept that U.S. arms sales would continue to Taiwan, something which stuck in their craw, but explicitly to accept that, thus making the United States the only country that had Chinese permission, if you will, to sell weapons to what they regarded as a province in rebellion against the central government.

We, for our part, had to agree to cap the quality of the weapons we transferred at existing levels and to reduce the quantity of sales progressively, with a view to ultimately reaching some complete solution of this problem and ending arms sales entirely.

Now, on the Chinese side, I thought at the time that it was very unlikely they would be able to accept U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, politically, indefinitely. I thought that there would inevitably come a moment at which this very controversial, indeed inflammatory, undertaking would collapse under attack in China.

And on our side, our undertaking to cap the quality and reduce the quantity, it seemed to me, strained our ability to manage a policy that had as its very sensible premise the maintenance of a military deterrent in Taiwan sufficient to take a good bite out of an invading force from the Mainland. I say this because obviously the quality of weapons systems marches on. The nature of the threat would change as new weapons systems were introduced in the area, by the PRC in particular, but by others. Old systems would go out of production and have to be replaced, if at all, with newer systems. And quantity was never really defined. Was it dollar volume, or was it numbers of bullets, or what?

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The intelligent policy always had been (and this is something I had pushed for, in fact, back in the '70s when I was on the Taiwan Desk, in anticipation of this sort of argument), rather than to make arms sales, to transfer technology, so that Taiwan, admittedly at somewhat greater expense, could produce major-weapons systems in Taiwan. And there would not be the visible export and all of the debates in Congress and publicity that we uniquely generate when we transfer weapons to some foreign purchaser. In fact, that was attempted, and it was the genesis of the so-called IDF (indigenous fighter) program in Taiwan, as a substitute for the F-20 (F-X). It was also attempted with other items, such as patrol boats and the like.

On the day that the communiqu# was actually released in Washington and Beijing, I was far from jubilant. I was happy that we had reached a compromise, but I frankly found the compromise very distasteful, and I was quite pessimistic about its longevity.

I turned out to be a bit too pessimistic, because, in fact, the agreement survived until August of 1992, when George Bush, ironically, given his connections with the PRC, in order to appeal to the voters of Texas, authorized the largest arms sale in U.S. history, in this case 150 F-16s, made in Texas, to Taiwan.

That totally destroyed both the cap on quality and any restriction on quantity, and, in effect, shredded the communiqu#. It released the Chinese from their undertaking to tolerate arms sales to Taiwan, as well. And it began the process that has produced a reemerging crisis in U.S.-China relations today (today being 1995, in November).

So my pessimism turned out to be somewhat overdone, but ultimately correct.

Q: Going back to the beginning, you said you took Chief Justice Burger and Charles Wick to meet Deng, rather early on in the Reagan time. Charles Wick was the head of USIA, a close friend of Ronald Reagan, and almost a show-business type person. The Voice of America, which became a rather powerful instrument in China, was under his sway to

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some extent. This must have been his first look at China and the power structure. How did he react to this?

FREEMAN: I think, like many Americans with no previous exposure to China, he was startled by what he discovered. I must say that that visit, the conjunction of the Chief Justice's visit with that of Charlie Wick, was a rather strange experience.

Charlie Wick began to lecture Deng Xiaoping on the iniquities of the Soviets, when Deng had been purged twice for his own distaste for the Soviets, and hardly needed to be told that they were dangerous people. Charlie's objective was to try to see whether Voice of America could set up relay stations in Xinjiang for central Asia, which he was eager to destabilize. Deng didn't rule this out. In fact, that visit produced the beginnings of some exchanges between the Voice of America and Radio Beijing.

To jump ahead quite a bit, toward the end of my tenure in Beijing, almost three and a half years later, the then head of Voice of America came out and met the head of Radio Beijing, a very tough old lady and very candid, and they had a pretty good discussion about what they were doing. Of course, there were many points that we had in common with the Chinese, on the Soviet issue in particular. At the end of this session, reflecting Charlie Wick's handiwork at USIA, the head of VOA asked the head of Radio Beijing what she thought of VOA's programming. She thought for a minute, and she said, "Well, the news is not bad, but, frankly, your editorials sound like we used to during the Cultural Revolution."

Of course, she was absolutely right. There were editorials that were appallingly ethnocentric and parochial and right wing, which purported to represent U.S. policy, but clearly represented one element of thinking in the administration, rather than the administration's actions. These things caused endless problems, not so much in China, but everywhere around the world, misstatements of policy and so on.

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The second thing that made that visit of Wick and Burger rather strange was that Burger wanted to come look at the ambassador's residence. It became apparent, as I was showing him around, that Ronald Reagan had told him that if he wanted, he could displace Arthur Hummel as ambassador, and he was just checking out the facilities. Of course, Art Hummel hadn't even arrived yet, so I thought this was a little unseemly. When Burger looked at the very modest quarters that the ambassador occupies in Beijing, he turned up his nose and said he didn't think he wanted the job after all.

Q: As the deputy chief of mission, how did Arthur Hummel use you?

FREEMAN: He was an absolute model manager, in my view. In fact, in my own later years in the government, I tried very much to model myself on him. He's a laconic man, very taciturn, and very quick to decide. Excellent judgment. Delegates easily.

A typical encounter between him and me was brief. I would go in and describe a problem. He'd ask a question or two. He'd say, "Well, what do you think the choices are?" I'd give him some options. He'd either say, "Well, there's another option," or he'd say, "Of those, I think we ought to do this. Go do it." So the whole procedure took very little time.

He never looked back on a decision. If he had made a mistake, against my advice, or with my advice, he accepted full responsibility for the decision.

As a negotiator, one of his merits indeed was his ability to maintain silence. Unlike many Americans, he's not bothered by a couple of minutes of sitting silently, looking at someone. I think some recent studies have shown that the average American can only tolerate about seventeen seconds of silence. Not Art Hummel. He would sit there, poker-faced, and wait for the other side to say something.

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He's very personable, a warm person. His wife, very charming and very much in the old Foreign Service den mother mode, not excessively demanding on the women of the embassy, but very supportive of them.

Stape Roy (J. Stapleton Roy), who's just finished a tour as ambassador in China, had been the charg# in Beijing, following the departure of Leonard Woodcock. Stape has a very controlling style.

One of the first things I did when I got there was to change things around. I don't believe that the job of the DCM or charg# is to edit other people's work. I think they should be capable of editing it or proofreading it themselves. If it was a purely analytical piece, with no real policy implication, I just told people, "Send it out. I'll read it afterwards. If I don't agree with it, you'll hear from me. If I do agree with it or it inspires another thought, I'll let you know. But you have to take responsibility for what you write."

Stape, I think, had been approving even visa cables, and I just cut all that off.

Second, there was a staff meeting that went on for about an hour, and I used a technique there, which I subsequently used elsewhere, just saying, "This staff meeting is going to last twenty minutes, and after twenty minutes, I will get up and leave. So you've got twenty minutes to say what you need to say."

So I tended to delegate a great deal and to try to use my time to direct and inspire, working with the different reporting and analytical offices. I would call them in, and we would chew over an idea for a new look at something or other, and then maybe toss out a few ideas to them for organizing it, and then tell them to go to it. And they either would, or would not, check back with me before it went out.

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Anything that had a policy implication, and certainly anything that had a policy recommendation, I did want to see, early on, in draft. I did read everything, and I did write comments on everything, but I believed in having people take responsibility.

Art Hummel very much was the same way. So he looked to me to do the long-range strategic planning papers for U.S.-China relations.

I also did a five-year master plan for the development of the embassy. We had constant tension at that time between the fact that we had requirements that were very large and we had no housing for people. There was a limit to how many people could be housed in hotels without producing a terrible morale problem. If we didn't have people in hotels, however, the Chinese wouldn't accept our protestations that we were in pain, and wouldn't allocate apartments as they became available, as they were building them. There was, at that time, an explosion in the diplomatic and business presence in Beijing going on. So we had, at any point, between a dozen and a half and thirty households living in hotels. This was a terrible morale problem.

But it also meant that we had to think ahead, to try to project what sort of staffing pattern the embassy might have once it matured. Remember, it was coming out of a liaison office and was in transition.

I paid particular attention to, and I'm very proud of having insisted on, the language designation of virtually every position. And the reason I did that was that if you don't designate positions, the Department of State's personnel planning process will not provide training slots, and no one will be trained. I wanted to have administrative officers who were capable of dealing in Chinese. And that meant that I had to construct career ladders, so that someone could come in as a junior GSO, have a tour in China, then go out and do something else, maybe have some more Chinese-language training, and come in as the administrative officer at a consulate, and then go out, and then maybe come in as administrative counselor. I was very insistent on this, over a lot of opposition. And I'm sorry

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to say that, subsequently, there was quite a bit of relaxation. But at one point, we had the only embassy in Beijing in which everyone, down to the secretaries, was able to handle some Chinese. Essential, in my view, to really understand the place and work in it.

So Art Hummel let me be CEO of the embassy, and he was chairman of the board. He set the broad policy, he made the major decisions, but he looked to me to not just bring problems to him, but bring solutions. So that's what I tried to do.

In terms of the management of relations with the Chinese, I tried very hard to broaden dialogue with the Chinese. I set up a series of regular luncheon discussions with the leadership of different geographic bureaus, at the Foreign Ministry, for example. I continued a practice, which Stape Roy had very wisely initiated, of meeting with some of the party ideologues and think tanks, editors of People's Daily and Red Flag, which was the ideological journal, and members of different institutes.

This was quite innovative, in the Chinese context, because China, even though it is not a world power, thinks like a world power and expects to be a world power, and the United States was unique in that we were interested in what the Chinese were thinking about Africa, even though we weren't African. So the African Department over at the Foreign Ministry saw Africans and us, and that was about it. Once in a while, a European would go over and say hello. We were interested in what the Chinese were thinking about Latin America, and we wanted them to know what we were thinking, so we would do that. And the same with the Middle East and Europe. The Europeans hardly ever talked to the people in the American and Oceanian Affairs Department, which was the one that took care of us.

So we were very active, and I was very personally active in a lot of discussions and contacts with many, many departments of the Chinese government.

Q: What was your impression of these bureau heads that you were talking to in the Chinese Foreign Ministry, as far as how they were thinking? They had come out of

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the Cultural Revolution, in which you had to tread a very careful line or you were off to Mongolia. How did you find that breed at that time?

FREEMAN: There were several exceptions, but by and large, these were really quite sophisticated people; as you say, very cautious because of the experiences they'd had. But, suddenly confronted with an embassy that talked to them in Chinese, rather than demanding that they go through interpreters or speak a foreign language, they opened up quite a bit. We had some very good discussions. We even got a discussion going, for example, with the Korean Desk, even though, at that time, Korea was the great symbol of the Cold War in Asia. That turned out to be very useful, as time went on.

There were a couple of exceptions. We had major legal difficulties with the Chinese over antediluvian, literally antediluvian, railway bonds. Some railway bonds had been issued in 1911, which actually had a role in provoking the 1911 Sun Yat-sen Revolution, to build a railway in south China, between Hunan and Guangdong. These so-called "Hu-Kwang" railway bonds had been bought out by someone in New York at half a penny on the dollar. And they were planning to attach Chinese property to get these things.

Q: This was the Chinese equivalent to the czarist bonds?

FREEMAN: Exactly, absolutely, only more like Russian bonds issued during the Napoleonic Era, because the most recent Chinese revolution was in 1949, and this was from 1911.

And we had other issues of that kind, so we had a great deal of dealing with the Chinese equivalent of a legal advisor, Mr. Huang, a very charming, Soviet-educated lawyer, who was absolutely aghast at the American legal system, and refused to believe that it really could operate the way we described it. I spent, I think, more than a hundred hours, in effect, drawing on my legal education at Harvard, trying to help this fellow become

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educated on the U.S. legal system. Finally, the American legal advisor and others came out, and we managed to resolve this issue.

That was very interesting, because I was in the position, which diplomats often are, of trying to explain the peculiar viewpoint of the Chinese to American lawyers, and trying to explain the peculiar viewpoint of American lawyers to the Chinese, while understanding both perspectives and really agreeing with neither. In the end, we were able to succeed.

Mr. Huang was a product of Soviet education that was extraordinarily rigid and difficult to deal with.

This issue, I might add, went all the way up to Deng Xiaoping, who at one point angrily stated, "How many governments does the United States have? Let's see, you've got the Executive Branch, which doesn't pay any attention to the Congress, which doesn't pay any attention to the Executive Branch. And then you have this other thing, the courts. I can only deal with one government." He was exasperated by all this. We finally got through to him.

I would say, the other notable exception to sophistication was the Consular Department, with which I spent a lot of time. I thought we needed to liberalize visas on a reciprocal basis. There were some other issues that they dealt with that I was interested in.

For example, although I never succeeded in doing it, I was very interested in getting an agreement on the employment of spouses and dependents, and opening up opportunities for people. Many of them did work illegally.

The Consular Department was headed by a bunch of, you know, not bad people, but they were country bumpkins, who'd come in through the military. They were not terribly well educated, and they were from the interior. They were very closely associated with the public security people, very xenophobic and rigid, doing everything in a sort of nineteenth-century-ledger style, by the book, controlling everything centrally, no delegation of

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anything to embassies, very rigid about varying the rules. Of course, we were trying to negotiate a consular convention with them, and had done so.

Anyway, I spent a lot of time trying to convince them that not all foreigners were bad, and that there were things they might learn from us. We actually sent them here on an IV, to spend some time in the Consular Affairs Bureau at State, and to talk to INS (the Immigration and Naturalization Service). We sought to cultivate them.

And I think the third sort of frustrating Chinese official, really quite aggravating, was the leadership of the Diplomatic Services Bureau. The Diplomatic Services Bureau at that time controlled virtually every element of our daily lives. It provided (or, rather, didn't provide) apartments to American officers and their families. It was the source of all of the local employees, who were actually employees of the DSB, not ours. And it was the source of all domestic help — “ayis,” as they're called, governesses, nursemaids, cooks, and the like. Frankly, an outrageously exploitative organization. We would pay them hundreds and hundreds of dollars a month for the services of the Chinese; they would then turnover ten dollars a month to him or her. They were part of the Beijing municipality, not really responsive to the Foreign Ministry, and having difficulty in a place where, since the government theoretically owned everything, nobody really knew who had the power to dispose of property. They couldn't find land to build apartments. They didn't have the capital. They weren't terribly interested in learning anything about how westerners wanted apartments designed.

We actually sent some of them here to the Foreign Buildings Office (FBO). I shudder at the thought, since I think FBO is one of the most catastrophic organizations in Washington. But we sent them here to look at apartments in Rosslyn and the like, to give them some of idea of why we liked our kitchens laid out the way we did, and why we wanted closet space and things like that, and why all the electric power that they put in was grossly inadequate for a modern household. This was an unending campaign.

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This was in support, obviously, of the administrative counselor, basically, I guess, with the counselors of embassy, including the station chief of CIA and the defense attach# and others. I tried to make myself available and use my notoriety within the Chinese establishment, as the conductor of negotiations with them on a wide range of issues, to give the counselors a higher level of access than they would have otherwise had, and to help develop a sort of court of appeal for them, so that if something broke down at their level, that if whoever was on top had been over to dinner at my house, or seen a movie there, or gone on a picnic, he knew, therefore, who I was, and was predisposed to at least answer my phone call, if not to listen seriously to what I had to say.

So this was a very active managerial and diplomatic role, an exciting one, as a great new embassy emerged from the kernel of the liaison office.

Q: Can you talk a bit about the reporting officers, both political and economic. How did they operate in this atmosphere at that time?

FREEMAN: From a managerial point of view, I should have mentioned, we were also in the process of establishing consulates. We had consulates in Guangzhou and Shanghai; and were working on, and indeed opened, a consulate in Shenyang, the former Mukden, in China's northeast, former Manchuria; and in Chengdu, in Szechuan; and we were planning to open a consulate in Wuhan, which to date has not opened.

So one of the issues was how to sort out reporting responsibilities between consulates and the embassy. I took the view that if the consulates were reporting purely on events and trends within their consular district that didn't have any clear national analog, they should just report directly and they didn't have to clear it with us. If they disagreed with us, that was fine, they could say so. But they had to justify why they did.

This led to a bit of friction with the reporting officers, because I also insisted on, and we got a budget for them to do, quite a bit of traveling around the country. We were exploring a

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piece of virgin territory, since the reporting that had been done on China previously was reporting on national politics from the vantage point of Hong Kong. We were now trying to fill in details, look at what was happening at the provincial level, the local city level, and what was happening in ordinary Chinese lives.

We set up a series, in fact a very active series, called China Essays, in which we looked at issues. We would plan an essay about a month in advance and get input from the consulates, and then we'd send out reporting officers to talk.

Sometimes reporting officers, in dealing with normally very reticent Chinese, would just have an extraordinary experience. I remember somebody going to see the Ministry of Railways about a plan that had been published in the People's Daily about railway construction and so on, and the Ministry fellow was trying to explain the People's Daily thing. Finally, he just threw up his hands and said, "Oh, for God's sake, that's all a fraud. Here's the real plan." And he pulled it out of his desk drawer and went over it with our officer.

Sometimes people would be surprisingly open about things that, frankly, they would be open about normally in another society, and sometimes they'd be extremely standoffish.

We had the odd incident, over this time, not where we were set up by the Chinese, but there were dissidents, nuts, in some cases, who would do things like jump over the wall and try to get asylum in the embassy. We were always trying to, on the one hand, not give them asylum, because we're not interested or authorized to do that, but on the other hand, smuggle them out, so that they didn't get zapped by the local authorities. We usually succeeded.

Jay Taylor, in particular, who was the political counselor, a very gifted writer and manager, insisted that his reporting officers be out of the office a certain amount of the day. And if he found them in the office, he'd really kick them out. He said, "If you don't have an appointment, go sit in the park and talk to people. What makes you valuable is that you're

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here, not in Washington.” I think we had a group of, by and large, very talented, certainly dedicated, officers, who really dug away at the subjects that they were looking into.

Of course, China, at that time, and it has continued to be the case, was undergoing really kaleidoscopic change. All of the old givens were being undermined and overturned, as the reform process proceeded. Even the economic officers (the practitioners of a dismal, pessimistic science) were astonished, and forced to continually upgrade their projections for the Chinese economy, as the reforms began to liberate labor power and produce more efficient use of capital assets and, therefore, astonishing growth rates in this period. Some provinces, in this early period, were growing at eighty percent a year, economically, as the sloth of Socialism was sloughed off and the natural energy and entrepreneurial spirit of the Chinese began to be liberated.

So, from an intellectual point of view, it was an exciting time. And the reporting officers, I think, were, by and large, excited.

There were one or two, I must say, and they were probably useful correctives, and often they tended to be people with a background in the Soviet Union, who just couldn't believe what was going on, and who were always darkly pessimistic about it: It wouldn't work. It was all a fraud. What seemed to be happening couldn't really be happening. After all, this was a Communist country.

But I think, for most officers, there was a sense that, as difficult as life was in China, and as constrained as politics were, and as hampered by Socialism as economics were, the country really was opening up and moving in interesting directions.

Q: There are two subjects that I would think, for somebody like yourself, managing the reporting, could always cause a problem. You want to foster good relations with a country, yet report accurately, in a totalitarian state, which it still was, human rights and also corruption. Because the problem is, it's my impression, that if you send in really good reports on corruption or human rights, they get zapped right off, immediately, into the

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hands of unfriendly people in Congress, newspapers, etc., who use this rather than seeing its totality. It's a hard one to deal with. You want to be truthful, yet you don't want to give too much food to, basically, enemies.

FREEMAN: Yes, you're quite right to point to those dilemmas. On human rights, the principal exercise, of course, was the production of the annual human-rights report, where we did try to be very scrupulously honest and straightforward, but also to put things a bit in perspective. Sometimes Washington didn't want that perspective, that's true. Things always look different from the field than they do from headquarters, and they always look different on the spot than they do from Washington.

At that time, the issue, for example, of birth control was far less controversial than it is now. Chinese coercive birth control practices we reported, but it didn't have the level of controversy in Washington that it now does.

To understand why the Chinese were doing things, you had to back up and look at the context in which they were operating. And we tried to explain that.

For example, China is, geographically, about the size of the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, actually a little larger. But it only has one-third the arable land. And it's got 1.2 billion people now, whereas we have 260 million. So if you look at the basic problem of feeding and clothing 1.2 billion people, housing them, and so on, I think the correct way to look at this is in terms of the ratio between population and arable land. If the United States, with three times the arable land that China has, had the same population-to-arable-land ratio China has, we would have 3.6 billion people in the United States. And I would contend that if we did have 3.6 billion people, we would take a rather different view of things like Planned Parenthood and the like.

So I think that reporting on human rights from the field always tries to state the context. And the context is sometimes dismissed as ideologically irrelevant in Washington. But I

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think we struck a good balance. We were not overly kind to the Chinese, but we were also not willing to accept Washington's dictates of how reality ought to be.

I can remember we had quite an interesting exchange of telegrams with Jeane Kirkpatrick, who was, at that time, elaborating her totalitarian-authoritarian dichotomy.

Q: She was a former George Washington University professor, quite from the right, who was ambassador to the United Nations at the time.

FREEMAN: Very ideological and very prone to prescribe what reality ought to be, rather than to look at it and then decide what it was. So, even though she didn't really know anything about China, she knew everything about it, and we had, as I say, some interesting exchanges with her.

Q: What about corruption?

FREEMAN: Corruption, at that time, was not that serious a problem, in the way that has subsequently become a problem. It is a major problem in China now. There was corruption, and we certainly reported it. The point being that if bureaucrats buy and sell commodities, people buy and sell bureaucrats. That's just a law of nature.

I can remember one case (which I think we did report, and certainly should have if we didn't) that was fairly typical. At that time, all housing and benefits for workers and so on came from this so-called work unit. So the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs would build housing, high-rise apartment buildings, for its workers. And I can't remember which ministry it was, I think it might have been Chemical Industries or someone, built some high-rise apartment buildings for their people. And then they sat vacant for a long time. I was quite puzzled (these were not far from my house), so I started looking into it. What had happened was that the electric company said they wouldn't provide electricity unless twenty apartments were turned over to their people. And the water company said they

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wouldn't provide water unless a certain number of apartments were turned over to them. And the PTT said no phones unless they got a slice of the housing.

So there was always this bargaining process, rather like the outrageous, under-the-table trades of space and equipment that go on in Washington bureaucracies, where budgets are not fungible, and in order to get things done, you've got to engage in barter. This kind of corruption was pretty bad, but by and large, China was still, at least on the government level, a pretty honest place, and people weren't taking cash and so on. That really began to come along later.

Q: Were you seeing, at this time, any signs of a breakdown of central authority at the provincial level?

FREEMAN: I don't think we were. No, I don't think that that was the case. And I'm not sure that I'd even describe the situation today in those terms, although I know the press does. But certainly you got a very, very vivid sense of the differences between different regions and provinces and cities throughout the country.

I mentioned that we had quite an elaborate system of coordination for reporting from the consulates and so on, inviting their input on things that we were preparing. It was almost a joke. We would send out, I think every two weeks, a cable in which we would say, "In the next two weeks we're going to be looking at this issue, especially in light of this policy statement that was printed in the People's Daily on such and such a date in an editorial that they did, which represents the thinking of the Communist Party on this matter. We would like to have your analysis of what the local reactions to all this are."

Invariably we would get, from Shanghai, "The people are aware of this. They're talking about it. They disagree with it. They're angry. They think this is apostate." Or "They endorse it." Strong opinions and active debate.

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And we would get, from Shenyang, something that said, "The people up here are aware of it, but they're not really terribly concerned about it. We can't find anybody who really gives a damn about it."

And we would get, from Guangzhou, "They never heard of this policy down here, and they could care less. Nobody down here reads the People's Daily anyway."

And when Chengdu began to come on line, toward the end of my tenure, we got yet another perspective from there.

So you began to get a sense of the diversity of the country.

In my mind, I'd always had an image of China as centrally directed. But when you looked at it more closely, you realized that it was centrally coordinated, not centrally directed. That each province was essentially self-sufficient economically. In fact, they even had non-tariff trade barriers on the borders. They all had automobile and truck factories, and they tried to be self-sufficient in grain and so on and so forth. That the center was really coordinating it.

Recently, a statistic came to my attention that I think really illustrates this in a startling way. The normal percentage of GNP that a modern western economy cycles through the government varies from around 55 percent in Europe (about 55 percent of GNP shows up as government revenue to be recycled in some way or another) to just less than a third in the U.S. (if you take state, local, and federal levels of government, something just under a third is government revenue). In China, the figure is only 9.8-12.5 percent. It's a very, very undergoverned society, in many ways. Now, obviously, that doesn't include state industry and all the things that the government does as a manager of business enterprises. But, in terms of government services, government bureaucracies that do government things, you've got a very, very low percentage of the country actually engaged in this kind of stuff.

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So China has always been more coordinated than directed. This, notwithstanding the fact that directives come out of the center and are dutifully studied and applied (or misapplied, as the case might be) at the local level by officials.

When Deng Xiaoping's revolution began, he took advantage of this. He very, very deliberately fostered experimentation at the provincial and city level, with different ways of doing things. Then he would go out and have a look at the six or seven ways that people had tackled Problem A, to see what lessons might be drawn for a national system. He fostered differentiation. To the extent that there is a serious problem in center-province relations (and I think there is), it's partly the result of that. But it's also just expression, in new form, of something that was always there — a lot of autonomy for provinces.

Q: How were the Chinese, during this period, looking at the Soviet Union? We didn't really realize that the Soviet Union only had less than a decade to go.

FREEMAN: The Chinese thought, I think, that they had repositioned themselves a bit too close to the United States and too far away from the Soviet Union. So during this period, they were trying to move a bit back into the middle. And that meant some minor improvements in their relations with the Soviets. Those, of course, were the subject of great alarm in Washington and great interest.

On a personal level, the Soviet Embassy, which is this enormous sixteen-hectare plot centered on the former Orthodox Church property (granted to the Orthodox Church, I think, at the end of the Ming, or in the early Ch'ing, Dynasty), the Russians were essentially isolated; no one would speak with them. They had extremely limited access to the Chinese government. Some of them were really quite fine Sinologists, and, I think, genuinely, personally distressed by this situation. I kept some contact with them, with the DCM in particular, who was a very fine Sinologist, just to make sure that I could have their perspective on what was happening in Sino-Soviet relations.

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But not much was happening, really. Not much was happening. The tensions between the two over border issues and ideological problems, as well as Soviet foreign-policy activities in Afghanistan and, in an earlier era, in Angola, remembering that Mr. Savimbi was originally a creature of the Chinese, later adopted by us, divided the Chinese very much from the Soviets. While there was some minor movement, there wasn't anything too much going on.

Q: At one point, we used to talk about the China card. Were we, at least from Washington, trying to manipulate China in any way vis-#-vis the Soviet Union?

FREEMAN: We were trying to give the Soviets the impression of their being effectively encircled, and the idea that the U.S. and China could, if provoked, respond together to the provocation. This was part of the general policy of keeping the pressure on the Soviet Union and containing it. It, I think, did contribute rather directly to the ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union, so it was a successful policy.

The shift in Chinese emphasis was illustrated in the wrangling we had in the August 17 communi# negotiations over how the Chinese would state their opposition to hegemonism and whether they would recognize common strategic interests with us. They, frankly, didn't want to be quite so closely associated with us, by 1982, as they had in 1972.

Q: Did any of your contacts say, "Look, fellows, we don't want to get too close to you"? Or was this the type of thing you had to pick up by osmosis?

FREEMAN: You had to pick it up by osmosis and by listening to what people didn't say as much as to what they did say. The Chinese didn't want to state flatly that they did not want an intimate strategic connection with the United States, but they clearly didn't.

Q: Since 1945, Korea has been divided between the Communist north and the non-Communist south. How was Korea, in its totality, seen by the Chinese?

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FREEMAN: That was an interesting subject, because I thought they grossly misperceived Korea, through ideological blinkers. Frankly, I think, in retrospect, that probably we did the same. I was concerned to try to help them develop a more balanced view, and specifically to facilitate some sort of relationship between them and the South Koreans. The South Koreans were fumbling around with the Chinese, through the KCIA in Hong Kong.

Q: That's the Korean CIA.

FREEMAN: Yes. Koreans are very direct and tough people, and they were making quite a hash of this. They tended to demand things up front, and to use a very blunt and insulting bargaining technique, and to misunderstand the difference between things that needed to be done with a wink and a shrug and things that could be done explicitly. And so they were getting nowhere.

As China opened up, part of what was happening was a political relaxation. China was letting some dissent blossom, and there was a good deal of discontent, particularly among former adherents of Maoist revolutionary thought, with what was going on. I thought that there would, at some point, be an aircraft hijacking, from China to South Korea. I thought it was just a matter of time. It occurred to me that the Koreans were totally unprepared for this, and that what might be an opportunity for them to begin to establish a relationship with the Chinese would probably be bungled by them and turn into a negative, rather than a positive, event.

So I decided, quite on my own, that I would go to South Korea and talk to the Koreans. And I did. I spent two and a half days in consultations with the embassy, and I saw the KCIA and the National Security Planning Agency, which was an intelligence organization, and I saw the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Reunification and the military. I found it really quite fascinating, and I came back, I must say, to China full of ideas, and talked to the Chinese very, very directly and enthusiastically about what I had seen. I think that had an impact.

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At any rate, I spent the better part of a day talking to the assistant foreign minister for political affairs, whose name was Kung. He was one of the descendants of Confucius, whose ancestors had gone to Korea as sort of foreign assistance technicians in the Ming Dynasty and stayed on. I talked to him about what to do in the case of a hijacking and how to handle it. I tried to make the point to him that you can't, with the Chinese, be unsubtle. Of course, he argued that there was no word for subtlety in Korean. He'd gone to Harvard and he knew what it meant, but Korean didn't have a way of translating this concept.

Anyway, when, in fact, there was a hijacking, several months later, this connection was invaluable, because I was able to tell him, through a patch through the Ops Center and by cable, who was who in the Chinese delegation, and who was really who they said they were and who was not, and what the characteristics and personal likes and dislikes of the Chinese were. And I was able to tell the Chinese who was who on the Korean side, because this fellow ended up dealing with the Chinese for the Koreans. So I got in the role of orchestrating both sides, and they were both turning to me for advice and counsel and information. And that gave me some credibility on the Korean issue with the Chinese.

Q: The plane was returned, wasn't it?

FREEMAN: Yes, it was.

Q: This was the beginning of an opening.

FREEMAN: It did turn into an opening, as I had hoped it would, mainly because the Koreans restrained their worst impulses and didn't ask for anything. That was my main point to them: "Don't ask for anything. Do the right thing, and your reward will come," which is what they did.

This gave me some credibility on Korea, and over the spring of 1983, I had quite a number of discussions with the Chinese, arguing with them that they should find a way to have an

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opening to South Korea, which was something the South Koreans desperately wanted and which we supported, in general terms.

This culminated (actually, this was very interesting) during Weinberger's visit to China, which I think was in the summer of '83.

Q: He was secretary of defense.

FREEMAN: Deng Xiaoping actually proposed to Weinberger a meeting in Beijing between the South and North Koreans, with the U.S. in attendance, all hosted by the Chinese. I was astonished. I thought it was a great idea, and wasn't entirely surprised, because it had been foreshadowed a bit by my own discussions with the Chinese.

That evening, after he left, as we got the reporting cable done and the Weinberger party took it to Hong Kong, we confirmed with the Foreign Ministry that indeed he had said this, that indeed it was very important, and that indeed he was making a major policy initiative. And we sent off a cable saying that, only to discover that Paul Wolfowitz had edited this comment out of the conversation. Washington was mystified by our cable reporting a Chinese initiative in Korea.

Q: Paul Wolfowitz being...

FREEMAN: Assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs. In any event, he had edited Deng's comments out of the reporting cable, alleging that he hadn't heard any such thing. Then he denied adamantly that it had been said, and accused us of having put words in Deng's mouth. We had two note takers, both of whom had this in their notes. In the event, this whole issue was stillborn, because Washington chose to ignore it.

Korea was subsequently a problem as well during the visit of Secretary Shultz. Al Haig did not see the August 17 communique through to completion, because George Shultz came in just before it was brought to fruition. I think probably the change on our side

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helped to convince the Chinese that they needed to reach a compromise, since their great champion, Al Haig, was leaving.

During George Shultz's visit to China with President Reagan in the spring of '84, the Chinese again raised the issue of meetings with South Korea, the U.S., and North Korea. Shultz agreed, talking to Art Hummel. Between Beijing and Shultz's arrival in Seoul, Paul Wolfowitz again reversed this.

And then there was a very nasty leak in the Periscope section of Newsweek, accusing Art Hummel of having manipulated George Shultz on the Korean issue somehow. In fact, I later discovered that there was a notation made in my personnel file to the effect that I had put words in the Chinese mouths on Korea and so on. Very nasty stuff.

Korea was a very ideological question for us as well as for the Chinese, and evidently, by the middle of '83, the Chinese were thinking a little more creatively and less rigidly on this than we were. So that's all that went on there.

I mention this because, if people look at the record, they will see a cable that refers to something that we thought was in the reporting cable, but which wasn't in the reporting cable because it had been struck. It's probably a little hard to understand that record without that.

The point here was that the United States and China share an interest in maintaining peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula. And I must say, this issue had a history of which the Reagan administration was blissfully unaware. Dick Holbrooke, in his last days, had begun a discussion with the Chinese on parallel moves by China toward South Korea, and by the U.S. toward North Korea. That, of course, was killed by the defeat of Jimmy Carter in the 1980 election. Probably, therefore, I was one of the few people left in the government who was aware of that. We had made some commitments to the Chinese about moving in parallel. They then began to do things with South Korea, but we did nothing. From their perspective, this was puzzling backtracking by us. But this was a very

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controversial issue in Washington, very dear to certain elements of the right wing. I think, in fact, we had some openings to produce a relaxation of tension in Korea, in the early '80s.

And I have to say that the Chinese also were absolutely disgusted when, right in the middle of their efforts to broker some contact between the U.S. and North Korea with the South Koreans, Kim Chong Il, Kim Il-sung's son, now the heir apparent but not yet the formal leader in Pyongyang, evidently inspired and directed the bombing in Rangoon of the Korean Cabinet, which resulted in the deaths of many able people, including some that I knew personally, and was an absolute terrorist atrocity.

The interesting thing to me was that, having spent a lot of time talking to the Chinese about Korea, I got a sense of the extent to which they maintained a stiff upper lip about their alleged allies in North Korea, but really regarded them with a mixture of contempt and derision.

At any rate, the North Koreans, by their own actions, ended up obviating any possibility of an opening to either South Korea or the United States. And maybe that was what they tried to do.

Still, we had some opportunities that I think we missed, because of people not hearing what they didn't want to hear.

Q: Before we leave your time in China, a couple of things I'd like to take up. One, about the flow of Chinese students to the United States, some defections and how these were dealt with. And also generally monitoring how you felt about this process and its influence. And then Vietnam, as an issue or non-issue. Tibet. Also, you had the Reagan visit. A presidential visit is equivalent to one major earthquake. I think it's always interesting to hear about how this went. But also even more about visitors, because it's always struck me that the Chinese are very good at impressing visitors, which sometimes can be a bit annoying to the embassy, because they come away just fascinated with little

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schoolchildren dancing and all this sort of stuff, when there are real issues to be dealt with. Maybe we could cover some of these.

FREEMAN: Great.

Q: Chas, let's start with Chinese visitors to the United States, particularly students, and how, at the time you were there, you saw what this was going to do.

FREEMAN: Over this entire period, that is, from normalization right through the time that I left and continuing beyond it, there was an extraordinary trend in progress in which the children of the Chinese elite came to the United States to study. I think, at this point, there are very few members of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee or senior officials in ministries who have not had one or more children graduate from American universities. Even Deng Xiaoping's children came here to study, and, in one case, to serve as a wife of a military attach# in the Chinese Embassy. So the Chinese elite is increasingly very...

Q: I take it, up to this point, there had been a dearth of foreign education. It wasn't as though they were switching from the Soviet Union to the United States.

FREEMAN: No. In the 1950s, there was significant exposure to the Soviet Union, but in far smaller numbers than later occurred with the United States, for many reasons. The Soviet system was just a lot less accommodating and much more controlled than the American one. That was the early period of restoration of full sovereignty under the Communists, and there was suspicion of foreigners. So that the people who tended to be trained in the Soviet Union were being trained as specialists of one kind or another for specific purposes, either for the Foreign Ministry or, in some cases, as engineers. The current premier, Li Peng, for example, studied in the Soviet Union. He's an electric-power engineer, who has come to specialize a bit in nuclear power.

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But the point I was about to make is that this enormous flow of young people, middle-aged people, many of them, whose educations in China had been interrupted by the Cultural Revolution and domestic turmoil, to the United States has given a younger generation of Chinese an extraordinary familiarity with the United States. This has been followed more recently, subsequent to my departure from Beijing, by another flow of, in this case, Chinese business people, many of whom have bought property here, have condominiums in strange places, and who are doing business here. So that the human ties across the Pacific have reknit very quickly. Some who had been in the United States before 1949, what the Communists call, "liberation," came back. Others who had had no exposure at all to the outside world suddenly sent their children here and often came to visit them.

The effects of this were rather interesting. I think there was enormous regard for the American economic system, the openness it has to new ideas, the way in which ideas can move from the university laboratories or company laboratories, but often universities, into innovative production technologies. I think probably the Chinese reforms were inspired in no small measure by the discovery of this whole new way, for them, of doing business and managing technology and so forth.

On the political level, I think there was a mixture of admiration and distaste for what the Chinese discovered here. No Chinese that I have met seems to want to emulate either the U.S. federal system or the constitutional democratic presidential system that we have.

In fact, as an aside, the pattern of American democracy was exported to Asia, in the Philippines, and the results have not inspired others to follow this path.

So there was certainly an admiration for the intellectual freedom that the U.S. provides, but at the same time, a great distaste for what many of the Chinese see as the inevitable results of excessive acquisitive individualism and First Amendment rights. The Chinese tend to tie social disorder in the United States — high rates of teenage pregnancy, drug use, the extraordinary crime rate in the United States, which is, if not the world's highest,

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certainly among the world's highest, the lack of personal security on the streets, some of the things that we Americans also find least admirable about our society to our political system. I don't believe, therefore, that most Chinese who came here left the United States feeling that China should abandon the authoritarian pattern it had followed for the previous four thousand years, most recently in an extreme variant under the Communists.

So the English language, admiration for many American ways of doing things, many ideas found fertile ground in China. The Chinese, for example, came here and interned in law offices and discovered the merits and perils of the legal profession. All these things have had an influence, and I think that influence is likely to be a lasting one, which will mount over time. But it didn't produce an impulse to emulate the United States.

Q: It's interesting, because in a slightly earlier period, '76-'79, I ran the Consular Section in Seoul, Korea, and looking where people were going, it was astounding — the top schools, many of them technical, at the graduate level. Also, from what I understand, more by hearsay, on Taiwan, the same thing was happening. And both of these groups brought back technocrats. But, along with the baggage of technocracy that they brought back and that they're putting to extremely good use, there were obviously germs of a more democratic society. And both those countries, at least in 1995, are on a democratic course, to some extent because of the American influence on people who came back.

FREEMAN: I think this may well be the future course of events in China. But the key difference, during this period that we've been talking about, was the absence of the sort of economic prosperity, rising tide of property acquisition, that occurred in both Korea and Taiwan some decades ago. It remains to be proven if, as I believe will happen, a Chinese middle class, which is already emerging, expands and, like middle classes elsewhere, demands a measure of predictability in decisions, and therefore raises increasing demands for the rule of law. I think it is doing this already. Over time, some of these ideas might well be adapted to China.

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But, in fact, I believe a more potent example for the Chinese, one that they cite among themselves frequently, is Taiwan, which evolved in an earlier period in which things were perhaps somewhat simpler in the United States. There was a greater sense of optimism and confidence in the United States than there is now, and many of the social problems I cited hadn't emerged in their current virulent form.

So the Chinese look for models, those who espouse democracy or expanding liberty, which is a common sentiment in China, to South Korea, to Taiwan, to Singapore. That is: Let's get on with the business of economic reconstruction, building prosperity first, and then deal with some of the political problems of the system later, in a gradual way.

I think the dominant sentiment for the Chinese, and the reason they react the way they do to some of the untidy aspects of American life — pornography and crime and addictions and this sort of thing — has to do with the searing experience of Chinese history. Disorder in China can have catastrophic consequences, and you don't have to be very old, if you're Chinese, to have actually experienced some of those. So that, while people would like to see human liberty expand, they're very cautious about how authoritarianism is to be relaxed.

As I've said before, China is, in a sense, in my view, recapitulating the experience of Taiwan, with a time lag of a quarter century or more. And it may be that, as time goes on, ideas will be borrowed from the United States. Some of them seem to have a great deal of applicability. For example, federalism, in some form or other, even if greatly diluted, is an obvious point of reference for resolving the difference between center and province in China, which has become more acute in recent years as market economics has raised new demands for government activity.

But the expansion of student exchange was quite something to observe. And the management of this, just from an embassy technical view, was very difficult. First of all, we had visa forms that were deeply offensive to the Chinese, because they asked whether

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you were a Communist, pusher, prostitute, or whatever, all in the same section, and the Chinese, who were rather proud to be Communists, didn't see why these other affiliations should be associated with their political philosophy.

But even when we got past that form, which we did, with some dickering with the Department of State, most of the Chinese who came here were Communists, and every one of them required a waiver from the attorney general to get in. This added inordinate delay to travel, and complicated things. We began to press hard for a simplification of procedures, because we had to send a telegram on every visa applicant and wait for a name check and so on.

Q: I used to see them at the other end. I was, at one point, the State Department's liaison officer with INS, and every morning, there was a couple-of-inches-high set of telegrams from China. They all went, so it wasn't a...

FREEMAN: Eventually, we did, progressively, manage to simplify and streamline this procedure, and, in effect, go to a presumption of issuance that could be rebutted, rather than having to wait for actual approval.

But management of this was difficult.

Then we come to the question you posed earlier about people staying on. I don't think the Chinese pattern really differed, in any material respect, from that of other developing countries — India, or Taiwan, in an earlier era, or South Korea. Many of those who came decided to stay.

They may not have had that intention when they arrived, but economic opportunity here, salary levels, income levels; opportunities to break out of rigid academic hierarchies, where seniors had a lock on supervision and jobs; fewer bureaucratic restrictions, not political restrictions, but customary restrictions on the ability to launch research on projects

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and pursue them; better equipment, etc., all tended to drive a lot of the technocrats to try to stay on, for a while.

The pattern elsewhere has been (and this may likely prove to be the case with China) that as prosperity rises, as new ways of doing things, particularly in academic institutions and companies, set in, then people begin to go back in greater numbers.

It's really quite extraordinary in Taiwan, which had notorious levels of non-return (at one point, about eighty percent didn't go back), I think the vast majority now do go back, although they may delay for a few years, to work here.

In China, also, I was more surprised by how many did go back than by how many didn't, because living and working conditions in China, in the early 80's, were really pretty awful, and you had to be fairly dedicated to want to go back.

Our laws and visa restrictions, particularly on exchange visitors, were sufficiently rigid, for people who were bewildered by the complexities of the process and didn't have the habit of going to lawyers, to drive many of them out, anyway. So they went back.

We had a number of notorious defections, not particularly by students. The Chinese seemed to take a very relaxed attitude about whether people came back or not. And during this period, there was a large number of people who were coming here on their own, rather than sponsored by an institution. And they didn't seem to care at all whether these people ever came back. But there was the Hu Na incident, a tennis player.

Q: A woman tennis player.

FREEMAN: A woman tennis player from Szechuan, who had been a sometime tennis partner for Wan Li, who was vice premier, and for Deng Xiaoping. Her defection was contrived by the immigration lawyer for the Kuomintang in San Francisco, and I suspect was contrived in part for political effect.

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Q: Often this is the case, they jump in on the...

FREEMAN: There is some reason to believe that she was put up to it by these KMT operatives. But whether that was the case or not, she did defect, and all holy hell broke loose, and we lost our cultural-exchange agreement.

Q: Were you there at the time?

FREEMAN: Yes, I was, and was present for protests by the Chinese and counterprotests by us.

I think one of my finest hours was at the Ministry of Culture, giving them a half-hour lecture on Marx's view that people were not commodities and did not belong to anyone but themselves. I took great pleasure in reading their scripture back to them. USIS doesn't generally do good reporting cables, so it was probably not adequately summarized in the reporting cable they sent. But I truly enjoyed the experience.

Because of Deng's personal involvement in the case, this became really quite a nasty matter. And Ronald Reagan got personally involved and made various defiant statements about how she could move into the White House and whatnot. So it took a while to defuse the whole issue, but defused it eventually was.

Q: I would think that, almost before this exchange thing got started, there would be an understanding that, look, we're going to have these things. In the first place, you always have #migr# groups (I dealt with this in Yugoslavia, wherever) who want to play up. You know some of these well, and you've got to look at the big picture. And the bigger the noise you make about it, the worse thing it is. Just let it go and say, "Well, you know, we'll see her when she comes back."

FREEMAN: I think the Chinese did finally learn that, from this incident and a couple of others.

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The problem was that, in the case of China, this sort of stuff got so easily bound up with Taipei's then-rivalry with Beijing. Of course, it's a different situation now. I remember arguing strenuously with friends in the Foreign Ministry exactly the point that you made, that these things become causes *c#l#bres* only to the extent that you make them such. If you leave them at the personal plane of decision making, where they belong, they don't become a great source of political struggle between the United States and whatever country has lost a citizen for the time being.

In this regard, I think I should say one other thing. At the same time China was opening up, allowing its citizens to go abroad, people in the overseas Chinese community, including many who had fled the Mainland during the Communist takeover, or who had later fled from various periods of turmoil in the People's Republic of China, began to come back in very large numbers. By the end of my tenure, I was repeatedly visited by friends from Taipei who had come, semi-clandestinely, to the Mainland, to look at their old homes, to meet their old schoolmates, to see the Great Wall, to look around and rediscover their native place. People who had been prominent defectors in earlier eras also came back, and came and went with impunity.

This overseas Chinese connection, although at various points it's been attenuated, is one of the great differences between the Chinese Revolution and the Russian Revolution, in an earlier era. The Chinese seem to be very willing to forgive and forget, not make terrible demands on *#migr#s*. They haven't had a history, for example, really, of going out and killing *#migr#s*. In fact, ironically, during this period, agents from Taipei killed a prominent dissident from Taiwan who was resident in the United States. It was so uncharacteristic; the Chinese, whether on Taiwan or the Mainland, just haven't done that kind of thing.

*Q: Certainly, in an earlier period, and it may be true even today, the old KMT group in Taiwan had a very effective apparatus in the United States. Basically, it looked after *#migr#s*, public relations and all. Really a very effective network, including spying for its*

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own interests. What was your impression, during the period you were in China, of that of the Mainland Chinese?

FREEMAN: I don't think, certainly on the side of the PRC, work with so-called overseas Chinese (meaning Americans of Chinese origin or naturalized Americans) was a great focus. Much less effectively managed, on many levels, than comparable work from Taipei. Also less overtly demanding. Taipei really demanded positive loyalty from people. Beijing was much more tolerant and willing to have broad contact, perhaps because it was starting from a very low base and needed to appear flexible and accommodating. I don't think this sort of work was done terribly well by Beijing during that period. To some extent, this kind of activity came at the expense of the sort of efforts that Beijing should have made to cultivate Americans with no close connection with China.

For example, they monitored very carefully Taiwan's activities with the overseas Chinese in Chinese. They didn't monitor Taiwan's activities with non-Chinese in English. And that pattern really continued right up to the present day.

So, in terms of Beijing's interactions with Taipei on this overseas Chinese battlefield, it seemed that Beijing was treating this more as an extension of the Chinese civil war than as something really involving the United States. And it was kind of interesting.

Now Beijing does have, as I think you suggested earlier, as Taipei does, the great advantage of Chinese culture as an attractive force. And in Beijing's case, it also has the historic monuments of past dynasties and the mystery and grandeur of this vast state on the Asian continent. The Chinese are exquisite hosts. They are very subtle and effective at putting people at ease and leaving a good impression. They're good stage managers of meetings. Increasingly, as Deng's Revolution unfolded and China opened up more, there was a lot of prestige attached to going to China. That, we were able, as I think I may have indicated earlier, to use to good advantage in reconstructing the U.S.-China relationship.

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You asked about Ronald Reagan's visit. That was something fairly extraordinary.

He had entered office with an ideological stereotype of China really untempered by any human contact with the Chinese. Early on in the administration, as I mentioned, we sent sort of the equivalent of a deputy assistant secretary, Ji Chaozhu, now under secretary-general of the U.N. for political affairs, in to see Ronald Reagan, for the simple purpose of showing him that Chinese Communists were also human beings. Ji went to Harvard, and he's a very glib spokesman for Chinese views, in terms that Americans can understand and relate to. This was, I think, not appreciated by the Chinese ambassador, at the time. But, anyway, it began to break down a bit of the stereotype in Ronald Reagan's mind.

Reagan had thought about going to China, I think, even during the campaign, although he ended up sending George Bush, which was just as well, because Bush took a pummeling from the Chinese on the Taiwan issue. But when Reagan actually came to China, he suddenly discovered very warm, reasonable human beings, who spoke in pragmatic, non-ideological terms. And he drew the extraordinary conclusion, which he voiced in a statement that he made during a stop in Alaska en route back to the United States, that the Chinese really weren't Communists at all, which was news to those of us who were dealing with them. What he meant by that was that they were decent human beings, rather than ideological fiends.

His visit was fascinating. First of all, as you suggested, this kind of thing puts an enormous strain on an embassy. In his case, I think the entourage was over a thousand. Given his responsibilities as commander in chief in a period of the Cold War when every president was mindful that a submarine-launched missile attack on the United States meant that warning was down to seven minutes, when he traveled in China, he had to be within range of earth's satellite stations. We actually installed these at intervals along the route, for example, that he traveled from the city of Xian out to the Qin Dynasty clay warriors at the Qin emperor's tomb.

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Q: A wonderful thing that they excavated, with all these warriors.

FREEMAN: Exactly.

I was personally very much involved in this, first, of course, as the overall control officer for the visit, although I had the wit to appoint an executive control officer, who did all of the legwork.

There were some bizarre elements of it. The president wanted to have an American meal (I think it was turkey or something), and the newly opened Great Wall Hotel, which was associated with Sheraton, I think, and was one of the first Western-style hotels in Beijing, was selected as the site for this. We went out and ate this damn dinner, in rehearsal, three or four times, my wife in particular, criticizing it and whatnot. In the end, it wasn't bad. California champagne was flown in, and California wines.

There were all sorts of hassles, as usual, about who would use what car and that kind of thing.

Q: Often, the advent of the advance guard of the Secret Service is as close to a political disaster as one might think. How did the Secret Service handle this one?

FREEMAN: Actually, by and large, they weren't too bad. Very often, as you say, since they want to treat foreign visits as they would treat a visit to Peoria or some other place in the United States, they tend to try to run roughshod over foreigners. Very quickly, if you try to do that in China, you discover that you cannot run roughshod over the Chinese. They are in charge, and you have to persuade them. But it went, as these things go, less badly, and we were less offensive than we often are.

There was great attention by the Reagan advance people to staging, of course. Ronald Reagan was not called the Great Communicator for nothing, nor did he communicate in a vacuum. So people from the advance team came out to sort of find out where China

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was and learn the basics of U.S.-China relations and collect material for speeches and the like. And they spent hours sitting in my office, typing on the laptop of the time, GRID computers, as I had sort of said, well, here's a nice theme that you could strike, that would be good politically in the States and good here, and so on and so forth.

Anyway, I started to say that concern about security was pathological on both sides, and the city of Beijing was essentially shut down. I think the ill will that was caused was less due to the Secret Service than to the Chinese acceding easily to American security requirements, which meant that the whole rush hour was stopped for two hours — people outside, unable to move, bicycles everywhere, and so on and so forth.

In any event, because of the concern for security, the Chinese equivalent of the Secret Service protective detail chief was, along with the head of the U.S. Secret Service presidential detail, in the car with the president, and there was a Chinese driver. The concern was that something might happen, and someone would have to be able to communicate in Chinese. So they wanted someone who could handle that, and, on the odd chance that the president might actually be interested in substance, someone who could also do something substantive on the policy side. So Ambassador Hummel very graciously yielded this place to me. I think his Chinese is solid, but not as good as mine. So I ended up riding around in the car with Ronald Reagan, probably for about six hours.

It was a fascinating experience, because I had not been a political admirer of his, and had been somewhat bemused by him, and I didn't know what my reaction to him would be. By the end of the six hours, I had concluded that he wasn't very smart, and he was awfully lazy, but that if I were ever marooned on a desert island, he'd be the man I'd want to have with me. Just about the most charming individual I have ever met.

On the trip in from the airport, there was dead silence. So I decided I would start acting as tour guide. And I said, you know, this is this.

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He said, "Well, what kind of trees are those?"

And I said, "Beats me, I don't know."

Then I said, "This is workers' housing."

That set him off, and he told a Soviet joke. So I told him one back. I guess maybe I told him a Chinese joke. Then he responded with another joke. And I responded with yet another. And so it went. I know, because I exhausted my total repertoire of seventeen jokes. I told these to him, and was amazed to hear him, a couple of days later, retell those jokes he liked, vastly better than I had told them. Just a perfect sense of timing, and a great memory for this kind of thing.

I remember sitting in there at one point, going between the state guesthouse at Diaoyutai to the Great Hall of the People for a meeting. I was sitting in the jump seat with the Secret Service chief, and Jim Baker was sitting next to the president.

Q: He was secretary of state at that point.

FREEMAN: No, he wasn't. He was chief of staff of the White House. He had a folder, and he turned to the president and said, "Mr. President, there is a dam project, and the Congress has passed this thing. You have a veto recommendation from the Department of Interior, and you've got to act on this in the next couple of days. I really think you should look at it." And he handed the president the folder. The president looked inside the folder for a second, and then he turned to me and said, "Did I ever tell you the one about..." And so he told some Irish joke, which was pretty funny. Baker was so disgusted; you could just see him, absolutely disgusted. But that was Ronald Reagan.

Nancy Reagan was extraordinarily protective of him, in the car a great deal, most insistent on this, that, and the other. On the departure, she wanted the car to speed up, to get out to the airport. Of course, the motorcade arrival was timed to the arrival of various Chinese

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dignitaries, and there was no way they were going to speed up. She was very frustrated. But she made sure that he got his rest and whatnot.

George Shultz, who was the secretary of state by then, was along, and had very good talks with the Chinese, which, as I mentioned, included yet another Chinese offer to deal with the issue of Korea, which Shultz, who got a little note passed to him by Art Hummel, our ambassador, readily acceded to. Then, between Beijing and Seoul, to which he flew directly, Paul Wolfowitz and company managed to talk him out of it.

Q: Again we were talking about opening relations at that point?

FREEMAN: We were talking, in that case, about a Chinese proposal to host a South Korean-North Korean meeting, with the U.S. in attendance, in Beijing, which would have involved, inevitably, U.S. and Chinese mediation between South and North Korea, and which, frankly, I thought was a pretty creative and useful suggestion. It followed up on Deng Xiaoping's earlier suggestion, which I mentioned. This resulted in a very nasty little Periscope item in Newsweek, directed at Art Hummel and at me. Somehow it was presumed I was the evil genius behind this Chinese suggestion. I had, in fact, encouraged them to think creatively, and was rather pleased that they did, and sorry that we weren't politically, apparently, able to take up the idea.

Reagan was the most prominent of our visitors, but Caspar Weinberger, the secretary of defense, also came out, in what was a very important meeting, because, unlike Harold Brown's earlier travel, it was not in a condition of crisis. It was after the Taiwan arms sales issue had been brought back under control. It did open a broader dialogue and some greater cooperation between the U.S. and China. In fact, as I left China, we began to get involved in assistance to the Chinese in building a new interceptor aircraft.

We had other visitors, some of them quite notable. Admiral Rickover, certainly the most unpleasant, arrogant, self-centered man I've ever met.

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Q: He was in charge of the Navy's nuclear force, and he was a power unto himself.

FREEMAN: Very much so, and very unaccustomed to anybody telling him no, which Art Hummel, to his great credit, did, since Rickover struck me as brilliant, but essentially a nut, in many respects. He had a visit to a Chinese nuclear submarine, which I suppose pleased him, but only barely. I was very proud of Ambassador Hummel for bringing him up short.

We had most members of the Cabinet, and much of the Congress. I spent a fair amount of time, as DCM, and even, on occasion, as charg#, when Ambassador Hummel was not there, accompanying congressional delegations out of Beijing, thinking that that actually was a very good investment of my time. And it was.

Q: This is something that I think sometimes is forgotten. We talk about political junkets, but, particularly to areas where there is a matter of easy misunderstanding, it's very good to be able to have these congresspeople, under your control is the wrong term, but to get to them.

FREEMAN: To make sure they learned something.

Q: Did you find that you were having to peel off the layers of euphoria that the Chinese were wrapping around these people? China is very exciting and all that. Did you have to bring them back to reality?

FREEMAN: Yes, but also, quite honestly, I saw my role in accompanying these delegations as building a bit of enthusiasm for the relationship. There were a lot of things that the congresspeople might not have asked about, which I put them up to asking about, precisely because I wanted them to have their stereotypes shaken and to get a more accurate view of China. But, yes, they were often prone to very misguided positive over interpretation of things that were going on, and they did have to be brought back to earth once in a while.

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Q: What about the American media in China at that time? I read a book recently by a couple from the New York Times. She's of Chinese descent, and he's American. There was the implication that the embassy is often uninformed. The reporters are out in the field all the time, talking to people, whereas the embassy is too busy running the embassy. Could you comment on that?

FREEMAN: I think there was actually, in this era at least, not very much of that sort of criticism leveled against the embassy, and certainly it would have been unjustified.

I had a practice, as DCM, with the ambassador's encouragement, of meeting regularly with the press, off the record, and sharing interpretations of events. I sometimes learned something from them, but more often than not, I was pointing them in directions they might not have otherwise connected with.

We had also, during this period, the beginnings of a resident business community.

I spent a fair amount of time helping to get the American School (actually the International School, because it was jointly founded by five English-speaking embassies) started. It began on the landing outside the DCM's apartment in San Li Tun, which is a diplomatic residential area in Beijing, moved into what is now the Marine House at the old Pakistani Embassy that we took over, subsequently expanded enormously, and is now out in the direction of the airport.

But at that time, it was very small and not recognized by the Chinese. I spent a lot of time trying to explain to fairly unenlightened Chinese officials in the Diplomatic Services Bureau and the Consular Department and elsewhere that part of opening up China to economic interaction had to be to provide education to the children of business people who would be going to China. I laid the basis for the recognition of the school and for the Chinese acknowledgment that this was a legitimate function. I think that some Chinese, in the beginning, as they had done in the '50 and '60s, wanted to insist that foreign kids go into

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Chinese schools. There's something to be said for that, but there are also grave demerits, and it's not very attractive to people. So that was an activity.

I helped form the AMCHAM (American Chamber of Commerce) in Beijing, which also needed to get recognized by the Chinese.

Q: Back to the school thing. At the beginning, you can create something. Given your proclivities and interests, were you able to get, in this International School, a course on China, to give some knowledge of China? Because, often, these international schools seem to ignore the country, and they sort of recreate a good school in Des Moines or in Oxford in the UK. Were you able to get much Chinese?

FREEMAN: Yes. The principal at that time, whose name was Ritter, who had served in a similar capacity in Nepal, was very enthusiastic about that. Chinese language was part of the curriculum, and Chinese culture and history were taught.

But at the same time, I have to say, we had to be a little careful about this, because if we overemphasized this, the Chinese might have taken umbrage, since the school was essentially something that we had cobbled together without Chinese permission.

Although this was certainly included in the curriculum, the greater emphasis was on picking the best elements of various national curricula, to ensure that the school was more demanding than the American school system, which is notoriously undemanding of children. We had to do that in order to make the school congenial to Australian, New Zealand and British participants. Canadians, of course, have a system that is not dissimilar to our own.

One of the major issues of the time was that places in the school were severely limited by space. English-speaking embassies, or embassies that, if not English speaking, at least wanted to have their children educated in English, were continually imploring me, as

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chairman of the board and the manager of the American Embassy, to get their kids in. And it was very difficult.

I started to say, on the American community at that time, there were several elements of it. There was a rising group of business people, many of them housed in hotels, living and working under difficult circumstances.

A growing body of American students there, learning Chinese.

A group of foreign experts, so called, people who'd been hired by Chinese organizations to do things, translate into English, polish English, and the like, some of them old-line leftists, but many of them just Americans with an interest in China, recruited by the Friendship Association or some other group.

One of the great events that we put on, and I introduced McDonald's to Beijing in connection with this, was the Fourth of July picnic. This was sponsored by several of these community organizations, with the Embassy Employees' Association, and was on the grounds of one of the embassy compounds. We had, as I suggested, initially, homemade, and later, McDonald's, hamburgers, and games and prizes and so on, and was an opportunity for the American community to get together.

We had also an official July Fourth reception, but this was just for Americans, and it was casual. As I left, this was beginning to get out of hand, because the American community was growing beyond our capacity to absorb them. And I'm not sure what the tradition now is.

We charged admission and financed the thing that way, with the proceeds going to what became the American Chamber (it was not then called that, because the Chinese didn't recognize foreign Chambers of Commerce) and to the Embassy Employees' Association.

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So there was a lot of emphasis on our part, within reasonable limits, on serving the needs of a growing American community in a very adverse environment.

That included, to go back to your original question, the American press, which were, by and large, very competent, hard-working people, obviously focused in a different way than we were. Our focus was what was in the national interest of the United States. Their focus was what was novel and of interest to their readers. The two weren't always the same. In fact, sometimes they conflicted.

Q: One foreign-policy aspect that I didn't ask you about was whether Vietnam come up as far as what was happening in Vietnam? Or was this just not an issue, particularly?

FREEMAN: Vietnam was an issue only in the sense that there was some reason to believe, as '84 marched along, that the Chinese might be planning a further seizure of Vietnamese-held islands in the South China Sea.

Q: The Spratlys?

FREEMAN: The Spratlys were part of the problem. Yes, I suppose you could say it was the Spratlys; they were an issue.

Q: So basically you were talking about oil.

FREEMAN: From a Chinese perspective, we're talking about, first and foremost, questions of sovereignty and, second, strategic position. If the Chinese, as I believe they will, are able to establish a military base of some kind in the Spratlys, they will be in a position, not now but some decades hence, to exercise dominance and to control that region in the event of a rise of international tensions. It is a major sea lane. So that's the second consideration. I think oil, economic exploitation of the region, is only a tertiary consideration. Perhaps Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and the others who

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have an interest in this put economics first, but certainly, for China, economics is not the primary consideration.

We had no relationship, to speak of, with the Vietnamese in Beijing. That, I think, was a subject of regret to some of the Vietnamese-speaking officers in our embassy, some married to Vietnamese wives.

The dean of the diplomatic corps at that time was the Cuban, who was an impressively intellectual man who would go on at exceptional length at farewell ceremonies for members of the corps. I can remember when the Egyptian left, that, about the time he'd gotten to Ramses II, which took him half an hour, I had to leave. He would give very erudite presentations on the history, culture, and relationship with China of each country. But we didn't have that much contact with the Cubans.

The major embassies with which we did have interaction were the predictable ones: the Japanese, the Australians, the British, the French, the Germans. I continued a tradition, organized by my predecessor, of having a five-power lunch, so called, with the deputy chiefs of mission, or equivalents, from Britain, France, Germany, and Japan. Once a month, we would meet to talk about the situation in China and international relations as they affected China.

We also had very close relations with the Yugoslav Embassy. They had an advantage over others, because they had a party-to-party relationship with the Chinese, and tapped into the International Liaison Department, which had a whole different set of insights and focuses than the Foreign Ministry. They often were very knowledgeable about goings on within the Chinese Communist Party, or at least more knowledgeable than those of us who were not Communists. So that was a good relationship.

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Q: It's an interesting thing, because I was in Yugoslavia during the '60s, and, of course, then, we had no relations. The Yugoslavs, at that point, were a prime source for information. They're quite willing to share.

FREEMAN: Yes, and very charming people, whose subsequent tragedy was not yet entirely apparent. This was a period, however, in which Kosovo emerged as a major issue. The Chinese took that to heart, and one of the results of that was a significant loosening up of the Chinese press, because one of the arguments was that the unrest in Kosovo had occurred...

Q: This was with the Albanian...you can't even call it minority, in Kosovo. It was the majority then.

FREEMAN: Ninety percent. But the growth of separatist sentiment in Kosovo had been overlooked by Belgrade, because, in the view of the Chinese, the Yugoslav press had not felt able to report. So, facing their own difficulties in Xinjiang and Tibet and the like with possibly restive minorities, they loosened press reporting rather considerably.

There were interesting things happening during that period. Perhaps the most liberal force in Chinese politics, liberal to the point of being anti-Communist, was, ironically, the Institute of Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought. This think tank emerged as a driving force in liberalization of Chinese politics, as well as economics.

It was later savaged, I might say, during the Tiananmen incident, as having been engaged in activities that were subversive of the established order. And I think it was guilty. I used to meet regularly with the people in that institute for lunch. I had a superb chef, and lunch at my house was a treat, so people very willingly came. I would do two or three lunches a week, and sometimes a dinner or two, in addition to whatever was going on with delegations.

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Finally, speaking of chefs and lunch and the like, with my then-wife and then-chef, I collaborated in writing a bilingual book, in Chinese and English, called *Cooking Western in China*, which was about 250 recipes, in menu form, with erudite explanations of the art of eating in the West and similar subjects, how to treat meat.

The inspiration for this was that, although I tried very hard to stay off the diplomatic circuit except to go to national days to meet the relevant Chinese and say hello, for symbolic purposes, to Europeans, Latin Americans and Africans, they tended to have dinner at exceptionally late hours, interminable affairs... They didn't seem to go to work at eight o'clock in the morning the way I did.

Q: This has been one of the great crosses that the Foreign Service has had to bear.

FREEMAN: Not only did they have these long, unproductive dinners, with maybe one token Chinese official, or often none, so that the opportunity to do serious work was not great (most of them didn't speak Chinese, and they didn't like Chinese food), but also the food they served, which was prepared by Chinese chefs, was a terrible travesty of Western cuisine. There were only, as I discovered, about four recipes that the Chinese chefs had mastered, so you ate Beef Wellington every time you went out.

So my wife and I decided that we would rectify this. As our gift to the community in Beijing, we would explain Western food to the Chinese, and provide them with detailed instructions on how to prepare it. So I sat down, over Chinese New Year's, which is an extended three- or four-day holiday period, and batted out a series of essays, and sort of forced my wife and the chef into writing down all sorts of recipes. At that time, I didn't know how to cook, myself, I just knew how to eat. Eventually, this was published and, I think, was welcomed by the community. Probably, if it didn't relieve the boredom of these affairs, it improved the cuisine.

Q: The last thing before we move on, was Tibet much of a problem during this time?

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FREEMAN: No, I don't think we considered it much of a problem, but we followed it closely. There were some fairly promising exchanges going on between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese. At one point, it looked as though the Dalai Lama and the Chinese were about to do a deal, and that he was coming back. I think that was sabotaged by militant members of the Dalai Lama's entourage, rather than the Chinese.

We were in the process, during this period, of establishing additional consulates. Shenyang opened. That's in the northeast, the former Mukden. Chengdu, the capital of Szechuan, which has a district including Tibet, was opening, toward the tail end of this period, in a hotel. And the consul general and others were frequent visitors to Lhasa. So we did monitor the situation, but it was not at a particularly acute stage.

In fact, this was a period, as I recall, of continuing liberalization in Tibet. The Cultural Revolution sacking of monasteries and libraries and the like was being repaired at the expense of the Chinese government. Large amounts of money were going into Tibet for reconstruction. The Chinese had reversed the Red Guard mentality. Although many of the Red Guards in Tibet were Tibetan, not Chinese, they had made an all-out effort to destroy both the relics and the reality of Tibetan culture. The Chinese had turned 180 degrees and were trying to restore and protect Tibetan culture. Tibet had not yet, at that time, attracted the odd coalition of international supporters that it has since. So, no, it wasn't much of an issue.

I should say that, in terms of opening consulates, we also planned to open in Wuhan. I went to Wuhan to select a site for consulate facilities. Of course, later, a combination of budget and intelligence-agency-generated reciprocity considerations prevented Wuhan from actually opening. I think that is a great mistake. Wuhan's right smack in the center of China, and we should have a post there.

Q: What was your feeling about the value and use of our consulates during this period?

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FREEMAN: China is a vast country, somewhat larger than the United States, including Alaska, with a huge population and an exceedingly primitive transportation network. At that time, many areas in China were still off limits to foreigners. Americans would turn up there and get themselves into trouble, and all of the usual sort of consular problems would occur. People in the interior needed access to American visa services. So, on the consular level, in terms of trade promotion, in terms of facilitative assistance to Americans and travel services to Chinese, they were invaluable.

But, beyond that, each region of China has a different pulse and different atmosphere. As we began to spread our presence more broadly in China, we were able to take these different pulses and sense these different atmospheres. Before 1949, we had had fourteen consulates in China, recognizing all of these factors. The fact that we now have four, with the right to open a fifth in Wuhan, in my view, hardly begins to scratch the potential utility of such postings.

Q: Where were the consulates when you were there?

FREEMAN: Guangzhou, which is Canton, Shanghai, Shanying, and Chengdu, with the right to open in Wuhan. We had previously been represented in Xiamen (Amoy), #r#mqi, and various places, most of the major cities in the interior, and additional areas on the coast.

So I think we were probably more foresighted than others. The Japanese have moved in their own directions. But there is no substitute for a presence on the ground. Whether it's in terms of reporting and analysis, or it's in terms of discharging responsibilities to American citizens and promoting bilateral relations, you just can't substitute for this.

Q: We might leave China at this point, unless there's something else that you think we might cover.

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FREEMAN: Why don't we bring this to a close, and we can continue the next time.

On November 2, 1984, I was transferred directly from Beijing to Bangkok, which was quite a shock to my system. Going from a very austere, egalitarian, rather (still at that time) drab society, moving in strange directions all at once, to the sybaritic, hedonistic, colorful environment of Bangkok overnight was amazing.

What brought the difference home to me... I left Beijing in the morning, and many friends came to the airport to see me off. I arrived in Bangkok and sat down on the porch with Ambassador Dean (John Gunther Dean, who was then the ambassador). I had been assigned there to bridge an anticipated gap between Dean's departure and the arrival of the next ambassador, still at that time unannounced.

Q: You were going to be deputy chief of mission.

FREEMAN: I was the DCM, and later charg#. The household staff in the DCM's residence took drink orders, and then approached, on their knees, with the drink orders, walking across the entire room on their knees, which, for someone used to the stern egalitarianism of China, was really quite a shock.

Anyway, we could talk about Thailand and the merits or demerits of that enormous embassy, and the activities in which it was engaged. I was there from November 1984 until March 1986, when I was suddenly recalled to the Department to be principal deputy assistant secretary for Africa.

Q: Chas, could you give me a feel for what the political situation was, during that period of time, in Thailand.

FREEMAN: This was, in effect, a period of transition in Thai political culture.

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The prime minister, Prem, was in office, as previous prime ministers had been, with the support of the military. The Thai supreme commander, General Atit, was constantly suspected of wishing to intervene in Thai politics. In fact, I don't believe he did, during the period that I was there.

There were a number of serious issues, not between the United States and Thailand so much as in our relationship. We still had, at that time, an enormous population, hundreds of thousands, of Cambodian refugees in safe haven just over the border in Thailand, and a very large effort at screening them, partly for resettlement, but also to collect information on the Khmer Rouge.

There was a controversy in the United States, because partisans of refugee resettlement charged that the Joint Voluntary Agencies (JVA), which actually did the pre-screening before an immigration officer (in other words, a consular officer, in effect) did the final interview, had been too quick to find Khmer Rouge connections among those that they were interviewing, and had been too tough in terms of excluding people.

There were also controversies about small groups of Montagnards who had come over the border.

We had a very large population of Hmong along the Lao border.

Q: That's "H..."

FREEMAN: Hmong or Miao or Meo, depending on which language you use. I don't think they like any of those terms, actually. But the Hmong, the Free People, as they call themselves, were also, in large numbers, along the Mekong, on the Thai side of the Lao-Thai border.

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Finally, we still had a very substantial population of Vietnamese boat people in Thailand, and more coming out, with a terrible problem of piracy being committed against them — rape and pillage and murder — on the high seas.

Q: This was both by Thai and others.

FREEMAN: It involved Thai, and it involved Malays, but largely Thai, who saw the Vietnamese refugees as easy sources of additional income.

So the refugee issue was quite a preoccupation of the United States and of the embassy.

In addition to that, we had, of course, the longstanding concern to cooperate with Thailand in the suppression of the drug trade. There was a substantial connection between the various rebellions and gangs that operated in Burma, in the Shan State in particular. Khun Sa, an ex-Kuomintang general who was the leader of one faction of the Shan people, was particularly notable. As a result of extensive drug trafficking through Thailand, there was a terrible problem of addiction in the Thai cities. There was also a substantial amount of marijuana grown, for export to the U.S. and other locations, in the Thai northeast. So the largest drug enforcement agency office in the world was then in Bangkok, with branches in Chiang Mai and Udorn and Songkhla, in the far south of the isthmus of Kra.

The third area of concern was, of course, Indochina itself, and watching Indochina. We had a large intelligence presence. The Joint Casualty Research Committee (JCRC), which dealt with accounting for missing in action (MIAs) and putative POWs who might still be in the hands of the Vietnamese or Lao, was also a part of the embassy. As DCM, I had occasional meetings with the Vietnamese ambassador to arrange for contact on that subject.

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Thailand was, at that point, just beginning the pattern of rapid growth that, of course, is characteristic of East Asia, but which had not been characteristic of Thailand. And there were substantial and growing trade and investment issues of one sort or another.

Finally, we had a military relationship that had largely gone into abeyance after the Mayaguez incident. As you'll recall, the United States, in the Ford administration, intervened in Cambodia to recapture the Mayaguez, a merchant vessel with Americans on board. This operation had been staged from Thai territory without the foreknowledge or permission of the Thai government. That resulted in the removal of American forces from Thailand. So there were abandoned American bases and facilities. There was a robust pattern of exercises, centering on an annual amphibious-landing exercise called Cobra Gold, which seemed to be badly in need of updating and redirection, as it had essentially deteriorated into a sort of operatic performance for the benefit of people in the reviewing stands. Altogether, these operations, plus the desirability of Bangkok as a center for regional operations, given the fine air connections out of Don Muang Airport and the availability of very loyal, competent labor, at reasonable prices, in Thailand, meant that we had a vast number of regional organizations as part of the embassy as well. So, altogether, this came to an embassy that was about three times as large as the Thai Foreign Ministry, and which had, by my count, somewhere on the order of thirty departments and agencies represented, and which was very difficult to manage.

The manager at that time was John Gunther Dean, one of the great figures of the Foreign Service, a viceregal personality, very much in charge, and very conscious of his status as American ambassador and the authorities that flowed from that.

I arrived, as I said, from a smaller, more austere environment, which was in the process of growing, and which, to a great extent, I had personally shaped and knew very well, to find this sprawling mass. The only mechanism for control was a regular country-team meeting, which was, of course, vastly beyond the span of managerial control of anybody.

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I really got, initially, no direction from this rather intimidating figure of the ambassador, someone who knew Thailand and Southeast Asia exceedingly well, and who was in the habit of writing the talking points both for the prime minister and for whatever the American was meeting him. He would literally write both sides of the conversation, and the conversation would always go exceedingly well, because it had a single script writer.

But he didn't really give me much direction as to what he wanted me to do, and about two months in, he suddenly said, "This isn't working terribly well. I want you to be in charge."

And I said, "Well, I thought you were in charge. You seem to be very much in charge. If you really mean that, bear with me as I take charge."

So I cut off most of his cable traffic, and screened it all through me. I reorganized the country team into five clusters, subteams, if you will, centered on military affairs, consular and refugee matters, drugs and intelligence, Indochina matters, and economic affairs. This cluster system began to give some coherence to the embassy organization, which it had lacked, and, I gather, has in fact been continued by my successors.

Much to my delight, Ambassador Dean did not object to having his cable traffic curtailed, and proved to be a very forceful backer of decisions that I made. We developed, over the roughly eight months that we overlapped, a very close working relationship, and even a strong personal relationship, such that, on the day that he left (protesting, of course, that he didn't want anyone to see him off, though, of course, many of us did go out to see him off), he, very dramatically, went around the room, informing everyone that he had just passed a stress test on a treadmill, and recommending that everyone do the same, and when he came to me, he said that I should definitely take the stress test.

I said, "John, that's what I thought the last eight months were." And he laughed.

We have remained in touch.

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Q: *He's where now?*

FREEMAN: He is retired and living, largely, in Paris. His wife is French.

Q: *Talking about the time Dean was there, why don't we examine some of these themes. As a regular Foreign Service officer, but also as a consular officer, I know the distaste that a normal embassy has when approaching something messy like drug problems or refugees. This, of course, was so overwhelming. Could we talk a bit about how, at the time, the embassy and the other agencies dealt with the refugee problem, both Vietnamese and Cambodian.*

FREEMAN: The structure at the embassy to deal with this, really, by and large, did not involve the Consular Section. We had a regional Immigration and Naturalization Service office in the embassy, headed by a very fine civil servant, who, I think, has since deservedly risen quite high in the INS ranks. In addition, as I said, we had an embassy refugee section, which was a State-Department-staffed section, supposedly supervising the JVA, the aforementioned Joint Voluntary Agency effort, which was headed by Dennis Grace. Lacey Wright was the head of the Refugee Section during most of the time that I was there.

Frankly, I don't believe that the supervision that the JVA received from the embassy was at all effective. There was, to my mind, a tendency for people generally in the refugee area, and it was certainly manifest in Bangkok, to think that the end justified the means, and to cut corners in the interests of compassion. So, had I tried to correct that endemic problem, I would have done nothing else in Bangkok. I think I was able to chip away at it.

The issue of piracy arose very early on, because there was pressure in Congress to use this as an issue with which to bash the Thai. And yet it was obvious that, without Thai cooperation and bringing the Thai to recognize that this was their problem and not simply

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something that the international community was clubbing them over, we were not going to get the issue settled.

Early on in my tenure, a very talented consultant, named Robert Gersony, arrived, and, with the help of people from the Refugee Programs office, managed to, in effect, work with me and set up some smoke and mirrors and co-opt the Thai by using the anti-piracy program as a means of bringing in the Thai police, rather than going after them.

Q: You say he was a consultant. Consultant to whom?

FREEMAN: Consultant to the Refugee Programs Bureau at State. I subsequently worked with him in a number of other contexts. He's just a very indefatigable, wise investigator, who has a habit of getting to the root of problems and dissecting them in a way that facilitates designing a solution to the problem. It's sometimes very useful to bring in an outsider for that purpose, and I think Bob Gersony performed a very useful role in this context.

We did manage to begin a program of cooperation with the Thai maritime police (in effect, the coast guard), and to set up an informant system among Thai fishermen, which slowly, although never entirely eliminating it, very greatly reduced the incidence of barbarous mistreatment or even murder of refugees on the high seas. That effort was centered mainly in Songkhla, in the south. As I say, it was a long-term effort, done in cooperation with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). That was something that RP (Refugee Programs) was initially very uncomfortable about. Refugee people don't like to work with cops and intelligence people. But actually it worked out pretty well, and I consider that to have been a minor success.

The broader issue of how to maintain sufficient offtake of Vietnamese refugees, whom Thailand had taken in on the assumption that they would all be resettled outside Thailand and that Thailand would not be left with a residual problem, was a difficult one.

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We also had another program, which was quite intriguing and, in a way, promising, but beset with difficulties, and that was the so-called Orderly Departure Program (ODP), whereby consular officers from the embassy flew to Saigon and interviewed the relatives of Vietnamese who had resettled in the United States, or Amerasians (that is, the children of American servicemen and Vietnamese women), and arranged for their direct flight, via Bangkok, to the United States.

So this was a different embassy in the sense that it ran very large programs, which is not characteristic of an embassy. The Orderly Departure Program, the Refugee Section, the JVA, the Consular Section, and the INS sometimes, with their different perspectives, would find themselves very much at odds. So I ended up spending a lot of time trying to forge more of a sense of teamwork among that group. And I think I had some success, although, as I said, I don't think I was able to overcome the corner-cutting tendencies of humanitarians in the JVA and Refugee Program and ODP entirely.

Q: I'm an expert on corner cutting, so I understand how this works.

FREEMAN: A certain amount of it is necessary. On the other hand, there is a reason to have policies and then to try to implement them. Striking a balance is not always easy.

Q: What about the intelligence side of the operations? One, of course, was the pirates, but that was sort of case specific. But trying to find out what was happening in Indochina. This was a time when we had relations with Laos, but not with Cambodia or Vietnam.

FREEMAN: That's correct. The intelligence presence was very large, partly for the same reason that the embassy itself was large; namely, that a great number of regional support operations were based in Bangkok. There were really two focuses: one was drugs, and the other was Indochina.

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Q: What was our focus as far as what was happening in Indochina? In a way, after the Vietnam War and our withdrawal, it almost fell off the political radar.

FREEMAN: A major focus of the collection effort was Indochina, and, without getting into detail, we used every means of collection available to us. I think, generally speaking, with regard to Indochina, the brief was a watching one. There were a few exceptions where we had active interaction across the border.

One, which I have mentioned, was the Orderly Departure Program in Vietnam. And we had an interest in tracking Vietnamese policy on refugees generally, not only those who might be allowed direct departure from Vietnam, but those who were likely to go onto the high seas. That was a great concern.

A second area of concern was, of course, the politics of the Vietnamese empire, because at that time, Vietnam very much dominated Indochina. And the concept of Indochina, which was a Vietnamese imperial concept (or a French imperial concept with Vietnamese roots), was very much the operative philosophy in Hanoi. So we watched for evidence of Vietnamese policies in, particularly, Cambodia and, to a lesser extent, in Laos.

We were also very concerned about and spent a great deal of time tracking two other issues. One was the POW/MIA issue, to which I referred, where there was an exhaustive effort to track down and investigate even the most farfetched rumors of sightings of alleged American POWs or the discovery of remains. The other issue (in fact, we had a separate little operation doing this) was so-called yellow rain — alleged Vietnamese use of chemical weapons against, primarily, the Hmong. We had a small group that would go out and try to collect samples, or obtain samples that had been collected by others, from sites where, allegedly, yellow rain had been used. There was a great controversy as to whether yellow rain was a natural phenomenon, bee feces, or whether it was in fact a weapon. And, I confess, I never reached a firm conclusion.

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So these were the principal focuses with regard to Indochina.

Occasionally, we would also have some foolish American sail a yacht into Vietnamese waters, become arrested, under suspicion of being a spy, and held. And then we would have a lengthy set of interactions with the Vietnamese, while we tried to gain the release of whoever this yo-yo was. I don't want to sound uncharitable, but you had to be awfully stupid to sail into Vietnamese waters, at least at that time.

The other focus of the intelligence effort was primarily drugs. Again, all available methods of collection were used. This was not an easy managerial issue, because CIA and DEA have very different professional cultures.

DEA, even overseas, is drawn from the ranks of agents who are more accustomed to kicking down doors than listening carefully at the keyhole, and who are used, in short, to exercising arrest authority, which they don't have overseas. So there was always a bit of strain and stress on them, as they tried to do a job that they felt they were hampered in doing. They had to rely on the Thai authorities for arrests.

CIA was, in this area, quintessentially a collector of information, rather than an action agency, but it also had its Rambo types who wanted to get into the door-kicking business.

Q: Rambo, just for the record, was a movie character who was sort of a one-man army, who went in and shot up a lot of people and did whatever he wanted to, to the cheers of movie audiences.

FREEMAN: Fortunately, the senior management of both agencies in the embassy was very sober and serious minded, so the more rambunctious in the ranks of both got some adult supervision. But I had to spend a great deal of time preventing an outbreak of guerilla warfare between CIA and DEA, particularly in Chiang Mai, where the consulate and the people associated with it were under constant terrorist threat.

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Q: Sticking to the drug thing, I'm under the impression that there was considerable involvement by many within the military, and even within the royal family, in Thailand, at least at certain times. How did we view this during the period you were there?

FREEMAN: I don't think, with one exception, that there was much reason to suspect involvement by the royal family. However, the nature of drugs, or indeed any effort to prohibit trade in a substance for which there is a high demand, as Prohibition in the United States demonstrated, is inherently corrupting. The problem of corruption in the police force, and to some extent in the military, although mainly the police force, was a main target of U.S.-Thai joint intelligence and operational efforts. A separate Thai equivalent of the Drug Enforcement Agency was set up, with elaborate checks to ensure that it was clean from corruption, and to a great extent, it targeted the police.

There were also problems, I must say, in the American community. I arrived, as I said, November 2, 1984, and discovered, to my surprise, that there was no drug policy in the embassy with regard to what would happen to people who abused drugs, which, of course, were readily available. One of my first acts, with the ambassador's strong support, was to establish a drug policy, a fairly draconian one.

Unfortunately, the first case in which I had to apply this was to the son of a friend of longstanding, who was photographed, by a joint DEA-Thai camera team, selling marijuana to other kids at the Bangkok American School. So the first victim (or beneficiary, depending on your perspective of the policy) was this very nice young kid, whom I had last seen as a baby. Bringing his parents into my office with him, and telling them that he had two days to get out of Thailand, and that they could go with him or stay, as they chose, was not a happy thing.

In an organization of this size (roughly 2,400 people, including the associated elements and local employees), the DCM is both the mayor of a small town and, in effect, the chief janitor.

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I remember with particular horror a series of incidents, which happened long after John Dean left and Bill Brown arrived as his successor, where a State Department officer (who shall remain nameless; I'll just call him Mr. E) arrived and, against the advice of the embassy, brought two very large German shepherds with him to a small apartment in an urban complex. The day after he arrived, he went around and shoved a note under the door of everybody in the apartment building, saying, "I have these two large dogs, one called Killer and the other Fang. I will be walking them occasionally, or perhaps my daughter will. They're very large, and she can't really restrain them, so, if you see them coming in the corridor, please get back into your apartment. Once a week, I will clean up the dog doo in the playground. So don't worry about it, because once a week, it will be removed."

This, of course, was not exactly the way for him to start out with his neighbors. We had to demand that the dogs be removed (actually, I offered to take them, because I like dogs and I had the space to do it), but, more important, to insist that he find a home for them, a kennel or something. We then made an effort to find some sort of a place where he could have his dogs, but this was very unsuccessful. And it turned out that Mr. E was a very litigious person, so, for years thereafter, I was answering grievance complaints about my dictatorial handling of this situation, which I had thought, in fact, was rather gentle.

We also had (while I'm on the subject of this kind of thing) a revolt among the military wives over the really very charming, nice, but bizarre-looking, wife of the chief of the joint U.S.-Thai military assistance program. This colonel, with a very distinguished war record, really salt of the earth, had met a Cockney lady, apparently in a bar in Florida, and fallen in love with her. She had the habit of dying her hair green and purple and the like, and was quite spectacularly full figured. Lavinia was really quite a pretty girl, with an hourglass figure, which she displayed to best advantage. This did not go over well with the much more staid military wives, who had to serve under her husband and her.

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I must say, the first time I met her, I was a little bit perplexed. But, as I got to know the two of them, I realized she was a wonderful person. She just had a bizarre and somewhat flamboyant sense of dress. Periodically, however, the military wives would land on me and demand that she and her husband be removed, which I would rebuff. So that sort of thing would go on.

Finally, I had the first case of a Foreign Service officer to come down with AIDS. Again, a very nice young man, in his thirties, I suppose, who openly lived with another man and had apparently contracted the disease years before in Zaire. This really was quite an odyssey, because he suddenly went back, with his hairdresser friend, to Washington, and evidently had a private medical examination. While he was back here, his friend died of AIDS. That was the rumor; no one could substantiate it. He declined to allow the State Department to give him a medical examination. When he returned, I attempted to order him to have a medical examination.

Actually, it got into the Thai press that the American Embassy was spreading AIDS in Bangkok. So it was a political issue, as well as a matter of compassion and morale in the post.

No one, at that time, knew much about AIDS. With the help of the embassy doctor, we ran a very extensive educational program, but there were people who panicked. He had escorted the wife of a friend, one of the embassy employees, who was out of town, to the Marine Ball. People refused to have any physical contact with her, on the grounds that she might be a carrier. They wouldn't swim in swimming pools where he had once been. They insisted that the washers and dryers in his apartment be removed and that he be barred from them. It became very nasty indeed.

The Department of State didn't know how to deal with this. The Privacy Act was invoked as a reason for not being able to compel him to have a medical exam. As charg#, I attempted

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to expel him from the country, and was told I couldn't do that, because it involved a medical matter. So I fought that.

As the end of his tour approached, I just frankly said the hell with it. I had been trying to get him back to Washington, to have an examination and have some treatment, and get him out of causing both a political problem in Thailand and a morale problem. He was determined not to go, and was fighting and getting a lot of support from the medical division. I was getting no support from anyone in Washington. It came up to about three weeks before he was due to leave, and I just said, oh, the hell with it, he's leaving anyway. A week later, he became extraordinarily ill and had to be medevaced to Clark Air Force Base and thence back to the States.

As a footnote, subsequently, when I left Bangkok and returned to Washington, I inquired what had happened to him, and discovered that he'd been made the lead advance person for George Shultz in his public appearances, which I thought was extremely questionable, given the public-relations fallout that it might generate. But it illustrated the fact that, at least at that time, the Department of State didn't know how to deal with this question and wasn't prepared to back people.

Q: It was highly political.

FREEMAN: It was highly political and very much misunderstood. People imagined that AIDS was a disease of homosexuals; whereas, it's just a sexually transmitted disease that is no more the province of males than syphilis or any other sexually transmitted disease.

But I got quite an education on it, and in the difficulties that people have in dealing with issues that challenge their sense of sexual morality and their concern about disease and the safety of their spouses and children and the like. I must say, I was quite disgusted by the inability of the Department of State to come to grips with the issue and deal with it. They did, later, but it took them the better part of 1985 to do that.

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Q: This is typical, in a way. I don't know at that time, but I assume it was true that Bangkok was sort of the sex capital. You had planeloads of German, American, Japanese, and Australian tourists coming in, mostly horny males who were out for... Was this true, and did this cause either consular problems or other problems?

FREEMAN: I think the American participation in the sex trade was, at that time, not great. The days of a large American military presence were gone. The sex trade, per se, did not pose an unusual problem. The main problem there was starstruck young men bringing in prostitutes whom they had rented for a week and then decided to marry. We tried to counsel them a bit on thinking twice before they got into a relationship they might later regret, with a woman who, in some cases, was twice their age, although she looked young, and so forth and so on.

Now, having said that, in Thailand, sex is regarded as an entirely normal bodily function. Thai men stop off on the way home to go to a massage parlor the way American men might stop at a bar. Thai culture is very hedonistic. In fact, I used to joke that the Thai had done an exhaustive study of the organs of the body, and determined that there was one that was essentially superfluous and should never be exercised, if at all possible — namely, the brain — but that all other organs of the body should be used to the utmost advantage.

The greater problem was with drugs, heroin in particular, because Thai heroin was uncut, and American addicts who were users of heroin were accustomed to taking much larger doses than could be safely taken in Thailand, and therefore we had a constant parade of people who were overdosing and dying from heroin. For the Consular Section, that was a constant problem.

We also had a range of other issues, various people who decided to play the aforesaid Rambo and swim the Mekong into Indochina, to rescue POWs that they believed were there, which was not regarded kindly by anyone. Basically, they were just getting

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themselves in trouble and causing problems for the Thai. So, tracking down these people, hauling them out of jail, and saving them from themselves was also a main activity.

I should say, since I've been talking primarily about managerial issues, really there were some fascinating ones. Indeed, the dominant experience I had in Thailand was managerial. I also did a lot of business with the Thai, which I'll come to in a minute. But I wanted to mention one unit in the embassy, which I became very fond of, called the Armed Forces Research Institutes of Medical Science (AFRIMS), which was conducting world-class, probably the best research in the world on malaria. They were part of the embassy, headed by a very competent medical colonel. No one had ever really paid much attention to them before, but when I established these managerial clusters, they suddenly were brought into the embassy.

Incidentally, the Centers for Disease Control, which was also theoretically under the embassy, just basically refused to show up at or have anything to do with the embassy other than access to the commissary and the like. And that was a constant problem. But there were only two of them, so I didn't worry about them too much.

AFRIMS had a huge battle going with the Civil Service Commission. They had one employee, a Thai, I believe, who, by dint of careful study over decades, had become the world's most infallible mosquito mater. He would take the male and female mosquito, each in a pair of tweezers, and put them together in such a way that they could procreate, which was a very specialized art indeed. The Civil Service Commission had great difficulty believing that this high level of skill deserved a significant level of Civil Service classification. One can understand how, in Washington, D.C., this might have sounded a bit absurd. But I got involved in intervening in support of AFRIMS's efforts to get this gent the proper level of salary and recognition for his prowess as an arranger of marriages between mosquitoes.

Q: The matchmaker.

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FREEMAN: Thailand is a remarkable culture, with enormous adaptive capacity and flexibility. A fantastic sense of protocol. There are seventeen words for “I” in Thai that I know, which define the relationship hierarchically between you and the person to whom or of whom you are speaking. When you would have a dinner party in Thailand, a Thai would come in, and instantly the table would rearrange itself to put this person in the right protocol place. A sort of instinctual sense of etiquette and politeness and grace that was really quite amazing and delightful.

But along with this went an absence of willingness, perhaps an absence of ability, really, to talk or think strategically. Everything was tactical for the Thai. So this was a very different experience for me than dealing with the very strategic-minded Chinese. Moreover, the Thai, unlike the Chinese, don't separate personal feelings from professional role very effectively. So it wouldn't be possible to have a bruising discussion with a Thai official and expect that person to remain a personal friend.

In some respects, Thailand, with its color and grace and charm, is a very hedonistic, extremely seductive society, such that many people in the embassy, who had served in Thailand before and were back, would retire in Thailand. There were many Thai wives among the embassy staff. Thailand is the only society I've seen that matches the United States in its power as a melting pot; it assimilates; it attracts. Really very enjoyable.

In some respects, however, from a diplomatic point of view, it almost struck me as more of a costume party than a country, more interested in style than in substance. I found it quite fascinating.

I studied very hard to learn Thai. Shortly after I arrived in Bangkok, Bill Casey, the head of CIA, turned up. The foreign minister at that time, Sithi Savetsila, was a former OSS agent in World War II and retained a friendly regard for the linear descendant of OSS, CIA. Bill Casey and John Dean didn't get along too well, and Mr. Bia, the head of the Thai intelligence service, didn't really want the ambassador around, so I got invited, as the

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token embassy representation, to the dinner for Mr. Casey. I sat there, having arrived only a week before in Thailand, and watched the Thai across the table conduct a lively conversation, in Thai. I felt enormously frustrated that I couldn't understand what was going on or participate, and determined that I would learn Thai. So I did. I was in Thailand for fifteen months, and I came out with about an S3+, maybe an R2+.

I actually started doing a project, which I never completed, comparing Thai and Chinese, since they obviously had a common ancestor, trying to do some, I guess you'd call it, paleolinguistic research to determine, from the words that were common and the words that were different, when the two might have separated. The point being that certain technologies, and iron, for example, or the use of animals, were known to have been introduced at certain points. I thought you could tell something by whether the words were the same or different. I actually got quite far with that, but then turned it over to Chulalongkorn University and to the Minorities Institute at Yunnan University in China, where there are also many Thai speakers.

The Thai language is a very beautiful one, grammatically very similar to Chinese, but rather like English in the sense that if you go into a bar in an English-speaking country and listen to the conversation, you'll find that about eighty percent of the vocabulary is German based, twenty percent Latin, Greek, French, whatever. Whereas if you go to a university lecture hall, the proportions are reversed, and you'll find that the bulk of the vocabulary is not Teutonic, but French and Latin and Greek and whatnot in its origins. Thai borrowed very heavily from Pali, which was the linear descendant of Sanskrit. Since I had learned Tamil, and Tamil had borrowed from Pali, I found learning Thai a great deal easier than I might have. The grammar, however, is very much like Chinese.

So I learned Thai, only to discover to my horror that these animated conversations that I had been so desperate to eavesdrop on, if not participate in, invariably concerned only four subjects: boxing, sex, drinking, and golf, and had no substance at all. The supreme

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Thai virtue is to be sanuk, meaning to be happy and content and at ease. And the Thai are sanuk, in a way that I really envy.

Q: Just an aside. You mentioned that the Thai are tactical, and the Chinese are strategic. The national game of China and Japan is Go, which is very strategic and a great game. Is there an equivalent Thai game?

FREEMAN: Thai boxing, which is a game of speed and skill, and very, very tactical, obviously, and quite rough. Beneath the very composed and aesthetically pleasing exterior, the Thai are a very tough people. It's no accident that they manage to drive others out of or assimilate others in what is probably the best farmland and real estate in Southeast Asia, most of which, in prior years, was part of the Khmer (Cambodian) realm. The traditional enemies of the Thai are the Burmese.

As DCM in Thailand with a regional responsibility, through the DEA offices and regional intelligence collection, for drug trade, I would go up about once a quarter to Rangoon, to participate in, or sometimes chair, meetings with the counternarcotics people in the American Embassy in Burma, not to meet with Burmese, because, of course, I wasn't accredited to Burma, but just to try to make sure that what we were doing in Thailand meshed well with and did not conflict with the requirements in Burma, and that the activities in Burma were fully supportive of and consonant with our activities in Thailand.

While in Beijing, I had gone around Southeast Asia a couple of times, trying to get a better angle on the Indochina questions from the Southeast Asian perspective, because they were also important to China and U.S.-China relations. In Bangkok, I continued to travel occasionally to other ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) capitals, to try to get a perspective on ASEAN, in which Thailand plays a central role, and to see whether I could gain some insights from that.

Finally, I was very proud in Thailand, as indeed I was in Beijing and have been in other posts, of the reporting effort that I mounted. There were a number of very talented people

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in the embassy who I thought needed some electric-shock therapy to get them into full gear, in terms of analyzing Thailand and the various issues, the five issues that I mentioned.

When I was in China, as I'm sure I mentioned, we initiated a series of essays on different elements of the rapidly changing scene in China. Thailand was not a place that was changing that rapidly, but it was a place that was very difficult to understand, a very complicated society, with many, many layers to it, with some key institutions. The reverence that the Thai have for their king, and their king's, in fact, very skillful establishment of the authority of the monarchy, it seemed to me, bore attention. The question of the role of the military in politics, the relationship between regions and the center in Thailand, and so forth all seemed to me to have been unexamined for quite a period of time. So I tried to take the mission back to basics, and tried to establish some benchmarks, through essay-type reporting. And I think we did a fine job. In fact, we were runner-up for the reporting award, as we had been in Beijing. So that was a large focus of my activity as well.

Q: I'd like to go to the MIA (missing-in-action) issue. This is still a political issue, and it's become sort of a standard of the right wing, the conservatives, that somehow or other there are American prisoners still being held, despite the fact that the figures on the missing in action in Vietnam, particularly since it was jungle war, are not particularly bad, as compared to the Korean War or any other war. What was your attitude toward this? Was this something that we were doing? How did you feel about this?

FREEMAN: I felt, first of all, that we had been given a task to do, and that it was important that we do it. I made every effort to be as supportive as I could be of that effort, which is quite a complex one, with which I later became even more familiar when I was at the Department of Defense.

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At the same time, I have to say that I found it somewhat odd that this was such a national obsession for the United States. I believe, in World War II, there were more than 40,000 people unaccounted for; in Korea, more than 8,000. And the fact that, at that time, there were between 2,000 and 3,000 unaccounted for in the Indochina theater struck me as, in fact, a remarkable achievement by the military: that they had kept the number so very low. So I was puzzled by the political impetus behind this, and by the extent to which both the Vietnamese, foolishly, and the Americans, perhaps without much thought either, had allowed it to dominate our bilateral relationship.

I say the Vietnamese 'foolishly' because it was quite apparent to me, from the information I was seeing and from discussions occasionally with the Vietnamese, that they were, in fact, playing games with us on this issue and behaving in a most, to my mind, self-destructive, counterproductive, and duplicitous manner. So I have no particular reason to doubt the thesis that Vietnam, in fact, had concealed and prevaricated on this issue, and that therefore it was a legitimate topic of investigation.

At the same time, as I said, I wondered to myself, even then, whether the level of attention that we were giving to this was not, in the end, more likely to harm than to help the families that it was ostensibly aimed at helping to solve the question of what had happened to the father of the family who might have perished in Indochina. Keeping hope alive, when hope hangs by the very, very slenderest of threads, it seems to me, prolongs pain. There comes a point when it is simply cruel to do that. I think, when I was there, working on this in the mid-'80s, we had not yet reached that point. The war was only a decade behind us. But certainly, by the time I reengaged on this issue in the early mid-'90s, I think it was the case that diminishing returns had set in, and we were doing something that was, I think, cruel, and exploitative of the families, rather than helping them.

Q: What about commercial and economic ties with the Thai? What were the issues at that time?

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FREEMAN: The normal sorts of issues for that period all arose. They had to do with textile quotas, child-labor laws, and the usual problems of that sort, and they were quite contentious, as they always are.

Overall, however, the U.S.-Thai economic relationship was very healthy and getting healthier. There was a large American business community in Thailand, with a very active American Chamber of Commerce. One of my first acts on arriving, since I had attempted in Beijing as well to be strongly supportive of the business community, was to try to get to know them, and to participate as much as possible in their activities, and to be supportive and offer briefings to their membership, as well as listen to their membership about its complaints. So I was really quite active with them, spoke at their annual meetings, and had a regular program of luncheon meetings with their board, and made some friends, of whom I'm still very fond years after leaving Thailand, in some cases not having seen them for all of that period. So the economic and commercial dimension was quite important.

In addition, Bangkok is the center of regional support organizations in the embassy. For example, in the embassy, we had the regional accounting center for the State Department, which at that time handled all of the payrolls from the South Pacific to East Africa. The computer support for much of that region was done out of Bangkok. I'm just naming two, but there were many of these organizations.

Bangkok itself was also the center of the U.N.'s Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Far East. The economic minister-counselor at the embassy was the American representative to this organization. I felt that, since I was trying to supervise him and trying to galvanize his section into more creative reporting and more active investigation of the rather obvious radical changes going on in the Thai economy, I should take an interest in ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific). And so I did, although I must say that that encounter with a multilateral organization was about as

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rewarding as sticking your head in an oven with the gas on. Totally soporific, pro forma activities, by and large.

There were also some ASEAN regional organizations, which I tried to get to know.

We still had, at that time, a substantial AID (Agency for International Development) program, focused, innovatively, on cooperation in science and technology. The Thai economy was coming to the point where it clearly would be graduating from an AID program. Technology cooperation was good for us commercially, as well as important to the future of the Thai economy. So the USAID mission was also something that I paid a lot of attention to, not so much going out and looking at projects as going over to their offices and listening to them, and making sure that I understood what they were doing, and that, in fact, it bore some resemblance to the overall objectives that we had established in Thailand.

Overall, the experience in Bangkok, as I think back on it, was a really very memorable and rewarding one, primarily because of the managerial elements that I've referred to, and less because of the diplomatic accomplishments, if any, that I was able to bring off. I think I did bring off a few, but they were less important than strengthening the management of the embassy, in the sense of community, within its far-flung, disparate elements.

Q: Ambassador William Brown came in. How long did you overlap?

FREEMAN: I think we must have overlapped six or eight months or thereabouts.

Q: Was his style different? How did you find him?

FREEMAN: Completely different, a different personality. Far less resolute and decisive. Very, very bright. Very able, but not at all viceregal, very down to earth. I enjoyed working with him. I know he was very grateful for what I did, but he probably felt a bit of relief when I left, because I think he'd sort of felt there wasn't a lot for him to do within the embassy,

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since John Dean had essentially shoved everything off to me as he left. The reason I was sent to Bangkok, in essence, was to bridge the anticipated gap between John Gunther Dean and, as it turned out, William Andreas Brown. That gap turned out to be a great deal briefer than many had feared, but I think I was able to get Bill Brown off to a strong start in Bangkok before I was suddenly yanked out.

Q: You went where?

FREEMAN: In the early winter of 1986, one morning, I suddenly received a telephone call out of the blue from Mike Armacost, who was then under secretary of state for political affairs, asking me whether I would have any interest in succeeding Frank Wisner as principal deputy assistant secretary of state for Africa, and, if so, would I please fly to Geneva and meet Chet Crocker.

I knew nothing about Africa, but I had very much admired the elegance of the diplomatic strategy that Crocker had devised for removing the Cubans from Angola and the South Africans from Namibia, while simultaneously laying the basis for the disappearance of apartheid in South Africa. Occasionally, since I did not know Crocker, but I knew Wisner, I would stop back when I was in the Department, whether I was working in China or in Thailand, and try to make sure that I had an understanding of what it was that they were trying to do. It was classic diplomacy, of a more European than American variety, and I admired it greatly. So when I got the offer to go and meet Crocker, I accepted with alacrity.

I flew to Geneva and met him, and we had a good meeting. I was amazed at the style with which he conducted his business, which was a far more open, participatory style of delegation management than anything I had seen. And I liked it. I thought to myself, this is a man from whom I can learn a great deal, and this is an area about which I know far too little, and I can educate myself.

So I readily accepted, and within a very short period of time, after doing what seemed like hundreds of fitness reports on people, I left Bangkok. Given the size of the embassy,

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I had to do twenty-eight ratings as I left, and literally dozens of reviewing statements. So I staggered through that and the farewell parties, which were mercifully brief and compressed, and came back to Washington to report for duty in the Bureau of African Affairs.

Q: You served from when to when in that position?

FREEMAN: That was from, I suppose, April of 1986 until May of 1989. It was a very tumultuous and exciting period, which began with the collapse of the Reagan administration's Africa policy over the issue of apartheid in South Africa, and which ended with the triumph of that policy in actually achieving Cuban withdrawal from Angola and South African agreement to Namibian independence.

If, in the course of my career, the first set of historic or great events that I had a chance to participate in was in connection with the opening and consolidation of relations with China, the second, emphatically, was this rather startling American foray into African mediation.

Q: How did you see the situation in Africa, and how did you bring yourself up to speed?

FREEMAN: I knew very little about Africa, perhaps a little more than some people, in the sense that, during the program of reading that I had done while at law school, I had actually read the few then-available histories of Africa. Of course, having grown up in the Bahamas, with major elements of African culture present in the population, I had always had an interest in Africa, in a sort of general sense. But I really knew very little about it.

One of my first acts when coming aboard in the African Bureau, in addition to going down to the State Department library and reading everything I could lay my hands on (and there was quite a bit more material than there had been in the early '60s), was to take an orientation tour to Africa.

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Actually, even before I did that, I accompanied Maureen Reagan, the daughter of President Reagan, to the coronation of the Swazi king. Swaziland, along with Thailand and Saudi Arabia, is one of the few remaining traditional monarchies in the world. Mswati III, a young man of about eighteen at that time, who had been pulled out of Eton and groomed for the kingship through the Buckingham Palace school for kings, was being crowned. That was really my first foray into Africa.

Swaziland struck me as an incredible place of tremendous contradictions and contrasts between a very vibrant, traditional culture and Swaziland's involvement in the modern world, very much a world, dominated by the ubiquitous presence of South Africa. In fact, P. W. Botha, who was then the state president of South Africa, actually came to Mbabane and addressed the group in passing. He was clearly regarded by the Swazis who were present as a great chief, not to be regarded with affection, but to be regarded with respect and a measure of awe for the power of the state that he represented.

I remember a couple of things that were quite striking. Q: When was this coronation?

FREEMAN: This was in April 1986.

We arrived and went to a brai, which is an Afrikaans word meaning barbecue, out in the veldt, the bush. In attendance there, as we munched on impala and wart hog and other delicacies that were cooking on the fire, were quite a number of Swazis (who were, unlike us, as we were in casual clothing, in full formal evening dress, white tie and tails, preparing to go to the Western coronation ball, to which we were not invited), present, out of curiosity and probably a sense of duty, to meet the daughter of the American president.

I can recall speaking to one gentleman, whose face I couldn't really see, because it was dark and he was very black, and getting into a chat with him, he said that he was in the cattle-ranching business. He described his spread, which was really quite enormous, and the number of cattle he had on it. And I asked him what sorts of problems he had. He said,

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well, he had particular problems with a couple of parasites that attacked the cattle. And I said, well, just by happenstance, I had received the annual report of a company in which I had some stock, and they had come up with a new technology involving a subcutaneous implant that, for six months, kept cattle parasite free. Just as we were beginning to get into a discussion of this, he was yanked away to go to the ball. I was told that he was, in effect, the prime minister in waiting and a rather important fellow.

The next day, in the great stadium in Mbabane, we were watching traditional tribal dancing, with, I suppose, 5,000 or 6,000 topless, mainly bottomless, young ladies of quite voluptuous physique, dancing to drumming, along with traditional Swazi and Zulu warriors in full regalia. I noticed a man, who looked vaguely like this fellow that I had dimly seen the night before, dressed, this time, with ostrich plumes and loin cloth, and a leopard skin thrown over his shoulder, with his shield and two spears, and a bow and arrow on his back. I went up to him and said, "I think we met last night."

He said, "Yes, indeed, we did. We didn't finish our conversation. What is the name of the company that you were talking about?"

And I said, "Well, it's Alza. It's a spinoff from Syntex."

He said, "Well, I have stock in that company. I just haven't gotten the annual report yet."

To me, this was a wonderful illustration of some of the contrasts of Africa: a man equally at home in white tie and tails and a loin cloth and sandals, with leopard skin, and a man who, while preserving some measure of his traditional culture, was also playing around in the New York stock market, along with doing a good cattle business. So that was really quite striking.

I also, in Mbabane, met, for the first time, Joaquim Chissano, who was then the foreign minister for Mozambique. Samora Machel, whom I met just to shake hands, was then the president. Machel had begun as a Marxist-Leninist. Frelimo (Frente de Liberta##o

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de Mo#ambique), the ruling party in Mozambique, was very much a Soviet-leaning party, which had done considerable damage to Mozambique by trying to apply to it a Soviet model that had no applicability. I didn't know this at that time, but I knew they were Communists who were attempting to reach out to the West. I had a drink with Chissano, who later became president after Machel died in an air crash, and found him remarkably sophisticated and open minded — not at all the sort of Marxist that I would have anticipated, having met many Russian and Chinese Marxists over the years. That drink in a hotel bar actually led to quite a friendship, which was important later in brokering the beginnings of a peace in Mozambique.

Q: What was our relationship at that time, spring of '86, with Mozambique? We had the Reagan administration. This was a confrontational state and all that.

FREEMAN: We had something of a mixed relationship. Mozambique was clearly trying to detach itself from the Soviet orbit, although there were many skeptics among the right wing in the United States. Indeed, the rebellion in Mozambique had been begun by Ian Smith's Rhodesian regime some fifteen years before, with the recruitment and training of a young man named Alfonso Dhlakama. The Renamo rebels, the Mozambique National Resistance, as they styled themselves, had, of course, lost Rhodesian support when Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, but had picked up clandestine South African support, and gradually built a network of support from right-wing Christian elements in the United States, as well as some Brazilian and Portuguese anti-Communist elements.

Mozambique was in a terribly sorry state. Our relations with Mozambique were tenuous. We essentially had no programs of cooperation going with Mozambique, just the beginnings of a dialogue, begun by my predecessor, Frank Wisner, only shortly before this Swazi coronation that I mentioned.

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In any event, our relations with South Africa and southern Africa as a whole were deeply strained over issues of apartheid and continuing differences over the issue of Namibian independence.

The linkage policy that Chet Crocker had devised was, in diplomatic terms, really a very elegant scheme. Lacking a means of persuading the South Africans that there was anything in it for them to give Namibia its independence, and lacking any means of persuading Castro that there was anything in it for him to withdraw Cuban troops from Angola, Chet cleverly linked the two, so that Cuba could gain freedom from an increasingly costly military venture in Angola, and South Africa could see that it could gain Cuban withdrawal in return for Namibian independence.

This theory of linkage was widely derided on the African continent, and indeed by liberal elements in the United States, including officials from the Carter administration, who had pursued, without success, a different approach to securing Namibian independence and who had not been particularly concerned about the Cuban presence in Angola.

At that time, we basically did not have any active dialogue going with the South Africans. The Angolans had broken off their dialogue with us. Chissano and Machel, of Mozambique, were trying to be helpful, behind the scenes, in restarting a dialogue between the United States and Angola. We had difficult relations with Jonas Savimbi, the head of UNITA, the rebel movement in Angola, a very controversial movement in the United States, given its acceptance of support from South Africa. It should have been controversial for many other reasons, given its tangled history, but that was the principal point of complication.

Anyway, in seeing Chissano, I was talking mainly not about Mozambique, although I rapidly became very interested in it, but really about the effort to jumpstart a resumption of dialogues between Luanda and Washington, and to begin a process by which we would

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mediate a solution between Havana, Pretoria, Luanda, and Dr. Savimbi. I found Chissano open-minded, flexible, really very bright, and a pleasure to deal with.

I should mention one other thing that was quite striking to me, and very amusing, actually, with this eighteen-year-old Swazi monarch.

Before I do, I should say that Swazi custom apparently requires that the king be a virgin, not having had sex with a woman. Now how that is to be determined, I don't know. But, anyway, it had been decreed that he was in that state of grace, and therefore eligible to become king. His mother, whose title in Siswazi was something like The Great She Elephant, had endorsed him.

But he was only eighteen, and when Maureen Reagan and I went to be received by him in the palace, his youth was very apparent. Swazi custom is that the king does not speak. His thoughts are instead intuited and voiced by his counselors. We came into a room that was furnished very much in the Bloomingdale's style of the day, with gold-metal, glass-topped furniture and colorful sofas and the like, to find him, in full tribal regalia, seated on the floor. We got down with him, and Maureen started speaking with him. The counselor answered. Maureen passed over the letter from President Reagan to the king, who gave it to the counselor. (She shouldn't have given it to the king; she should have given it to the counselor.) The counselor opened it, looked at it, and then gave it to the king. The king looked at it, and he turned to Maureen and said, "Gee, is that really Ronald Reagan's signature?" And a good conversation ensued.

His youth came through in one other way. I mentioned the nubile, voluptuous, actually, young ladies who had been dancing on the field. He was evidently so taken by this sight that he was determined to lose his virginity at once. He selected two of the young ladies, and cut his own coronation dinner, to experience a different sort of pleasure.

So this was an interesting introduction to Africa.

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Q: One question here. Could you talk a little about before you went with Maureen Reagan, because Ronald Reagan's relationship with his family was just a bit difficult sometimes. Maureen Reagan, though, was an important figure. What were you told about her before you went? And what were her impressions, and what do you think she reported back to Daddy?

FREEMAN: I was told several things about her, all of which had a grain of truth to them, but were not entirely accurate.

First, I was told that she was, in fact, very dutiful and willing to commit time to Africa. She cared about Africa, refugee and women's issues in particular, and was one of the few people associated with the administration or the White House who would take time to do things in Africa. She really was a trooper, as it turned out. She gave unstintingly of her time, on numerous occasions during my tenure.

Second, I was told she was very difficult and tempestuous and a bit prone to tantrums. That indeed turned out to be true. She is, as I saw her, a very bright, very capable, lovely woman, whose sad experiences as a child, given her father's divorce from her mother, and the rather odd friendship that continued, under considerable strain, between her father and mother, and her mother's apparently fairly cold behavior to her, had, in many respects, left her emotionally maimed. She had terrible insecurities, and worried that people would not take her seriously. But she deserved to be taken seriously; she had, and has, I suppose, a great deal to offer as a human being.

So there were a few instances of, not tantrums, but tears and emotional distress on the trip. Those sorts of trips are fatiguing. But I think I understood her perspective and was able to help her get over the tears. Certainly, she behaved magnificently, and I think, at the end of it, we were quite good friends.

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You asked at the outset about familiarization with Africa. In addition to doing a lot of reading (which I did, to the point where I think probably, since people tend to read on an area when they're studying in university and then to cease reading, I may have ended up one of the best-read people in the African Bureau on African history and culture), I went on an orientation tour, in my own right, which included travel to South Africa — Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Cape Town — and some initial calls on South African officials.

Just as I arrived in South Africa, the South Africans conducted a raid over the border into Botswana, allegedly pursuing what they called terrorists. In the course of this, they killed a soccer player. Whatever intelligence they had wasn't terribly good, and they tended, as I learned, to be a bit too quick on the trigger generally.

After checking with Washington, I found myself, on my initial visit, delivering a blistering protest to the foreign minister, Pik Botha, on whom I was calling for the first time, and then delivering the same incendiary comments in public at the Johannesburg Airport as I left for Zambia.

I felt bad about this, because, first of all, I didn't like what the South Africans had done, but, second, I had really rather hoped to get on a better footing with the authorities in South Africa than this enabled me to do. But, on the other hand, it made me something of a public figure throughout Africa. Indeed, I got admiring mail from as far away as Hong Kong, from different Chinese who had seen me on TV. When I arrived in Zambia, to be received by President Kenneth Kaunda, the reception was extraordinarily warm, since American officials had not been in the habit of delivering candid condemnations of South Africa in public.

This raid into Botswana coincided not only with my visit, but with the visit of the so-called Eminent Persons Group, which was a British Commonwealth effort to compose South Africa's system of apartheid to produce a reform process in South Africa. The EPG, as it

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was called, was essentially sabotaged and never really recovered from this very ill-timed South African foray over the border. So it was a turning point.

In Lusaka, Paul Hare, who was the ambassador, and I and Gib Lanpher, who was charg# in Harare, were assembled, at the suggestion of Washington, to formulate suggestions for action. Out of that meeting came a recommendation, which was later followed, that the United States should initiate a dialogue with the African National Congress (ANC), Mandela's party, which was based in Lusaka.

There was great concern over ANC so-called terrorist activity... Well, actually, I think, in many ways, like any resistance movement, any maquis, they were indulging in acts of violence for the purpose of making a public point. I suppose that is terrorism.

In any event, we recommended a dialogue with the ANC, in a cable back to Washington, as well as some other steps, pretty much all of which unfolded over the ensuing months.

It was difficult for the Reagan administration to talk to the ANC. The ANC was a coalition, including the Communist Party of South Africa, and had been regarded very much by conservatives in the United States as an instrument of Soviet influence. Of course, it was a much more complicated organization than that.

We also began, shortly thereafter (and this came out of the same telegram), a dialogue with the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), based in Tanzania, which was a Chinese-leaning and rather more violent organization.

Q: Maoist, I think, is the shorthand term for the more violent.

FREEMAN: Frankly, they were imbeciles. When we finally encountered them, they were not impressive. I later met their Chinese handler, someone who had dealt with them for eight years in Dar es Salaam, and asked him what he thought their prospects for doing

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various things in South Africa were. And his comment was that he doubted that they even owned a map of South Africa, let alone had any capability of doing anything there.

From Lusaka, I went on to Kenya, mainly for meetings with the Kenyan Foreign Ministry. There was then in charge of the Foreign Ministry, as the senior career person, Mr. Kiplagat, a very highly regarded (justly so), very professional, diplomat.

From Kenya, I went to Nigeria, in a hair-raising experience with Nigerian Airways. I must say, the arrival in Lagos was quite an education, in terms of smuggling and corruption and everything else, which were going on quite visibly at the airport. The drive into downtown Lagos was in an armored car, because highwaymen tended to stop vehicles at random and rob the passengers. It was quite something. I had a very good talk, actually, about South Africa with the Nigerian Foreign Ministry, which had tended not to talk to us, because they considered us in league with apartheid, but which had been quite taken by the press statement that I'd made in Johannesburg. It gave me a bit of an opening to have a sensible dialogue with them, where I was able to caution them and bring some reality to bear on their rather doctrinaire views of what must be going on in South Africa.

I drove from Lagos to Lom#, via Cotonou, the capital of Benin. There, too, I discovered something different about the diplomatic method.

Q: Lom# being the capital...

FREEMAN: Lom# being the capital of Togo. Benin is largely Yoruba inhabited, as is southwestern Nigeria.

In any event, there I met with the foreign minister, after climbing up to the top of the Foreign Ministry, since the elevator was broken, which I gathered it had been for years. This man leapt out of a hidden panel in the wall, dressed in a sort of bilious green clown suit, which was the native dress, a very handsome, sort of silk dress and cap. I then learned something interesting, which is that, at least in Benin, at that time, all encounters

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of this kind were live on national television. I had not entirely prepared myself for this, and my French was very rusty, but, anyway, it got cranked up for the occasion.

George Moose, later the assistant secretary for African affairs, was then the ambassador. I had lunch with him and a group of Beninese intellectuals, who turned out to be able to justify predatory capitalist behavior in the very best of Marxist terms. So I felt quite at home, because I approve of capitalism, but I understand Marxist terminology. The business of the country at that time was largely smuggling, even though it was Marxist.

In Lom#, I learned the answer to a series of questions that had really puzzled me.

As I say, I'd grown up in the Bahamas, where eighty-five percent of the population was of African descent. Very clever people, and very competitive when they come to the United States as immigrants. Many prominent figures in the United States have West Indian or, indeed, Bahamian origins. And yet Africa had never produced the great urban cultures that other regions of the world produced, and had lagged considerably behind in terms of literacy and all of the artifacts of civilization. I'd never understood why, given the cleverness of the people.

In Lom#, I went upcountry to a project that was run by Partners for Progress, which was an AID contractor, and toured a farm area. There were several interesting things about it, not just what they were doing, in terms of trying to improve Togolese agriculture. Basically, they were teaching people to plant in rows, which was a novel idea, and to use green manure, meaning to refresh the soil with material that would become compost and aerate the soil. They'd had a wonderful idea. They had a Hmong from Laos...

Q: One of the hill tribes.

FREEMAN: Well, more than one of the hill tribes, a very prominent ally of the United States in the great struggles with Communism in Indochina.

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The Hmong are excellent smiths. Using techniques that went out of fashion in Europe probably a thousand years ago, they produce wonderful iron implements. They're sort of late-Iron Age people. They had brought a Hmong smith, who was teaching the Togolese ironmongery and smithery. It was perfect, because his techniques were considerably in advance of the Togolese ones, but not so sophisticated that they were incomprehensible or impractical.

But the main thing was, looking around me on the farm, I realized what they were attempting to grow there was staples. All had been absent in Africa, prior to the European contact and the slave trade.

The banana, actually, was introduced from Indonesia to East Africa about 800 A.D., and had spread to West Africa by probably a little after the year 1000. This actually set off a population explosion in Central Africa, which led to the Indonesian settlers being driven out of Kenya and ending up in Madagascar. The things that were being grown — cocoa, which is Central American in origin; chili, which is Central American in origin; maize, which is North American in origin; potatoes, which are Andean in origin; sweet potatoes, which are Brazilian in origin; cassava, which is Brazilian in origin; various sorts of pulses, beans, which are Central American in origin; coconuts, which are Southeast Asian in origin, as is the banana; and quite a number of others crops — all of these things were absent from pre-European-contact Africa.

Which meant that the only native crops were millet, which came down apparently from Libya about 1500 B.C. and had been entirely naturalized; a sort of very inferior yam; and okra. And that was about it. If you ask yourself, Is this enough to produce an agricultural surplus to sustain an urban culture?, the answer is clearly no.

Which is why the only urban cultures were based on trade out of the region, across the Sahara, and why Africa never developed in the way that other regions did. It was extremely poorly endowed by nature with foodstuffs, with the result that people were

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forced into sustained hunter-gatherer, slash-and-burn agriculture mode, which really was not very productive.

I should add that one of the things that the Partners for Progress were attempting to introduce was the idea of animals for traction, plowing. But you couldn't have this with the tsetse fly present, so Africa was short-changed on that as well. The use of the animals that worked well in Europe and Asia was simply impractical.

So I was both impressed by the project and also even more impressed by what it suggested about some of the reasons for the relatively prolonged primitive state of life in Africa.

In Togo, I saw President Eyadema, who had come to power in a coup and was said to have strangled nineteen people with his own rather large hands, which I kept looking at during the meeting. I found that an odd sort of place, with many continuing vestiges of German influence. It was nothing like Namibia, as I later discovered, where the native Bushmen, or what the Dutch used to call Hottentots, tend to go by names like Ludwig and Heinrich and so on, and speak rather good German, as well as making excellent beer. But, in Togo, there were still quite a number of German names present, and descendants of German colonial administrators were prominent in the business community and the like.

Anyway, I'm sure I did more on that first trip to Africa than that.

I ended up, over the succeeding three years, commuting a great deal to places like Cote d'Ivoire, Zaire, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe, for various purposes, most of them related to the whole issue of composing conflict in Southern Africa and dealing with the effects not really of apartheid as a destabilizing factor, although it certainly contributed to the destabilization of the region, but with the effects of the absolute preponderance of power in South Africa, by comparison with neighbors. South Africa is, in level of competence and in economic size and in military power, a superpower amidst much lesser powers in Africa. There are very few African armies that are professional. Probably, beyond South Africa,

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the one real exception is Zimbabwe, which has a battle-hardened army, having fought a very tough war for independence against the white Rhodesian settlers.

My concentration over the three years was on Mozambique; so-called frontline state relationships with South Africa; dialogue with the African National Congress, and with SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization), which was, quite fecklessly, attempting to liberate Namibia, with UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola), the national union for the total independence of Angola led by Jonas Savimbi.

I met Jonas Savimbi, in many locations, on behalf of the U.S. government over that three-year period, and with Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, the president of Angola, and with his entourage, as well as with the Cubans. The Cubans I met included Fidel Castro; General Ram#rez, who was the head of military intelligence; Carlos Aldana Escalante, who was the head of the international liaison department of the Cuban Communist Party (himself, however, a very liberal-minded individual); Ricardo Alarcon, who now I think is the speaker of the Assembly in Cuba, who was then the foreign minister; and many others.

So the three years were very active, mainly on Angola and Namibia, a bit on apartheid in South Africa, and on Mozambique.

Q: I want to return to a couple of things, then we'll come back to all of this. What went on in this sharp note that you delivered? You had first arrived, and obviously you must have had some part in or knowledge of the work that went on to deliver a note to the South Africans on their raid into Botswana. Can you talk a little about the background of this, because this was a bit of a change, wasn't it?

FREEMAN: It was a change. It was frankly my belief that the South African action had been so outrageous, in terms of its coincidence with the Eminent Persons Group activity in Cape Town, where they were just about to arrive, that it really did deserve a sharp rebuke.

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Furthermore, the South Africans had cited as justification the American raid on Libya, which was hardly comparable to Botswana or the ANC's situation there.

Q: This was when we bombed Qadhafi after he had been implicated in the blowing up of a nightclub in Berlin, which killed several Americans.

FREEMAN: So I felt very strongly that the South African action should not pass without rebuke, and so recommended to Washington, and received authority to do that. I think perhaps I've always had a somewhat more blunt and direct diplomatic style than a lot of my colleagues in the Foreign Service. I'm not at all concerned to say to someone that they have totally messed up, and that their actions are not in their interest and are misguided and incorrect and deserve condemnation. And so I said so. This was all oral. I think Ambassador Herman Nickel, who was then in South Africa, was happy that I was doing this instead of him, and was very supportive of the action. USIS arranged the exit interview at Jan Smuts Airport in Johannesburg, and I let the South African government have it.

Q: How did you find Nickel, who had been assigned there to be more friendly, as I recall, to South Africa than many in the United States wanted us to be? And how did you find the embassy, as far as our policy toward South Africa, which was the main policy in Africa at that time?

FREEMAN: I think it's a myth that Herman Nickel was assigned to South Africa to be nice to the Afrikaners, although that myth was assiduously propagated by critics of the administration.

Herman Nickel was not a career ambassador; he was a Time magazine correspondent of some distinction, German in birth, I think half Jewish, and one of the kids who, just at the end of the war, I think with his half-Jewish side concealed, ended up operating an anti-aircraft battery in Berlin against the advancing Western and Russian hordes. He ended up

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in the United States and had a very distinguished career as a journalist, and was sent to South Africa not to be nice to the Afrikaners, but to do a job.

The job was to base a policy on the recognition that there were problems in Southern Africa beyond South Africa itself, that South Africa's power and influence and policies were both central to these problems and central to their solution, and that therefore, while we should continue pressure on the South African regime and make our displeasure with apartheid known, there was a broader agenda to pursue with the South Africans, and that we had some business to do with them, and we had to get on with doing it.

That business consisted largely of trying to manage the process of Namibian independence, through the tradeoffs that I mentioned, Cuban troop withdrawal, in return for South African withdrawal from Namibia and independence for Namibia.

The advantage to the South Africans being that, under the right circumstances, Namibia would then emerge as a buffer state between them and the Angolans and others on their northwest. They had, in effect, such a buffer state in Botswana.

One of the reasons for the sharpness of our reaction to the raid into Botswana was that Botswana was and is an admirably democratic country, with a very competent little military that is nonpolitical and professional, and a rapidly growing economy that was doing just about everything right, and doing it in an extremely inoffensive manner, from the point of view of the South Africans. That is, the Botswanans, who live in Botswana, were realists. They didn't like the South Africans, but they were aware that they lived next to them, and they dealt with them on a realistic basis. Swaziland, in many ways, is a satellite of South Africa. Botswana was quite independent, but intelligently conducting its relations with South Africa.

Zimbabwe, in effect, was a self-proclaimed rival of South Africa, both ideologically and economically, through Robert Mugabe, the president, who was a self-educated, quite

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doctrinaire Marxist, who presided over a society in which capitalism flourished and produced a wide measure of prosperity and international involvement for his people.

Mozambique, South Africa had managed to assist in bloodily destabilizing, and Mozambique was bleeding to death.

There were reasons to be concerned about the well-being of the newly independent states of Southern Africa. And South Africa was central to that, not only to the issue of Namibian independence.

Namibia was the last instance of colonialism on the African continent, although this was a colonialism by Africans, white Africans, but still Africans. And the Cuban involvement in Angola, as Cuban involvement in Ethiopia was winding down, was the last instance of an external expeditionary force in Africa. We wished to end both of these.

To do that, we had to get the cooperation of the South Africans, and to persuade them that compromise and change were in their interest. It was that task that Herman Nickel was assigned.

The problem, I think, with the policy, from the outset, in terms of its domestic base of support, was that, from the American popular perspective, the only issue with South Africa was apartheid. There was an inability to see that, in fact, there were many other issues to address with the South Africans, some of which wouldn't go away even if apartheid were to end.

Furthermore, Chet Crocker, the architect of the policy (rather than Ronald Reagan, who, as it turned out, had a more simple-minded view), had the idea that if Namibian independence could be brokered in the right terms, and that if South Africa could be made to see that working with the international community brought benefits, this would have its own subversive cascade effect within South Africa.

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That, by the way, turned out to be right. There is no doubt that the South African opening to the outside world, which Crocker's diplomacy ultimately brokered and which produced the Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola and the Namibian independence in 1989, was a fundamental factor in impelling P. W. Botha's successor, F. W. De Klerk, in the direction of releasing Mandela and opening the political process to black South African participation.

So, ultimately, the policy worked, but it had very little support in the United States, and a great deal of opposition, particularly from the civil-rights movement in the United States, which saw the issue of apartheid as mirroring that in the American South in earlier years, even though it was fundamentally different in many ways, but a natural analogy for them to make; and from liberal Democrats in the Congress, who saw this as a moral issue, pure and simple; and from conservatives, who saw South Africa as a bulwark of anti-Communism, when, in fact, there was no particular strategic argument that could be made convincingly for doing anything with South Africa, and, rather than being a bulwark, it was a focus of destabilization that had provided the Soviets with the opportunities they had taken in Angola and Mozambique and elsewhere. But, at any rate, there were many viewpoints, all of them centering on the issue of apartheid or South Africa's anti-Communism, and all of them quite missing the point.

Q: What was your impression, on this trip in '86, of the South African political leadership? This was very important, because, within three years, there was a peaceful revolution, or damn close to it.

FREEMAN: I don't know that I can separate one trip from another, at this remove. I was in South Africa frequently, over the succeeding three years.

I think there were several impressions that I gained.

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First, that indeed there were important elements of the National Party, which was the Afrikaner-dominated ruling party, who saw the necessity to re-legitimize authority in South Africa by opening the political process to nonwhites.

That the Afrikaner right wing was really quite scary, in terms of its bloody mindedness vis-
#-vis its nonwhite compatriots and the countries in the region.

That the military establishment, particularly the military intelligence establishment, was, to some extent, conducting an independent, parallel, hard-line policy behind the back of some of the civilian establishment.

That the English-speaking white community was predominantly liberal and anti-apartheid.

That, among the very large Indian population in South Africa, there was a very significant Communist influence, but that basically many of the Indians were open to the idea of compromise with the regime.

That the very large, so-called colored population, meaning the Afrikaans-speaking descendants of liaisons between Afrikaners and their Malay and black African servants in an earlier era, was divided in its view of the South African future, but increasingly polarized against the National Party apartheid regime, which had caused them to suffer terribly over the preceding forty years.

That, within the black African community, which, of course, is the vast majority of South Africans, there were terrible divisions, many of them fomented and fostered deliberately by the apartheid government, which had set up ten nominally independent, but in fact utterly dependent, homelands, only a few of which had any claim to viability at all, but some of which had taken on a life of their own.

That, in particular, there was a terrible divide between Xhosa people, the largest single ethnic group, and the Zulu, who were largely under the sway of Mangosuthu Buthelezi,

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the chief minister of KwaZulu homeland in Natal, and that violence amongst black African, rather than against white African, components of the community was ubiquitous.

South Africa's population — white, colored, black, or Asian — impressed me as far and away the best-educated, most dynamic and industrious and imaginative and creative group of people on the African continent. I think black South Africans are people of enormous drive and ability. It was my feeling that, given half a chance, they could not only compete effectively with white South Africans in business and other endeavors, but probably beat them, because they are very determined people, as well as very bright.

What impressed me about all segments of the community was the obsession with the domestic ills of South Africa, and the fact that they were debating great issues of a kind that we in the United States debated only at the outset of our independence. Issues of the kind that our Founding Fathers debated as they formed the Constitution were the common currency of talk in South Africa. It was exhilarating to be there, and stimulating intellectually.

Finally, that people of all segments of the South African population had a surprising goodwill and a kind of African ability, which we saw also in Nigeria after the end of the Biafran rebellion, to forgive and forget and to move on with things. That gave me great hope that, in fact, there could be a transition to a decent post-apartheid order in the country.

I must say that one further impression, as I dealt both with the South African government and the ANC establishment in Lusaka, Zambia, was that they had grown to be, as opponents often do, a mirror image of each other. That the deficiencies of each were mirrored in the other, and the rigidities and blind spots of each were mirrored in the other. That they resembled each other. And that there really was, therefore, a kind of national South African political culture of a most unfortunate kind, which needed a special kind of leadership to see the way through.

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If, in fact, Mandela had not been released, and if, in fact, F. W. De Klerk had not been the successor to P. W. Botha, both events occurring in 1989, then I'm afraid that Oliver Tambo of the ANC, who was not a very imaginative or flexible individual, and alternative leaders to P. W. Botha in South Africa would not have managed the transition. It's very much the product of F. W. De Klerk and Mandela that it went so well.

But it drew on an underlying goodwill and willingness to compromise and, as I say, forgive and forget, which is both very African and very South African, and I found it admirable.

Q: You arrived in the African Bureau in 1986. Ronald Reagan had been in for five years. You have Chester Crocker coming in from outside, who has a vision. But you said things seemed to be in disarray, how it was working. What was the mood with the Africanists and others in the African Bureau, and also outside forces playing on you, such as Congress and the National Security Council? Can you describe that?

FREEMAN: One thing that I discovered, in the course of reading, was that Africanists make Latin Americanists seem objective and balanced.

I've often thought (as I mentioned, my first education was in Latin American affairs) that Latin Americanists tend to be flagellants, beating themselves for the sin of being American, and blaming the United States for much of the ills of the Western Hemisphere, some of which indeed may be laid at our feet, but not all, by a long shot.

Africanists are even more passionately aligned with woolly-minded left-wing African causes, and prone to provide excuses for African lapses into strange institutions like single-party government. Human-rights violations that were committed against, for example, South Asians in East and Southern Africa passed without notice from these people.

Q: Uganda and Kenya.

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FREEMAN: Many Africanists, I found, were apologists for really dreadful regimes in Africa. I think this is probably, in part, due to the American obsession with race. By becoming Africanists, these people were, in a sense, expiating the sins of their ancestors, or taking a stand in domestic American politics. Psychologically, that was important to them.

So this is one factor in the difficulty of managing a policy toward Africa that is realistic.

A second one is the level of ignorance. Most Americans, black or white, know very little about Africa, and tend to see it, depending on their political orientation, in terms of Shaka Zulu or Sheena of the Jungle or Tarzan. Africa is, of course, a real place, with real people, very complicated, good people, bad people, able people, and people who are not able. All of this essential detail fades away at this distance. You could say, in a sense, that Africa's a blank screen on which Americans could project their fantasies about the issue of concern to them, for or against.

So that was a complication.

Finally, of course, having, in the 1960s, finally begun to come to grips with the travesty of American race relations, Americans felt self-righteous and inclined to pontificate and believed that we had the solutions for other people's problems. We saw in South Africa (I should say, misperceived in South Africa) something resembling the Mississippi of Jim Crow.

Ronald Reagan came into this with a peculiar insensitivity to these sorts of issues. He was a man of enormous goodwill, I think genuinely color blind, in a sense, but at the same time, full of country club stereotypes, and prone to generalizations that wouldn't withstand scrutiny. He swallowed various lines produced by South African propagandists to the effect that South Africa's issues were not racial, but were tribal in nature. There's an element of truth in that, but it's very misleading. He had essentially, by his public statements from time to time, appeared to side with the apartheid regime against its opponents, or to endorse

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that regime against some of its weaker and beleaguered neighbors. So, essentially, by the spring of 1986, he had lost credibility on the central issue of concern to Americans, which was apartheid.

There was an effort made, in the spring and early summer of 1986, to turn this around, by having the president make a speech. And I actually wrote a draft. I wrote a hell of a good speech, actually, which was American, non-apologetic, realistic, but compassionate, which would have provided a basis for sustaining a policy of engagement with South Africa, while at the same time stepping up the pressure against apartheid and helping the forces inside South Africa that were attempting to produce reform. That speech went to the White House pretty much the way I had written it. And exactly two lines of it survived the pen of one Pat Buchanan, who was the speechwriter for Reagan, and who himself has very definite views on racial issues and on Africa, about which he knows nothing.

The speech, which the White House took over and gave, was catastrophic, in terms of its political impact. It essentially cemented the total loss of control by the administration of the policy. And it resulted, by the late summer, early fall, in the passage of the Comprehensive Anti-apartheid Act over the president's veto. That was a policy humiliation for him, and, I think, in many ways, a misguided stance by the United States. Sanctions for the purpose of producing political reform have a very dubious history generally, even where American influence is paramount, as was the case with Noriega in Panama at a later time. Sanctions have proven incapable of producing internal reform.

In the case of their application to South Africa, as is normally the case with sanctions efforts, they became a very convenient vehicle for protectionist impulses in the United States.

So, for example, South African apples were banned, at the insistence of the Virginia and Washington State apple growers, despite the fact that the apple growers in South

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Africa were predominantly colored. We wiped out a good deal of the colored middle-class yeomanry in South Africa with this action.

The South African sugar quota was taken away and redistributed to the friends of various lobbyists. And yet sugar in South Africa was grown primarily by Zulus, not by whites. We impoverished this important non-ANC element of the black population.

South African coal was similarly affected, until it became apparent that the U.S. coal trade depended in part on adding higher-quality South African coal to American coal in order to produce a viable and competitive product internationally, at which point, that particular thing went away.

Anyway, the law, which I actually ended up administering, and trying to do so faithfully, as the interagency coordinator for its implementation, produced all sort of anomalous results. And it had the effect of accelerating American disinvestment from South Africa, despite the fact that American companies had had affirmative action programs and had been actively engaged in promoting black advancement in South Africa.

In the end, this kind of effort at economic isolation of South Africa, in my view, had two pernicious and entirely predictable results.

One, was to cause deep structural damage to the South African economy, which the post-apartheid government is now having to struggle to overcome. That is, structural unemployment and inefficiencies in the economy, the absence of growth, and an excessive debt burden.

And second, perhaps, in a strange way, by reinforcing South Africa's isolation, it fostered the growth of uneconomical industry and other activities in South Africa of two kinds: one, the sort that can be competitive and profitable only behind a tariff or a quota wall (in this case, externally imposed by sanctions); and second, the arms industry and other elements of industry that are amenable to smuggling and sanctions-busting. So, as a result of twenty

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years, really, of sanctioning against South Africa, the Mandela government inherited a government that really had only one competitive international export capability, and that was in the area of arms.

It is far from clear to me, despite the fact that the conventional wisdom asserts the contrary, that sanctions in fact accelerated the process of change in South Africa. I think they may have retarded it, by diverting attention from the real issues in South Africa.

In any event, I would say, on balance, they probably helped in some respects, and hurt in others — very much a mixed picture.

But the point here is that, by the fall of '86, the Reagan administration essentially was discredited in its African policy in general, and its policies toward South Africa in particular.

Chet Crocker, who personally was terribly ill at ease with the racist rhetoric of Pat Buchanan, and was a European conservative, rather than an American conservative, by temperament, with an elegant vision of how to produce change in South Africa and between South Africa and its neighbors, found himself essentially persona non grata on Capitol Hill, with the result that, for the succeeding two and a half years, virtually all of the congressional testimony on these issues was done by me. That was not a pleasant experience, because essentially any administration spokesperson who went up to Capitol Hill was there as a scapegoat and an effigy of the administration, to be struck as hard as possible, as many times as possible, for political effect.

This process played through, I should say, in '88. As the presidential election approached, the Democratic majority in the House and Senate were determined to produce a bill on South Africa to tighten sanctions, not because they particularly wanted to tighten sanctions, but because they hoped that Reagan would veto the bill, and then ensaddle the Republican candidate, George Bush, with the label of “soft on apartheid,” which they had successfully attached to Ronald Reagan, with, I must say, a great deal of help from Pat

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Buchanan and others in the White House who were insensitive to American public feelings on the issue.

There was a further set of fallout that I should mention, which I think may come back to haunt us in the future. And that is that, since apartheid was such an overwhelmingly detested phenomenon, the federal government did nothing when state and local governments throughout the country adopted independent foreign policies banning investment in South Africa and took other actions that the federal Constitution clearly reserves to the federal authorities, rather than state and local authorities, with the result that the City of Berkeley, California, and the State of Massachusetts, and the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and others became quite outspoken and adopted a whole set of punitive measures against companies that had been trying to conduct affirmative-action programs in South Africa.

This accelerated disinvestment in South Africa, as I say, with what I believe are pernicious results, since, once investment leaves, as South Africa is now finding out in 1996, it is difficult to attract it back. The most enlightened sectors of South African industry were transferred in ownership to much less enlightened native South African ownership, which was able to buy these assets at a significant discount.

But, anyway, in Constitutional terms, I don't think it's particularly a good idea for state and local governments to adopt independent foreign policy stances. The administration was simply unwilling to take them on, on this very unpopular issue.

Q: Were you able to talk to anybody, staff or members of Congress or people in the White House, on the side? Were there any people who understood what was happening?

FREEMAN: There were indeed people who understood what was happening, particularly in the Senate — Senator Lugar, Senator Kassebaum, moderate Republicans, and some Democrats as well — and they made every effort to save the president from Pat Buchanan and the bad advice he was getting from others like Buchanan, and to reach a compromise.

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In the end, the President wouldn't bend. So it was not that conservative realism (if there is such a thing) had no voice in the political system. It did. But it was a voice that was totally drowned out by the ideological opposition to apartheid, on the one hand, and by Ronald Reagan's peculiar blindness to the natural American aversion to apartheid, on the other.

Q: Did Chet Crocker feel isolated at all? What were you getting from him?

FREEMAN: He, I should say, is quite a remarkable person. He's a scrapper. You can knock him down, and he'll get right up again and go at it again. Indeed, he was knocked down daily, and picked himself up and went back into the fray, in the most courageous fashion. As a manager, he is very open to ideas and to criticism of his own activities.

I found him a great pleasure to work with, though I must say he had many dark days during this time, particularly because, as all this was happening, we were essentially out of business on the Angola-Namibia deal that he had invested so much effort in achieving.

He has described in his book, and I described in an article in Foreign Affairs in the summer of 1989, the process by which we got back into contact with Luanda, Havana, and Pretoria.

But that, too, was not easy. The mood in South Africa, after the Comprehensive Anti-apartheid Act passed, ranged from unrealistic euphoria amongst anti-apartheid activists, who believed that this would bring down the regime (when, of course, it wouldn't), to animosity against the United States and indifference to our interests on the part of the South African authorities. The process of reengaging South Africa with Angola, and keeping Mr. Jonas Savimbi on track, was not easy.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point, and I'll put down here what we want to cover. Two side issues that I'd just like to cover, because they haven't been mentioned, are your impressions of events in the Horn of Africa and in Zaire, then we'll get into your area of

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concentration and developments in this '86 to '89 period, particularly the Cuban connection and how we worked on that.

FREEMAN: And Mozambique, which is very important and not much understood.

Q: Chas, before we move on to Southern Africa, how did we look upon events, from your perspective, in Ethiopia at that time? Ethiopia was still undergoing a very difficult time, with difficult relations with us, wasn't it?

FREEMAN: As I arrived in the Bureau of African Affairs, Ethiopia was in the grips of a terrible famine, aggravated by forcible relocation, "villagization," as I think they called it, of much of the rural population, which had been moved around inside Ethiopia, given a few tools and some seeds, and pretty much left to fend for itself by the government, under circumstances of extreme drought.

Of course, a great deal of the suffering had been caused by two factors: one, the stupidity and brutality of the Mengistu regime; and two, its adoption of a Soviet system and its volunteering to place itself essentially under Soviet tutelage. This was after the Cuban intervention between Ethiopia and Somali, so the external factors were not great.

The American reaction (rather surprisingly to me, since I sort of wondered why the United States should have to clean up every mess that the Soviet Union had created, especially food shortages) was virtually totally and purely humanitarian. And somewhat to my surprise, that was Chet Crocker's perspective, also. Chet normally is thought of as very much a strategic thinker, in the Cold War context, but in this case, he really was concerned primarily about the suffering of people. So that the option that we might have explored of offering to assist the Soviet Union to carry the burden that it had itself created was never really explored, and we began a huge humanitarian relief operation into Ethiopia.

At the same time, of course, the same conditions existed, in a different way, in southern Sudan, as a result of the civil war in Sudan and the relapse of southern Sudan into a

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virtual state of pre-modern society, with the resumption of slave-taking and various atrocities by different ethnic groups against each other, much of it supported by Ethiopia. There, too, we ended up mounting a substantial relief operation, essentially out of Kenya.

So the concern about Ethiopia at that time was virtually entirely humanitarian. In a sense, the Horn of Africa was in the process of becoming what it subsequently fully became; namely, a sort of humanitarian theme park for the United States, in which one could find endless examples of human suffering to alleviate, and, if one was inclined to engage in good deeds, one could find an endless source of opportunity to do so.

Q: During this period, what was our impression of what the Soviets were doing? Were they beginning to back away from this whole thing?

FREEMAN: Not in 1986-87. It was not until really 1987-88 that we began to see evidence of a true Soviet desire to cut their losses in Africa. They had become quite seriously overextended, particularly in Africa, and with Cuba. As their own economy imploded and the burdens on their own society became unsustainable, they began to pull in support of the far-flung reaches of the empire, and concentrate more on Central and Eastern Europe, which, of course, were core concerns. The Soviets were taking a terrible drubbing in Afghanistan, as a result of the Sino-American joint venture, funded in no small measure by Saudi Arabia, with a bit of Egyptian support as well. And the whole adventure of Third World interventionism, which they had launched in the aftermath of the fall of Saigon in the mid-'70s, was becoming more and more difficult for them to sustain.

But during this, for me, early period, '86-'87, the Soviets were not an effective player. We weren't really talking with them on the level of detail about their adventures in Africa.

We, of course, were not talking at all to the Cubans about these things.

As I mentioned, Angola had essentially severed communication with the United States; that is, the Angolan government, the MPLA, the Marxist regime. Jonas Savimbi was

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extremely suspicious. We were trying to use Mozambique as an intermediary to restart those talks, and to use Kenneth Kaunda, the president of Zambia, for the same purpose.

Meanwhile, the South Africans were skeptical in the extreme and not much inclined to play along with the United States.

At home, as I mentioned, the Reagan stance on South Africa had drawn virtually universal condemnation, and the Comprehensive Anti-apartheid Act, which slapped severe sanctions on South Africa, fueled the disinvestment drive that progressively removed American influence from the grassroots of the struggle against apartheid.

Q: Was there a debate over sanctions and embargo? Did the economic people look at this and say, you know, would this thing work or would it not? Because it seems, if you go back to Jefferson's embargo, the results are so meager on these things, and they impact mainly on the United States. Was this just an act of political frustration in the United States, or do you find that these things work, these economic things?

FREEMAN: This was both an act of political frustration (apartheid was indeed a horror and correctly evoked a strong American reaction) and a very partisan matter (a Republican president with no sensitivity to race relations, who was very much under attack by the Democratic majority in Congress). So it had both characters.

As for the sanctions themselves, there really wasn't much discussion of their efficacy. They were seen more as a gesture of disapproval. Some people argued that they would have some sort of effect in South Africa, although it was never quite clear what that was supposed to be. The issue of the American propensity to respond to difficult situations with sanctions and ostracism really wasn't addressed during that period.

I think the studies of sanctions that have been done suggest a couple of things.

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First, they can be a very useful adjunct to negotiation, in the sense that they can increase pressure on the other side to compromise, providing two conditions exist: one, that the objective of the sanctions — what the other side has to do to avoid having sanctions imposed or to achieve the removal of sanctions in the event that they have been imposed — is very clear; and, two, that it is doable, that, with a single act or a couple of acts, they can achieve the avoidance or removal of sanctions. If those conditions exist, and if there is a negotiating process in place, then they have some utility. But those conditions generally exist only in the context of trade negotiations, where sanctions have proven a useful, if somewhat two-edged, instrument of policy.

Second, when sanctions have broad, nebulous goals, like the transformation of another society's political system or mores, or the achievement of some new moral condition in another society, they have invariably failed.

That, in my view, was much the case with South Africa, where I don't think the sanctions played a central role in ending apartheid, although they may have played a marginal role.

They failed in Panama, with Noriega. Under conditions where Panamanian dependence on the U.S. financial and other markets was overwhelming, they nonetheless failed to dislodge Noriega.

They failed with Libya, which had to be bombed in order to curb its forays into international terrorism.

They failed with Iraq, of course. They did not obtain the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait.

And really they are quite dangerous. Perhaps the clearest instance of that was the outbreak of World War II, which was caused in no small measure, for the United States, by the American imposition of sanctions on Japan, with no clear standard or set of actions that the Japanese could take to meet American demands and have the sanctions removed. The Japanese concluded that the sanctions represented an intolerable threat

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to their independence and to their aspirations, and reacted with a counterattack at Pearl Harbor.

So I think sanctions are generally an instrument that can be wielded with precision in support of negotiations, but when they take on broad, transcendent objectives, they generally either fail outright or are, frankly, counterproductive.

But none of this was really discussed. There were efforts, obviously, by people in the administration, including myself, since I was doing most of the congressional testimony, Chet Crocker having become persona non grata on Capitol Hill, to raise these issues. But these arguments were brushed aside as supportive of a stance by the administration that was seen as racist and therefore unworthy of consideration.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your attitude and experience going up and testifying before Congress. Did you find this was sort of a Kabuki dance, a pro forma thing, where you would get up there, but it didn't have any real effect one way or the other?

FREEMAN: Yes. On an issue like this, where essentially the matter is an extension of domestic American politics, and highly partisan, I don't believe rational argument plays much of a role. The hearings were designed for effect, and for their public-relations or political impact, not to clarify the issues.

The worst instance of this, which got me in considerable difficulty, actually, with the then-chairman of the foreign relations committee, was not in 1986, but in 1988. In the fall of 1988, as the presidential election approached, the Democrats in Congress were eager to embarrass George Bush by producing a further bill on South African sanctions, which President Reagan would veto, believing that this would rebound to the benefit of Governor Dukakis, Bush's opponent. To this end, they had a whole series of hearings, by all sorts of subcommittees and committees, none of which were at all interested in hearing anything. They were going through the motions and trying to get some publicity.

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There were at least two incidents I recall from that. One, with my own congressman, Fernand St. Germain, of Rhode Island, who was the chairman of the House banking committee and later fell afoul of the law for various benefits that he had squeezed out of the banking community as part of that position. He held a hearing, and when I arrived at the hearing to testify for the administration, I was told that the administration would be sitting with a panel of private witnesses, all of them representing various anti-apartheid movements and interest groups.

I said, after checking with both the White House and the State Department, that that was not acceptable. That the administration was an equal branch of government, and that it deserved to be heard as such. That I would be available to answer questions, and wouldn't object to the anti-apartheid activists joining that process, but that I certainly was not going to appear as a co-equal with private advocacy groups on the witness stand.

I was told, "Well, that's the way Chairman St. Germain wants it."

And I said, "Well, I'm sorry. If that is the procedure you're going to follow, then you will not have an administration witness."

They said, "You can't be serious."

I said, "I am totally serious."

And, again after checking with the White House and the State Department, I reaffirmed that.

They nonetheless went ahead with a hearing, at which the chairman announced at the outset that that was the procedure he intended to follow, that he'd hear the administration along with the anti-apartheid activists.

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So I said that the administration was a co-equal branch of government and was not prepared to appear in such a demeaning fashion. And I walked out of the hearing. I was later told that this was the second time in U.S. history that the administration's ever done that. The first time was sometime time in the 1930s, evidently.

There was a little note in The Washington Post that expressed puzzlement about why I'd done that.

It was symptomatic of the atmosphere, where these events were essentially staged for political effect. They weren't serious.

The second incident. In the fall of 1988, we were, of course, very actively engaged in discussions with Angolans, Cubans, UNITA, South Africans, and the Soviets, and making very good progress toward a resolution both of the Angola and Namibia problems.

George Shultz (and I was in the room) called Senator Claiborne Pell, the Democratic chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee, and suggested that the committee perhaps, before it moved to bludgeon South Africa further, might want to inform itself about the state of play in the U.S. mediation effort between Angolans, South Africans, Namibians, and so forth.

Pell replied that he would like to help George Shultz, but that this was a party matter, and that he couldn't agree to any such briefing. He asked whether George Shultz himself would testify. And Shultz said, well, if he couldn't, he would arrange for the appropriate senior expert on the subject to appear. Pell, nonetheless, declined.

There was, subsequently, a markup of the Democratic bill on South Africa, at which Senator Helms somehow had learned of this conversation between Senator Pell and Secretary Shultz, and asked in the hearing whether the chairman had declined an offer by the administration to appear, to brief the committee, and whether he had declined an offer by the secretary of state to appear before the committee. Well, the question of whether the

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secretary of state in fact had intended to appear was quite ambiguous, and probably he had not. But clearly the chairman had declined a briefing attempt.

I was there, as the administration witness, and I confirmed that the chairman had done that.

Senator Pell then asserted that Shultz had offered to brief only the Democrats, and that he'd felt that was improper and would not agree to it. I'm not sure how he had come to that conclusion. Senator Pell is an honest and honorable man, so I'm sure his confusion was honest.

I was put in the position of supporting Jesse Helms's efforts to discredit Senator Pell, and I had to say what I had heard, with considerable damage to my own personal relationship with Senator Pell.

That later resulted in some friction during my nomination to Saudi Arabia, which was a terrible thing, since I've always had the very highest regard for Senator Pell.

But, in this case, he was simply mistaken and confused. In the partisan atmosphere of the time, he was mousetrapped, and I'm afraid I was the steel clamp that came down on him.

But that was the atmosphere of their hearings. They were very much circuses, not serious inquiries into the issues.

Q: Let's talk about developments there. You particularly mentioned Mozambique. From your perspective, what were you doing?

FREEMAN: Mozambique was a particularly difficult issue. Mozambique had attained independence from the Portuguese suddenly, as indeed all of the Portuguese empire had, in the context of the essentially-Communist revolution in Portugal. The Portuguese settlers in Mozambique departed en masse, many of them for South Africa, some for Portugal, and

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a few for Brazil. Their properties were abandoned and taken over by Frelimo, which was the Soviet-sponsored, Marxist liberation movement that inherited Mozambique.

Mozambique, despite nearly five hundred years of Portuguese occupation and control, had, I believe, about two university graduates. Everything had been run by the Portuguese. The only-middle class was Portuguese, and with the departure of the Portuguese, Mozambique essentially collapsed. It collapsed even further because of the incompetence of Frelimo and its dysfunctional ideology — the nationalization of this, that, and the other, and foolish efforts to impose a Soviet model on an economy that was at a very different stage of development and couldn't begin to respond.

Also, of course, the struggle to end the unilateral declaration of independence by Rhodesia was in full strength. The Rhodesians organized what they called the Mozambique National Resistance Movement, or the Renamo, finding a young man named Alfonso Dhlakama to lead this. They trained it.

All of this is very well documented in the memoirs of Ken Flowers, who was the head of Ian Smith's central intelligence organization. I spoke later with Mr. Flowers and with others who had helped set up Renamo.

When Rhodesia itself succumbed to the pressure of the resistance movement in Rhodesia, and Robert Mugabe was elected as the president of Zimbabwe, as Rhodesia came to be known, the support from Rhodesia was clandestinely taken up by South Africa, which I think had been, in any event, an active partner with Rhodesia in the destabilization of Mozambique. Since a significant part of the former Portuguese population of Mozambique was in South Africa, there were many, many people with a grudge and a good knowledge of Mozambique on whom the South Africans could draw to conduct a destabilization campaign in Mozambique.

As the struggle went forward, it got nastier and nastier, and Renamo in particular, but Frelimo as well, engaged in truly savage reprisals against civilians, with the cutting off of

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ears, the severing of limbs and breasts, and general mutilation. This mutilation became the norm, and perhaps half a million people perished in the conflict. It was a sort of African version of the events in Cambodia, in terms of the level of bloodbath that it involved.

Q: Had we been able to stay out of this, as far as the CIA?

FREEMAN: I have some reason to believe that Mr. Casey, who was prone to follow his own foreign policy, indeed did become, to some extent, involved with Renamo, against the declared policy, and indeed the strongly held internal policy of the administration.

One of the problems we constantly faced at the State Department during that period was the cooking of intelligence by CIA to magnify the impact of Renamo. Renamo was seen by some in the clandestine service, and by some on the political right in the United States, as a strong candidate to join Jonas Savimbi and UNITA in implementing the Reagan doctrine. The Reagan doctrine was that, as in Afghanistan, where we supported the mujahideen against the Soviets, we should support national resistance movements, guerilla activity, to make life miserable for the Soviets abroad. But Renamo really didn't need any American support to make life thoroughly miserable for Mozambicans.

I don't know how far Mr. Casey's activity actually went. I know of this only because of a chance remark by a senior official in Saudi Arabia, who told me that Mr. Casey had tried to involve Saudi Arabia with Renamo. I don't think they had become much involved with it.

In any event, the conflict was horrible.

In the meantime, the Mozambican authorities, Frelimo, at its highest level, and the government, first under Samora Machel, the initial leader of Frelimo and president of Mozambique, and then later under his successor, Joaquim Chissano, had begun to break with Marxist ideology. Mozambique was clearly looking to reposition itself between East and West, with a strong inclination to move to the West. It was also driven by realism to recognize the necessity of dealing with South Africa and of accommodating South African

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power. Therefore, it was not only of interest to us as a channel of communication with its fellow Marxist movement in Angola, but also as a case where indeed Soviet tutelage might be reversed simply by working with the local authorities who wished to find alternatives to Soviet dominance.

Q: Did we have representation in Mozambique at that time?

FREEMAN: We had an embassy and an ambassador, but no real relationship.

In any event, I began to visit Mozambique, for the two purposes I mentioned.

First, to use Mozambique as a means of regaining communication with Angola. I was not the only American official to do that. Robert Cabelly, who was Chet Crocker's special assistant, was there quite frequently, and others were there. But probably I had the highest level and most sustained contacts as time went on.

Second, as part of the effort to detach Mozambique from the Soviet orbit, we began to become more and more involved in trying to find a way of both halting South African support for Renamo and brokering some sort of peace process between Frelimo and Renamo.

This really culminated in my last visit to Mozambique, in the spring of 1989, before I actually entered the Bush administration, before I left African Affairs, when I went out to see whether there was a basis for a peace process, and found there was, and outlined a series of steps, in a long cable. Many of these ideas in fact worked in succeeding years and laid the basis for the peace accord between Renamo and Frelimo, and the subsequent elections, and the incorporation of Renamo into a democratic process, and their laying down of their arms, and the demobilization of some of the worst of the Frelimo troops as well.

Q: Did you have any contact with Renamo?

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FREEMAN: During the period I was there, we had none. We had contact with many who were themselves in contact with Renamo, including the government of Kenya, which was quite involved with Renamo, and the government of Malawi, which, by force of geopolitics, since Renamo's main areas of control were adjacent to Malawi, and since much of the support from South Africa ran through Malawi, clandestinely, had a good deal of contact as well. We did not, however, have a direct dialogue with Renamo. That came later, as the result of the peace process effort that perhaps I conceived, but which I wasn't able to see through. My successors did.

Q: What was your impression of the leaders in Mozambique at this time?

FREEMAN: It was a parody of the Third World at its worst. A few very intelligent, forceful individuals at the top, among them the president, Joaquim Chissano; the foreign minister, Mokumbe; the minister of transportation, Armando Guebuza, who was a great force in the party; and the minister of defense. Below them, the second tier of officials were essentially incompetent. And there was nothing underneath them at all. So there really was very little of a state in Mozambique. It was an area of anarchy, in which a few individuals pretended to be in charge. Everything was broken down, and nothing was very competently run.

I might say that one of the interesting aspects of Mozambique was Margaret Thatcher's involvement.

Q: She was prime minister of England at this time.

FREEMAN: Prime minister of the United Kingdom. She had become convinced, as a result of her own keen sense of realism and contact with the Mozambicans, that indeed they could be and would be and wanted to be weaned from support of the Soviet Union and brought in a different direction. Periodically, when Ronald Reagan would be tempted in the direction of supporting Renamo or disengaging from the government in Maputo, the capital

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of Mozambique, Margaret Thatcher would give him a call, and he would go right back on course.

I must say, sometimes these calls were, if not instigated, at least stimulated by the Bureau of African Affairs at State, which was very close to the British in everything we were doing in Southern Africa.

In any event, Ronald Reagan, like George Bush, admired, respected, and often followed the advice that Margaret Thatcher gave him.

Q: What was your impression of the leadership of South Africa at this time?

FREEMAN: South Africa went through two phases during my involvement with it.

The first was the leadership of P. W. Botha, the state president, who was a man who had begun his political career by swinging a bicycle chain through opposition party gatherings, and had quite a thuggish nature, but who was trying to lead his country in the direction of reform, somewhat halfheartedly and always quite ineffectually. He always seemed to lose his courage just before he took a crucial step to broaden the electorate to include nonwhite participants, for example. He approached a very interesting experiment in democratic politics and constitution-building in the Province of Natal, involving the white and Zulu leadership of Natal, called the Indaba (which I suppose means something like "Great Conference" or "Discussion"), with a total lack of imagination. His military intelligence and security services were clearly engaged in a wide range of really disgusting assassinations and other activities. He also was the author of the South African nuclear bomb project, which, of course, was successfully concealed from the world, and revealed only later under his successor, F. W. De Klerk.

So that, during much of my time, this old man, whose time had clearly passed, was in charge of South Africa, with members of the South African establishment below him, including many Afrikaners, restive in this circumstance.

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One of those who was restive was F. W. De Klerk. To jump way ahead, I had the opportunity, in March of 1989, to go in to see De Klerk, for what was to have been a half-hour meeting but which stretched on to quite a bit longer than that, and to ask him how he planned to engage in dialogue with the anti-apartheid, disenfranchised opposition in South Africa.

And I was very encouraged. I came away with the impression that this was a man who had no clear vision of exactly where he wanted South Africa to go, but knew very well how to manage the process of getting it there.

I was astonished when the reporting cable from that meeting came to me for clearance from the embassy, because, after a rather perfunctory accounting of what I thought was a rather interesting conversation, the bottom-line conclusion was: "So you can see, this man is the typical Afrikaner, who talks a lot of bullfeathers and doesn't in fact mean to do anything."

My conclusion was quite the opposite, and I did something that I've never done before or since. I went to Ambassador Ed Perkins and asked him whether I could insert a paragraph dissenting from his judgment of De Klerk. And I put in the judgment, which was essentially the one that I just voiced, that, while he had no clear vision of where to take South Africa, he certainly had a vision of how to take it away from apartheid. That turned out to be accurate. But, unfortunately, my involvement with South Africa did not extend much beyond that meeting, and I was not able to watch that prediction play out.

Q: Did you see our embassy as having settled into a groove of not seeing opportunities, of not seeing change? It's so easy, once you're in a country, particularly if you have a policy that is opposed to the one that country is following, to bristle at everything and not be very agile.

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FREEMAN: Despite the immense personal dignity and professionalism of Ed Perkins, I think the embassy had fallen into a stance that was essentially reactive and negative and despairing of progress, on either the internal issues, which were, of course, of much greater interest to the embassy than anything else, especially to Ed Perkins, as an African American, or, more importantly, on what was actually, we felt in Washington, doable in terms of the agenda with Angola and Namibia and the Cubans.

In fact, I was sent down, suddenly, to South Africa by Chet Crocker, during the winter of '87-'88, to say to Ed Perkins and his brilliant political counselor, Bob Frasure, later killed in Bosnia after serving as ambassador in Estonia, that their negative comments disparaging American diplomacy and its prospects for success were in fact coming back to Washington in various channels; that these statements and attitudes had to stop; that we had some things we needed to accomplish; that, although it might look like a long shot, we could get them done; but that we certainly wouldn't get them done if our representatives on the spot lacked a positive commitment and belief that they could be done.

That's not the sort of message that anybody likes to carry, particularly to someone of the stature of Ed Perkins. But one of Ed's strengths is that he will listen and reflect. And he did. And I think the embassy did thereafter take a stance that was more supportive of the external agenda (meaning the broader Southern African agenda vis-à-vis Angola, Namibia, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe) than had earlier been the case. And that was helpful.

There were, I might say, in the South African establishment, some very fine people, not people with whose attitudes or beliefs I necessarily agreed, but who were quite clearly men of integrity. One of those was the senior civil servant in the Foreign Ministry, Neil Van Herden, who later played a key role in the actual success of the U.S. mediation effort and who went on to serve as ambassador in Europe for South Africa. Neil was typical, someone of high-quality mind in skeptical opposition to American objectives.

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The same was true, by the way, with the ANC, with whom we began to conduct an active dialogue.

Q: The ANC being the...

FREEMAN: The African National Congress; now, as of 1996, the government of South Africa under Nelson Mandela. There, one could not help but be impressed by the enormous quality of the mind and the personal integrity of someone like Thabo Mbeki, who later became vice president of South Africa.

But, as I think I probably remarked when we last discussed this, the ANC and the South African government, in the course of their struggle, had come greatly to resemble each other, and for every man or woman of great quality, there were a vastly larger number of thugs and nincompoops with whom one had to deal.

The same was true of the internal opposition in South Africa. The ANC, of course, could not operate openly, but there was the United Front, which in effect was the ANC, and which contained some people of really extraordinary caliber.

So it was exhilarating to deal with South Africans, in terms of dealing with people who were intellectually capable and emotionally balanced.

I felt, at the time, that the world much underestimated the capacity of South Africans, of all ethnic backgrounds, to transcend the hatred that they naturally felt as a result of so many centuries of oppression and warfare, by everyone, I should say. No one in South Africa, if one looks at the broad sweep of South African history, has particularly clean hands.

Q: Here you had President Reagan, who, in his pronouncements, did not seem to be terribly sensitive to the racial thing or to have much of a world view. And you had some members of his party, particularly Jesse Helms, who took almost a 19th-century view of Africa. Did you find, in dealing with our own embassy there and with the rest of the parties,

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that you had to almost say, look, the president's there, but we have a serious policy and we're trying to do something? Was this a problem?

FREEMAN: It was always a problem. I would say that one of the great reasons for our ability to stay the course was the stalwart character of the secretary of state, George Shultz, a man of strength and conviction, few words, but great determination. In the case of South Africa and Southern Africa generally, George Shultz had the compassion and sensitivity that Ronald Reagan did not. He also had the understanding of the complexities that Ronald Reagan lacked. More important, he was prepared to allow Chet Crocker and his team, of which I was a senior member, to do our diplomacy, and strongly back us, under very general guidance. He always backed us. Occasionally, he would make a decision with which we didn't agree, but it was always after a fair hearing of the alternatives.

The Department of State under George Shultz was probably the best managed that it has been in certainly the last three or four decades. He knew how to use assistant secretaries and the Foreign Service, and he did so. It's not that everyone always agreed with George Shultz, and I suppose much of the Foreign Service was skeptical about the wing of the Republican Party that Ronald Reagan represented; nonetheless, no one questioned the intellect or character of our secretary of state, or his competence. The competence of the people around him, people like John Whitehead, as deputy secretary, or Mike Armacost, as under secretary for political affairs, was simply unchallengeable.

The contrast with subsequent administrations — which, in the case of Jim Baker, ran policy cabalistically, with a small group of insiders who were not well connected to the building, and who in fact attempted to discourage the bubbling up of ideas from the building, and who really had no guiding overall strategic sense, or which, in the case of the Clinton administration, frankly has been disinterested, to a great extent, in foreign policy, and has been wholly tactical and reactive in its approach, and totally deferential, in most

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respects, to domestic interests, rather than responsive to foreign realities — could not be greater.

So, despite the difficulties of a partisan nature, which were legion, some of which are alluded to in an article I later did for Foreign Affairs in the summer of 1989 on the Angola-Namibia Accords, which more or less outlines the process by which success was achieved, the presence of George Shultz as a solid gyroscope for American foreign policy was of vital importance during this period.

Q: Going back to this relationship with the embassy, it sounds like it took some prodding, not just on your part but others', to bring the embassy away from almost the mindset of: "We're here in a beleaguered place where all we can do is be sort of grumpy and not get anywhere."

FREEMAN: I think that sort of characterization's really not fair to the embassy, which was, under Ed Perkins, with some very talented officers, reaching out very broadly in South African society, and was, understandably, of course, living in South Africa, like South Africans, obsessed not with foreign affairs, but with South Africa's own domestic travails. I think the embassy, under Herman Nickel, was not given due credit for the quality of the contacts that it developed, across the board, in South African society. And, under Ed Perkins, those contacts clearly broadened.

If anything, the criticism I would make of the embassy, under Ed Perkins, was that there was so much emphasis on contact with the leaders of the future, meaning the opposition, that sometimes the embassy seemed to forget that there were people who were in power at present without whose cooperation one could not accomplish things.

But that is an overstatement and an overcharacterization.

I think the embassy's performance under siege, and it really was a difficult task, was excellent. I don't have much criticism. And I find it hard to be condemnatory of the

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despondency that sometimes set in, since it was very, very difficult, in the face of the daily realities of South Africa, and listening to the benighted views of the South African establishment at that time, to feel optimistic.

Q: Certainly, when you get right down to it, it's better to feel somewhat despondent than complacent, which criticism has been leveled, at other times, at that embassy. In other words, sort of the idea of, well, the whites obviously are going to rule this country for a long time, and they're doing a pretty good job, and the blacks are benighted, and so what's the problem?

FREEMAN: I must say that, fortunately, I did not deal with South Africa during the period when those attitudes prevailed, as I guess they may have in the '50s. For my part, while I certainly met some people with benighted attitudes among the black African cohorts, the most benighted attitudes I encountered were those of right-wing Afrikaners. So I can understand the distaste of people living in that place for many of those with whom they had to deal.

On the other hand, in the case of my own career, I've dealt fairly consistently with people whose views I find distasteful, whether they're Chinese Communists, or members of the Kuomintang in Taiwan, or proponents of caste politics in India, or Afrikaners, or members of the Maoist-leaning Pan-Africanist Congress in South Africa, or some of the more absurd leftist members of the African National Congress, or the racist, right-wing nationalists of the National Party in South Africa.

I think one of the things that a Foreign Service officer must be able to do is to be empathetic, in the sense of understanding the viewpoint of other people, but always to preserve one's own viewpoint, and not allow the distaste for other people's views to color judgment. If you are trying to get something done, you have to understand the other fellow's point of view, but you don't have to agree with it. You also have to avoid fits of moral outrage, which generally are not productive.

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Q: My career was the same thing. Looking at it, I think I've been in one or two countries, out of seven, whose, you might say, politics I could feel comfortable with. What was our attitude about Nelson Mandela, who was a prisoner at this time, wasn't he?

FREEMAN: Nelson Mandela was very much a prisoner during this whole period, although, in 1989, as my tenure in Africa came to an end, it was already reasonably clear that he was going to find release. And it was clear, from my discussion with F. W. De Klerk, that he understood the need to bring Mr. Mandela out. Mandela was more symbol than reality as a presence at that time. No one really knew what his views were. He was variously described, depending on the political viewpoint of the person doing the describing, as a saint or as some sort of demon. In the end, he turned out to be a bit closer to the saint than the demon image, but still a very complex human being.

One of the complications in examining Mr. Mandela was, frankly, the antics of his sexually promiscuous and amoral wife, Winnie Mandela, who had set herself up as the ruling queen of the black African contingent, particularly in Soweto, and was engaged in all sorts of thuggish behavior, as well as other behavior that didn't add luster to her reputation. A bit of this spilled over on Mr. Mandela, and people wondered whether he would not share some of her lower instincts.

Q: Out of INR or the CIA, were you getting any sort of psycho. profiles, or whatever it is, of Mandela? Were people playing with the idea of whither South Africa, during the time you were there?

FREEMAN: I don't recall seeing such things. There was splendid reporting out of the embassy on grassroots politics. There was much psychological profiling of the state president, Mr. Botha, and other members of the establishment who had power in their hands. Much of it, I suspect, would not withstand the scrutiny of today. But, in any event, there wasn't much of that.

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The fact is that people like Chet Crocker and myself, over the course of my time in AF, got to know all of the individuals who were not in prison and who were key players pretty well, and had a sense of them as people, as well as of them as political leaders. So I think our judgments were informed by intuition, as well as by events and the facts of the moment, and they turned out to be not too bad.

Q: What about the Zulu leader, Buthelezi, was he a player?

FREEMAN: Mangosuthu Buthelezi was very much a player, in two senses.

First, he was an instigator and leader of the Indaba, to which I referred, in Natal, which essentially envisaged ending apartheid in Natal on a federal basis, so that Natal could have a federal status and achieve non-racial government, in quite an imaginative fashion. That experiment was blighted by the joint opposition of the Afrikaner establishment, which insisted on a unitary rather than federal state, for reasons of control, and the similar opposition of the ANC (Mr. Oliver Tambo was then the acting president of the ANC, while Mr. Mandela was in jail), for the same reason, looking forward to a unitary state in which Pretoria would exercise dominant control.

The second point of influence and interest in Mr. Buthelezi was that, unlike other black African leaders, he was a proponent of liberal politics and economics, a free-enterprise enthusiast. To a great extent, I think his ideas were shaped by a small brain trust that he had.

Mr. Buthelezi's personality is an odd one. He was very rigid, prone to reading out prepared statements, the major parts of which I believe he crafted himself. They were always very eloquent and very well reasoned, but somewhat peremptory in tone. He was more the Zulu chief, in other words, than a democratic politician, in many respects.

I think that he was of interest to the South African authorities primarily as a means of splitting the black African opposition to white African dominance. He undoubtedly was

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used by the authorities for that purpose. But he was a serious political figure in his own right, the darling of some elements of the American right wing who were looking for a leader among the black African opposition whose ideological views were anti-Communist and pro-Western. Buthelezi filled that requirement.

Still, there was never any effective support by the United States or other countries either for the Indaba, which I considered somewhat tragic, because I think it had great promise, or for Mr. Buthelezi and his Inkatha movement.

Part of the reason for that was that Inkatha was often engaged in violent actions against the ANC and non-Zulu black African inhabitants of areas where it was present, whether they were in Natal or in the black townships surrounding Johannesburg. Many of these were very bloody. There was a lot of political murder going on, and there was some reason to believe that Mr. Buthelezi was implicated in much of this. So he was not the sort of person that one could lightly embrace. In fact, no one did embrace him.

Q: Is there anything else on the South African side that we should cover at this time?

FREEMAN: In my article in Foreign Affairs, I described the process that led to the settlement.

Q: This was in 1989.

FREEMAN: Nineteen eighty-eight, actually, during the Reagan administration, actual implementation occurring between the time of the election and after the inauguration of George Bush. This was a very difficult process. It was certainly interesting, in terms of the fact that, in its later stages, as it accelerated, it resulted in multiple meetings in Europe, Cairo, Havana, Cape Town, Rwanda, and other locations, many of which I participated in. It was quite fascinating to deal directly with Fidel Castro on this issue, as we did in going to Havana to nail down the agreement. But, as I say, much of that is covered in the article I wrote in Foreign Affairs.

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Q: What was your impression of Fidel Castro?

FREEMAN: An absolutely brilliant man, vastly too large for the small island that he bestrode. He is a micromanager, with an astonishing grasp of detail — apartment rent rates and electrical rates and the conditions of life at the grass roots. And, like most micromanagers, the net effect of his micromanagement is to gum everything up.

One had the sense that his immediate senior entourage (much of which we got to know, and I prefer not to name names) went to bed nightly praying for his demise. Not that they lacked admiration for him; it was hard not to admire him if you were a Cuban in his establishment. But it was hard not to hate him if you were not in his establishment, simply because he had a smothering effect on Cuba. Many of these people could see that the net effect of the revolution had been to stick Cuba into a sort of time capsule and remove it from the modern world. They resented the dependence on the Soviet Union. They agreed with Castro on the need to cut foreign adventures and concentrate on things at home, but were prepared to go much farther than he in economic, and even a measure of political, reform. So they favored a kind of Deng Xiaoping-type revolution from the top, and were very frustrated that he remained true to his original vision of a Marxist society in Cuba.

The staff work that he did, his grasp of detail, were impressive. All of the conferences we had were videotaped, and he watched all the video tapes. Before we met him, he knew every detail, and he micromanaged every aspect of our talks with his subordinates.

When Fidel described military movements, it was apparent that he had micromanaged those, too. I think actually he deserves to be given an enormous amount of credit for producing the settlement of the Namibian issue. He was prepared to escalate militarily very significantly against South Africa. And he did so, brilliantly. It was a model case of the use of force for a diplomatic objective. He put South Africa in the position where it had everything to gain by compromise and much to lose by refusing to compromise. He did that because he had reached the conclusion, which Chet Crocker had reached earlier on,

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that Cuba would be far better off cutting its losses in Angola and going home than staying on. Part of the reason, of course, that Cuba would be better off cutting its losses was that Chet Crocker himself and the Reagan administration, by stepping up support for Jonas Savimbi, had put Castro in much the same position that he later put the South Africans into.

It was impressive to deal with him, in terms of the quality of the grasp of detail and his memory. It was also somewhat depressing, because you could see, as I said at the outset, how a man of this intellectual power and misguided conviction could suffocate the society that he was running.

Q: With the Soviets pulling out, did you feel that that gave us a stronger hand?

FREEMAN: The Soviets, as I said earlier, by '87-'88, had begun to have great doubts about the sustainability and wisdom of their African commitments, and to wish to cut their own costs. Over the same period, certainly by '88, the ideological differences had emerged between Castro and Moscow, such that there was not the affinity and commonality of views that there had once been. I think Castro must have judged that the Soviets might well be in the process of leaving him high and dry, as they went out on the ebb tide in Africa.

So, certainly, increased tension between Moscow and Havana, the declining mutual confidence between them, and Castro's own sense that his backers were cutting their backing for him were a powerful influence on his decision not only to withdraw from military activity in Africa, also to withdraw from the export of revolution and the support of insurrection in the Americas.

He spoke, I must say, very eloquently and quite persuasively of a vision of Cuban involvement in Africa and other areas of the world, based on the capabilities of the Cuban public health and military medical corps, which are quite formidable. The Cuban military, as we observed them in Africa, were very professional and very competent,

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and able to accomplish things with limited means, but with a kind of determination and competence that was very impressive. His decision, which he outlined, to end the expression of the revolution in terms of military intervention and to give it expression in terms of humanitarian assistance to societies, was a powerful one.

Q: Looking at this (and I hope these things will be read unto the 25th century), what was in it for the United States to get involved in all this? The Soviet threat was receding, and yet here we were, going all out in South Africa, which, abhorrent as it was, still wasn't us.

FREEMAN: I think there were a number of compelling American interests that drove the mediation in Southern Africa.

One of them was related to the Cold War. We had an interest in dismantling and reversing the Soviet inroads in Africa. From an American perspective, the proper objective strategically vis-#-vis Africa was strategic denial. We had no particular interest in basing or access or anything, whether in South Africa or farther north, but we had every interest in denying others shore facilities that could threaten transit around Africa or over Africa.

Second, there was an interest that derived from American values. The effects of apartheid within South Africa, and of power politics, including Cold-War politics, in Southern Africa more generally, were to impoverish and frankly to create a state of anarchy for much of the populations involved. An enormous amount of human suffering was involved, and there is always an American impulse to reduce this, which I think is enlightened. It's an enlightened interest, in part, because, if these elements of suffering are not reduced, the American people inevitably will end up paying to remedy the effects of the chaos.

There was a third interest, again related to American values, and that was in ending the era both of colonialism, of which Namibia was the last expression on the African continent, and of Cold-War, non-African intervention in African affairs, of which the Cuban expeditionary force in Angola was the primary expression.

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Fourth, with regard to Angola, specifically, and Mozambique, for that matter, in addition to the obvious interest in removing these places as footholds for Soviet influence in Africa and in accelerating the process of Moscow's realization that it should cut its losses and remove itself from these places, these are societies and places that, under proper management and with an open economy, are enormous potential sources of resources and trade and investment opportunities for Americans. Angola is rich in oil and diamonds. Mozambique has rich agricultural land, coal and mineral and metal deposits rivaling those of parts of South Africa. None of these could be developed to the benefit either of the native inhabitants or of the global economy as long as chaos continued.

I suppose I should also mention that, to some extent, our involvement was a joint enterprise with the British. It was supportive of British and, more generally, European interests in promoting stability and order in Africa. Africa is much closer to Europe than it is to the United States. So that was important.

Finally, there was a sense that the international system hadn't worked terribly well in terms of producing a stable order and peaceful environment in Africa, and that it was the role of the United States, as the leader of the international order, to try to bring that about.

All of these interests, of course, were alloyed with the overriding impulse of disgust by the American people with the racist system in South Africa. But those of us who were practicing diplomacy, as opposed to criticizing it from the political benches, saw it was possible to do things in Africa that were worthwhile, useful, and consistent with American interests, notwithstanding the deplorable state of affairs either in South Africa or in Angola or in Mozambique, and didn't believe that our disgust with conditions in those societies should stop us from trying to get on with producing a more just and stable order.

Q: Which is basically an American impulse, more than most, I think. We not only have the impulse, but the ability to carry it out, as opposed to a Sweden or somewhere, where the impulse might be there, but they don't have much to work with.

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FREEMAN: Or Canada. We had power, we had influence, we had credibility, and we had the wherewithal, as in the case of Angola, to make things worse for the regime and thus to force it to compromise, much as Mr. Castro later made things worse for the South Africans and helped us to make them compromise.

Q: Speaking of disgust with the regime, what about the one where we didn't seem to put much power behind a general feeling; that is, in Zaire, particularly with Mobutu? We're talking about the '86 to '89 period.

FREEMAN: Zaire is a fascinating place. To the extent that it is a country, it is the creation of Mr. Mobutu. He created a sort of black hole, the gravitational pull of which sooner or later attracted all loose currency and other objects into Kinshasa, where he could recycle them as part of a Mayor Daley-type patronage system. He thus made Kinshasa the center of Zaire, and he thereby created Zaire, a society built on the corrupt recycling of power, influence, and money through his hands. So that, I think, is the Zairian reality.

Zaire is, of course, a vast country, about the size of the U.S. east of the Mississippi, with an enormously diverse population, ranging from Bantu cannibals to pygmies in the forest, and many, many tribal groups. To give such a place unity, even by methods that most Americans would not find admirable, is quite an achievement.

During the Cold War, Zaire was alternately the object of intervention and counterintervention by the two contending parties, often using the United Nations as an instrument. The concern was primarily that Zaire not collapse. Mobutu, to the extent that that was the international concern, provided the answer to it.

More to the point, Zaire, with its borders with ten countries, is either a force for stabilization or destabilization in a wide range of Africa. We've seen that more recently with the events in Rwanda and, possibly, in Burundi, which border on Zaire, of course. But there have been many other instances.

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The most serious of these was, of course, Angola, where the United States became involved with Mobutu initially in supporting Holden Roberto, who is the brother-in-law of Mobutu, as an anti-Communist alternative to Mr. Savimbi, who was then a Maoist, supported by the Chinese, and to Mr. Neto of the MPLA, who was very much a Marxist, supported by the Soviets.

So Zaire became an instrument of covert action in the mid-'70s, and the relationship between the Central Intelligence Agency and agencies in Zaire involved with the CIA in activities in Angola, in particular, became quite intimate.

That was, of course, truncated, and those relationships, to a considerable extent, went away when the Congress, former senator Dick Clark in particular, ended the American intervention in Angola. The end of American intervention, of course, resulted in the Soviet triumph in Luanda in 1975-76.

But relations with Mr. Mobutu continued to be important to the U.S., at least in terms of avoiding a further relapse of the former Belgian Congo into chaos.

Mr. Mobutu's opposition internally during this period, that is, up through about 1989, was intermittent and frankly fairly feckless. The opposition sometimes would turn around and allow itself to be co-opted by Mr. Mobutu, suggesting that they had less interest in pursuing principle than in pursuing private gain, and that their objectives in terms of coming to power were to get their piece of the action, rather than to allow it to go to Mr. Mobutu.

Nevertheless, I think Mr. Mobutu is essentially an embarrassing friend to have. A friend of convenience, rather than of conviction.

During the period that I worked on Africa, I went to Kinshasa frequently, never to deal really with Zairian issues, but to meet with Jonas Savimbi or to do other things connected with Angola, because, of course, in the '80s, we had reinitiated our support for Angolan

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insurgence (in this case, Mr. Savimbi), and Zaire was a sort of safe haven for him. So I met with Mr. Savimbi either in Kinshasa, usually, or in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, where President Houphou#t-Boigny was a conservative anti-Communist open to facilitating such meetings, although himself not complicitous in any American program of support of Savimbi; I think working with the French, rather.

I thought of Zaire as the great jellyfish of Africa, sort of an amorphous mass, with the appearance of a sting, but none in fact. The sort of bubbling mass that, if exposed to the light, begins to smell pretty bad.

On the other hand, it was better to have something there than nothing. The alternative to Mr. Mobutu, then, seemed to be, and may still in fact be, anarchy.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover on Africa?

FREEMAN: I'm sure there's a great deal more, but this is probably enough.

Q: Chas, we're coming now to something completely out of your ken, although, of course, Africa had already been out of your ken. How did your assignment as ambassador to Saudi Arabia come about?

FREEMAN: I was, of course, due to leave the Bureau of African Affairs, after a bit more than three years there and a new administration, and the post of Saudi Arabia was open. It was nothing I had ever considered. In fact, one of my proudest achievements to that date had been to avoid the Middle East, with the poisonous domestic politics that it entails. I think, precisely because I had no record on the Middle East, and I had a reputation as a strong manager and a competent diplomat, and was available, I was offered Saudi Arabia. After a brief gulp, I accepted. I actually got the telephone call when I was in Mozambique, and it really rather stunned me.

Q: You didn't have to ask where that was.

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FREEMAN: No, I knew where it was. I'd met very few people from Saudi Arabia, although those I had met I found really quite charming. I'd only had two experiences with the area.

I had transited the Arabian Peninsula, including Jeddah, on several occasions, going to and from Asia or Southern Africa, the Indian Ocean. In the middle of the night, when one gets off a plane, one forms impressions. I must say, they weren't terribly favorable. When the aircraft transited, for example, from Mauritius, the Seychelles, and then Jeddah on to Paris, I tended to be asleep, and I would be awakened by the sudden arrival on board of what looked to be animated black bags, who would sit down. Once the plane was in the air, these black bags would disappear into the ladies' room and emerge in Paris couturier costume or jeans and sweaters, very pretty ladies who were adapting themselves to life outside the kingdom.

Similarly, in the Gulf, at several of the airports there, I remember getting off in the middle of the night and seeing men sitting around at two o'clock in the morning, picking their toenails with daggers while they watched the female transit passengers.

So, overall, in cultural terms, I sort of wondered what I was getting into.

On the other hand, I had, in the course of my reading back at the Harvard Law School, when I was ducking classes there, read a fair amount on Islam, and, when I was in India, had quite a number of Muslim friends, and had some familiarity with the religion. I'd read histories of the Arab world, which, however, mentioned the Arabian Peninsula hardly at all. After the explosion of Islam out of the Arabian Peninsula, it essentially became the empty quarter of the Arab world. Nothing of significance was presumed to have happened there by the Syrians, Egyptians, Lebanese, and Iraqis who wrote the histories.

So I started immediately trying to find what I could to read, and discovered there wasn't a great deal.

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Saudi Arabia is unique in the following sense. It is the only traditional non-Western kingdom, political structure, if you will, that has survived intact into the modern age without having been conquered or significantly bent to Western ways. Japan, of course, was conquered by the United States in World War II. Swaziland, another traditional kingdom, which I talked about some time ago, had been taken over by the British. Thailand, where I'd also served, had deliberately absorbed many Western ways as part of its tactic of survival and adaptation. But Saudi Arabia experienced no missionaries, no soldiers, no foreign influence at all. And when the West came to Saudi Arabia, it came essentially as hired help.

The Saudi mentality, therefore, is much less full of self-doubt, much more self-confident, not to say smug and complacent. The Saudis, because of this history, lacked the angst that make many other Arabs, for example, Lebanese or Syrians or Egyptians, so full of self-deprecating humor. The Saudis are a very reserved, rather dour, dignified people, with few self-doubts. Their history teaches them that the more religiously devout they are, the more oil comes out of the ground. So I knew I was getting into something special.

Another consequence of the absence of foreign dominance, either in terms of conquest or influence, in Saudi Arabia, unlike many states in the Arabian Gulf, is that there is very little accurate literature on the kingdom. I found some reasonably good works done from secondhand sources at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and a few British books. Of course, there are the books of Abdullah Philby (the father of Kim Philby, the traitor), who became a Muslim and settled in Saudi Arabia, but who wrote copiously of his treks around the kingdom. There is Wilfred Thesiger's work on the desert and desert tribes. But really nothing I would consider terribly reliable about the modern kingdom. So, learning about Saudi Arabia was more a process of finding informants than it was of reading, unlike any other preparation for a post I'd ever made.

Q: You served in Saudi Arabia from when to when?

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FREEMAN: That's an interesting story. I mentioned a bit of a misunderstanding with Senator Pell. Senator Helms, now the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, but at that time the ranking minority member, was equally dubious about me, I suppose because of my involvement with Cuba, Angola, and others. So not only was the nomination process the usual painfully extended one, because of the increasingly arcane procedures of investigation and paperwork that are involved, but it was summertime, and the Senate was not in session. Senator Helms, obviously, wasn't pushing my nomination, Senator Pell felt that he should take his time, and so it wasn't until the early fall that I actually had hearings.

Q: We're talking about '89.

FREEMAN: Yes. So I actually served in Saudi Arabia from about the middle of October 1989 to August 1992, just about three years.

Q: I always think it's interesting to catch the new boy on the block looking at a bureau. You said you'd always avoided the poisonous domestic atmosphere. I wonder if you could talk about that atmosphere, and also your impressions of the Middle East and the so-called Arabists, which you were not. The Chinese hands, of which you were one, have always come in for a certain amount of scrutiny. But probably even more, mainly because of the domestic reasons, the Arabists have been looked upon. Could you tell me your impressions of that and the Near Eastern Bureau, as you went in, the things you'd been picking up by osmosis and observation.

FREEMAN: I had, of course, served in NEA (Near East and South Asia Bureau) when I was in India, and had a great deal of respect for its tradition. I think it traditionally had a reputation in the Department of State of being one of the most efficiently managed and effective bureaus that there were.

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On the other hand, people forget that, up until Lyndon Johnson's time as president, the United States maintained an arms embargo on Israel and Egypt and the Arab countries, and tried to keep strictly neutral between them. But in the mid-'60s, in the wake of the first really major war between an established Israel and Egypt and Syria, and through the '70s, Israeli influence over American foreign policy on Middle Eastern matters, and indeed on Soviet matters as they bore on Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union, became deeper and deeper, and the relationship became closer and closer, to the point where there was a virtual hammerlock on American foreign policy.

The American Jewish community, which had always been extremely suspicious of people who trafficked with the Arabs (who, of course, were professed enemies of Zionism in the Jewish State, and who, by and large, over the period of the '50s and '60s, abandoned the policies of tolerance they had had toward Jewish minorities, and made life miserable for these minorities or actually expelled them), became increasingly hostile to Arabists in the State Department. It essentially became difficult, if not impossible, for Foreign Service officers dealing with the Arab world, or with the Middle East generally, to take anything other than a stance that was assertively loyal to causes espoused by the Israelis.

Whether the officers believed what they were saying or not was another matter, but they knew that the price of remaining in business was appropriate deference to Israeli interests.

By the '80s, as AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee), which was only formed at the end of the '70s, achieved the transcendent influence in the Congress that it did, there was an atmosphere of intimidation, worthy of the McCarthy era, in many respects, imposed on Arabists.

So, when I spoke of poisonous politics (without taking any position on the merits of Israel's case versus Arab countries'), I was referring to the sense that those of us in the Department of State, observing NEA from afar, had that the Arab specialists there were operating under extraordinary political constraints, really worthy, in many ways, of those

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that apply in totalitarian countries. They could not speak, even privately to friends, an ill word of Israeli actions, let alone Israeli policy, without fear of consequences to their career. So this was not the sort of situation that one voluntarily moves oneself into, unless one has some great affinity for the Middle East, which I didn't.

In any event, since I had no record at all on Middle East questions, and indeed really had quite an open mind on them, and didn't know much about either Israelis or Arabs, except to the extent that I'd dealt with Israelis on non-Middle Eastern issues, where I actually had a very cooperative relationship with the Israeli Embassy. So they were quite surprised, but not at all displeased, about my nomination, and there was no opposition at all from that quarter. It still struck me that, from a personal point of view, it was a good thing that I was going to a part of the Arab world that was not directly involved in the Arab-Israeli dispute, but which presented a series of different issues.

This was, of course, the last gasp of the Iran-Iraq War, which was in the process of being settled.

We had a longstanding, cordial relationship with Saudi Arabia, which, however, had come under strain on a number of issues, precisely as the Israeli influence over U.S. policy grew.

For example, the Saudis, in the mid-'80s, wishing to upgrade and modernize their air force in the face of a threat from Iran, which was a real threat, wanted to buy F-15s.

Q: F-15s being...

FREEMAN: F-15s being, at that time, modern, frontline, fighter bomber aircraft. In any event, they had some F-15s; they wished to buy some more. This followed several incidents between the Royal Saudi air force and the Iranian air force over the Gulf. The Reagan administration approved that, but it was essentially blocked in Congress by friends of Israel.

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At that point, the Saudis turned emphatically to the British, making a deal called al-Yamamah, after the name of a town in pre-Islamic times and the name of a palace in Riyadh, where the king now resides. The word means dove in Arabic. They made a deal with the Brits that involved the purchase of a large number of Tornados, a British bomber. That contract grew over the years, from the mid-'80s, into a sort of open-ended, general military procurement contract, which covered everything from barbed wire to airport construction and communications equipment. In other words, any military item that the Saudis wished, they could, drawing on this relationship with British Aerospace, achieve. The al-Yamamah arrangement, furthermore, was immune from any difficulties in the Saudi budget, because it was essentially funded by a stream of oil; that is, a certain portion of Saudi oil production was dedicated to the al-Yamamah project. It was turned over to British Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell for marketing. They then remitted the proceeds of sale, after refining, to an account in the Bank of England held by British Aerospace. The Saudis could draw at will on that account to procure British defense equipment. So it was a very cozy deal. I might say, there were many substantial sweeteners for Saudis involved in the process of setting this up and managing it, in the form of the usual rake-offs that one expects in the region. So that was a bad turn in U.S.-Saudi relations.

A second one came when the Saudis, again in response to developments between Iran and Iraq, meaning the War of the Cities, as it was called, hundreds of Scuds fired...

Q: Scuds being...

FREEMAN: Scuds being a Russian upgrade of the German rockets of World War II, a rather crude, 200-300-mile-range ballistic missile. Hundreds of these were fired by the Iranians on Baghdad. The Saudis became very concerned about the potential for Iranian use of these against Dhahran and the oil facilities. They wished a retaliatory capacity, so they sought to buy the Pershing, which was an even shorter-range, probably 100-150-mile-range, missile that we used in Europe for nuclear purposes. The Saudis did not want a nuclear warhead, they wanted a conventional one. But this was dismissed out of hand.

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That led the Saudis to turn to the Chinese, and they bought a 1,500-mile-range, behemoth missile, called, by us, the CSS-2.

That led to a sharp deterioration in relations, and also played a key role in one of my predecessors, Hume Horan, being declared persona non grata; that is, the American ambassador essentially expelled from the kingdom.

So, although the relationship was cordial on one level, it was also quite strained on others. And, by 1989, the United States had fallen to fourth place among Saudi Arabia's suppliers of military equipment and services; that is, the British, French, and Chinese were all ahead of us, which was hardly a healthy state for the relationship.

Moreover, despite the escort of Kuwaiti tankers during the Iran-Iraq War, to protect them from air attack from Iraq, but also from Iran, and close U.S.-Saudi cooperation in that operation, there really had been no high-level travel by members of the U.S. Cabinet to Saudi Arabia, to speak of, for years. I think the last secretary of state to visit had been Henry Kissinger, which was probably in 1976, and this was 1989. Two secretaries of defense — Mr. Weinberger and Mr. Carlucci — had made very brief visits, of several hours, essentially in transit between places. No secretary of commerce had ever visited Saudi Arabia, despite the fact that about fifty percent of U.S. exports to the Middle East go there.

Saudi Arabia, in short, was not on the policy map in Washington. The relationship was fraying. The underpinnings of it, commercially, remained strong. Hundreds of thousands of Saudis had studied in the United States or been trained by Americans. The Saudi sense of connection to the United States was strong, but the American sense of connection to Saudi Arabia was weak. Official interaction was infrequent to nonexistent. So it was an odd set of contrasts.

I really became aware of this over the course of the summer of 1989, as I sat awaiting, first, nomination and then a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and

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applied myself, over the summer, in half-day stints at the Foreign Service Institute, to learning Arabic.

I found it surprising, because my image of Saudi Arabia and the American relationship to Saudi Arabia had been quite different. I think the image I'd had was largely colored by the very successful U.S.-Saudi-Chinese joint venture in Afghanistan, in which Saudi Arabia and the United States supplied the money and management, and the Chinese supplied the equipment, for the mujahideen, ultimately making the Russian occupation of Afghanistan untenable. Indeed, the one area of the relationship that did seem to be somewhat intimate was cooperation on covert action of that kind. In fact, the Saudis had gotten themselves in a bit of trouble by responding positively to a White House request, under Reagan, for some money in connection with the Contras in Nicaragua.

In other words, Saudi Arabia was a reliable friend, but one that was feeling a bit neglected and a bit hurt by rebuffs by the Congress.

In any event, over the course of the summer, as I learned Arabic and waited for my hearing, I began to meet more and more people from Saudi Arabia. There was a very helpful seminar put on by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the Department of State, at Meridian House here in Washington, at which a number of former ambassadors, business executives, and scholars provided papers and did a briefing for me. But Saudi Arabia remained very much an abstraction to me, and I didn't have much idea of what I would see when I got there.

Q: We're talking about the summer and the fall of '89. You said the Iran-Iraq War was running down. What were you getting from those who were in NEA dealing with Iran and Iraq, as far as how it was going to come out and what it was going to mean?

FREEMAN: Very little information came to me on the negotiation process that was going on between Iran and Iraq.

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The people dealing with Arabian Peninsula affairs at that time were much more interested in the Taif Accord, which was the Saudi-brokered process at the Saudi city of Taif that produced a reknitting of a coalition regime and constitutional guidelines in Lebanon, including dealing with the issue of Syrian withdrawal from areas that Syria had occupied while Lebanon was in a state of anarchy.

Oddly enough, although the Arabic version of the Taif Accord was available, nobody had translated it. My first exercise in translation of Arabic was to do the translation, for NEA, of the Taif Accord, which I did sometime in August or September, and was very pleased to find that, in the short time I'd had, I'd gotten to the point where I could sit down with a dictionary and translate what was quite a complicated Arabic legal constitutional document.

Aside from the Taif Accord, the other great issue was the prospective sale, by General Dynamics, of a main battle tank to Saudi Arabia, in competition with the British, French, and Germans, and in sort of partial competition with a Brazilian tank, the Osorio, which actually wasn't directly comparable. It was not a heavy tank, it was a medium tank, and not really in contention.

There, I think perhaps I played a useful role in stimulating General Dynamics to pioneer a technique that has since been used quite successfully in terms of generating congressional support for sales of this kind, against opposition (in this case opposition from AIPAC), by getting them to do a study of the economic impact of the deal on every congressional district in the country, so that each congressperson was provided, in his home district, with an indication of the number of jobs that would be generated if the sale were to go through, or, conversely, the number of people who would be laid off if the sale did not. That ultimately did produce a congressional non-veto of the tank deal, which went through.

But, no, nobody was talking to me very much about Iran and Iraq.

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Q: Obviously, this became the thing, but was anybody saying, "Well, we're going to have a victorious Iraq sitting there"? Was this in the cards at the time we're talking about?

FREEMAN: I heard that from no one. I did, myself, as I looked at the situation, come to that conclusion, and later, when I was ambassador in Riyadh, wrote fairly extensively on that and its implications. But that's jumping ahead.

Q: You say you were confirmed in the late fall.

FREEMAN: I was confirmed in October, sworn in, and went out to Saudi Arabia, to be greeted by Dave Dunford, who'd been charg# for eight months.

Q: Who had been the ambassador prior to you?

FREEMAN: That is an interesting story. After Hume Horan was expelled, there was a four-month gap, during which, again, Dave Dunford held the fort. And then Hume Horan's predecessor, Walt Cutler, who is the president of Meridian House and who presided over the briefing I mentioned, was recalled to a second tour in Saudi Arabia, which lasted about eight months. Then he left, and there was an eight-month gap. And then I arrived.

Q: The Saudis must have been thinking, "What the hell is this?"

FREEMAN: I'm sorry to say that the gaps have gotten progressively longer since that time.

In any event, Dunford had been very much in charge.

I recall an amusing incident as we came in from the airport. I asked him to tell me about the employees of the embassy, specifically the Saudi employees, the Foreign Service national employees. He laughed and said that was a bit of a joke at Riyadh, in that, when the beautiful new chancery building had been commissioned by George Bush, as vice president, Bush had given a speech in which he praised the hard-working Saudi employees of the embassy. Dave Dunford informed me that there was only one Saudi

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working at the embassy, but we had thirty other nationalities. I asked him who the Saudi was, and he gave me a name, which didn't make much impression. I said I'd like to meet him, and I did meet him the next day. It turned out his name was Muhammad Gireaux, which is a French name. And we were able to trace a common ancestor. So the only Saudi employee of the embassy turned out to be distant cousin of mine, through a French connection.

But I must say, at this point, and it was proven beyond any doubt in the performance of the embassy during the Gulf War, that the quality of the third-country national staff of that embassy is extraordinary, quite the best group of people I've ever worked with, and I've worked with some good ones.

The embassy itself had recently, a couple of years before, relocated to the diplomatic quarter in Riyadh. It originally had been in Jeddah, and then in temporary quarters in Riyadh. There was a residence for the ambassador under construction, barely under construction. My residence was downtown, in the Suleimaniyah district, a wonderful house, with a sort of hanging garden over an indoor swimming pool. So I was plunked down in that.

I recall that I'd had a bad cold, and, arriving in Riyadh, found that both of my eardrums had popped out, and my ears were bleeding as I was greeted by royal protocol at the airport.

But I settled in. I was astonished by Riyadh, really. It's a city that, in the mid-'40s, was a mud-walled village of twelve thousand, with only one electrical generator and a couple of telephones, one in the king's bedroom and one in his mother's bedroom, because he was very close to his mother.

Q: That was 'Abd al-'Aziz.

FREEMAN: 'Abd al-'Aziz. It had mushroomed into a vast, sprawling, sort of Los Angeles-type city, connected by motorways and superhighways, and contains some spectacular

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contemporary architecture and public buildings. The Saudis took the windfall that they got from the oil price rise after the Arab embargo and recycled it to the benefit of the Saudi people, building roads, hospitals, public buildings, universities, new schools. And so you really, in a way, have a 21st-century environment there, even though the culture very much retains most of its traditional premodern elements. Somebody whom I asked at the embassy who had just arrived from Moscow told me that the difference between Moscow and Riyadh was that Moscow was a Third-World city inhabited by First-World people, and that Riyadh was the opposite. Learning to time travel and shopping around prayer time was quite an experience. There were a lot of adjustments that had to be made.

I found, however, the Saudis with whom I was to deal, first, of course, the foreign minister, whom I saw promptly to present a copy of my credentials, and then the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd, and other ministers of the government, to be very shrewd, but very gracious people. Over the course of the three years there, I developed a great deal of respect and affection for many of them.

Q: Let's talk a bit about the embassy. You had a DCM who had been charg# for two long, extended periods, is that right?

FREEMAN: Right, and who had a bit of the problem one would expect, of stepping gracefully back.

Q: I was going to say. Could you talk a little about that, because this is one of the things that's endemic within the Foreign Service. It's probably true in any other thing, but particularly in our business, where you have somebody running things, and all of a sudden having to step back. And this was your first embassy.

FREEMAN: We had a period of some adjustment. I should say that to run the embassy in Riyadh is to run something really unusual, in that, when one included all of the different elements of the diplomatic mission, most of them paid for by the Saudis and therefore not visible on American staffing patterns or payrolls, the total American population under the

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ambassador is about five thousand. This dwarfs any other embassy in the world. And it's a very well-kept secret.

There was a series of problems that my arrival was able to address.

The Department of the Treasury, in the '70s, had established with the Saudis a joint economic commission that was essentially a reimbursable assistance program by which Saudi ministries, through the Ministry of Finance in Riyadh, could acquire the services of American specialists. In its heyday, this had about four hundred American bureaucrats working in Saudi ministries around the kingdom. And they played a really seminal role in developing the Saudi Census Office, building the desalination plants that were the source of all the water for these large, new cities, doing budget planning, and so forth and so on, really across the board.

Treasury, however, ran this operation, to the extent it could, without reference to the embassy. This was aided initially, before the embassy moved to Riyadh, by the fact that JECOR, as it was called, was in Riyadh, whereas the embassy was in Jeddah, and the ambassador visited infrequently. There was a very small liaison office in Riyadh for the embassy, but it was not able to exercise any real oversight over JECOR.

Dave Dunford, I think quite sensibly, had made a strong effort during his tenure to begin to assert some measure of guidance over JECOR, as was appropriate. To do that as a *chargé*, however, is extremely difficult. It had resulted in an essential rupture of relations between the deputy assistant secretary of the treasury and Dunford.

And so my first act was to try to straighten this out by denying the deputy assistant secretary of the treasury country clearance, thus establishing who was in charge. It took several months of discussion on the phone, and finally face to face, to establish a pattern by which JECOR, while remaining quite autonomous, not only informed me of what they were doing, but actually took guidance.

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This, in the end, turned out to be very helpful not only to me, but to JECOR, because the luster had quite worn off JECOR by 1989 and 1990, and I was able to work with the Treasury Department and the Ministry of Finance and others to reorganize, restructure, and revitalize JECOR and give it a new lease on life, so that everyone benefitted.

I think Dave Dunford was most grateful to be relieved of this burden. But, generally, as you say, and as I've experienced, it's not easy to step back. I think he had a bit of problem doing that. But we worked out a very good relationship, which served us well during the ensuing martial arts festival in the Gulf.

Q: You say "denied country clearance." What does that mean?

FREEMAN: What it means is that officials of the United States government may not visit a foreign country to do official business without the approval of the ambassador, meaning, for most purposes, a routine notification and routine approval by the embassy. The purpose of this is to ensure that U.S. government activities in a country are in fact coordinated by the ambassador, as he is supposed to do. It's very rare for someone to deny permission for a government official, particularly a senior government official, to visit.

I did it on two occasions. Once was with Mr. Schotta of the Treasury, with whom, by the way, later I developed a very good relationship. Sometimes it's necessary to fight in order to form friendships. The other occasion was the Foreign Buildings Office interior designer, whose, in my view, gross mismanagement and appalling taste in the furnishing of a really quite spectacular new ambassador's residence, and whose total unresponsiveness to any suggestions from the post or from the ambassador, led me to believe that her presence was not necessary.

I might say that, the minute I left, Treasury reverted to its old ways immediately. Which is always what happens; the bureaucracy can wait out any transient, like an ambassador. And the FBO designer promptly came out and undid everything I had done and did it back

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her way. I was rather pleased later to find that my successor, when he ultimately got there (there was a two-year gap between me and my successor), quite independently, without having talked to me, undid everything that the interior designer had done and put it back more or less the way I had.

But Dunford was an enormous source of information and sound guidance on how to do business in the kingdom.

I inherited a secretary, Alice Boynton, from my predecessor, Walt Cutler. And she also, having served a full tour in Riyadh, knew how to get things done.

So I got off, I think, to quite a smooth start.

There was some wait to present credentials to the king, which is normal. [14 January 1990.] But it wasn't very long, and then I began to establish a relationship with him and with his office quite early on. In fact, I saw him clandestinely before I publicly presented my credentials, in connection with an official visitor from Washington, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Q: Still talking about the embassy operations, before we move to the broader scheme of things. At the time, what did you see as the role, and what was your impression of the operation and use of our consulate general in Dhahran?

FREEMAN: The diplomatic establishment, as distinct from the diplomatic mission, consisted of an embassy in Riyadh, with something under a hundred Americans working in the embassy; a rather large consulate general in Jeddah, with a strong commercial focus, but also a focus on the hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, both because of its implications for Saudi Arabian internal security and also because a growing number of American Muslims were making the pilgrimage; and, finally, a small consulate general in Dhahran.

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Dhahran actually consists of three joined cities, al-Khobar, ad-Dammam, and Dhahran. The principal function of Dhahran was threefold. One, to keep an eye on the Saudiized Aramco and oil production, and maintain liaison with them. Second, to promote business in the Saudi Arabian eastern province, which was growing fast economically, on the basis of the oil production and demand for services there. Third, of course, to provide consular services to the rather large number of Americans who lived and worked in the eastern province, many of them for Aramco, but many for other companies as well.

There were efforts made, ironically, on the eve of the war, to close Dhahran, on the grounds that it was irrelevant in the modern age. Extremely ironic, because we then sent five hundred and fifty thousand soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines to protect the very interests that Dhahran was charged with managing.

I should say that Saudi Arabia really consists of five regions, maybe six, but only three of them are really relevant to our interests, particularly.

The central region, the Nejd, is where the political power of the kingdom arose and remains the cultural center. The dominant national culture of the country is in the Nejd. And Nejdis dominate the government, along with people from the Qassim region to the north.

The eastern province, where the oil is mainly found, has a very substantial Shi'ah minority (Saudi Arabia is, of course, a Sunni Islamic country), and a very distinct culture that is closely related to the culture of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. In other words, a culture focused on what we call variously the Persian, or the Arabian, Gulf.

The Jeddah consulate, in the western province of the Hejaz, has yet another culture, one that has a cosmopolitanism, coming from centuries of pilgrimage through Jeddah to Mecca and Medina, and well-established trading families, whose wealth has grown along with that of the kingdom, but a very different, softer, more tolerant cultural tradition than the

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very austere Islam of the Nejd, and quite different from the Gulf atmosphere of the eastern province.

Q: Since I'm an old consular hand, I wonder if there were any particular problems with Americans getting involved in the hajj?

FREEMAN: No, there were not any particular problems involving Americans. However, the hajj in 1990 saw a terrible disaster, in the form of the trampling of a large number of people who panicked. You're talking about crowds, which, at that time, were a bit over two million, concentrated in a small space. They've now grown to much more than that, maybe three million. And it's extremely difficult, under the best of circumstances, to manage such a willing throng.

There had been, of course, in the past, prior to my arrival, a series of incidents in Mecca, one of them homegrown, in 1979, in which the Great Mosque itself was seized by a Saudi religious radical and his followers, and had to be taken back by the Saudi Arabian National Guard and Ministry of Interior forces. And, after the Iranian Revolution, there were efforts by the Iranians to politicize the hajj by making it into a xenophobic, anti-Western event. So there was always a certain amount of tension, in security terms. There were bombs that occasionally were placed.

In 1990, without recalling the details, there was a terrible incident in which many people were trampled to death. Fortunately, I don't believe there were any Americans among them. But my Indian and Pakistani and Bangladeshi colleagues had a large number of their citizens killed. The difficulty of identifying bodies, in a place in which everyone, by religious edict, is dressed in a seamless, unsewn, white costume that is identical and bears no identifying marks, became apparent. In subsequent years, I had many discussions with the minister of interior, Prince Naif, and with the minister of hajj and endowments, about the adoption of the sort of hospital bracelet identification system that we have here. And I think that is now actually being implemented.

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But, during my tenure, there were no really notable problems with the hajj. There were some rather prominent Nation of Islam black Muslim hajjis, who kept a distance from the embassy, and who, I think, found a more tolerant vision of Islam when they mixed with all the different racial groups together at Mecca, and saw that Islam was the very opposite of the racist vision that many of them had professed prior to coming on the hajj.

Q: Again, sticking to this type of problem. Did the embassy get involved in parental problems of American women married to Saudis? And then the children, where do the children go? This is always a problem. And you say over a hundred thousand Saudis studied in the United States, and they're mostly male, and life being what it is...

FREEMAN: The American community in Saudi Arabia at that time numbered between twenty-five thousand and thirty thousand, but has since grown. While the vast majority of those were Americans married to Americans, there were quite a number of mixed marriages between Saudis and American women, much fewer, although I do know of some, between Saudi women and American men. And that is simply because Islam does not permit marriage of Muslim women to non-Muslims; whereas, Muslim men may marry non-Muslim women. As you would expect, many of these marriages took place while people were studying in the United States. The women were very young and inexperienced, and had no real idea what they were getting into in marrying someone of a different culture. Some of the marriages were very strong and good, but many of them were not, and they would fall apart under the impact of culture shock and the difficulty of American women adjusting to sexual apartheid and other aspects of Saudi society.

Saudi Arabia shares with Israel the distinction of being a country with the largest number of child kidnaping cases. In both countries, the issue is the same at root, and that is the desire of the Saudi or Israeli partner in the marriage, and the insistence of the authorities, that the children be raised in the religious tradition of the country, rather than in the secular tradition of the United States. So that we had many problems of children who had been taken by their fathers from the United States to Saudi Arabia, with the wife

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left in the United States unable to communicate with the children. We had cases of wife abuse, beating of women. And we had cases of divorce, where the divorces were far from amicable, and the dispute of custody of the children became very ugly. I had a great number of occasions, on weekends and nights and during the day, to meet with and try to help distraught American women, and also, of course, occasions where the women would take the children out of the kingdom without the permission of the husband or father. I would then have to talk to the Saudi authorities about this. Generally speaking, I think the authorities were reasonably helpful. But this sort of problem is essentially very difficult to manage, and it was a constant source of distress for me and for the consular section.

There were other issues, since we're on the subject of the difficulties of work. The Saudis had, in the course of the oil boom, signed contracts, with great haste, with a large number of companies. In some cases, frankly, they were badly gouged by the foreign partner. The Saudis at that time were inexperienced. This gave rise to both a large number of commercial disputes about contract fulfillment and a rising suspicion on the part of the Saudis that led them sometimes to refuse payment on contracts where in fact the American partner had delivered what was contracted. So there were commercial disputes, many of them dating back years, which were slowly being settled.

I spent a great deal of time trying to get the royal Saudi government to push the process of dispute settlement. Where the disputes involved a member of the royal family, particularly a senior member of the royal family, they were particularly difficult, because they involved the politics of the royal family. Again, I spent a great deal of time talking to representatives of the royal family and some senior princes about these, as well as coordinating with Prince Bandar, the Saudi ambassador to the United States.

Some disputes, which had long been settled, revived, as those who had settled saw others settling on what they felt were more generous terms than they'd been able to get. Despite the fact that they might have signed a quit claim and expressed satisfaction with the settlement or court decree in earlier years, they then attempted to reopen the cases,

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through congressional intervention, which got quite ugly. In fact, there are several of these cases that have dragged on to the present day, it being 1996, long after I left Saudi Arabia. Still, working with the commercial counselor and his staff, we were able to make a substantial dent in the number of such cases outstanding, and thus reduce the irritation between the United States and Saudi Arabia.

There were several other consular cases that were troublesome, cases where Americans alleged that they had suffered bodily harm in the course of being imprisoned. (One was never sure whether the bodily harm arose from the expectation of vast sums from the wealthy Saudis by way of settlement, or whether it was real.)

But these issues, too, tended to become politicized, especially because, again, elements of the American Jewish community were always looking for ways to embarrass the Saudis and complicate U.S. relations with Saudi Arabia. So they would provide informal counsel and support to the efforts of disgruntled Americans to press their case in Congress. Some of these became quite causes *c#l#bres*. And I made the best effort I could, I must say not by any means always successfully, to try to produce some reasonable quelling of these controversies.

Q: In this type of dispute, was there a body of law that really dealt with it adequately? I served in Dhahran as a vice consul from 1958 to '60, and we were up against the almost impossible problem of having everything, either commercial law or automobile collisions, judged according to Sharia law, which was a law that goes back to the 15th or whatever century it was.

FREEMAN: No, it actually is based [in part] on the Koran (systematized in the 9th century), and was perfected probably in the 12th century. [Systematized during the 8th-9th century AD.]

Q: So that if you have an automobile accident, you have the problem of when cars collide and camels collide, there is quite a difference. And also the intricate problems of

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demurrage and everything else you can think about as far as shipping costs and who's responsible for when goods arrive and all that.

FREEMAN: There continued to be tension between the Sharia legal system and modern codes that had been put in place alongside it — civil courts, rather than religious courts, the grievance board, which was a body that settled disputes between Saudi-government entities or royal-family entities and foreign claimants, or Saudi claimants, for that matter.

Generally speaking, Saudi Arabia, like most societies other than the United States, abhors the idea of litigation. Settlements really should be reached by give and take, bargaining and negotiation. The dispute-settlement process can work, but Americans find it arcane, and it may not yield the results that Americans would expect from another legal system.

So, yes, this was a problem. But there has been considerable modernization of law in the kingdom since 1960, and I suspect the problems are far less than those that you encountered when you were there from '58 to '60.

Q: Before we get into the dustup that they had there, with that tremendous American commitment, what was your impression of the Saudi government, both the princes, the king, and the various ministries?

FREEMAN: Saudi Arabia is an interesting case of a country with a new class of highly competent technocrats who are making a transition to authority in the kingdom in bureaucratic organizations that are, in many ways, typical of the Third World. What I mean by typical of the Third World is that you have a few rather competent people at the top, in whose hands decision making is centralized, and a larger number of people of dubious competence underneath them, who, in any event, can't make decisions.

Q: They can't make decisions because of the structure of the situation?

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FREEMAN: Because of the structure of the situation, or because, in many cases, they're not competent. And a great deal of the work is still being done by foreign advisors — Syrians, Lebanese, Palestinians, or even, in some cases, Westerners.

But the cabinet and the sub-cabinet I found to be a remarkably competent group of men and women. There are some very senior women, but it was rather difficult for me to communicate with them. Really an outstanding group of people; however, rather long in the tooth. The king had not made significant changes in his cabinet for decades. Anyone who is in a position for a long time, however bright and however strong a manager they may be, after a time, settles into a routine and is no longer a source of innovative thinking. And so there was this problem. But the competence of the group was considerable. As American ambassador, I had excellent access to them, and found them really quite responsive to sensible suggestions, and appropriately dismissive of the sometimes nonsensical suggestions that I had to put on behalf of Washington. So I had a sense that I was dealing with people whom I could respect.

Q: What was your impression of their Foreign Ministry and Foreign Service?

FREEMAN: The foreign minister was Saud al-Faysal, who had been foreign minister, at that time, for about nineteen years already, having become foreign minister as a very young man. He, of course, is the son of the late king, Faysal ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz. He's a graduate of the Hun School and Princeton, a gentleman of extraordinary personal grace, gravamen, and dignity.

He had a number of highly competent, terribly overworked senior staff, who were really first-class. Much of the Ministry, however, despite occupying what is certainly the most beautiful foreign ministry building in the world, fell quite short of those standards. And I have the impression that the Ministry remains a very personalized structure, not really institutionalized. This tendency, of course, is aggravated in the case of the United States, because a great number of the decisions taken about the United States are taken outside

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the Foreign Ministry, many of them directly by the king, in consultation with Prince Bandar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, who is the brother-in-law of Prince Saud, the foreign minister. The two of them are on very good terms, but Prince Saud often had to scramble to keep up with what was going on. His Ministry was not being effectively used.

Indeed, by the time I arrived in Saudi Arabia in 1989, Prince Bandar had emerged, in a way, as an alternate foreign minister for great-power relations. That is, it was he who had set up the al-Yamamah deal with Margaret Thatcher in Britain. It was he who managed the missile transaction in the opening of relations with China. It was he who, when the Soviet Union began to decommunize and flake apart, dealt with Mr. Gorbachev. He did not deal with the French; that was the responsibility of someone else. And, of course, he dealt with the United States, and was on extraordinary terms with both President Reagan and President Bush.

Prince Saud's role was limited to the management of lesser relationships, and not even all of those. Prince Saud, in fact, on many occasions, did not handle problems with the Arab League or in North Africa. A former deputy of his, in fact a former chief local employee of the American Embassy, Muhammad Ibrahim Masa'ud, who was a minister of state in the palace, tended to handle issues in the Horn of Africa, as well as some intra-Arab issues, Arab League issues, for the king. So Prince Saud, I think, performed splendidly when called upon, but, on some occasions, his talent was simply not made use of.

Q: What was your impression, since this was a whole new thing for you, of the stability of the House of Saud, as far as the ruling?

FREEMAN: That is a very complicated question. It goes back to the point I made about Saudi Arabia being a traditional non-Western society that, in its relations with the West, is unique, having never experienced Western dominance.

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I would argue that Aristotle failed to include in his taxonomy of political systems the system of government that prevails among the desert Arabs.

There is a word, which a Yemeni told me, that is really quite pejorative in Arabic, but, if one takes out the pejorative sense, probably does better than any other to describe this system. He called it *bedukratia* (*bedocracy*, ruled by Bedouins). I think, if one doesn't use the term *Bedouin* in the pejorative sense that many urban Arabs do, that nicely captures the essence of a system that is quite consistent with tribal tradition.

The sheikh of a tribe is a venerated elder figure, who is revered for his ability to form and implement consensus. That is to say that a function of the leader (and this carries over to the modern kingdom in Saudi Arabia) is not to impose decisions made in an arbitrary and capricious or individual capacity, but rather to form a consensus, to learn the consensus, and then to impose the consensus. The sheikh is responsible for both the moral and political leadership of his tribe. He's also responsible for the dispensation of largesse and alms for the poor. The wealth of the tribe goes through the hands of the sheikh, and is recycled, in effect. In part, this is a patronage function, of course very political.

All of these things together represent a sort of basic compact of governance between the sheikh and the people of the tribe (or, in this case, between the king and the people of Saudi Arabia).

The essence of that compact of governance, that bargain, is that the king will preserve a moral society. He will not allow gross moral transgressions. He will not make decisions without wide consultation. He will be open to popular opinion and petitions. As you know, in Saudi Arabia, every member of the royal family, every minister, must, by custom, which has the force of law, open his doors, at least once a week, generally twice a week or more, to the public, so that anyone literally can walk in on the king and speak with him directly, much as American presidents may have been open to the public in the last century, but very unlike our system now. So it's a system with a great deal of access to leaders by the

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public. Along with this, the king is the custodian of the welfare of his people, and he is to dispense wealth to them.

Now this bargain has basically been kept by the modern kingdom. The elaborate welfare system that's been erected really is the functional equivalent of the bag of coins that the king used to carry with him, to dispense to those in need. The dispensation of government contracts spreads the wealth around. The Council of Ministers' procedure and the way in which the king decides things is consensual, rather than dictatorial, to a great extent, although the king really does have a great deal of power. In other words, he is not Henry VIII; he is the president of a collective body.

The system works pretty well, especially given the oil wealth that has come in. Saudi Arabia has been able to use modernization to reinforce traditional values and traditional systems, rather than to overthrow them. It's sort of a paradox. I often thought that the kingdom's slogan should be: "Progress without Change," because that seemed to be the objective.

While the speed of the physical transformation of Saudi Arabia — the introduction of air conditioning and modern buildings and telephones and television and motor cars and airplanes and so on — has been extraordinary, literally taking Saudis from camelback to the space shuttle in twenty-five years, which naturally engenders a fair amount of stress on the culture (future shock, if you will), it's also been managed extraordinarily well. The amount of dissidence, meaning, primarily, griping and conspiring from religious militants on the right, has been a great deal less than, frankly, I would have expected.

In other words, the king has succeeded in doing what the sheikh of a tribe is supposed to do; namely, co-opting opposition and maintaining tribal harmony and unity.

When I say the king, I don't just mean King Fahd, although he is the architect of the modernization of Saudi Arabia, but I mean the king as an institution, kings through 'Abd al-Aziz; King Saud, who was, of course, deposed for failing to carry out these functions

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appropriately; King Faysal; King Khalid, who did not rule, but allowed Fahd and his crown prince to rule for him, in effect; and Fahd himself.

So, while there is always a sort of prurient interest in the possible instability of the kingdom, especially after the fall of Iran's shah, and this question really concerned me, I found very little evidence, as I looked around, that Saudi Arabia had made the mistakes that the shah made.

Certainly, the shah, in promoting a secular, or pre-Islamic, vision of Iran, challenged the strong Islamic tradition of the people in Iran, and alienated himself from them. The fruits of his corruption perhaps were not as widely shared as they should have been. The clergy was not effectively co-opted, and the regime's method of rule was increasingly violent and dictatorial.

None of these things have happened in Saudi Arabia. So I tend to be a great deal more optimistic about the resilience of the Saudi system and its ability to manage shock (in other words, its stability) than many other people are.

As I say, I came to this view really after approaching the whole question with a great deal of skepticism and, indeed, probably a bias in favor of finding instability, given the improbability of the existence of a place like Saudi Arabia.

If you look at the history of the Arab world, post-World War II (that is, post-decolonization), various ideologies Pan-Arab in nature — Socialist nationalist, Arab nationalist, or combinations of these — military coups d'état, Islamic visions, along the lines of Qadhafi's rather strange one in Libya, have arisen and fallen. If one had been sitting in the 1950s, I think it is entirely forgivable that one would have predicted, as indeed people did, that monarchies were a thing of the past in the Arab world, and that they were in the process of being superseded by Socialist-Party systems like the Baath in Syria and Iraq, or Nasser's single-party structure in Egypt. And yet Nasser and Nasserism are dead, the Baath has

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lost its following, Libya is isolated. The systems that have survived and prospered are precisely those that are most traditional.

Q: Morocco and...

FREEMAN: Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and the small Gulf sheikhdoms. Now it helps to have oil. But even Jordan, which doesn't have oil, but which has a traditional monarchy, has managed to adapt itself quite well.

So, in this broad sweep of perhaps forty-five years of Arab history, stability has been with the traditionalists, not with the Westernizers, the Marxists, or the others, nor with the religious innovators like Qadhafi. So I tend to believe that, as I said, Saudi Arabia is and remains a very resilient society, with a great deal of inherent ability to right itself after shocks.

A final point on Saudi Arabia. The current al-Saud dynasty, founded at the beginning of the century by Abd al-Aziz after his reconquest of the Nejd from exile in Kuwait, is the third such al-Saud dynasty. The al-Sauds had been overthrown once by Egyptian invasion and decimation of their homeland; and once by Egyptian manipulation of their internal politics and divisions within the family, followed by military intervention from Egypt. The Egyptians tried again, under Nasser, to overthrow them in the 1960s. On every occasion, they have managed to survive, and when they have been overthrown, they have managed to reconstitute themselves.

This is obviously a family of great diversity, a family in which Abd al-Aziz's direct male descendants now number almost ten thousand, a large and diverse body, with every political opinion, from Communism to reactionary Islamic radicalism, represented. But it is a family with a depth of talent that pretty much guarantees that if there is change in the kingdom, of whatever nature, it will most likely be led by a member of the al-Saud.

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So one has to distinguish between stability in the sense of the current leadership staying in power indefinitely (individuals change; people grow old; they die; if they perform poorly, they may, as in the case of King Saud, be deposed), on the one hand, and the constant reality of the al-Saud as the guiding force in the kingdom, on the other hand, which is very unlikely to change.

The more I looked at this, the more impressed I was with the factors pressing for continuity, rather than abrupt change. And I've not altered my view.

Q: I'd like to ask about some of the pressures on you as the American ambassador, on things that grate on the Zeitgeist of the American soul, such as the role of women, and maybe some other things dealing with the Saudis, where there was pressure on you to try to make them be more like us. Also, how did you and your officers work within this society, and what were you getting? And then the relations with the other neighbors in the south, the Gulf states, with Saudi-Jordan and all that, prior to when all hell broke loose. And then we'll talk about hell breaking loose. Chas, let's talk first about being the American ambassador and representing American values in the Saudi society. Did you get involved in this type of thing?

FREEMAN: Mainly in the sense that, as ambassador in Saudi Arabia, you are the mayor of a good-sized town of some thirty thousand Americans, many of them women. The Americans are there in the kingdom to work for joint ventures, or to work for Saudis as experts, but, from a personal point of view, they've chosen to be in Saudi Arabia in large measure because of the tranquility of Saudi society. Saudi values are family centered, involve swift and sure justice against malefactors, and produce a society that is a wonderful one in which to raise a family. I discovered, when the war broke out and attitudes were tested, that probably fifty or sixty percent of those Americans in the kingdom were there because they could raise their children in a home environment in an atmosphere free of drugs, with the kind of confidence, that things like child molestation and meaningless violent crime would not beset their family, that really Americans have not

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seen since the 1950s, and perhaps didn't even see then, since we tend to idealize past ages.

But there were constant points of friction between this American community and the Saudis, the most severe of these, of course, as you suggested, was over the status of women.

When I paid my farewell call on Prince Salman ibn Abd al-Aziz, the emir of Riyadh and the governor of the central region of Saudi Arabia, a very senior member of the royal family, I joked with him that it was the first time we'd had an opportunity to meet since my initial call on him, when I was not appearing before him as the sheikh of my tribe, protecting the women of my tribe from the men of his.

Since Saudi society contains a group of officially sanctioned religious vigilantes, known as the mutawa, often referred to as religious police, I and members of my staff spent a great deal of time trying to recover these women from the custody of the religious police, who had picked them up for what they regarded as immodest dress.

There is no clear definition of what modesty consists of, but the most extreme definition in Saudi Arabia, of course, requires virtually total coverage of a woman's face and even her hands, as well as what the looser definition stipulates, which is simply that the hair be covered and the ankles and wrists be obscured from view.

So there were daily incidents, really, of, I would say, generally petty harassment, much of it not by the officially sanctioned religious enforcers, but rather by true volunteers. The name mutawa means volunteer. But there are mutawa, who are genuine, unsanctioned volunteers, who, in many cases, are teenage boys, with the sap of lust rising in their bodies and a desire to harass women following close behind. So this was a constant source of friction.

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As far as other items are concerned, obviously there is a grave set of differences between American secular values and Saudi religious customs and values, and a fundamentally different view of issues like human rights and so on.

And one must remember, of course, that I really didn't have a normal ambassadorship, since the war broke out nine months after I arrived.

Q: After that, I assume everything was...

FREEMAN: Everything was on a different level. But there wasn't much pressure on the issue of human rights from the United States. I think American officials certainly recognized that the Saudi royal family was, in many respects, more progressively minded and more enlightened in terms of our values than much of the Saudi populace, and that pressure, for example, to democratize might well backfire in the form of unleashing people similar to those in Iran who democratically impose a reign of terror on minorities and dissenters. So there wasn't much pressure there.

There was, as I began to get around and have obvious access and to demonstrate a bit of influence with the establishment, a sort of constant murmur of requests from members of the Saudi technocratic class (relatively liberal-minded, Western-influenced Saudis, of whom there are very many), who urged that I speak to the king or speak to others in the royal family on behalf of this or that liberal cause that they espoused.

I have to say that this, of course, has a cultural background. In Saudi Arabia, one very seldom makes a direct request of someone in power. If one can possibly do it, one finds an intermediary. And the American ambassador seemed like a logical intermediary to these people.

Many of the issues they raised, it seemed to me, were quite beyond the pale of what was appropriate for a foreign diplomat to speak about. Generally, I counseled them that they were Saudis; I was not. That the king and others had open meetings several times a week,

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and that the mosques were places where relatively free discussion of issues that would be considered constitutional in our society were raised. And I said that if they felt so strongly about matters, I hoped they would raise them, and if anyone asked me, I would express my view, but that I didn't really see it as appropriate for a foreign envoy to become an intermediary between a king and his people.

I basically concluded, since very little, if anything, in fact did get expressed by these people to a higher authority, that Saudi liberals, unlike Saudi conservatives, were born without spines. Saudi conservatives, many of them very well educated, including in the West, very articulate and well versed in the Koran, which provides the language of political discourse in Saudi Arabia, had no hesitation about standing up in the mosque and railing against what they perceived to be libertine behavior on the part of this or that person in Saudi society. The liberals tended to be doing something else during the Friday mosque ceremony, and, if they were there, lacked the strength of religious education and conviction necessary to join the debate on their own behalf. And so the net effect of the liberal tendency to seek indirect means of expressing their views was to leave the field of debate very much in the hands of religious militants on the right.

But that, in the initial period of my tenure in Saudi Arabia, was not a major thing. It really became considerably greater during and after the war.

As you know, just before the war, in a magnificently ill-timed gesture, a number of Saudi women, many of whom I had gotten to know indirectly or, in some cases, had met in the company of their husbands or fathers, took to the streets in a protest drive against the custom that decreed that women couldn't drive in the kingdom.

I say this was magnificently ill timed because this was during the very nervous period before Desert Storm broke out. The king had made a very courageous decision to invite foreign troops, virtually all of them, initially, infidels, onto the holy earth of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The local religious faithful, especially the committed religious militants,

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imagined the worst of these foreigners who had arrived. Islam in Saudi Arabia is full of stories and speculations of disgusting behavior on the part of Christians in particular, and Jews to a lesser extent. There was a great deal of tension, and the king was trying to hold the majority of the country, which was religiously conservative, behind his policy. In these circumstances, to face a social protest from the left, as it were, was a prescription for disaster to the cause that these women espoused.

Indeed, that happened. The king, I think, tried to protect them from some of the worst aspects of the broad popular reaction to their drive, but he wasn't really successful. Women who were teaching in the university, for example, found their students spitting on them, and their husbands received threatening phone calls about their failure to manage their household in the proper fashion. It became very, very uncomfortable for those who had participated in the protest.

Of course, there was an investigation, which meant, in practice, that they had to stay in the kingdom and be available for questioning, the point being to find out to what extent there was some sort of broad conspiracy behind all this.

The irony was that there was good reason to believe that in fact the king had been waiting for the right moment to declare that he saw no reason why women couldn't drive. Bedouin women do drive, and, of course, Arab women drive in the neighboring countries. But the effect of the protest was that the custom became a law, and therefore is now enshrined in a way that will be much harder to overcome.

With regard to women, there were things that my then-wife and I did that attempted to be supportive. We sponsored, for example, in our residence, a show of art by Saudi women, much of the art very, very good, by very talented women, including some members of the royal family who were painting. Sculpture is not much of a Saudi art, as you might expect in an Islamic society. We held gatherings of women at the residence, with all the men sent away for the occasion, including myself. And we ran a series of interactive television

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programs, where the residence was used for women, while men were in the embassy chancery, so men and women were appropriately segregated and yet able to interact with people in Washington over a television connection. So we did a number of things to try to be supportive.

More particularly, however, I think we tried to hold the line in terms of not succumbing to demands that we advise the American community to adopt the full veil or anything like that. Indeed, liberal members of the Saudi royal family, very quietly, made it clear that they would regard our yielding on that point as a sort of betrayal of their own hopes for the kingdom.

So there was tension. It centered, however, mainly, as I said at the outset, on the role of the foreign, particularly the American, community in Saudi society.

The majority of people working in the kingdom were being well paid, and there were reasons for them to be there other than family reasons.

For example, there are a large number of American doctors in the kingdom. And they are there for two reasons basically. One, the access to top-of-the-line, very expensive equipment, which they wouldn't get to see in the United States for years, if ever, but which was immediately introduced in Saudi Arabia's excellent hospitals. Two, the absence of malpractice suits and the whole avalanche of paperwork that bedevils professionals, under government regulation, in the United States. Saudi Arabia is a very unregulated environment.

Still, most people were there, as I indicated, because they found Saudi Arabia an excellent place to live and to maintain a family and raise children.

There was a first class American school in Riyadh, and a very good one in Jeddah as well, and in Dhahran. These are not official, but I took an interest, of course, in helping them when they had problems.

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By and large, the majority of Saudis, I must say, were privately quite tolerant of foreign behavior, and very sympathetic to the problems that foreigners had when the mutawa poked them with a stick in a shopping mall, or whatever.

Q: My next question is about the embassy and also our consulates general, one in...

FREEMAN: Dhahran, one in Jeddah.

Q: How did the officers get around? You mentioned that there were what amounted to constitutional political debates in the mosques on Fridays. I would think this would be an excellent place for an American political officer to be, sitting off to one side and observing what things are burning within the society. I assume that we didn't have many Muslim officers, but maybe I'm wrong.

FREEMAN: You're quite correct, the issue of religion is a barrier to penetration of Saudi society. Non-Muslims may not visit Mecca or Medina, for example. Indeed, they are surrounded by ring roads, beyond which the nonbelievers may not pass (called locally, by the expatriate community, the Christian bypasses). So, to the extent that the staff was non-Muslim, there was an immediate barrier in terms of travel and access, particularly, of course, to the mosques. There were some American Muslim staff, as well as, of course, local employees, who worked in the political section, who were themselves Muslim, although by no means all of them were. Many of the most ferocious debates, sermons, in mosques tended to be reduced to cassette, and one could buy the cassettes and listen to them.

I think a larger barrier, frankly, was language. By contrast with China, where as deputy chief of mission and, before that, as country director, as normalization began, I insisted on a level of linguistic competence that was virtually total in the embassy, a great part of the American Embassy in Saudi Arabia and the consulates consisted of people who had either

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no Arabic at all or whose Arabic was rudimentary. There were some exceptions, but there was not the depth of linguistic talent that I had seen when I worked in China.

One can speculate about why that is. Arabic, like Chinese, is, of course, an intimidatingly difficult language, although, frankly, I think its difficulty is overrated. The expense of training people for two years in a hard language is such that it is difficult to sustain, budgetarily, over a long period of time. But I suspect that it is because a great many of the most distinguished ambassadors that we had had in the field, and those who had worked in Washington as assistant secretary for Near Eastern affairs, themselves knew no Arabic. And since they managed to get along without it, they imagined that it was not necessary.

When I started learning Arabic (and I did, during the entire time that I was there, including during the war, except when it was simply physically impossible, put in at least an hour and often two hours a day on language, with a tutor or reading), I asked one of the most distinguished American diplomats in the field whether he had any particular insights into learning Arabic. And he told me, much to my surprise, that he had never learned it, and that he had not done so because, in his words, "I saw no point in acquiring the key to an empty room."

Q: This is the story I heard that Ambassador Wadsworth, years back, told somebody.

FREEMAN: This may have lived on. I'm not at all sure that the person I'm quoting was the source of the original insight. In fact, it's not an insight; it's a slander and a very parochial attitude. Arabic culture is far from an empty room. To proclaim that the people with whom you are working inhabit an empty room is to say something very profound about yourself, rather than about them.

So, over the years, evidently, language-designated positions, at least in the establishment in Saudi Arabia, and I believe elsewhere in the Arab world, had either been de-designated, as no officer suitable for the position could be found with Arabic, or had never been

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designated in the beginning. Of course, the problem is that if the positions are not designated, the training positions are not created. So you get into a vicious circle.

I would say, of the senior people on my staff, in a very large establishment, there were only two or three who really could handle Arabic at a level that I considered moderately impressive.

My own Arabic, as I studied, finally got to the point where I could understand virtually everything that was going on around me, as long as it was in the local dialect, rather than classical Arabic, which I made no effort to master. I couldn't, of course, speak well, and in fact made no real effort to learn to speak well, because my concern was to be able to understand my environment. In any event, if one is an ambassador, I think one should speak with the precision that one's native language provides, and not speak in a broken version of local language.

I think really the lack of linguistic depth in the embassy was a greater barrier to interaction.

You had asked earlier about how people got around. The restrictions of language and religion, I have discussed. Sexual apartheid in Saudi Arabia was a very significant barrier as well.

The Department of State, in its wisdom, and reflecting the drive toward affirmative action and diversity in American society, decided that Saudi Arabia should be treated like any other post for purposes of the assignment of female officers. This was, in my view, grotesquely unfair to them, even if they were interested and volunteered for the slots, and unfair to the rest of the embassy.

There was, for example, a very, very bright, able, young woman officer who was assigned to the political/military section. She could not get access to the Ministry of Defense, as a woman. She could not get into the building, nor could she have any social interaction with the officer corps. She was restricted, in her contacts, to foreign contractors and

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subcontractors or to telephone conversations. The net effect of this was that she became enormously frustrated and resentful. The work that she was supposed to do had to be done, and therefore it had to be done by others. Eventually, I managed to move her to a position where she could display her talent, and in fact she did all right.

It is difficult, not impossible, but difficult for female officers to be effective in certain functions, of which the political/military function is clearly one. In others, perhaps it's less of a barrier.

There was another problem. Normal social life in the non-Islamic world is conducted between couples, but many Saudi couples would not appear in mixed company, so that evenings tended to be sexually segregated. There were nights when my wife would go one direction, and I would go another, and since evenings tend to be very late, we would not meet up until the wee hours of the morning, when we were separately delivered back to the residence. Saudi couples would come to the residence if they were sure who the other couples were. Women are concerned about their reputation in Saudi Arabia, as they are anywhere, and public appearance before strange men will become the subject of gossip and innuendo. Therefore, a great deal of time was spent arranging that nobody ever met anybody new, and that certain circles of friends were reassembled. Very often, I would invite people to the residence, and they would say, "We'd really rather that you come here," not for any reason other than that they could then control the guest list.

Now having said that, when I did have the opportunity to meet the upper echelon of Saudi society, as couples, I was very, very impressed by the professionalism and level of education and competence of many of the women. They were doctors, they were businesspersons, they were engineers and professionals of one sort or another, who were managing to conduct very successful careers in this society, despite its peculiar strictures on contact across gender lines. They seemed to have very comfortable relationships with their husbands. Most Saudis are monogamous, but some are polygamous, up to the Koranic limit of four wives. Sometimes we would be in the company of a man with two

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wives, and it was very interesting to watch the interaction. The husband might well request that the wives unveil. But generally they wouldn't, because whoever unveiled first might be criticized then by the other as a brazen hussy of some sort.

At any rate, there was a lot of social interaction, but it was conducted in this manner, which is peculiar, a great many receptions at which American and other Western couples were present, but only Saudi men would turn up.

Of course, the great attraction of embassies in Saudi Arabia is that, by longstanding custom, despite the strict laws against possession and consumption of alcohol, embassies do have access to alcohol. Many Saudis rather enjoy a drink once in a while. So there was never any great difficulty in getting a certain class of Saudis, who liked to drink and to be in Western company, to an embassy affair. Whether these people, in the end, were totally representative, I doubt.

Some of the most interesting evenings I had were with members of the religious right, who would come to the house for discussions, for example, on concepts of human rights or the like, and, very articulately, state a case quite contrary to the view that I and most Americans have of these subjects.

Q: How well informed did you find the religious right about, you might say, the mote in the American eye?

FREEMAN: Many of the most prominent religious figures and preachers in mosques in fact had doctorates from American universities, and traveled back and forth to the United States. Some of them, as professors now do, if they were university professors, had businesses on the side, with offices in the United States.

They were very familiar with conditions in the United States, and were really sometimes, I found, quite contemptuous of the American lack of recognition of the religious roots of American secular values.

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They had read and would point out that the reasoning of John Locke and Thomas Jefferson rested on Deism. That the inspiration of the Protestant Reformation was the essential prerequisite for the Enlightenment. That the Enlightenment itself was animated not only by a spirit of skepticism, but by religious faith. That the Bill of Rights therefore ultimately rested on a religious vision, despite being presented in secular form. They would say that it's impossible to conduct a significant debate with Americans about issues like the Bill of Rights, because Americans don't know the history that led to the founding of the Bill of Rights, and don't know what the inspiration of the various provisions in the Bill of Rights, in terms of the definition of man and woman's relationship to God, is, and are really not conversant with the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition to an extent that they can talk intelligently with them.

Which is, of course, another way of saying that there is a great gap in communication, in terms of values, between the two societies.

Islam, of course, has a grand tradition of scientific inquiry and respect for foreign ideas. Islam, in many ways, certainly in the Middle Ages, was the religion of science, which is why so many of our basic scientific terms have Arabic roots, terms like algebra, alchemy, and algorithm, for example. It's also why Plato, Aristotle, and even some of the pre-Socratic philosophers were introduced to the West through Arabic, either the Caliphate in Spain, or the kingdom of Roger of Sicily, who did a great deal of translation into Latin of Arabic translations of Greek and other sources that had been lost in the West.

But Saudi Arabia, unfortunately, does not adhere to this particular tradition of Islam, and the study of pre-Islamic philosophers, Aristotle, for example, is banned in Saudi universities. So that the criticism that many of these very well-educated religious men were making of Americans, in my view, applied even more to Saudis, who had been denied exposure to part of their own heritage, let alone the basic heritage of Western thought. So I always found a certain level of irony in this kind of discussion with them.

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Q: On the reporting that came out of your embassy, and the fruit of these contacts (there are usually two fruits: one is to influence and exchange information; the other is reporting back to Washington), how did you find the support of the Desk and the understanding? And what were its desires for information?

FREEMAN: As I said at the outset, Saudi Arabia, during this period, simply was not on the Washington policy map, and there was no great interest at all in anything that we were reporting, beyond the narrow circles of specialists — the Desk, one or two people in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and, of course, the intelligence community.

We had a much more active interaction, in a way (but, at that time, since the military relationship was in such a sad condition, a very sweet and sour relationship), with Desk officers at the Pentagon than we did with people at State or Commerce or in the White House.

Saudi Arabia was a place that no one thought of except when they needed some cash to do something and thought they could shake down the Saudis for that purpose.

I did have some difficulties with the Desk. Frankly, I wasn't very impressed with the level of support from the Desk on many issues, whether they were personnel and staffing or insight into the Washington policy process, although, in fairness to the Desk, there wasn't much of a Washington policy process going on about the Arabian Peninsula. NEA (the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs), at that time, to the extent it was engaged at all, was engaged completely in Levantine matters, the peace process between Israel and Palestinians, which was a great focus of U.S. policy, to the exclusion of all else. So there wasn't much there.

Two things I can say about reporting.

One, I began, very deliberately, to reorganize reporting and to try to raise the analytical standard, by looking at some of the more fundamental questions of long-term importance.

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As I gradually got to know the capabilities of people in the embassy, I was able to put together little teams that produced really first-class material, of which I was quite, quite proud, some of it quite prescient. And I was able, as I made my own intellectual inquiries into the understanding of the kingdom and its environment, to inspire and stimulate, I think, a higher level of reporting than had been the case for some time.

The second thing I would say is that, on occasion, the Desk, much to my horror, and reflecting the difficult atmosphere in Washington with regard to Arab affairs, would tell me not to report things that I heard.

The most egregious example of this was in connection with the Saudi desire for F-15s. Washington had, by the summer of 1989, contrived an elaborate charade with regard to Saudi aircraft purchases, and had convinced itself that this charade was in fact an accurate portrayal of Saudi views.

It went like this, that the fleet of F-5s that the Saudis had was aging and losing its utility, and that the Saudis were not interested in the F-15, but they were interested in the F-16, or possibly the F-18, as a replacement for the F-5s, and that they planned in the process to get rid of the F-5s, so that there would not be a major increase in the capabilities of their air force. This was because, in the mid-80s, AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee) had successfully vetoed an F-15 sale. So it was a convenient way for Washington, if indeed the Saudis believed this, to avoid addressing the question of F-15s.

Over the summer of 1989, I'd heard this story, and I had no reason to doubt it, since I knew nothing about what the Saudis might want. But, shortly after I arrived in Saudi Arabia, it became apparent to me that this was a concoction for the convenience of Washington. I heard specifically from Prince Sultan, the inspector general and minister of defense and aviation, that he was absolutely uninterested in getting rid of the F-5s, that he had a problem that needed F-15s, and that he wasn't at all sure that he wanted anything to do with F-16s or F-18s, but if he did, it was as a supplement to an F-15 purchase.

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I reported this and was roundly reprimanded by several levels of Washington for puncturing the political balloon that they had raised, and was told not to report further.

I told them, "I'm sorry. I am not out here to tell you what you want to hear. I'm out here to tell you what is going on. If you find it awkward and inconvenient, then I deeply regret that. But it is not my job to deform reality out here to fit your convenience."

I, in fact, as I looked at the military environment, could see a very good case for F-15s that the Saudis had and were making, and became a proponent of an F-15 sale, which made me even less popular.

I think Washington's optic I could understand. A Saudi F-15 purchase might have complicated the Middle East peace process by riling up the Israelis or causing the Israelis to demand compensation in some form, and therefore it was a very awkward issue. Nevertheless, it was an issue, and I refused to pretend that it wasn't.

Q: I'm really fishing in waters I know nothing about, but I've heard the name of Dennis Ross so often in the Middle East process, and it continues to be there. Did he play any part in this?

FREEMAN: I think he was quite central to this, although he didn't personally speak to me. But his name was cited on many occasions by different people who called me and told me to shut up.

Q: Dennis Ross, I'm not sure what his position was at the time. I know he was with Baker.

FREEMAN: He was, I believe, at that time, the director of policy planning staff at the State Department, but in fact engaged almost totally on the Middle East issue, to the exclusion of all else.

Q: What was your impression of Dennis Ross and his role in this?

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FREEMAN: I have to say I don't know Dennis well personally. I have a very high regard for his intellect and his ability as a securocrat, meaning a professional bureaucrat dealing, in the Washington context, with national security issues.

I later learned from Israelis, when I was at the Department of Defense and visited Israel, that there was a great deal of suspicion of Dennis in Israel as being temperamentally connected, if not politically connected, with the Likud, if not the Party, at least the strain of thought.

Q: Which would be basically the right-wing party.

FREEMAN: The Israeli right wing. In fact, one of the reasons that was cited, by Israelis who had participated, for the Israeli decision to go to Oslo for meetings with the Palestine Liberation Organization, and with Mr. Arafat, at a later time, rather than to go through the United States, and one of the reasons for keeping the Americans in the dark about this, was concern that Dennis Ross and a couple of others were so close to Likud that they would have talked to Likud and injected this issue into Israeli domestic politics. I don't know whether these concerns have any founding in fact or not, but they certainly were cited to me.

In any event, Dennis is very much focused on Israel and its security problems and on the peace process, to the exclusion of other factors in the Middle East. He certainly had no great interest in or affinity for the Saudis and their problems, as he began to come out during the many, many visits that Secretary Baker ended up making as a result of Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. A set of proposals emanated from Dennis that made great sense in the Washington political and bureaucratic context, and absolutely no sense in the Saudi context, and therefore were infeasible or insensitive to Saudi style.

So I would say that (and I don't attribute this particularly to Dennis personally) Dennis, in a way, did personify some of the self-absorption of Washington, its lack of empathy for other

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viewpoints, and its total focus during this period on the Washington game and the Israeli-Palestinian game, to the exclusion of other issues.

Q: I'm just trying to catch the atmospherics of the time, again before the balloon went up over Kuwait. You were obviously the new boy on the scene, but did you find developing, both within the embassy and maybe even internally with yourself, a certain sense of paranoia about Washington? Whatever Israel wants, Israel gets, and the rest of the Arab world can go to hell unless we want some money. Did you get this?

FREEMAN: There were several issues that reinforced a sense of, rather than paranoia, I would say difficulty of communication with Washington, and inability to engage Washington in the issues of concern locally.

One of them was Afghanistan. This was, of course, as I mentioned, a very successful Saudi-American joint venture, with Chinese involvement, through the Americans, in support of the mujahideen in Afghanistan, which ultimately proved fatal to the Soviet occupation, and perhaps played a role in bringing down the Soviet Union, much to everyone's surprise. As my tenure in Saudi Arabia began, the Afghan adventure was winding down. I spent an enormous amount of time dealing with, mainly, the Central Intelligence Agency and Judge Webster, who was the director for Central Intelligence at that time, through the station chief, but also, to some extent, with National Security Council staff, rather than State, and with the Afghan people at State, and a bit with Bob Oakley, who was ambassador to Islamabad, Pakistan, at that time, trying to ensure that the Afghan adventure ended in a way that enhanced, rather than diminished, prospects for future U.S.-Saudi cooperation, when that might become desirable. In other words, having been eager to get the Saudis in on the takeoff, I thought it was important that we not forget them as the landing occurred. And I thought, in many respects, this required a level of dialogue and an intensity of dialogue and an honesty of dialogue that was frankly missing. So this was one issue that, during this period and subsequently, was of very great concern to me, where I found it difficult.

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A second problem was, of course (and this is implicit in the F-15 issue to which I referred), Saudi Arabia had, in response to various congressionally administered American rebuffs, turned to others as the mainstay of its arms imports. The British in particular, the French, the Chinese were all ahead of the United States in gross volume of sales. Their influence was rising, and ours was diminishing. I felt that this was a long-term trend that needed to be addressed. That we had an interest in maintaining our connection to Saudi Arabia and our ability to cooperate with the Saudis in the defense field. And that the whole question of arms sales, training, exercises, and the like needed more attention from Washington than it was getting. I found Washington not only unresponsive, but, as I indicated, on occasion, actively hostile to suggestions in this area.

A third area was trade. About fifty percent of American exports to the Middle East region go to Saudi Arabia alone, and yet no secretary of Commerce had ever visited Saudi Arabia. There was virtually a complete lack of interest at that time, pre-war, in Washington, in promoting exports to Saudi Arabia by high-level travel, business delegations led by government officials, and the like. It was very difficult to get American participation, through the Department of Commerce, in major regional and other Saudi-specific trade exhibitions that were going on regularly in the kingdom. I had a great sense of frustration as the multiple arms of the U.S. government with an interest in trade tussled with each other, rather than worked together to promote trade.

I might now jump ahead, because, of course, the war did energize interest in Saudi Arabia. In fact, over the course of my tenure, during which I spent probably half of my time promoting exports and trade and investment, I was able to get U.S. exports up from about three-and-a-half billion a year to eight billion, in a three-year period, of which I'm very proud.

But, jumping ahead, I would say that there was almost total confusion in Washington and many efforts canceling each other out. At various times, I was dealing with, of course, the Department of State; the under secretary for economic affairs, as the title was at that time;

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the assistant secretary for economic and business affairs; the Ex-Im Bank; the Overseas Private Investment Corporation; the Foreign Commercial Service; the Foreign Trade Administration at Commerce; the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal, Plant, and Health Inspection Service; the Foreign Agricultural Service; the Bureau of Reclamation, which had an interest in cooperation in recharging aquifers, such as the Ogallala aquifer in the central western part of the United States; the Treasury, through several different areas, one of which is the Joint Economic Commission Reimbursable Assistance Program; the Department of Labor's occupational Safety and Health Administration; the Health and Human Services Department, through its hospital arm, since hospital business is big in Saudi Arabia; the Defense Security Assistance Agency, which manages foreign military sales; the Minority Business Administration; the Small Business Administration; the National Technical Information Service, which is the former Bureau of Standards; the Department of Energy's oil and gas equipment export-promotion arm; and I'm sure I've left out quite a number.

One of my great battles was an effort, during this period, to engage Washington in rectifying an error of omission that had been made earlier, and I'll talk about that.

But my point is that all of these agencies, in my experience, spent more time trying to one-up each other in Washington than they did doing anything in the field. And they were impossible to engage.

Let me mention the Saudi Arabian Standards Organization as a case in point. Back at the beginning of the 80s, as Saudi Arabia began to modernize, under then-Crown Prince Fahd's leadership, the Saudis determined, quite sensibly, that they needed to have a standards organization that would write standards for industrial and consumer goods, such that they would have compatible equipment and that consumers would be protected. They asked the United States to supply a couple of experts in the writing of such standards. And the U.S. replied we had no budget, but that we might be able to do it if they paid, but we weren't sure. Similar offers went to others, like the Germans, the Singaporeans, the

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Japanese, the French, the Brits, Swedes, whatever, all of whom immediately supplied people, free of charge.

The result was, for example, that a half-billion-dollar annual U.S. electrical-appliance market — refrigerators and electric stoves and the like — disappeared overnight, as the Japanese rewrote the standards to require 127-volt appliances, with two-meter cords. In other words, precisely what Japan made and what no one else made.

The most egregious case, which led me to become a bee keeper, was honey. We had had an approximately twelve-million-dollar honey market in the Gulf; not enormous, but significant for honey producers. The Germans rewrote the standard. Germany, of course, being a heavily polluted place, has a great deal of soda ash in the air and in the honey. They wrote the standards to require a certain level of soda ash in the honey, so that American honey could no longer be sold in Saudi Arabia unless it was deliberately adulterated with soda ash.

So a great deal of my time was spent trying to get the business community and the Department of Commerce to cooperate, separately, putting up matching funds, to bring somebody out to work in the Standards Organization and reverse some of this damage and prevent further damage. And I ultimately succeeded. But doing that was virtually a full-time task, with no real help from anybody.

There were other issues, some of them generic and not specific to Saudi Arabia.

I'll give you a case in point. The United States and the Philippines have the distinction of being the only two countries (at one point, Ethiopia may have been in this category also, but I think they've dropped out) that apply an income tax to their citizens overseas. There is, in the case of the United States, a seventy-thousand-dollar exemption, and, of course, you can take a foreign-tax credit. Saudi Arabia has no income tax, so the tax

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credit is irrelevant. The rules are arcane. The effect of U.S. taxation is, very often, to price Americans out of the job market.

In Saudi Arabia, this had had a specific consequence. The hospital-supply industry, pharmaceuticals, including a huge pharmaceutical trade that goes on around the hajj in Mecca, had originally largely been in the hands of American companies. The tax law, however, had had the effect of leading hospital-supply companies in Saudi Arabia, including American-owned companies, to hire Brits, Germans, Swiss, and other Europeans, all of whom promptly placed orders with British, German, Swiss, and other pharmaceutical companies not in the United States. So that the net effect on U.S. exports to Saudi Arabia was measurable.

I argued (I spoke a great deal to the American business community in Saudi Arabia) that this was a very good example of the pernicious effects of the American tax policy. But I further argued (and I thought this might have some resonance with a Republican White House, since I suspect that most of the roughly three-million overseas Americans are Republicans) that there was a great deal to gain and very little to lose by putting a proposal to Congress that these overseas Americans be allowed to vote in constituencies for representatives with powers similar to those of the representatives of the District of Columbia, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and the like. That is, representatives in Congress who could sit in and vote in committee, but not on the floor of the House. That, in fact, the no-taxation-without-representation cry had a certain resonance in American history. But, more important, that good trade and overseas tax policy would be made if those affected by the overseas tax policy had a voice in the Ways and Means Committee that they lacked. And that the global involvement of the United States ought to be recognized in this fashion. Perhaps I was inept, but I got no real response.

So I found it very difficult to engage Washington's attention.

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And I wasn't the only one. In February of 1990, General Norman Schwarzkopf, who had succeeded the previous summer as commander in chief of the central command (CINCCENT), turned up in my office. I had, of course, met him previously. He was stuck with a plan, approved by the Joint Chiefs, for the region that envisaged fighting the Soviet Union in the mountains of Iran. He and I had agreed, when we had met before, that this was probably a bit out of date, especially as it wasn't clear there was going to be a Soviet Union, and our relationship with Iran had rather changed. So he came to my office and laid out a number of scenarios that he was exploring, for exercises and focuses of battle plans.

I stopped him, and I said, "Now I think you really ought to think about three scenarios. You ought to think about Iraq invading Kuwait, or Iran invading Kuwait, anyway an invasion of Kuwait. The second scenario you ought to think about is Iraq invading Kuwait, and Yemen attacking Saudi Arabia from the south, by prearrangement."

Q: Because these two were blood brothers almost, in the political context.

FREEMAN: They were both estranged from the Saudis, but I'll come back to what the reasoning was.

"And third, you should consider the possibility of an Iranian-fomented insurrection in Saudi Arabia's eastern province among the Shi'a, possibly beginning with intervention, through subversion, in Bahrain and/or Qatar. I think these are really more realistic scenarios than others. And while I doubt that any of them will happen, if you concentrate on these, I think you will not be wasting your time, in the way that you are."

He readily agreed and indicated that he'd been thinking along much the same lines himself. We agreed that he should focus on scenario number one, an Iraqi or Iranian invasion of Kuwait.

He then went back and tried to get the Joint Chiefs to approve this scenario, and ran into a total lack of support. In fact, it was not until June of 1990 that Colin Powell, the

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chairman of the Joint Chiefs, personally overruled the rest of the Joint Chiefs and allowed Schwarzkopf to proceed to develop this scenario, which led to the command-post exercise that Schwarzkopf ran just at the very end of July, only a few days before Saddam Hussein actually did invade Kuwait, a command-post exercise that was invaluable in putting together what became known as Desert Shield.

I cite this because it's an indication of the disconnect between thinking and realities in the Gulf and Washington, at all levels.

Similarly, I might say, in the spring of 1990, the U.S. Navy determined that the naval presence, which we had maintained in the Gulf since 1947, called COMMIDEAST Force, was no longer required in the post-Cold War era. That there was no strategic interest of the United States that required defending in the Gulf. And that this force should be disbanded and withdrawn. Schwarzkopf and I and some of the other ambassadors in the region argued strenuously against this. Again, fortunately, in June of 1990, Colin Powell overruled the U.S. Navy, and we did have a naval presence in the Gulf, therefore, when Saddam went into Kuwait.

Q: What was the thinking there? We had had this very active tanker-guarding thing, reflagging tankers and all, so it wasn't as though this had been a dormant area.

FREEMAN: That operation had ended. More particularly, the National Command Authority, as the military call it, had proclaimed the Carter Doctrine, which was directed at excluding external intervention in the Gulf. And while Earnest Will, the operation to escort Kuwaiti tankers, had in fact not involved an external threat, but rather one from within the Gulf, post-Cold War, there was no interest in remaining engaged. The Navy was under terrible pressure to reduce the number of naval vessels worldwide, and saw this peripheral region, the Gulf (ironically, as it turned out), as a good place to carry out the naval reductions that the budget was driving.

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The sense that I had that we were unattended in Washington became so acute that I called some of my counterparts in neighboring countries — Nat Howell, in Kuwait, in particular, I recall, Charles Hostler, in Bahrain — and suggested that, since NEA (the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs) apparently had no intention of calling a chiefs-of-mission conference and was not keen to have us come back to Washington, we call our own subregional conference, much along the lines of the one that South Asian chiefs of mission pioneered, that we get together informally, and that we invite some people from Washington. If they came, so much the better; if they didn't, we would still have a lot of useful common problems to discuss and help each other to resolve.

I stressed to Nat and others that we should go ahead and formulate this proposal, and we should not seek Washington's permission until we had a proposal, and that we should present Washington more or less with a fait accompli, and then we should have the assistant secretary for NEA and whoever else wanted to come out come out, if they were able to do it. But that the great utility was the opportunity to exchange experiences that we all had in the Gulf and different perspectives that we all had, and to talk about the Gulf after the end of the Cold War, what the collapse of the Soviet Union that was going on meant for Gulf security and economics and the like.

Nat, unfortunately, did mention it to Washington before we got very far along in the proposal. And they were so alarmed at the prospect of people in the field getting together on their own, out of control, as it were, that they proposed a chiefs-of-mission conference in Bonn, of all places. Which meant that we wouldn't be able to run around Washington and pollute people's minds with the local perspective, and they would be very much in control.

So we had a very strange chiefs-of-mission conference, which was not Gulf specific, it was the entire region of the Near East, not including South Asia, in Bonn, which the then-

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assistant secretary, John Kelly, attended, with Jock Covey, his principal deputy, and very few other people from Washington.

In preparation for that conference, I sent in three long telegrams on the Gulf after the Cold War. Among the ideas that I threw into those cables, not stressed, was the thought that, to go back to your earlier question, Iraq had emerged from the Iran-Iraq War as the dominant military power in the region. Iran was exhausted and no longer able to check Iraqi ambition. That Iraq did have ambitions and an empty treasury. That it was far from impossible to imagine that Iraq might use its military power to do again what it had done in the past; namely, to try to extinguish Kuwait's independence, or at least to grab the oil fields on Kuwait's northern border with Iraq. And that there were further possibilities of regional collusion, through the Arab Cooperation Council, which Iraq had formed with Yemen, Jordan, and Egypt, Egypt dropping out of the ACC as that year went on.

The great irony is that the only ambassador present in Bonn who gave any credence at all to this thesis that Iraq was a menace to the region was April Glaspie, who was in Baghdad. Others pooh-poohed it, and Washington simply didn't want to hear about it.

Now right around this time, of course, Saddam Hussein, in an informal talk with his officer corps and political entourage, which I reviewed for my Arabic lessons, so I actually watched it, made what was reported in the West as an unprovoked threat to rain fire on Israel. In fact, what he said was that Israel had attacked Iraq in the past, but if it did it again that he would retaliate by raining fire on Israel. He also said quite a variety of things about how Kuwaiti and Emiri, meaning United Arab Emirates, behavior on oil pricing and supplies was intolerable, and how this would have to be fixed.

This threat to the Gulf was not taken seriously. The threat to Israel was taken very seriously. Ironically, of course, Iraq was planning aggression against the Gulf, not against Israel. As I say, we can talk about this next time.

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Q: Going back a bit, you say no secretary of commerce had ever gone to Saudi Arabia.

FREEMAN: Not to my knowledge.

Q: But why not? After all, we were always asking for money, and it was a big market. Do you have any feel? Was it just not a fun place to go?

FREEMAN: I think it was not regarded as a significant market until the '70s, when the oil revenues produced a major market. At that time, there was a bureaucratic struggle, as I understand it, between the secretary of state, the secretary of commerce, and the secretary of the treasury. And there were other struggles going on; for example, with regard to who would have responsibility for managing economic relations with China, which was an opening market. Basically, Henry Kissinger, as both the national security advisor and secretary of state simultaneously, arranged to give Saudi Arabia to Bill Simon, the secretary of the treasury. Therefore, Washington treated Saudi Arabia through the treasury. Well, the treasury, whatever its merits may be, and I'm sure they're considerable, has no proven record of success or even great interest in the specific promotion of American exports. It's interested in financial relationships rather than trade relationships. Bureaucratically, therefore, I think that greatly reduced the incentive for secretaries of commerce to take an interest in Saudi Arabia. That is the only reason that I can ascribe to this, other than, of course, the point that you made, that Saudi Arabia is not the U.K., and Riyadh is not Paris.

Q: I would have thought, in a way, by calling a meeting in Bonn, both it took you away from the area, but also, by including the whole Middle East into the thing, this immediately brought you back to the Levant, really.

FREEMAN: Of course. It made the Gulf again a sideshow. I must say that that was very apparent.

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I did give a paper, which turned out to be fairly prescient, at the conference, on the forthcoming collapse of overseas official development assistance, and the requirement to focus on the development of private capital markets as a source of finance for development, the need to refocus relationships on economic and structural reform — privatization and the like — rather than on donations of official money, which I didn't think would be available anymore. This was, of course, 1990, and the scenario that I predicted did unfold in the coming years.

Q: What about the role of Secretary Baker? We've mentioned Dennis Ross. Obviously, great things were happening elsewhere. Did you have the feeling that Baker was at all engaged in the Middle East outside of the Levant?

FREEMAN: No, he was totally disinterested, which was one reason that he was caught so totally by surprise by the Gulf War. That is to say, he was totally disinterested and frankly, I believe, let it be known to the bureaucracy that he did not wish extraneous distractions, like information about other areas of the Middle East, to be brought to his attention. As you say, great things were happening...

Q: We're talking about the fall of the Soviet Union.

FREEMAN: The fall of the Soviet Union, the reunification of Germany, which was agreed in the spring of 1990. So I think he may very well have been right to concentrate on these, but we did end up paying a price in terms of not being alert to events that were occurring elsewhere.

Q: Before we come to the Gulf War, could we talk a bit about how Egypt was viewed at that time from Saudi Arabia. Also, a bit about the Yemen and the Gulf states and Kuwait, as far as what you were getting. And then we'll go to relations with Iraq. I'd like you to talk about how that developed, and the role of April Glaspie, because this became very

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controversial later, and your perspective on that. And then, obviously, the developments on this.

Today is the 5th of July, 1996. Chas, why don't we take a tour of the horizon. This is prior to the Gulf War breaking out all over the place. What was your view of, and how do you think the Saudis felt about, Egypt?

FREEMAN: In the spring of 1990, the embassy, under my direction (actually, I did a great deal of the writing), did a series of three telegrams, which became known as the hairy mammoth series. The contention was that, with the end of the Cold War, things in the Gulf, as elsewhere, had fundamentally changed. The telegrams attempted to examine the strategic environment around Saudi Arabia, both on the Gulf and Red Sea, Horn of Africa, fronts, as well as, of course, the Levant.

They became known as the hairy mammoth series because the thesis was that the Cold War, much like an Ice Age or a heavy winter, had covered the landscape to such an extent that it looked very much unlike what it was underneath the snow and ice. Suddenly, the ice of the Cold War was melting, and the familiar landscape, which had been obscured for nearly fifty years, was reemerging. Animals that we thought had been dead turned out to have been simply hibernating, and nationalist passions were re-arising. I think that somehow hairy mammoths came into this extended metaphor.

Looking at the world around Saudi Arabia at the end of the Cold War, one was struck by the effects of the collapse of bipolarity, the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The Arab world traditionally had three centers of power that contended for ascendancy. They were Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo, each place representing a very different personality within the Arab world. During the 1950s, '60s, '70s, and '80s, Riyadh arose as a fourth point of influence. It got to the point where nobody did anything very much in the Arab world without first checking with King Fahd, because, while they might take a dim

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view of the nouveau-riche character of Saudi society, they recognized that his money gave him influence, particularly influence with the United States.

By 1990, on the eve of the Gulf War, Saudi Arabia and Egypt had restored a good relationship. Their relations had been impaired, as Egypt's relations with most Arab states had been impaired, after the Camp David Accords. Saudi Arabia, in fact, had bankrolled part of the Egyptian preparation for the 1973 crossing of the Suez Canal, which gave Sadat the bargaining leverage he needed to make peace with Israel. But I don't think the Saudis were witting that that was his intention. They saw this purely as a recovery of Arab land from Zionist occupation. So, in 1990, actually President Mubarak of Egypt and King Fahd had established a quite cordial working relationship. It was the case that Mubarak did very little without checking with Fahd, and Fahd did increasingly little without checking with Mubarak. Nevertheless, under the surface, the Saudi-Egyptian relationship remained somewhat an arms-length relationship.

You have to remember the history of the Arabian Peninsula to understand this. On three occasions, armies from Egypt had attempted, twice successfully, to overthrow the al-Saud dynasty in Riyadh. At the beginning of the 19th century, they sacked Riyadh and destroyed it. Later in the 19th century, they manipulated family quarrels within the al-Saud and sent an expeditionary force that again overthrew the al-Saud. They did not welcome the conquest and reorganization of Saudi Arabia by Abd al-Aziz at the beginning of the 20th century. In the 1960s, President Nasser attempted once again to overthrow the House of Saud, through his operations in Yemen, and subversive operations, including some commando operations and air operations in the Hejaz, the region of Saudi Arabia along the Red Sea coast.

So there was a legacy of suspicion. And this came out, I think, most forcefully in the aftermath of a late-1989 summit meeting between Mubarak and Fahd in Riyadh, at which, among other things, Fahd agreed to the construction of a bridge and causeway across the Strait of Tiran; that is at the bottom of the Gulf of Aqaba, between Sinai and the part

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of the Saudi coast opposite that. This agreement quickly unraveled as Fahd's brothers in the royal family, Minister of Defense and Aviation Prince Sultan, in particular, but others as well, and other Saudis, raised a question about whether Saudi Arabia really wished to have a land link to Egypt, given the propensity of Egyptian armies to arrive in Saudi Arabia with malign intent. And so this project very rapidly was shelved.

Nevertheless, I think the political relationship was clearly warming. One element of the warming was the increasing Egyptian coldness to something called the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC), which had been formed under Saddam Hussein's leadership and which attempted to coordinate policy between Iraq, Yemen, Jordan, and Egypt. In retrospect, President Mubarak says he became aware that this was in fact seen by Iraq as an instrument of expansionism. And he basically dropped out of participation, leaving Yemen and Jordan to conspire with Iraq in the events that led up to the Gulf War.

Mentioning Egypt, from Saudi Arabia's perspective, in other words, historically, the enemy has lain to the west. And that's generally true of the Arabian Peninsula. At one point 1500 years ago, Ethiopia sent an army that succeeded in conquering Yemen and advancing into portions of what is now Saudi Arabia, in fact coming quite close to Mecca. The Saudis, particularly those who live along the Red Sea coast, see themselves as part of, if not a Red Sea community, at least a network of Red Sea relationships, many of them with an unfortunate history.

There is a very large Sudanese population in Saudi Arabia. Sudanese are, in the Arab world, a very clever lot, with excellent Arabic and generally excellent English, and a propensity for religious discourse that is quite impressive. Many Sudanese teachers work in Saudi Arabia. So the Saudis, as they looked at this strategic area to their west and south, saw an improving relationship with Egypt, but a deteriorating relationship with the radical Islamic regime in Khartoum.

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And they were very concerned about the trends in Somalia, which eventually led, in December of 1992, to the initial American intervention, later joined by the Saudis, in Mogadishu and elsewhere in Somalia.

Looking in the other direction, traditionally, there has been no love lost between Iranian Shi'ites and Saudi Sunni, especially Wahhabi Sunni, Arabs. There are, of course, many Arabs who live in Iran, a significant Arab minority population, and there is, in the Gulf, particularly in the United Arab Emirates, and to some extent in Oman, Bahrain in particular, as well as a bit in Kuwait, a substantial group of people who trace their origins to Iran, many of whom still can manage to speak Farsi at home. At various points throughout history, the Persian empires that have risen and fallen have exerted control over the southern coast of what the Saudis call the Arabian Gulf (what most of the world calls the Persian Gulf). Particularly after the Iranian Islamic Revolution, 1979-1980, the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran was extremely tense. There were Iranian military probes at Saudi Arabia. On one occasion, two Iranian aircraft were shot down by Saudi pilots. There was, of course the Iran-Iraq War, which broke out in 1980 and which lasted eight years before it finally sputtered to a halt, with Iran exhausted and Iraq ascendant. The Saudis, during that war, provided very substantial assistance, something on the order of \$28 billion or so worth of help, to Iraq, in order to prevent its collapse in the face of the vastly more populous and fanatical Revolutionary Guard in Iran. During this period, also, there were incidents of Iranian mischief-making during the hajj (the pilgrimage to Mecca), including subversive activities and even an explosion or two, which were traced to Iran. Iran continued, during the early 1990s, to make efforts to politicize the hajj in ways that would have turned it into a forum for anti-Western diatribe. This was not welcome to the Saudis. So there was a great deal of concern about Iran.

Saudi Arabia's relationships with the smaller Gulf countries were superficially good. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), to which, I suppose, Saddam saw the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) as an antidote, was an organization with increasing importance. But, of

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course, Saudi Arabia's smaller neighbors, most of them having border disputes with Saudi Arabia...

Q: I think of the Buraymi dispute.

FREEMAN: The Buraymi Oasis, with the United Arab Emirates; an unsettled border with Yemen, which meant that the Omani border was unsettled; an unsettled, undemarcated border with Qatar; and, of course, disputes over a couple of islands with Kuwait, although the neutral zone that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia had jointly managed for about fifty years was successfully divided. Only Bahrain, which in many respects functions as a client state or a subsidiary of Saudi Arabia, with heavy Saudi subsidies, enjoyed really close and friendly relations with the Saudis.

So there was considerable concern in Saudi Arabia about the potential for Persian subversion of the smaller Gulf states, and also of possible Iranian efforts to stimulate unrest among the Shi'ites of Saudi Arabia's eastern province. The area around Hufuf in Saudi Arabia is predominantly Shi'ite (that happens to be where the oil is, and it is therefore of great strategic importance), but restive under a culture that is predominantly Sunni and a political leadership that is Nejdi, from the central part of the kingdom.

With Iraq, relations were superficially good.

With Jordan, relations were clearly deteriorating. King Hussein chafed under his dependence on the House of Saud. After all, the House of Saud had pitched out his grandfather from the Hejaz. The fact that, in the southern part of Jordan, the Bedouin tribes felt, if anything, more allegiance to the House of Saud than they did to the House of Hashem, I think, also disturbed him. But mainly there were signs, as 1990 proceeded, that King Hussein's tolerance for his role as a mendicant in the Arab world, and particularly one dependent on Saudi largess, was coming to an end.

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The specific issue that aggravated relations during this point was the nonpayment by Jordan of several bills to Saudi Arabia, one of them well known, and that was the bill for the Tapline's delivery of oil to Jordan.

Q: Trans-Arabian...

FREEMAN: Trans-Arabia Peninsula pipeline. But the Tapline that ran from Saudi Arabia's eastern province up into Jordan essentially was turned off when Jordan became very much in arrears in paying for the oil. And this dispute festered.

A more serious and less well-known dispute concerned Saudi subsidies for the American foreign military sales program. The Saudis paid for a good deal of the U.S. military training in North Yemen, and they also paid for a great deal of the U.S. program in Jordan. On one occasion, King Hussein and the United States came to Saudi Arabia with a request for a couple of hundred million dollars (it might have been \$250 million), to support Jordanian purchases of American equipment and related training and so forth. And the Saudis gave King Hussein a check for that amount. But he never paid the United States; he simply pocketed the money. Then the United States began to try to collect from Saudi Arabia. This naturally rather annoyed the Saudis, since they had already paid. And this, I think, was a bone of contention.

At any rate, as 1990 proceeded, King Hussein, in a dramatic gesture, went to Mecca and embraced King Fahd, in precisely the manner that his grandfather Abdullah had embraced Abd al-Aziz, the founder of the current Saudi dynasty.

To understand this, you have to understand the role of the iqal, the black band that holds down the head cloth on many desert Arabs.

Q: It's basically a hobble for camels, isn't it, which is wrapped around the...

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FREEMAN: That's, I think, its origin, but its significance, symbolically, is great. Very religious Saudis don't wear iqals, because they regard them as an adornment and therefore contrary to Islam. But most Saudis do. The iqal symbolizes the honor of the man who wears it.

The story goes that, early in his reign, Abdullah had come to Mecca to meet Abd al-Aziz, and pledged his fealty to Abd al-Aziz, and buried the animosity that had previously existed, because he knew he would be dependent on Abd al-Aziz. Abd al-Aziz took off his iqal and put it over Abdullah al-Hashemi, in a gesture of welcoming him into this relationship. And Abd al-Aziz declared that the House of Saud would always be respectful, supportive, and loyal to the House of Hashem.

So these pledges were renewed in the summer of 1990, which accounts in part for the very sharp reaction of King Fahd and others when Jordan in fact sided with Iraq during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and threat to Saudi Arabia.

Yemen, at that point, was also a problem for the Saudis, as always. 'Ali 'Abd Allah Salih, the president of Yemen, had begun a process of democratic reform in Yemen. But that was not the issue. The issue was unsettled borders and 'Ali 'Abd Allah Salih's flirtations with foreign powers, especially Iraq. On the eve of the Gulf War, it was said that Saddam gave 'Ali 'Abd Allah Salih a check for \$50 million, in order to ensure Yemeni neutrality, at a minimum.

There were also suspicions (and now I leap ahead to after August 2) that Jordan had been promised the Hejaz back, and Yemen had been promised the Saudi southern provinces, which it had lost in a war in the 1930s to Abd al-Aziz. Actually, forces led by Prince, later King, Faysal spearheaded that war. At any rate, in addition to this, of course, at that point, there was still a Communist regime in South Yemen. Yemen was moving toward unity. And the Saudis don't like the prospect, particularly, of a strong, united Yemen on their

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southern border. So this was a troubling situation, and it was one that was getting virtually no attention from the United States.

Q: On these relationships, did you, as the ambassador, either on instructions from Washington or on your own initiative, take any aggressive role? Or was this pretty much the Saudis dealing with what was happening?

FREEMAN: No, there were no instructions from Washington on any of this. Nor was there any effort by Washington when, in the winter/spring of 1990, relations between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait deteriorated, in part for the same reason that Iraqi/Kuwaiti relations deteriorated; namely, Kuwait was blatantly cheating on its OPEC quota, to the detriment of larger producers like Saudi Arabia and Iraq, but in part because of some rather egregious Kuwaiti pokes at Saudi Arabia during a soccer match. Sports are often an instrument not of friendship, but of hostility. So, when Saddam began to threaten, in the spring of 1990, to take action against Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates for cheating on their oil quotas, he had a measure of sympathy in Saudi Arabia. The Saudis, however, never imagined that he would take the sort of military action that he did.

By the early summer of 1990, the U.S. Navy had, as I mentioned, its plans to withdraw from the Gulf reversed by Colin Powell.

Q: Who was chairman of the joint chiefs of staff.

FREEMAN: The United Arab Emirates, in July of 1990, asked the United States for a show of force in the form of a joint exercise, which was called Ivory Justice and involved the deployment of a squadron of U.S. aircraft to the United Arab Emirates.

The reaction of all of the other Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, was that this was an unnecessarily provocative act to Iraq, that Iraq had no intention of using force against either Kuwait or the United Arab Emirates, and it was generally disapproving of this action, which, in fact, was prescient by Sheikh Zayid in Abu Dhabi, because, when the invasion

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of Kuwait occurred on the 2nd of August, the only state in the Gulf that was militarily in a state of readiness and alert was the Emirates. There was a measure of complacency in Saudi Arabia about Iraqi intentions.

Now, in retrospect, we could see that, on July 20, 1990, Iraq conducted a simulated invasion of Kuwait in central Iraq, which it then carried out two weeks later. But, at the time, this appeared to be more military posturing and regular military training than anything terribly unusual.

As July went on, I was due for home leave. On July 28, I convened a meeting of the country team to poll them as to whether I should cancel my home leave. With only one exception, the deputy chief of mission, Dave Dunford, those present expressed considerable confidence, including the intelligence agency representatives, that the worst that could happen between Iraq and Kuwait would be some sort of tussle over the Rumaila oil fields, which straddle the border, which Iraq conceivably might take and hold for ransom in order to obtain Kuwaiti forgiveness of debts, which the Kuwaitis were very unwisely insisting on collecting from an essentially bankrupt Iraq. No one, including the DCM, anticipated anything beyond that. It was left that there really wasn't any reason why I shouldn't go on home leave. If something happened, I could come back. But the expectation was that if something happened, it would essentially be a limited conflict between Iraq and Kuwait, without grievous implications for Saudi Arabia.

So I took off. I arrived in Washington on July 31, hopped in my car, and went to my house in Washington, where my daughter was living. I took a shower and a nap, and then got in the car and drove to Rhode Island, overnight. I arrived there on August 1, about nine-thirty in the morning.

On August 2, being very jet-lagged and confused about where I was physically, I awoke about four in the morning and went out and turned on the BBC, on the shortwave radio that I normally carry with me, and heard, to my astonishment, that Iraq had invaded

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Kuwait. I waited for the sun to rise, and when things had opened up in Washington, I called David Mack, who was the deputy assistant secretary in the bureau of Near Eastern affairs, who was responsible for the Gulf, and asked him whether this was something with really broad implications, and whether I should plan to return to Saudi Arabia, and was told, no, it didn't look that way, it looked like a very limited action, and that I should feel free to continue with my home leave for the time being, and that maybe I would have to curtail it, but I didn't have to turn right around.

The same essential message was given on the 3rd of August, when I called again.

On the morning of the 4th, which was a Saturday, I called again and was told, well, you probably ought to come down the beginning of the week to see the president, and then plan to go back to Saudi Arabia. I had planned a family reunion for the 5th, Sunday, and there were a large number of people planning to turn up. Saturday afternoon, however, I received a call saying, no, no, this is something very serious, it looks like Saudi Arabia is at risk, and you'd better come back tonight for meetings at the NSC. So I managed to get myself on a plane, and I got down to National Airport. I was paged and told that the meetings were off, and that I should come at eight o'clock the following morning, Sunday, to the Ops. Center, which I did.

I found, on the morning of Sunday the 5th, a great atmosphere of confusion surrounding what was happening. I was able to ascertain that somebody was probably going to Jeddah, which is where the king was at that season, around noon. The signals kept changing. First, it was Bob Gates, the deputy national security advisor, who was to go. Then it was Brent Scowcroft, the national security advisor. Then it was Dick Cheney, the secretary of defense. Then it was General Norman Schwarzkopf, the commander in chief of the central command. When I got out to Andrews, I found Norm Schwarzkopf there, and he told me that it would be Bob Gates who was going. There was a plane standing by; I put my luggage on it. Fifteen minutes later, a call came saying, no, that wasn't going to happen. I took my luggage off. And I said to Norm, "Look, I think I'd better go down to

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MacDill Air Force Base in Florida and go over there with you,” because he was planning to go. Then a call came that Dick Cheney, who had earlier been supposed to go and had been canceled, was now going. Cheney arrived, we got on the plane, and took off.

Q: Let's go back here now. I can recall, on the 2nd, picking out the headlines of the Washington Post, "Iraq Invades Kuwait," and the word coming in, even right at the very first, was that it really looked pretty awful. Obviously, major American interests were being threatened, the oil, even if it didn't go into this. And yet, from what you're telling me, one of the key people, the ambassador to Saudi Arabia, wasn't being used by the State Department or the National Security Council to say what the hell was going on, what the Saudi reaction was going to be, and this type of thing. Could you look at that?

FREEMAN: I don't personally find anything particularly unusual about that. I'm not an expert on Iraq and was very new in the Arabian Peninsula. Prince Bandar was in Washington and very ably representing King Fahd in intensive discussions with the White House and the State Department.

I think the more unusual thing was that it took until the 4th of August, when two Iraqi Republican Guard divisions were spotted, in a pattern typical of resupply for further advance, on the Kuwaiti-Saudi border, and several Iraqi reconnaissance patrols appeared fifteen to twenty kilometers deep into Saudi territory, for the wider implications of this to really sink home.

There was a further complication. When the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait occurred, President Bush was out West with Margaret Thatcher.

Q: Prime minister of England, and a very tough lady.

FREEMAN: Yes, exactly. And she worked him over pretty hard in terms of the need for a stiff response.

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But, going back a little bit, remember, please, that U.S. relations with Kuwait, notwithstanding Operation Earnest Will, which had escorted Kuwaiti tankers through the Gulf during the Iran-Iraq war, were not cordial. The Kuwaitis were not asking for help. As I understand it, only a couple of hours before the actual invasion, Nat Howell, the U.S. ambassador to Kuwait, asked the Kuwaitis whether they wanted us to do anything, and was told no.

In fact, at that very moment, an Iraqi sports team, which was not really a sports team, but a group of air traffic controllers, was guiding Iraqi helicopter gunships into Kuwait City, and guiding the initial assault.

Furthermore, Kuwait's relations with Saudi Arabia, as I indicated, were not good, nor were they good really with other members of the Gulf.

The U.S. had no defense commitment to Kuwait implicitly, and certainly not explicitly. So I think the initial reaction was to treat this as a classic case of a quarrel in which the United States was not directly involved, where perhaps Iraq was intending to, as I said earlier, in effect, conduct a bank robbery, or at least a hostage-taking, and then bargain with Kuwait for financial advantage.

When, however, the Iraqi forces began visibly to prepare for further advance into Saudi Arabia, I think people remembered that the United Arab Emirates had been as much a target of Iraqi ire as Kuwait had been. And there began to be real alarm about the implications either of an Iraqi advance into Saudi Arabia or of an Iraqi position on the Saudi border, which would put it in a position to intimidate Saudi Arabia and perhaps dictate some measure of policy to Saudi Arabia.

Q: I might point out at this time that Iraq had by far the most battle-experienced and largest army in the whole area.

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FREEMAN: Iraq had just finished its eight-year war with Iran. It had 1.2 million men under arms; actually more men in the Iraqi armed forces than there were Saudis of military age, which was one of the reasons that Saudi Arabia felt it required assistance.

But, in any event, I was simply not a participant in whatever confused discussions were going on in Washington. And confused they were, as the last-minute pulling and hauling over who would go to see King Fahd illustrated.

Q: Actually, Secretary Baker was not in town, either, as I recall.

FREEMAN: Secretary Baker was in Mongolia, and broke short a visit, which I believe in fact was a private hunting trip, but described as something else, to return to Washington.

In any event, I didn't consider it particularly unusual not to be in that group.

In fact, as we proceeded on the aircraft toward Jeddah, I really found it very difficult to figure out what the Saudi reaction to all this was likely to be.

King Fahd later confirmed to me that my judgment of his leadership style was correct. He said that in fifty years of public life, he had never once made a decision outside the consensus of the royal family and the Council of Ministers. In fact, the Saudi monarchy is not a Western-style monarchy. The king, in some respects, is a powerful presider over a consensus. Typically, King Fahd takes an agonizingly long time to come to a conclusion about what must be done. Therefore, I was frankly astonished not only by the decisiveness that President Bush displayed with regard to Saudi Arabia, but also by the decisiveness of King Fahd.

The meeting with King Fahd, Secretary Cheney, General Schwarzkopf, and others, in Jeddah, has, I think, been misportrayed in the press and in much of the writing about the Gulf War. Much of the writing about the Gulf War, I might say, is really writing about

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Washington and the Gulf War, and tends to overlook the fact that the Gulf War took place somewhere outside the Beltway.

Q: Before we get to that meeting. You were on this plane, flying out with Norman Schwarzkopf and Dick Cheney. What were you all talking about as you went? What was the mission to do, as they saw it, as you flew?

FREEMAN: The mission was essentially to describe the threat to King Fahd and to ascertain whether he wished assistance or not. To offer assistance, but not to cajole him into it.

I believe that in fact there was a great deal of effort made by Prince Bandar, who occupied a pivotal position and who had...

Q: Whose position was what?

FREEMAN: He was ambassador to the United States. Almost a foster son, in many respects, of King Fahd, very close to the king. A man of great ability and energy, with unparalleled access in both capitals. Bandar had, himself, flown back, just ahead of Cheney, to Riyadh, to prepare the king for whoever it was that turned up, and clearly anticipated and wished to see a decisive American intervention.

But no one knew whether that would happen. So a great deal of the discussion was: "What will the king decide?" and "How should we present the intelligence material to him?"

Accompanying the group was a CIA briefer, with a great package of what is called PHOTINT, meaning overhead satellite photography, of Iraqi dispositions in southern Kuwait and along the Saudi border.

Q: It's ideal country to find out who is getting ready for what, isn't it?

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FREEMAN: Exactly. It's open, with clear skies at that season of the year. We asked this briefer to run through his briefing, and it was a very good briefing, but it was very much in the peculiar style of such briefings in Washington, with: "On the one hand..." "On the other hand..." "We don't know." "Probably." "Probability of seventy percent this," and blabitty blah. It was my judgment, and I expressed it, that if King Fahd were given this sort of briefing, not being familiar with that particular style, it would simply confuse him. And I suggested that the briefer come to the meeting, but that, in effect, General Schwarzkopf provide his military judgments, rather than a normal intelligence briefing. And that is what happened.

The king really, as it turned out, had only two questions.

One was, "Is the threat to Saudi Arabia as grave as I believe it to be?" When the king, with General Schwarzkopf on bended knee in front of him, and the crown prince looking over the king's shoulder, and the foreign minister looking on, with the deputy defense minister, Prince Abd al-Rakman, and the chief of staff, General Hamad, saw these photographs, particularly those which showed Iraqi patrols inside Saudi territory, he saw his judgment confirmed. So that answered his first question, is there a serious threat. The second question, which he put rather bluntly to us, was, "What are you prepared to do about it?" And he said, "Frankly, if your reaction is the sort of thing I had from Jimmy Carter when I was threatened by Iran..." (in which the United States persuaded Saudi Arabia to accept the deployment of a squadron of F-15s, and then, when they were in the air en route to Saudi Arabia, announced that they were unarmed). The king said that if this was the sort of thing we had in mind, we needn't have any further discussion.

Norm Schwarzkopf then briefed the king on the plan that became known later as Desert Shield. At that point, it had no name. And when the king saw that the American response involved the deployment of 220,000 people in our armed forces to Saudi Arabia, he said, "That is a serious response, and I accept."

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Q: Now he was talking about a decision that had been made in Washington that, if requested by the Saudis, we would do it.

FREEMAN: That's correct. And it was clear that the king did want this deployment.

At this point, there was a nice reminder of the normal Saudi decision-making style. As I mentioned before, normally, in Saudi Arabia, decisions are made after lengthy discussion and the formation of consensus among the ruling group. The crown prince interrupted in Arabic (and my Arabic by that time was good enough to understand all of this), in an aside with the king, and said, "Don't you think we ought to take some more time to consider this before we make this decision and convey the request to Washington?"

And the king said, "No, we don't have any time. We have to make the decision now, or what happened to Kuwait will happen to us. There is no more Kuwait."it."

The crown prince said, "Yes, there is still a Kuwait."

And the king said, "And its territory consists solely of hotel rooms in London, Cairo, and elsewhere."

The crown prince said, "I agree with you."

And then the king went around the room, polling his other advisors present, the deputy defense minister, Prince Abd al-Rakman; Prince Saud, the foreign minister; and the chief of staff, who saluted and said, "At your orders, your majesty." And that was the decision.

So it is often made out that the United States went there determined to persuade the king to accept forces. That is not correct. The king did not require persuasion, and proved to be exceptionally decisive. He later said to me that this was in fact the only time in his many decades of public life that he had ever made a decision on his own, without waiting for

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consensus. And he said he felt qualified, by experience and by his understanding of the circumstances.

Secretary Cheney asked the king whether he could communicate to the president that there was a request. When he did so, the president ordered the 82nd Airborne to deploy to Saudi Arabia, as well as Air Force units and the like. And the first phase of what became known as Desert Shield was set in motion.

That, however, I must say, left many, many questions to be resolved. For one thing, as the 82nd Airborne rightly put it, they were, in effect, speed bumps, not an obstacle to Saddam's further advance. The 82nd Airborne is a very competent, light-infantry paratrooper unit, and it would not have been able to stop the heavy Iraqi forces had they chosen to advance. They were essentially joined initially only by the Saudi Arabian National Guard, another light, very mobile force. And it took quite awhile for the Saudi Arabian land forces to deploy. We had very little air power beyond that provided by the Royal Saudi Air Force. So, for the first four or five weeks, perhaps, into September, we lived in a situation in which it was clear that if Iraq wished to prosecute its attack, we could not stop it. It was not until the middle of September that the military began to feel confident that they could hold Iraq some hundreds of kilometers inside Saudi territory, and in time press a counterattack. And it was not until early October, when the deployment was complete, that they were confident they could hold Iraq near the border.

The purpose of the deployment was wholly defensive. The mandate that we had from the United Nations, to which the U.S. government promptly applied for approval of this action, was to defend Saudi Arabia and to mount pressure on Iraq with regard to withdrawing from Kuwait. That involved an enormous deployment of naval forces, which began to board ships and divert them if they were carrying cargo destined for Iraq. This, in turn, led to endless complaints, primarily from Jordan, which was a primary transshipment point, through Aqaba, for Iraq.

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I discovered only later that there was still an Iraqi detachment of about 1,200 men sitting up in the northern part of the Red Sea, near the Gulf of Aqaba, which had been managing Saudi-financed military supplies to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War. They were interned and returned by the Saudis to the Iraqis.

But the early days were tense. And they were made even more tense, to jump ahead a little bit, when an incident, which turned out to be totally unrelated to the war, occurred. An American woman and her children somehow found themselves in the middle of a gun battle between the Saudi police and a Saudi drug trafficker, who commandeered the car. A wild chase then ensued, with bullets flying everywhere, and the woman and a couple of her kids were killed.

This was a memorable incident, for many reasons. Among others, I felt obliged, as ambassador, to ensure that rumor control in the American community was promptly instituted. We set up a command post that provided news to the warden system, which is part of any embassy's normal evacuation plan. And I spent hours on the phone with senior members of the royal family. It was quite clear that police bullets, rather than those from the criminal, had killed the woman and her children.

The husband, who had gone inside a supermarket to go shopping while his wife and children waited in the car, was a devout Mormon, a man of great spiritual strength. I took him, the following morning, to see Prince Salman, the governor of Riyadh, a very emotional meeting. I didn't know what this man would say. Much to my astonishment, he said to Prince Salman that he and his wife had come to Saudi Arabia to find an environment that was drug- and crime-free. That Saudi Arabia had been good to them. That he recognized this was a most unusual incident. That he bore Saudi Arabia no ill will. And that he would treasure the memory of his days with his wife in Riyadh. Prince Salman, for his part, was most gracious and apologetic. And the incident passed.

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But, in the conditions of tension where invasion was a real possibility, keeping the American community from misunderstanding this incident was quite a task.

I should go back and say that the decision to make a huge deployment of U.S. forces to Saudi Arabia (220,000 men and women, initially) was obviously problematic on many scores.

Before Norm Schwarzkopf left for MacDill Air Force Base, leaving Lieutenant General Chuck Horner, the commander of the Central Air Forces, behind as his forward command element in Riyadh, Norm and I had a long chat, in which I basically made two points to him.

First was that my own readings of military history suggested that, unlike the British, who had become accustomed to operating with and among foreign forces of very different mentality, the U.S. had not really developed in the armed forces what I would call an adequate military-political function. And that liaison with Saudi forces and with local Saudi emirs, meaning governors and potentates, would be a major task. That this was an opportunity for Norm to develop a system that would be a model for future operations.

Second was that, given the nature of Saudi society, we could anticipate a huge amount of friction between American forces and Saudi forces unless certain things were made clear. Specifically, that there could be no use of alcohol. There could be no USO shows involving scantily clad women. And there would have to be some program of orientation and indoctrination for U.S. forces, so that they understood the nature of the society they had been thrust into.

All of this discussion, which Norm, having grown up partly in Iran, understood very well, I think paralleled his own thinking, and resulted in General Order #1, which was a godsend, because it banned liquor, it required all forces to have a one-week indoctrination in Islam and Saudi society, and it recognized the need for extreme discretion in the practice of

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religions other than Islam in Saudi Arabia. This, together with the exceptional discipline and remarkably high quality of the U.S. armed forces as they then existed, kept frictions to a minimum.

But, in parallel with this, the embassy and the consulates, most particularly Ken Stammerman, the consul general in Dhahran, established an extremely effective liaison process with the U.S. military and the local Saudi authorities, such that when incidents began to occur, they were either nipped in the bud or resolved or, if not resolved, at least kept out of the newspapers, and therefore didn't have a snowballing effect. As time went on, the civil-affairs people in the military got awfully good at working with American consular officers on this. And the American consular officers got awfully good at working with local Saudi authorities. I think probably this element of the Gulf War experience, the fact that the relationship between the embassy and the consulates and the military was so close and cooperative, and that the two were able so effectively to manage the frictions between the Saudis and the U.S. military, is one of the great achievements.

It parallels one other, of which I'm personally very proud. Norm Schwarzkopf and I are the only war-fighting commander in chief and ambassador who have ever been co-located forward in a war zone. Historically, ambassadors and CINCs (commanders in chief) have had a very rocky relationship. Norm and I had an exceedingly cooperative relationship, with a great deal of mutual assistance provided. He kept me adequately informed of military plans; I kept him adequately informed of what was going on, on the political side. I supported him, and he supported me. I think it would be worth going on at some length, when time permits, about that relationship and how it was managed and why it worked, because both of us have strong personalities. Norm, in particular, unlike me, has a notorious temper and a leadership style that was very dictatorial, peremptory, and demanding. While he kept most of his subordinates in a state of fear and trepidation, the relationship that he enjoyed with me was cordial and cooperative.

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These two things, that is, the good connection between the ambassador and the CINC, and the excellent connections between people on the ground managing the day-to-day frictions from this large U.S. presence, played a vital role in enabling us to build up in Saudi Arabia and ultimately to liberate Kuwait.

Q: What about the problem of Americans leaving Dhahran, particularly, since the oil fields could be a critical problem, as well as elsewhere? The embassy plays a major role in this. How did this play out?

FREEMAN: The American community was desperately afraid of the use of chemical weapons. I was far more concerned about biological weapons being employed. Early in August, around August 10, the embassy sent the first of twenty-seven telegrams to the Department of State, asking for support in the form of materials and guidelines for briefings of the American community that would enable us to cope with this problem. We pointed out then, and in all of the succeeding communications, that we were trying to walk a fine line between keeping essential civilian personnel at work in the kingdom and avoiding the deaths of American citizens.

The point being this (I'm really leaping ahead a bit and melding Desert Shield and Desert Storm in this regard), Saudi Aramco included a vast number of expatriate personnel, some of them key ones, being Americans, but many of other nationalities. The defense contractors who supported the Saudi armed forces and the U.S. military were staffed largely by Americans or by British subjects, with other nationalities in a subordinate role. Altogether, at this time, there were fewer than 30,000 Americans in the kingdom, with the largest community in the eastern province, which was the target of Saddam's possible attack. If those Americans had left in a panic, there would have been no oil with which to fuel aircraft or tanks or to keep ships at sea. There would have been no defense contractors to maintain those weapons systems. And we would have ended up fighting to defend the two holy mosques, rather than the world's oil supplies, and doing it under gravely disadvantageous circumstances. Moreover, other communities regarded the

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Americans as likely the best informed, and an American departure would have set off a stampede of everybody, down to and including the Filipino bottle washers for the Saudi military and the Bangladeshi street sweepers. Saudi Arabia's dependence on expat labor therefore rested on the behavior of the American community. So we did not want the American presence to attrit; we wanted the essential personnel to remain.

However, as you might guess from the figure of twenty-seven cables, the Department of State and the interagency process in Washington proved utterly unable to come to grips with this matter. We first got instructions not to worry. Then we got instructions not to brief the American community. Then we got instructions, in response to our request for chemical gear that we could distribute to the American community, not to press that.

Q: You're talking about chemical suits and things like this.

FREEMAN: Gas masks, ponchos, that sort of thing. We were enjoined from briefing the American community at all. In the absence of briefings, panic began to rise. So I just violated our instructions, and we provided over a hundred briefings to the American community.

The idiocy did not stop with this. In December 1990, the Department of State Human Rights Bureau vetoed a sale of chemical gear to the Ministry of Interior in Saudi Arabia, which would have been distributed to the foreign community, including the Americans, gratis, on the grounds that the Ministry of Interior controlled the police, and the police in Saudi Arabia are violators of human rights. It proved impossible to overturn this decision.

I attempted, in December, when the majority of American families leave Saudi Arabia with their children for Christmas vacations (since Christmas is not congenially celebrated in the kingdom), to issue a voluntary-departure notice before school let out, so that the families would be able to stay abroad (I knew the date and time of the attack, by then; Washington didn't, apparently, except for a few people), and I was vetoed. So these

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families returned to Dhahran, and in January, just after their return, the voluntary departure was then approved.

An issue arose about Riyadh. I favored a voluntary departure. Washington suddenly was thinking about a directed departure (meaning involuntary). We were never able to resolve this, and it was the subject of a number of very fiery communications from me, some back-channel, which are frankly obscene and which I will not quote. One, front-channel, I sent after the missile threat to Riyadh began to eventuate, when I got an instruction from Washington to distribute gas masks and chemical gear to the American community, which, of course, I didn't have, because Washington had declined to provide them. At that point, I sent a telegram that began, as I recall, "If I were to ask my staff whether to continue the search for intelligent life in Washington, they would all advise against it," and went on from there.

This subject, of managing the American community in the face of indifference and efforts at micromanagement... At one point, I learned that Washington was about to make a decision on directed departure from Riyadh. I informed the Department, back-channel, that if they did that, I intended to go to Dhahran and resign in front of 1,600 American newspeople, since I felt I was responsible and accountable, and I needed to be consulted. So this was a major issue for me and for the Americans in kingdom.

It was aggravated by the issue of biological warfare, which the American community had not focused on, but which the military were very focused on and which I was very focused on. I have reason to believe that in fact Saddam Hussein did make one attempt to employ biological weapons against Riyadh. But, in any event, there were insufficient anthrax inoculations available, and it was decided to inoculate the military, but not the American ambassador, the embassy, or the American civilian population, still less the Allied and coalition forces that were alongside us. So we had a situation in which the civilian population and industrial base, which supposedly the U.S. troops were protecting, was left unprotected, while the troops, quite properly, were given inoculations.

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Finally, in the middle of all this, I would say the intelligence community, from my perspective, behaved in an unfortunately quite typical pattern. That is, as the war began, in August of 1990, the judgment of the intelligence community was that Iraq did not have chemical warheads for its Scuds or, still less, the longer-range variance of these, which it had manufactured, the al-Hussein and al-Abbas missiles. There was no change in the evidence, but as we began to get closer to conflict, the intelligence community began to cover its bets by steadily escalating, until, on the eve of the war, the intelligence community was asserting that Iraq definitely did have chemical warheads. There was some dispute about whether Iraqi missiles could reach Riyadh or not. As it turned out, of course, they not only could, but did.

I objected to all this, and after the war, I received an apology from Judge Webster, the director of Central Intelligence. I was right, and he was wrong. Iraq never did successfully mount chemical warheads on missiles, although it certainly stockpiled a vast quantity of artillery shells and other shorter-range munitions with chemicals, for use against an infantry and armor attack.

Q: When you say "Washington made these decisions," obviously there was a lot of to-ing and fro-ing, but it wasn't as though there was this big amorphous Washington and you were sitting there and had no idea where things were coming from. I assume that you were getting knowledge of where the micromanagement and the indecisions were coming from. Did you get a feel for what the problem was?

FREEMAN: You're quite correct, "Washington" is a convenient way of avoiding having to name names.

Q: Just name names.

FREEMAN: I don't want to get too much into naming names.

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There were several problems. The Deputies Committee, which, in the opinion of all who participated in it in Washington, worked splendidly, was, in effect, a device for micromanagement.

Brent Scowcroft took a particularly active and unhelpful role in the issue of evacuations. All the rest of the Middle East, North Africa, and Muslim countries had directed departure. We ended up as the only place that didn't. And the reason was that he was concerned about exactly what I was concerned about; namely, that if the Americans bolted, everything would fall apart. But rather than trusting me to manage that, they attempted to do so by remote control. Ivan Selin, the under secretary for management at the department of state, who was the subject of much of my ire, was frankly in a very, very difficult position, given Scowcroft's assumption of authority over this matter. Now this was most unusual. The responsibility for the protection of American citizens runs from the ambassador through the secretary of state, not the national security advisor. But, anyway, that's Washington.

There were other issues, I might say, and perhaps when we return to this topic, we could talk about them: the nature of deployment orders; the question of who would pay for what; the issue of religious observances at Hanukkah and Christmas; the question of the extent to which military and political policy in Washington were being effectively coordinated, as I observed it from my distance; and the issue of the avalanche of bright lights and dim bulbs that descended on Saudi Arabia.

Q: For someone who's reading this in the 25th century, you're talking about not very bright people.

FREEMAN: A lot of people who wanted to have their photograph taken with troops in the field; 2,010 of them, to be exact, over the course of the run-up to the actual fighting in the Gulf War.

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Q: You arrived back there on the 5th of August. In what state did you find the embassy and the consulates? How did you employ the embassy at this particular time?

FREEMAN: I was very fortunate in having an exceptionally competent and seasoned deputy chief of mission, David Dunford.

Q: Is he still...

FREEMAN: He's now retired and living in Tucson, Arizona. He had served as charg# for two extended periods, one between the expulsion of Ambassador Hume Horan and another between Walt Cutler's second coming and his departure and my arrival. So Dave was very, very competent and familiar with the local scene, and had done all the right things in terms of activating the liaison with the American community, setting up a command center in the embassy, putting the embassy on alert, establishing immediate liaison with the U.S. military as they arrived.

The first few days after the deployment decision, I was stuck in Jeddah, because of the need to reach an agreement with the Saudis on, in effect, a status-of-forces agreement. The deployment of this number of foreign forces to Saudi Arabia was unprecedented. At the king's direction, with my help, ultimately the agreement was actually reached in Washington. It was agreed that all 220,000 and any others who might be deployed (ultimately there were 550,000) would be assigned as technical staff of the embassy. So, in a technical sense, I certainly commanded the largest embassy in history, since it numbered something over half a million people at its peak. But I was stuck in Jeddah, trying to convey to Washington, without enormous success, the sense of urgency that the Saudis felt about resolving these issues.

And then, even before I could really get settled again in Riyadh, I had to go to Dhahran with John Kelly, the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, to call on a very shaken emir of Kuwait. The emir, in the initial stages, was housed at the Gulf Palace,

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which is a guesthouse that the king maintains in the eastern province. Later, he relocated to Taif. There were questions about liaison with the Kuwaitis. In the initial period, either I or Phil Griffin, the consul general in Jeddah, who's now retired also and lives in the Washington area, handled this liaison. I very quickly decided that I wanted Phil to handle it, because he had served in Kuwait and knew it better than I, and because Taif, where the Kuwaiti emir eventually lodged, was in the Jeddah consular district, and finally because, frankly, I had so much to do with the Saudis that I didn't have time to give the Kuwaitis the attention they deserved. This later became very awkward, when, really at my urging and at the urging of the individual concerned, Skip Gnehm, the ambassador-designate to Kuwait, was accredited to Taif. Initially, my thought was that Phil Griffin might serve, in effect, as his DCM, double-hatted, as consul general in Jeddah and DCM for Kuwait, because of the requirement for on-going liaison. But Skip didn't find this arrangement attractive. He was very concerned about turf and who would control what. And so, by the latter part of the war, Phil Griffin had dropped out of that role.

When I arrived in Riyadh, of course, the major concern providing a context for the supposed incident of terrorism (actual incident of innocent death in a police firefight, to which I referred earlier) - the principal concern was, of course, to establish security for the embassy and for the American community. To ensure that we had effective, rapid liaison with the Saudi authorities, I was able to get secure telephones installed between the embassy and the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Defense and the king's private secretary, so that I could communicate on a timely basis. Then, of course, as time went on, liaison with CENTCOM and adequate arrangements to keep informed of what was happening and to make sure that they were informed of our views became the principal issue.

Very soon, however (and this should be the subject of the next conversation, as I indicated), we got into visitor overload. The first visitor, who was instructed not to come, was Senator Lautenberg. Steve Solarz, of course, turned up, as he did everywhere. I

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found myself bouncing around in the kingdom, taking visitors in to see the king and the military and various other people.

Fortunately, quite early on, Norm Schwarzkopf agreed to simply make a jet plane available to me on a twenty-four-hour basis. That was a godsend. I think I went to Jeddah fifty-two times, over the course of the war, on that aircraft. I remember there was one twenty-four-hour period when, because of congressional and other delegations, primarily, as well as work, I was in Jeddah three times, Dhahran three times, and Riyadh twice, all within twenty-four hours. These are a thousand miles apart. This again was a nice instance of Schwarzkopf and Freeman cooperating informally. My colleague in Turkey, Mort Abramowitz, was never able to get support from the military, because he approached it in a formal manner. I simply said to Norm, "Look, a lot of what I'm doing is work for you. If you can fly a sergeant around, you can fly me, I think." And so he never billed the Department of State or whatever. When Abramowitz made his request, the military asked for a fund site, which, of course, was not forthcoming, because the expense of military aircraft is enormous.

So visitor management became a major obsession very early on. As the war proceeded, I began to make requests, in cooperation with Norm Schwarzkopf, that Washington cease treating Saudi Arabia like a military theme park, with an ambassador and a general as the park rangers, and remember that we had things to do. We had preparations to make and issues to deal with, and were really less able to do so because we were spending all our time meeting VIPs.

Q: What was the reading at the time, as you saw it, why the other shoe didn't drop? Why didn't Iraq come in when they could have? Was it indecisiveness or they didn't have a plan? How did you feel at the time? What were you getting?

FREEMAN: Clearly, they did have a plan. We suspected that at the time, and later became aware that Saddam Hussein in fact had been using the services of a computer company in

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Colorado to do war simulations of an invasion of Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates for the past five years, updating this annually. So, clearly, he had a plan. The disposition of his forces led us to what turned out, once we saw the computer simulations, to be a correct interpretation of his intentions.

As to why he sat in Kuwait, neither advancing nor withdrawing, I think no one knows the answer to that. Certainly, in August 1990, as I said, the way to Riyadh, to Dhahran, and onward to the United Arab Emirates was open to him.

I believe that he was like a house burglar going down a line of townhouses. His intention was to go into the House of Kuwait and take whatever he could. And then he'd poke his head out and see if the police were anywhere around or not. If they weren't, he'd move on to the next house. The sudden arrival of the police left him with a situation where he could neither gracefully withdraw, under apparent pressure, nor could he safely attack. I think it led him to hole up in Kuwait. I find no more elegant explanation for his very obtuse decision-making than that.

Q: A question which has no pertinence to what we're talking about, but it came up by our transcriber saying that you never offered your impression of why Paul Wolfowitz didn't subscribe to the idea of having a meeting with China, North Korea, and the United States. This goes way back, but we can insert it.

FREEMAN: I'm not entirely sure, but I would speculate that there were several reasons.

First of all, Mr. Wolfowitz took a very jaundiced, rather ideological view of China, and I think was inherently suspicious of any initiative that originated with the Chinese.

Second, with regard to contacts with North Korea, I believe that he was apprehensive about the political reaction from the Republican right, which he has courted and from association with which he has benefitted, and that therefore he saw such a development as politically unattractive.

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And I suppose he might also have been concerned about the adequacy of prior consultation with South Korea. On the other hand, he must have been aware, as certainly I was, that South Korea itself was conducting a whole series of maneuvers intended to get the Chinese to put forward just exactly this sort of proposal.

I never really have understood it, but I suspect these are the factors that led him to be more than skeptical, actually out either to brush aside or actively to sabotage the Chinese initiatives.

Q: For the next time, you'd mentioned several things that we should discuss. All this is during the build-up phase. One was the nature of the deployment orders, getting who was going to pay for all this, problems of religious observations by American troops on Saudi soil, and then, probably the most horrendous problem you had, all the U.S. visitors coming.

FREEMAN: I think I've actually dealt with the latter, pretty much.

Q: And then the other one might be also talking about the early part of putting together a coalition, and whatever role you played as we put this coalition together. And this is all what became known as Desert Shield.

FREEMAN: I'd add a couple of other things that we should discuss. That is, the timing of the counterattack on Iraq, the nature of the battle plan, and the coordination problems in Washington that surrounded it. The problem of sustaining Saudi will as many Iraqis died under air attack. And finally, in the aftermath of the war, a whole series of issues related to prisoners of war, refugees, and the like, as well as the financial difficulties that the war placed Saudi Arabia in.

Q: And then, of course, we'll talk about the attack and also the embassy under Scud attack and all that sort of thing.

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Today is the 3rd of September, 1996. Chas, we've talked about the visitors. Did the finances come in early on? This became a major question.

FREEMAN: Who was going to pay for the deployment was an early issue. I think it was recognized, from the outset, that Kuwait should make a substantial contribution, since the issue had to do with Kuwait's annexation by Iraq and our desire to reverse that. But, frankly, there was never any real formula worked out for sharing the costs.

Jim Baker, the secretary of state, who from the outset raised this issue, found the Saudis willing to make substantial contributions. The Kuwaiti government, by about September, was located in the Saudi city of Taif, and he visited there before going to the United Arab Emirates, as I remember, in an effort to obtain financial support for the deployment, which he was successful in doing.

The figures, however, were essentially made up on the back of an envelope. I know that the Saudis felt, from the outset, that the Kuwaitis were doing something less than their fair share.

Of course, the Saudis, during this period, were bearing an enormous burden of expense themselves. As the war went on, that burden mounted continuously, until around January of 1991, as the air attack had begun, it was clear that the Saudis were financially overextended. At least it was clear to me, although it was not at all clear, apparently, to intelligence analysts in Washington, who, frankly, dismissed the warnings of the embassy that this was the case, and substituted their own, as it turned out, erroneous judgment for ours.

The burden of carrying the war fell very heavily on the Saudis. I would guess that they probably spent something on the order of \$65 billion, which, against an economy the size of the State of Georgia of about \$100 billion GNP, is a very, very substantial unanticipated

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charge; rather as though the United States had suddenly had to spend \$4 trillion off budget.

They went into the war with minimal reserves. The windfall from the oil embargo in '73 and the speculative run on oil in 1980 were invested by the Saudis in some of the world's most modern and impressive infrastructure. This infrastructure actually was crucial to our ability to conduct Desert Shield, because the Saudis had, very deliberately on the military side, overbuilt their airfields and ports precisely to facilitate a large movement of U.S. forces in time of emergency.

Q: Had this been a joint plan? In our previous time, you were saying how difficult it was to get the Saudis to make the decision to bring them in, yet here this was being anticipated.

FREEMAN: I think it wasn't really a joint plan, but the Saudis had always anticipated the possibility that a crisis might come on them that would require them to accept American forces. And when, in fact, that crisis occurred, they were prepared logistically.

I remember, ironically, then Major General, later Lieutenant General, Pagonis, who was the chief logistician for CENTCOM, commenting in 1990 that if, God forbid, we ever had to go into some less-developed place (and he cited Somalia as a probable example), we would never get ashore.

At any rate, they had invested their money in infrastructure, including universities and social services and modern highways, ports, airfields, and the like. By August of 1990, I suspect that they had liquid reserves of somewhere between \$3 and \$7 billion, which were essentially exhausted in the first week of the response to Saddam's occupation, because they bore a very wide range of costs.

In addition to payment directly for support — food water, housing and the like — for American forces and other foreign forces, British, French, African, South Asian forces, and other Europeans who ended up on Saudi territory, they bore the entire expense of the

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refugee exodus from Kuwait, both the non-Kuwaitis, for whom they quietly bought airline tickets and sent home, and also the Kuwaitis. I think probably, by the time the Kuwaiti refugees were finished, they had cost the Saudis somewhere around \$3 billion, maybe a bit more. Very generous treatment for the Kuwaitis.

They had their own emergency deployment and mobilization costs. They had emergency re-equipment costs, as they stocked up on ammunition and spare parts. They had to put quite a significant investment into the production of jet fuel for the growing air force presence. In fact, Saudi Arabia ended up as the largest importer of jet fuel in the world. They bought huge amounts of jet fuel from refineries in Singapore and elsewhere, to fuel the allied war effort.

They had, as the war proceeded, direct payments, which they made to the United States and other American allies, but they also wrote off billions of dollars in Egyptian debt. They made cash transfers to both Egypt and Syria. They paid for the transportation and, indeed, the equipment of many of the Third World forces who arrived, essentially in jock straps and flip flops, requiring everything from uniforms to guns to Jeeps to artillery, all of which the Saudis provided, along with salaries and housing and water and food.

An enormous burden was placed on them. I think they were very generous, and did not haggle at all over the requests that the United States made of them during the course of the war. Our bill to the Saudis alone was \$16.9 billion, essentially in direct payments. It was left to me, after the war, to collect that from a Saudi Arabia that was in a state of near bankruptcy.

So the question of who was going to fund things emerged very early on. It was smoothly solved, but it had consequences in terms of a squeeze on Saudi Arabia that probably should have been anticipated better by Washington and mitigated.

Q: Why do you think that the analysts in Washington were coming up with the wrong calculus? Was it that they were trying to make it all seem easy and make it simpler from

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their point of view? Just sort of, well, the Saudis have got a lot of money and that's no problem? And was what you were telling them treated as, well, this is localitis?

FREEMAN: All of that was a factor.

There was simple disbelief at the idea that Saudi Arabia could be cash poor.

There was also, I must say, an inability in Washington to distinguish between the private wealth of the royal family, wealth that belonged to individuals, and wealth that belonged to the government. That is a distinction, of course, that the Saudis sometimes forget. Princes are accused of helping themselves at the public trough when they feel like it, and there's some justification to that. But the fact is that the government is distinct from private individuals, and the government does not control the private fortunes of members of the royal family. The two are not at all interchangeable; that is, the two pockets of money are quite different.

There was a third, and I think more important, factor in the analytical failure in Washington, and that was that the Saudis, I think deliberately, had somewhat cooked the books with the World Bank and the IMF on their reserves. I think they had essentially listed various debts that they were owed (for example, some \$28 billion or so they were owed by Iraq; \$11 billion they were owed by Sudan) as assets. Well, anyone who thought that these assets could ever be collected against was dreaming. So I think that the Saudi financial position was somewhat misstated.

Finally, the Saudis have, like the United States, a social security administration, which has its own funds that it invests, which is really the patrimony of the ordinary Saudi citizen. And these assets somehow got confused with government budget reserves; whereas you couldn't really rape the social security system with impunity, even in Saudi Arabia.

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In any event, there was a very strong tendency, with one analyst in INR at State being particularly vociferous on the subject, to accuse the embassy of misperceiving the problem, and of localitis, if you will.

In the event, the embassy turned out to be all too correct, and the analysts in Washington all too wrong.

Q: We're talking now about the Desert Shield operation. What about the alliances that gathered together? As the ambassador, did you play any role in this?

FREEMAN: A great deal of it was done directly either by the Saudis or in Washington or at the U.N. But, yes, I did play a role, and the embassy did play a role, in holding the coalition together. We were often called upon by members of the coalition to provide ground-troop briefings. Often I had to go to the Saudis to make requests for them to persuade a recalcitrant coalition member to do something that we thought they should do. Sometimes this extended to the Saudis is in effect buying votes in the United Nations, as they did with a series of extensions of foreign assistance to the Soviet Union. Essentially, this secured Soviet cooperation in the Security Council.

The greater role of the embassy, however, was in assistance to CENTCOM, as a sort of front for CENTCOM in managing the politics of the military coalition. We acted, of course, as an important channel of communication between the Saudi government and the U.S. government to concert policy, but I would say the major role there was really played by Prince Bandar, rather than by those of us in Riyadh. So it was an extremely active time on the diplomatic front.

Q: The Syrians arrive, the Egyptians arrive, the French, others are appearing there, and most of these would not have the diplomatic clout that the embassy would have. We, of course, wanted to have as large a coalition as possible. Did you find yourself running

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interference for Syrian problems or Egyptian problems or French problems or anything like that?

FREEMAN: Actually, the main problem with the Egyptians and Syrians really was that they didn't arrive. It turned out that neither of them had the lift to get there or the money to pay to get there. So there was quite a long delay while I helped worked out arrangements for the Saudis to provide sealift. I worked very closely with CENTCOM on that, and we did eventually get them there.

As far as running interference for the Syrians is concerned, the answer is no, I didn't. The Syrians were very standoffish. I thought our cause was best served by allowing them to work directly with the Saudis, and I didn't try to get in the middle.

The Egyptians, of course, have a very fine diplomatic service, and they had an excellent ambassador in Riyadh with whom I worked quite closely.

The French were initially quite standoffish. At the last minute, having at first decided to put themselves under Saudi command, they defected and came under American command. But I had little to do with them except to trade diplomatic information not related to their deployment.

There was a great deal of effort made by the United States to broaden the coalition by including representatives from different countries, and I found myself going to the Saudis and persuading the Saudis to pay for the recruitment of different contingents from around the world.

By the end of the war, I found myself working closely with the Swedes, who made the first overseas deployment, I think probably since Charles V, in the form of a medical support unit that they deployed to Riyadh. This was really an important development, because it marked Sweden's first major step in the abandonment of its neutrality policy, and the

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decision to integrate with the Western alliance in the post-Cold-War era. The Swedes had a very able ambassador, also, and he and I worked very closely together.

Others who contributed even when they were not a major presence on the ground — the Australians, the New Zealanders, again very close contact, and, of course, the Canadians. So it was a very, very active time.

Of course, I was not the dean of the diplomatic corps, but it was widely assumed that I was the best informed about what was going on. I found myself holding hands a great deal with the African ambassadors, as a group, reassuring them that they were not about to be obliterated in a nuclear exchange; or talking to the Filipinos, who provided a great deal of the labor supply in the kingdom; to the Bangladeshis, the Indians, and Pakistanis, to try to help them hold their workers in line and prevent panic. In other words, a major dimension of the diplomatic activity in Riyadh during the war was persuading various foreign communities, through their embassies or directly in some cases, that there was every reason to have faith in the ability of the coalition to prevail over Iraq, and that the danger to their nationals was overblown.

Q: When the American troops started to arrive, were you at all involved in putting together a war plan, or figuring out where do we go from here?

FREEMAN: No. Early on, in August, I sent a cable to Washington, in both a short and a long version, which appeared to have had some impact. I argued, essentially, that it was likely that we would end up having to go to war with Iraq, and that if this were the case, we needed to bear in mind the requirement to sustain Iraq's ability after the war to balance Iran, and that therefore our objective vis-à-vis Iraq should be limited.

I may have been the originator of an unfortunate phrase (which got taken out of context and used in a way different than I had intended), “new world order,” because in that same telegram, I argued that this was, in the post-Cold-War context, the precedent of the potentially pivotal nature of the Korean War, and that it might be the defining event in

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the end of the old world order and the birth of a new world order. I meant order not in the sense of tidying up things or imposing something, but order in the sense of a classification of an era. At any rate, that phrase was then seized upon, within a matter of days, by the White House and passed into the folklore, in, of course, quite a different sense than I had intended.

But I was not involved in war planning. I kept myself, deliberately, at some remove from the war-planning conferences, which went on both inside CENTCOM and between Secretary of Defense Cheney and his entourage and General Schwarzkopf, or between General Powell and General Schwarzkopf.

On the other hand, I had a very close, cooperative relationship with General Schwarzkopf, such that he kept me broadly and quite adequately informed of every twist and turn in the planning. So that, by late October, as I argued, again in a series of cables that seem to have had some influence, that we had to make a decision either to increase deployments to the point where we acquired a genuine defensive option against Iraq, or to plan a curtailment of our presence before Ramadan and the heat returned in March and April of 1991, I was already aware of both the nature of the battle plan and the rough timing that General Schwarzkopf had assigned to it.

By December, I was aware of his proposed time and date for the air attack and for the ground attack. The air attack was, I knew at that time, planned for two-forty to three o'clock in the morning on January 17. The reason for that had to do with the phases of the moon, as much as anything else. That is to say that, at that time, the moon would be dim, and the Stealth bombers could be used to maximum effect.

I was also aware of the proposed use of Special Forces to take out radars at that time. And I was aware that the ground attack was planned for February 21. As it happened, it only occurred on the 23rd of February.

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But I found, to my amazement, in January, that Jim Baker was not aware of any of this. And I found it out by participating in a conversation I may have already referred to.

Q: I can't remember. I think you did, but maybe we'd better do this because we don't want to take a chance. And I would like to ask about your relations with James Baker and his entourage during this time, because he was a very touchy individual who didn't like anybody...it seemed...I don't want to put something in the way he operated, but it just appears that he was not somebody who liked to have anybody stand up who took the sun away from him.

FREEMAN: No, I certainly didn't make any effort to get out in front of him. I thought his forcefulness of presentation was very effective. I also found him to be totally focused on Washington and on relations with Congress, to the exclusion of almost everything else. And that, I think, contributed to his unwillingness to take into account the possible long-range financial impact on Saudi Arabia of the demands that we were making on the Saudis.

After the fighting, he was, of course, immediately focused on the Middle East peace process. And there, I'm afraid, also a combination of Washington focus and the Israeli diplomatic style to which he was subject led to expectations of the Saudis that they never could have possibly fulfilled, and very little willingness to listen to the American ambassador in efforts to propose a different approach. I thought it was always the secretary of state's job to formulate policy, but that the ambassador should be of some assistance in developing a way to make that policy effective on the ground in Saudi Arabia. He wasn't always too open to those sorts of suggestions.

Q: How did the Saudis and the rest of you view the debate that went on in Congress over whether we should get involved or not?

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FREEMAN: It was regarded with fear and trepidation, because there seemed to be a possibility that Congress would pull the plug on the president's support of Saudi Arabia and the U.N. effort to compel Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. I think the nature of the debate in the United States, although it reflected the vigor of American democracy, seriously confused the Iraqis and had something to do with Saddam's disastrous miscalculation in failing to withdraw. It also had something to do, I think, with some of the unease that many Saudis felt as we went forward. And I found myself constantly having to reassure them, as Jim Baker did, of the constancy and resolve of the Bush administration.

Q: In my interviews, I've been talking to people who were talking about how they did almost the same thing after the peace accords in Vietnam, in '73, '74, about the constancy and the resolve of the United States in supporting South Vietnam. That, of course...

FREEMAN: Proved to be empty.

Q: Proved to be absolutely empty. There are a lot of people going around today who went down that path one time and said never again. Did that have any effect on you?

FREEMAN: No. I thought, in the end, we would do what we had to do, and that, if necessary, the president would exercise his authority as commander in chief and as chief foreign policy officer for the United States. In the end, of course, the Congress was not asked for a complete endorsement of the president's action, but provided one. Still, the delicacy of this relationship between the Executive Branch and the Congress had a great deal to do with why we were unable to formulate war aims or a war termination strategy, as I've mentioned, because of the concern about leaks and the danger that any clear definition of war objectives would have been picked apart by members of Congress, made public, and then dismantled the coalition.

Q: No doubt about it.

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FREEMAN: So I'm sure the administration had a well-founded fear of clarity.

Q: There was a certain amount of fait accompli, though, wasn't there? I mean you had close to half a million American troops on Saudi soil at a certain point, and to pick them up and go home would have been kind of disastrous.

FREEMAN: Well, no. When the decision for the so-called second deployment, which made possible Desert Storm, the counteroffensive, was made, which was in late October, announced by the president right after the midterm elections in November in the form of the call-up of a significant part of U.S. Reserves, this was the clearest evidence that you could have had that the administration was serious and meant to see this through. And it became virtually unthinkable, I think, that the Congress would pull the plug on that, for the reason you mentioned. Nevertheless, there was a sort of nagging concern throughout, and very confusing to our friends.

There was, I must say, also, as January 1991 approached, repeated evidence of concern in the National Security Council that Jim Baker might reach some sort of compromise diplomatic solution with the Iraqis that would in fact have made the entire deployment, in a sense, moot. And I think there was delight when, at Geneva, in mid-January, just before the U.N. deadline of January 15, the Iraqi foreign minister, Tariq Aziz, in effect, took such an uncompromising position that Baker did not have the opportunity to produce a diplomatic solution and a face-saving way for Iraq to withdraw. By that time, everyone was ready for war and didn't want compromise and temporizing to get in its way.

Q: As we moved to the brink of war, were you getting any information that seemed useful about what was going on in Iraq and what was in the mind of Saddam Hussein?

FREEMAN: There was very little information of that nature coming out. Essentially, the human intelligence resources of the United States on Iraq were extremely limited to nearly nonexistent. We had very little insight into what went on in that regime. That, I must say,

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was the product of very misguided decisions by some of the predecessors to General Schwarzkopf. In fact, General Schwarzkopf himself, in one instance, vetoed an effort to put an agent into Baghdad who might have provided some information, on the grounds that the risks outweighed the possible benefits. In the event, of course, Schwarzkopf was among the most vociferous complainers about the absence of such intelligence. But we didn't have much information about what was going on inside Baghdad.

I felt, pretty much from the beginning, that it was extremely unlikely that sanctions and public castigation would succeed in enforcing Saddam to reverse his course on Kuwait, and that, in effect, a fight was inevitable. That, of course, is what happened. As I've indicated previously, nothing in my reading of history or personal experience has given me much faith in sanctions as a method of coercing foreign governments to do things they regard as fundamentally challenging to their national interests.

Q: I always think back to Jefferson's embargo, which devastated American shipping much more than it hurt the British.

FREEMAN: One can look at more recent examples. Sanctions failed to persuade Noriega to do anything in particular in Panama. And if there were ever a case where they should have worked, it was in this highly dependent Panamanian instance. Yet they didn't. Why should we assume that they could work in the case of Iraq? In any event, they didn't. There were repeated rumors of impending preemptive withdrawal by Saddam, but he never did.

Q: Americans armies are a microcosm of some of the best and the worst of American society. We arrived, complete with women soldiers, religious chaplains, religious services, books, TV, what have you. I'm talking as an old Saudi hand, and just watching the small contingent in Dhahran back in the '50s trying to keep our TV from annoying the Wahhabis there was an act and a half. This whole thing being dumped into the eastern province.

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FREEMAN: This, of course, was a major focus of concern on many, many levels: arranging with the Saudis permission for broadcasts, first of radio and later of television, for the troops; arranging USO-type activities that did not include female participation that would offend the Saudi sensitivities.

This process was made very complicated at the outset by the unintended consequences of well-intentioned people in Dhahran who organized a show, on the consulate grounds, for the U.S. forces, which included various young ladies from the American School, performing, and which, in an incredible lapse of judgment, the consulate allowed to be televised on CNN. So it immediately became a cause c#l#bre among the Saudis.

But, anyway, we were able to arrange for some things and to move others offshore. Steve Martin was fine, but Brooke Shields was not welcome.

Q: Steve Martin being a male comic, and Brooke Shields being a...

FREEMAN: Female actress.

Q: Sort of actress, but a beauty of...

FREEMAN: Bob Hope was all right, but not with Bob Hope's usual female entourage.

Q: And his patter.

FREEMAN: I suppose the major difficulty was ensuring freedom of religion for the American troops without offending the Saudis. Basically, there was a tacit understanding, well, more than tacit, between the king and me that the troops should feel free to practice their religion in private, off camera. They could, and did, celebrate both Christmas and Hanukkah on Saudi soil with no difficulty. But the press imagined there was an issue where there was none, because they were not allowed to see this activity. So we had to keep a stiff upper lip as the press accused us of denying the troops the right to practice

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their religious faiths, when in fact, of course, they were practicing them, but we just couldn't say so.

Q: Back in the 1950s, we used to have priests and ministers arrive, as teachers, once a month, and conduct services on Aramco facilities. Everyone, including Saud bin Jaluwi, the emir of the Eastern Province, knew about this, but we just didn't publicize it.

FREEMAN: Many things are possible as long as they're not in the public eye. Despite the fact that Saudi society has become even more conservative since the time you refer to, and such private visitations are virtually impossible now, the fact is that the chaplain corps was more heavily represented in this war than in any previous one. But they were not identified as chaplains; they were called morale officers. Nevertheless, they ministered to the troops, on a sectarian or nondenominational basis, very effectively — Catholic, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and I believe there may have been a Buddhist or two.

The other problem, of course, was the continuing tension over the role of female troops, which, of course, is largely logistical. That is, the women tend to be very heavily represented in the logistical functions — truck drivers, loadmasters, and this sort of thing. Essentially, the Saudis agreed to turn a blind eye to this, and when problems occurred, were quite good about intervening with those who objected to this, to ensure that a problem did not develop.

As I think I may have mentioned earlier, the very effective coordination between the consular officers and the consulates general, on the one hand, and the U.S. military and the Saudi authorities, on the other, meant that when problems arose (for example, an officer arrested for soliciting homosexual sex in the souk in Riyadh, the sort of thing that can bring the death penalty in Saudi Arabia in normal times, this was very quickly handled with the quick expatriation of the officer concerned, with the collaboration of the Saudis, who didn't want problems), we were able to avoid incidents coming to the attention of the press, and we were able to ensure that they were either resolved or swept under the rug

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sufficiently fast that they didn't become an incitement to serious friction between ourselves and the Saudis.

Q: It seems, during a critical situation like this, that you have a basic problem of roles. The press normally, in our society, anyway, is always looking for conflict, for stories to show isn't it awful that such and such happened. Yet, at the same time, I suppose, if you were to talk to the members of the press, none of them really wanted to dissolve the alliance and to seriously damage this thing, or most of them wouldn't; that wasn't on their agenda. And yet they were playing a role where you had to almost view them as not the enemy, but damn close to it.

FREEMAN: They were antagonists, there's no question, on several levels.

First, they had a prurient interest in military plans, which, if it had been realized, could have resulted in hundreds, maybe thousands, of unnecessary deaths on the battlefield. So military security had to be protected.

Second, they were looking, as you say, for controversies. The net effect of reporting such controversies would have been to exacerbate relations between the foreign members of the coalition and the Saudi civilians and soldiers who supported it.

Third, the press is always looking to sensationalize things. They're looking for headlines; that's their business, and one had to be very cautious in dealing with them.

There were 1,600 members of the American press on Saudi territory during this time. I think I did over 700 backgrounders without a single leak, which testifies to the professionalism of the press. I followed a special practice, because I did not want my name in the newspaper or on the television or on the radio. I simply told them that my condition for giving a briefing on background was that there be no attribution at all, and that, beyond that, if I saw my name in their publication under any circumstances remotely connected with the interview, they were never going to get back in to see me again. That

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had a sufficiently intimidating effect that I stayed out of the public limelight in the U.S., which is what I wanted to do. There is no advantage, to my mind, for an ambassador to appear in the limelight, and I was happy to yield pride of place to those who should have it, like a secretary of state.

The final comment I'd make about the press, however, is that they were extremely poorly prepared for this war, and their performance suffered. This was a press composed of members of the Vietnam-draft-dodging generation, who had had no experience with the military, did not understand the military mentality or the terminology of the military, and continually astonished me in their response to the really quite comprehensive and revealing briefings at CENTCOM by failing to understand and follow up on points that were being made. They were militarily illiterate.

Second, they were illiterate about Saudi Arabia. They didn't speak Arabic.

Let me give you two instances of this that illustrate my points.

First, during the air campaign, there were 41 Scud attacks on Saudi Arabia, many of them on Riyadh. And in the city of Riyadh, by the embassy's estimate and the estimate of Saudi authorities, who kept this figure secret, perhaps 100 inhabitants of the city died from the Scuds, either directly from the warheads on the Scuds, or sometimes from the Patriot warheads that were chasing the Scuds. Yet it was an article of faith among the press that only one person was killed. The evidence of many deaths was all around them. We were able, at the embassy, to track it down, notwithstanding Saudi reluctance to see it revealed. The members of the press were not.

Second, another example, on February 11th, as I recall, I had a regularly scheduled meeting with General Schwarzkopf, and being aware of the battle plan as I had been for months, and knowing that the great movement of forces to the northwest to carry out what became known as the Hail Mary maneuver was in progress and due to finish on February 14th, and being concerned about the increasing tendency of the press to violate guidelines

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and go off into the desert on their own, I said to him, "Norm, you know, I'm concerned that someone is going to blow the deception, with the result that the attack may result in much higher American casualties than will otherwise be the case. If you want, I can arrange for some of my Saudi Bedouin friends to make guests of these wandering members of the press, and migrate slowly with them in the general direction of Yemen, and keep them out of harm's way." And I said, finally, "How is the movement going?"

And he said, "Well, I have good news on two scores. First, we've actually completed the movement today, three days ahead of schedule," which I was delighted about. "Second," he said, "you won't believe this, but I have been taking the members of the press up to the new locations, and even though they're 300 kilometers away from where they used to go, they haven't noticed. One part of the desert looks just like another to them."

So this was, I think, yet another instance of lack of acuity and adequate preparation by the press. In this case, an insufficient knowledge of Saudi geography and attention to detail.

Q: There was one newsman who got himself picked up by the Iraqis.

FREEMAN: Bob Simon, who was one of those who had been warned repeatedly not to stray off, but he did. And, I must say, many of us had mixed feelings when he was picked up. He became a major focus of an effort to get him out. CBS, which was the network involved, became quite histrionic and sometimes quite obnoxious about trying to get him out. When he did emerge from Iraqi jail, it was as a much-chastened man.

Finally, we had to contend with the CNN broadcasts from Baghdad, which, inadvertently, in the course of repeating what they had been told by Iraqi officials, amplified and disseminated the Iraqi propaganda messages very effectively. CNN, in particular, through the Baghdad broadcasts and through the recruitment of an entire phalanx of retired generals to anticipate Schwarzkopf's battle plan, seemed to many of us to be playing a role that could get a lot of people killed. I take some pleasure in having insisted with CENTCOM that the Baghdad television and radio broadcast tower and a satellite link

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be taken down in the first wave of attack, little knowing that CNN had a backup portable satellite transmitter that kept them on the air after they initially went down. That, in effect, led to quite a debate about whether we could legally take out that American-owned portable satellite dish on the grounds of a hotel in Baghdad where the press were. And, of course, we concluded we couldn't, much to our distress. There were repeated instances where the press, not having access to all of the facts, or having access only to one side (in this case, the enemy's side), inadvertently aided and abetted Saddam's very skillful political warfare.

Q: During the buildup time and then also during the military action, from your perspective, did the specter of some move on the part of the Israelis play much of a role?

FREEMAN: It didn't really, until the fighting actually began and Israel came under Scud attack. Then, the Israeli government, like the Saudi government, came under tremendous popular pressure to retaliate, and the Israelis began to insist that their own air force was going to go into western Iraq and somehow do a better job than the U.S. Air Force at ferreting out Scuds. There were several problems with this. There were some military problems, in that the Israeli Air Force is in no respect more competent than the U.S. Air Force. The Israeli intelligence on the whereabouts of Scuds turned out to be mainly bogus, and we wasted hours and hours chasing after targets that proved not to be there, which the Israelis had sworn were there.

Finally, the larger problem was that, while I think Saudi Arabia would have gritted its teeth and gone on with the war, the Arab and Islamic coalition would have flown apart had Israel attempted to muscle its way into it. Israel was not welcome as a coalition member, and wasn't a coalition member. I was aware, although I did not participate, of very angry confrontations between Schwarzkopf and officials in Washington, and directly between Schwarzkopf and Israeli military officials, patched through on the line from Tel Aviv through Washington to Riyadh. And I was very grateful for Schwarzkopf's insistence that the Israelis not be allowed to come in.

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As I said, the Saudis also came under intense pressure. On two occasions, we had to talk the Saudis out of launching their Chinese IRBMs against Baghdad. Once, Schwarzkopf did it, and, once, I did it, in the middle of the night on both occasions, and they were 20 to 30 minutes away from launch on each occasion.

Q: *Why?*

FREEMAN: There were many reasons not to do this. One, is that these missiles were terribly inaccurate, and they would have hit, in all likelihood, a heavily populated part of Baghdad and killed an enormous number of innocent civilians. We, meaning the Royal Saudi Air Force as well as the U.S. Force, engaged in pinpoint bombing, with very small civilian casualties. So the use of these missiles would have cost the coalition the moral high ground. It wouldn't have added anything to what the Saudis were doing anyway with their air force. And, frankly, the value of these missiles as a deterrent depends on their inaccuracy never being revealed, so, using them would have degraded their long-term utility to the Saudis. I used all these arguments, as did General Schwarzkopf, to dissuade the Saudis from decisions that they had made under the heat of popular indignation at deaths in Riyadh.

Q: *When you go into a war, you usually want to have a war aim. As you were cranking up and the air war was getting ready, what, from your perspective and General Schwarzkopf's, was the perception? How was this thing going to end?*

FREEMAN: This was a major difficulty. There was an enormous amount of discussion between the embassy and General Schwarzkopf, and, I presume, between General Schwarzkopf and other ambassadors in the region, remembering always that Schwarzkopf had a regional role, and I had a country-specific role. Nevertheless, my embassy, being co-located with CENTCOM's headquarters, I lent my officers to study groups at CENTCOM, to plan a post-war order.

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But there was enormous frustration here, from the beginning. At about the same time as I argued for what became the second deployment, arguing with the president that he had to make a decision whether he was prepared to use force to eject Iraq from Kuwait or not, I also made the point that the first question you should ask yourself before launching a war is not whether your forces can prevail on the battlefield, but how you propose to end the war, on what terms, negotiated by whom, with whom, and why should the other side regard an end to the fighting, or not cheating on a truce, as preferable to fighting on. And so I pressed, in a series of communications, for a war termination strategy and also for a statement of war aims. I got no response from Washington, for the reasons I've mentioned; namely, the potentially lethal consequences of a leak, with the result that there never was a statement of war aims. The war aims were the lowest common denominator of U.N. Security Council resolutions, which were the liberation of Kuwait. To that, we managed to add the reduction of the Iraqi Republican Guard and Iraqi weapons of mass destruction to a point where Iraq would not pose an intolerable threat to the region, or, in other words, could be balanced by Iran, again.

Schwarzkopf and I were so frustrated at this that, on the eve of the counterattack in the air, I sent in a cable saying that, not having heard anything about war objectives, and having discussed it with General Schwarzkopf, unless instructed otherwise, these are the objectives he is going to pursue, which were what I thought the lowest common denominator was. I never had a response, and that document, in effect, was his operative statement of war objectives.

The more ludicrous development was, at the end of the fighting, at Safwan, when he met with the Iraqi generals, he had no instructions. We tried to get him instructions, he tried to get instructions, but Washington was unable to provide instructions, because they had no vision of what sort of peace they wanted to have follow the war.

Of course, after the war, the absence of such a policy framework led to a fumbling and inadequate and greatly delayed response to both the Shi'a uprising in southern Iraq and

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the Kurdish uprising in the north. The Kurdish uprising in the north led eventually to a huge flow of refugees into Turkey. And the Turks insisted, along with European partisans of the Kurds and humanitarians... In Europe, Madame Mitterrand, you mentioned off-mike a while back, certainly played a role. This led to an international response in the form of a protected zone for Iraqi Kurds, a repatriation of the refugees, relief supplies, and reconstruction activities, which were thought of as temporary, but which, in 1996, five and a half years after the end of the fighting in the Gulf, continue to be a semi-permanent feature of the Middle Eastern landscape.

So the absence of war aims, the absence of a war termination strategy, in my view, is the reason why the war never really ended. There was no political negotiation, no request for one. In short, Saddam's military disgrace was never translated into a political humiliation for him. Hence, he is still in power, being able to claim, with some justification, that he stood against the mightiest force the international community could organize and survived, which is itself a sort of political strength.

Q: Speaking of that strength. When our people, Schwarzkopf and you, were sitting and getting the briefings, what was the assumption how the war would take place? We were building up the Iraqi army into being the fourth-largest army in the world, and it had just won a war against Iran, and there were great concerns. Were those concerns translated, do you think, in our planning?

FREEMAN: Very much so. And they were real concerns. The Iraqi army was a formidable, tough instrument of war. And that is why the battle plans subjected that armed force to 42 days of nonstop bombing — one bomb a minute, for 42 days, on those forces — with the objective of attriting those forces to the point where there was a three-to-one ratio between the attacking forces (ours) and the defending forces (the Iraqis). In other words, the Iraqi forces, without that sustained, in effect, artillery bombardment from the air, would have been a formidable, and perhaps insuperable, obstacle, notwithstanding their technological limitations. With the effect of sustained bombing, much of that force melted away or was

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so demoralized that it surrendered at the first sight of the advancing coalition forces. In fact, the success of the bombing campaign, which was, as I say, seen by CENTCOM from the beginning as a means of preparing for an unobstructed or lightly obstructed ground advance, was vastly in excess of what we had hoped.

It was aided by a belated effort at psychological warfare. In fact, one of the more difficult military elements, as I saw it, in the planning was the lack of attention early on to what are called psychological operations (PSY OPS), psychological warfare. The reason for this was that the U.S. military had become accustomed to thinking of war in the Fulda Gap and in the central European area. We had had 45 years in which to prepare psychological operations; we had plans in place and radio transmitters and leaflets, everything all done. Faced with a new theater, we sort of forgot that this stuff wasn't in place. This problem was compounded by bureaucratic confusion in Washington, and buck-passing between State, Defense, USIA, and CIA, to the extent that only very late in the game did the psychological operations plan, which CENTCOM had prepared early on, get approval and get implemented. And it ended up by, I think, saving a lot of lives, both Iraqi lives and, more particularly, American and coalition lives. But it had very low priority. It sat in General Schwarzkopf's in-box for over a month, until I called him and got it shaken loose.

I must say, General Schwarzkopf and I had an excellent relationship, cooperative and close, because he was helping me, and I was helping him, and sometimes each of us was helping the other, by helping the other to see that he needed to pay some more attention to good ideas from his subordinates. I think he did that for me a few times, and I guess I did it for him a few times.

Q: How did the embassy and, by inference, the consulates, particularly in Dhahran, respond during the Scud attacks?

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FREEMAN: Our major difficulty was, as I think I may have alluded to, the absolute inability of Washington to respond to the danger of chemical and biological attack. I don't know whether I've spoken of that.

Q: You did, yes.

FREEMAN: This left us essentially unprepared in many important psychological dimensions, as well as otherwise.

But we had a 24-hour, around-the-clock, community information center that was in touch with embassy people, as well as members of the American community, and we were able, I think, quite effectively to subdue panic, or at least reduce it to acceptable dimensions.

As time went on, of course, people began to gather on the balconies to see the nightly shrapnel show overhead (not recommended, but I'm afraid all of us did it), and the sense that these large pieces of steel falling from the sky were unlikely to fall on you personally grew to probably a dangerous level.

Q: How did you find the embassy family and consulate family responding?

FREEMAN: It was varied. I had a couple of employees who frankly panicked and had to be sent home, because their panic was contagious. I was sorry to see that the Foreign Service was unable to deal with cases of cowardice, and took care of these people as though they had done something exemplary, rather than something that showed a weakness in their fitness to serve the United States in conditions of stress abroad.

I had only one incident that I thought was a clear case of insubordination, when an intelligence agency, which had been supplied quietly by its own parent organization with gas masks and the like, distributed those to its own employees while other embassy employees did not have them. I hit the ceiling and forced the recall of everything that had

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been handed out, on the grounds that either everybody was going to get stuff or nobody was going to get stuff, and everybody was going to get treated the same.

But, with that one exception, I think people behaved, by and large, magnificently.

I was particularly proud of the Foreign Service national employees, third-country nationals in the case of Saudi Arabia, who showed a level of dedication and loyalty that was most impressive, who stayed on the job even though many of them were terribly concerned about their families. In the end, I was able to get Washington, somewhat grudgingly, to give the American employees an extra R&R for all this, and to recognize the employees with a group honor award.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point, because I know you have something coming up, and we'll pick it up the next time. Maybe there's something more you want to add about what was done during the war.

FREEMAN: I have a feeling we've probably missed an enormous number of things.

Q: I'm sure, I'm sure. Anyway, if anything occurs to you, it can be added to the record at some point. We'll pick it up with what you were doing and the embassy was doing when the attack went in, and how you viewed the ground attack and the aftermath.

Today is the 31st of October, Halloween, 1996. It's been a while since we've talked on this, so that we may be missing something, but let's start about the attack, when the actual timing of the attack went in, and then what Baker knew.

FREEMAN: I can't be absolutely sure at this point what we've discussed and what we haven't discussed. [Some of the following was covered in the last session and can be combined or deleted.]

As I probably mentioned, General Norman Schwarzkopf and I had a very close and cooperative relationship, rather unusually. As part of that relationship, although I never

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took part in military planning sessions, during visits by Secretary Cheney, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Colin Powell, and others associated with them, General Schwarzkopf would fill me in, in broad terms, about his thinking, not only before they arrived, but also about the results of these conferences. The result was that, as I probably indicated, we were able to help each other a good deal.

My telegrams, in mid- to late October, pointing out to the president that there was a limited window for making the additional deployments necessary to gain an option to take the offensive against Iraqi forces in Kuwait, I think, played a key role in producing the decision, right after the November midterm elections in 1990, to deploy an additional 300,000 troops to the area of General Schwarzkopf's responsibility, the AOR, as it's called in military terms. That deployment, of course, was not completed until early February.

I knew, from, I suppose, mid-November, two prospective dates that were crucial. One was the date of January 17, 2:40 in the morning, which was the moment that General Schwarzkopf had recommended for the air assault on Iraq to unfold. The second was the date of February 21, 1991, which was the date that he had set for the unfolding of the ground assault. Between January 17 and February 21, obviously, there were almost five weeks. So it was clear to me that the battle plan, which he outlined to me, involved an air assault to attrit Iraqi forces and bring the Iraqi forces down to a level at which something approaching the normal ratio of attacking to defending forces of three to one could be achieved on the Kuwaiti front.

I was also aware from the beginning that it was our intention to shift ground forces 300 kilometers to the northwest, so as to assault the Kuwaiti front mainly by a flanking action through Iraq, which would culminate in or near Basra, north of Kuwait.

So I was quite clear on the general nature of the battle plan. I did not confide it to my staff. And I was rather surprised, in January 1991, to discover that the president and Secretary Cheney had not confided it to Secretary of State Baker.

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He came to Saudi Arabia to meet with the king and various others, especially Foreign Minister Saud al-Faysal. During that meeting, a couple of things happened that I found really rather shocking. One was a meeting, actually in a sort of side room of the king's guest hotel in Riyadh, between Baker, several of his entourage, Schwarzkopf, and me (now mind you, this was January 10, only seven days before the actual unfolding of the battle for Kuwait), at which Baker mused out loud that he wondered what our war aims ought to be.

I said, "Well, one of them clearly should be to establish Iraqi recognition of Kuwaiti independence, and to achieve the demarcation of the Iraq-Kuwait border, so that future problems of the sort we had experienced would not occur," recalling, in that connection, then, in the 1960s and 1970s, Iraq had fiddled with that border.

Baker looked surprised and initially resisted this idea, until Schwarzkopf endorsed my suggestion. So it was clear that there had really been no thought at all given in Washington, at high levels, to what specific results we wished to achieve from the war, notwithstanding the many telegrams that I had sent and the many representations General Schwarzkopf had made in military channels, asking for two things: a definition of war objectives and, second, a war termination strategy.

That led me, several days later, on the eve of the attack, having failed to get for General Schwarzkopf and myself and others any statement of war aims, to draft a cable saying that, unless instructed otherwise, here is what General Schwarzkopf believes he has authority to do, a cable that was informally coordinated with General Schwarzkopf and that sank without a trace into the Washington morass.

Q: Chas, this is really sort of frightening. Prior to Saddam Hussein making his move, the general wisdom was that the whole foreign policy apparatus was centered on Baker and a small entourage in that particular administration, and that they were concentrated on the breakup of the Soviet Union, at least the fall of the Soviet bloc. But there's nothing like

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impending war and half a million American troops to sort of focus one's mind. I would have thought that this would have been a time when he would have gotten the boys and girls together, Policy Planning or his coterie or whatever, and said, okay, what are we going to do with this? Did you have any feeling about this?

FREEMAN: I couldn't really, from the distance of Riyadh, understand exactly what was happening in Washington, but it appeared that the Deputies Committee, meaning the committee of under secretaries and deputy secretaries that is the operational arm of the National Security Council, was, in effect, so mired in the management of day-to-day detail and routine that the larger questions were never, in many instances, addressed.

Now, in the case of the setting of war objectives and the determination of a strategy for war termination, I think the problem was essentially the existence of multiple coalitions, any one of which might have been upset by clarity beyond the lowest common denominator of objectives set by the United Nations.

The only objective that the United Nations had really proclaimed was the liberation of Kuwait.

We - that is, we in Riyadh, General Schwarzkopf and my embassy, but General Schwarzkopf first and foremost - had added a second objective, which was the reduction of Iraqi war-making potential to a level that might be balanced by Iran after the end of the war. Not below that level, because to reduce Iraqi defense capabilities excessively would have invited Iranian opportunistic attack, and not at a level at which Iraq could successfully threaten the offensive against its major adversary in the region, Iran.

But, with the exception of these two objectives, one openly declared by the United Nations, and the other a sort of hidden agenda, if you will, of a military nature, coming from CENTCOM and the American Embassy in Riyadh, there were no objectives stated.

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Had such objectives been stated, I suppose the concern of the White House and of Jim Baker was that they would have been second-guessed in Congress, and the coalition between Executive Branch and Congress, which was in a delicate state at that point, might have collapsed.

Wobbling in the Executive-Congressional coalition would have clearly disturbed the United Nations Security Council coalition, which was vital to retain U.N. authority for our actions. Some members of the Security Council, specifically the Soviet Union and France, were always prone to second thoughts about the wisdom of confronting Iraq. To state objectives beyond the liberation of Kuwait would have opened a debate in the Security Council that could have been fatal to that coalition.

Furthermore, there were other coalitions. One, with our Western allies, principally Britain and, to a lesser extent, France. Others, such as Germany and Japan, who, although not present on the ground or in the air or on the sea at that time in the theater, were important financial contributors and contributors of logistical support to the war effort. And then, of course, our coalition with the Saudis, and their own delicate coalition of Arab and Islamic states.

The effect of so many coalitions was to make it politically extremely risky to state clearly what it was we were about.

My view was that it was nonetheless very much worth the effort to be clear in our own minds about our objectives, even if we had to do that on a secret, rather than on an open, basis.

Q: You can't go into a war using your own troops without figuring out what you want out of this.

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FREEMAN: That was my perspective. That is, I thought it was essentially irresponsible for the United States to use force like a sledgehammer, rather than like a chisel, to achieve results that we hadn't carefully considered and thought through.

But, in the event, I suppose, from Secretary Baker's and the White House's perspective, the risk of clarity was too great, given the probability of leaks. Therefore, the danger of leaks prevented any serious thinking through, let alone a statement of, war aims.

So this was the first thing that really rather shocked me. I had not recognized the extent to which we were operating without the sorts of guidelines that one normally would expect when force is used on this scale.

I guess I should mention that, throughout this period, I was acutely aware that, although I was cohabiting with General Schwarzkopf and therefore was the only American ambassador in touch directly with the Central Command at the top, and the only one with a comprehensive view of the war effort in the field, I was not ambassador to the Gulf or to the Middle East, but merely ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Therefore, although I did raise, as I said, a repeated series of questions about war aims and war-termination strategy, I did not feel that, in the end, I could insist...

The second point that really took me aback was a meeting between Secretary Baker; Saud al-Faysal, the foreign minister; Ambassador Bandar ibn Sultan; and me, at which Saud leaned across to Jim Baker and said to him, "You know, Chas says that the air campaign is likely to go on for many weeks, perhaps months, and that, during this period, there is undoubtedly going to be a great deal of unrest on the Arab street throughout the Middle East, but that we are just going to have to hunker down and take that political pressure. Is the air campaign really going to go on that long?"

And Baker said, "Oh, no, it'll be a matter of four or five days."

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Q: *Oh, God.*

FREEMAN: Which made it clear to me, suddenly, that he had not a clue what the battle plan was, since the essence of the battle plan was a sustained air campaign to attrit Iraqi forces, as I said, to the point at which they could be easily overwhelmed on the ground.

So I suddenly had a decision to make. After all, I worked for Jim Baker, received my instructions from him, in the name of the president. The president had obviously not chosen to confide in him. And, clearly, there was some sort of compartmentalization in Washington between the diplomatic and military side of which I had previously been unaware. Should I tell Jim Baker the battle plan?

In any event, I answered Baker and Saud by saying, "Well, Mr. Secretary, Your Royal Highness, my point to Prince Saud was not to describe the specifics of the battle plan, which are not a matter of concern to diplomats, but rather to make the point that the purpose of the air campaign is to reduce the Iraqi forces sufficiently to be able to overwhelm them. And that may take a sustained period of time. However long it takes, Saudi Arabia must be prepared to hang in there and stick with the effort resolutely, rather than to have second thoughts or to give ground in the face of political pressure from other Arab states or from the Arab street."

And Jim Baker said, "Well, of course, I completely agree with that point."

So that was the end of that discussion. I never did tell him what I knew.

One other element of this particular encounter with the king was the concerting of a means of informing the Saudi monarch of the moment at which the counterattack on Iraq would be launched. The king said, in effect, he didn't want to know until the last minute. I added to him that I thought he should assemble members of his family, once he knew the time, and essentially cut off telephone communication with the outside world, because I was concerned that some members of his family might call their mistresses or their

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stockbrokers, and that the surprise, which was essential to success, would be jeopardized. Anyway, we agreed on a method of notifying him, which was double-tracking Prince Bandar to call him from...

Q: When you say "we," this is you and Schwarzkopf?

FREEMAN: This is Baker; the king; Bandar; Saud al-Faysal, the foreign minister; and me. We agreed on a method of double-tracking notification to our Saudi allies.

Q: Double-tracking...?

FREEMAN: Meaning that Secretary Baker would inform His Royal Highness Ambassador Bandar, in Washington, and Bandar would call the king with an agreed code; at the same time, I would inform Saud al-Faysal, the foreign minister, and his royal highness the foreign minister would also go to see the king, thus ensuring that, one way or another, word would get to the appropriate place at the right time.

This later led to an odd circumstance, because on January 16, as the moment of the attack approached (I, of course, was not able to share that with my staff or my wife or anyone), the day went by in Riyadh, and finally, around four-thirty, five o'clock, I got a call from Secretary Baker on the secure phone, saying that Prince Bandar was with him, and that he had just informed Bandar of the time and date of the attack, and he was now informing me. I had to act surprised, because it turned out to be, surprise, surprise, 2:40 in the morning on January 17.

I asked if Bandar could be put on the line, and he was, and I said, "Bandar, I think you know your family better than I do, but I'm getting to know them pretty well, and I think the later we can notify them the better. Particularly, I'm concerned about your brother, Khalid," who was the Saudi general in charge. "I will talk to General Schwarzkopf carefully about that. But I think we should hold off for several hours."

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Bandar said, "Well, you're right. Actually, I would suggest that we hold off for another five or six hours. Around nine-thirty, ten o'clock your time in Riyadh would be about right."

And I said, "Okay, that's agreed."

So I tried to behave normally, though, I was very agitated. I went home, had dinner with my wife, picked up the phone to call the foreign minister, with whom I had met several days prior to concert a code, and said to him, "You remember that information you wanted from Washington the other day. I don't really have it yet, but I'll have it tomorrow. If you're at home tomorrow afternoon, maybe I could come around at about six o'clock in the evening. I might even be able to get there as early as about 5:40. I have some prior commitments. And I know I'll be able to give you that information then." Of course, the code was, whatever time I said, subtract 15 hours and you have the time of the attack. Saud, who was a very controlled, reserved, dignified individual, for the first time in my experience was so excited that he lost control, his voice broke, he hung up the phone, and went racing off to the king.

I had talked to Schwarzkopf, and he essentially contrived to have Khalid sequestered in a series of briefings.

Q: What was the problem with Khalid?

FREEMAN: The concern was that he might call his broker or get on the phone and tell people, because, of course, he was terribly concerned to appear to be in charge. Khalid is a very able individual. But, anyway, there was some concern about telephone security and communications security, which in Saudi Arabia is not what it ought to be.

At this point, my wife said, "What was all that about?"

I said, "Well, I can't really tell you now, but I'll tell you later." And I went to bed.

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I had arranged for the DCM, to whom I had given this information just prior to leaving the office, to call me at 2:20 in the morning, to say that there was a NIACT immediate that had come in and I needed to come down to the office. So he did. At that point, I got up (I was not really sleeping terribly soundly) and went into the office.

As I left, my wife heard the Filipino butler calling his network, since he was one of the chief wardens in the Filipino community, saying, "It's going to happen. It's starting."

But, in any event, notwithstanding the fact that, from about eleven o'clock on, the air over Riyadh was full of the rumble of tankers and bombers and everything else, we did manage to achieve surprise.

The crucial element of the surprise was in part the fact that the border would be crossed by aircraft. Some three months earlier, I had suggested (I don't want to take credit for this, because I'm sure others had thought the same thing) that the B-52s (which I think I probably did describe earlier on in terms of the aborted effort to get them bedded down in Jeddah), which were staging out of Diego Garcia, run a daily mock bombing run at Iraq and stop at the border each day, with the idea that eventually one day they'd just keep going. So they did. We expected to lose up to 150 aircraft in the initial assault. I think, as it turned out, we only lost two, and I was ecstatic a little later when that became apparent.

But the more important part of the surprise really was that, as I was aware, there were three Special Forces teams that were going in on the ground to take out Iraqi radars, so that the planes could come in. And they were in great jeopardy. But their part of this went off without a hitch. We did achieve surprise.

At three o'clock in the morning, as Baghdad was hit, I was delighted to see CNN-Baghdad go off the air.

I spent the early morning hours calling colleagues, first the British, then the French, at about three o'clock, and then, later, other members of the coalition and key neutrals. I

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had sort of become the unofficial acting dean of the African diplomatic corps. The poor African diplomats had no reliable source of information, and were panic stricken, as most people in Riyadh were, about the possibility of Scud and chemical attack. So I had set up a system of diplomatic wardens, whom I called, including some very helpful pro-Western neutrals and some Arab ambassadors. So, by about five o'clock in the morning, everybody in Riyadh was well aware of not only what was going on, but of the success of the initial assault.

The air campaign lasted for, I think, 42 days. We dropped one bomb a minute on Iraqi forces during that period.

Q: I'd like to stop here, Chas, before we move into that, to go back a bit about Washington, your angle and all that. In the first place, was Saddam Hussein's survival in power a subject of discussion at all when you talked to Schwarzkopf or in what you were hearing from Baker in Washington?

FREEMAN: Well, no. It was very much a topic of discussion between Schwarzkopf and me, and between Schwarzkopf and his command structure.

There, the operative constraint throughout, in a peculiarly American way, was the law against the assassination of foreign leaders, which was taken very seriously by the Judge Advocate General Corps, and which greatly constrained our actions against Saddam.

However, generally speaking, there was an assumption, which proved erroneous, for reasons I'll be happy to explain, that Saddam would, willy nilly, fall from power, given the devastating blow that his forces were about to suffer, and that he would not survive the end of the Gulf War. Since that was the assumption, and since I knew nothing about Iraqi politics and had no basis for really questioning it, I shared it. There was very little discussion of that.

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Now, in Riyadh, between the embassy and CENTCOM, there was an elaborate planning process going on between J-5 and the embassy for post-Gulf-War security structures, trying to determine the desired end state after the war. That included a variety of factors related to Iraq.

For example, from the outset (and I think I had argued this as early as August in a cable to Washington), we determined that we did not want to threaten the territorial integrity of Iraq, for reasons of regional balance of power and the sensitivities of our Arab allies.

There was not really much discussion, by us certainly, and apparently none in Washington, about how to deal with possible post-Iraqi-defeat rebellions inside Iraq.

There was, in Riyadh, a great deal of planning about how to transform the GCC the Gulf Cooperation Council, consisting of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman, into a moderately effective collective security system that could provide a first tier of defense against future challenges to regional stability.

And there was also a great deal of discussion about what sort of prepositioning of war reserve material might be necessary to manage Gulf security without a continuing American military presence, but under circumstances in which such a presence could be reconstituted very effectively on short notice. All of this was relayed to Washington; none of it apparently had any impact, since Washington was not interested in thinking about these things, or, more accurately, some people in Washington were very interested in thinking about them, but decision-makers were not interested in considering the options.

Q: This brings up another question, both at the time and in retrospect. Here you were, a new boy in NEA. You were in a position of major importance at the time. But did you have a feeling that you lacked a mentor, a man or a woman, back in the Washington establishment, the State Department, who could both keep you alert to what was

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happening and push things though? This often is very important. You understand what I'm saying.

FREEMAN: Oh, exactly.

Q: It's a network system.

FREEMAN: I very much felt that way. The Baker State Department was focused entirely internally, with minimal interaction even between the 7th and 6th floors, and no real involvement or linkage between the 6th floor, meaning the assistant-secretary level, and desk officers. It did not seem to me that the assistant secretary for Near Eastern affairs, who would have been the person to play the role you describe...

Q: This was John Kelly.

FREEMAN: John Kelly, was in any sense a member of the inner circle, or that confidences were shared with him, or that he had much to impart in the nature of policy guidance. So I felt very much out at the end of a limb that had a very limited connection to the trunk of the tree. I think I described the appalling history of the chemical warfare preparations. That was, in a way, symptomatic. When we tried to get guidance from Washington on matters of concern to us, we never did. That was true also on major issues: war aims and war-termination strategy.

There were other issues where perhaps I was more effective with Washington, and those tended to be the military issues, which the military were far better about communicating, by fax and phone. As I mentioned, we came very close to not having a psychological warfare strategy, which was a crucial element of our success in the end, because, in the first instance, General Schwarzkopf, who, like his entire generation of military commanders, had been nurtured on theaters with longstanding battle plans that included well-thought-out psychological warfare elements, specifically in Europe, did not initially perceive the priority of this. I had to help his staff break the PSY OPS (psychological operations) plan

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out of his in-box. When he finally did that, some 30 days after it had landed in his in-box, it went to Washington. And, there, bureaucratic turf struggles between the State Department, USIA, the Defense Department, and the NSC staff caused it to languish for a long time. It was only after I personally buttonholed Colin Powell and insisted on the importance of this that he was able finally to break that plan loose.

In addition to the psychological operations plan for the military, which involved leaflets, broadcasts, loudspeakers, and the like for the Iraqis, which we hoped would be demoralized by the bombing (successfully, as it turned out), we placed a great deal of emphasis on what I would call political warfare, meaning propaganda, directed at Arab and Islamic opinion. Washington was never able to get its act together on that. The single film that was produced by the Central Intelligence Agency, when it arrived in Riyadh, proved to be so counterproductive and unsuitable for an Arab or Islamic audience that I demanded that it be removed immediately and not shown in the kingdom, and recommended that it not be shown anywhere in the Arab world.

I cite these things as examples of the failure of the Washington apparatus to provide answers to questions that were coming in from the field and, I assume, not only from me, which were relevant questions. It wasn't that we necessarily needed to have the answers, but we felt the questions needed to be addressed and answered. Going back to the incidents I mentioned with Jim Baker, I was really horrified when I discovered that in fact the questions had not been addressed, even as we began to go to war.

Q: Did you sense in Jim Baker, and again I'm getting this third, fourth hand really through newspaper editorials, that he was a man who had presidential aspirations, and that essentially his group around him seemed to be primarily interested in making him look good, which is always, I think, quite dangerous. For him to think that his ambassador knew more than he did about something rather crucial, I think, could be almost dangerous both for you and for the way things go.

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FREEMAN: Well, it might have been, but that really wasn't a consideration in my mind.

I would take minor issue with something you just said. I think that the function of staff is, in large measure, to make superiors look good. I have always felt that, when I acted as staff to someone, that was my job, to make that person look good by helping that person to do his or her job most effectively.

On the other hand, Jim Baker is a man of presidential demeanor, and obviously someone who, in the White House, both as chief of staff to Ronald Reagan and with George Bush in office, was quite capable of acting presidential. He is, in fact, very well qualified, in many ways, to be president, but not qualified, I should say, by virtue of personality. His personality is not a warm one; it's not suited to campaigning. Although I'm not a great admirer of Jim Baker, in many respects, I do admire his ability, and I think it is a great shame that our system will not permit someone of that sort of ability to aspire to the highest office in the land. Rather, that selection is made on the basis of criteria that are ultimately largely irrelevant to the ability to govern.

So I wouldn't say that Jim Baker was the problem, and I didn't feel that. I do think that the constipated management style that he practiced in the Department of State was a problem that he was never able to figure out. Indeed, he wasn't particularly interested in learning how to take effective advantage of and make good use of the large number of very talented people in the Foreign Service and the Department of State or in embassies overseas who were available to him to make him look good. Instead, his management style was very much focused on a small coterie and was quite cabalistic.

But, be that as it may, I don't think that was the main factor that led to what I consider to be the policy failures of the war, which meant, in effect, that the war, in some respects, never ended, and goes on to this day.

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Q: Going back now to the air attack. How did you use your embassy? For one thing, this was a time of great strain, because you had some nasty people across the border, who had missiles, and also particularly there was a fear of chemical and biological weapons. The ability of the Saudis, the princes, and the rest of the population to stay in line was very important.

FREEMAN: In effect, Stu, I may have already discussed this. One of my greatest focuses during this whole period, from August of 1990 through the beginning of March 1991, was the maintenance of morale among embassy American and Foreign Service national staff, and, more broadly, in the American community, and, in fact, because of the centrality of the American community to the calculations of other foreigners and Saudis, through the American community, ultimately, the morale of the kingdom.

There were few problems in that regard, in part because my DCM really did yeoman service, particularly on this point of embassy, consulate, and community morale during this period. (I would urge you, by the way, given the importance of the topic, to interview David Dunford, who was my DCM, later ambassador to Oman, and now retired and living in Arizona.)

I began to be more concerned about a series of other issues. The exactions that we and other foreign allies of Saudi Arabia in the campaign for the liberation of Kuwait had imposed began to visibly cause severe financial strain in the kingdom. Toward the end of January 1991, as the bombing campaign was at the end of its first ten-day period, I recall a meeting with Foreign Minister Saud al-Faysal at which he expressed grave concern about the level of financial demands that the United States was making on Saudi Arabia, in terms of the impact on Saudi financial health and ultimately on the kingdom's stability. I reported that, and, indeed, throughout the fall, one of my principal points of friction with Secretary Baker was my concern that, if we found it necessary to bankrupt Saudi Arabia in order to save it, we would regret that, for many reasons.

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First, a selfish American reason: Saudi Arabia historically had bankrolled many important American foreign-policy initiatives, some of them far from the Middle East, as the Iran-Contra controversy illustrated. But there were many others. The Afghan adventure, in particular, which may ultimately have brought down the Soviet Union, or catalyzed its collapse, was such a case in point. So I was concerned that we would lose this asset, and, more particularly, that, if indeed we were able effectively, after the end of the Gulf War, to produce a peace process in the Middle East, the Saudis would not have the financial wherewithal to contribute, and that we would be left to finance it ourselves, and that we would not be able to do so.

The second concern I had was about the nature of the constitutional bargain in Saudi Arabia, one element of which is that the royal family, and the king in particular, is expected to share the wealth through endless largess to the citizenry. And if the means by which the well being of Saudi citizens was taken away and the financial resources to do that were no longer there, I was concerned that that would produce instabilities in Saudi Arabia that we would regret.

So I, fairly constantly, made representations to Secretary Baker urging that we go somewhat easy on the Saudis, recognizing that political imperatives in Washington dictated that allies pay their fair share, and that we should be careful not to overdo it. I think he interpreted that as a sort of clientitis and special pleading for Saudi Arabia.

Q: Not only he. Recently, I was talking to a friend and colleague of mine, Bob Duncan, who was an economist with INR, I think, at the time. He was making a point, and he said, "Well, you know, that Chas Freeman was trying to claim the Saudis were broke, and they weren't broke. And, you know, maybe it was private money in the hands of the ruling family, but what's the difference." I'm talking about the perception.

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FREEMAN: That's correct. There was a huge battle, which really began in '91 and continued through '92, between my embassy and Washington, more particularly INR, on this issue.

INR persisted, right up through 1993 when the Saudis finally did essentially collapse financially, in insisting that the Saudis had all sorts of money squirreled away, in places that INR was never able to identify.

My perspective was that, no, they didn't. Second, that it's all very well to sit in Washington and say that the private wealth of members of the royal family should be available to the government. But the private individuals who make up the royal family are no more inclined to share their private wealth with the government than wealthy Americans are. Therefore, this equation simply was erroneous.

I think enormous damage was done to American policy by the persistent failure of the intelligence analysts, particularly in INR, to a lesser extent in the Central Intelligence Agency, which was a little more open minded on this, to recognize the financial strains, which are now acknowledged to exist. I had the misfortune of being right, before my correctness was recognized, and that was indeed interpreted as special pleading. And it contributed a great deal to friction between Secretary Baker, or, more accurately, Dennis Ross, and me.

But the fact is that the Saudis, on the eve of the outbreak of the war, August 2, 1990, probably had liquid assets, above the currency cover that was required by law, of only \$3 billion. They went through that and then some in the first week.

The net result of the war, notwithstanding INR's frankly injurious and self-serving analysis, since they were telling Secretary Baker what he wanted to hear, was to take Saudi Arabia from zero national debt to a national debt equivalent to 55 percent of GNP, overnight. In other words, the Saudis spent unbudgeted funds equivalent, in terms of the U.S. economy,

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to roughly \$4 trillion. The Saudi Arabian economy is an economy of about \$100 billion, the size of the State of Georgia. And while that provides fabulous wealth for a few, and a moderate standard of living for the many, it does not provide an endless cornucopia of dollars with which to do everything they wish.

The Saudis ended the war, in fact, financially lamed in a way that has had all of the consequences that I anticipated with apprehension from the fall of 1990, and, more particularly, from January 1991, on. We have had to do a sort of Chapter 11 reorganization on the foreign military sales program. Ironically, I ended up doing that, as assistant secretary of defense, in February 1994. We have had to curtail many programs in Saudi Arabia.

The general view in Saudi Arabia of the American role in the war has shifted from affection, respect, admiration, and gratitude to resentment of financial exactions, as the extent of those exactions became known.

At the end of the war, in fact, the DOD (Department of Defense) accountants had to struggle to show that we had not made a profit on the war. I believe, in fact, if it were not for accounting sleights of hand, we did. Now a good deal of that was not accounted for by the Saudis, but much of it was. I personally collected \$16.9 billion from King Fahd, including \$3.2 billion that he had never agreed to.

When the second deployment was agreed to, the deployment that ultimately transformed Desert Shield into Desert Storm, in early November 1990, Jim Baker came out to Saudi Arabia with, among other things, a request that the Saudis contribute \$3.2 billion to the financing of that second deployment. What he was asking for was that the Saudis pay for every truck that gassed up in Seattle to transport material to Baltimore, the shipping expense, and, of course, the living expenses of soldiers in Saudi Arabia. Which was not, on its face, unreasonable, perhaps, but which, in the meeting, the king responded to by

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saying, "Well, I suppose anything is possible," which, translated from the Saudi Arabic, meant no.

At the end of the meeting, His Royal Highness Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi ambassador; the king; Jim Baker; and I stayed behind in a little group for a minute. Jim Baker grabbed King Fahd by the equivalent of his lapels and said, "I want to understand that I heard yes to that question."

King Fahd was so taken aback that he knocked Baker's hands off his lapels and said, "All right!"

On the basis of that, Jim Baker reported that King Fahd had agreed to \$3.2 billion.

I knew that he hadn't.

But then, when the king somehow mysteriously failed to pay this \$3.2 billion, Jim Baker went to Bandar and asked him to collect it. Bandar said, "Well, you better talk to Chas Freeman about that."

I ended up going, actually with help from Bandar, to the king and convincing him that, notwithstanding the ambiguity about what he had agreed to or not agreed to, his friend George Bush would be mortally embarrassed before Congress, because Secretary Baker had reported his agreement to this figure, and therefore the king had to come up with \$3.2 billion, which he did.

There were other instances of this sort. Some money that we wanted for the benefit of the Turks was another point at issue.

At any rate, one of the problems of fighting wars with other people's money is that the other people may come to resent what you're doing. And that was, I'm afraid, the case here.

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When I left Saudi Arabia, in my farewell call on the finance minister, I treasured his remark when he asked me what I was going to do when I left. I said that I thought I had done enough government service, and I planned to go to the private sector. He said, "Well, I don't know what you're going to do, but if you ever need a letter of recommendation, say, for example, you decide to become a mafia bill collector, I will provide the letter," which, unfortunately, I never did get from him, but I would have treasured such a letter.

So I found myself in the odd position of arguing with Washington that Saudi Arabia was strapped, and arguing with the Saudis that they could and should pay more. And I was more successful, I think, with Saudi Arabia than I was with Washington.

Q: What was the atmosphere that you were getting from our military and the alliance about the air war and how it was going and what they were thinking?

FREEMAN: We had daily briefings during the war, as we had had frequent briefings several times a week in the runup to the war, on the implementation of the embargo by the U.S. Navy and other navies operating in the Red Sea and in the Gulf.

There were endless complaints, by the way, about that embargo from, particularly, the Jordanians, who were playing a somewhat dubious game throughout this. I would say that describing it as 'dubious' is generous. Our embassy in Amman appeared to endorse Jordan's special pleading to such an extent that I considered persuading the United States Navy to refrain from air strikes on our embassy there to be one of my greater achievements.

The Jordanian role, from the Saudi perspective, was not a helpful one. In fact, I learned, in September of 1990, of a series of approaches to a member of a prominent Hejazi family (the Hejaz being the region of Saudi Arabia that includes Jeddah and Mecca and Medina) by Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan, in London, in mid-June of 1990, of a most peculiar nature. The individual who was approached told me that Crown Prince Hassan had come

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to him and said that he recalled that, when the Hashemites had controlled the Hejaz, this family had played a prominent role in supporting them. And he said, "You know, we may well be coming back to the Hejaz, and we would like to know that we can count on your support to reestablish ourselves."

The individual said, "Well, I'm not sure what you're talking about," and sort of dropped the issue.

He then reported to the head of the family what he had heard. And the head of the family sort of dismissed this by saying, "Well, you know, there's a history of insanity in that family, and this is some sort of delusion."

Q: The present king's father was...

FREEMAN: The king's father was disturbed.

However, this individual told me that, around July 20th, he had received a telephone call from Hassan, who asked him whether he recalled what they had discussed in London in June, and said, "You know, it's really going to happen, and we need to know..."

Q: We're talking just prior to the invasion of Kuwait.

FREEMAN: That's right, this was two weeks prior to the invasion. "It's really going to happen," he said, "and we need to know that you will be with us."

The man said, "Well, you know, Saudi Arabia and the association with the oil of the eastern province has been rather good to us, and we're loyal to the al-Saud, so I'm not sure what you're talking about." And they broke off the conversation.

At that point, the head of the family went to King Fahd, to tell him of this rather peculiar approach, since it had occurred twice. King Fahd also, reportedly, according to the

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individual with whom I spoke, said, "Oh, well, it's a strange family, and you can't take this kind of thing too seriously."

In any event, after the August 2 invasion of Kuwait, King Fahd put two and two together and concluded that the Hashemites had been very much witting of the Iraqi plans. Indeed, ironically, in light of later assertions by Jordan that it was always neutral and skeptical, during this period in August right through the early part of September, negotiations that had begun between Amman and Baghdad on a merger and amalgamation of Jordan and Iraq continued, notwithstanding the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

So there was a widespread belief in Saudi Arabia, with some evidence behind it of the sort that I just cited, that the Jordanians, like the Yemenis, had been promised a payoff for support of the invasion, not just of Kuwait, but of Saudi Arabia, ultimately.

In these circumstances, it was very difficult after the war, when the imperatives of the peace process, quite correctly, dictated that the United States attempt to broker a rapprochement and resumption of normal relations, including Saudi subsidies to the Jordanians, to persuade the Saudis that this was in fact in their interest. In fact, after the end of the fighting, Riyadh decision-making circles were dominated by the view that Jordan, which had had great utility as a buffer state for Saudi Arabia, Israel, Iraq, and Syria, had lost that utility, and that Jordan's greatest contribution to the peace process probably lay in its dismemberment. People began openly to agree with Ariel Sharon of Israel who once had said that Jordan is Palestine. The level of hostility and suspicion was extremely high. So, in these circumstances, it took quite a while for me to be able to persuade the Saudis even to open the border to truck traffic from Jordan.

The war left Saudi views of many nationalities within the Arab world and Islamic world poisoned.

The view of the Jordanians was understandably very negative. The Jordanians were seen, in large measure, as a subset of the Palestinians. Mr. Arafat and the Palestine Liberation

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Organization's open embrace of Iraq led to the curtailment of all transfers of funds to the PLO. And that, ultimately, was one of the factors forcing the PLO to the negotiating table at Oslo with the Israelis.

The Saudi view of the Yemenis was that of someone who has been betrayed by his brother, with a special bitterness reserved for the leadership in Yemen. And the Saudis began to toy with support for secessionist forces in Yemen. Yemen, having united, seemed for a while to be on the verge of disuniting again. So that it made for strange bedfellows, the Saudis ending up by sympathizing with and supporting the former Communist forces in South Yemen, as well as conservative Islamic tribal forces in the far north of North Yemen.

The Saudi view of others was probably somewhat changed for the better.

Iran's behavior during the war was surprisingly benign and cooperative. Iran, I believe, felt that, after the war, it, like Israel, should receive some sort of recompense for its forbearance and self-restraint, which, of course, was not forthcoming. But Iranian behavior was, in effect, rewarded with an improvement in relations between Riyadh and Tehran.

For a time, relations among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states seemed to have improved, and suspicions of Saudi hegemonism, which are always present among the smaller Gulf states, seemed to have somewhat abated. They resumed, however, with a vengeance as the GCC struggled ineffectually to put together a collective security structure and a joint armed force, which it failed to do when proposals by the Sultan of Oman proved to be completely unacceptable to Saudi Arabia and several other GCC states, and Saudi proposals were seen by the others as excessively hegemonistic.

So there were these problems. However, the principal point of friction between the Saudis and us was not over our differences about their relationships with Palestinians, Jordanians, and others in the Arab world, but rather friction over our continuing demands

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on the Saudis for support of various foreign-policy initiatives that we had, in many cases, very remote from Saudi Arabia.

This culminated in July of 1992, on the eve of my departure from Saudi Arabia, with the 52nd such request of the Saudis (the previous 51 all having been ignored and thus rejected) for funding for Armenia, a remarkably strange request in light of the fact that the Saudis were competing in Azerbaijan with the Iranians for influence, and Azerbaijan and Armenia were at war. Therefore, the idea that the Saudis would somehow aid the Armenians was most peculiar.

At any rate, having failed, after several attempts (which tie back to this point about the dispute between the embassy and Washington over the state of Saudi finances), to turn off this flow of uncoordinated and ill-considered requests, I dutifully presented the 52nd request to the vice minister for political affairs, Sheikh Abdurrahman Mansouri, in the following manner.

I came in and said to him that I understood from Washington that the Armenian foreign minister might shortly be visiting Saudi Arabia.

He said, well, that was news to him.

I said, "Well, I'm not sure how my government knows that, but at any rate, they are convinced in Washington that this is going to happen. So let's assume, for the sake of argument, that it is.

He said, "I bet you have a request."

I said, "Well, now that you mention it, I have received a request from Washington. Rather than go through all of the argumentation, let me simply leave my talking points with you as an aide-m#moire, and you can consider that the request has been registered. In due course, I hope for your reaction."

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He took the talking points, set them down on the sofa beside him, and looked at them without reading them. Then he picked them up again, tore them up, and threw them on the floor. He said, "I will give them all the attention they deserve."

I said, "I will report to Washington that you were not enthusiastic, and prospects are dim for a favorable response on this."

In other words, there was a great deal of wear and tear, because analysts in Washington did seem to succeed in continuing to convince the political leadership here that rumors of Saudi financial straits were some kind of special pleading from the embassy in Riyadh rather than a reality.

Q: Also, there seems to be, in Washington, a sort of patronizing attitude toward Saudi Arabia. Is that correct?

FREEMAN: One of the great utilities of Saudi Arabia historically to the United States, as I indicated, was in fact Saudi willingness, as a friend, to be helpful to various causes of importance to the United States, even though they were of no intrinsic importance to Saudi Arabia. I suppose the unexamined presupposition was that this behavior would continue even when the Saudis were broke. But, of course, people in Washington didn't believe they were broke, and couldn't understand why requests for funding of worthy projects, from Argentina to Zambia, both of which countries were mentioned over the course of the 52 requests, would go unanswered. So I think frustration built on both sides. The key to it really was the analytical difference between the embassy and Washington with regard to the state of Saudi finances. So that was a crucial issue.

Q: Obviously, the finance side was of major concern to you, and you were not running the war, but you were having a part in it, and you were sitting there. What was your impression of the atmospherics during the air war?

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FREEMAN: During the air war, Saudi Arabia took 41 Scud attacks. The nights were filled with the explosions of Patriot missiles igniting, followed shortly thereafter by the explosive sound of their crossing the sound barrier, and finally, one hoped, by the explosion of a Patriot warhead against a Scud warhead. I should say, the Patriot was remarkably effective, much more effective, I think, than it is now given credit for being. In some cases, the Patriot intercepted not the warhead but the fuselage of the Scud. In one case, a Patriot actually chased a Scud warhead down a street, and the two of them blew up together in a building.

There were about 100 civilians killed in Riyadh by these attacks. Remarkably, despite the fact that this was fairly widely known in the inner circles of the Saudi establishment, the American and other foreign press presence remained totally unaware of it and did not report it. I think it remains an article of faith and of public record that only one person died of Scud attacks in Riyadh. [See page 18 of Freeman.14] Most of the people who died were not Saudis, but Yemenis, Palestinians, Jordanians, and other nationalities.

But the Scud attacks did take a heavy toll on Saudi morale and on the morale of foreigners in the kingdom. Riyadh lost about a third of its population, which decamped to Jeddah, which was out of range. Dhahran lost an even higher percentage. The Saudi authorities were under tremendous pressure from their own populace to retaliate in kind.

On two occasions, [see page 20 of Freeman.14] Norm Schwarzkopf and I talked the Saudis out of launching their own Chinese-built IRBMs at Baghdad. These are very large missiles that somewhat resemble a blunderbuss in their lack of accuracy. My concern and General Schwarzkopf's concern was that, far from continuing the pattern of coalition pinpoint bombing of military targets, they would land on civilians, cost us the moral high ground, and incur a major propaganda loss, with no real military benefit. So, twice, as I say, in the early morning hours, once, Schwarzkopf, and once, I, with the Saudi defense minister... Sultan bin 'Abd al-'Aziz, managed to convince the Saudis, who were only 20 minutes or so from launching, not to do so. "After all," we argued, "the Royal Saudi Air

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Force is engaged in pinpoint bombing of Iraqi targets, including in Baghdad. Why do you need to fire such a blunt instrument?" In my mind was the thought that whatever deterrent value these missiles had would be greatly degraded if it became apparent how inaccurate they were.

So there was an atmosphere of great tension.

During this whole period, I was essentially living, as I had done earlier, on an aircraft, commuting around the kingdom on an aircraft provided by CENTCOM, but at a less frenetic pace than had been the case prior to the outbreak of the war.

One thing that I did (you asked earlier about embassy morale in this context) was to write our situation reports, our daily SITREPS, to Washington in as entertaining a fashion as possible, sometimes including doggerel and the odd pun or joke.

I can remember reporting an actual incident, for example, in which a Palestinian employee in a local supermarket threw a potato at an American housewife as she was shopping. And I said that we had counseled the American community to beware of Spud attacks.

But the main purpose of doing this was to keep embassy morale up, which I think we did quite successfully.

Q: Back here in the United States, we were treated to a fascinating series of military briefings, showing pinpoint bombing and all this, which later showed, yes, there was this, but there were also other types. It was a selected view of how many tanks were knocked out, etc. What type of briefing, when you were not in the air going someplace, were you getting from the American military? This seemed like a PR-type briefing that the world was subjected to.

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FREEMAN: I don't think it was. I think that the bombing campaign in fact was remarkably precise, with, of course, the exception of B-52s, which are a carpet-bombing device. The efficiency with which ordnance was delivered was extraordinary.

The best proof of this is in the accomplishment of the objective of the bombing campaign; namely, an Iraqi army so demoralized and so attenuated by desertions that it collapsed and willingly surrendered, by and large, to the invading coalition forces when they finally crossed the borders on February 23.

There was a two-day delay in the ground attack, due to two things: a combination of weather and, more particularly, a last-minute intervention in Baghdad by Mr. Primakov of the Soviet Union, as well as a French initiative, which it was felt had to be allowed to die a natural death before the ground attack occurred.

In connection with the ground attack, I began to become very concerned, around the early part of February, about the extent to which the press was violating its guidelines and straying into areas that it was not supposed to be in. [See page 18 of Freeman.14] I was aware, of course, that the plan called for the shift of a massive force to the northwest by some 300 kilometers, and I was concerned that the element of surprise and deception, which was crucial to the success of the battle plan, would be jeopardized by the press stumbling on this movement. So, around February 11, three days before the movement was to close (the movement was to have been completed by February 14, or to close, as the military put it), I met, in one of my regular sessions, with General Schwarzkopf, and I expressed this concern to him. I asked him whether there was anything I could do. I said, "I don't know how the movement is going, and I'd be interested to hear," because the movement was not reported in the daily briefings that we got at the embassy. I knew about it, but other members of the staff did not. So I asked first how it was going, and second, I said, "You know, with regard to the press, if you want, I could probably call my

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Saudi friends and arrange for them to be made guests of some Bedouin tribe, meandering slowing in the direction of Yemen, to just get them out of harm's way.”

He said, “Well, I have good news for you on both counts. First, today, three days early, we have actually completed the movement, and it was successful. There's no indication that the Iraqis are aware of it. Second, you won't believe this, but I have actually been taking the press up to the new locations, 300 kilometers away from where I used to take them, and one part of the desert apparently looks just like another to them, and they have not noticed that they are going 300 kilometers away from where they used to be.”

The day that the ground attack began, which kicked off at about four o'clock in the morning, I went down around six in the morning to Schwarzkopf's command center in the subbasement of the Ministry of Defense and Aviation in Saudi Arabia, and was present during some very interesting and somewhat histrionic examples of the famous Schwarzkopf temper, as he spoke with various commanders, whom I also knew and who were friends and for whom I felt very sorry.

His temper had never been in evidence in my presence before, but I was very well aware of it. You know, there are different ways of leading. His manner of leading was very much in the mode of tirades, uncompromising demands, castigation, and criticism, which is not my style, but, in fairness to Norm Schwarzkopf, it produced a fantastic result, and results really are what count. My own relationship with him, as I've indicated, was one of great cordiality, friendship, cooperation, and, I think, mutual admiration. So this element of his personality never intruded on our relationship; it only affected the many other people of whom I was fond who were subordinate to him.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point. We've really talked about up to the ground war, and I'd like to pick up with some of the reaction to the 100 hours or so of the ground war. Also, any input you or others might have put into the peace terms with the Iraqis, and how they were evaluated by you and maybe from other embassies, and also the aftermath of the

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war. We've talked at length about going again and again for financing, so probably we don't have to cover that again. But let's talk about, other than the financing, the aftermath of the war and the reaction in Saudi Arabia and with the ruling class and that sort of thing.

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Chas, other than finance, let's talk about when the ground war started. Were you or others talking to General Schwarzkopf, saying, for God's sake, make sure that the Saudis get credit, as well as the Egyptians, the Syrians, and others? In other words, there was more at stake than just getting the Iraqis out of Kuwait.

FREEMAN: Oh, indeed. I had had many conversations with him on that subject, and he had arranged the final stage of the battle plan in such a way that Saudi and Arab coalition forces would capture Kuwait City and appear in the main square in Kuwait City as the liberators of Kuwait. He very deliberately contrived the battle in such a way that, regardless of what those forces (meaning Saudi, Egyptian, primarily, and Syrian forces) actually did in the fighting, they would get the photo opportunity. Indeed, that is pretty much what happened. So I think everyone was pleased about that.

When the ground war kicked off, I was asleep. It was four o'clock in the morning. However, very early after that, I went down to Schwarzkopf's bunker under the Ministry of Defense and Aviation, and was present to hear him begin to rearrange the battle plan in response to the unexpected extent to which we had softened the Iraqis with our aerial bombardment. I was there the following day, when he was having enormous difficulty with the Egyptians, whose top-down Soviet planning style made them very inflexible and unable to adjust tactically to developments on the ground. Also, he was quite upset by the slow pace of movement by General Franks.

Q: General Franks was...

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FREEMAN: He was the commander of the Army group [VII Corps] that was, in effect, at the center, moving directly along the Kuwait-Iraq border. The two flanks, that is, the so-called Hail Mary, the northwest advance toward the Euphrates, went splendidly, faster than had been expected. It was the longest tank drive in the shortest period of time in history, and it resulted in the largest tank battle in history, all of it off camera, and not, therefore, much acknowledged.

Q: Was it larger than the battle of Kursk?

FREEMAN: Larger than the battle of Kursk. In one night, Tom Rhame, who was later the head of the U.S. military training mission in Riyadh and director of the Defense Security Assistance Agency, but then commanded an armored division [1st Infantry Division], killed more than 400 Iraqi T-72 tanks.

At the same time, Schwarzkopf was having some trouble restraining the Saudi National Guard forces from a too-speedy advance along the Kuwait coast, in the direction of Kuwait City.

Of course, the extent of the Iraqi surrender and the number of prisoners of war that had to be handled was vastly in excess of what anyone had expected, so there was an enormous problem of moving Iraqi forces back out of the line of advance, disarming them, interning them, and so forth.

I followed that closely, and it was clear that the war was going to end shortly, and to end, as I had indicated earlier, without the benefit of a clear statement of war aims. Schwarzkopf and I were in doubt as to whether there was in fact a war-termination strategy. I asked orally, and he asked many times in writing, I believe, as well as orally, for instructions on a surrender negotiation, and never received them.

In the middle of all this, I happened to be present in his office at the Ministry of Defense and Aviation, which was well above ground, when he spoke with Colin Powell, who was in

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the Oval Office. Colin called to ask, basically, how Norm Schwarzkopf viewed the idea of “the hundred-hour war,” meaning hundred-hour ground war, something which the White House was thinking of, I think, exclusively in terms of political packaging.

Q: Yes, sounds good.

FREEMAN: Sounds good. Of course, the war was not a hundred-hour war, because it was a combined-arms action and had been going on for well over 40 days. But it was clear from that conversation (I think the president was in the room with Colin Powell, together with various political spin doctors) that the main focus of the White House was on packaging the victory for electoral advantage.

Schwarzkopf said, in effect, and somewhat wryly, given everything that had gone before, which I've described, “Well, you know, the only thing I was asked to do was to liberate Kuwait. That I have done. If you gave me another 24 hours, I could finish off the Republican Guard. But I've done enormous and perhaps sufficient damage to them. Therefore, since I've done what I've been asked to do, I'm not in a position to object.”

There was a short discussion between Colin Powell and him about the desirability of avoiding another Wounded Knee (Wounded Knee being a black moment in the history of the U.S. Army when the Army massacred an Indian force that had essentially capitulated).

Q: Sioux, I think, wasn't it?.

FREEMAN: Yes, Dakota, I think. [Teton Sioux]

But essentially the decision was made on political grounds. And Schwarzkopf did not object, although he did register the point that, given a little more time, he could do a great deal more damage and cut off the Republican Guard completely from retreat across the pontoons north of Basra.

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So, indeed, a cease fire was declared, early in the morning of February 28.

Then the question was, as we looked to a meeting at Safwan with the Iraqi generals, what demands would be made of them. To my consternation, and to Schwarzkopf's complete bewilderment and anger, he was given no instructions whatsoever for that meeting.

Therefore, the only meeting between the coalition forces and the defeated Iraqi forces was restricted to military technical matters, specifically three issues. First, where the line of control lay. And I think the Iraqis were astonished to find how far the coalition forces had actually advanced into their territory. Second, how prisoners of war and missing in action were to be handled by both sides. And, third, restrictions on overflight of southern Iraq by the Iraqi forces.

In any event, I think the results of the failure to devise a war-termination strategy were very far reaching. I imagine that the Iraqi generals must have gone out of that tent at Safwan having great difficulty restraining a broad smile. They must have assumed that one term that would have been laid on them, at a minimum, would be a requirement for a meeting between their government and the governments of the coalition forces or the United States or the U.N., at least someone representing the coalition forces, to arrange the terms of a permanent cease fire and, in effect, some sort of Iraqi capitulation.

The fact that no such meeting was requested or ever took place meant that the United Nations, several days later, ex post facto, defined war aims, to include reparations; demarcation of the Iraq-Kuwait border; an intrusive inspection regime to eliminate some elements of the Iraqi armaments industry, especially those related to weapons of mass destruction; a series of further restrictions on the movement of Iraqi forces within Iraq; and so forth. But Iraq never was compelled to agree to these explicitly, and since it did not accept these terms and has not really felt bound by them, it has cheated ever since.

The second major consequence of the failure to insist on a political negotiation to end the war was, in effect, that the war never ended. The military disgrace that we had visited on

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the Iraqi armed forces was not translated into political humiliation for Saddam Hussein. He was, in effect, able to stand in Baghdad and declare that he had survived the worst that the world could throw against him, and was a man of great staying power, strength, and formidable political skills. In a sense, much as Gamal Abdel Nasser did after the Suez Crisis, he was able to transform a military defeat into a kind of political vindication, with the result that he remains to this day in power in Baghdad, plotting revenge against the House of Saud in Saudi Arabia, the Americans, and others who injured him. Therefore, as I say, the Gulf War, in a sense, never ended.

All of this, I think, is an extraordinary lapse on the part of the American-led coalition, which could have easily been remedied.

I think it was not remedied mainly because of the speed with which our attention (that is, the attention of political Washington) turned from the war to the task of bringing the troops home and getting on with the 1992 election. This must be unique among wars in that it produced no clear political result, despite the ample opportunity to do so.

Q: Looking at it as a system, Chas, how you felt at the time and then comment looking at it overall. You have a war where obviously at a certain point it's up to the generals to say, Your troops go here, you go there, this is how we fight it. But a peace, cease fire, end of a war is a political act. It's not only a political act, but it's an international political act. It would seem here that the secretary of state, who apparently got along well with George Bush, and George Bush, who had certain qualifications in the international field, and I think he should be given full credit for putting together this unlikely alliance, it seems like they just went into a coma. We're not talking about something that happened in a hundred days. From early December, we knew we were going to go to war. One of the lessons that's always learned is, well, God, you've got to figure out what you're after and what kind of a world you want and all that.

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FREEMAN: I think you really would have to ask people who served in Washington during that period for an explanation of this lapse.

I was, as I say, horrified, disgusted with the absence. I was totally astonished. It had never occurred to me that we could go to the end of the fighting without a political strategy for translating military victory into political victory.

Norm Schwarzkopf, as I say, was enormously frustrated, because, like all well-trained members of the U.S. military, he believed very strongly that generals implement policy, they don't make it. And he was asking for a statement of policy that never came. Just before he went to Safwan, he called me to ask if I had had any success.

I had to tell him that I had, in effect, shot my wad some time ago on this with a series of cables, to which I referred, arguing for a war-termination strategy. That I was not the ambassador of the United States to the region. That this was, as you just said, a major international issue and a regional issue. That the question of what terms the United States should demand from Iraq, which was something on which I had pronounced myself earlier, was, in effect, above my pay grade at this point. And that if his own efforts, through Colin Powell and others at the Pentagon, to obtain clarity of terms had failed, there was really nothing I could do. I asked him whether he had received any instruction or indication that he should ask for a follow-on meeting at the diplomatic level, and he said he had not. I was simply appalled, but there was nothing I could do.

Now why this happened, as I say, I think it was a combination of all of the factors I've discussed before. The focus in Washington, which was a successful focus, as you point out, was on the nurturing and sustenance of several interlocking coalitions: between the White House and Congress; between the United States and the United Nations Security Council; within the Council; between the Security Council and Arab and Islamic allies led by Saudi Arabia; within the Western alliance, NATO in particular; and between the United States and Japan. All of these coalitions were delicate and subject to collapse. And

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I suppose that the habit of avoiding potentially controversial statements or appearing to impose an American agenda on the coalition had become so ingrained that the momentum of this, in my view pernicious, habit simply carried us through this crucial moment.

In any event, that's what happened. Not having been in Washington or in the U.S., I can't begin to explain it.

Q: You were mentioning your deluge of visitors. Two people with whom you might have had discussions on this would be James Baker, secretary of state, and maybe somebody within his group, and then John Kelly, who was the assistant secretary for Near East and South Asian affairs. Did either of these discuss this with you at any time when they came to visit?

FREEMAN: They did not. I raised it with them, with Secretary Baker, with Secretary Cheney, with Colin Powell. As I say, I had put my thoughts in writing, in fact, sending a telegram, I believe, in a very restricted channel, in November of 1990, called "Defining Victory," the first line of which, as I recall, was something like, "The first thing you should ask yourself when you prepare to start a war or launch an offensive is how you propose to end it, with whom will you negotiate, what terms will you insist upon, why should the other side regard those terms as superior to fighting on or to cheating on the truce," or words to that effect. And I had gone on to try to describe the requirement, without, I must say, getting into an excessive level of detail, because it seemed to me that my vantage point in Riyadh was naturally skewed in a certain direction, and that my superiors in Washington would have a more complete and well-grounded set of ideas.

So, certainly the issue had been registered, and I knew from people at the time that there were many good minds in Washington wrestling with the question. A lot of papers written, a lot of meetings held. The fact that they came to no fruition, it seems to me, reflects some sort of mental vacuum at the top that I can't explain.

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Q: What about the role of James Baker? Did you feel, particularly during this period, any particular hand on the helm there?

FREEMAN: I think his principal concerns, which he managed brilliantly, were the construction of the multiple coalitions that I mentioned and, in particular, the management of the inside-the-Beltway coalition, which was, in many respects, the most fragile and subject to collapse.

Q: The congressional vote was extremely close. It got sort of quasi-political as far as who was supporting...

FREEMAN: That focus, on Secretary Baker's part, explains the difference of view that we had on the level of exaction that was appropriate to take from Saudi Arabia, which you and I discussed last time. He was focused on a war that did not require congressional appropriations, although, in the end, he had to accept that even though the money was not coming from the United States, there should be an authorization by Congress.

Q: I've just finished interviewing Jim Bishop, talking about having to be evacuated from Somalia. We were talking about how crises were dealt with in the Department of State and beyond. And he said, and this is clear from other interviews I've had with people who've been involved in crises, that, at a certain point, the people in the field are moved out, and the operators take over within Washington. And it's usually: Who's going to pay? What do we tell Congress? What about the media? What does this mean politically? And very little about: Is there a road from A to B and how do we do this? I'm talking more about diplomatic crises, of embassies under siege or something like this.

FREEMAN: That's entirely true, and was certainly the case throughout the nine-month course of the Gulf War, and was reflected in some of the frustrations, which I have expressed earlier, with regard to, oh, matters as mundane as chemical warfare, briefings, and protection for American citizens in the war zone. It meant that, while you could have

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input from the field, you were not present at the discussions. The French have a proverb that nicely states a consequence of that. They say, "Les absents ont toujours tort," the absent are always wrong. If you're not at the table, by definition you are subject to blame, but get no credit for whatever you have contributed. That is the lot of an ambassador in the field in circumstances like this, and it simply has to be accepted and endured silently.

Q: What was your impression of the role of Colin Powell? He was not only chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, he had been national security advisor and had been around a long time, right in the conning tower of the government of the United States. So his wasn't, or shouldn't have been, just a military role. Did you have any feel for him as far as how he...

FREEMAN: I think, perhaps because he took a political path to the chairmanship, he continually evidenced great caution in his approach to the possibility of an attack on the Iraqi occupying forces, and was very much concerned about the domestic impact of failure.

In the event, of course, he presided, I think with great skill at his end, over one of the most stunning military victories of all history, a victory that restored to the U.S. armed forces the prestige that had been stripped from them by the Vietnam War and, in some sense, before that, the Korean War. The professional army that emerged from the Nixon reforms, and the decision to go to an all-volunteer army, and the hard work that a whole generation of military leadership did to professionalize the armed forces paid off, in the sense that the unparalleled professionalism of the American armed forces, which really is at a level not seen before in history, was vindicated in this extraordinary victory.

So Colin's caution may have been a salutary thing, but in the end, I believe, it was Norm Schwarzkopf's battle plan that deserves the principal credit for all of the good political effects on the armed forces that I referred to.

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Q: During the ground war and the aftermath, the lack of a defined peace, were you getting any reflections from your colleagues in the other diplomatic services in Riyadh that they were trying to figure out what the hell was going on?

FREEMAN: The principal and most active and adroit allied participants, of course, were the British. They have a long history of military muddle and political acumen, which have taken indifferent performance on the battlefield by their generals, combined it with the bravery of the common soldier in the armed forces and the political skill of their political class, and snatched victory from things that hardly were deserving of that name. And I think that they were enormously frustrated by effectively being cut out of the process. The process that you cite Jim Bishop as describing was very much operative, and there was little room in that for consultation with allies, still less accepting advice from allies, as we went forward. As I say, the whole focus was on the packaging of victory for domestic political effect, rather than the consolidation of victory for the post-war order in the Gulf.

Now, just to continue this theme beyond Safwan, there had been a great deal of work done by CENTCOM, located forward with my embassy, and members of my embassy had long discussions between Schwarzkopf and myself about exactly what sort of post-war order we should wish to see, what end state we should desire after the conclusion of the fighting in the Gulf. And we had a series of ideas. One was that we should use the warm glow of victory to reach understandings with our Gulf allies, particularly with the Saudis, on a package of actions that would preclude the need for long-term stationing of U.S. forces in the Gulf, but provide the area with the stability that it had apparently lost after the end of the Iran-Iraq War.

The measures that we envisaged included, first, some assistance and brokering of a more effective collective security element to the Gulf Cooperation Council, which is a very loosely organized group of the six Gulf states, without much coherence. We hoped to persuade the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council that, in their own interest, they should establish some common military institutions and train together to raise the

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threshold at which they would have to call for help from external allies. This was the first objective.

A second was to ensure that there was, in effect, a three-tier defense structure: beginning with self-reliance by the GCC as a group; backstopped, as a second tier, by regional allies, especially Egypt, but conceivably Syria as well if it were prepared to play a constructive role, perhaps Pakistan, which could come to the aid of the GCC, with the United States perhaps performing a logistical role, but not a direct combat role; and third, and only in case of dire need, resort to the deployment of U.S., British, and other non-Arabic, non-Islamic forces to the region. This was the concept.

The final point was that, in order to make this structure operate, we envisaged the development of a comprehensive plan for prepositioning of war material and equipment in the region, which would enable U.S. forces to arrive, get into their tanks and aircraft, and go instantly into action, which would therefore preclude the need for U.S. forces to remain in the area, because they would come periodically and exercise this capacity, but not hang around in the interim. So, in other words, we would maintain a presence by demonstrating our ability to reconstitute it on very short notice and to make it effective on the battlefield.

These were the concepts that we developed. Many of them became declared policy after the war. But all of them were severely undercut by the absence of attention from Washington. In the case of prepositioned equipment, a kind of overreaching by Washington, which was most unseemly and counterproductive, ultimately resulted in the absence of any agreed plan.

In other words, post-war, the United States did not act effectively to cement the GCC military coalition that the war had produced. We did not consult effectively with our Arab allies on making the Damascus Declaration, which provided the Egyptian and Syrian backing potentially for the GCC, effective. And we did not put forward either a comprehensive plan or a realistic one that fairly balanced cost and benefit with our

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potential allies in the Gulf for prepositioning. So that we ended up, in effect, with nothing. To this day, the GCC is a big shell with a very small snail inside it. The Egyptians and Syrians have faded away. And, far from having left the Gulf, we are there in such large numbers as to be a destabilizing political influence and an attractive target for terrorism.

Q: You say our overreaching on the prepositioning. What do you mean by that?

FREEMAN: Schwarzkopf and I, knowing the Saudi preference for succinct, general statements, drew up a very short umbrella agreement to cover post-war military cooperation, including prepositioning. It was about a page, page and a half. And we sent it to Washington for approval. The idea was that we would get, at a very senior level, an agreement on this text, which we would then follow up with detailed negotiations to implement the agreement later. What we needed was a political stamp of approval at a high level, and we needed to get that before post-war tristesse set in, in the Gulf.

That ran afoul of the not-invented-here syndrome. Platoons of DOD lawyers, State Department desk officers, and various people in the office of the secretary of defense conspired to produce a sort of debenture-like, detailed document.

In the end, Dick Cheney went to Saudi Arabia. Somehow, on the aircraft, Paul Wolfowitz, I believe, the under secretary of defense for policy, managed to persuade Dick Cheney that he should ask the Saudis to buy equipment already in the U.S. inventory, at their expense, and store it, at their expense, in the desert, with assurances that they could not use it, but that U.S. forces that arrived would. I talked to Dick Cheney by telephone before he left. I was here in Washington, taking a little bit of time off from a pretty harrowing experience, and I did not return with him. But I understand that the meetings with the Saudis and others did not begin at the level of generality that was required. There was a series of presuppositions made, that the Saudis would understand the utility of preposition, that they would want it, and that they would be willing to pay for it. As I mentioned, the reporting that I was doing, suggesting that the Saudis were broke, was not taken seriously

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in Washington; in fact, it was derided in many quarters. So, somehow on the plane, a modest scheme became an enormous demand. And, as I understand it, the meeting began with Dick Cheney introducing an admiral, who said, Well, we need 5,000 square feet of air-conditioned storage space, and we will have to store 1,300,000 tent pegs, and we will have this and that, and you are going to pay for it all.

The result was, of course, that the Saudis said, Nothing doing. This looks like a permanent U.S. presence. You agreed with us that there would be no such thing. And we're not going to do it.

This was pursued first with Prince Sultan bin Abd al-Aziz, who is the minister of defense and aviation and the second deputy prime minister of Saudi Arabia, and then later with the king, both of whom, in a very polite Saudi way, rejected the notion.

At the same time, this debenture-like agreement on the sort of occupation-style status-of-forces agreement and other things was presented.

And when I objected, a few days later we were allowed to present the umbrella agreement that we had proposed. But by then, of course, it had, in effect, been superseded by this far more ambitious and frightening agenda (frightening to the Saudis).

That, basically, in my view, killed any prospect of getting what should have been, in the interests of both Saudi Arabia and the United States, a much more modest package in which costs would have been shared.

There was a follow up. Dick Clark, who I think was then the assistant secretary for political-military affairs at the Department of State, came out for another run at this, probably around June of 1991, and basically was told the same thing that the Cheney mission had been told, with the specific exception that Prince Sultan, with whom he met, said that Saudi Arabia would agree to a very limited prepositioning for the U.S. Air Force, and an even more drastically limited prepositioning for the U.S. Navy and Marines, and that was it.

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Clarke then attempted, after that meeting, for some reason, to reverse Prince Sultan's decision with Prince Sultan's subordinates, which, of course, was not going to go anywhere.

Dick Clarke is an exceedingly able Washington operative, a very bright man and very effective in the Washington context. But, in the context of this international intercultural negotiation, he was very off-putting. One of the key Saudis on the other side remarked to me later that this was the only occasion in his life when he'd been tempted to use his ceremonial dagger.

So we continued to try locally to pick up the pieces and produce an agreement. In fact, we did get pretty close to an agreement by the end of the summer of 1991, only to be told by Washington that we had been acting without adequate instruction, and that they needed to restudy everything that we had worked out with the Saudis. That cost about a year. The result is that, to this day, there has been no closure on what could have been a very useful and mutually advantageous, if modest, prepositioning of equipment for the Air Force and the Navy, if not for the Army.

In the event, to leap ahead, CENTCOM has been forced to scurry around in the Gulf and get what it can. And the pattern of prepositioned material that has emerged is militarily irrational, to say the least.

The Army has prepositioned a great deal of material for a division basically in Qatar. And Qatar is a sort of sandspit that sticks into the Arabian Gulf 500 miles south of Kuwait. That is not where you need to have Army material.

We are continuing to operate Air Force and naval installations and a presence on a large scale in Saudi Arabia, with no agreement with the Saudis on this, basically on sufferance. The Saudis continue to pay for that presence, but not under any agreement, so they could terminate that at any moment.

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We have begun to use the United Arab Emirates as the principal port of call for the United States Navy, but have been unable to get an agreement with Abu Dhabi on the terms of reference or status-of-forces arrangement that is mutually satisfactory.

We have established a Fifth Fleet with headquarters in Bahrain, partly by sleight of hand, with a wink and a nod from the Saudis, but without, in my view, an adequate regional underpinning of acceptance for this operation.

We have had a roller coaster in our relationship with Oman, reflecting the collapse of the foreign-assistance program, more generally, and the inability of the United States to make good on commitments to Oman to provide foreign assistance that would offset some of the pain, suffering, and costs of a very large prepositioning package that has been in Oman since 1980.

So we have, in effect, a kind of Rube Goldberg military presence cobbled together in the region, which is something that CENTCOM, being a very competent and ingenious organization, can probably make work, under most circumstances, but not all. This is not an ideal result. It's certainly very far from what we had conceived during the war, as I say, partly, probably, because of the pressure of different bureaucratic forces and political forces in Washington far removed from the area and from what is feasible on the ground in the Gulf.

Q: For the historian of the future, Rube Goldberg was a cartoonist who made up fantastic, sort of homemade inventions, which would turn an alarm clock on, for instance, with lots of pulleys and all, an almost amusing type of construction.

FREEMAN: It's an extremely elaborate, improbable, and inefficient way of accomplishing a desired result, basically.

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Q: Did you find that, after the war was over with Iraq, there was an immediate turning of the searchlight of your concern toward Iran and whither Iran?

FREEMAN: No, on the contrary. Iran had behaved with great responsibility and restraint throughout the war. Clearly, Iran expected that it, like Israel, would be rewarded for good behavior. If that was its expectation, however, Tehran was sorely disappointed. The political image in the United States of Tehran as the site of hostage-taking and mad mullahs made any incentive to improve relations with Iran that we might have had quite beside the point, especially in the context of an election campaign.

The concern that I had in the region shifted immediately, rather, to two points, which were related: first, the absence of a policy with regard to the Shi'a rebellion in southern Iraq; and, second, the related issue of how to deal with prisoners of war and interned civilians from Iraq who were in the occupied area of southern Iraq.

Now when I say 'the absence of policy,' what I mean is that, since we had not defined the desired end state in Iraq, and since we had all assumed, including myself, erroneously, that Saddam would fall from power under the military licking that we had given him, we didn't know what to do when rebellion broke out both in the north among the Kurds and in the south among the Shi'a.

In the north, Turkish pressure to end the intolerable situation that was created by a massive flow of Kurdish refugees into southwestern Turkey forced the development of what became known as Provide Comfort, a relief and sanctuary operation for the Kurds.

In the south of Iraq, the Shi'a rebellion, which had some assistance from Iran, was the subject of great confusion. Privately, the Saudis, very early on, began to press very hard, through me and directly in Washington, for a joint Saudi-American program of assistance to the Shi'a. The Saudis, despite their distaste for the Shi'a religiously, had come to the conclusion, correctly, I believe, that Iraqi Shi'a are Iraqi Arabs first and Shi'a second. They

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had certainly shown that in the conflict between Iraq and Iran. Nor did the Saudis wish to leave the field to the Iranians. And they saw support for the Shi'a rebellion as the key to dislodging Saddam Hussein from power.

It was six months, however, between March 1991, when the rebellion began, and September 1991 before Washington could muster a reply to these requests. By that time, the Shi'a rebellion had been crushed.

In the interim, in the absence of instructions, or perhaps carrying out instructions of which I was unaware, our military occupying southern Iraq, up through about June of 1991, routinely disarmed and interned any Shi'a who came across the line of control, thus draining the rebellion of its most effective military support. The United States destroyed vast arsenals of Iraqi weaponry, including weaponry taken from the Shi'a rebels. Some of that weaponry was removed quietly and provided to the mujahideen in Afghanistan, but most of it was simply destroyed. So, in effect, whatever our intentions, from an objective point of view, we were allied with Saddam in suppressing the Shi'a rebellion, contrary to Saudi desires.

The newspapers, throughout this period, perhaps reflecting some sort of superior wisdom being leaked from Washington, continued to allege that the main reason we weren't helping the Shi'a was because the Saudis objected to our doing so, which was 180 degrees off the truth.

In any event, as the occupation of southern Iraq ended, the question immediately arose: What do we do with the Iraqi Shi'a civilians and fighters who had been interned?

Now many of these people had come over voluntarily to the area of coalition occupation, and had served as interpreters or otherwise assisted the occupation forces, and were subject to the death penalty for treasonous behavior if they came back under Baghdad's control.

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I, therefore, insisted very strongly, first with the Saudis and then with the United States, that these Iraqi rebels should be removed to a refugee camp in Saudi Arabia, and that the United States, having disarmed them and taken custody of them, should continue to exercise some degree of responsibility for their well being.

The Saudis were very reluctant to do this. It is rather as though a large group of Irish Catholic partisans of Sinn Fein were given sanctuary in Ulster, if one knows the feeling between Wahhabi Sunni Saudis and Shi'a Iraqis.

Nevertheless, the Saudis agreed, in an important humanitarian gesture, and built a very, by normal Third-World standards, luxurious refugee camp, up in the deserts of northern Saudi Arabia, in which to intern both the POWs who had not been repatriated and didn't wish to be, and those refugees from the Shi'a population who were in the custody of the coalition.

Then there ensued a lengthy battle with Washington, in this case with the Bureau of Refugee Programs, which was not resolved until Princeton Lyman, the then-assistant secretary for refugee programs, came out to Saudi Arabia.

The battle was this, that I and my embassy insisted that the United States had a responsibility vis-à-vis these refugees. That that had to include some effort to arrange resettlement, if not in the United States, then elsewhere. That we could not, in good conscience, either leave these Iraqi Shi'a in the custody of Saudis who were religiously antipathetic to them, or simply abandon them to their fate. That we had a direct and active role to take.

Obviously, resettling in the United States former enemy aliens was not a popular thing, and I can understand the reluctance of political Washington to respond to this.

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In the end, finally, we did. And, as you are probably aware, there are now large numbers from among this Iraqi refugee population who have been resettled here and in Iran, primarily.

Now one sort of entertaining byline on all this was a revelation about the manner in which some of our allies conduct arms sales to Saudi Arabia. When the Saudis were building the refugee camp at Rifia'h, they needed 1,000 kilometers of field-grade telephone wire to connect communications from the camp and within it. Their normal supplier, the British, under the al-Amamah arrangements, was unable to supply that, because they had exhausted their supplies during the course of the war. So the Saudis came to us, and we rummaged around in the stocks of the European Command, which, of course, was beginning to dismantle a large part of the U.S. presence in Europe. And we came up with the required 1,000 kilometers of field-grade telephone wire. We also presented an invoice, a bill.

Two days later, the Saudi Ministry of Defense and Aviation came back to us, in a great state of anxiety, and said that they thought there was some fundamental mistake with the invoice.

We said, "Well, what is it?"

They said, "Well, this is only ten percent of what we normally pay."

And we said, "Well, this is what it costs."

If you think about it for a minute, you can imagine what a premium of that sort could be used for, in terms of kickbacks, rake-offs, ripoffs, profiteering, and the like.

So that was an interesting sidelight on some of the relationships that Saudi Arabia has internationally, which often ace out American defense contractors.

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Q: Going back to the Shi'a revolt in southern Iraq. What were you getting from the Saudis, and could you explain a little about what they were saying to you and what you were passing on?

FREEMAN: From many sources, but primarily from the foreign-intelligence side of the Saudi Arabian government, there were increasingly anxious, escalating requests for, first, American support for these Shi'a, in several forms, one of which, I believe, eventually was answered positively, although, as I said, six months late. And that was support in the form of a propaganda outlet for the Iraqi opposition to Saddam Hussein. But, beyond that, they wanted military training, equipment, and the usual sorts of support that one would offer an insurgency, to be provided to the Shi'a.

As I say, these requests fell on deaf ears in Washington, perhaps because they were counterintuitive in terms of what Washington thought the Saudis might want, perhaps because they were in extremely restricted channels, naturally, as such requests always are, perhaps because the principal objective of Washington was to put the Gulf behind it as it moved toward the 1992 election. But, for whatever reason, the requests, which were serious requests, and which, as I say, were fairly constantly reiterated both to me and directly by very senior members of the royal family in Washington, were not answered.

As they were not answered, a sort of tone of desperation crept into the requests. But, by mid-summer, it tapered off, as it was apparent that Saddam had successfully crushed the rebellion.

The American focus at the time, to the extent there was one, was on the Kurds, where General Shalikashvili, acting for the European Command, was operating a very successful repatriation of Kurds to northern Iraq and a resettlement program for those Kurds in a protected zone of northern Iraq. The continued condition of the Kurds is another subject.

But no one was apparently prepared to come to grips with this group of Shi'a in the south.

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Q: There is sort of a policy that has been articulated, I think, that no matter how you do it, Iraq is one of these entities that was put together, a bunch of tribes following a flag type. and that there isn't really an Iraq that's always been there. And that if you allow the Shi'as to break loose, you could have an Iraq breaking into essentially three parts: a Kurdish north, a Shi'a south, and something in the middle around Baghdad. And this would leave Iran the predominant power. That would not be in our interest, because you want an Iraq to offset an Iran. Was this a matter of consideration at the time, in 1991, from the Saudis or anyone else?

FREEMAN: That view is certainly one that I share, and those concerns I also share. And I had articulated them at the outset of the war, as I believe I mentioned. That is, that the one primary objective that should be kept in mind was the preservation of the territorial integrity of Iraq, precisely because of its importance as a factor in the regional balance of power, especially vis-#-vis Iran. So I agreed completely with that.

The difficulty with the application of that thesis to the Shi'a rebellion was that the Shi'a were not attempting to secede from Iraq or establish a separate Shi'a state. They were focused on overthrowing Saddam and participating in national politics in Baghdad. So there was no inherent inconsistency between the two.

Now it is true that if the Kurds, who are Sunni, are removed from the Iraqi equation, the Shi'a, who constitute about 60 percent of the Iraqi population, would exercise a dominant influence in Iraqi politics. But if the Saudis, who are the great skeptics about Shi'a Islam, were prepared to accept the possibility of greater Shi'a influence in Baghdad, it seemed to me it ill-behooved the United States to object. Nor did I believe that support for the Shi'a would necessarily have led in any way to the weakening of the Iraqi state.

Now it is conceivable that the Shi'a might well have made common cause with the Kurds in demanding a more federal structure within Iraq. But I also fail to see why that is inherently

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objectionable. After all, the United States is a federal structure, and we find that it works well for us as a means of allowing a high measure of local autonomy and experimentation.

I think the real answer is that serious consideration at a high level was simply not given to the issue. So the arguments that I've just stated and you've just stated were, in a sense, beside the point, because there was no willingness to pay attention to the issue. That, of course, in fact, may or may not have been the right decision. I simply note that we didn't have a policy. And that the public appearance of Saudi opposition to the rebellion in southern Iraq was incorrect; that, in fact, they had quite a contrary view. And that we failed to give it even a response, still less, apparently, adequate consideration.

Q: I would have thought there would have been a little bit of concern on the Saudi side about doing anything with the Shi'as, because they had a significant minority of Shi'a in the eastern province, where all their oil is. Did that come up at all in any discussions you had?

FREEMAN: Frankly, I was surprised by the willingness of the Saudis to put aside their religious doctrinal differences with Iraqi Shi'a and advocate support for them. Typically, in the history of the region, when a strong dynasty, the first al-Saud Dynasty, the second, the third, arises in Saudi Arabia, one of its first acts is to go smash the Shi'a shrines in southern Iraq. And there's certainly no love lost between the Saudi Wahhabi adherents and their Shi'a fellow Arabs in Iraq. Nevertheless, whatever concern there might have been about the impact on Shi'a in Hofuf and the eastern province apparently was swept aside by considerations of realpolitik.

Q: It sounds like there was really a very sophisticated world view by the Saudis, at the leadership level.

FREEMAN: I have great respect for the political acumen and prudence of the Saudi leadership. It is a leadership with an enormous depth of experience, great continuity, and a fine intuitive grasp of the political-military environment surrounding the kingdom. It is a successful leadership, which sometimes makes errors of judgment, but, more often than

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not, has a good sense of what it wants to accomplish, and has been able, by enlisting American competence, with Saudi money, to accomplish much of what it wants to do.

I think that, in this case, the Saudis were very frustrated by the absence of American willingness to join them in a common endeavor. As I say, later, this was to some extent repaired, but by that time, it was, in effect, nugatory, because the Baghdad regime had effectively reconsolidated its control of the south.

Q: Was there anything such as a conference of the American chiefs of mission of the Middle East, to get together at some point, sit down, and say, well, where are we going to go now?

FREEMAN: That's a splendid idea, which didn't happen.

Q: I asked the question, but I knew the answer. Was there any noise about doing this?

FREEMAN: I don't recall any great interest on the part of Washington in convening such a meeting. I've recounted the difficulty that those of us in the Gulf had trying to put together such a meeting on the eve of the war, and the really rather paltry results that came from that, as an essentially irrelevant meeting was organized as a diversionary tactic by people in Washington concerned about losing control over their ambassadors in the field. So it wasn't something that anyone Washington particularly wished to hear.

Q: We've talked about some of the major things. When did you leave Saudi Arabia?

FREEMAN: I left Saudi Arabia in August of 1992.

I would say that the remaining period, that is, from the fall of '91 through the late summer of '92, was dominated, first, by the endless stream of sometimes ill-considered monetary demands that I described, by the dispute between the embassy and Washington over whether Saudi Arabia indeed was in financial difficulty or not, and by a number of other subjects. I spent a great deal of time during that period working to promote U.S.

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commercial interests, which is something I'd given great attention to before the war, but not much during it, especially the sale of new aircraft to Saudia, the Saudi Arabian national airline, and in coping with the internal political aftermath of the war, which was a definite swing in Saudi public opinion toward radical Islamic activism. It was clear that the war catalyzed a more open division between cosmopolitan elements and nativist elements in Saudi Arabia. There was a great surge in activity by religious vigilantes that affected the American community in Saudi Arabia, and a great deal of quasi-consular work was done by me.

The second area of concentration was in foreign-policy terms. I guess there were two. One was continuation of the effort I had been making to produce a happy ending for the joint venture in support of the mujahideen in Afghanistan. We had been very eager to have the Saudis in at the takeoff, and I thought we should be appropriately considerate and consultative at the moment of landing, if we were to preserve a relationship that had historically been very important to both countries. And I registered some success with the Central Intelligence Agency, less with the State Department, in moving that way.

Q: What did you mean by that?

FREEMAN: What I meant was that we had had a set of agreed objectives in Afghanistan in terms of removing the Soviets. The Soviets had gone from Afghanistan. Afghanistan was, however, in a state of chaos and confusion. The Saudis, in many instances, had gotten too close, in my view, for their own comfort, or ours, to radical Islamic groups among the Afghan mujahideen. The Pakistani intelligence service that we both cooperated with in funneling assistance to the mujahideen was, in effect, playing us off against each other. Whereas there should have been a sense of accomplishment and pride in a job well done, coupled with some agreed process for managing it down and phasing it out, there was instead an absence of consultation, and a bit of ill will and a sense of working at cross purposes developing. And I thought it was important to try to mitigate that. As I say, I think, with some support from the Central Intelligence Agency and a lot of work by

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my colleague in Pakistan, Bob Oakley, we did manage to mitigate the effects, but not to resolve the issue.

The final issue that was important, but not an easy task, was enlisting Saudi support for the Madrid peace process; that is to say, Saudi support in the form of diplomatic representations and the usual diplomatic payoffs to various Arab parties to the Arab-Israeli peace process, aiming at a conference at which these adversaries would openly appear with each other and shake hands at Madrid, and a process in which the Palestine Liberation Organization, which was persona non grata in Saudi Arabia after the war, would be engaged with the Israelis in a constructive process of bargaining about arrangements for the emergence of a Palestinian autonomous zone, with eventual claims to statehood, in the area of the former Palestine mandate.

Related to this was a constant desire on the part of Washington to broker some repair in the ruptured relationship between Amman, Jordan, and Riyadh. In a previous session, I described some of the bases for Saudi suspicion of and animosity toward King Hussein and his entourage. Obtaining a relaxation of restrictions that the Saudis had placed on Jordanian and Palestinian workers was not easy.

I would say, by way of a sidelight, that I had become quite concerned during the war about the probable mistreatment of Palestinians by the Kuwaitis after Kuwait was liberated, and had made quite an effort, primarily through Crown Prince Abdullah, who is the commander of the National Guard, to try to ensure that the Saudis weighed in on behalf of Palestinians who had been active in, indeed the mainstay of, the Kuwaiti resistance movement. A myth grew up that Palestinians were uniformly in favor of Saddam. That was emphatically not the case. And it seemed to me that the Kuwaiti impulse for indiscriminate revenge against all Palestinians was something that the Saudis should take an interest in tempering. I wasn't terribly successful in this regard.

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In other words, after the war, the focus shifted to the northwest, to the Levant and the Arab-Israeli peace process, and to the business of reconstruction in Kuwait.

We also had a number of issues left over from the war that took attention: the environmental damage from the Iraqi deliberate spilling of oil in the Gulf; the environmental damage from the enormous oil fires that the Iraqi forces had set in the Kuwaiti oil fields as they withdrew. I visited Kuwait two or three days after its liberation, and have never seen anything like the black sky and the towering flames, something resembling the floor of Hades, on the one hand, and the so-called Road of Death north of Kuwait, in which perhaps 16,000 Iraqis were killed as they left Kuwait with their loot, in many cases killed by phosphorous bombs, which do not produce a pretty corpse. I was acutely aware of the need to support the reconstruction of Kuwait, and much of that was based in Saudi Arabia, and much of it involved American military operations or American companies.

So all of these things took a great deal of attention. But life was less exciting, in some ways, than when large metal objects were hurtling down in the direction of my residence.

Q: Obviously, the Saudis had been a strong supporter of the PLO, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, for decades. To have the Palestinian leadership side with their mortal enemy, Saddam Hussein, not only turned off the American public on this — the newsreels showing Palestinians in Amman and even in Kuwait jumping up and down with joy over what Saddam was doing — but also this was almost helpful, wasn't it, in that the Saudis no longer had to be particularly nice to the PLO, as far as the peace process with the Israelis.

FREEMAN: I think that most Saudis have always had grave doubts about Palestinians in general, and the PLO in particular. Yasser Arafat was not a widely admired person in Saudi Arabia even before his treacherous alignment with Baghdad.

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The Saudis continued collecting the tithe on Palestinians, which was a principal source of income for the PLO, but put it, in effect, in escrow, rather than turning it over to the PLO. Ironically, the United States later played a role in getting the Saudis to turn that money over to the PLO, in order to give the PLO some incentive and some ability to carry through on its peace commitments.

But the Saudi distaste for the Palestinians has many sources, one of them is religious. Fifteen percent of Palestinians are Christians. In Saudi Arabia, Christians are regarded with even greater suspicion religiously than Jews. The Palestinian leadership was notably atheist or agnostic, and that is even worse than being a Christian or a Jew. In fact, it may be worse than being a polytheist Hindu, if that's possible. So there was no love lost between Saudis and Palestinians. The Palestinians clearly sensed this, and evidenced very anti-Saudi sentiments during the war, which were fully reciprocated by the Saudis.

So it was not for some time after the war that Yasser Arafat was able to crawl into Saudi Arabia and humbly beg forgiveness from King Fahd. It's a measure of the fine grasp of political realities that the Saudis have that eventually they did accept that apology. They must have been holding their rather large noses while they were doing it.

Similarly, eventually, some sort of peace was made with King Hussein.

But those things happened, I'm afraid, after I left. I'd like to think that I helped advance those processes, which I think were helpful in producing a hopeful moment in the perpetual peace process in the Middle East.

Q: We'll stop here. We're very close to wrapping up Saudi Arabia. One question I wanted to ask, which we can deal with next time, is the Middle East peace process between Israel. During the whole time you were in Saudi Arabia, how well did you find the Saudis informed about events in Israel? Of course, they had no diplomatic relations, but did you have a feeling that they knew what was going on and understood the political process, being a

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very political country, unlike the other countries around. I'm just putting this down as a question, and we'll pick it up next time. And we'll finish up your time. We've pretty well covered everything. Is there anything else we should cover?

FREEMAN: You had said something about covering the period at the Defense Department.

Q: Oh, I plan to pick that up.

FREEMAN: Let's take it as we go, on Saudi Arabia. There may be one or two other things.

Q: And also you had mentioned something about quasi-consular work. Are there any cases that are of particular interest?

—

Chas, how well did you find the Saudis informed about events in Israel?

FREEMAN: I think, for most Saudis, Israel is a place that exists only on TV, where daily atrocities against fellow Arabs are staged. That is to say, every night on TV, on the news, one saw scenes of Israeli bulldozers bulldozing houses, or Israelis doing a Bull Connor routine on protesters (Bull Connor being the police chief [commissioner of public safety] in Birmingham, Alabama, who gained notoriety in the '50s for his police dog and baton [fire hose] routine with civil rights demonstrators), or shooting into crowds and killing kids, and so forth. So, for most Saudis, Israel was sort of a bad dream. On the other hand, many Saudis with satellite television dishes watched the two Israeli stations, particularly Channel 2, which had a sort of soft porn element to it, which, at least in the Saudi context, seemed to be very pornographic and therefore attracted quite an audience.

I think, as far as the king and the crown prince were concerned, they certainly had a major interest in seeing the Gulf War bring into being some sort of peace process for the Middle East. And they had a measure of sympathy with Israel as the target of Iraqi Scud

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attacks, much as they were. As I mentioned, twice I worked with General Schwarzkopf to dissuade the Saudis from launching missiles at Baghdad. In one case, they were only twenty minutes from doing so. These are Chinese missiles, manned and targeted by Chinese, but for the benefit and under the control of the Royal Saudi air defense forces. They felt tremendous pressure from their own populous to retaliate, and they certainly understood how the government in Israel might have been under similar pressure from Israelis. CNN was widely available in Saudi Arabia at that time, and people could watch the human-interest stories that it broadcast about Scud attacks in Israel.

Strangely, just as a footnote, CNN and the other networks never did any human-interest stories to speak of on the terror that the Scuds produced in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi story of Scuds was high-tech American counteraction; the Israeli story was human interest, and it was a very interesting contrast.

After the end of the fighting, Jim Baker came out to try to enlist the Saudis in support of what became the Madrid Process.

Q: You might explain what the Madrid Process was.

FREEMAN: The Madrid Process is the peace process that began in '91 with a major Middle-Eastwide Israeli-Arab conference in Madrid, which spawned not only bilateral negotiations between Israel and its neighbors and ultimately led to the meetings in Oslo that produced an agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Israelis, but also set up a series of subconferences on regional issues, such as water, environment, agriculture, and the like. The purpose of those conferences, in which the Saudis took part, was less, frankly, to accomplish anything on the matters that were nominally the subject of discussion and more to engage the Saudis and others, who didn't have a border with Israel and didn't have specific issues to negotiate with Israel, in contacts with Israel that would give the Israelis some confidence that a peace with their neighbors would lead to a wider reconciliation.

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In any event, the initial proposal really was quite different from the one that produced Madrid. But Secretary Baker found King Fahd enthusiastically supportive of American diplomacy and willing to help, and, if anything, Crown Prince Abdullah even more enthusiastic.

And the reasons for this are not hard to understand. The establishment of Israel, and its expansion at the expense of the Palestinians, and the several wars that have occurred, and the enmity between Israel and its neighbors that resulted have been among the principal factors radicalizing politics in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia does not like radical politics; it is a very conservative country that is dedicated to the status quo. To the extent that the Arab-Israeli struggle has produced left-wing, radical, or terrorist organizations in the Middle East, particularly in Lebanon and Palestine (meaning the Israeli-occupied portion of Palestine), this is very destabilizing, and it is very much opposed by Saudi Arabia. So they very much would welcome an end to the confrontation between Israel and its neighbors, whether Palestinian, Jordanian, Syrian, Lebanese, or Egyptian. So that was a major factor.

The second point, however, is that the only issue of direct concern to the Saudis is the status of Jerusalem as the third holy city of Islam. King Fahd, as the custodian of two of the three holy cities...

Q: Medina and...

FREEMAN: Mecca, has a possible role in the management of religious sites in Jerusalem. That management responsibility historically devolved from the Ottomans ultimately to the Hashemite family who now are the royal family in Jordan. As I think I must have mentioned, one effect of the war was to cause deep estrangement between King Hussein and King Fahd and his brothers. I think King Hussein no longer had the confidence of Saudis in his role as custodian of the Dome of The Rock and other Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem. So there is this issue.

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There is also the legacy of succeeding Saudi monarchs from the time of Abd al-Aziz, the founder of the kingdom, who have said that they will not set foot in Jerusalem, nor will they normalize relations with Israel, until the issue of the right of Muslims to worship freely in Jerusalem is settled. This is, in fact, an issue that has a great deal of passion behind it in Saudi Arabia.

And it's probably the only issue between Israel and Saudi Arabia. They do not share a border. Saudi Arabia, rather cleverly, donated twenty kilometers of territory to Jordan, to ensure that they didn't have a border. While they share the Gulf of Aqaba, there is really no contact to speak of. There are no prisoners to exchange. Saudi Arabia, in fact, has never actually gotten into a fight with Israel. On several occasions, it promised to join the battle, but always contrived to arrive too late to take part. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, has been a staunch financial supporter of the Egyptian-led anti-Israeli effort, and was a principal bankroller of Egypt's 1973 counterattack on Israel across the Suez Canal. But Saudi Arabia, as far as any Saudi could tell me, in fact never gotten around to declaring war on Israel. And while arguably the Arab League declaration of war somehow affected Saudi Arabia, from a bilateral Israeli-Saudi point of view, there is no state of war. There is no trade to speak of. There have been no specific issues, really, between the two countries.

So that is one of the reasons why the regional conferences that accompanied the Madrid Process were so important in giving the Saudis an ostensible reason to sit down and discuss substantive matters with the Israelis.

Other than that, I think most Saudis, like most Americans, other than those who follow Israeli politics closely, find the Israelis somewhat bewildering. The multiplicity of parties, particularly religious parties, the shifting coalitions of Israeli politics, the uncertainties of electoral campaigns in Israel, the sometimes indiscipline of Israeli cabinets all present a sort of kaleidoscope, rather than a firm image, to Saudis.

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Nevertheless, as I say, they were very supportive of the peace process, and very much hoped it would succeed. To that end, with great difficulty and quite a bit of work by me and by others, they gradually accepted a reconciliation with Jordan and with the Palestine Liberation Organization, both of which had sided with Iraq in the Gulf conflict.

Q: You say a great deal of work on your part, among others. What do you mean?

FREEMAN: I mean that, as part of the effort to get the peace process going, Secretary Baker traveled frequently to the region, for example, to Amman, the capital of Jordan. And he always felt that he would like to be able to present some evidence of American effectiveness in serving Jordanian interests more broadly, in order to induce Jordan to take risks for peace with Israel. During the war, the Saudis had expelled the majority of the Jordanian citizens in the kingdom, and they had, in effect, sealed the border to truck traffic from Jordan. Jordan had traditionally been the major supplier of fresh fruits and vegetables to Saudi Arabia. I was very happy to arrange for California to replace it in that role during the war. Still, from the point of view of long-term American strategic interests, it made sense to facilitate the reopening of that. So I worked to try to persuade the king to relax the strictures that had been imposed on Jordan, and ultimately to allow the PLO to resume collection of the tithes on Palestinian residents of the kingdom that it had traditionally collected, but that it had been barred from collecting during the Gulf War and in its immediate aftermath. I don't want to say that I was by any means the only one working on this, but I did spend a lot of hours in discussing it with the Saudis.

Q: When you say with the Saudis, would it be the king, the crown prince, the foreign minister?

FREEMAN: The king, the foreign minister, basically those two, Prince Sultan, Prince Naif, who was minister of interior and who was concerned about infiltration of terrorist elements from Jordan, with all of them.

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The other subject was, of course, the requirement to influence Syria, which traditionally held a sort of veto over Arab actions on the Arab-Israeli peace process, and which required some financial inducement from Saudi Arabia, and representations from its Saudi bankers, as it were, to feel comfortable with the process of peace that was beginning to unfold.

So I spent a good deal of time on this subject after the war, amidst dealing with the refugee, POW, MIA, environmental-cleanup, and business-development issues that the war left behind it.

There was also, as you indicated, a lot of internal change going on in Saudi Arabia. The war had catalyzed a resurgence of Islamic militants. The American community, particularly the female part of it, was subject to frequent and escalating harassment by religious vigilantes. So I found myself working a great deal on that.

Also, the war was a very stressful experience for everyone (and by 'the war' I mean not just the period of combat, but the whole period from the occupation of Kuwait, August 2, 1990, through the withdrawal of U.S. forces in June of 1991). It was very stressful for Saudis, and many mixed, Saudi-American marriages came under strain. In fact, all marriages came under strain. My own marriage collapsed under the impact of Scud attacks, a marriage of thirty years, which had been quite happy.

So I found myself doing a lot of work trying to persuade the Saudi authorities to exercise greater control over the religious vigilantes, and reduce, if not eliminate, the sort of harassment that they were engaged in. Helping American spouses (usually it was women) to separate from their Saudi husbands and go home.

Q: The children were always the problem.

FREEMAN: The children were always a problem. Saudi Arabia and Israel share the distinction of being the two places with the largest numbers of kidnapped kids, and for

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essentially the same reason; namely, the desire of the parent, usually the father, to ensure that the children are raised in the proper religious atmosphere, meaning in either a Muslim atmosphere or a Jewish atmosphere.

There were cases where American women and children managed to smuggle themselves, with help from various people (whose identity I didn't particularly want to know), across the causeway to Bahrain, for example, and thence onward to the United States. And since this sort of border crossing is a violation of Saudi law, and since there was always an angry Saudi husband involved, sometimes I found myself responding to accusations from the Saudis of official American involvement in these actions, which I certainly was not about to acknowledge.

Q: The prisoners of war and the missing in action, did that engage you much, or was that more a military matter?

FREEMAN: No, it was very much a concern of mine. As I mentioned, after the war, in the absence of any clear set of objectives vis-#-vis Iraq, the United States allowed, and in fact in some ways colluded inadvertently in, the crushing of the Shi'a rebellion in the south of Iraq. I say colluded in the crushing of that rebellion, because the rebels who crossed the line of control into the American-occupied zone of southern Iraq were promptly disarmed and interned, rather than aided and assisted or provided with weapons and training. The Saudis were very strongly in favor of aid to these Shi'a.

At any rate, as the American forces withdrew from southern Iraq, they had with them, either to be left behind or brought with them, a large population of Iraqi POWs, Iraqi Shi'a civilians who had been interned in the manner I described, and Iraqi civilians who had been in the occupied zone and who had collaborated with the American forces by providing various services, such as interpreting or other services, that would have subjected them to a charge of treason once Saddam reasserted control in the region.

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I argued very strongly with the Saudis and with my own government that we had a responsibility to these people. Those POWs who did not wish to be repatriated should not be left to their fate; those civilians who had aided us should not be left to suffer for having done so.

The result was that the Saudis finally agreed to take these people, in two groups, into northern Saudi Arabia: the first, POWs; the second, refugees.

Then there ensued a most unseemly American failure to transfer internal responsibility from the military, which had taken these people in Saudi Arabia, to the State Department, which was then responsible, presumably, for helping them, through the U.N. High Commission for Refugees and others, to achieve appropriate resettlement. Many able-bodied young men in these camps were being picked off by the Iranians in order to form an Iraqi foreign legion. I had a very difficult time persuading the Bureau of Refugee Affairs, which I had actually created, to work on this problem and to consider resettlement of these people in the United States. This took a great amount of time.

Q: What was it, just bureaucratic slowness, or was there a principle involved, from their point of view?

FREEMAN: It was partly, as I say, the failure of the military to pass the baton effectively. The military just checked off this problem and left, rather than following up with State. Partly it was political, because Iraqis were hardly the most popular people in the United States at that time. The difficulty of explaining why the United States should accept responsibility for Iraqis, and particularly to resettle them in the United States, was obvious and made this an unpalatable topic for RP [The Bureau of Refugee Programs]] to take up. And, frankly, there was the usual problem that RP has of too many refugee crises in too many places, and not enough time and management availability to deal with all of them effectively. So it was something of all of the factors that you mentioned.

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Q: After the war was over, during the time you were in Saudi Arabia, did we see this as an opportunity to advance the development of American business, as opposed to some of the other ones, like the Japanese or the Germans, whose support was halfhearted, to say the least?

FREEMAN: I devoted, I would guess, over half of my time during this period to promotion of business. Not, however, in the zero-sum context that you suggest. I thought the Japanese performance in the war was, in fact, quite commendable, both the \$13 million in direct financial support for the war, and the dispatch, for the first time, of mine sweepers beyond Japanese territorial waters, to help clean up the Gulf after the combat ended. Similarly, the Germans gave, I believe, \$11 billion, and I didn't, for my part, fault them in any way. The French and British had participated in the fighting, in no small measure, in order to reap commercial benefits after the war, to be sure. But I felt, quite aside from the issue of competition and who was more deserving or not, that there was a major opportunity, because the war had put Saudi Arabia on the map for American business. Senior corporate management was suddenly willing to come out to Saudi Arabia and devote some time and effort to cultivating relationships and making sales pitches. There was, at that time, a very favorable attitude by Saudis toward many American companies, as well as toward Americans in general. Some American companies were looked at with particular favor, because they had not cut and run from the kingdom during the crisis; they had stayed and supported both the war effort and the continued operation of the civilian economy. So I spent a lot of time trying to help business, from small businesses to large ones.

I spent a lot of time, for example, working on the replacement of the aircraft in Saudia, the Saudi national airline, by Boeing and McDonnell Douglas's newer models. This I did not bring to fruition during my time in Saudi Arabia, but I did advance it substantially.

And here I must remark on one thing that was very interesting to me. It was clear to me that a letter from the president to the king, expressing interest in the aircraft sale, which

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was a \$6-billion transaction, not inconsequential, and in one or two other things that I was working on with other companies, would have an impact. So I suggested this, and a letter was drafted for the president. It said simply that the president was aware of this and hoped that the king would give every consideration to these companies, whose products were of high quality, and further trade would be to the advantage of both countries, and so forth. There was no overt we-deserve-this-sale kind of language. There was no disparagement of third countries in that letter.

Anyway, the letter went and sat in the National Security Council and didn't move. I came back for a brief leave at Christmas 1991, and I literally had to go camp in the NSC and, in effect, almost blackmail the White House (since it was widely known in the aerospace industry and in the other industry that I was working with that this letter was sitting there) by asking what the president planned to say during his campaign about why he didn't send the letter. Was it because the ink had run out in his pen? Or because he didn't consider it appropriate for the president to promote American exports and jobs? Or beneath his dignity in some way? What was the reason?

Anyway, after raising these unseemly questions, it took about ten minutes to get a signature on that letter. And I think it did advance the sales, which took place some years later, actually, under the Clinton administration.

Q: Was this, do you feel, because, just within the bureaucracy, particularly the National Security Council, which was not primed to promote trade particularly, this did seem almost not their sort of thing or something?

FREEMAN: I think that was probably it. There is an odd, in my view, sentiment among some Foreign Service officers and among securocrats (that is, bureaucrats who specialize in national security) toward the promotion of trade and relationships with business. Somehow it's considered unseemly for them to make representations on behalf of business. In fact, I found it impossible, until Jim Baker's very last visit, to persuade him to

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raise this issue, because he didn't feel it was the job of the secretary of state to do this sort of thing.

On the other hand, American competitors, the British and French, frequently had the prime minister, the minister of defense, the minister of foreign affairs out in Saudi Arabia essentially for the sole purpose of supporting commercial offers with political inducements.

I don't think that the United States should or needs to entangle political relationships in commercial relationships. But I do think it's appropriate for senior officials of the United States, the ambassadors and the secretaries of departments, to make it clear that they support American jobs and exports.

But there is an odd attitude, and I think that was probably all that was behind this. I'm sure, once the president became aware of the matter from his staff, he had no difficulty signing the letter. So it's a question of a sort of subculture in the national security and foreign affairs bureaucracy that is, I think, quite dysfunctional and not entirely erased.

Q: What about relations with The Yemen? They had taken the most pro-Iraqi stand, I think, other than Jordan. Was there any attempt to reconcile differences with the Saudis, or wasn't The Yemen of importance enough for us to try to get the two parties back on terms?

FREEMAN: There wasn't much effort by the United States to broker an improvement of relations between Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

On the other hand, the Yemenis, during that period, were in the process of achieving the reunification of South Yemen, which had been the British colony of Aden, a Soviet-leaning Communist state, and North Yemen, which was traditionally a conservative Arab-oriented state, pro-Egyptian during the Nasser period, in part, and the subject of quite a civil war on its orientation, and later quite dependent on the Saudis, with a good relationship with the United States. The Yemenis, I think, were resentful, feeling nationalistic, and not really able, during that period, to muster much of an effort to improve relations with the Saudis.

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On the other hand, I had very good relations with the Yemeni ambassador, and was very interested in the issue of Yemen, and tried in my own way, really without much instruction, to do what I could to encourage both sides to pursue reconciliation. I tried to keep informed on the Yemen matter by speaking frequently with Prince Sultan, the minister of defense and aviation, who had the Yemen portfolio, within the ranks of the senior royals. So Yemen took a good amount of my time, to the extent I wasn't doing business promotion, but it wasn't a burning issue for Washington at all.

Q: Sudan, did that play any role?

FREEMAN: Sudan was the b#te noire of Saudi Arabia.

Bureaucratically, within the State Department, it is within the African Bureau, which doesn't have quite the burning passion about Middle Eastern matters that the Near East and South Asia people had. So there were not many instructions about Sudan, again, but I made a point of talking with Islamic bankers who were involved there, some members of the royal family included, and frequently saw members of the Sudanese opposition, who came into Saudi Arabia seeking assistance from the Saudis, for discussions, and tried to generate a bit more interest in Washington than otherwise.

This was a period when the Sudanese government was clearly moving, under the influence of Hassan Turabi, toward a more radical stance of support of international Islamic terrorism and political movements. It was a period when Algeria was undergoing its electoral process in which the Islamic Front, FIS, as it was called, won the elections and then had the elections negated in a coup d'##tat.

So there was great concern about the spread of radicalism and political Islam generally in the Arab world, and much discussion, essentially of an information-exchange nature, with Prince Turki al-Faysal, who is the head of the Saudi foreign intelligence service, with Saud al-Faysal, his brother, who is the foreign minister, with the crown prince, who

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has an interest in this, and with others in the Saudi establishment, but not a great deal of interest from Washington at that time. I think the interest really gelled later, in response to a number of Sudanese operations against Egypt.

So Sudan was an issue for the Saudis, but less so at that time for the United States.

Q: You left Saudi Arabia when?

FREEMAN: I left Saudi Arabia in mid-August 1992, right on the heels of discovering that my marriage had collapsed. I had my first inkling and information about that an hour before Secretary Baker arrived in Jeddah, which was not a happy experience. And I was unable to leave Saudi Arabia to do anything about it, because there was another one of the periodic confrontations with Iraq in which we might have ended up bombing Iraq. We didn't, as the case turned out.

I came back to the United States, took some home leave, and then moved to the National Defense University (NDU), as a distinguished fellow, while I straightened out my personal life. The NDU very kindly agreed to publish the collection of diplomatic quotations that I had compiled in Saudi Arabia while sitting around waiting for the king, and on weekends and other times when I was not at work.

But, before I could complete the process of putting that entirely in publishable form, I was summoned to the Pentagon, to become assistant secretary for international security affairs. Actually, at that time, the title was regional security affairs. The new secretary of defense, former congressman Les Aspin, had a, frankly, very misguided and confused idea of how the policy function in Defense should be reorganized.

Q: We're talking about the Clinton administration.

FREEMAN: That's right, this is 1993, January and February. At that time, I had not yet reached the age of 50, which is the magic age for retirement in the Foreign Service. I

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had intended to stay at the National Defense University and then retire from the Foreign Service. But I found that my sense of duty to public service overwhelmed my common sense, and I went off to the Defense Department, into a recently reorganized, demoralized, and quite ineffectual policy apparatus that was not entirely straightened out during my entire tenure, which lasted until September of 1994.

Q: I would like to go back and talk about something that concerns me. As I do these interviews, I find... and I hope you'll dissuade me from feeling this way. We'd just been through a hell of a mess, a war, and whether or not we could have done anything about beforehand. But, anyway, it was certainly a very traumatic time, and lives were not only risked but lost. You were in the heart of this. When you came back, did you find any particular interest in, as a profession, the Foreign Service, Department of State, diplomacy, what have you, looking at how we operated? And you were one of the operators. What did we do right? What did we do wrong? How could we do it better? It's the thing one would expect of a profession. Was there any interest or any effort made to do this?

FREEMAN: There was certainly an effort made by the Defense Department and the military. Partly, this grew out of a joint U.S.-Saudi study, which Major General Dennis Malcor chaired for the U.S. side, on ways of strengthening Saudi self-defense capabilities so that the threshold at which American assistance would be requested would be raised.

There was no interest whatsoever at the Department of State or in the Foreign Service. To my mind, this points to the lack of professionalism of the Foreign Service, that it does not learn from experience in a systematic way, it does not do after-action reports, it does not consider why things went well or why they went wrong, with a view to improving performance in the future. All of those attributes are the attributes of a profession. The Foreign Service, as I think we discussed at the very outset of this series of interviews, in my view, is at best a proto-profession.

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Q: I keep coming across this again and again. Maybe we've talked about this before, but I don't mind bringing it up again, in light of this. Is it a mindset? My personal bias is, I think we hire a bunch of quite-bright people who figure that they can wing it every time something happens. Whatever starts, they can do right from the beginning and take care of it. They're too bright to learn from history (I mean, stupid).

FREEMAN: I think there is a failure within the Foreign Service to recognize the function of diplomacy in its several meanings: meaning foreign policy formulation, foreign policy implementation, and the translation of policy into activity in foreign lands. I think there is a failure to recognize this as the core function of the Foreign Service.

Instead, members of the Foreign Service identify with their specialty, whether it is some sort of area specialization, linguistic and cultural, or whether it is functional, for example, economic reporting, or trade and investment matters, or the like. It seems to me that, when you raise the question of professionalism with most Foreign Service officers, they look blank, because they define themselves not as diplomats, but as specialists on Iran, on Latin America, on international trade and finance, on consular matters, or on administration.

Since that is the way people define themselves, they look at the experiences they undergo in terms of: What happened? From the point of view of an area specialist: What was it that caused this event, and what are the results? From the point of view of an economist: What is it that caused this adjustment in the pattern of international trade and investment, and what are the results? From the point of view of a consular officer: What is it that I was able to do to help so and so escape a life of misery in some Third World jail for the rest of his or her life? They don't see what they're doing as shedding light on how diplomats might be more effective professionally as diplomats. I'm not sure if I'm making myself clear, but it seems to me that this is a fundamental problem.

It's been aggravated in the U.S. Foreign Service by rigid insistence on cones.

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Q: Cones being the term for specialties.

FREEMAN: Yes. And by the view of area specialists that the only thing they bring to the table is their area expertise. I find it absolutely remarkable that the Foreign Service accepts the appointment of totally unqualified political appointees with such equanimity. They do so because, in fact, there is no pride in the core functions of the profession.

Now I would argue that someone who has learned how to make a demarche, how to listen for what is not said as well as what is said, how to observe and report, how to persuade, how to manipulate, if you will, how to form foreign opinion, and who knows what instruments of statecraft the United States government has to bring to bear on these things, and understands what therefore each section of a diplomatic mission can contribute to an overall effort, does, in fact, have a body of knowledge that he or she could profess to be uniquely expert in, and therefore see as the core of a profession equally relevant to service in Rwanda and in Russia.

But I am sorry to say that I have not found this mentality among my colleagues.

Q: Have you observed a more professional approach by any other foreign service, or is this a problem with all diplomats?

FREEMAN: No, there are several foreign services of which I know that are very self-consciously professional, some of them very effectively so, some of them less so. I think of the French foreign service, which is quite self-consciously professional; of the German foreign service; of the Brazilian foreign service; of the Ghanaian foreign service; of the foreign service of Singapore, which I think is probably, pound for pound, by far the most effective in the world. These are people who not only see themselves as area specialists, as functionaries doing a particular function, but who also see the combination of that expertise with the management of government functions, intergovernmental relations,

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relations between governments and foreign peoples, the management of embassies, the conduct of foreign relations, in a broad sense, as what they are and what they do.

I don't find that in the American Foreign Service. Partly, in the American Foreign Service, that is because anyone with a diplomatic passport is considered a diplomat, and diplomatic passports are handed out like lollipops to whiny agencies that demand them.

Furthermore, I think there is an American anti-elitist sentiment and anti-hierarchical sentiment that refuses to acknowledge the distinction between professionals and staff.

I would argue that the Foreign Service is a profession potentially as much as, let us say, the practice of law or medicine or military science. No lawyer would ever assert that a legal secretary was a full member of the legal profession, although no law office can function without a legal secretary. Clearly, in the realm of other professions, whether it's law or medicine or military science, there are people who are at the core of the profession and who are seen as professionals, and there are people who are para-professionals, who are essential to the functioning of the profession, but who are not themselves regarded as part of it. Just so, I suppose, a combat infantryman or woman is, in a sense, at the core of the military profession in a way that a supply clerk is not. But all of them have a sense of belonging to the military.

We don't have that sense in the Foreign Service, to my distress.

Q: I don't think we work at it, either.

Tell me, when you came back, you had been in a hot spot, at a very difficult time, and very obviously, as the ambassador to Saudi Arabia, the country that was most menaced by this Iraq invasion, close tie, we had a big military contingent there, did you find much, maybe not in the organizational thing, but I'm talking about high-ranking or your peers within the Foreign Service, saying how did it go and asking you about this? Or was it sort of business as usual when you got back?

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FREEMAN: Something of both, I think.

The political appointees of the outgoing Bush administration and I had had our difficulties, as we've discussed, partly differences of interpretation of Saudi finances, partly my unwillingness to support what they wanted to hear, rather than what I heard, partly my insistence on the need for policy on matters that they didn't find it convenient to develop policy on. So I didn't expect adulation, admiration, or much in the way of anything from them. And, with a few exceptions, I therefore wasn't surprised that I didn't get it.

There were some exceptions. Among my colleagues who had read the reporting from Riyadh and who were aware of or could imagine what the embassy had been through, I think there was a great deal of both admiration and interest in the job that I had performed.

But there really isn't, in the Foreign Service, any mechanism by which people report to colleagues on their achievements and failures in a particular task of this nature. In the case of the military, all of the major participants found themselves enormously busy when they came back, addressing various staff colleges and professional training institutions, partly, I suppose, to pass on whatever knowledge they had gained, but equally, I believe, to buttress pride in the profession and in the ability of the American military to excel. We don't really have a mechanism like that in the Foreign Service.

I must say, I didn't expect anything, and therefore I wasn't at all upset. But you point to an interesting thing: one day, you're an ambassador in charge of the largest diplomatic mission in the world; the next day, you're just another guy pushing a cart down a supermarket line.

Q: As a matter of fact, that's one reason why I feel that these conversations that we're having now, and others, are probably the only time that this ever happens. I never had this kind of a conversation when I was in the Foreign Service. I fault myself for not taking

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advantage. But at least we're doing it now. And I hope that we can insert this somehow into the system. It's a long-term thing.

FREEMAN: I think that looking at the experience of professionals, in this case, diplomats, from the vantage point of what professional lessons can be learned, how things can be done effectively, or how they're done less effectively, how mistakes can be avoided, and why mistakes are made, in other words, after-action review of significant events, is the prerequisite for professionalization of the Foreign Service. I, for one, have always hoped that the Foreign Service would, like the professions of law, medicine, the military, and theology, professionalize itself, in the sense of having an awareness of the need for members of the profession to accredit other members of the profession, to recognize professional skills, as opposed to those skills that are not unique to the profession. So I think the oral history project is very, very important potentially in this regard. I don't believe, however, that the Foreign Service will become truly professional until its members, not retirees, perceive the need and the benefits from professionalization.

I consider it absolutely shocking that, at the end of the 20th century, the United States still follows a 19th-century practice with regard to appointments to the most senior diplomatic positions. We are, I believe, now virtually unique among countries in entrusting important diplomatic functions to people without proven ability to manage them. That is not to say that the Foreign Service invariably has the best candidate or the most effective person to be an ambassador. It is to say that the Foreign Service ought self-consciously to work toward being able always to field the best-qualified candidate for a job. And part of that depends on recognizing the core functions of the profession and trying to develop them in a systematic way.

Q: You went to the Pentagon. You were there for about a year and a half?

FREEMAN: A year and three quarters, just about two years.

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Q: Your title was assistant secretary...

FREEMAN: Well, it changed. In the office of the secretary of defense, there was originally an assistant secretary for international security affairs. That function was split, decades ago, in two: one assistant secretary for international security affairs, who handled all the world other than NATO and the Soviet Union (in other words, Europe and the Soviet Union); and one assistant secretary for international security policy, who handled those two regional (NATO and the USSR) functions as well as some nuclear and technology-transfer functions.

Les Aspin reorganized to bring this under the assistant secretary for regional security affairs NATO as well as the rest of the world, everything but the former Soviet Union, which was retained by another assistant secretary. He also attempted, unsuccessfully, as it turned out, to create a series of functional bureaus, if you will, dealing with humanitarian issues, policy planning, and whatnot.

When Secretary William Perry succeeded Les Aspin, having been Aspin's deputy secretary, one of his first and most welcome acts was to abolish several of the functional bureaus, and to rename regional security affairs as international security affairs, restoring the original name, but with the difference that I, unlike my predecessors for many years, was dealing with NATO as well as the Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, and Latin America.

So I started with the title of assistant secretary for regional security affairs; I ended with the title of assistant secretary for international security affairs.

Q: What was your impression of the Clinton administration, both during the election campaign and after they came into power, which was focusing on the economy, rather than international affairs? Clinton had little exposure to foreign affairs as governor of Arkansas. What was your impression of this group that was taking over the administration on January 20, 1993?

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FREEMAN: I should probably start by saying that, when I returned from Saudi Arabia and spent some time in my home state of Rhode Island before returning to Washington, I concluded, and I've not altered this conclusion, that the 1992 election was really about the restructuring of the American system of governance. That the American people had, in effect, concluded that the system of government, the organization of the federal government, the relationship between the federal government and the states, the relationship between government and the individual or the community, and the relationship between Washington and the world, which had been formed in the Depression, World War II, and the Cold War, was no longer appropriate. They didn't know what they wanted to replace it with, but they wanted it replaced.

The person in the campaign who came the closest to articulating this was Ross Perot. Ross Perot, however, for many reasons, was not an acceptable president and was soundly defeated. But he got a substantial vote, I think, by appealing to this sentiment.

To some extent, the Clinton administration, when it came in, had picked up elements of this. I think that actually it was Vice President Al Gore, more than anyone else, who had this sense. I think they came in full of the sort of sentiment that the public had. To put it in terms of a Chinese metaphor, somehow the Beltway was like the Wall of the Forbidden City, within which the eunuchs cavorted, playing games with people's lives, not caring about the impact on the lives, but only about the game and how it was played. So there was a sense of outsiders coming into Washington, possibly interested in reinventing government. That was the setting.

Now the performance was something far different. The administration's appointments, by and large, were made to appease and reward the special-interest constituencies that had formed the coalition that elected President Clinton with 43 percent of the vote. Many of the people who were put in really had no qualifications other than their identification with some interest group.

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I was quite concerned about this, because it seemed to me that the president had about six months to seize the issue of reinventing government, and that he had about two years to demonstrate the competence of his administration, or he was going to be in deep trouble. And that, if he didn't seize the issue of reinventing government, in 1994, in the mid-term election, his party would be badly battered by the opposition, the Republicans, whether or not they had a better idea. And, of course, that happened. Reinventing government became a slogan of the administration, but, in effect, under Al Gore, the administration went for the capillaries, rather than the jugular, and this was not persuasive.

Second, although the quality of the people at the top, in many cases, was quite impressive, the administration, in the foreign-affairs area, and, I gather, in the domestic-affairs area as well, was never able, in the period that I was serving in it, to establish a system that would produce orderly consideration of policy issues and well-informed decisions about them.

Meetings in the White House Situation Room, in which I frequently took part, and elsewhere, including by closed-circuit television, which is now a favorite mechanism for senior meetings in the U.S. government, were almost invariably chaotic, unstructured, and, if they reached a conclusion at all, left the participants in doubt as to what conclusion had been reached.

So this was the case of an administration, in my experience, that was very much less than the sum of its parts.

Now, in the final year of President Clinton's first administration, lessons began to be learned, and performance began to improve. But still the administration, in foreign affairs, seemed to me to be quite as muddled as the American people are, and unable, because of the lack of a clear vision or a rigorous policy process, to provide the leadership necessary to form an American consensus on post-Cold-War foreign policy.

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The result of this was that the more senior the meeting, the less strategic and the more tactical the focus. Senior people would go to meetings, and, in the absence of any firm grasp of the details of the issues being discussed, would grope, as bright people normally do, to understand the details, and would end up micromanaging the issue, in effect shaking the leaves without looking at the forest at all.

So, endless hours were spent, enormous amounts of senior management time wasted, on the discussion of the most minute details of potential operations in Bosnia or in Haiti or, earlier, in Somalia, with no opportunity for people to sit back and ask: What are we trying to accomplish? How can we best accomplish it? Are we, in fact, inadvertently shifting our goals as we go along without adjusting our resources and the degree of effort necessary to accomplish what we want to accomplish? So it was disappointing.

Now, in the Department of Defense, the organization created by Aspin, in effect, produced a situation in which the various assistant secretaries pretty much canceled each other out. It was very difficult for any of us to feel that we had a clear mandate to accomplish anything in particular, or, indeed, to accomplish it.

I think, in the almost two-year period that I was assistant secretary, I probably accomplished a few major things.

The first was the invention of the Partnership for Peace (PFP), which is the NATO expansion program, adopted in January 1994 in Brussels, which remains the mainspring of American security involvement in Europe.

The second was the reopening of security and military dialogue with China, after a long hiatus during which mutual ignorance had grown, and therefore suspicion and a measure of hostility was creeping into the relationship.

The third was, frankly with no support from my superiors but considerable support from some parts of the Department of State, to help head off a possible coup d'etat by the

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South African military in advance of the elections that brought the African National Congress into power and ended apartheid decisively.

And the final achievement, I suppose, was to conceive of, but not to carry out, a summit meeting of defense ministers in the Americas, with a view to transforming the Rio Pact from a collective-security instrument of no value into a cooperative-security instrument with some possible value.

These were not small achievements, but they were not the sorts of things I would have expected to be able to accomplish.

I was unable to produce a reconsideration of policy toward the Gulf, which was essentially stymied by the White House.

I was blocked by the Department of State from considering and doing contingency planning for the possible collapse of the protected zone for the Kurds in northern Iraq, something that actually happened this year, which I anticipated, but was not allowed to plan for.

I was unable to produce the reconsideration of policy toward Cuba that I and members of the uniformed military thought was appropriate in order to advance Cuba toward a soft landing from the Castro regime, rather than a hard landing that would spill over on Florida and cause low-intensity conflict in the Florida Straits. In that case, the reason for failure was a combination of politics and ideological rigidity in the Latin American Affairs Bureau of the Department of State.

I was unable, in effect, because of the extent to which more senior people were involved in the details of policy in Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti, to exercise the influence there that I would have liked to exercise. Even though these areas were nominally under my authority, in effect, they were being managed directly out of the White House and at the under secretary level.

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I think that's probably a good list of accomplishments and opportunities lost.

Q: Maybe this would be a good time to stop. We'll go back to this list and talk about these in some detail.

Today is the 3rd of January, 1997. Chas, do you want to address these one at a time?

FREEMAN: The first issue that I mentioned was the Partnership for Peace, as an approach to solving a number of problems connected with the post-Cold-War American security relationship with Europe.

I should say at the outset that it was not until the spring of 1993 that I actually engaged in this issue and began to think seriously about it and to ask questions. After my confirmation in June 1993, having sat around for four or five months in limbo, I was finally able to act officially, and I began to look at the question of post-Cold-War relationships with Europe on a much more active basis. Finally, in August-September 1993, I engaged very directly, with the assistance of Joseph Kruzel, who I had selected as deputy assistant secretary of defense for Europe and who made major contributions first to the refinement of the concept that I came up with and then to its implementation, until his untimely death in Bosnia, along with Ambassador Bob Frasure, an old friend, in 1995.

I found, as I looked at U.S. relationships with Europe, that there was a virtually universal assumption that the answer to this relationship was NATO expansion. I began to ask, if that was the answer, what was the question? And I concluded that really there was a series of questions that had to be addressed.

The first was, should the United States indeed remain engaged with Europe? After all, on two previous occasions, in World War I and immediately after World War II's conclusion, the United States either disengaged or began seriously to disengage. In the second case, of course, the disengagement was interrupted by obvious Soviet challenges in Greece and Azerbaijan and Berlin, which led to galvanizing American response and a

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continued presence in Europe. But it wasn't at all clear that the United States indeed should remain present on the ground after the end of the Cold War, or that NATO should survive. Obviously, there was a great deal of bureaucratic, political, and historical inertia behind both propositions. But it seemed to me that intellectually the case needed to be examined. That was the first question, should the United States remain engaged, and, if so, why?

The second question was, what sort of security architecture should Europe have in the post-Cold-War era, now that central Europe, which had been artificially detached from its longstanding close links with western Europe during the Cold War, was rebuilding those links?

The third question, obviously, was, what relationship should Russia, as a country with one foot in Europe and one outside, have to that European security architecture?

So I pondered these questions, and in July of 1993 - as part of a visit to Israel, my first visit to Israel, a politically obligatory stop for an assistant secretary of defense, and a very interesting one, I must say - I went to visit in Brussels, at the U.S. mission to NATO, General Shalikashvili, who was then SACEUR, the supreme allied commander of Europe, or, in other words, the commanding general of NATO, and his principal deputy, General Chuck Boyd, who was at Vainingen in the south of Germany, and talked about these questions with them, and thought some more about them, and on the way back home on the plane, scribbled down, on the back of an envelope, the essence of what became PFP, the Partnership for Peace.

What I concluded, first, was that, yes, the United States did need to remain engaged with Europe. That our presence was in fact essential to answer two problems of European security: one, how to fit a rather large and powerful Germany into a Europe of smaller, less powerful states; and, two, how to relate Russia to those parts of Europe that were purely

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European in character. And that the United States had to be present if European stability on both fronts was to be achieved.

Second, that the appropriate mechanism, the established mechanism that worked for such an American presence, was NATO. And that the United States therefore had a strong interest in the maintenance of NATO as the means for remaining in Europe.

Third, that NATO, in fact, had implications that went well beyond Europe. During the Gulf War, for example, it became apparent that the only agreed functioning multinational standards for military operations are those that NATO had developed. NATO is, in fact, the only alliance in history that has developed transnational standards of military operation that enable people from many different military and cultural traditions, speaking different languages, to cooperate effectively on the battlefield in pursuit of some common aim. So, during the Gulf War, it was found necessary basically to import NATO's intellectual software in order to maintain and proceed with interoperability among the allies and coalition forces. So, preservation of the interoperability and the mechanisms for multinational military cooperation that NATO represented was something that clearly the United States had a large interest in, in a world in which it was clear that a great deal of what we would be doing, with vastly downsized armed forces, would be in coalitions, meaning involving international partners. So we had an interest in that.

Fourth, it was clear that it would be important for NATO and European security architecture not only to provide a mechanism for cooperative security in Europe, meaning a system that could help to manage security problems, contain problems as they arose, and perhaps facilitate their composure, mediation, management, if you will, but also that, given the uncertainties of the future, it would be very foolish of the United States to blithely discard the collective security, collective defense, capabilities that the Atlantic alliance represented, whether in the European context or more broadly, and that therefore, whatever happened in Europe, it had to lay some emphasis on maintaining the military

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interoperability and the military competence of the alliance, in addition to whatever it did on the political side.

That was a point that, by the way, my colleagues in the Department of State had some difficulty grasping, since, from their perspective, to a great extent, NATO was a political organization, rather than a military organization. They dealt with the political side of it, and since NATO, up to that point, had never carried out any operation at all, other than training for World War III, most effectively in terms of its deterrent value, perhaps the Foreign Service can be forgiven for seeing it in nonmilitary terms.

Q: You alluded to this at the very beginning, but I've always felt that the big thing of NATO, outside of keeping the Soviets off our necks, was to keep the French and the Germans from going at each other.

FREEMAN: This is exactly the point that I was making, that the American presence in Europe, through NATO, does enable Europe to accommodate Germany and the historic antagonisms surrounding it, a Germany that, in the absence of an American presence, would clearly be the dominant, if not to say hegemonic, power in western and central Europe.

Q: It's almost a thing you can't say, isn't it, in a way?

FREEMAN: Well, I never found any difficulty saying it to the Germans, as well the French and others, because I think it's true. Thoughtful Germans, in fact, value the U.S. presence and NATO precisely because it helps them to avoid the sorts of frictions they might otherwise have with the French and others.

At any rate, whatever European security architecture might emerge, it was clear that NATO had to be at the center of it. And it was clear that Europeans wanted to have, and that it made sense to have, that European security architecture be Europewide. In other

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words, whatever architecture it was, you could think of NATO as being the tent pole that holds up the tent, but the tent had to cover all of Europe.

That raised an immediate further issue, because in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the North Atlantic Council, which is the political body that makes policy decisions for NATO, had been joined by something called NACC, which I think stood for North Atlantic Cooperative Council or something of that sort, which basically embraced all of the NATO members and all of the Warsaw Pact countries, plus the countries of the former Soviet Union, but did not include neutrals like Finland, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, or some of the smaller states of Europe, such as Malta and Cyprus, or the Balkans, countries such as Albania and Yugoslavia, which had been outside both the NATO and Warsaw Pact frameworks. So there wasn't any obvious organizational framework to produce a Europe-wide security architecture.

Finally, nobody seemed to know where Europe began and ended. And there were all sorts of people who wished to impose some sort of definition of Europe from the outside. Ukraine is in Europe or it is not in Europe. Europe does include Armenia or it doesn't. It was clear to me that Europe did not include Tajikistan. It seemed to me that what we needed was a mechanism that would allow countries to define themselves as European, as quasi-European, or as non-European, as the case might be, and to do so by the level of effort that they were willing to put into integrating themselves into the Western defense structure that NATO represented.

So all of this is by way of saying that, having asked myself, if NATO expansion is the answer, what is the question?, I concluded that the question really needed to be defined quite differently from the way in which it had been, and that we needed a mechanism that basically challenged countries who aspired to be regarded as European to prove their European character, with respect to NATO, in two ways. First, to develop the civilian institutions characteristic of modern European civilization; namely, parliamentary oversight of defense budgets, and civilian defense ministries that exercise civilian control over

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the military, on the political side. Second, to abandon the Warsaw Pact doctrine and operational practices that they had developed, and to adopt NATO standards.

Now there are some 3,000 standardization agreements (STANAGS) that NATO has worked out, which cover everything from how to do search and rescue to how to run an airfield forward under battlefield conditions, and many other things of lesser consequence. These are really the language, the software, if you will, that allow interoperability between armies, as I say, of different traditions and cultural backgrounds on an effective basis.

So it seemed to me that the trick was, on the military side, to have countries devote whatever measure of effort they were prepared to devote to learning these STANAGS and putting them into practice in their own military. And that meant, among other things, reorganizing militaries to establish non-commissioned-officer corps, which would mean delegating authority down, to at least the company or perhaps the platoon level, rather than centralizing authority, as had been done in the Russian military tradition.

Finally, I wanted to have this all open. It should be open to neutrals as well as former Warsaw Pact members. It should refuse no one. It should give no one a right of veto on anyone else's membership.

So the result of all this was Partnership for Peace. Now Joe Kruzel, whom I mentioned, contributed the name. General Shalikashvili had been thinking about cooperative programs, with central and eastern European programs focused on peacekeeping. So that became the focus of PFP.

Why? Because to learn how to operate, for example, an airfield for purposes of disaster relief or peacekeeping requires learning exactly the same skills you have to learn to be able to operate the airfield in time of war. So, even though you are doing it ostensibly under the political heading of peacekeeping, which is appealing and non-threatening,

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you are in fact acquiring military skills that are relevant to collective defense as well as to cooperative defense.

Partnership for Peace then emerged as a system, and it has worked out very much the way we envisaged it.

We envisaged a document that would be signed by anyone who wished to sign it, among countries that belong to NACC, plus neutrals, which would consist of two parts: first, a pledge to develop the parliamentary oversight of defense budgets and the civilian control of the military that were central to the Western system and to NATO; and, second, to develop interoperability with NATO, and, to that end, to work out a series of annual plans of cooperation and joint exercises with NATO that would gradually mark progress from incompetence to junior varsity, and, finally, in time, lead to militaries that were so indistinguishable from NATO militaries that the question of membership would answer itself.

In that connection, it was important that countries that applied for NATO membership not only be consumers of the security that NATO provided, but also be contributors to the collective security of NATO members. Actually, in other words, if Poles wished to become members of NATO, in my concept, as indeed they did wish to become members of NATO, they should not only be prepared to handle their defense in cooperation with other NATO member countries, but also to participate in the defense of Portugal. They should be able to get forces to Portugal and work with the Portuguese in the defense of Portugal. In other words, not to die in vain, but to die as part of a collective defense effort.

We thought that this document, which is exactly what happened, would attract the following responses: Some countries would sign it and rather quietly go about implementing it, make a substantial effort, and rapidly transform themselves, in civilian and military terms, into establishments essentially indistinguishable from NATO-member countries. And we thought that the most likely candidates there were the Czech Republic

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and, conceivably, Poland. As it has happened, the most effective performer to date has been the Czech Republic, which I think is on the verge of achieving total compatibility with NATO. The Polish performance has lagged. Hungarians lag still further, but are making a serious effort. We didn't foresee the strong efforts that Slovenia would make, which put it just behind the Czech Republic in this process.

We thought there would be a second group of countries, for example, Ukraine, that would wish to develop military interoperability with NATO, so that, in time of emergency, they could cooperate effectively with western European and American forces, but which would not, for geopolitical reasons, wish to join NATO. And that is indeed the stance that Ukraine has struck.

We thought there would be other countries, Kazakhstan, perhaps Uzbekistan, that might sign the document, but in fact do almost nothing to implement it, and therefore have the psychological comfort of a relationship with NATO without in fact any real progress toward integrating themselves with NATO.

We thought there would be a further group of countries, Tajikistan we thought was the most likely candidate, and that has proven to be the case, that wouldn't even sign the document.

We expected that this would answer part of the problem of Russia's relationship with Europe, because we thought the Russians, after a lot of grumbling, would sign the document, but train only a limited portion of their forces to be interoperable with NATO. Why? Because it was simply inconceivable that the Russians would ever agree to abandon their own military traditions, doctrines, and operating procedures, or to subordinate themselves to an American general at Mons, in Belgium, as this general planned military campaigns.

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And we thought that the neutrals would find this an appealing and useful way of integrating themselves into the post-Cold-War order in Europe.

All of these things have in fact happened. Ukraine has declared itself to be interested in interoperability with NATO but not in NATO membership. Russia has, with much grumbling, begun to develop the capability to operate alongside NATO forces, as it indeed is doing in peacekeeping in Bosnia at present. In other words, this scheme allows the Russians to develop an entente relationship with NATO in which the two parties can cooperate, for a limited period, for limited purposes, without making a broad commitment across the board, which is simply inconceivable.

Finally, this process begins to answer the question of who should be a NATO member. Because, as countries transform themselves militarily into armies and defense ministries indistinguishable from those of their Western neighbors, the question of membership is answered naturally in practice. But, if an emergency were to occur, if, for example, Russia were to resume an aggressive stance against Europe, all of these countries are that much farther ahead in terms of being able to cooperate with NATO in deterrence of Russian aggression, because they have been learning the plays, if not for the varsity yet, at least for the junior varsity.

So this scheme, I thought, had a certain compelling logic, and both Les Aspin and Bill Perry thought so.

But it was greeted with horror, initially, at the National Security Council and State, because it basically finessed political manipulation of NATO membership for domestic political purposes. And it put an emphasis on military competence, which was not relevant to either institution's view of NATO. And, more important, it emerged as a substitute for the rather elaborate but inconclusive planning process that was going on for the January 1994 Brussels Summit.

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In the event, however, it proved to be a better idea. It swept the other ideas out of the way. And it proved to be a more powerful idea politically, because we deliberately attributed it all to Shali (General Shalikashvili). His name had a much greater impact than Chas Freeman's name would have had, on any issue, but certainly on a European security issue. Shali, in fact, with whom Aspin, Joe Kruzel, and I met in Brussels in early September 1993, instantly saw the logic of all this and embraced it. Later, [General] Barry McCaffrey, then the J-5, meaning Strategy and Plans in the staff of the Joint Chiefs, also embraced it. And it became a reality.

I think (and I will sound very immodest in saying this) it probably is the only significant innovation, of a structural nature, that the United States has made successfully in the post-Cold-War era. And it is something that has the potential to transform European security in a very positive manner.

Q: You talk about the NSC and State being concerned about the domestic politics of this, which really means mainly Poles, but Czechs, Hungarians, and all. And yet, in a way, it's nicely tailored, so they'll be the ones to come on earlier. They're ready to come on more than some of the others.

FREEMAN: It basically said there's no such thing as a free lunch. NATO cannot and will not extend a unilateral security commitment to you. You must be able to contribute to the security of NATO members, to be a member.

There is a fundamental political reality that sometimes I thought my colleagues at NSC and State forgot, which is that admission to NATO requires the approval of sixteen parliaments. It is impossible for me to imagine that sixteen parliaments would in fact approve the admission of a country to NATO when that country added nothing but a burden to European defense and made no contribution of its own.

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So it seemed to me that a process that allowed Europe's borders to be defined, in an evolutionary manner, in relation to the degree of effort that countries were willing to make to be European, and which admitted members to NATO, barring emergency, of course, on the basis of their ability to contribute to as well as to consume security, was something that had a chance of getting through sixteen parliaments, in the end, when simple pronouncements from Washington in favor of some country with a large ethnic constituency in the United States probably wouldn't. And, as you say, by and large, the countries of greater political import were also the ones that were likely to make the largest effective effort to become part of NATO through this process.

There was a related element, I should say, which was nothing that I can take credit for, but which dovetailed very nicely with this, and that was the establishment of the so-called Marshall Center in Garmisch, in Germany, on the site of the old language school, Army Russian Language School.

Q: Detachment R.

FREEMAN: Which provided a campus at which civilian defense officials could learn to be effective in their control of the military, and at which the military could learn to be effective in their handling of parliament, and parliamentarians could learn to be effective in dealing with both bureaucrats and soldiers. That process, without anyone really publicizing it, has been going on very effectively.

There was one final twist. My original concept was too pure for the real world. I thought that the United States should not spend a nickel on any of this, that those who wished to be members of NATO should be prepared to spend their own money to become part of NATO. But, in the end, ethnic politics won out, and there was money provided to both the Baltics and the Poles.

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I think the one area of uncertainty that remains, and which I never was able to answer satisfactorily to myself, is whether this European security architecture, to which I have referred, includes the Baltics or not. I took the position in bilateral meetings with the Poles and the Baltics that NATO could not be directed against Russia, in the absence of a true challenge or threat from Russia, without creating a challenge or threat from Russia. That the United States did not want to expand NATO as an anti-Russian instrument. That if these countries saw NATO in those terms, as a means of poking Russia in the eye, they were pursuing a course that was more likely to lead to political failure and their exclusion from NATO than to their inclusion. That, instead, they should see this as an opportunity to become part of a Europe-wide security system and to acquire allies committed to their defense, even as they extended such commitments to others as well. That they should see this as part of the process of integrating themselves totally into Europe.

Now the irony is, of course, that, in many ways, military integration is not the most pressing requirement in Europe. Economic and political integration are. And it's telling to me that, in the economic and political area, where the United States is not a member of the key institutions, the European Union, progress has been fitful, slow, and frustrating. In the military area, the United States, once again, has demonstrated perhaps a greater dedication to European integration than the European nations themselves are able to muster. Ironically, therefore, in a sense, military integration through NATO is likely to precede rather than follow economic and political integration, although it should be the other way around.

Q: There are still some unresolved borders. The Baltic States have their problems, and Romania, Hungary, and all. As we get into this, was there something saying, okay, the borders are where the borders are?

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FREEMAN: In a broad sense, of course, there is such a declaration. That is what the Helsinki document on Security and Cooperation in Europe proclaimed, that existing borders are the borders.

As part of the Partnership for Peace process, it's been made clear to us by members of NATO that they cannot bring border disputes with them into NATO. One Greek-Turkish situation is more than enough. And it's been very encouraging in that regard.

Actually, the Baltics don't really have border issues. There are some areas that are subject to revanchism perhaps, but there is no legal dispute about where the borders of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are. The main issues, as you indicated, have been in the Balkans. It's quite encouraging that Hungary, for example, has now signed a treaty with Romania, recognizing Romanian sovereignty in Transylvania, which was the largest Hungarian ethnic area. Nor has Hungary, which might have disputed borders with Slovakia, done that, nor have the Slovaks disputed with Hungary. In the end, they've settled that. Nor have the Hungarians disputed Serbian sovereignty in the Voivodina, which is south of Hungary in the former Yugoslavia. The major issue of border definition, of course, has been in the Balkans. As the former Yugoslavia has disintegrated into its ethnic and religious components, that problem really remains unresolved. The other principal issue, of course, is the problem of the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, the existence of which is deeply offensive and disturbing to the Greeks, who have been very unhelpful in fostering a healthy infancy for the new Macedonian state, and, I might say, quite unhelpful, in some respects, with regard to Albania as well.

These are exactly the sorts of issues that a cooperative security structure can assist in dealing with. And NATO, in fact, has proven its worth as a cooperative security structure by maintaining a high measure of peace, while the somewhat bizarre agreements negotiated at Dayton are carried out in the former Yugoslavia. Those agreements, of course, came after I left government service, so I really can't comment on them.

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Q: I was interviewing Frank Carlucci on Monday, and we were talking about the period around 1974 or so when Portugal had an officers' military revolution, and the Communists had more or less taken over.

FREEMAN: Oh, indeed, they did.

Q: But their hold wasn't very strong. As Carlucci, who was our ambassador, and others were looking at it, they realized there was no way of getting rid of somebody in NATO. So twenty years later, let's say Slovakia has an officers' coup, and all of a sudden their defense minister is also the head of state. In other words, as you were putting this plan together, did you see a way of sort of deNATOizing countries?

FREEMAN: No, I think once you're a member of NATO, you're a member of NATO. But that is indeed another reason to proceed in a patient, evolutionary manner, rather than simply to impose some sort of cookie cutter on Europe, and say, with a U.S. government stamp of approval, you are now certified to be, once and forever, a democracy.

We've had in NATO at various points a military dictatorship in Greece; a military dictatorship from the outset under Salazar in Portugal, long a NATO member; and, of course, in Turkey.

Q: Perpetual military coups.

FREEMAN: Coups in Turkey at various intervals. So, in time of crisis, which was the Cold-War situation, NATO was able to accommodate very diverse political systems.

This is not a time of crisis. As I say, should some threat arise, let's say from Russia or from the Islamic nations of North Africa to the European southern flank, that called for an emergency response, NATO could very quickly move, presumably, to admit new members, even if those members did not fully meet the criteria that the Partnership for Peace lays out, either in terms of their civilian institutions or in terms of their military

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competence in interoperability with NATO. But, in non-emergency times, in relatively calm times, it seems to me that there is every reason to proceed deliberately, rather than to risk the sort of contingency that you outlined.

Q: Just a practical thing. You've got a military organization, and they're training all the time. It has been always convenient to be training against a Soviet push through the Fulda Gap and all, but all of a sudden, you're in this thing... not only the 500-pound monster... no one weighing anything, practically, on the other side that would be a threat to NATO. How do you train....

FREEMAN: It's not that difficult. You train for missions, rather than against particular threats. And the principal focus of training, in fact, has been for the sorts of peacekeeping, humanitarian intervention, and peace enforcement that NATO has come to carry out at various phases in the Balkans.

Now, in the course of learning to do those things, as I indicated, European militaries formerly outside NATO are also learning how to work with NATO armies under wartime conditions, so that the operational experience is not simply relevant to the missions that are being carried out, but have broader implications.

But certainly there is, as I say, a great deal less focus, quite correctly, on security issues in Europe than there was. The Fulda Gap is not an invasion route of any plausibility in the foreseeable future. And Europe has a period, probably fifteen or twenty years, before Russia reconstitutes itself as an active and effective player in European and Asian security affairs, during which NATO can develop the institutions that it needs to manage both of the problems I mentioned; namely, the German issue and the question of how to relate Russia to the rest of Europe.

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In fact, NATO has begun to make a good start at doing that, and I'm really very proud to have played a role in making that possible, and proud to have received, when I left the Defense Department, two awards for having done that.

Q: Why don't we turn to the next one, which is China.

FREEMAN: There were three events in 1989 that affected the development of US-China relations, not particularly in order.

First, and most important in strategic terms, was the collapse of the Soviet empire. The Berlin Wall came down in November 1989, and with it any credible Soviet threat. So the U.S.-China relationship, which had been premised on the idea of a strategic triangle, or balance, between Washington and Moscow, with Beijing as the swing factor, suddenly was left with no strategic rationale. There was no obvious impulse to cooperate.

Somewhat earlier, on June 4, 1989, the Chinese government, with great difficulty after waiting for an unconscionably long time until it allowed things to get totally out of hand, brutally crushed a student rebellion in Tiananmen Square. And did so in the full glare of the television cameras. That seared a negative image of China firmly into the minds of most Americans. An American distaste for a politically incorrect China, American disillusionment with a China that it probably had had illusions about, really dominated the relationship.

And so the two things coming together meant that the previous policy of setting aside ideological differences in order to pursue practical cooperation between the United States and China effectively came to an end, symbolically, with the ill-fated December 1989 visit of national security advisor Brent Scowcroft to Beijing.

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In subsequent years, there was essentially no real high-level contact. In fact, it was not until the summer of 1996, seven years later, that a national security advisor from the United States again visited Beijing...

Part of the reaction to Tiananmen was a freeze on all military interaction and contact. Some limited contact continued. Members of the so-called Capstone Course, a commissioning course for colonels about to become brigadiers, or captains about to become rear admirals, continued to visit China for a class visit. But essentially there was no military contact and no high-level political dialogue to speak of.

In this context, the U.S.-China relationship, in mutual ignorance, began to become a real problem. The United States has had a very outdated image of a rapidly changing China. The Chinese have not correctly interpreted American actions and feelings. And so mutual suspicion was growing. In fact, by the time I went into the Pentagon in 1993...

Q: You were there from '93 to...

FREEMAN: Ninety-four, just less than two years. That suspicion had begun to grow... with the general staff department in Beijing beginning to plan for a possible war with the United States, and the Joint Chiefs beginning to think in the same terms about China. Both sides, in effect, finding the other a convenient substitute for the Soviet Union as an enemy.

Q: This is all the budgetary thing, too.

FREEMAN: It's got all sorts of dimensions to it.

So I thought it was essential, and Bill Perry thought it was essential, and Les Aspin was less ardent, but agreed, that we reestablish a military dialogue between the two countries, in order to mitigate the problem of a conflict by inadvertence or avoidable misunderstanding. I began to argue for this with the help of the China desk officer at DOD, Eden Woon. But the White House wanted nothing to do with the Chinese, who were

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egregious violators of human rights, the so-called butchers of Beijing. And, in fact, when the North Korean nuclear issue arose, in March of 1993, when Les Aspin, at a meeting in the Sit Room, (the White House Situation Room), suggested that we should talk to the Chinese about the problem, he was brushed aside by Tony Lake on the grounds that China was politically unacceptable and we could not have such a dialogue.

At any rate, by August-September, with the Korean issue helping to clarify American interests to some extent, there was greater understanding of the need to establish dialogue with China.

And so, in November of 1993, I flew into Beijing, actually from northern Iraq, where I was tramping around in Iraqi Kurdistan), and held two days of official meetings with the deputy minister of defense, and saw the senior people in the central military commission and the defense minister. And we agreed that the United States and China would resume military dialogue and conceivably look toward to conducting a variety of concrete military activities, including some very modest joint-exercise activities.

Q: Did you have any feelings when you were talking to the Chinese officials that some of them were also concerned about how both sides are beginning to use the other as the Evil Dragon?

FREEMAN: Oh, indeed, very much so. I found a real community of interest on that. It helped, I must say, that many of the people I was talking with were people that I'd known for years, and that I was able to talk with them in Chinese as well as in English.

At any rate, I think the visit was quite a success.

That brings me to the third problem that came to a head in 1989. That was the beginning of Taiwan's democratization and its move out of the framework that had successfully managed the Taiwan problem for the United States and China, and for Taiwan, in earlier years. By the early 1990s, Taiwan was well advanced in the process of democratization,

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and by about 1995-96, had emerged as a robust democracy, maybe one of the most robust democracies in the world.

Always in the past we had managed to handle the Taiwan problem on the basis of the common understanding of people in Taipei and Beijing that there was only one China, that Taiwan was part of China, and that the only issue was: Where was the capital of China? Was it in Taipei or in Beijing? For 21 years, we successfully, if fraudulently, insisted at the U.N. that the capital of China was in Taipei, not in Beijing.

This one-China policy, which Taipei and Beijing had agreed about, began to fall apart as Taiwan democratized and the native (that is, pre-1949) Chinese population on the island began to express its own sense of separateness from other Chinese.

So the Taiwan issue, which has always been a problem in U.S.-China relations, reemerged with a vengeance in 1994 and again in '95 and '96, to derail for a time the reopening of dialogue between Beijing and Washington in the military area that I had helped to start.

I'm pleased to see that, notwithstanding some very difficult moments arising because of the Taiwan issue, we have now, as of December 1996, when the Chinese defense minister finally was able to reciprocate the secretary of defense's visit to China of October 1994 (which I went on as my final act in the U.S. government), achieved some sort of institutionalization of the relationship.

Q: How did your visit to China go?

FREEMAN: The October '94 visit was wonderful, in the sense that Bill Perry, the secretary of defense, has a great sense of how to do things with the Chinese. He had been, as under secretary of defense, the first senior Defense Department official to visit China on a working visit, in 1980, and knew many of the people with whom he was speaking, and had a very good touch. And even though I had left the Defense Department by that time

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and was on the verge of leaving the Foreign Service and the government, he invited me to accompany him, I guess in recognition of the role I had played in starting all this. I had the first essentially non-stop flight between Chongqing (the old Chungking) and Washington in history, I think, with aerial refueling. Perry's visit was a great success. And I think it has, despite the difficulties, revealed that sober military minds in both Beijing and Washington both see the necessity of avoiding needless conflict and pursuing mutual understanding, because they see the consequences of confrontation as too dire to contemplate.

Q: What about the military and civilian officials on Taiwan? Did you have any contact with them?

FREEMAN: Oh, yes. Not in my office, although I did see members of the military, including the chief of staff of the air force, the chief of staff of the navy, and others, in my office at the Pentagon. But I had many social contacts with them when they came here. The head of the Taipei office here, Ambassador Ding Mo-shih, was a friend of twenty years, and I frequently saw him. Indeed, I have always maintained cordial and quite candid dialogue with both Taipei and Beijing, and did not alter that practice when I was at the Defense Department, which I think was able to help Taipei put the resumption of U.S.-China military dialogue in some less alarming perspective than they might otherwise have done.

Q: Did you find that the native Taiwanese leaders were less confrontational than the people who'd been kicked out, the Chiang Kai-shek KMT group? Are they almost a different breed of cat?

FREEMAN: I think the Taiwanese, with fifty years of Japanese occupation and twenty-five years of really brutal repression by the Chinese mainlanders behind them, do have a different mentality. But far from being less confrontational, they are perhaps more fiery of temperament than the mainlanders who came over, and I think really quite cocky. Taiwan is a wonderful success story. It's the first Chinese society that has successfully modernized, both politically and economically. It is, in many respects, I think, the most

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admirable society that has ever existed on Chinese soil. The achievements that people in Taiwan have made give them a kind of self-confidence that sometimes verges on obstreperousness and genuine rashness in their approach to the mainland. But that was not, I must say, as evident during my time at the Defense Department as it became subsequently after I left government.

Q: Turning to the Persian Gulf. You were saying that you couldn't get the U.S. government to focus on whither the Gulf.

FREEMAN: I think the problem, to which I'm sure I alluded in discussing the consequences of the Gulf War, was that essentially we had put ourselves in a position of trying simultaneously to balance both Iran and Iraq, rather than using each of them to balance the other, and trying simultaneously to isolate both, in a circumstance where none of our allies in the Gulf were either comfortable with such a policy politically or really able to bear its economic and social expenses easily. The implication of this policy is essentially a permanent standing American presence in the Gulf, paid for in no small measure by the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, in circumstances where this all contradicted the assurances that we had given them that we would leave after the end of the Gulf War. So, financial strain made our presence, it seemed to me, not viable over the long term. More important, perhaps, was its social impact and the radical Islamic tendencies that the foreign presence created.

So I thought that we needed to have a reexamination of that posture, with a view to seeing whether we couldn't implement some of the objectives we had formulated during the war, but never implemented. Specifically, fostering greater military cooperation among the Arab countries of the Gulf, so that we could adopt a lower profile, with less burden on ourselves and on them. Developing a series of regional backups, perhaps a better relationship between the Gulf Arabs and Egypt and Pakistan, in the interest of providing a non-American Islamic guarantee that could cope with some, but not all, emergencies.

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Finally, in this context, dealing collectively with the Gulf, not country by country, to work out a rational distribution of military access rights, prepositioned war material and the like.

I also felt that we really needed to rethink our posture on Iran and Iraq. That we had not come up with an effective answer to the problem of how to help to foster the emergence of a regime in Baghdad we could deal with. That, similarly, there were changes going on in Iran, in the direction of the mellowing of the revolution, that our policy was apparently unable to take note of, for political reasons. And that we really needed to rethink what we were doing and start pursuing our objectives more effectively and at lower costs, both to ourselves and to our allies.

This would have been a demanding exercise in any event, but it was one that the administration, for political reasons, was absolutely uninterested in pursuing.

Q: What were the political imperatives?

FREEMAN: Partly, I think, they had to do with Israeli concerns. The administration was very much, I think correctly, focused on peace in the Levant, and didn't want the distraction of policy innovation in the Gulf. Second, the Israelis, since after the end of the Gulf War and with the beginning of the peace process they faced no convincing military threat, needed to find one in order to justify the very large level of military subsidies they get from the United States. They basically found Iran. And so they had no interest in seeing any improvement in U.S.-Iranian relations. Quite the contrary, they were happy to see us locked into confrontation with both Iran and Iraq. Frankly, I wouldn't overstate these forces, but there wasn't much incentive in Washington politically to reexamine things. I think there was a classic American distaste for the phrase "balance of power," and I think a misreading of Gulf history, in the belief that, somehow or other, the policy of balancing Iran and Iraq in earlier days had led to the Gulf War. In fact, it was the collapse of balance that led to the Gulf War.

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Q: You say you made a trip to Israel while you were in the Pentagon. What was your impression of the relationship of our military to Israel and the Israeli people? I've heard very conflicting stories about how our people feel about this.

FREEMAN: I had never followed very closely the relationship, and I had assumed it was a great deal closer than in fact it is. The Israelis essentially refuse to do any joint exercises with us. They are unique as such among our allies — our security partners and coalition partners and allies. Of course, they're not a formal ally; there's no treaty between the United States and Israel. But there's certainly a strong U.S. commitment to Israel's defense. The Israelis have consistently refused to do joint exercises. They are very chary of allowing U.S. forces on their territory. Much of the U.S. presence there and the war reserve material is a very thinly disguised reserve for Israel, not for the United States. Because Israel has not been integrated into the Middle East, but has remained at odds with its neighbors, it has continued to be part of the European Command, in military terms, rather than the Central Command, which deals with Egypt, Jordan, and the Gulf. So I was rather surprised to find that, far from a cooperative atmosphere, there was a good deal of standoffishness, not, I think, on the part of the U.S. military, but on the part of the Israeli military.

Generally speaking, when the Israelis arrived in Washington, the U.S. military feared what might come out of their political meetings in the form of stripping the U.S. military of equipment and munitions that they felt they needed to maintain their mission. There was always some really quite palpable concern about the ability of the Israelis to exploit their political connections to take that bite out of the U.S. military capability. So it was a relationship that, on the political level, obviously, was very cordial and effective, but that, underneath, has large elements of anxiety and also maybe some mutual animosity and suspicion. At any rate, it's a relationship that the U.S. military tend to see as very one-sided in favor of Israel. The Israeli style, of course, is demanding and brazen and not

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terribly strong on courtesy and expressions of gratitude. So it's a relationship with a certain amount of tension.

The relationship with the Egyptians, I might say, which is of course in part derivative from the relationship with Israel, since the principal motivation of it was to buttress the Camp David Peace Accords, is similarly superficially cordial, but riven by frustration with the inability of Egyptians to abandon the top-heavy, over-centralized, rigid planning structure and the excessively heavy, fairly immobile force structure that they developed in the era of Soviet tutelage in Egypt. And then a great deal of frustration with the Egyptians' inability to reform the conduct of military industry in Egypt, to make it more efficient and to begin a process of commercializing some of the military installations that clearly are vastly larger than military demand would justify.

Q: Did you notice, as an aftermath of the Gulf War, in which, to a certain extent, the Iraqis were fighting with the Soviet strategy and system, and we were fighting with the NATO system, that there was a tendency on the part of other countries who had grown up under a Soviet tutelage to say, hey, maybe we're working out of the wrong handbook, and trying to switch over and become NATOized? I'm not talking about within Europe, but elsewhere.

FREEMAN: I think there was, to some extent, yes. Certainly, Egyptian conduct in the war illustrated all of the problems of over-centralization, lack of delegation of authority, inflexibility of the planning mechanism, and the absence of mobility that U.S. military advisors in Egypt have been trying to reform for the last decade and a half. But whether the Egyptians in fact saw the problem in the terms that I described and we did or not, I doubt.

It really is very striking, however. At one point during the Gulf War, I watched, really in the course of one working day, the entire American battle plan redrawn. It went down to the level of the sergeants, then rippled back up through succeeding levels in the chain, and constituted a completely redrawn plan. There is no other military in the world that can

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show that measure of creativity and flexibility. The way in which we delegate authority down to noncommissioned officers is completely foreign to the Egyptian tradition, not just the Soviet element of it, but perhaps the pharaonic element of it as well.

I think the Israelis, in that respect, are a great deal more like us, although, since we don't exercise together on the battlefield, it's rather hard to tell exactly how much they are like us and how much they differ.

Q: While we're still in the Middle East, how about, at the time you were there, the Kurdish problem?

FREEMAN: The Kurdish problem was, as I came to see it, this way. We had intervened in northern Iraq essentially to create a zone of security to which refugees who had fled or would have fled over the border into Turkey or Iran could return for resettlement, thus relieving Turkey, in particular, of the pressure of this refugee problem. This humanitarian intervention, which was called Provide Comfort, it seemed to me, was beginning to outlive its usefulness. The premise of the policy was that we were not attempting to dismantle the Iraqi state or imperil the territorial integrity of Iraq. And yet the effect of years of foreign occupation and management of northern Iraq was exactly to do that.

For example, it had become necessary, because of the stupid responses by Baghdad to Provide Comfort, to connect the northern Iraqi electrical grid to Turkey, so that gradually this zone was drifting out of the Iraqi economy. It was detached from the rest of Iraq school system operating without reference to Baghdad, which sent teachers no longer. So, it was diverging from Baghdad culturally and diverging economically as it reoriented itself away from dependence on central Iraq and toward dependence on Turkey. And really I was concerned, as Turkey was about the extent to which we might be implying willingness to create a state which neither Turkey nor Iran could tolerate, that we might once again be setting the Kurds up for the slaughter. And that we really had to consider a way to wind down and phase out operation Provide Comfort so as to avoid a political humiliation

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for ourselves, avoid unnecessary strained relations with the Turks, but more particularly to ensure that the Kurds were not ultimately, once again, subjected to some terrible military or political disaster of the sort that they suffered over the centuries. So I went into northern Iraq actually without having any clear notion about all this. But as I began to talk to the Kurds, it became apparent to me that events in Iraqi Kurdistan were out of control. That expectations in fact of an indefinite American protectorate and the emergence of an independent state for the Kurds were rising. And that, at the same time as that was happening, the Turkish parliament and Turkish public becoming more hostile to the whole US operation. So I thought there was a danger that it would end in a war that humiliated us, damaged US-Turkish relations, and left the Kurds in peril. And I found few who were enthusiastic about staying on this treadmill. None, I should say, in the U.S. military, but more among relief organizations, groups that are partial to the Kurds, what a friend of mine calls the humanitarian industrial complex basically had gotten itself entrenched in northern Iraq.

Finally, the fact that Iraq and Iraqi Kurds are the responsibility of people who deal with the Near East, and Turkey is the responsibility of people who deal with Europe meant that there was a certain policy coordination problem. The people who dealt with the Near East didn't take Turkish developments sufficiently seriously, and the people who dealt with Europe didn't take the concerns of the Near Eastern Bureau about the impact on Iraq of what was going on in Turkey sufficiently seriously. It just proved impossible to get any reexamination of the policy. After I and my deputy assistant secretary for the Near East and Africa, Molly Williamson, struggled with this for a while, we essentially concluded that we would not resolve it on our watch, and abandoned it.

I should mention two other things briefly, and then probably we can call this whole exercise to a halt.

I mentioned South Africa. I went to South Africa (I think I was the first assistant secretary of defense ever to visit South Africa) in February of 1994, in response to what I thought

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were clear concerns by our ambassador, Princeton Lyman, about the possibility of an Afrikaner coup d'etat. The South African Defense Forces (SADF), on the army side, are organized very much along militia lines, very much like the Swiss, with the weapons widely dispersed among the civilian population and heavy reliance on reserves. There was a very real possibility, it seemed at that point, that some sections of South African Afrikanerdom, led in particular by a former chief of staff of the military, Constance Viljoen, might arise in rebellion and deny the government, which was to be elected in the first non-racial elections in South Africa, authority over the regions where Afrikaners lived. And the SADF might very well have declined to follow orders to intervene against their fellow Afrikaners. I should say that a good part of the SADF, in fact, is black African, rather than white African, but these black Africans supported the African National Congress of Mandela.

So I went to South Africa really at the initiative of the deputy assistant secretary of defense for Africa, Jim Woods, in an effort to try to persuade the SADF that the American military respected their professionalism, and would be prepared to work with them after the election to ensure that this professionalism was not eroded by affirmative-action concerns of diversity. That, in other words, those people from the African National Congress guerilla groups that were brought into the military would be brought in on terms that preserved the character of the SADI. That basically, as a professional military of considerable competence, it is a very, very good army, the South African Defense Force could look forward to constructive and cordial and cooperative relations with the US armed forces. That we had some experience in our own armed forces that might be relevant to the challenges they would face, and that we would be happy to share those experiences. That, in fact, they might want to consider, although they couldn't participate in Partnership for Peace, not being European, the desirability of using U.S. Army manuals or NATO manuals as objective standards, to ensure that, if someone were promoted from corporal to sergeant, there was a certification process for professional skills, so that promotions were determined objectively, rather than subjectively or in a biased manner. And generally, to speak to Constance Viljoen and to assure him that we saw a future for his beloved

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SADF... He reminded me a bit of Robert E. Lee, trying to make a decision between the Union and its army, which he loved, and his state of Virginia. And to try to skew Constance Viljoen more in the direction of choosing the army than choosing the course of secession and rebellion, and to exercise a positive influence among the people who looked to him for leadership.

Finally, to make contact with the incoming ANC military, with a rather similar message, that we looked forward to working with them to maintain the professional standards of the South African military, and to providing access to our training facilities for their people as part of a process of doing that. Far from seeking to obstruct whatever the electoral outcome was, we thought that such assistance could help consolidate it. We, in short, welcomed the emergence of the new South African armed forces.

In addition to meeting with different branches of the South African, and with the ANC incoming leadership, I met with some of the black homeland armies to tell them that we would take a very dim view of their following the Afrikaners into rebellion. There was some question about that. And generally, I showed the American flag in a way that I think ultimately proved to be quite reassuring to those who were alarmed, and helpful in holding everybody in place as the election proceeded.

We will never know whether in fact there was a serious danger of mutiny in the South African Defense Force, or secessionist rebellion by Afrikaners. I think there was, and I list this trip as one of the things I was proud of having done at DOD, because I think we did make a contribution to the peaceful transition.

I might say, finally, that I found both the South African military and the ANC military very suspicious and resentful of the United States, for different reasons. The United States had had no dialogue or contact with either of them essentially for years. The South African Defense Forces made it clear that they thought we had a lot of cheek coming in at the last minute. And the ANC, I think, sort of smirked at our arrival. Still, I think it was useful.

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Finally, perhaps the last subject I might mention is the question of the Rio Pact and the Summit of the Americas as it bore on the summit meeting of defense ministers in the Americas. The Rio Pact was one of those that we signed as the Cold War began. It grew out of earlier arrangements in the 1930s, for a sort of Monroe Doctrine sphere of influence by the United States in the Americas. In theory, it was a collective defense organization for the Americas. In fact, it was largely moribund, cited more by us than by anyone else. Its major expression was in some military activities by the Organization of American States.

But there had never been a meeting of the defense ministers in the Americas, in part because, during much of the history of these two continents, there have been military dictatorships in place. Suddenly it occurred to me that we had, in the early '90s, a situation where, with the exceptions of Cuba and Haiti, where a coup had taken place, every country in the hemisphere had a democratic leadership and was aspiring to civilian control of the military.

SOUTHCOM, the U.S. command at Corey Heights in Panama, which has been responsible for cooperative engagement with these militaries, was working very hard primarily against drug smugglers, but also to try to instill military respect for civilian leadership. And it seemed to me that the Rio Pact really had no utility and never would have any utility as an instrument of collective defense, but that it could become useful for cooperative defense relationships. And that a promising way to begin to reinvigorate the College of the Americas here at Ft. McNair, for example, would be to try to get a meeting of the defense ministers.

So I, with my deputy assistant secretary for Latin America, with some help from the Argentine ambassador to the Organization of American States, began to work toward this idea of redefining the Rio Pact. Again, surprisingly to me, I found not only no support within the National Security Council, but active opposition, reflecting the anti-military bias of many Latin Americanists. There was a political appointee academic specialist on Latin America at the NSC who saw no relevance to the military. For my part, I did see

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some relevance for the military to Latin America's future. Latin American countries are most likely to continue to have militaries, and the question of whether those militaries recognize the utility of trading off the policy-making role for professional autonomy by respecting civilian control will remain a vital one. To that extent, there need to be many more contacts between the militaries of the hemisphere. We laid the groundwork for this, I think, important development, which wasn't much noticed in the United States, but which, again, I think begins to restructure relationships that need restructuring in the post-Cold-War era. It did not, of course, take place until after I had left government. But I was delighted to see something that had been just a concept when I was there actually take shape.

Q: It raises a question, and that is, you're watching the first two years of the Clinton administration and its dealing with the military. Here is Clinton who, as everybody knows, ducked the draft. He was a draft dodger... nicer terms, but anyway, he avoided the draft. And also with him he brought a fairly substantial crew, at least that's what I've heard, of people who were of like mind, who had no feel for the military, in fact, a certain antipathy towards the military per se. How did you find this group during this time, sitting there as a civilian, but having been in the military, and not quite part of the military establishment?

FREEMAN: There was no question that there was a great deal of mutual suspicion and animosity. I think the president, to his credit, recognized that he had an uphill battle in terms of establishing his credibility with the military. He was not much helped really by Les Aspin, not so much because of the disorganization of Les Aspin, to which I may have referred, but rather the, strange for a politician, inability of Aspin to engage in the kind of formal ceremonial that is so important to military life. He just didn't have the ability to look anything but ruffled and to move in anything but a slouch. He clearly didn't particularly enjoy ceremonial events. But such events are important to any large organization and they are an important part of the secretary of defense's relationship with the uniformed military.

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I think, as time went on, there were some egregious incidents. One allegedly involving Barry McCaffrey when he was the J-5, entering the southern gate and being told by some campaign gerbil at the White House that he shouldn't come there with his uniform on. You have to understand that McCaffrey is a heavily decorated Vietnam War hero, with a good part of one arm missing from a wound taken in combat. He certainly did not deserve that kind of disrespect from somebody whose main claim to distinction was to have organized campaign contributions and activities in some obscure part of the United States, so that his or her person prospects for power would improve.

Anyway, there it was. There was an issue. And it was clear to me that, on a more fundamental level, the senior policy officials at NSC and State did not understand the uses of force, and the relationship between the military, as an instrument of national security policy, and diplomacy.

The military, for their part, were very frustrated. Their doctrine tells them to be loyal to the civilian elected leadership, and to take their policy cue from that leadership on the civilian side. But the civilian side was not able to provide them with anything that was intelligible, in military terms, to translate into military decisions. So it was not an easy situation at all.

I think, however, as time went on, with a real effort, a sincere effort on both sides, at least the atmospherics of the relationship steadily improved. I think the president began to understand and appreciate the role of the military more. Bill Perry brought a much more dignified, organized, credible approach to the secretary of defense position than his predecessor.

Q: Did you get involved at all in the three sort of crises of peacekeeping in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia...?

FREEMAN: I, as I indicated, was more peripheral than central in all of these. I felt very frustrated. I did not at all like what I saw was going on in Somalia, which seemed to me to

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be a case of steadily escalating our objectives while reducing the resources that were to be applied to achieve them and which ultimately produced a disaster. I did not agree at all with the idea of pursuing General Aideed, the Somali warlord that we proclaimed to be our nemesis, even though his son was serving in the U.S. Marines in Somalia as we did so. It's always struck me that it's very unwise to threaten prosecution or war-crime trials or political oblivion to people whose participation in political settlements is probably essential to make them work. So I didn't like that, but no one, frankly, was terribly interested in hearing my opinion on the subject, as I indicated. The under secretary level was dealing with that directly.

The same was true of Haiti. I felt that, from the beginning, there was a terrible problem of inability of civilians, particularly at the Department of State, to articulate objectives that could be translated into military operations by the military. Rather, there was an attempt to draw up plans for military operations for political effect, which, with all due respect, Foreign Service Officers are not particularly good at doing. We're much better off telling the military what result we want, and then working with them to shape a military operation that they basically design to achieve that result. So there were many miscues there, and partly, I thought, there was confusion about what we might hope to genuinely accomplish in Haiti. A lot of overselling of the mission. It seemed to me highly unlikely that a year's intervention could conceivably transform Haiti from two hundred years of squalor and undemocratic habits into a genuine member of the community of democracies in this hemisphere. So I had a lot of doubt about that, which I shared with those who were actually dealing with the issue. But again they had no great interest in hearing my opinion.

Finally, with respect to Bosnia, even more so. My concern was that, rather than trying to create a peace that could be policed for a limited period and then allowed to sustain itself, we were essentially creating a nonviable Muslim state that would have to be treated as a protectorate, by someone — NATO, the Western European Union — someone, if it was to have any hope of surviving. Bosnia was one of those cases where who won the fighting was almost less important than allowing someone to win it, so that the fighting could end

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and we could get on with constructing some viable, long-term arrangement in the place, which is an objective that apparently has eluded us, Dayton notwithstanding, to this day.

So I expressed these thoughts, and certainly was very well aware of what was happening. But, in the nature of things in this administration, as I indicated at the outset, one of the problems is that the higher the level of meeting, the more tactical and the less strategic meeting is. These issues were being directly micromanaged from the Situation Room, in an interagency context, headed by Tony Lake and Sandy Berger at the NSC and by the under secretary for policy at DOD, who was sort of the desk officer for those issues. And it seemed to me to be a waste of my time to try to affect what was going on, to try to insert myself in the middle of that. And so I made a conscious decision to give my best people on each of these topics to the under secretary or deputy under secretary directly, to allow him to take direct advantage of their talents. I asked them to keep me well informed, but I made it clear that I did not expect to be consulted before decisions were made.

Q: I wonder, finally, on this, could you compare and contrast your impression of how the State Department operates and how the Defense Department operates, from your perspective?

FREEMAN: The Office of the Secretary of Defense, DOD's policy element, is lean and flat. Desk officers have a great deal of direct contact with the secretary, much more than is the case these days in the Department of State. It's much less bureaucratic, much more open, much more creative. The military, the Joint Chiefs, are, of course, a separate force. The legislation that was passed about a decade ago enshrined the independent role of the JCS in policy making in law. So that, when the Defense Department is represented at interagency meetings, the secretary of defense goes, or the Office of the Secretary of Defense, but the JCS goes separately and with its own independent voice. The military are meticulous planners. I think they have a great deal of trouble dealing with the sludge excreted by the policy planners and the Department of State and making sense of it. They have very concrete and practical minds — “go one hundred yards forward, then turn right

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or left” is how their plans read. The State Department is not concerned about that — “we go a hundred yards forward, we look around, and we turn whichever way is appropriate.” So there is a difference of style. And the military are also, because of the nature of their precision, much less flexible than the State Department. So you've got a natural difficulty of communication.

Finally, there is the institution of the unified, warfighting command - CENTCOM in the case of the Middle East, CINCPAC in the case of Asia, and SOUTHCOM in the case of Latin America. These organizations basically are paper-pushing organizations in times of peace. When they're not fighting, they are watching events, thinking about trends, and planning possible military operations. They have enormous capabilities, which are very often not taken adequate advantage of in the Washington context.

So when you speak of the Defense Department, you're really speaking at least of these three distinct elements: OSD, the Office of the Secretary of Defense; the JCS, the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and finally, the various CINCs. And each one is distinct. The Department of State is much more structured, much more hierarchical, much more bureaucratic, in many ways, than the civilian side of the Defense Department. Less rigid, less hierarchical than the military. Somewhere in the middle.

Q: One final question. We're just approaching twenty-seven hours of this. I've interviewed well over four hundred people in the Foreign Service. And you obviously, I'm not trying to be flattering, but in objective terms, the fact that you got a 4++ in Chinese in two year's training and all this and the things you've done, you've had two things I've noticed. One, you're very bright, but I have seen bright people come and go in the Foreign Service. And often... certain areas... faster than somebody else. And you obviously think through things and all. Do you have any words on, one, how you did it, and words to pass on to bright people who come in on how to deal within the Foreign Service?

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FREEMAN: I'm not sure I do. [I think the Foreign Service... But I guess maybe I... I've always thought that...] There are two things that Foreign Service officers are called upon to do. One is to assist in the formulation of foreign policy, primarily in Washington, although policies may be suggested in the field. The other is to carry out the implementation of policy and diplomacy in the field, to cause foreigners to see things and do things our way, rather than their way. An officer may be very good at one and not particularly good at the other. Basically, if your inclination is policy formulation, if you are oriented toward a Washington policy role, I don't think you belong in the Foreign Service. I think, to be a happy and successful Foreign Service officer you need, one who carries out policy implementation abroad with a measure of joy and to recognize that the core function of diplomacy, which is influencing the foreigner, generally is done abroad, but also done here in Washington a bit.

I guess the parting thought I would have is one that I think I probably mentioned at the outset, and that is that I don't believe that the Foreign Service can be successful as an occupation if it fails to become a profession. So far, it has, at best, in its better moments, which are not 1997, risen to the level of proto-profession, rather than achieving the genuine professional introspection and dedication to rigorous development of doctrine training of juniors by seniors, promotion on the basis of professional competence as well as accidents of place and time, consideration of the professional lessons to be learned from events and activities once they're carried out, and a sense of professional ethics. All of these things the Foreign Service has the potential to develop. None of them have really been developed by the Foreign Service.

So I guess the final word I would say is that I hope that succeeding generations do better than mine did in developing some greater degree of professionalism in diplomacy.

Q: Amen. Thank you.

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End of interview