A Cold War Odyssey

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A Cold War Odyssey
To Edwin and Max
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In the spring of 1940 Nazi Germany’s military machine was on the move in Europe. By early June, Hitler’s armies had overrun Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, and France was on the verge of capitulation. An outflanked British force waited anxiously at the channel port of Dunkirk for evacuation to England. Germany’s conquest of Western Europe seemed imminent, and the world was stunned.

On June 10, 1940, Franklin Roosevelt journeyed by train to Charlottesville, Virginia, and, in a graduation address at the University of Virginia, warned Americans that isolationism would be folly in the face of Nazi Germany’s threat to world peace. “This perception of danger,” he said, “has come to us clearly and overwhelmingly, and we perceive the peril in a world-wide arena—an arena that may become so narrowed that only the Americas will retain the ancient faiths.” He then issued this challenge to Americans: “Let us not hesitate—all of us—to proclaim certain truths. Overwhelmingly we as a nation . . . are convinced that military and naval victory for the gods of force and hate would endanger the institutions of democracy in the western world and that equally, therefore, the whole of our sympathies lies with those nations that are giving their life blood in combat against these forces.”

Eighteen months later, on December 7, 1941, Japan bombed the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Within a week the United States was at war with both Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany.

In 1945, after a gigantic worldwide armed struggle, which pitted the allied forces of Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States against the Axis powers of Germany, Japan, and Italy, the Allies prevailed. Germany surrendered in May after the country had been overrun and occupied. Japan capitulated in August after the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. By 1947, however, the victorious Allies disagreed fundamentally about how postwar Germany should be administered. The United States, Britain, and France decided to merge their
occupation zones into a separate entity and rebuild the West German economy, along with the economies of other Western European countries, with Marshall Plan assistance. The Soviet Union vigorously opposed this move, and in 1948 Moscow imposed a blockade on Berlin that eliminated surface transportation to the city from the western zones of Germany. This was the beginning of the Cold War.

The great political struggle that ensued between the Soviet Union and the United States for control of central Europe continued—with several periods of so-called détente—until 1990, when Germany was finally reunited under West Germany's democratic government. One year later the Soviet Union was dismantled.

_A Cold War Odyssey_ tells how my wife and I, who first met as civilian employees of the U.S. Military Government in Berlin in 1946, experienced nearly forty-five years of the Cold War on three continents, especially the struggle for control of Germany and Europe. We lived in Thailand during the early 1960s and outside Washington, D.C., in the late 1960s while I worked in the Office of the Secretary of Defense at the height of the Vietnam War.

The events described here are historically accurate. The people we encountered in our travels are all real, and I have recorded their reactions to the major events in this story essentially as they occurred. To make the story more interesting to readers, I have told it in the third person and used fictitious names for most of the individuals whose ideas and reactions are recalled here. By giving fictitious names to these interlocutors, I wish to avoid giving the reader the impression that the words attributed to them are literally theirs or that the dialogues printed here reproduce the actual conversations precisely.

It is my hope that _A Cold War Odyssey_ will provide students of history, politics, and economics with an interesting, realistic, and personal account of the major events in Europe, East Asia, and North America during this extraordinary part of the twentieth century.
Postwar Germany

Berlin and Nurnberg

When he viewed Berlin for the first time in June 1946, Ensign David Bruening could not see a roof on any building for a mile around Tempelhof Airport. As the DC-3 descended for the landing, he realized that the destruction of Germany's capital caused by Allied bombing and Russian artillery was truly awesome.

Rubble stood so high in the streets around the airport that the young officer could barely see the pavement. In a strange way, the scene reminded him of a morning after a snowstorm in Michigan when the plows had piled snow on both sides of the roads. Most of the buildings in downtown Berlin had no outer walls. Bathtubs and toilets dangled by their pipes. In less damaged neighborhoods, away from the city's center, the ground floors of some buildings had been repaired, and small shops had opened. On the upper floors, where walls and roofs were partially restored, people had crowded into the space, seeking shelter. Large windows that had once faced broad, tree-lined streets either were boarded up or were covered except for a small area of glass. Only fragments remained of most of the trees.

As David reached the end of the navy jeep ride into Dahlemdorf, a district in the southern part of Berlin, neighborhoods began to look normal. Most apartments and homes appeared to be undamaged, although an occasional residence had been demolished by a stray bomb. Near headquarters for the U.S. Office of Military Government (OMGUS), many apartment buildings and some private homes now housed U.S. military and civilian personnel.

The Americans had seized buildings in July 1945 when General Dwight Eisenhower, commander of U.S. forces in Germany, moved his headquarters from Frankfurt to Berlin. After the war was over, Germany and Berlin had been divided into four military zones. In Berlin, the British and French troops occupied the northern and western sectors, American forces were in the south, and Russians dominated the large eastern sector, which contained most of the former German government's offices.

After dropping off his courier pouch at the headquarters for the U.S.
Navy in Dahlem, Ensign Bruening took the car and driver into the center of the city to the Brandenburg Gate, which marked the border between East and West Berlin. This famous Prussian monument had been darkened by fire and pockmarked by gunshots during fierce fighting between German and Russian troops in the final days of the war. A few blocks to the west on the boulevard called Unter den Linden, David stopped to see a massive victory monument recently built by the Red army to commemorate its conquest of Berlin. As the car moved through downtown Berlin, he viewed this apocalypse in the center of Europe with dismay verging on shock.

The destruction David had seen in Frankfurt and Bremen that spring was not comparable to that evident in Berlin. The scene was so terrible that he wondered how Hiroshima could have been worse. "How," he thought, "could rational human beings cause such a tragedy?"

Three months earlier, in March 1946, David had crossed the Atlantic on the former German luxury liner Europa, which had been confiscated by the U.S. Navy in 1945 and then served as a troop transport for returning GIs. On a cold March evening the huge ship docked at the port of Bremerhaven. The next morning he got his first look at Germany, the country that his great grandfather had left in 1852. Walking out on the upper deck, he glanced down at the pier and watched while an unshaven man in a rumpled green trench coat rifled the ship's garbage cans. "So the master race has come to this," he mused.

Bremerhaven in 1946 was a dismal place. The port had been bombed repeatedly, and the city had been occupied by British troops in the spring of 1945. Most houses and apartments were damaged. Many that were not had been confiscated by the American army and navy, which jointly controlled the port by agreement with the British. Bremerhaven had become the major transit point for tens of thousands of American GIs going home. On the jeep ride from the ship to the U.S. naval base, David saw whole city blocks lying in ruins, with debris piled everywhere.

Dust billowed in the street as the jeep sped along. A few exhaust-spewing cars and trucks sputtered on the streets, many equipped with coal-burning engines. The Germans he saw on this first visit looked gaunt and somber. The children on their way to school seemed thin and wore ill-fitting clothes and shoes. David felt subdued as he viewed this scene and wondered how Americans could live in these terrible surroundings. Soon he would be one of them.

After a briefing and an interview, he was assigned as assistant flag secretary to Commodore Robert Jenkins, the base commander. The job required that he and a small staff prepare official correspondence for the commodore and that David take it to him for his signature at 4:30 each
afternoon. The job luckily gave him access to a jeep, which he used on weekends to visit Bremen and occasionally Hamburg. The navy maintained an officers' club in a suburb of Bremen, which had not been seriously damaged. One Saturday evening in April he had dinner there and met a German woman named Inge at a dance.

David was attracted by Inge's broad smile and blonde hair. She was six years older than he, spoke good English, and appeared to come from an upper-class family. She seemed pleased to dance and talk with him about life in postwar Bremen. After their conversation, David asked whether she might have time on weekends to help him improve his German. She accepted the offer and agreed to meet him the following week. She undoubtedly knew that he could get her cigarettes, cosmetics, and food from the post exchange (PX), luxuries that were worth far more to her as compensation than money.

The next weekend David drove his jeep to Bremen, to the address that Inge had marked for him on a map. It was her family's partly damaged home on the outskirts of the city. Inge had one room, a converted study, and her mother and two younger brothers had rooms in another part of the house. The second floor was so badly damaged that it could not be used. Inge said she had been married to an army officer who was killed in Russia. Her father, who had been a businessman before the war, had died in a bombing raid. One of her brothers had been captured by the British at the war's end and had only recently returned home. Another brother was in high school.

Her family was luckier than many others, Inge said, because they still had a house. But she and her mother had sold jewelry and china in order to buy food and fuel, and so she was glad to have the opportunity to tutor David. He had a cigarette ration, and she could purchase extra food from "greedy farmers" with the packs he gave her. When he entered the back garden, he noticed Inge's brothers digging a vegetable garden while their mother placed seeds in the soil. Inge introduced him, but it was clear that her family was not happy to have him there. The brothers nodded and said nothing. Her mother said a few words in German but did not smile.

A bit embarrassed, Inge remarked, "They resent the Allies for what they did to Germany. My mother can't forgive the British for the raid that killed my father. My brothers don't want me to go out with British or Americans because you are occupying our country. But I don't care what they think."

"You don't seem to resent anyone," he said.

"I hate the Russians," she snapped, "not the Americans or the English." After a moment's pause, she added, "Hitler was so stupid to make war on everybody. We weren't strong enough to defeat the Russians, British, and Americans all at the same time."
“Did you ever see Adolph Hitler?” David inquired. “What kind of man was he, that Germans blindly followed him?”

“Most people here didn’t like him. Bremen has always been a free city. The Nazis were not educated people and brutalized anyone who disagreed with them. The local Nazis were lower-class, uneducated, nasty people. But most Germans believed Hitler did a lot of good for us before the war.”

David mentioned that Americans learned about death camps after the war. He asked when she had been aware of their existence.

“David, you must believe me,” Inge said earnestly. “We didn’t know about death camps. We knew about labor camps where Poles and East Europeans worked. We knew there were political prisoners in concentration camps. But I did not know the Nazis were killing all those people.”

“What about the Jews?” he asked, watching her eyes.

“We knew they were being taken from their homes and sent away. My family was worried when it began to happen, because most Jewish people were good. We didn’t know where they were taken or what happened to them until after the war. I am ashamed for what Germany did.”

David thought she had told him the truth as she saw it.

Early in April he visited Frankfurt on a duty assignment and was shocked when he saw the main railroad station. The large roof and shops had been destroyed. The square, including nearly every building, lay in ruins, and the streets leading away from the area were filled with heaps of debris. David had seen movies and photos showing such destruction, but this view of what had once been one of Germany’s most picturesque cities appalled him. What affected him the most was the odor that rose from the huge piles of stones and steel on that warm April day. It was the smell of decayed bodies that had remained entombed there nearly a year after the war’s end.

David stayed at the apartment of Nelson Atwater, a twenty-four-year-old submarine officer whom he had met on the Europa during the Atlantic crossing. They spent several off-duty hours driving around the countryside near Frankfurt and talked about their impressions of postwar Germany. Nels said he was thinking of staying in Germany after his navy time was up. He asked whether David had given the idea any thought. Jack White, who had been with them on the ship, reported at dinner that he was being processed for a job as a diplomatic courier with the State Department. He expected to take the job when his navy time was up.

“Are you interested?” Jack asked. “It’s a great life. You get to travel to the capitals of the world.”

David thought about it for a few moments before replying. “I should probably get back to Michigan. I have at least another year until I get my degree. Besides, I’ve got a girl at home.”
"Dave, my friend," Jack said in a patronizing manner, "you ought to see something of Europe before you settle down. Have you noticed the women over here? They're beautiful. And they love Americans! You need to live a little before you settle down."

The following week David was reminded of home when he unexpectedly met a school chum from Saginaw. As he and a navy friend waited in line at a movie on the army’s base in Bremerhaven, he heard a familiar voice. After listening intently, he turned and shouted in the darkness: "Is that Jim Shuster from Saginaw, Michigan, back there?"

A startled army first lieutenant stopped talking and looked toward him. "Yes. And you're not Dave Bruening, are you?"

They were two high school friends who by purest chance had found themselves together in a theater line in Bremerhaven, Germany. Jim was about to leave for home after having served in France and Germany for two years. When David joined the navy V-12 program in 1943, Jim went to the army's officer candidate program. But in 1944 he had been pulled out along with many other students because the army needed infantrymen in Europe. Jim had fought in France and had earned a battlefield commission. He had also won a Purple Heart decoration.

After the movie, they went with several friends to Jim's room for drinks and talked into the morning about their experiences since high school. David noted that Jim seemed a good deal older and more serious than he remembered, no doubt as a result of the time he had spent in combat. David had had no such experiences and was a bit embarrassed to admit that he had been in college for two years at the navy's insistence. Jim didn't talk about the war or his decoration. He said only that he was glad to be alive. David realized that he felt awkward with friends who had seen combat. The best he could do, he decided, was try to internalize the experiences about which he heard others speak. Perhaps, he thought, he might through these conversations come to appreciate the courage of those who had fought in the war.

David made two trips to Berlin, one in June and another in July. The first was as a navy courier and the second was to interview for a job that he had learned about on the first trip. He spoke with Harry Farmer, a recently discharged army officer who was in charge of all official publications issued by OMGUS. Afterward Farmer said he would like him to meet Hal Williams, his editor, who was on leave. David agreed to return. A couple of weeks later he made the trip by jeep, traveling along the autobahn from Hanover and through the Russian zone in East Germany.

David spoke at length with Williams, a former Associated Press (AP) writer who had been with the Office of War Information (OWI) during the war. Williams was skeptical about taking on this young man who had never worked on a newspaper or magazine. But after David successfully
completed a specific writing assignment, he was offered the job. He then returned to Bremerhaven, finished his work, took the required physical and dental exams, and signed the papers releasing him to "inactive duty" in Germany rather than in the States. He had recently turned twenty-one and was elated at the prospect of starting another adventure, this time in Berlin.

Before he left Bremerhaven David had dinner with a few friends who discussed their plans.

"If I weren't getting married—" Andy Curtis remarked but quickly added, "but don't get me wrong, I'm glad that I am—I'd probably stay here another year and see what happens in Germany. This is where the action will be in Europe."

"Why do you say that?" David asked.

"Because what happens to Germany in the next five years will decide what happens to Europe. If you want to be a writer, Dave, this is the place to start."

David wrote first to his parents about his decision to stay, and then to Allison, his girlfriend. He knew that it would be impossible to explain the situation to her, especially after she had been so faithful about writing while he was away. He told her that it was important to him to work in Europe for a year, but he knew she probably would not accept his explanation.

Civilian David Bruening started work at the OMGUS headquarters in Berlin early in August 1946 in the editorial office of the Weekly Information Bulletin, the official organ of the U.S. Office of Military Government. Hal Williams, the editor, was about forty and had moved to Berlin when General Eisenhower brought his military government staff there in July 1945. Williams was a tireless worker who often wrote and edited copy in the middle of the night. He taught David how to write in a crisp newspaper style and to observe space limitations.

Although he was a demanding editor, Williams took a professional interest in his aspiring young writer and occasionally invited him along to the American Press Club of Berlin. As they sat around the bar after dinner one evening, chatting with correspondents for major American newspapers, David found himself wondering what it might be like to be a foreign correspondent and to travel the world in search of stories. The job sounded appealing, but he needed experience.

Ron Kilgore was the Associated Press's chief correspondent in Berlin, and he wrote regularly under a byline. When Hal invited David to join them for lunch in mid-September, he mentioned that Ron was from Michigan and had been with the AP in Detroit. During lunch David asked Kilgore about the life of a correspondent and wondered aloud whether he should consider studying journalism when he returned home the following year.

"It's a tough life, Dave," he replied. "There's a lot of work to go
through before they send you abroad. You have to start in a large news bureau or a fairly large paper. You have to work all hours and be ready to move whenever your editor tells you. As for studying, I'd say history and political science would be as good as journalism. They give you perspective.” David thought this sounded like good advice.

The letters from home differed from those he had received in the spring. His parents reluctantly accepted his decision to go to Berlin, but Allison didn’t write for weeks. Finally, a long letter arrived in which she expressed her disappointment. David worried that he might lose her, but after several months he concluded that being in Berlin during this exciting year was more important to him than being home in Michigan.

As a civilian working for OMGUS, David was entitled to live in a house rather than bachelor officers’ quarters. The housing office found him a third-floor room in a large residence that OMGUS had acquired on Sophie-Charlotten Strasse, about a mile from OMGUS headquarters. Few houses in this neighborhood had been destroyed during the war, and many shade trees lined the streets. As fall descended on Berlin, the trees on his morning walk to work displayed a wide variety of colors. The sight contrasted sharply with downtown Berlin, where few trees had survived the war. The large residence also housed two other Americans, both of them high-ranking civilians who each occupied several rooms on the second floor.

The first floor had a large dining room, a spacious living room, and a small sitting room just off the front entrance. The rooms were well furnished. A veranda opened onto a flower garden that was tended by the brother of the German housekeeper. A fence separated the compound from adjacent houses, and the entrance gate could be opened by key or by pressing a buzzer to alert the housekeeper or one of the officials. It was a lovely residence that had belonged, David learned, to a prominent Jewish family that had gone to a concentration camp in 1939. The Nazis had seized the property and assigned it to some high-ranking official. The American army had confiscated the property in 1945 along with those of other Nazi officials in Berlin.

David loved the house, with its beautiful lawn and garden. He wondered about the Jewish family that had lived there and concluded that they had probably perished in a death camp. As for the Nazi family that took over the house, he thought they could be living somewhere in Berlin or in western Germany. It was incomprehensible to him that civilized people like the Germans could seize the property of other Germans and send them off to die simply because they were Jews.

David’s job at the Weekly Information Bulletin provided a good vantage point from which to survey the wide variety of activities that the U.S. military government was carrying out in western Germany. “De-Nazification” was a hotly debated issue between those who wanted to pros-
ecute most Nazis and those who believed that West Germany's economy could not be rebuilt without participation by many technologists, businessmen, and professionals who had joined the Nazi Party primarily to protect their jobs. People parted company on the question of who was a "bad Nazi." Another troublesome issue was "decartelization," or the breaking up of the industrial combines that had collaborated with the Nazis to construct the powerful German war machine. The debate here was between those who believed in industrial efficiency and those who thought cartels were a threat to democracy.

The Public Safety Division of OMGUS had responsibility for reorganizing and reeducating the German police following twelve years of indoctrination by the Nazi Party. The Education Division had the job of restructuring German primary and secondary education and fostering democracy and individual freedoms. The Political Affairs Division was instrumental in organizing German political parties and launching campaigns in free elections in the three Western-occupied zones. The Transport Division was instrumental in reestablishing German rail, water, and highway traffic and in facilitating industrial production and the transportation of goods. A Labor Affairs Division devoted its time to organizing trade unions that were not under government control. By talking to officials in these and other OMGUS offices, David got insight into the large task of reconstructing postwar Germany.

One of his most interesting work assignments that fall was attending several meetings of a joint committee of the Allied Control Council, in which representatives of the four Allied Powers met to discuss how to coordinate policies in their occupation zones. Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin had agreed at the Tehran Conference in 1944 that Germany should be divided into three zones (France was later given a small zone), but they also agreed to administer Germany as a unified country. Consequently there was a need to coordinate occupation policies and procedures. American and British officials had little difficulty coordinating, and the French usually went along, even though President Charles DeGaulle's postwar government often presented obstacles. Soviet representatives had a different agenda for Germany.

After sitting in on one meeting that dealt with rail transportation in Germany, David asked Gary Weeks, an expert on rail transport, what the Russians were up to.

"They want to strip Germany of everything they can use in Russia. They aren't interested in doing anything to rebuild Germany, unless it's a Communist one. And the bastards even expect us to pay the bills."

"We aren't that dumb, are we?" David asked.

"No? Have you heard about how our own secretary of the treasury gave the Russians the plates to print the same occupation scrip that our
Postwar Germany

troops use? Since we can convert the scrip into real dollars and send them home, we invited the Russians to print all the scrip they wanted and have us redeem it in dollars when their troops bought stuff from us. OMGUS stopped this business last spring, but a hell of a lot of dollars went to Joe Stalin while it lasted. Now they are stonewalling until they get their hooks into the German economy.”

“What’s their objective?” David asked, a bit surprised by Gary’s outburst.

“They want a Communist Germany. They plan to take over the labor unions and use them to establish a system they can control. They’re doing it in Eastern Europe. Now they want us to roll over and let them do it here. They think it’s all inevitable. Lenin told them so!”

This was the first time that David had heard so powerful an indictment of Soviet intentions in Germany. Until that time he thought cooperation among the victorious powers was working well.

About six weeks after he started his job at the Weekly Bulletin, Hal Williams called him in and asked whether he would like to make a trip to Nurnberg.

“Sure,” David responded with interest. “I have a distant cousin there. My dad wants me to look him up. What’s the assignment?”

Williams said he was planning a special issue of the magazine that would feature the deliberations of the International War Crimes Tribunal in Nurnberg. Its verdict in the trial of twenty-one top Nazi Party leaders, including Goering and Hess, would be announced on October 1, he said.

“I want you to go there and collect as many documents on the trial as you can get your hands on. You might also jot down some human interest stories we could use.”

“Will I be in the courtroom?” David inquired.

“Sorry, Dave. I can’t get you a pass for that. But you will be in the Palace of Justice, and you should have enough time to look up your relative.”

Waiting at Tempelhof Airport on a sunny morning for a military plane that would fly the Berlin press group to Nurnberg, David spotted Ron Kilgore, whom he had met at the Press Club.

“Hello there, Dave. You coming with us?”

“I guess so, but I won’t be with all you famous writers in the courtroom.”

Kilgore laughed. “Well, it’s a big story, and you’ll be close enough to tell your children about it some day.”

“Do you know Nurnberg, Ron?” David asked him. “I have to look up a distant cousin while I’m there.”

“Bruening isn’t a common name. I’m sure you’ll find him,” he replied, adding, “I wonder what it was like to live in Nurnberg during the Nazi years. It must have been weird.”
David thought about Ron’s comment on the one-hour flight to Nurnberg and wondered whether his cousin Martin and other members of the family had been involved with the Nazis.

It was dark when David found the address on Haller Strasse. The dimly lit apartment building was about half a mile from Nurnberg’s old walled city, in a section of Nurnberg that had not been completely destroyed by the bombings in January 1945. David wore his Eisenhower-style army uniform, as civilian employees of the U.S. military government were required to do. Instead of the military insignia, however, his brown uniform had patches on the lapels displaying the letters “U.S.”

After checking the residents’ names at the entry way, David climbed one flight of stairs and knocked gently on the door. A thin, gray-haired woman in her sixties opened the door slightly and looked startled when she saw his uniform. During twelve years of Nazi rule, a nighttime knock on the door by someone in uniform had usually come from the Gestapo.

Speaking in halting German, David asked whether Martin Bruening lived there.

“Ja,” the woman said in German, showing considerable apprehension. “But he is not here now.”

“Can you tell me when he will return?” he asked calmly.

She was staring at him, probably wondering whether Martin was in some kind of trouble with the occupation authorities. David decided to introduce himself.

“My name is David Bruening,” he said as best he could in German. “I come from America. I bring greetings from my father, Herbert Bruening, who lives in Michigan.” He hoped that his words reassured her.

She didn’t comprehend and continued to stare at him. David repeated his name, adding that he was Martin’s cousin from America. Herbert had given him the address.

“You are Herbert’s son—from America?” she exclaimed at last.

“Yes. He asked me to see Martin when I came to Nurnberg.”

The woman’s countenance gradually brightened, and she suddenly became quite animated. She asked him to come in and said she was Aunt Margaret and would go to fetch Martin’s mother. He overheard the two women talking excitedly in another room. Soon Martha Bruening, several years younger than her sister, appeared. Exhibiting puzzlement, she asked in German whether he was indeed Herbert’s son. She knew about the correspondence with Martin after World War II and remembered the food parcels that Herbert had sent. But she had evidently not known that he had a son who was in Germany with the American forces.

“Martin will be very disappointed not to see you,” she continued in German. “Can you please come again tomorrow? He will be home in the afternoon.”
David agreed to come back at 4:00 P.M. the next day. They chatted briefly about his reasons for being in Nurnberg. The women seemed impressed that he was working in Berlin.

As he left the apartment and walked along the dark street toward his military hotel, David felt odd about having and meeting distant relatives in Nurnberg, the famous Nazi Party headquarters. He wondered what kind of people they were. He realized how difficult their lives had become after the war, yet how exciting his own life was becoming.

The next morning, September 30, he went to the Palace of Justice, a complex of drab-looking buildings located behind a high steel fence. It had been damaged but not destroyed during the 1945 bombings. In April 1945 the area had been taken over by American forces and turned into the headquarters of the International War Crimes Tribunal. The court was composed of American, British, French, and Russian lawyers and judges who began their deliberations in the fall.

After spending the morning collecting documents and press releases, as his boss had asked, David looked for a way of getting into the courtroom the next morning when the Tribunal handed down its verdicts on the top Nazis. He had a pass permitting him to move around the building but not the special one for the reserved seats in the press gallery. He decided to seek out Lieutenant Colonel Charles Hauser, the American public affairs officer, who controlled the seating arrangements. He found Hauser in the hallway and showed him his OMGUS travel orders.

"Colonel," he said, smiling, "what're my chances of getting inside the courtroom tomorrow?"

The tall, good-natured officer looked down at the eager young man and replied with mild exasperation, "Son, do you have any idea how many people want to get into that courtroom? Every big-name reporter in the United States wants to be there, not to mention the Brits and the other Allies."

"I know that, sir," David replied, "but I'm the only one doing a story for the OMGUS magazine. My editor thinks I should be in there instead of just listening on an intercom."

It was an exaggeration, David knew, but it was worth a try.

"I doubt there's any chance," Hauser replied after looking at the roster. "If you want to come by here about 9:30 in the morning, we may put an extra chair or two in the gallery. If no one demands them, you could get lucky."

That afternoon, when David arrived at Martin's apartment, he was warmly greeted by a slightly balding man of about thirty-five. Martin resembled one of David's uncles in Michigan, and he instinctively liked him.

"Welcome to our home," Martin said. "I'm so sorry I was not here when you came yesterday." His English was reasonably good because he
had been a student at nearby Erlangen University, where he had earned a
degree in the 1930s. He wore a dark suit that hung loosely
on his thin body.

Martin led David into a dining room and introduced him to the fam-
ily, including Martin's mother and aunt, his uncle Walter and his wife,
Helga, and their nineteen-year-old son, Helmut. David realized that al-
though he had been invited for coffee, they had prepared a modest meal.
He knew that obtaining extra food in 1946 was difficult and that Martin
had probably bought some of the items on the black market, as most Ger-
mans did in order to offset the postwar privations.

After they were seated at the table, Martin explained that his father
had been killed in France in 1918, when Martin was a boy, and that he had
been raised by his mother and by Aunt Margaret. Uncle Walter, a success-
ful businessman before World War II, had been a surrogate father to Mar-
tin. Walter, whose English was good, said he had traveled abroad, in Eu-
rope, in connection with his Christmas ornament business, including
several trips to England where he improved his English. Helmut, he said,
had been in high school in 1944 when the army called up his whole class
for military service. He was in Berlin at the end of the war and was cap-
tured by the Russians but was released when he developed an illness.

Helmut understood some English and nodded as his father told the
story. Walter said that his son was in pre-med training and would one day
be a doctor. Again Helmut smiled and nodded, but he did not contribute
to the conversation. David learned that Martin was now working as a law-
yer in a private firm in Nurnberg and felt that he was lucky to have a job.
Before the war, he had been a junior attorney in the Ministry of Justice of
Bavaria and had served as an artillery officer during the war. The Ameri-
cans had captured him in 1945, he said, and he spent ten months in a
POW camp near Stuttgart. It had been a difficult time, and he weighed
only a hundred pounds when released in 1946. The investigators found
no evidence against him of Nazi activities, he said. As Martin talked, Walter
translated his words into German for the others.

"Uncle Walter" wanted to know how David had come to Germany,
and to Nurnberg, and what kind of work he did at OMGUS. David said
he did not have an important position but that it was a good experience to
work in Berlin for a year.

"And you will see Goering and the others sentenced tomorrow?" Martin asked.

"I don't think so," he said. "There are so many important journalists
there. I don't expect to be in the courtroom. But I'll be nearby."

"They are such terrible men," Martin's mother said in German. "And
they caused us so much trouble." Walter translated.

"None of us were Nazis," Helga added, "but we all suffer because of
them. The Americans took our home in Furth, and we don’t know when we’ll get it back.” She looked intently at David. “Is there anything you can do to help us?” she asked.

Her plea made him feel uncomfortable. In fact there was little that he could do to help them. Germany was a defeated, occupied country. If the military authorities needed housing for their personnel, they would and could commandeer it. He told them regretfully that there was nothing he could do about their house.

Walter then expressed his own frustration in English. “I can’t even get permission to go into my garden and pick fruit off my own trees. I was not a Nazi, but they treat me as if I were.”

Martin’s mother also asked for help. “Can you get us a few necessities? Life is so difficult for us now. We appreciate the boxes that Herbert sent. It would be so good if you could get us some food.” Martin translated her words for David.

David did not know how to respond. Here was his distant family in Germany, whom he had just met, asking him for some items from the PX and commissary to make their lives more bearable. He could see that they were undernourished, but he was apprehensive about making significant purchases at the PX even though the practice was widely accepted. He also suspected that no matter how much he provided them, it would not be enough.

“I’ll see what I can do,” he said quietly, looking at Martin’s mother. “I know these are difficult times for you.”

David and Martin agreed to meet the next afternoon at the castle in the old walled city and to talk more about Nurnberg and Germany. He concluded that Martin was a person who could help him to understand what had caused Germany to bring such a tragedy on itself and on Europe.

October 1 was a sunny, warm day as officials and distinguished visitors assembled at the Palace of Justice to hear the verdicts of the court. From the moment he awoke, David had but one thought in his mind: would he be in the courtroom? A chauffeur-driven military sedan picked him up at the hotel at 8:15 A.M. By 8:30 he was at the lord mayor’s office building, where he had been asked by Colonel Hauser to pick up several German dignitaries. When they arrived at the court, the area was cordoned off to all but official cars. Many newsmen, photographers, and dignitaries were gathering.

After he turned over the lord mayor and two other German officials to the military reception team, David slipped into a side entrance of the Palace of Justice and headed for the public affairs office. Colonel Hauser was busy conferring with his staff and talking on the phone. Eventually he looked up and David asked, “How does it look?”

Hauser paused as if trying to recall what he had said the previous
day. "Can't tell you yet," he responded. "But if you want to hang around, I should know in half an hour. Right now the press gallery is full."

David wandered around the building and watched the arrival of foreign and German officials. He looked through the large press office and glanced at the piles of documents. Then he recognized a reporter named Tom who worked for Reuters in Berlin.

"Hi, Tom. Good to see you. Are you going to get into the court?"

"Are you kidding?" the young man exclaimed. "Nobody except big names gets in there. You want to join us here and listen on the intercom?"

"Thanks," David replied, "but I have to meet someone in his office. We'll probably listen to the Armed Forces Network." He couldn't bring himself to tell Tom that he stood a chance of being in the courtroom.

At 9:45 Hauser spotted David standing outside his office and motioned to him. "You're on, son," he said hurriedly. "Now, put this badge on, and follow that young lady up the stairs. She'll seat you."

David couldn't believe his ears. When the pretty young American woman took his arm and beckoned him to follow her quickly up a long narrow staircase, he understood that he was about to witness history. On entering the balcony overlooking the modest courtroom, he followed his escort up more steps until she stopped, smiled, and motioned him toward one of two folding chairs that had been placed alongside a wooden pillar. He thanked her and took the chair with the clearer view. As he looked around the press gallery, which was packed, he spotted Ron Kilgore, who smiled and gave him a thumb up sign. He no doubt wondered how David had managed to get in.

Looking down on the small courtroom area about forty feet away, David suddenly saw the prisoners seated at the left, on three rows of benches. Several smartly dressed military policemen (MPs) stood at attention behind them. Hermann Goering, easily recognizable, was the first prisoner in the front row. David noted his large round face. Goering looked thinner than he had in his wartime photos, which showed a very heavy man. He had reportedly lost seventy pounds in prison. David also recognized Rudolf Hess, who sat erect and motionless; Joachim von Ribbentrop, Hitler's foreign minister; and Fleet Admiral Karl Doenitz.

Goering spoke with several of the others, but the rest of the prisoners seemed very subdued. Could these be the same men, David thought, who only two years earlier had been the top bosses not only of Germany but of occupied Europe? Contemplating the scene, he thought, "What an astonishing moment. Here I am in this famous courtroom, on the final day of this historic trial. How did I get so lucky? All because of good old Colonel Hauser."

His pleasure was tempered by the sight of the empty folding chair nearby. "What Tom would have given to have that one," he thought.

As he waited for the judges to enter the room, David looked again at
the journalists seated all around him and thought once more how great it would be to be a foreign correspondent. He imagined writing a story on the trial that would detail some of the horrible things done by these Nazis. He would describe what had happened to three top Hitler lieutenants who were not present that day: Joseph Goebbels had committed suicide along with Hitler in their bunker, SS chief Heinrich Himmler also committed suicide, and Martin Bormann had simply disappeared.

David was jolted out of his daydream when everyone stood up. The judges entered the court and took their places at the large bench facing the prisoners. Suddenly a hush fell over the press gallery. Suspense mounted in the room. A simultaneous translation system made the proceedings available in English, French, Russian, and German. David fastened his earphones. After the preliminaries, each prisoner stood as his name was called. Goering went first, looking defiant.

"Guilty! Death by hanging." The verdict was pronounced in a clear voice. A hubbub arose in the gallery. Goering looked around, still defiant, and sat down.

Rudolf Hess was called. He stood impassively.

"Guilty! Life imprisonment." He waited briefly and sat down without betraying any emotion.

Joachim von Ribbentrop was sentenced to death by hanging. So was Field Marshal Keitel. The last man in the front row was Hjalmar Schacht, a tall elderly man with a full head of gray hair. He had been Hitler’s economics minister until 1939 but was fired because of conflicts with other cabinet members, particularly Goering. When Schacht stood to receive his sentence, Goering leaned forward on the bench to watch him.

"Not guilty," came the verdict. David could not see Schacht’s face until Schacht turned to his right. Then, looking in Goering’s direction, he appeared to smile. Goering half rose, gripped the handrail with both hands, and glared. He was clearly outraged that he would hang while his arch enemy would be a free man. An MP quickly moved forward to restrain Goering. It was the most dramatic moment of the morning’s session.

The procedure continued until twenty-two top Nazis had been sentenced. Twelve were condemned to death, three received life imprisonment, four got sentences of ten or twenty years, and three were acquitted. Martin Bormann was sentenced to death in absentia.

When the proceedings ended, the press gallery burst into feverish activity as the journalists, talking animatedly, rushed from the room to file their stories. When David emerged from the long stairway, he searched out Colonel Hauser, who was chatting with several journalists. "Thanks, Colonel," he said with emotion. "It was really great to be there." Hauser nodded and smiled. Both of them knew that it was a peak experience for this young man.

After a quick lunch at the snack bar, David met Martin at the castle
that overlooked the ruined walled city of Nurnberg. He eagerly related the morning's events. Martin seemed amused by his account of Goering's reaction to Schacht's acquittal.

"They hated each other, you know," Martin said. "I'm glad they didn't convict Schacht. He is not an evil man like most of the others."

From the castle's balcony, David and Martin could see people below working in the destroyed areas with wheelbarrows and a truck, into which rubble was being dumped. The cleanup operation was so massive that sixteen months after the end of the war, rebuilding had not yet been able to start. David learned that every able-bodied German male had to work one day a week without pay to help clear away the debris.

In the distance they could see the spires of two historic churches, St. Sebald and St. Lorenz. The roofs of both had collapsed. Martin said they had been severely damaged by the bombings in January 1945.

David wanted to walk down to the area around St. Sebald Church, but Martin advised against doing so. "It's quite dangerous down there. Some of the walls on those buildings are so weak that they could fall anytime."

The cousins did look through the castle, however. It was damaged, but it would be the first building to be restored, Martin said, because of its historic significance to Nurnberg. They stood on the castle's balcony and surveyed the devastation.

"This is what war brings," Martin said sadly. "Nurnberg was a great commercial free city in German history, a key travel center between east and west Europe. It is important to all its citizens that we restore it, so that it looks as much as possible the way it did before. But it will take much time, and a lot of money." He spoke with resignation.

"How long do you think it will take?" David asked.

"Ten to twenty years, I'd say," Martin replied. "It depends on whether we can raise the money."

Martin expressed concern about Russian troops that he said were only about sixty miles away. "Nurnberg was lucky," he observed, "that the Americans, not the Russians, captured it. Other great cities like Leipzig and Dresden were not so lucky." He despised communism, he said, but he thought Nazism was even worse. "It's the worst scourge that ever came to the German people." Martin was also worried about the current bad economic conditions in Europe. He feared that widespread poverty would give communism a chance in Germany and France and perhaps in other countries.

David wanted to visit a park near Nurnberg where Hitler and the Nazi Party leaders held their huge summer rallies. He recalled seeing newsreels and photos of goose-stepping troops and party leaders gathered in a large amphitheater with enormous Nazi banners. He ordered an army taxi that drove them southwest from Nurnberg's center to a site known as
Zeppelinfeld. In front was the remains of a huge stone structure, thirteen hundred feet long with at least twenty rows of tiered seats. A small podium stood in the center. Here Hitler, Goebbels, and other top Nazis had stood to review the troops and harangue the throngs of party zealots. David recalled seeing photos of huge parades, swastikas and the glowing torches during nighttime festivities. As he looked over this scene and walked where German troops had marched in front of Hitler, David was struck by the contrast between this desolate scene and the ones he had seen at the movies.

Martin told him he had once been assigned to a unit that paraded at one of these rallies. "It was awesome," Martin said, "to see how Hitler and Goebbels could whip up the crowd to an emotional frenzy. It's hard for Americans to understand how completely the Nazis controlled people's emotions, how they turned people into instruments of terrible cruelty."

"Why weren't the people skeptical of the Nazi leaders before they came to power?" David asked. "Americans are always suspicious of government and of political leaders."

"Germans are too trusting of authority, David. In fact, we are a nation of sheep. We have never had any real experience with democracy."

When they returned to the city and were about to say good-bye, Martin took an envelope from his pocket and gave it to David. It was a book of photos of Nurnberg before the war and was inscribed "To David on his first visit to Nurnberg."

David thanked him and gave Martin a package that he had been carrying in his briefcase.

"They're American cigarettes," he said. "I hope you can buy some things you and your family need with them."

"But I can't accept this," Martin said in astonishment. He knew that cigarettes were rationed in the PX and that his cousin could exchange them for a wristwatch or camera. But David said he didn't smoke and didn't want them. Finally, they shook hands for a long minute before parting. The visit marked the beginning of a warm friendship that would span more than four decades.

After moving to Berlin from Bremerhaven that summer, David renewed his efforts to improve his conversational German. Sally James, an acquaintance who worked for the U.S. diplomatic mission in Berlin as a translator, suggested a German woman named Ursula Froelich. She was a well-educated woman in her early thirties who proved to be an engaging conversationalist as well as a fine teacher. She had a good sense of humor and was candid in her opinions, which David appreciated. She had spent a year in England studying the language before the war. She loved the country and the people.
Beginning in October Ursula came to the house on Sophie-Charlotten Strasse on Wednesday evenings for half an hour of conversational German and usually another half hour or more of talk in English about what was happening in Germany. David paid for the lessons with cigarettes and food. Hanna, the housekeeper, always brought a pot of coffee, sandwiches, and cookies, a welcome treat for Ursula. After one of the lessons in November, David asked Ursula what it had been like when the Russians captured Berlin in May 1945. She became very serious.

“We were so scared that we didn’t leave our houses,” she said with emotion. “Most of the women hid. We had heard that the Russian commander gave his troops three days to do whatever they wanted in the city—rape, steal, destroy. It was a three-day victory rampage.”

“What happened?” he asked.

“I didn’t get caught. But I know other women, even young girls, who were rounded up by the soldiers and taken to a park. They were told to sit in a big circle while the soldiers took their pick and led them off. It was awful. Many of them were from good families too.”

“And after the three days? How was it then?”

“The troops were better disciplined after that except at night when some of them were drunk and grabbed any woman in sight. We didn’t go out after dark until the Americans and British arrived in July. I was living in the British zone and felt very lucky.”

Ursula then changed the focus of the discussion. “What a shame the Americans didn’t get to Berlin before the Russians. You just waited at the Elbe. Why didn’t General Eisenhower move and get here before the Russians?”

“We had an agreement that the Russians would take Berlin,” David said. “The Allied leaders probably figured that because the German armies had caused so much destruction in the Soviet Union, it was fitting that they should take the surrender of Berlin.”

Ursula didn’t argue his point, and after a minute he decided to test her views. “Some Germans say we should have joined up with you to defeat the Russians before they took over Eastern Europe. What do you think?” David suspected that Ursula was a good nationalist, but he didn’t know whether she would go that far.

“In 1941,” she said, “most of us thought we would defeat the Russians before Christmas. Our soldiers were not even supplied with winter clothing. But the Russians fought so fiercely. They thought nothing of taking casualties.”

“Are you suggesting that Hitler should not have attacked Russia, that he should have kept his deal with Stalin?”

“As things turned out,” she said, “it was foolish. We couldn’t defeat the Americans and Russians at the same time.” It was a realistic answer, he thought.
During the extremely cold winter of 1946-1947, most Germans in West Berlin lived on a food ration of twelve hundred calories a day. In the Soviet sector of Berlin, it was only a thousand calories. Exceptions were the German employees of OMGUS, who received a hot meal at noon on workdays. David noted that when the office secretaries and clerks returned from the mess hall at noon, many carried leftovers from their meal to share with their families. Also exempt from the meager diet were the girlfriends of Americans and the growing number of black marketeers. The black market accepted cigarettes and other scarce items obtained from Americans in exchange for food from farmers living in the rural areas surrounding Berlin. Packs of cigarettes were often traded from one person to another.

Some of the German women attached themselves to American military and civilian employees. By doing so they gained access to good housing and good food and acquired, through their lovers, numerous items from the PX and commissary. These women looked very well fed and well groomed. Nylon stockings and cosmetics were in great demand. From teenage girls to women in their forties, the live-in friends of Americans knew that they could escape the deplorable conditions in Berlin and Germany if they managed to marry an American and move to the United States. Thousands of applications from officers and GIs wanting to marry German women were processed beginning in late 1946.

Some bizarre incidents occurred that summer and fall when the American wives of officers and civilian personnel went to join their husbands in Germany. Many of them, dismayed to learn that their husbands had been living with German women, threw the Germans out of the house. The *Stars and Stripes* told of one case where a wife killed her husband, an American officer who refused to give up his German mistress. Some wives returned to the States and filed for divorce. Many others simply ignored the previous arrangements, took control of their households, and established social contacts just as they would have done at home after moving to a new duty assignment. For some of the German women, however, losing an American lover meant losing a comfortable living.

By the end of 1946, relations between the Soviet Union and the Western powers seemed to be cooling, in social respects as well as professionally. When David arrived in August he saw Russian officers at many of the parties he attended. Some drank heavily, often straight vodka, with remarkably little apparent effect. Some of them were the featured attraction on the dance floor doing their cossack dancing.

David met a Russian army captain at one of these social gatherings who spoke adequate English. Vladimir Seminov was attached to the Soviet public information staff and made it a point to talk with American and British journalists. David suspected he might be with Soviet intelligence and was guarded in his conversation. Vladimir was a good interlocutor who seemed to know much about Europe. They saw each other on
several occasions, including a European history class at the new Free University of Berlin, which had opened that fall in the American sector.

In December Vladimir invited David to join him and his wife at a Russian officers' club in East Berlin and suggested that he bring along a girl friend. David asked Sally James, who spoke fluent German and French and some Russian as well. They traveled to East Berlin in an OMGUS taxi and entered through the Brandenburg Gate. It was a time when travel between East and West Berlin was not yet restricted.

At their destination, which was just off Unter den Linden, David asked a Russian soldier for directions. He spoke no German, and David worried that they were in the wrong place. But Vladimir had seen their car and directed them around the back of the building, which appeared to be a Russian enlisted men's club. David introduced Sally, and the Russian officer escorted them through a large, smoke-filled room to a relatively small and newly renovated dining room and lounge where he introduced his wife. She was nicely dressed and, like her husband, appeared to be in her early thirties. She spoke no English, but her German was passable, and Sally could converse with her. Vladimir said he wanted them to drink the "best Russian vodka." David, who soon realized that his own tolerance for vodka was limited, sipped slowly. He presented his Russian friend with Lucky Strike cigarettes, which he called "America's best cigarettes." Vladimir and his wife lighted up immediately. The meal included a first course of caviar, which their host assured them was "Russia's best."

When the talk eventually turned to politics, as he had known it would, David was happy that Sally James was present, because she was well informed.

"I have the impression," Seminov said, as he drew on another cigarette, "that the Americans are not going to negotiate with us. Are our relations not as good as they were?"

David was not sure what Seminov was driving at. He tried to parry the question.

"I'm not in a position to say, Vlad," he replied. "I'm just a writer. As far as I know, relations are pretty good." He looked at Sally.

"I think that's right," she said. "But our foreign ministers don't seem to be making much progress on German reparations or on all-German elections."

Seminov smiled and continued his probing. "Some of our people think you Americans are being too tough on the reparations question. After all, Germany destroyed most of our industry. Why shouldn't we have the right to collect large reparations?"

Sally indicated that she really didn't want to debate with Vladimir, so David picked up the conversation.

"Vlad, it seems to me that we don't agree on some major issues re-
garding Germany. Free elections in all four zones are important to us, but your Foreign Minister Molotov says no. We have quite different views on how to govern Germany, don’t we?”

The Russian lit up another cigarette and tried again. “Some people say the Americans, British, and French want to end the four-power administration of Germany and merge their three zones. What do you think?”

“I simply don’t know,” David responded with some irritation. “My guess is that Truman would not do that unless he thought there was no hope of getting Moscow to agree on a united approach to governing Germany. Elections are the key.”

It was a fascinating evening. David and Sally talked about it on the half-hour car trip back to Dahlem. Their OMGUS driver had waited for them.

“You were so right,” Sally said. “Vladimir is too clever to be an ordinary army officer. He was baiting us. He knows the answers to those questions, but he thought we might reflect the mood around OMGUS.”

“Well, I doubt that he got anything useful out of us,” David responded, smiling. “We handled it pretty well, don’t you think?”

“And the caviar and vodka were great!” Sally added.

Berlin and most of northern Europe were miserably cold in the winter of 1946-1947, and some older people died from exposure. Coal was strictly rationed, and most buildings were unheated during the day. Patrons of movie theaters sometimes stayed all night. David felt sorry for the hungry children, especially the orphans.

The German Evangelical Church had an orphanage a few blocks from the OMGUS headquarters and solicited donations of food and clothing. David’s father sent several boxes of used children’s clothing collected by his church in Saginaw, and in mid-November David went by the orphanage to drop off the clothes and several boxes of soup that he had purchased at the commissary. When he arrived at the large house with the boxes, the woman who came to the door asked, “Would you like to see the boys?”

She led the way to a large room in the former residence where about twenty boys aged five to twelve were playing with assorted toys and a few games. They were very thin and wore clothing in odd sizes, including oversized shoes. The room had little heat. The youngsters wore heavy sweaters and coats. When the woman introduced David as an American, the boys bowed politely, as German youngsters were taught to do. David asked one boy, “What is your name?”

“Claus Ehrlich,” the youngster answered.

“Are you from Berlin?”

“Yes, from Tempelhof. But our home was bombed and we had to leave.”
“Were your parents killed?”
“My mother was killed, but my father died in Russia.”
Other boys related similar stories with little emotion. Finally, one of
them got up his courage and asked, “Do all Americans have a car?” His
eyes sparkled.
“Not all, but most families do. My father has a car for our family.
Some people ride a bus or streetcar.”
The encounter reminded David that youngsters, no matter how dif-
ficult things are, are much the same everywhere. He remembered his own
youth and how interested he had been in every car that his father owned
from about 1930 on.

Early 1947 found tensions increasing between Americans and Russians in
Berlin, a major reason being the failure of the Western powers and the
Soviet Union to resolve their differences regarding the administration of
postwar Germany. The danger became personal when Harry Farmer, the
OMGUS publications chief who had hired David, while traveling with a
companion in a well-marked U.S. jeep, failed to halt at a roadblock. He
was fatally shot by a Russian guard in East Berlin. His death sent a shud-
der through OMGUS.
General George Marshall, who was appointed by President Truman
to be secretary of state in January 1947, had the task of formulating a new
policy to deal with the Soviet Union’s intransigence regarding Germany.
The American, British, and French governments had discussed an eco-
nomic merger of their occupation zones if Moscow continued to demand
huge reparations and to stall on treating Germany as a single entity.
Marshall made a final effort in March, at a foreign ministers’ meeting in
Moscow, to persuade Molotov to accept the Western proposal, but his ef-
forts came to naught. On his return to Washington, Marshall stopped in
Berlin to brief General Lucius Clay, commander of U.S. forces in Germany,
on his findings.
A few days later Hal Williams invited David to join him at a staff
meeting where Clay reported on Marshall’s visit. The secretary of state
was pessimistic, Clay said, and would propose to President Truman that
the Western Allies proceed without the Russians. General Clay thought
that if Marshall’s advice was accepted, Germany could become two po-
itical entities, a democratic west and a Communist east. He cautioned his
staff to be careful about traveling in the Soviet zone of Germany.
Back at the office David asked his boss whether he thought there
would be two Germanys.
“ Wouldn’t surprise me,” Hal replied. “The Russians are cracking
down in Poland and Hungary, and they’re getting rid of Germans who
don’t toe the line in their zone.”
"Could Berlin be cut off from the western zones? This place is pretty vulnerable."

"You bet it is," Williams said. "Berlin is an island and at risk. Stalin is turning up the heat in Greece and Turkey, and he'll do it here if he thinks he can get away with it."

The news from Washington in the spring of 1947 was dominated by President Truman's urgent request to Congress for $400 million in military and economic aid for Greece and Turkey, to help deal with a Communist insurgency in Greece and to counter Moscow's pressure on Turkey to alter a treaty governing Soviet warships crossing the Bosporus Strait. This initiative eventually became known as the Truman Doctrine, under which the United States acted to prevent democratic countries from being taken over by communism. Then, in June, Secretary Marshall made a stunning proposal at Harvard University: the United States would grant billions of dollars in aid to assist in the economic recovery of Europe, if the European countries coordinated their economic plans. The program, which became known as the Marshall Plan, stimulated the leaders of the Western European countries to consult on how to qualify for massive U.S. economic assistance, expected to total about four billion dollars a year over four years. Many members of Congress, particularly Republicans, were skeptical about the size of this projected aid program. But the Truman administration's proposal received the endorsement of the foreign policy establishment, including key Republican senators, among them Arthur Vandenberg, who was then chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

That summer an important article on United States-Soviet relations appeared in the influential foreign policy journal Foreign Affairs. The author, initially identified only as "Mr. X," was soon discovered to be George Kennan, a top State Department Soviet expert. The article set forth the basis of a global "containment policy" toward the Soviet Union. The ideas that Kennan outlined endured for forty years as the rationale for defending U.S. interests against an increasingly dangerous Soviet military machine.

In Berlin that year David met a number of young American women, including an especially attractive girl named Helen Martin. She too worked at OMGUS, in an office on the floor just below his in General Clay's headquarters. Helen was his age and had come to Berlin from Washington, D.C., in May 1946 to join her sister, Betty, who was employed in a different division of OMGUS. The sisters shared an apartment at a complex in Dahlemendorf known as "Onkel Tom's Hutte." It was located about a mile from their office. David invited Helen out a few times during that year, and they went dancing at Harnack Haus, the nearby army officers' club, which had been seized from Goering's Luftwaffe in 1945.

During the spring of 1947, the friendship blossomed, and David and
Helen began to see each other more regularly. Sometimes they went sail-
ing on Lake Wannsee, where the army had a large recreation center. By
August, when the two of them had completed their assignments in Ger-
many and were ready to return to the States, they realized that they were
in love.

David found that knowing Helen Martin boosted his morale because
Berlin that winter was a terribly cold and depressing place. By summer he
thought about asking her to marry him, but it did not seem a good idea
until he had finished his studies at the University of Michigan and de-
cided on a career. That was not likely to happen until the following spring,
he concluded. In the meantime, Helen planned to return to Washington
and work for the Department of the Army at the Pentagon, and he would
live in Ann Arbor. They talked about this separation and wondered whether
they would feel the same about each other after a year. Still, they knew
when they sailed for New York in mid-August that they had found some-
thing very special in their lives during those final months in Berlin.
Saginaw, Michigan, lies ten miles inland from Lake Huron on the state’s eastern side and about ninety miles north of Detroit. In the early nineteenth century Saginaw Valley became one of Michigan’s most productive agricultural regions. The immigrants it attracted included four Bruening brothers, who left Bavaria in the late 1840s and moved to the village of Frankenmuth, where David’s father was born at the end of the century.

From the 1880s until about 1900, Saginaw was at the center of Michigan’s booming lumber industry from which a few families made large fortunes. In the 1920s the city became known as a “General Motors town” and took on the character of an industrial community with a large blue-collar workforce. The Great Depression in the 1930s devastated the region’s business and farm economy, however, especially the auto industry and banking. There were massive layoffs, and unemployment rose to nearly 20 percent.

Like the larger city of Flint, Saginaw quickly became a target of recruitment drives by the new United Automobile Workers of America (UAW), which precipitated labor unrest and led to “sit-down strikes” in some factories. The depression also shifted Saginaw’s political mood to the left and toward the Democratic Party.

In the 1930s Saginaw had a population of around 80,000. Its downtown area, on the east side of the Saginaw River, was a bustling commercial center. After Franklin Roosevelt became president in March 1933, the newly powerful labor organizations that supported Democratic Party candidates heavily influenced Michigan politics. At about this time, in January 1933, Germany’s politics took a sharp turn to the right. Adolph Hitler, newly appointed chancellor, quickly moved to crush Germany’s fledgling democracy and impose a brutal Nazi dictatorship.

In their international outlook, most Michigan residents tended to be isolationist. Their attitudes toward Europe were influenced to some degree by the editorial policies of the Detroit Times in the east and the Chicago Tri-
bune in the west. Saginaw's large German-American population was mildly pro-German and clearly anti-British. Its outlook was a legacy of the World War I period, when many had opposed sending troops to Europe to fight with the British against the Germans. Until the Munich crisis over Czechoslovakia in September 1938, German-Americans voiced much curiosity about Adolph Hitler and some support for his economic policies.

With the Munich crisis, Hitler brought Europe to the brink of war. He demanded that the German-speaking part of Czechoslovakia, known as Sudetenland, be annexed to the Third Reich. Britain and France reluctantly agreed at a conference in Munich to accept Hitler's territorial demands, but in the spring of 1939 the German dictator sent his troops to occupy the remainder of Czechoslovakia. This annexation of a large non-German population indicated to Europe's capitals that Hitler intended to expand Germany's power elsewhere in eastern Europe.

Early in 1939 David Bruening acquired his first newspaper carrier route, delivering the Detroit Times to about twenty-five houses on the west side of Saginaw. He also began to read the paper every day and quickly became aware of the great events taking place in Europe. Sometimes he talked with his customers about the news, especially when the Times carried photos of suffering refugees in the Spanish Civil War.

The young paper boy was intrigued by the opinions of Otto Krueger, a sixty-year-old shop owner who had anti-British and pro-German sentiments. Krueger owned a butcher shop near the corner where bundles of newsprint were dropped off each day for David. On rainy days the old man let David use the front of the store to fold his papers. He regularly engaged the youngster in a discussion of the news, and he had an opinion on nearly every subject. His opposition to the British was particularly strong. Krueger also had no use for President Roosevelt, who, he said, was leading the country into socialism. It seemed to amuse him that a fourteen-year-old boy was prepared to argue with him about politics.

Krueger had been born in southern Germany around 1880 and had arrived in Michigan at the turn of the century. In 1917 he was too old to be drafted for service in France, but his strong views against "Wilson's war" were well known to his customers. He said that Germans had gotten "a bad deal" after the war, and he was convinced that "Germany would have defeated Britain and France if the United States had stayed out." Wilson sold out to Wall Street, Krueger declared one day, "even after he promised to keep us out of the war." Although he believed that Hitler had done a "good job" of putting Germans back to work and making them "feel proud to be Germans," he was not a Nazi sympathizer. Neither David nor his father ever heard him attack the Jews. He seemed typical of many citizens in Saginaw in 1939 who opposed U.S. involvement in "Europe's quarrels."

In April 1939, just after German forces had occupied all of Czecho-
slovakia in a blatant grab for territory in Eastern Europe, Bruening and Krueger discussed the latest developments.

"It looks like Hitler finally got what he was after in Czechoslovakia," Krueger said.

"Do you think there will be a war?" David asked.

"I doubt it," the old man responded. "Wilson never should have created a Czech republic in the first place. It's not a country. Those people were better off under Austria."

"But why should Hitler get it?"

"Because most of those people are pro-German."

"Well, why don't the British and French try to stop him?"

"Because the Czechs don't matter," Krueger responded coldly. "The big guys decide these things. Hitler is the biggest guy in Europe right now. That's why he got his way at Munich. The British won't move."

The news boy found Krueger's words a sobering lesson in international politics.

On September 1, at 6:30 A.M., the phone rang at the Bruening home. It was the circulation manager of the local Detroit Times office. David sleepily took the call.

"Bruening, can you get down here by seven o'clock? We have an extra coming in."

"What happened?"

"Hitler attacked Poland. The war has started," the circulation manager barked.

The truck was late arriving from Detroit. When it finally came, David opened his bundle and read the bold headline: "Warsaw Is Bombed." Ten minutes later he stood on the main corner of downtown Saginaw, on Genesee and Washington Streets, in front of the Second National Bank building. "Extra, Extra!" he shouted to the pedestrians. "Hitler attacks Poland!" He sold thirty-five papers in an hour. That afternoon he asked Otto Krueger what he thought of the news.

"We should stay out of it," the old man muttered. "The British are going to declare war. They'll drag us in. You'll see. Roosevelt is pro-British, you know. He'll get us into it."

From that day on, David Bruening read the newspaper and listened intently to radio reports from London and Berlin in an effort to understand as much as possible about the events in Europe. When he took over a larger paper route for the Saginaw News in the spring of 1940, he lost contact with Krueger, but the opinionated old man had nurtured an interest in international affairs that was to last for the rest of David's life.

On the afternoon of December 7, 1941, a Sunday, David turned on the radio in his study room and learned that Japanese bombers had attacked U.S. warships at Pearl Harbor. The Bruening family, stunned, listened to
news reports late into the night. At Arthur Hill High School the next day, classes were interrupted so that everyone could hear President Roosevelt's speech on the intercom. He called December 7 a "day that will live in infamy" and asked Congress to declare war against Japan. Most of David's classmates were astonished by the Japanese attack. Many of them thought Japan would be defeated easily by American forces.

A few days later, when Germany declared war on the United States, David's friends took the conflict more seriously. Soon the country began to feel the impact of war. Gasoline rationing began and affected nearly everybody. Junior and senior boys began to speculate about whether they wanted to enlist in the army, navy, or marines or whether they should graduate and wait to be drafted. About a dozen of David's classmates dropped out of school in 1942 to enlist.

In March 1943 a navy recruiter from Detroit visited Arthur Hill and outlined to senior boys the program offered by the navy air corps. David had not considered the navy, but the idea of flying immediately appealed to him. He took an application home and waited until dinner to talk about it with his father. Herbert listened carefully.

"Isn't flying dangerous duty? Why would you rather join the navy than the army?" he asked.

"I'd rather be on a ship or a plane than in a foxhole," David replied. "I want to be an officer in the navy, and that's better than being a sailor or soldier." In fact David liked the navy's blue uniform and was excited by the prospect of flying off carriers.

After more conversation, his father fell silent. Lillian, David's mother, was so upset about the subject that she remained silent throughout their conversation. At last Herbert said, "You seem to be set on flying, Dave. If that's what you prefer, you might as well go ahead and apply and see what happens."

David felt good that his father had endorsed his plan, and within a few days he sent off an application to the navy's recruiting office.

One morning in mid-April about one hundred teenaged boys from different parts of Michigan took a three-hour written exam in Detroit and were told to report back after lunch. The assembled group then listened as a yeoman called out the names of those who had passed. Hearing his name called, David was elated. More than half the group had not made the cut. Later he underwent a rigorous physical exam, talked briefly with a doctor, and finally was interviewed for about twenty minutes by a navy lieutenant wearing a dark blue uniform with two gold stripes on each sleeve and gold wings on his jacket. He had flown in combat.

The officer urged David to think carefully about his interest in flying. "You do understand that being a carrier pilot is more dangerous than flying off land?" he asked. David nodded. The officer also told him that if he was accepted, he would not go directly to flight training because "the navy
wants its officers to have a college education." David felt that it was a good interview.

At 5:00 P.M. he was one of only three remaining applicants of the one hundred who had assembled that morning. He was then officially sworn into the U.S. Navy and was given a V-5 pin to display on his lapel. Eighteen boys were told to have physical problems attended to by a physician or a dentist and to return at a later date.

"Only three out of a hundred, and I'm one of them!" David exulted. He couldn't wait to tell his parents and friends that he was officially in the navy.

In February 1945, as David was finishing a second year of college under the navy's V-12 program, his personnel officer at Notre Dame University called him in.

"Bruening, you've completed four semesters of college and are now ready for flight school. If you want flight training, you can get your wings in about ten months. But you could go to midshipmen's school instead and get your commission in four months, as a line officer. You have to make a decision."

David thought it over for a minute. "Sir, the war in Europe is almost over, and I'm still in school. If I'm going to get to sea before the end of the war with Japan, I need to get my commission quickly." He paused, knowing that his career as a navy pilot hung in the balance. "I'll take midshipmen's school."

Within ten days he received his orders to report for training at the school in Fort Schuyler, New York, about half an hour by train from Manhattan. He expected the four-month course to be about as intensive as the one at Notre Dame had been, but he was wrong. The experience at Fort Schuyler turned out to be the most excruciating of any he had endured so far in his young life. In fact, he sometimes worried that he would not survive the ordeal to receive his commission.

While David struggled at Fort Schuyler, two major political events occurred that spring. First, President Roosevelt died suddenly in April and Vice-President Harry Truman assumed the presidency. The midshipmen heard the news after class and saw the flag flying at half staff. David's classmates knew nothing about Mr. Truman except that he had been a senator from Missouri and that he played the piano.

"The war is still on," the executive officer told them that evening, "and the navy will train its prospective officers with no interruption in the schedule." Indeed there was no break in the daily routine at the school.

The second event was VE Day, the end of the war in Europe, on May 8. Again, there was no celebrating at Fort Schuyler and no break in classes. As far as the navy was concerned, what mattered was the war with Japan. And in the spring of 1945, it appeared that the Pacific war would last at least another year. Savage fighting and large American casualties on the islands
of Iwo Jima and Okinawa demonstrated that Japanese forces would not surrender. Japan's home islands would have to be invaded at great cost.

David and his buddies responded to news of Germany's capitulation with mixed emotions. Although they were elated that the war in Europe was over, they began to wonder whether they would actually see action before the Pacific war ended.

Early in July, after receiving his commission as an ensign, USNR, in a ceremony at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, David reported for duty at the Advanced Line Officers' Training Center in Miami, Florida. This was an intensive two-month course of instruction on shipboard operations under combat conditions. About eight hundred new navy officers gathered the first morning to hear the commanding officer's welcome.

"Gentlemen," he began, "the war in Europe is over but the navy's war in the Pacific grows in intensity. The enemy will defend every inch of his territory and we will therefore have to invade Japan. You will be trained for that amphibious assault. You should know that one-third of you may not survive. Gentlemen, it is a time for seriousness and for dedication to our job of getting this war over as quickly as possible and bringing peace to our country."

The newly commissioned officers sat soberly, contemplating a grim future. As he left the hall, David remarked to another officer: "What a cold shower that was." At lunch the conversation was subdued. According to one member of the group, General Marshall, the army's chief of staff, had estimated that a million American casualties could result from the invasion of Japan. The word around Miami was that most of the officers then in training would be assigned as "skippers" of the landing craft that would ferry soldiers and marines ashore on Japan's southern coast.

"If that's so," another said, "the slaughter on Okinawa will seem like kids' stuff."

"What about our B-29 bombers?" David asked. "With their big payloads, won't the job of invading be easier?"

"Bombing didn't stop the Germans," someone else responded. The Nazis didn't surrender until every German city was captured and the Russians occupied Berlin. The Japanese will fight to the end, I'm sure."

It was a serious group of navy ensigns that began training that day. They realized that they would probably see combat before the end of the year. Meanwhile, the heat in Miami that summer was terrible. Neither the classrooms nor the hotel rooms where the men had quarters were air conditioned. Staying awake in class often took great effort.

On August 6, when the course was half over, David learned from the radio that a single atom bomb, dropped by a B-29 bomber, had destroyed the Japanese city of Hiroshima in a firestorm. President Truman was calling on the Japanese government to surrender in order to avoid further destruction. No one knew what an atomic bomb was, but soon the newspa-
pers and radio provided some of the details. A single bomb had obliterated a large city and had killed nearly 100,000 people. The new weapon, which had been developed in great secrecy during the war, had been tested only six weeks earlier in New Mexico. President Truman had authorized its use against Japan in order to save American lives and end the war.

All of David's friends expected the war to be over quickly because they believed Japan could not cope with such an awesome weapon. But three days later, because Japan had not surrendered, a second atomic bomb fell on Nagasaki, with similar results. When news of Japan's surrender came at about 8:00 P.M. on August 14, David walked a few blocks to the center of Miami to join tens of thousands of GIs and sailors in the largest celebration that the city had ever seen. He was not sorry that Truman had used the atom bomb. If the bomb could avoid a costly invasion of Japan, David believed, it was worth the price. Several hundred thousand American GIs owed their lives to Truman's decision.

When classes resumed the next morning at 8:00 A.M., many students had trouble staying awake. Their instructor smiled, mentioned the celebration of the previous night, and carried on with his scheduled lecture on damage control. Few of his classmates bothered to take notes and David said to himself, "What the hell, this course is really over."

In September he learned to his great disappointment that his next assignment was not sea duty, as he had expected, but the naval station at Bainbridge, Maryland. It would be another year before he would have enough service "points" to get out of the navy and he wondered how he could endure twelve more months of shore duty. At least he had his commission, he told himself. But it was really embarrassing not to be assigned to a ship.

The naval station at Bainbridge had been a training installation during the war—one of many—but now it was being converted to a separation center processing tens of thousands of sailors for discharge to civilian life. As one of six junior duty officers, David was expected to meet the many troop trains and buses that brought navy personnel for transfer to civilian status. He ensured that their orders were properly endorsed, that billets were ready, and that the men were fed good meals upon their arrival.

From the start of this assignment he made a nuisance of himself by repeatedly asking for a transfer to sea duty. The commanding officer turned down two requests because the separation center did not have enough junior officers. In January 1946, a new executive officer came on board, and David asked to speak with him directly, in spite of the difference in their rank. He knew that the new exec had been in combat and wore several rows of ribbons. When he walked into his office, Ensign Bruening was determined to make a strong case.

"Sir, I've been in the navy for over two years and haven't been to sea. I wanted to fly, but my personnel officer suggested that a commission in the line would get me to sea faster."
"You haven’t had any sea duty at all?" the tall commander said with some surprise.

"No, sir. They sent me to college for two years. I have only six more months in the navy. I really don’t want to end my time here in Maryland."

"What kind of ship are you looking for?" the exec asked, showing interest.

"A destroyer, sir. But I’ll take any sea duty that’s available. I really need your help."

The senior officer eyed him for a moment before speaking. "All right, Mr. Bruening, bring me a request and I’ll see that it gets approved. Every officer should be able to serve at sea sometime during his career." He smiled. David felt elated.

To make sure that the Bureau of Naval Personnel (familiarly known as BuPers) processed the request properly, David took a train to Washington on his next day off. He went to the Navy Annex in Arlington, just above the enormous new Pentagon office building. The navy clerk who handled his personnel file noted his preference for destroyer duty but cautioned that there would not be an opening soon, because many ships were being decommissioned. He could probably be assigned to a large cargo ship (AKA) operating in the Atlantic, however. David quickly agreed and left the office convinced that he would soon be ordered to sea. Two weeks later, when the orders arrived, they assigned him not to a ship, but to the U.S. naval base in Bremerhaven, Germany. He was stunned. "How could they have messed up like this?" he exclaimed.

That evening he and Tom Snyder, his roommate, talked at dinner about his bad luck. Tom, a navy dentist, was six years older than he, and David appreciated his reasoned approach to things.

"Come on, Dave, look on the bright side," Tom suggested. "You’re so interested in history and politics. Why not see this as a study project in postwar Europe?" He was right, David had to concede. He began to regard the assignment as an opportunity. Anything was better than being stuck in Bainbridge, he concluded.

Before going overseas, David took a week’s leave in Saginaw. His parents were pleased that he had an interesting assignment and knew that he would be gone only until August 1946, when he could return and enter the University of Michigan. Herbert gave him the address of a distant cousin in Nurnberg to contact while he was in Germany. David’s discussion with Allison, his girlfriend, was more difficult, however, because he had to disappoint her. She had hoped to be engaged before he left, but he didn’t feel ready to take this step.

While walking around Times Square in New York on March 5, David read a news bulletin sliding along the electric panel on a building at Forty-second Street. It said that the former British prime minister, Winston Churchill, had just spoken in Fulton, Missouri, about the "iron curtain"
that was descending in Europe. The Soviet Union was imposing Communist rule on Poland and Romania in Eastern Europe. Later David heard that many American liberals had called Churchill a warmonger because he had criticized Moscow. Most Americans believed in 1946 that the Soviet Union was a friend and an ally and should not be regarded with suspicion.

After waiting in New York for nearly a week, David boarded the former German luxury liner *Europa*, which the U.S. Navy had confiscated in 1945 and used as a troop ship for returning American servicemen. This crossing of the Atlantic in March 1946 was to be David Bruening's only sea duty during his three years in the navy.

The trip was uneventful except for his conversations with a dozen other junior officers assigned to European duty. Some had been in the Pacific, and they liked to compare their wartime experiences. The most impressive person, David thought, was Lieutenant (j.g.) Nelson Atwater, who had served on a submarine that was badly damaged by Japanese destroyers. The sub had managed to return to Pearl Harbor despite damage and the death of some crew members. Tears formed in Atwater's eyes as he spoke of his experience. It was the first time David had seen another officer break down with emotion. The sight reminded him that his own participation in the war had been minimal. As the *Europa* neared the coast of Germany in late March, he promised himself that he would at least see postwar Europe.

When he returned home from Germany in late August 1947, as a civilian, David Bruening found that downtown Saginaw had changed during the war. There were now so many cars that one-way streets had been instituted. Parking lots had been added to accommodate the great increase in traffic. Sears and Montgomery Ward were doing a major business, and many new stores had opened. Used car dealers were thriving because not enough new cars were available to satisfy the huge postwar demand. New home construction was also booming. Many veterans were using their benefits under the G.I. Bill to obtain low-interest mortgages.

His family seemed largely the same, David thought, but it was he who had changed. He didn't feel as cheerful and self-confident as when he had departed for Europe. He had seen so much destruction and human suffering in Germany and elsewhere that he had trouble relating his feelings to his family. None of them had been away from the United States, the only major country that had escaped the hardships of World War II.

The University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, was one of America's leading universities. In 1947 its law, medical, and engineering schools were nationally recognized for their excellence, and the undergraduate College of Literature, Science and Arts (LSA) was one of the nation's best. Like most other institutions of higher learning in this early postwar period, the university struggled with the huge increase in students as thousands of
veterans sought an education under the G.I. Bill. David registered for a heavy course load so that he could graduate in June. He also found off-campus housing with a young couple, Betty and Fred Morton, who had an extra room and offered him meals. They became lifelong friends.

The *Michigan Daily* was known for its liberal-left political leanings and was read by most of the university's students and faculty. After looking through it for a week, David thought it needed some realism in its commentaries to balance the liberal slant of many of its articles and editorials. The editor agreed to let him write a piece on Europe, based on his experiences there. A week later David's first column appeared under the heading "It Seems to Me." It was about dealing with the Russians in Berlin and explained why relations had become so tense in 1947. He felt a surge of pleasure when he saw it. The editor invited him to do a second piece the following week. This one dealt with American economic aid to Europe, which became known as the Marshall Plan. By Christmas David had written nine columns, roughly one a week.

He had lunch with Jim Shuster at the Pretzel Bell, a favorite hangout for students, a few days after his first article appeared in the *Daily*. He kidded David about writing for "that leftist rag." Jim had joined the army reserves after returning from Europe and had become a strong conservative since the war. He seemed convinced that the Soviet Union was a military threat to Western Europe.

"Things are going to get a lot worse in Europe," Jim said when their conversation turned to postwar Germany and David's experiences there. "I stayed in the reserves because we may have to build up in Europe again. This way I can get promoted and I get paid for my training duty. Are you in the navy reserves?"

"Yes," David responded, "but I'm not active. I guess I'm not as worried as you are that we and the Russians are headed for a showdown in Europe."

That Christmas the Bruening family spent a week in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, a welcome break for David from his studies and Ann Arbor's cold weather. On his return, he visited Washington, D.C., to see Helen Martin, with whom he had corresponded regularly that fall. On New Year's Eve they attended a gala ball at the huge Washington Armory and danced to the music of Vaughan Monroe's orchestra. The next day, January 1, they listened to the Rose Bowl game from Pasadena on the radio as the University of Michigan's football team defeated Southern California 49-0. By the time David left on the train for Ann Arbor, the two of them had discussed the possibility of marriage that summer.

The serious events in Europe during the early months of 1948 forced a complacent American public to rethink its assumption that Europe was no longer a dangerous place. In February the Czech Communist Party, sup-
ported by Soviet agents and massed Russian tanks, staged a coup in Prague and ousted the democratically elected government of Czechoslovakia. In Washington, London, and Paris, leaders were jolted by this blatant Soviet move to seize control of a democratic state that had expressed interest in joining the Marshall Plan. President Truman went on national radio to warn the country of a serious danger in Europe. He asked Congress for a large increase in the defense budget.

A month later the United States, Britain, and France decided to move ahead with the long-delayed merger of their occupation zones in Germany. They also made plans to introduce a new currency into their parts of Germany. In April, Congress approved the Marshall Plan legislation of large-scale economic aid for Western Europe. Moscow retaliated by walking out of the Allied Control Council in Berlin. Finally, in May and June, Russian forces imposed a blockade on all rail and road traffic into Berlin from the western zones of Germany. This dramatic action was a clear violation of a four-power agreement guaranteeing free access by the Western Allies to Berlin. Soviet authorities claimed that the roads and rail lines were closed "temporarily for repairs."

No government in Europe was in doubt about the significance of the Russian blockade: it was intended to force the Western powers out of Berlin unless they rescinded the planned merger of their occupation zones. General Lucius Clay, the American commander, recommended that the United States send a tank column along the autobahn to Berlin and fire on anyone who tried to stop them. President Truman instead adopted a plan advanced by the air force, to undertake a giant airlift of supplies into Berlin and thereby feed West Berlin without risking war. The Berlin Airlift, a massive logistics operation begun in June 1948, demonstrated to the German people and to other Europeans that the United States would not retreat under Soviet pressure. The airlift continued for a year and brought the lasting gratitude of West Berliners to the Western Allies, which only four years earlier had been bombing their capital.

David received a letter in February 1948 from Arthur Stanton, the editor of the *Ann Arbor News* who had seen his columns in the university newspaper. He invited David to write editorials for his paper dealing with national and international affairs. After talking with Stanton, he submitted an editorial on the Marshall Plan's importance for the economic recovery of Europe. Within a week David received a check in the mail for five dollars, the first money he had ever earned from writing. "I've arrived," he told Betty Morton, who had handed him the letter.

A week or so later Stanton introduced him to Ray Barber, the associate editor, who wrote most of the editorials as well as special features on science and medicine. Ray was middle-aged, smoked constantly, and took a low-key approach to newspaper work. He was viewed by staffers as mildly eccentric, and his desk was a total shambles. With Barber's help, David's
writing style steadily improved and he thereafter contributed one or two editorials a week to the News.

The heated congressional debate in Washington on the Marshall Plan renewed the tension between the isolationist and internationalist wings in the Republican Party, which then controlled Congress. The legislation also brought to national prominence Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who played a major role in forging a bipartisan coalition on foreign policy with the Truman administration.

Vandenberg had been an isolationist before World War II, but he changed his position in 1944 after being persuaded that the United States would have to help build a lasting peace after the war ended. Unlike many other Republicans, he supported the Marshall Plan for another reason: he agreed with Truman that western Germany needed to be tied economically to the West so that Stalin would not succeed in bringing all of Germany into the Soviet sphere of influence. Many observers in Washington feared in 1948 that Moscow might use force to get the Western Allies out of Berlin and eventually out of Germany as well.

In May David stopped by the newspaper to see Ray Barber. "Are we going to war with the Russians?" he asked.

"It doesn't look so good, does it?" Ray replied. "But I don't think it will go that far."

"Because Truman has an election this year?"

"No, because Stalin is leading from weakness. He'll back down on the blockade when he's convinced that Truman won't give up in Berlin."

"Then why doesn't the president take General Clay's advice and send a tank column up the autobahn?" David asked.

"Because it's provocative. We don't have enough troops in Germany to take that gamble. But we do have airplanes."

David hoped he was right. Things were getting very tense in Europe. News commentators began using a new phrase, "cold war," to describe the dangerous situation that had developed. No one knew whether a hot war would result. But a major change was occurring in American public opinion. People's postwar hope for a peaceful world was fast giving way to awareness that there were serious international tensions.

By May 1948 David still had not decided what to do about a job after graduation in June. He had three possibilities: one was to work for the Ann Arbor News as a reporter as well as an editorial writer. A second was to enter graduate school and work on a master's degree in political science. The third possibility was to join the State Department's diplomatic courier service. He had submitted an application to the State Department six months earlier, and he learned in March that it was being processed when an FBI agent talked with Stanton at the newspaper, with several of his professors, and finally with him. Being a diplomatic courier, David believed, could
lead to a career position in the Foreign Service or the State Department, and the idea appealed to him. In late May he received a firm job offer from the State Department.

Things had changed, however, by the time he drove to Washington in mid-June to present Helen Martin with an engagement ring. They decided to marry the following month, and that decision precluded David's accepting the courier job.

"Are you sorry to be giving up your chance to join the State Department?" Helen asked.

"No. I've thought about it and I'd much rather be with you."

He met with Ann Langden, the personnel chief of the courier corps, at a State Department annex on Twenty-third Street. She was glad to meet him.

"Ann," he said quietly, "I'm afraid I won't be able to accept your job offer after all. I'm planning to get married this summer and I know you don't take married men."

Ann Langden seemed astonished to hear this because rarely did anyone turn down a chance to be a Foreign Service courier. She offered congratulations and was interested to learn that Helen lived in Washington and worked for the U.S. Army at the Pentagon. David asked her whether there might be something else for him in the department after he had finished graduate school. She said she would be happy to send his file to the central personnel office and remarked as he was leaving, "I still hope to see you in the State Department one day."

He and Helen were married in July in a simple ceremony at the University's Lutheran chapel in Ann Arbor. They drove to Mexico City in their newly acquired Ford for a ten-day honeymoon, during which David took photos and made notes for a series of articles that Arthur Stanton had suggested he write for the Ann Arbor News. He and Helen were delighted when the editor paid him $25 for each article.

David decided to work full time at the paper that summer and also to take two graduate courses in political science at the university. He had already been accepted into graduate school, and he and Helen decided to remain in Ann Arbor while he worked on a master's degree. Helen worked for a local insurance agency and began to adjust to life in a small town after having spent most of her adult life in Washington, D.C.

Jack Meadows, the city editor and David's new boss at the newspaper, started him out reporting on the police and fire beat. Occasionally David accompanied a veteran reporter to meetings of the city council, an assignment that gave him an introduction to local politics. After a month of news reporting, with Meadows's encouragement he wrote a human interest story on the Veterans' Rehabilitation Center at the University, for which he earned a byline. He continued to write some editorials and kept up his conversations with Ray Barber. By the end of summer, however, David began to
wonder how reporters ever reached a big city newspaper or became foreign correspondents. Even senior reporters at the paper did not earn very much money. In September, he went back to being a full-time graduate student in political science but continued to write one editorial a week for the paper. He and Helen concluded that newspaper work was probably not his best career choice.

The November 1948 presidential election looked as if it would be an easy victory for the Republican candidate, Governor Thomas Dewey of New York. President Harry Truman had two other opponents in this election: Henry Wallace, leader of the leftist Progressive Party, and Governor Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, leader of the States’ Rights (Dixiecrat) Party. Dewey led Truman by a large margin in the early polls because the Democrats were deeply divided over Truman’s policies, particularly his liberal civil rights stand. Some even wanted to deny him the nomination. Truman campaigned vigorously against the Republican-controlled Congress, branding it the “do-nothing Eightieth Congress.”

The president’s narrow victory on November 2 sent political shock waves across the country. A memorable photo showed an exultant Harry Truman holding up a copy of the conservative *Chicago Tribune* with its large headline: “Dewey Defeats Truman.”

It was a good time to have a chat with Ray Barber, David decided, and he found the editor in a good mood about the election outcome.

“How did the Republicans blow it?” David wanted to know. This was the first election in which he had been able to vote, and he supported Dewey.

“Tom Dewey was a colorless candidate,” Ray said, puffing on a cigarette. “And the Republicans scared hell out of the farmers.”

“So where does this leave the Republicans?”

“They will become more radical in their frustration.” The editor blew smoke across the desk. “They could turn to some far-out leader, because they are now desperate.”

“And how will all this affect foreign policy? Is bipartisanship down the tubes from now on?”

“It depends on whether the isolationists get control of the Republican Party. It could happen, and that won’t be good for the country.”

In the spring semester of 1949 David’s most interesting seminar, offered by John Parsons, dealt with European politics and foreign policy. He had been an adviser in Germany on the drafting of a German constitution. A hard-liner in foreign policy, he was convinced that Stalin would never agree to unify Germany unless he could control all of it. Parsons had earlier thought that Stalin might resort to war to prevent the Western powers from concluding a separate peace treaty with West Germany and from bringing it eventually into the new North Atlantic Defense Pact, which the Allies concluded on April 4, 1949. In May, the Russians lifted their blockade
of Berlin because it had been a failure. Parsons then concluded that Stalin was not willing to risk a major war if the Allies remained united.

Parsons’s seminar encouraged David and Helen to consider spending a year of study in Europe. The American-Scandinavian Foundation had announced a special program for American graduate students at the University of Copenhagen, which offered courses in Danish history, politics, and social systems. The G.I. Bill, under which David was already studying, would cover the tuition and would continue to provide him with a monthly stipend of $110. The Bruenings would have to finance their travel arrangements, however. Parsons was enthusiastic when David approached him with the idea. The professor agreed to write him a recommendation and asked, “What type of career are you looking for, Bruening?”

“I’m not sure. One reason for working on a master’s this year is to help me decide if I want to be in journalism, government, or perhaps teaching.”

Parsons suggested that he think about teaching. As for government, he said, “It’s all right if you get into the right job. The State Department might be an interesting place for you.”

“I think I’d like to spend next year in Denmark and then decide. Could I get credit for the courses they offer?”

“It shouldn’t be a problem if they are graduate-level courses. This might also help you decide whether you want to pursue our doctoral program.” Here was an option that David hadn’t even considered.

He worked full-time that summer at the News, and with Helen’s salary they saved enough to travel to Denmark. Coincidentally David’s parents also traveled to Europe that summer, visiting Britain, France, and Germany, where they spent a few days in Nurnberg with Martin Bruening and his extended family. David was sure his parents would have a better appreciation of his reasons for staying in Germany in 1947 after their own visit there.

David and Helen boarded the Polish liner Batory in September for a ten-day Atlantic crossing to Copenhagen. They were glad to be traveling again, this time to a relatively prosperous and undamaged European country. Their expenses dropped during the voyage because of Great Britain’s devaluation of the pound sterling. As the Danish krona was pegged to the pound, David and Helen suddenly found their dollars worth about one-third more. Like the dozen or so other American students traveling on the ship, they felt suddenly rich.

During the trip they made friends with a group of Danish students who were returning home after studying in the United States. Poul Hilstrup, an exceptionally friendly young Dane, provided them with excellent insights into Danish life and politics and subsequently gave David and Helen an outstanding introduction to Danish hospitality.
Classes began the first week of October 1949. The twenty-five Americans in the graduate program heard lectures in English given by four Danish instructors. The courses covered history, politics, economics, and Danish social institutions. The Americans studied Denmark’s relations with other European countries, particularly the Scandinavian ones. They also received intensive instruction in written and spoken Danish that was designed to enable them to sit in on some lectures in Danish during the spring semester. After about six weeks, David was able to get the gist of newspaper articles, and by Christmas his reading ability was reasonably good.

The Americans learned early in their stay that most Danes preferred to practice English rather than converse with Americans in their own language. At the university it was easy for Danish students to spot the Americans because of their more colorful clothing and their casual manner. Most of the Danes were friendly and wanted to speak English, but some resented the Americans, and there were occasional arguments over lunch. David concluded that some of the Danes regarded Americans as rich and brash. They might also be influenced, he thought, by the leftist ideas prevalent on campus, including the neutralist views on foreign policy that had surfaced when Denmark decided to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) earlier in the year.

In mid-October John Davidsen, the politics instructor, asked what the students thought about the news that Mao Zedong’s Red army had established the People’s Republic of China. According to Rob Harris, a high school teacher from California, Senator William Knowland had two years earlier predicted a Communist victory in China if President Truman refused to send military aid to the Nationalist forces of General Chiang Kai-shek. Davidsen wondered whether the Communists won because the Nationalists were so corrupt. David disagreed that Truman was responsible for the Communist rise to power in China. While U.S. military intervention in China might have prevented the Nationalists’ collapse, he argued, the Red army would have won eventually because it was disciplined and ruthless and had the support of the peasantry. Another student was sure that Americans were not willing to get involved in China’s civil war. This discussion continued outside the classroom for weeks and involved some of the Danish students who supported their government’s view that the People’s Republic should receive diplomatic recognition.

In October the Berlingske Tidende, Denmark’s largest newspaper, interviewed four American students, including David, and printed a long story. The following week the paper’s editor invited David to write about his impressions of Denmark. His two short articles about Danish life and customs were published several weeks later in the paper’s afternoon edition. The editor then invited him to write a longer commentary on American policy toward Europe. He told David over coffee that Denmark’s decision to join the North Atlantic pact was controversial and that an article
explaining the pact from America's point of view would be helpful. David knew from his history course that most Danes tended to be neutralist at heart. According to the editor, the public needed to be reassured that NATO was designed to prevent another war, not to start one. David enlarged the subject to encompass Scandinavia's importance for American foreign policy, in line with a term paper that he had written for Parsons's seminar earlier that year.

When the 2,000-word article appeared ten days later, Davidsen commented on it in class. He asked David to contrast Sweden's refusal to join NATO with Denmark's and Norway's affirmative decision. David took this opportunity to develop his thesis that Western Europe was at a crossroads: it had to unite militarily, as it had economically in order to qualify for Marshall Plan aid, or to pursue a policy of accommodation to Soviet power on the continent. Most of the American students shared his view, but their experiences in Denmark had led them to conclude that many Danes would have preferred Denmark to remain neutral like Sweden.

Poul Hilstrup, whom Helen and David had met on the Batory during their Atlantic crossing in September, was the first person to introduce them to outstanding Danish hospitality. On their first night in Copenhagen, Poul invited them to his home, where his parents had prepared an impressive "welcome back" family dinner party for their son. The two Americans were introduced to the Scandinavian custom of "skoling" and serious speech-making at such occasions. Through their many visits to the Hilstrup home that year and their contacts, through the Danish-American Society of Copenhagen, with other Danish families, the Bruenings learned much about Denmark's extensive social welfare system. On one occasion a medical doctor who had done postgraduate work in Buffalo observed that the United States had the best medical facilities in the world. But, he added, if he were old or poor he would prefer to live in Denmark, because everyone there was covered by national health insurance.

After Christmas 1949, David and Helen traveled by train and ship to Stockholm and Helsinki, both of which looked lovely in the snow. During the train trip across southern Finland toward Helsinki, they encountered Russian soldiers for the first time since their departure from Berlin in 1947. When they stopped outside the port city of Porkkala on the Baltic, Russian soldiers boarded up the windows from the outside, because the train was about to pass through a Soviet military enclave that Russian troops had seized in 1945 as a military base. After the Russians had finished with the windows, a sentry was posted on the platform of each car. No one was allowed to go outside. Helen asked a Finnish woman with whom they had struck up a conversation earlier what was going on.

"They are sealing the train," she said with chagrin. "They won't let anyone see out for the next half hour, while we travel through their military zone."
“I guess the Finnish people don’t much care for the Russians, do they?” David asked.

“It makes no difference how we feel,” she exclaimed. “We lost the war, and they do what they like.”

He asked whether she thought Finland could keep its independence, given its long border with the USSR.

“Only if we are clever,” she responded. “Moscow prefers a neutral Finland, not an occupied country. To stay free, we must follow Moscow’s line in foreign policy. They let us run our internal affairs as long as we behave ourselves.”

The most enduring memory Helen and David kept of Helsinki, in addition to the friendliness of the Finns, was hearing an overflow crowd in the national cathedral sing “Finlandia,” the national anthem, on New Year’s Eve. Three inches of new snow fell during the service, and they felt exhilarated as they made their way to a New Year’s Eve party in a nearby hotel.

The Bruenings met William Roland, the American embassy’s public affairs officer, at a reception in Copenhagen that winter, and he invited David to drop by his office. Roland was fluent in Danish and knew all the newspaper people and many intellectual notables. He had seen David’s newspaper articles and inquired about his other impressions of Denmark. For his part, David said that he might like to work in the public affairs bureau of the State Department. Roland recommended applying directly to the State Department in Washington and added, “Your service in Germany and your year here should help.”

“How are things going at the university?” the embassy officer asked. “Is it a good experience for you and your wife?”

“We’re really enjoying it,” David responded with enthusiasm. “My instructors are very good and the students are friendly. But a few of them are pretty critical of our foreign policy. They say we invented the Soviet threat so we could get control over Europe.”

Roland smiled. “That’s not surprising in a European university. Marxists have a good bit of influence there, but a lot of the criticism is envy, I’d say. Danish intellectuals resent seeing Americans, who they say have no sense of history or culture, come over here to protect tiny Denmark. It’s a price we pay for providing leadership in Europe.”

He was probably right, David told Helen. “The students don’t dislike Americans: they’re just envious because of our standard of living, our self-confidence, and our military power.”

In April 1950 the Bruenings bought a small British car, a Morris Minor, for $950, and drove to Nurnberg to see Martin Bruening and his bride, Anna. They were royally entertained with a home-cooked dinner, and David could see that things were much better for Martin than at the time of David’s
last visit. He now worked in Bavaria’s Ministry of Justice as a prosecutor and seemed confident that he would be promoted soon.

In the afternoon Martin took Helen and David to see the progress that had been made in rebuilding Nurnberg’s old walled city. Much had been accomplished. Some shops and cafes were open for business, and new construction was continuing. They visited St. Lorenz Church, which was being restored, and toured the nearly renovated castle, which formed a part of the wall. Martin said that the old city was being rebuilt to look as it had before the war.

“This is real progress,” Helen said during their lunch. “I wouldn’t have believed you could do this much rebuilding so quickly.”

Martin said that Marshall Plan aid had contributed financially but that German hard work and determination were mainly responsible. He seemed very proud of the work accomplished so far. He asked what was happening in the States. “Is President Truman in trouble with the isolationists? Might there be a change in your foreign policy?”

David tried to reassure him. “Truman got bipartisan support for the Marshall Plan and for the North Atlantic pact. The isolationists attack his foreign policy because they think it may help defeat him in the 1952 election.”

“I read that they are giving Mr. Truman a lot of trouble on his China policy. Is that serious?”

“I don’t worry too much about the isolationists,” David responded. “They make a lot of noise, but they won’t change our policy. Americans learned too much during the war to turn their backs on the world now.”

He asked Martin for his opinion of Moscow’s tough policies on Germany.

His cousin responded with deep concern. “We have Russian troops less than one hundred kilometers away. If American soldiers leave Nurnberg, the Russians will be here in two days. Do the American people understand this?” he asked.

“I’m sure they do,” David said. Privately he hoped he was right.

That spring David saw an announcement that Oxford University would be holding a seminar for Commonwealth and American students entitled “Europe Since 1870” at Balliol College at the end of June. Helen was enthusiastic about the idea of attending. After verifying that the G.I. Bill would pay the tuition and would continue his monthly allowance, David applied. Two weeks later he received an acceptance letter. He and Helen left Copenhagen by car on June 22 and traveled across Denmark and into Germany, where they proceeded down the Rhine to Koblenz and then westward toward Paris.

In the wine country of Germany, they stopped to take a picture of a farmer tending his vineyard up a steep slope from the road. The old man
agreed to let them take his picture, but afterward he began to talk emotion-
ally about something in the news that bothered him. David’s limited Ger-
man made it difficult for him to follow the story, but he heard the word
“Korea” and a mention of the Russians. He also understood the old man to
say, “America should have joined the Germans against the Russians.” He
and Helen didn’t understand, and they dismissed the remark as the
ramblings of a German nationalist who thought Hitler had been right about
the need to keep communism from taking over in Europe.

The next afternoon, after arriving in Paris, they had coffee at the Place
de L’Opéra. There they overheard several young Americans talking about
fighting in Korea. In response to Helen’s question, one of them held up a
copy of the International Herald Tribune.

“Haven’t you heard? North Korea invaded the south and Truman is
sending U.S. forces.”

“So that’s what the old German was jabbering about,” David ex-
claimed. “He knew we were Americans, and he wanted to give us a lesson
in international politics.” The thought amused him.

They crossed the English Channel at Calais and soon learned that the
Korean War was making headlines in all the British papers. President
Truman had ordered General Douglas MacArthur to take charge of the
effort to defend South Korea. Truman had won approval from the U.N.
Security Council to establish an international force to help stop the aggres-
sion. Great Britain quickly dispatched troops to assist the American-led
U.N. effort, as did other European countries. Helen was worried that the
navy would recall David, because he was still in the reserves. He reassured
her that he was not an active reservist.

Balliol, located on Broad Street near the Bodleian Library, was one of
Oxford’s oldest and most prestigious colleges. It was known as an excel-
lent place to study philosophy and economics. Many American Rhodes
scholars had studied there. The Commonwealth seminar had attracted
about seventy-five students, a third of them Americans. The traditional
Oxford tutorial system was employed, and the Americans thought it was a
great way to study, although the system was expensive. David’s tutorial
had six students from a number of countries. Most of those in the seminar
lived at the college, but he and Helen stayed in a private home where their
English landlady was very friendly and helpful. Because they had a car,
they were able to travel around England on weekends.

Hugh Sutherland, David’s tutor, had secured his position by achiev-
ing a first in his final exam in politics, philosophy, and economics (popu-
larly known as PPE) and by being invited to be a fellow of Balliol College.
Hugh was in his late twenties and had an impressive knowledge of British
history, politics, and society. David knew he could learn a great deal from
him. When the weather was good, as it was that summer, the tutorial met
under a large shade tree in the Balliol garden. Occasionally, he and Sutherland took afternoon tea alone and talked about British politics, relations between France and Britain, and American policy toward Europe.

The Korean War was, of course, a prime topic for discussion, but Hugh was not as concerned about its implications as David was. Like most fellows of the college, he was a strong supporter of the British Labour Party, which was then in control of the government. When David asked why British voters had decisively rejected Churchill and the Conservatives after the war, he said, "Britain needed a social revolution at the end of the war. Churchill may have been right for Britain in 1940, but he was really out of touch with the country after the war. He mobilized the people for war, but Old Winnie was an anachronism when it came to understanding the economic and social needs of the country. The Labour Party had a program for sweeping reforms, and in 1945 the public demanded radical change."

David said he was surprised to find that so many things, including food, were still rationed in Britain, five years after the war.

"That's the price we are willing to pay for fairness, David," Hugh responded. "This way everybody gets enough food. We also have universal medical care, which is greatly improving public health. The rich, especially those aristocrats and lords who live in their country mansions, now pay their fair share of taxes. I think we have a far better democracy in Britain today than we've ever had."

David didn't share Hugh's socialistic outlook but appreciated the young scholar's candor.

The seven weeks at Oxford proved to be a rich experience in many ways. David heard lectures by some of Oxford's great professors, including the historian A.J.P. Taylor and the political scientist Samuel Finer. Afterward he felt eager to study more history, especially modern European history, to improve his understanding of postwar Europe. In addition, he and Helen used the weekends to see London, Kent, and the Midlands.

In mid-August they left England on an overnight ferry from Harwich to Jutland. They spent a few days in Copenhagen packing, saying goodbye to friends, and having a final dinner with Poul Hilstrop and his family. Then they traveled overnight by ship to Oslo, where they boarded the Norwegian liner Oslofjord for an eight-day voyage to New York. After a week's vacation with David's parents, they drove to Ann Arbor and found a small furnished apartment at University Village. They soon began making preparations for the arrival of their first child, Jennifer.

Now that their twelve months in Europe were behind them, David needed to pursue his graduate work and new family responsibilities. It was also a time for deep concern about the major war in Korea. The Bruenings, like many other students, wondered how it would affect their lives.
The mood on campus at the University of Michigan in early September 1950 was one of apprehension. The Korean War caused many males, especially World War II veterans who had joined the reserves, to worry about how the conflict would affect them. Some pilots, doctors, and other specialists had been called back to service. Draft calls increased. The war had caused inflation in many products, especially in building materials. By the time classes began at the end of the month, however, the news from Korea sounded more favorable than it had for three months.

General Douglas MacArthur, the U.S. supreme commander in the Far East and commander of U.N. forces in Korea, carried out in September a brilliant surprise amphibious landing of his forces at Inchon on South Korea’s western coast and outflanked the Communist North Korean army. Many experts thought that Seoul, South Korea’s capital, would be liberated and that the thirty-eighth parallel would be restored as the border between the north and south. Few were willing to predict when the fighting would end, however, because the South Korean army was pursuing the retreating Communist forces into North Korea.

In mid-October President Truman traveled by air to Wake Island in the Pacific to confer with General MacArthur and other senior U.S. officials. The five-star general wanted to send American forces into North Korea, crush its retreating army, and unite the entire Korean peninsula under a non-Communist government. MacArthur assured President Truman that neither China nor the Soviet Union would enter the war, although the People’s Republic of China had warned that it would do so if American troops invaded North Korea. The president approved MacArthur’s plan, and the United Nations, at American urging, also accepted it. In mid-November MacArthur launched his offensive into North Korea and predicted that the troops would be coming home by Christmas. The operation proved to be a military disaster. Communist China intervened with large numbers of troops and profoundly changed the nature and scope of the conflict.
David decided to drop by the navy's Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) office on campus in September to ask about his reserve status. He had not received any letter from the Bureau of Naval Personnel while he was in Denmark, and he wondered whether they had tried to reach him. Lieutenant Jim Ross looked over his file.

"There's good news—you were promoted last year," he said. David was pleased to hear that he was finally a lieutenant junior grade. After World War II promotions were very slow, and he had not been active in the reserves. Ross reported that the navy had not tried to contact him while he was in Europe.

"But what if the war drags on?" David asked.

"If MacArthur is right," the officer said, "you won't have to worry. But if there's a bigger conflict and the navy takes ships out of mothballs, you might be called back."

David also went by the university to see Professor John Parsons, who was now chairman of the political science department. While in Copenhagen David had written him to verify that he could enter the doctoral program upon his return to Ann Arbor. Parsons was in an expansive mood that day, and they chatted about Denmark and David's experiences. In answer to his question, Parsons estimated that David would need another year and a half of coursework before preparing for the comprehensive oral examination. Parsons also offered him a teaching assistantship in the spring. "It doesn't pay a lot," he said, "but it's fine experience."

By December the news from Korea was alarming. Chinese troops had entered the war with a huge number of troops. They launched a surprise nighttime attack on U.S. Marines at Chosin Reservoir and forced their retreat and eventual withdrawal from North Korea. U.S. Army forces too came under heavy attack and were forced to withdraw to the south. The American public and Congress were shocked and demanded to know why the president had authorized MacArthur's invasion of North Korea. Many Republicans supported MacArthur, who wanted to take the war to China by bombing supply lines across the Yalu River. Without additional troops available in the Far East and with limited forces in the United States, Truman was faced with the prospect of a military calamity in Korea, one that would have negative repercussions in Japan and perhaps in Europe as well. The mood of the country had, within a few weeks' time, shifted from euphoria that MacArthur would soon end the war to a realization that the country was in a dangerous situation and was militarily ill prepared to meet it.

David and several graduate students talked about the situation over beers after their seminar.

"MacArthur really screwed up," Brad exploded. "He should have known the Chinese wouldn't sit still if he sent troops to the Yalu. We'll be lucky to get the marines out."
“Truman should fire MacArthur,” Roger added. “He’s been over the hill for years. He thinks he’s god.”

“Okay,” David interjected, “we don’t like MacArthur. But what should Truman do now? Do we pull out of Korea or stay and fight?”

“He’s in one hell of a bind,” Brad said. He had been an army officer in Europe during the war and understood better than the others the implications of the looming Korean disaster. “We don’t have enough troops to send to Korea. Congress forced the Pentagon to demobilize too fast and too much after the war. The army doesn’t have reinforcements today. All we have in Japan and Germany are occupation troops. If China sends a big army into Korea, they could drive our guys into the sea. Airpower won’t do any good in that situation. Then what happens to Japan?”

“I guess a lot of us could be called back,” Roger said quietly. The others agreed. It was not a happy time.

Word leaked out in Washington before Christmas that President Truman was considering using atomic bombs against China if Beijing did not halt its offensive. In the wake of this news, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee made a hasty visit to Washington to caution Truman against such rash action. He warned that using atomic bombs would split the Atlantic alliance and would give Moscow a great opportunity to undermine America’s influence in Europe. Talk about nuclear warfare was not heard again until 1953 when General Dwight Eisenhower became president.

Early in 1951 the serious security situation in Europe claimed major attention in Washington. Concern was growing that Josef Stalin, the Soviet dictator, might take advantage of America’s distraction in the Far East and make another grab for Berlin, as he had done in 1948 with the blockade. The Pentagon did not have enough troops in Europe to defend the city against a serious Soviet push. According to speculation, if Stalin could get control of Berlin without a Western response, he would seriously undermine American credibility in western Germany and France and provide a major political boost to local Communist parties all over Western Europe. This danger persuaded President Truman to call General Eisenhower out of retirement and send him back to Europe for the purpose of organizing Western defenses under the North Atlantic pact.

When Eisenhower arrived in Europe he was stunned to see how little the West was prepared for a war. When he was asked what it would take for the Russians to reach the English Channel, he answered, “Shoes.”

President Truman relieved General MacArthur of his command in April 1951 on grounds of gross insubordination. The aging general had insisted in public that he should be allowed to bomb China. While many congressional Republicans supported his view, the president wanted to end the fighting on reasonable terms, not enlarge the war and have to fight in Manchuria. He appointed General Matthew Ridgeway, a combat veteran from
The graduate students discussed the situation again in April 1951, after MacArthur had been relieved of his command.

"Truman should never have agreed to let him go into North Korea," Brad said. "We didn’t need to have a war with China. We just needed to restore the integrity of South Korea."

"So why did Truman let him do it?" Tim asked.

"Because the China lobby in Congress is so powerful. Most of the Republicans think MacArthur is right. Some even think he should be president. What a disaster that would be."

"Maybe some good could come of this mess if it wakes up the country to our military weakness," David commented.

"How so?" Tim asked.

"The country got carried away after the war about a lasting peace. A lot of people said we didn’t need the military any more because we had the bomb. And there was the U.N. It was supposed to keep the peace. Now we are beginning to see that we can’t even defend Germany if Stalin decides to move his troops westward."

"I suspect this will help the Republicans next year," Brad predicted. "I’ll bet they murder the Democrats in the elections."

David decided to wait until fall to take Parsons’s offer of a teaching assistantship because a more interesting opportunity arose in the spring. Charles Drake, one of his professors, administered a University of Michigan contract with the State Department to handle groups of German municipal leaders on orientation visits to the United States. Drake needed a graduate assistant who was familiar with Germany and who could speak some German. The part-time job paid well and involved traveling with the groups, usually eight or nine persons. They were in Ann Arbor for one week and traveled for a second week.

The first group, from Krefeld in the Rhineland, arrived in April. David enjoyed arranging for these German leaders to meet American counterparts, and he also conducted short seminar sessions on American government and politics. Drake had instructed him, "Bruening, your job is to see that these people understand what democracy is all about. They haven’t had much of it in their history. The State Department thinks we can do some good through this program."

Between May and August David escorted five leader groups from different parts of West Germany. One team from Hamburg traveled across the country by train, stopping in several capitals to meet with state officials. The Germans spent a few days in Denver, and on the weekend they
rented a car and drove up Mount Evans. While they were having lunch, Max Gehring, a senior official in the city government of Hamburg, mentioned an incident that had occurred the night before.

"We are very impressed with this beautiful country," he told David. "The people are friendly and helpful. But last night in a restaurant someone at another table heard us talking German and asked where we came from."

"Was that a problem?" David asked.

"He said he didn’t like Germans because we started two wars. He said he didn’t understand why the State Department was paying for our visit to the States. We were surprised and tried not to talk with him."

"You shouldn’t be surprised to hear people express feelings like that," David responded. "It’s only six years since the war ended. A lot of Americans fought against the Germans."

"We told him we are guests in this country," Max continued, "and that we are learning how democracy works. That seemed to quiet him."

"Well," David said, smiling, "I suggest you try not to get rattled by such talk. Most Americans think we should help Germany get back on its feet and become democratic. The public supports the Marshall Plan. This kind of talk will diminish as time goes on."

"Excuse my poor English, David," Max said, looking puzzled, "but what do you mean ‘try not to get rattled’?"

"It means try not to get upset. Just maintain your balance, your good humor." The German official smiled and nodded. He would try, he said.

When the Bruenings visited Washington, D.C., that summer, the city seemed different from the place where they had become engaged three years earlier. In 1948 the capital still reflected America’s postwar optimism, and people seemed relatively carefree. Few military uniforms were in evidence on the streets. In 1951, by contrast, optimism had given way to pessimism. The Korean War now dominated the nation’s agenda and Washington’s mood. People appeared to be very serious. The military services were expanding rapidly, and many military uniforms could be seen around the city. Some government departments, including the State Department, the Defense Department, the new Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the National Security Council (NSC) were taking on new functions and personnel. After spending a few days visiting friends in Washington, Helen and David concluded that the city seemed more the way it had been in 1944, a wartime atmosphere.

Their visit to Washington enabled David also to investigate job opportunities at the State Department. Their year in Ann Arbor and his rewarding experiences with the German leaders program had left him uncertain that he wanted to spend another two or three years at the university.
Jennifer’s birth made him and Helen aware that they needed more income, which the proposed teaching assistantship plus the GI Bill would not provide. David had therefore asked Professor Drake to arrange an appointment for him with Ted Mayhew, the executive secretary of the Governmental Affairs Institute (GAI) in Washington. GAI was the contractor charged with administering the German leaders program for the State Department.

Mayhew’s office was on Massachusetts Avenue near Washington’s Embassy Row, where most of the foreign diplomatic missions were located. He was in his thirties, and David surmised that he had been educated at one of the Ivy League schools. He had excellent contacts in the State Department, especially in the Bureau of Information and Cultural Affairs. The two of them discussed the leaders program and the German participants’ perceptions of American life.

“They were impressed by our prosperity,” David remarked, “but I’m not sure how much they understand our political system, how our government works.”

“Some of them learn more than others,” Mayhew responded. “I had good reports from the Hamburg group that you took out west. I think those people will use a lot of what they learned from talking with state and local officials during that trip.”

David took this occasion to ask Mayhew whether he could help him find a job with the State Department. Knowing of his study experience in Denmark, the GAI chief phoned a friend who worked on the Scandinavian desk in the Bureau of European Affairs and made David an appointment for the next day. As they parted, Mayhew told him that the State Department was expanding as a result of the Korean War, and he encouraged him to follow that course.

Feeling cautiously optimistic, David decided to pursue as many contacts as possible. He had written to Ros Sanford, a friend from graduate school at Michigan who had taken a job that spring as a research analyst in the State Department's Office of Intelligence Research (OIR). When he phoned, she offered to introduce him to Harold Aiken in the Scandinavian branch of OIR. She said they were looking for someone who had lived in Scandinavia. They made an appointment for the next day.

David met first with Gary Hellyer, a Foreign Service officer (FSO) in his thirties who served as administrative and personnel chief in the Office of British and North European Affairs (BNA), located in the Old State Department building on Twenty-first Street. Hellyer had served three years in Sweden and was closely attuned to events in all the Scandinavian countries. He also knew William Roland, the official in the American embassy in Copenhagen with whom David had explored the possibility of working in the department’s information and cultural affairs program. Gary asked about
his experiences in Denmark. He smiled when David also described the train trip through the Russian military zone at Porkkala in Finland. “So they kept you in the dark on that train, eh?” He too had made the trip, he said.

Hellyer briefed him on the State Department’s organization and said the Korean War was causing an expansion of some divisions. He asked several probing questions about Scandinavian foreign relations.

“What do you think about Sweden’s staying out of the Atlantic pact when Norway and Denmark joined?”

“The Swedes have a special interest in what happens to Finland,” David responded. “They think the Russians will let the Finns keep their independence if Sweden stays out of NATO. I’m not sure they are right about that.”

“ Aren’t the Danes as neutrality-minded as the Swedes?”

“Probably. But Denmark was occupied by the Germans during the war, and its leaders decided afterward to seek protection against the Russians. The Swedes avoided German occupation and seem to be convinced that they can now resist Moscow’s pressure.”

Hellyer ended the cordial conversation by saying that BNA hoped for an opening on its Finland desk by the end of the year. David thought that working on the Scandinavian desk at State would give him a good opportunity to see policy being formulated. But Hellyer didn’t have a firm job to offer.

The interview with Aiken in OIR also went well. David had the impression that there was a job opening for a research analyst on Denmark.

“We have specialists in OIR on practically every country in the world,” Aiken said. “Most of our analysts come from universities and research institutions. We provide political and economic research on foreign countries to many departments and agencies.”

“It sounds like you have an academic environment here.”

“In some ways,” Aiken said. “ Many of us have a Ph.D. But it’s not like a university because we have to meet real deadlines with our research. That’s one difference.”

They talked about David’s experiences in Denmark and his knowledge of Scandinavian history and of the Danish language.

“Reading Danish is not a problem for me,” David replied, “but I don’t speak it very well. Some say the Danes talk like they have potatoes in their mouths.” They laughed.

Aiken said he was looking for someone to do a research job on Denmark, and he thought David had the qualifications. He wanted him to meet with Edward Storing, his branch chief. Storing was in his late thirties and had been in the army during the war. He had been attached to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) when its research division was transferred to the State Department after the war. During off-duty hours, Storing was finishing his doctoral dissertation in history, which he hoped to complete the following year.
The twenty-minute interview dealt mostly with David's impressions of Denmark and postwar Germany. Storing then arranged for him to talk with Neil Pelikan, the division's research coordinator for Europe. They spent about half an hour talking in Pelikan's office, which was stacked with research reports from the various parts of the organization. He was particularly interested in David's graduate program at Michigan.

"If you came to work here," he said, "you might have to give up work on your doctorate, wouldn't you?" It was a good question, David thought, and went to the heart of his dilemma about a career.

"My hope," he responded, "is to work in the State Department for two or three years and then return to Ann Arbor and finish the degree. Maybe I can complete the course work before I leave Ann Arbor. That way I could read for prelims and write a dissertation on weekends."

"It's a tough way to get a doctorate," Pelikan said, smiling.

At the end of an hour and a half of interviewing, David waited for Aiken to return to his office. Finally, he came in and smiled, saying he and his colleagues were prepared to offer him a job as research analyst on Denmark. The formal processing might take four to five months because David needed to be investigated for a "top secret" security clearance. Aiken thought that the one he had received earlier for the courier service might speed things up.

"It may take a while before we can formally bring you on board. We'll process your papers for a GS-9 grade level. Right now that is $4,200 a year, but we think Congress will approve a federal pay raise this fall. If it does, your salary will be about $5,400." He paused and looked at David seriously. "What I need to know is, will you accept an appointment if it is offered?"

David thanked Aiken and promised to call him in the morning.

When he told Helen about the job, she was very excited and suggested they go out and celebrate. "You know I'd love to live here again," she said. "And the State Department is what you've talked about ever since I've known you. So let's do it." He agreed.

The next day when he called to accept the job, Aiken sounded pleased and said he would push the processing along as fast as possible.

When they returned to Ann Arbor, David registered for the fall semester and selected the remaining seminars that he needed to complete his course requirements. Once they were out of the way, he calculated, he could read for the prelims in Washington. When he felt ready, he would return and take the dreaded oral examination. "At least," he thought, "I'll have a decent income while working in the government."

As the autumn progressed, Aiken let David know that things were moving along smoothly. With luck, he would start work early in 1952.

During this period there were reports of more fighting and more casualties in Korea. David did not expect to be affected personally, but the in-
ability of President Truman to negotiate a cease-fire in the war frustrated him and other students. Republicans in Congress attacked the administration's Asia policy, particularly its "loss of China to Communism." Secretary of State Dean Acheson was roundly criticized for a public statement he had made in February 1950 in which he omitted South Korea when naming the countries he considered part of America's "vital interests" in Asia. Conservatives charged him with inviting Moscow and Beijing and the North Korean Communist regime to try to unify the Korean Peninsula by force. More troubling to many, including David, was a charge by Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin that the State Department was full of Communists.

The processing of David's application by the State Department was concluded in January at about the same time the university's fall semester was drawing to a close. David drove to Washington to take care of administrative matters at the State Department and find a place to live. The search for housing proved much more difficult than he had expected, and he learned that all the moderately priced apartment complexes in Arlington had long waiting lists. A large influx of military and federal workers to the Washington area following the outbreak of war in Korea had created a tight housing situation. He finally found an affordable place near Seven Corners, in Fairfax County. It seemed like a long commute to work, and the buses were more crowded and less convenient than he had expected. They moved in mid-February, but in the spring they bought a small house in Falls Church. Nearly all their neighbors worked for the government, either as civilians or as military personnel. Most had children. The community was typical of hundreds in the Maryland and Virginia suburbs of Washington, and the economy in these areas was booming because of the recent increase in government spending, particularly on the military services.

David carpooled with four other State Department employees, three of whom worked in his building, at State Annex 1 on Twenty-third Street. Over a period of nearly three years they became good friends, and each afternoon they discussed the day's events and shared the latest jokes that were going around the offices. One of the hottest topics was the presidential election campaign of 1952. President Truman had announced that he would not seek reelection, which cheered many Democrats who considered his handling of the Korean War a disaster and believed that he would damage the party if he ran again.

A new Democratic candidate had to be found. One of the most likely was Adlai Stevenson, the governor of Illinois and the choice of the party's liberal wing. The contest in the Republican Party was between the conservative isolationist wing, headed by Senator Robert Taft of Ohio, and a moderate internationalist wing headed by Governor Thomas Dewey of New York, who had lost the 1948 election to President Truman and would not run again. Dewey and several senators from eastern states, notably
Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, were determined to find another candidate who would keep the Republican Party out of the hands of the isolationists.

As the car pool drove home from work one night in June, Bob Simon asked whether the others thought the Democrats could possibly win the election, "regardless of their candidate."

"I think they've run out of steam," Bob asserted. "They've had the White House for twenty years, and we're seeing the same old New Deal policies."

"Well, what's wrong with that?" Chip responded with some emotion. "The Republicans are dominated by Hoover and Taft and the reactionaries. If they don't get some new leaders and new ideas, the Democrats will beat them."

"What worries me," David interjected, "is that the disaster the Republicans had in 1948 made the party so radical that moderates like me won't vote for them."

"I agree," Chip replied. "The Republicans are coddling McCarthy because they think he attracts voters with his campaign against 'Communists in the government.' My dad wrote the other day that in Iowa people think the State Department is riddled with spies. That's us, guys!" he exclaimed. "Alger Hiss gave McCarthy a handle to beat us with."

"What about Eisenhower?" Rob Enright asked. "He'd give the Republicans a new face. And he's a war hero. I'll bet he could win in November."

"I agree he could win," Chip said. "But first he has to get the party's nomination, and Taft has that pretty well sewn up."

The political conventions that summer introduced two new personalities to the national political scene. The Democrats chose Governor Stevenson, an eloquent speaker, and the party quickly united behind him. The Republicans went through a bruising contest at their convention. The conservative isolationist wing battled with the moderate internationalist faction. The moderates finally won, and the party selected General Dwight Eisenhower ("Ike"), who had until recently been commander of NATO forces in Europe, to be their nominee. Earlier, internationalists like Senator Lodge had gone to Europe and pleaded with Eisenhower to return home and save the Republican Party from another humiliating defeat and another four years of New Deal policies.

Ike resigned his post that spring and waged a short, vigorous campaign to convince Republicans that he was a conservative in fiscal policy and an internationalist in foreign policy. His stance separated him from Taft Republicans, who had opposed NATO and Marshall Plan aid for rebuilding Europe. Eisenhower chose as his vice presidential running mate Richard Nixon, a young California senator who had made a national reputation by exposing Alger Hiss, a high State Department official, as a Communist who had hidden his past association when accepting his position.

One morning, after the political campaign was launched, three of
David's car pool mates who had television sets talked about how Eisenhower and Stevenson looked when they gave their speeches. They agreed that the Democratic candidate was a better speaker but that Eisenhower spoke with more authority. They said that Ike spoke of balanced budgets, lower taxes, and waste in government, while Stevenson concentrated on social issues. In foreign policy, they said, Eisenhower seemed more credible because of his war record, which he used to good advantage when discussing Korea, the most important issue in the campaign. Soon after that, David and Helen bought their first television, a used eleven-inch set, in order to keep informed.

After watching one of Stevenson's speeches, Helen remarked, "I like what he says. I may vote for him."

"Well, I bet he won't find a way to stop the war," David responded. "Eisenhower is more credible on foreign policy."

"I also like Ike," she said, "but I don't like all those conservative Republicans who support him. They are encouraging McCarthy, and he's dangerous."

"I agree with that. Ike should denounce him for calling General Marshall a Communist sympathizer."

"So whom are you voting for?" she inquired.

"I haven't decided. I think the Republicans need to be in power after twenty years and take some responsibility. Ike is a moderate, but can he hold his party in line?"

Just before the election Eisenhower announced that if he won, he would immediately go to Korea and find a way to end the war. There was speculation on how he would do it, but the offer appealed to a war-weary public. Polls showed him pulling ahead as he campaigned for a tougher foreign policy.

The election outcome produced a major Republican Party victory. It was the first time in twenty years that a Republican had occupied the White House, and the party also won a majority in both the Senate and the House. As a result, Republicans claimed they had a mandate to reverse many of the New Deal policies of Roosevelt and Truman, and they promised to reduce the federal government drastically in size.

David's car pool speculated on the changes that Republicans might make in the State Department. It was known that Eisenhower would appoint John Foster Dulles, his foreign policy adviser, as secretary of state. It was rumored that the undersecretary would be Herbert Hoover, Jr., a son of the former Republican president and an arch conservative. Dulles was known as an excellent international lawyer who had helped the Truman administration negotiate a peace treaty with Japan in 1951. But despite this Democratic connection, Dulles was a lifelong Republican who would now be charged with carrying out a much tougher U.S. foreign policy toward China, the Soviet Union, and even some of the European allies.
Chip Martin, who had voted for Stevensen, was apprehensive about the election's outcome.

"They're going to dismantle much of the State Department," he predicted. "Dulles may be a good lawyer, but he's not interested in a lot of what we do in State. He'll cave in to whatever the conservatives want."

"This department has grown a lot in the last four years," Bob Simon commented. "Maybe we should reduce the aid program now that Europe is back on its feet."

"What about OIR?" David asked. "I think we'll be a target for cuts too."

"I'm concerned about what Joe McCarthy and his guys will do when they get control of the congressional committee investigating subversives in government," Bob Enright said. "After all, the Republicans campaigned on that issue."

For the next two and a half months, until Eisenhower was inaugurated in January 1953, Washington was inundated with stories and rumors about the coming "Republican Revolution" that would probably affect most of the government. The Washington Post, the Evening Star, and the Times-Herald all carried stories about the Republicans' plans as well as the profiles of cabinet members and of the new Republican chairmen of the congressional committees. The outgoing Truman administration imposed a freeze on government hiring, a prudent step in view of the likelihood that many of those contracts would not be honored by the new administration. Rumors spread quickly at the State Department that a large reduction in force (RIF) was in the works. In this disturbing atmosphere, David and Helen began to consider the possibility that they might be returning to Ann Arbor.

During this period David derived much satisfaction from his association with the naval reserve's Political-Military Affairs group in Washington. It was a unit that brought together reserve officers from the State Department, the Department of Defense (DOD), the Central Intelligence Agency, and other government agencies that were engaged in international affairs. A few staff officials from congressional committees were members. The group of about fifty naval officers met Monday evenings in the Main Navy Building located on Constitution Avenue, a few blocks from the Lincoln Memorial. The programs featured invited speakers, occasionally one of their own members, who discussed current foreign policy issues. In addition to giving David this opportunity to associate with knowledgeable and interesting people in government, the meetings earned him points that counted toward promotion in the naval reserve. It also qualified him as a foreign affairs specialist in the Office of Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) staff in the Pentagon. This benefit became significant when he was promoted to lieutenant in 1953 and needed a two-week annual training assignment, which he found in the CNO's office.

A refreshing aspect of being associated with the U.S. Navy during this period was that it had no budget problems and no threat of personnel cuts.
The atmosphere at the Pentagon was almost the opposite of that in the State Department. Also, David could not deny that he enjoyed getting back into his blue uniform occasionally and being associated with other navy officers. It had been seven years since he had worn the uniform, and it made him realize that the navy was still an important part of him.

After Eisenhower’s inauguration, Secretary of State Dulles assembled the department’s employees in a large courtyard behind the State Department and lectured them for about ten minutes through a loud speaker regarding their responsibilities to the new administration. He grabbed special attention with the phrase “positive loyalty,” which he used to describe the attitude he expected to see in the department during the coming months. As they listened to his raspy voice on that cold January morning, no one was in doubt that a new era was about to begin at Foggy Bottom. Dulles told the audience of Foreign Service personnel and civil servants that American foreign policy was going to change. Everyone needed to get on board or get out, as one commentator later put it. The term “positive loyalty” received most of the media attention, but the entire address verged on intimidation of State Department personnel.

When David and his colleagues had coffee in the snack bar that morning, the mood was sober.

“What the hell do they plan to do,” someone said, “put everybody through another security clearance?”

“What happens if the files are turned over to McCarthy’s congressional staff, and State is pressured to drop anyone who ever supported a liberal cause?” another asked.

Someone else spoke up. “I’m going back to academia. I don’t have to put up with this crap. I’m a veteran, and if they question my loyalty, I don’t want to work here.”

That afternoon, Ed Storing, the branch chief, told his staff not to panic.

“Just show good sense and keep on with your work,” he said. “It’s normal for things to change when a new party takes power in Washington. As civil servants, we are protected against the spoils system. So do your job, and we’ll keep you informed as we get more information from the new team.”

Hearing the news, Helen was more concerned than David. Her fears were well founded. A week later word circulated at the State Department that hiring and promotions would be frozen for at least six months and that a reduction in force would be instituted. No one knew how many positions would be eliminated, or which criteria would be used to select those who would be dropped.

If seniority counted, David would be vulnerable. Even though his own position might be more important than that of someone else, the “bumping” process, by which a person with more seniority could demand the job
of a lower-ranking person, might affect him. Still, he had a veteran’s preference, which gave him the edge over someone who had not been in the military. Also, his expertise on Denmark would make bumping less likely. After several months of uncertainty and worry, he learned that he would not be cut. But there was no chance of promotion for a year, he was told.

Several analysts in the European division of OIR did receive RIF notices, however, and it was a bad experience for everyone. Two single women lost their jobs. The rumor was that they were more expendable because they did not have families to support. A more likely reason was that they lacked veteran’s preference.

President Eisenhower wasted no time in setting a new direction in foreign policy and national security affairs. After visiting Korea and Japan, he threatened North Korea and China with a wider war if they did not quickly agree to a cease-fire and negotiations to end the war. The president was rumored to have warned China and the Soviet Union that he would use atomic weapons if the fighting did not stop. Whether or not this rumor was true, no one in Washington, Moscow, Peking, or Europe’s capitals doubted that, to judge from his rhetoric, Eisenhower was determined to be very tough-minded in running U.S. foreign and defense policy.

In May 1953 a cease-fire was announced in Korea. The two sides began a frustrating year-long series of talks to set the terms of a formal armistice. Later, when Secretary Dulles enunciated a new strategic policy of “massive retaliation” against the Soviet Union if it used force to achieve its objectives, leaders around the world understood that the Cold War was increasing in intensity. Dulles’s warning took on added meaning with passage of a huge budget increase for the air force to build strategic bombers.

A powerful anti-Communist propaganda campaign was launched by the State Department through its foreign information programs, including the Voice of America, to warn the world about the “Sino-Soviet threat.” Eisenhower made it clear that he would avoid costly ground actions like that used in Korea and would rely instead on the air force and navy to protect America’s vital interests abroad. It was ironic, many thought, that a five-star army general, now president, intended to downgrade the army’s role in national security matters and to place greater emphasis on airpower as a means to check the Soviet Union’s and China’s aggressive policies.

Secretary Dulles made a series of administrative changes in the State Department. He decided to divest it of some “operating functions,” such as the economic assistance program, which by then included underdeveloped countries as well as Europe. He also wanted to shift out of the department the overseas information and cultural programs, including the Voice of America, and create a new agency to administer them. Finally, Dulles intended to locate the new arms control function outside the State Department, but under his policy guidance. The Republican-controlled Congress
went along with these sweeping changes, and by 1954 each of these functions had been placed in a separate agency of the government.

The sole exception was the exchange-of-persons program, with which David had been involved in Ann Arbor. Under the strong prodding of Senator William Fulbright, who had sponsored the Fulbright-Hays legislation to exchange students and scholars with other countries, the Senate decided to keep that program in the State Department. Some said the senator did not want to have Fulbright exchanges tainted with the propaganda brush of the new U.S. Information Agency (USIA).

When Dulles had completed his reorganization, the State Department was a much smaller organization that concentrated on policymaking and diplomatic negotiations with other countries. Dulles was a forceful spokesman for the administration’s tough stance on foreign policy issues, and many observers thought (erroneously as it turned out) that he, not Eisenhower, was making U.S. policy.

David had an opportunity in June 1953 to compare Secretary Dulles’s handling of a press conference with that of Dean Acheson, his predecessor. State Department employees were permitted occasionally to attend the secretary’s weekly press conferences. A colleague suggested they go, and they walked to the department’s large auditorium, adjacent to the main entrance on Twenty-first Street. Acheson, when David had watched him hold forth the year before, sat at a table and fielded questions with good humor periodically tinged with impatience. Acheson had good rapport with the forty to fifty newspaper and radio people, and there was some bantering.

In contrast, the mood Dulles created in the auditorium the day David was there was somber, even chilly. He stood in front of the group of reporters, and his answers were crisp and measured. He never smiled. He reminded David of a lawyer delivering a brief. He occasionally showed irritation when he was asked to explain something. When the meeting was over, he simply walked out.

As they left the auditorium, David remarked to George, his colleague, “He really is a cold fish, isn’t he? Ike has much better rapport with the press.”

“Yeah,” George said, “but Dulles plays the tough guy, while Ike plays the good guy.”

David’s mother, Lillian, died of a heart attack that spring, and the family flew to Michigan for the funeral. Herbert was stunned by his wife’s death, and David and Helen decided to spend two weeks with him at the family’s cottage in Linwood in July. The vacation also provided them time to ponder David’s job situation. Ed Storing had told him that the promotion freeze would stay in effect until the beginning of 1954, when the reorganization
was expected to be completed. It would not be easy to find a job outside the State Department, David knew, because hiring freezes affected many government agencies. He had written Professor Parsons in the spring about continuing work on his doctorate. Parsons advised that he read extensively in the fields on which he would be examined and said to let him know when he felt ready to take the prelims. He offered to assign Dr. Henry Borden to work with him.

On their way back to Virginia, the Bruenings stopped in Ann Arbor so that David could discuss his progress with Borden. He was a competent scholar, David thought, but he was not as engaging or supportive as Parsons had been.

“It’s up to you,” Borden told him. “It will be a lot of hard work. If you are ready by then, we could schedule the prelims next June.” They agreed to this timetable.

In the fall David also began exploring an overseas assignment with the new U.S. Information Agency (USIA), which was about to be moved out of the State Department. This program had aroused his interest in Denmark, and he wondered whether he might be lucky enough to get an assignment in Copenhagen. He talked to several people in USIA’s Scandinavian division, and Margaret Hastings invited him to lunch with one of her colleagues. They encouraged him to apply.

“We’re going to expand our programs in Scandinavia,” she said, “and we’ll need good people in Denmark and Norway. You know the language and culture there.”

After several other conversations with USIA, David discussed the idea with Ed Storing and found him favorably disposed. “I think you’d enjoy either the information or the cultural affairs program in Scandinavia, Dave. You should have overseas experience. Right now, USIA is the fastest way of getting it.”

Helen encouraged him to look for an overseas job. With the birth that autumn of Jodie, a second daughter, David felt the need even more than before to firm up his career plans. He told Margaret Hastings that he wanted to join USIA and be assigned in Denmark. As a second choice he listed Norway or Sweden.

The year 1954 was shaping up as crucial in American foreign policy, in Europe and in the Far East. President Eisenhower made decisions that set the stage for a significant change in policy toward the Soviet Union and in America’s role in Thailand and Vietnam. After the death of Josef Stalin in March 1953, there was an opportunity for improvement in United States-Soviet relations. Stalin, who had ruled the Soviet Union for nearly thirty years, was succeeded by three members of the Soviet politburo who formed a triumvirate.
British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who had returned to power in 1951, urged President Eisenhower to seize the opportunity to explore the feasibility of negotiating some agreements on Germany and on arms control. Eisenhower was skeptical but instructed Dulles to sound out Moscow about the possibility of talks on Germany, Korea, and other issues that had caused East-West relations to deteriorate.

With respect to Korea, the new Soviet leadership helped to bring about a cease-fire in May 1953 and an armistice agreement later. Moscow subsequently indicated that it wanted to reduce tensions also in Berlin and Germany and might even be willing to agree to an Austrian peace treaty if Austria’s neutrality were guaranteed. The eventual peace treaty for Austria paved the way for a summit meeting in Geneva in 1955 between President Eisenhower and Soviet General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev.

The war in Indochina proved far more difficult for Eisenhower and Dulles to manage because France, which had reimposed colonial control there after 1945, was losing a guerrilla war to Vietnamese Communists. They had wide support among the peasantry and received some arms from China and the Soviet Union. President Truman had given France considerable economic and military assistance, after the Korean War started, to persuade the Paris government to remain in Southeast Asia. By the spring of 1954, however, French forces were on the verge of a major military defeat in Vietnam. The French prime minister urgently asked President Eisenhower to deploy American airpower to help avert a disaster at Dien Bien Phu.

After much discussion in the National Security Council, Eisenhower decided not to use the American military to save the French position in Indochina. Vice President Richard Nixon and Secretary Dulles reportedly favored U.S. support for the French, but General Mathew Ridgeway, the army’s chief of staff, argued that U.S. bombing was not likely to save the French and that American troops would subsequently be required. When the British government decided not to intervene in Indochina, Eisenhower ruled against using U.S. airpower. It was a fateful decision and led to the surrender of the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu and a decision by the French government to withdraw completely from Indochina.

In June 1954 a conference was held in Paris that led to the partitioning of Vietnam between a Communist north and a non-Communist south, with the border at the seventeenth parallel. This decision resembled those that led to the partitioning of Germany and Korea after World War II. France also agreed to grant independence to Laos and Cambodia, which were part of its colonial empire, but the final status of Vietnam was left for determination by national elections in two years. The Paris accord was a clear victory for the Communist government in Hanoi and for Ho Chi Minh, the Vietnamese leader who had fought France for seven years to gain Vietnam’s independence. Secretary of State Dulles, clearly frustrated, called this outcome a “sellout to communism.” He left the conference, and the United
States refused to sign the agreement. "Asian communism," as Dulles called it, appeared to be on the move, and most countries in Southeast Asia, specifically Indonesia, calculated how they should adapt to the new political winds then blowing in East Asia.

These international events fueled a series of discussions in David's car pool during the spring and summer.

"Did Eisenhower make a mistake when he refused to support the French at Dien Bien Phu?" Bob asked.

"I don't think he had a choice," David replied. "The public is against more interventions in Asia after the experience in Korea."

"But if the French are out of Indochina, who will pick up the ball?" asked Hank Allen, a new member of their group. "An anti-Communist hawk like Dulles is not going to turn over that area to the Russians and Chinese, is he?"

Chip took the question. "All I know is, we should not get involved in any more wars in Asia. The Communists bled us in Korea, and they bled the French in Vietnam. Let the British handle Southeast Asia. They have bases and troops in Malaysia and Singapore."

"It wouldn't surprise me if we did something to threaten those people in Hanoi," Rob said. "There is no way Dulles will let himself be tagged with giving away Vietnam after he and the Republicans blasted Truman and Acheson for losing China."

The United States took the first step toward a commitment to defend South Vietnam when Dulles met in Manila in September 1954 with the foreign ministers of seven other countries to sign the Southeast Asia Mutual Security Pact (SEATO). The signatories were the United States, Great Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, and the Philippines. Washington committed itself to defend Thailand, the Philippines, and the British possessions in Malaysia and Singapore. The treaty authorized signatories to give aid to South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia if they were threatened by Communist aggression, including insurgency. It also permitted the United States to provide military assistance to South Vietnam even though Saigon was not a signatory to the treaty.

Secretary Dulles was disappointed by Indonesian president Sukarno's decision to reject membership in SEATO and instead to cosponsor a conference of "nonaligned nations" at Bandung in 1955. Because Indonesia was the largest and potentially most influential country in Southeast Asia, its decision detracted from the credibility of the SEATO commitment and led to fears in Washington and London that Sukarno might be prepared to work more closely with Moscow and Beijing.

Fundamentally, the Southeast Asia Mutual Security Pact made the United States a guarantor of the region's security in cooperation with Britain and the Commonwealth countries of Australia and New Zealand. This was a huge extension of U.S. national interests in Asia. Ten years later an-
other president would have to decide whether to honor Dwight Eisenhower's commitment by sending American troops to Vietnam.

One Monday evening, before going to his weekly navy reserve meeting, David had dinner with several navy colleagues, including Rex Benson, a lawyer in a private firm in Washington. He was known as a conservative Republican with strong views on foreign policy and on the Sino-Soviet Bloc. David wanted to get his view on the recently concluded Manila Pact.

"Rex, what are we getting into with SEATO?" he asked. "Aren't we taking on another big commitment in the Far East?"

"We are, and we should," Benson responded. "Ever since the Communists took over China, we've had a new ball game in the Far East. Every country out there now thinks communism is the wave of the future, and they're cozying up to Beijing."

"Didn't our intervention in Korea convince them that we won't bug out of the area?" David suggested.

"Not in Southeast Asia, it didn't. Japan might have been reassured, but the Thais and Indonesians and Cambodians are not impressed by our waffling on Indochina."

"So, what are you saying?" David asked. "That we should have encouraged the French to stay in Indochina?"

"No, we can't be supporting French colonialism," Benson replied. "But now that the French are leaving, we and the Brits and the Aussies should put troops into Thailand and South Vietnam. We should blockade their ports, if necessary, to get them to back off from trying to take over Laos and South Vietnam. The navy can easily blockade North Vietnam."

In June 1954 David had flown to Ann Arbor for his preliminary doctoral examination, which was administered by six professors. It was a three-hour ordeal that taxed his memory as well as his analytical skills. When it was over, he waited for what seemed like hours in an adjacent room. Finally, Henry Borden came out and told him he had passed. The next morning, before flying back to Washington, he and Borden discussed his dissertation subject. David said that USIA had offered him an assignment as information officer at the U.S. embassy in Reykjavik, Iceland. It was not his first choice, he said, but it was a good job in an important country.

"If I take the assignment," he said, "I don't know when I'll be able to start work on the dissertation."

"Why not write on Iceland's role in NATO?" Borden suggested. "It's a member of the alliance and occupies a strategic position in the North Atlantic. As far as I know, nobody is writing on that subject."

David thought that he might be able to gather research materials in Iceland and perhaps do some interviewing. If he were later assigned to Washington, he might then do the writing in his spare time. He agreed.
"All right then," Borden concluded. "You write me up a prospectus of what you want to cover, and I'll discuss it with a couple of other professors. Parsons will like the idea."

Word of the Reykjavik assignment had reached David through Margaret Hastings, who told him that the embassy needed an information officer with newspaper experience who had lived in Scandinavia. The United States had several thousand air force personnel stationed at Keflavik as part of the NATO military buildup in Europe. Keeping Icelanders satisfied about hosting a military base in their small country was apparently a major job for the U.S. Information Service (USIS) in Reykjavik.

Helen was not immediately enthusiastic about going to Iceland because of the climate, but she finally relented. The family spent their last weeks in Virginia renting the house, buying warm clothes, and packing up furniture. David took a week-long orientation course on USIA's information and cultural programs. Ed Storing gave them a farewell office party at his home and presented David with a cocktail shaker with the comment, "the martinis should help keep you warm in Iceland."

In mid-November David, Helen, Jenny, and Jodie flew to New York, boarded a Pan Am DC-7, and began their journey to Reykjavik. He and Helen were happy to be starting another adventure.
American GIs who served in Iceland during World War II called Keflavik airport the coldest, windiest, and most desolate place on the face of the earth. So it seemed to the Bruening family when their plane landed at about 5:00 A.M. in late November 1954. As they descended the DC-7’s long stairway at the parking ramp, rain and a howling wind nearly knocked Helen, who was carrying Jodie, to the ground. David put Jenny down, picked up Jodie, and let Helen and Carl Jensen, David’s new boss, hold Jenny’s arms as they walked slowly toward the terminal. Once inside, Jensen broke into a broad smile and exclaimed, “Welcome to windy Iceland.” David was impressed that the chief of the U.S. Information Service had driven to Keflavik in the middle of the night to meet them instead of sending a younger staff member.

After checking through Icelandic immigration and customs, they drove in Jensen’s car for about an hour in complete darkness in a northeasterly direction toward Reykjavik, Iceland’s capital. David noted that they were driving on the left side of the two-lane road and wondered how long it would take him to get used to the change. The car’s headlights illuminated black lava terrain that reminded him and Helen of photos they had seen of the moon’s barren surface. He asked Carl how people coped during the long winter months, when they had only five to six hours of daylight.

“Some folks manage better than others,” he said. “You learn to compensate. My wife and I play a lot of bridge.”

Rooms had been reserved for them at the Borg, Reykjavik’s only hotel, but Jensen had arranged for them to stop first at the home of a young embassy officer and his wife for some breakfast. Ted and Joan Keller greeted them and helped put Jenny and Jodie, who were sound asleep, to bed.

When they sat down to have hot coffee and a good breakfast, Helen asked: “Does the wind often blow this hard?” The sharp wind and the rain smacking horizontally against the windowpanes reminded her of the near-hurricane force winds they had experienced in Virginia that September.
"It usually does," Joan replied, smiling. "When the wind is from the south, it rains or snows. If it's from the north, the days are clear and cold. Either way, the wind blows."

Looking out the front window and along the street, David saw that there were no tall trees anywhere in sight, only low bushes and an occasional small evergreen. He knew from his reading that Iceland had been deforested years before to provide firewood for the settlers. He felt slightly depressed by the absence of trees in combination with the weather outside. He asked Ted how long it had taken him and Joan to get used to the climate, because they too had served in Washington prior to this assignment. "Six months," Ted said, "maybe a bit more."

In 1954 the population of Iceland was slightly less than 180,000. Outside Reykjavik, the people were scattered in villages around the coasts, in the fjords. The country's interior was only sparsely inhabited. Fishing was Iceland's principal industry, and fish exports were crucial to the economy. Coastal ships had traditionally provided transportation between the towns, but during World War II British and American troops who occupied the island built a few roads. After the war the DC-3 aircraft ferried people between Reykjavik and some of the remote towns. Icelandic pilots were said to be among the best in the world. Some planes were on pontoons so that they could land in the water at places like Isafjordur on the north coast, near the Arctic Circle. During his two years in Iceland, David made six or seven trips by plane to the outlying areas, including Isafjordur.

Iceland had been a part of Denmark in April 1940 when Nazi Germany invaded Denmark and Norway. The island's highly strategic location in the North Atlantic and its undefended coasts made it a target for Hitler's military planners. In May many Icelanders feared a German invasion, but British forces arrived first. They remained until President Roosevelt in 1941 sent American troops to replace them, before the United States had entered the war. This move helped protect American ships carrying Lend-Lease material to Britain and relieved the British troops for duty in North Africa. The American occupation of Iceland, from 1941 until 1945, ensured that the island remained securely in Allied hands during World War II.

Iceland declared its independence from Denmark in 1944 and after the war it asked the United States to withdraw its military forces. The country had no means of defending its new independence, however, and in 1949 its leaders decided to join the North Atlantic Alliance with the United States, Canada, and nine European countries. In 1951 General Eisenhower, the new NATO supreme commander, visited Iceland and discussed defense with its government. In 1952 Iceland concluded a defense agreement with the United States that permitted the U.S. Air Force to establish a jointly operated base at the international airport in Keflavik. The relationship between Icelanders and several thousand American servicemen stationed at Keflavik nonetheless remained uneasy.
Carl and Beth Jensen invited David and Helen home for dinner their first evening and said they should bring the girls, "because it will be difficult to find a baby-sitter on short notice." The Jensens had served for six years at the U.S. embassy in Vienna, where Carl had been in charge of USIS press relations. Unlike Vienna, Reykjavik was a diplomatic hardship post, for which the State Department paid its employees an extra allowance. "Maybe we were spoiled by the good life in Vienna—the opera, museums, and restaurants," he said. But Carl found the task of an information program in Iceland more important, he said, because "Iceland is such a strategic country for NATO."

The Jensens also invited Brad Wallace, the embassy's political affairs officer, and his wife, Priscilla, to join them for dinner. When they were introduced, Wallace recalled meeting David as a student in Copenhagen and helping him with research on Danish-American relations. Over dinner they talked about Icelanders and how one got to know them.

"They're really well educated," Beth said. "Everyone under thirty seems to speak English. It's a good thing, too, because Icelandic is difficult to learn."

"I've heard that many people here read the 900-year-old sagas in the original," Priscilla reported. "I'm impressed with their schools."

Helen asked where the American families sent their children to school if learning Icelandic was so difficult.

"Some go to the air force school at Keflavik," Priscilla said, "but mostly we teach them by the Calvert system at home."

After dinner, the men went to Carl's study for brandy and political conversation. Carl lit his pipe and suggested that Brad describe the local political situation for David, "so that you understand the importance of the press operation you'll be handling." Wallace appeared to be an intense, highly intelligent person whose life revolved mostly around work. His crisp, clear analysis of Icelandic politics, which he characterized as "very personal, like the politics of a small American city," was impressive. There was a growing antimilitary mood in certain political circles, he observed. "If left unchecked, it could affect the status of our strategic air base at Keflavik."

David asked how serious the local Communist influence was.

"If the Communists and their Russian patrons got control of this island," Brad said in measured tones, "it would be extremely difficult for the United States to defend Western Europe." He added, with emphasis, "Hitler almost beat the British to get here in 1940, after Germany invaded Norway. If Soviet planes and submarines were operating from this island today, we would have great difficulty supplying our troops in Europe."

"Surely the Icelanders appreciate that, don't they?" David asked with surprise.
"Most of them do," Carl interjected. "But the Communists are quite strong here. They control most of the labor unions, and many teachers and intellectuals are members or at least sympathizers."

"Another problem we face," Brad said, "is that the Social Democrats have split. The party's left wing is joining a united front, called the Labor Alliance, with the Communists. The Conservatives and Progressives, the largest parties, are in a coalition government right now. But the Progressives are the junior partner and are ambivalent about having a U.S. military base here, even though they favor NATO membership. Fortunately, Prime Minister Olafur Thors is solidly for NATO and the base."

"Brad, tell David about our foreign policy objectives in Iceland," Carl said.

"Our objective is to help this government stay in power and keep the U.S. military profile as low as possible. We don't want to give the Communists and leftists any ammunition to stir up nationalist sentiment against the base. Most Icelanders wish it were not necessary to have any U.S. forces here."

"Where does the USIS program come in?" David asked.

"Newspapers are the main source of information," Carl said. "Radio has some influence, but the daily papers—all but one of them are owned by political parties—are the way people learn about local and world affairs. Morgunbladid, an independent conservative paper, is the most widely read and is generally friendly to us. Titinn, the Progressive Party organ, likes to take potshots at our forces in Keflavik and occasionally at our foreign policy. The Communist paper, Thjodviljinn, is read by a lot of people, even though many discount its pro-Soviet propaganda. The Social Democrats have a small paper that is read mostly by non-Communist intellectuals and some of the labor people."

"So you want to beef up the USIS press operation?" David suggested.

"That's right," Wallace said. "Carl and I think you should get to know the editors as soon as possible and see if we can get stories and photos published that show our role at Keflavik in a favorable light."

Jensen added, "We need to inform the Icelanders of the important NATO role here so that people don't think the defense of this island is just an American idea. We have to convince the public that they are a key part of Western Europe's defense system."

The apartment into which the Bruenings moved after a week was relatively new and was, like many, built of concrete and stucco. The building was well insulated and was heated by hot water from an oil-fired burner, even though many other homes in the center of Reykjavik were heated by thermal water piped in from hot springs in the nearby mountains. David learned that most of the oil and gasoline used in Iceland was imported from the Soviet Union in exchange for Icelandic fish. His knowledge of
Danish came in handy occasionally when he needed to communicate with the landlord and other Icelanders who had not learned English in school. Many of the younger people were required to study English for four years in high school. David found Icelanders generally more reserved than Danes and Norwegians, and some Americans mistook their reticence for anti-Americanism.

Because Iceland's population was so small, its leaders constantly worried that foreign influences would imperil their ancient language and culture. Nationalists viewed American servicemen as a threat because Icelandic women were attracted to them. In fact, several thousand of them had married Americans during the war and had left the country. As a result, tight restrictions were placed on U.S. servicemen assigned to Iceland. Only one hundred were allowed to visit Reykjavik at a time, and they had to wear civilian clothes and be off the streets by 11:00 P.M. This situation rankled the U.S. military, but it was the price that Iceland demanded for agreeing to the American presence during the Cold War.

The U.S. Information Service office was located on the main street of Reykjavik about six blocks from the American embassy. The facility consisted of a library on the ground floor and a film library and press operation located in offices above. Three American officers and a secretary, plus eight Icelandic employees, composed the USIS staff. Four bilingual Icelanders worked for David in the press section and in a film lending library. A female American officer supervised the cultural affairs program, and she and David shared the job of staying in touch with university professors and students.

After his first conversation with Jensen and Wallace, David understood that his primary job was to cultivate good relations with newspaper editors and journalists. He spent most of his first months in Reykjavik building up contacts with them and inviting some to lunch. He and Helen also had informal dinner parties that many of the newspaper people attended. David was pleased that before long some editors reciprocated with invitations to their own homes. He credited Helen with putting the Icelandic wives at ease in their apartment and demonstrating her genuine interest in the local customs and culture. By spring David knew reasonably well about a dozen editors and political writers in Reykjavik and considered some of them his friends.

In the spring of 1955, as the weather improved, David proposed to Jensen and to Ambassador Monroe that the U.S. Air Force command at Keflavik invite a group of Icelandic journalists from the newspapers and the state radio for a tour of the military facilities. This would be followed with a briefing by senior officers regarding the importance of the base to the defense of Europe as well as Iceland. Nothing of the sort had ever been done before because of animosity that had built up between the military
and the local press over what the air force viewed as anti-American articles in the newspapers. Jensen obtained approval for him to visit the base and present his proposal to Colonel Joseph Harris, the chief of staff. David’s task was made easier because the base had a new public relations officer, Major Bill Wyman, who liked the idea and facilitated the meeting with Colonel Harris and other senior officers.

“Mr. Bruening,” Harris asked when the group assembled in the conference room at Keflavik, “why are you so sure that showing these press people our planes and facilities will lead them to write favorable stories about us?”

“Colonel,” David said firmly, “I’m convinced that most Icelanders want us to defend this country. The problem is that they don’t know much about how we do it. Thjodviljinn prints antibase propaganda, and the other papers don’t have enough facts to counter it with favorable stories.”

“How do you propose we deal with the problem?” Harris asked.

“I suggest we bring a busload of journalists from all the papers and the state radio out here, give them a tour and a briefing, let them see the fighter planes and talk to pilots, and give them a good lunch hosted by you or the general.”

“Did you say all the papers?” Harris exclaimed. “What about the Communist press? We can’t have a spy wandering around out here.”

“Sir, I checked that point out with several friendly journalists. They think it would be foolish not to include Thjodviljinn’s reporter. They assure me that the journalist is a decent person and would not embarrass you. If he does print some adverse material, my contacts say they will counter it.”

The colonel frowned, and David thought his plan was dead. But after a pause, he said he would confer with his staff and with General Shannon and would let the embassy know within a week. Bill Wyman told David afterward that he should not worry, that he thought the idea would be accepted. “If the ambassador thinks it’s a good idea, the general will go along,” he predicted.

“We’ll have to keep Thjodviljinn’s guy quiet while he’s here,” David said. “You can see how touchy Harris is about inviting a Communist to his base.”

Three days later the major called and said, “It’s go.” He added that official approval would be communicated to the embassy, but he wanted David to come out to Keflavik the following day to help him draw up the plan. “It has a high priority,” he said. “Let’s do it soon.”

The press tour was a big success. The Reykjavik papers carried long stories and photos of the planes and pilots and excerpts from the news conference that Colonel Harris and his officers held. Morgunbladid carried short interviews with several young American pilots and described how they “scrambled” when the air defense warning siren sounded during a
drill. *Thjodviljinn* ran a small story on an inside page, noting that its reporter had finally seen the "imperialist base" at Keflavik. Carl Jensen was pleased with the coverage, and Bill Wyman was ecstatic. "Great job," he exclaimed when the news stories appeared.

During the following weeks he and David began planning other projects to improve relations between the base and the public. One of them involved bringing several air force planes into Reykjavik's small airport and opening them to public visits. That gesture too helped to improve relations. Wyman told David that his bosses wanted them to "do more of these kinds of projects."

The spring of 1955 witnessed a thaw in United States–Soviet relations, and a more hopeful international climate emerged in Europe and the United States. The new mood began slowly after Stalin's death two years earlier, and it was promoted by his successors, Nikita Khrushchev and Nikolai Bulganin, who shared the power. At first the anti-Communist rhetoric of President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles was not affected by the change in Moscow. This aloof attitude continued in 1954 because of the White House's embarrassment over the Vietnam peace treaty, which many countries, but not the United States, had signed in Paris. The treaty gave North Vietnam's Communist government control over half the country. Republicans who had campaigned in the 1952 elections on a pledge to "roll back the Iron Curtain" were embarrassed by what they viewed as a Communist victory in Vietnam.

In late 1954 and early 1955 Moscow sounded out the State Department about the possibility of a summit meeting between President Eisenhower and President Nikolai Bulganin and Communist Party chief Nikita Khrushchev. Dulles vigorously opposed the idea because he saw no reason to elevate the prestige of Moscow's new Communist leaders by treating them as Eisenhower's equals. The president dismissed the idea at first. But he let it be known that if the Kremlin was serious about reducing tensions in Europe, it should take some dramatic action to demonstrate its new flexible policy, perhaps in Austria.

The Western allies had tried for ten years to negotiate an Austrian peace treaty with Moscow, including withdrawal of all occupying troops. Like Germany, Austria was divided into zones of occupation in 1945, and the Russians had showed no sign of being willing to relinquish their control of eastern Austria. In early 1955, Soviet negotiators suddenly shifted their position, and within two months they agreed to withdraw Soviet troops, establish a democratically elected government, and guarantee the neutralization of Austria. Eisenhower changed his stance and agreed to meet with the Soviet leaders in Geneva in June.

The Geneva summit meeting demonstrated to the world that Eisen-
hower was a man of peace and was prepared to deal with the new Soviet leadership. The two sides concluded several limited agreements, and the summit was declared a great success. American and Soviet leaders were seen by millions of viewers on television toasting and shaking hands at the conclusion of their talks.

The successful Geneva summit improved morale among millions of Europeans and Americans who had come to fear an outbreak of war in Europe after hostilities erupted in Korea. The summit also enhanced Eisenhower's image as peacemaker. In the months that followed, observers used the phrase "Spirit of Geneva" to describe the changed international climate. An important consequence of the breakthrough was a widespread belief among Europeans that Washington and Moscow would now proceed to negotiate an end to the Cold War and also agree on the future status of Germany. The word "détente" was used by some journalists to describe the mood of optimism that prevailed in the summer of 1955.

In Iceland, the Geneva summit was hailed with enthusiasm by most of the press, and some politicians began questioning the need for the U.S. military base at Keflavik. Thjodviljinn belabored the theme that the Cold War was ending, the Soviet Union had no designs on Iceland's sovereignty, and it was therefore time for Icelanders to "regain our independence by demanding that the occupying forces leave the country." Articles appeared in other papers celebrating the new era of peace and goodwill and suggesting that arms reductions, particularly nuclear arms, should have high priority. The agrarian Progressive Party, then in an uneasy coalition with the Independence Party, began running stories about problems at the Keflavik base in its newspaper, Timinn. Some of these were critical of working conditions confronting Icelanders and of the activities of American servicemen who had weekend passes in Reykjavik. Once again attention focused on the troops' fraternization with Icelandic women, a sensitive subject. Progressive leaders also sounded more nationalistic than before the Geneva summit meeting.

Some in the American Embassy speculated that the Progressives anticipated new elections in 1956 and might therefore capitalize on public sentiment to reduce, or even eliminate, the U.S. military presence at Keflavik. Because a Progressive Party leader headed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iceland's foreign policy pronouncements began to sound somewhat more nationalistic regarding the presence of American troops in Iceland. Timinn highlighted Khrushchev's call for "peaceful coexistence," and it praised Moscow's decision to withdraw from the military base at Porkkala in southern Finland and return the area to Finland. Reading this news, David and Helen recalled traveling through the Russian zone at Porkkala in a sealed train in 1949.

During 1955 the State Department sent a number of well-known Ameri-
can musicians, artists, and writers to Iceland as part of a worldwide program to publicize American cultural achievements. William Faulkner, who had won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1949 and was widely read by the highly literate Icelanders, arrived in Reykjavik at the end of a European tour. The embassy and USIS recommended that he give an interview to Morgunbladid, the largest paper, and mention his views on NATO and Western defense. David was asked to arrange the meeting and to be present at the interview. The interviewer was to be Jon Magnusson, a young poet who also did newspaper writing. David knew from a briefing that Faulkner was not a talkative person. Accordingly, he suggested beforehand that Magnusson, whom David knew, talk briefly about himself and Icelandic writers before launching into the questions. Faulkner puffed on his pipe and seemed to be interested, so Magnusson asked about his early life and writing in Mississippi. After about twenty minutes, during which the Nobel laureate answered questions about how he came to write several of his novels, the journalist inquired about his impressions of the European countries he had just visited and what he thought about the current state of East-West relations.

Faulkner was prepared for a political question and responded in a way designed to have a major impact on Iceland's educated elite. "People who believe in freedom of expression," he said, "have to be prepared to defend that freedom when it is necessary. I think the nations of Western Europe have done the right thing by joining in a common defense to defend their freedom."

There was no need for Faulkner to elaborate that the NATO air base at Keflavik was important to that defense. Icelanders understood his meaning, and the prodefense newspapers did not hesitate to make the connection. The Morgunbladid story was a major news event.

Iceland honored Faulkner at a formal gathering of the country's intelligentsia in a moving ceremony at Reykjavik's small national church in the city square. David listened to a reading, in Icelandic, which he didn't understand, of Faulkner's famous short story "A Rose for Emily." At its conclusion, the crowd of several hundred people stood and gave Faulkner a long, emotional ovation. The mild-mannered American was presented with an award and stood quietly during the ceremony, which was conducted in Icelandic. He made no oral response.

David received approval from the embassy to host an informal reception and buffet at their home so that he could introduce Faulkner to newspaper editors and journalists. He and Helen were pleased with the turnout and the lively conversations that took place over drinks and buffet. The guest of honor appeared tired, or bored or both, however, and did not participate except to answer an occasional question. David thought about how to pique Faulkner's interest and had an idea.
“Mr. Faulkner,” he said softly, “I understand you have a daughter. We have two young daughters who are asleep, and I wondered if you’d like to look in on them.”

Faulkner immediately stood and without saying a word followed David into the nearly dark bedroom where Jenny and Jodie were asleep. When he saw the crib where Jodie lay, he bent over it for what seemed like three or four minutes, in complete silence. When they went out, he smiled but said nothing. David imagined that Faulkner was remembering his own daughter, Jill, at about that age.

When he saw Brad Wallace a few days later, David remarked on how much the famous American writer had done to help the prodefense cause in Iceland.

“You’re right,” Brad said. “And he’s so different from so many intellectuals at home who think the Cold War is an American invention.”

In November 1955 Wallace asked David to come by the embassy to discuss the impact of the Spirit of Geneva on the local political situation.

“Dave,” he began, “the embassy is concerned about what’s going on in the Social Democratic Party.”

“I thought you’d be more concerned about the way the Progressives are heating up their rhetoric on the base issue.”

“That’s another story,” Brad replied. “We think the Social Democrats are planning to make a deal with the Progressives to break up the government.”

“How would they do that?” David asked. “The party’s too small. The left wing split off and formed an alliance with the Communists.”

“Well, there’s a new wrinkle. At their convention last week, one group proposed that the party’s prodefense stance be changed because of the more favorable international climate. In short, they seem to be buying Moscow’s line that peace is at hand. They may even think it’s safe for our forces to leave.”

“Is that the real reason?” David asked.

“My guess is these people think elections will be held during the next six months. They hope to capitalize on what they think is declining public support for the Defense Force.” Brad continued: “I think they’re positioning themselves to join a new coalition government with the Progressives and possibly the Labor Alliance.”

“A coalition with the Communists?” David exclaimed. “Are you serious? Just imagine the impact in Washington if Iceland were the first NATO country to accept Communists in its government.”

“Well, my friend, we need to find out what’s going on. You know Helgi Jonasson, don’t you?”

“Sure. He’s a professor at the university. I’ve talked with him a few times. In fact, he was at a party at our house a few months ago. Helen
expressed interest in the writings of Halldor Laxness, and a few days later Jonasson showed up at our door with the English version of *Salka Valka.*”

Wallace said he thought Jonasson was a leader of the Social Democratic group that wanted an election alliance with the Progressives in order to oust the Conservatives from power. "He and his group think the defense issue might be a winning one. Many voters, regardless of party, are nationalists in their hearts and don't want our troops here even though the country has prospered as a result of their presence."

Then Brad came to the point. “Can you find out what's on Jonasson's mind?"

David was surprised at the question. He was being asked to do something normally outside his job as information officer, but the proposal intrigued him as a student of political science, and he agreed to do it. The next day he called Jonasson and asked him to lunch. But the professor suggested instead a meeting at his home. After hanging up, David mused to himself, "He doesn't want to be seen in public right now with an American official, even somebody from USIS."

When they met, the two men had an interesting hour-long conversation about Icelandic politics. The professor was far more candid in his views than David had anticipated. What he heard confirmed Wallace's suspicions: the Social Democrats were indeed talking with the Progressives about forming an election alliance in which neither party would run candidates against the other. With great pleasure Jonasson showed David an electoral chart that he had given his colleagues, indicating districts where one or the other party could beat the Conservative candidates if they were not running against each other. When David eventually asked about the Social Democrats' stance on the Defense Force, Jonasson assured him that there would be no change regarding Iceland's membership in NATO. On the Keflavik base question, however, his response was different.

"David," he said earnestly, "let me assure you that most Icelanders respect the United States and approved of your willingness to defend this country when Stalin threatened Western Europe. But things have changed. Stalin is dead. Eisenhower and the new Soviet leaders toasted a new era of peace. The Russians are pulling out of Austria and Finland. We Icelanders have to ask ourselves whether we need your military forces now that the danger of war is receding."

David realized that he was hearing an early result of Moscow's new peace offensive from an intelligent, friendly Icelandic political leader. He responded with a question: "Why are you so sure, Helgi, that the Russians will behave themselves? They haven't shown any willingness to reduce their huge army or agree on a unified Germany. All Khrushchev has done is give up two pieces of occupied territory that were embarrassing Moscow abroad."
Jonasson showed surprise at the question. "I'm not suggesting we should move soon to have your forces leave," he said with some agitation. "But I think we should be willing to begin negotiations next year on a gradual withdrawal. If East-West relations continue to improve, there really is no further need for the forces. But if things turn negative in Moscow, we will want you to stay."

As he was leaving, David thanked Jonasson for being candid. "Whatever happens in your political discussions, Helgi, I hope U.S. policy toward Iceland won't become a major political issue. That would be unfortunate for both sides."

When Wallace listened to David's account of the conversation the next morning, he said he wanted Ambassador Monroe to hear it firsthand. John Monroe was a veteran Foreign Service officer who was not particularly pleased about being assigned to Iceland after having been ambassador in Korea. But the State Department knew in 1954 that political difficulties lay ahead for the U.S. military presence in Iceland, and it wanted a seasoned diplomat there. Monroe had a reputation as a no-nonsense official who fully understood domestic and international politics.

Although David had seen the ambassador at larger staff meetings, this was the first time he had briefed him with only one other person present. Seated at his large desk with photos of President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles prominently displayed on the wall, and an American flag standing to the side, Monroe put down the folder he was reading, knocked his pipe gently against an ashtray, and waited for Wallace to speak.

"Mr. Ambassador, Dave has a report on his conversation with Jonasson that I think you should hear."

Monroe nodded. David then summarized the information he had given Brad earlier. The ambassador said nothing, puffed on his pipe, and looked at him without expression. Finally he asked, "Do you think he was trying to snow you? Or was he telling it straight?"

"I can't be sure. I've known him socially for about six months. He's an academic, an intellectual, not your usual political type. I think he was honestly describing the current political scene as he sees it."

"Why would he talk to you so frankly when none of us has gotten that kind of detail from other sources?"

"Maybe he thinks a USIS officer is different from an embassy officer. I've had many contacts at the university. He may think it's okay to talk to me. But I have no doubt he expected me to report the conversation to you. He might like to find out how the embassy will react if his party goes ahead with this plan."

Monroe's eyes sparkled at this suggestion. He put his pipe down. "You're damn right," he said. "He wants to smoke us out on this idiotic notion that Iceland doesn't need defense anymore."
After giving the ambassador a few more details of the meeting with Jonasson, David and Wallace returned to Wallace’s office.

“Good job,” Brad said. “I think we got the old man’s juices going.”

The Bruenings’ first winter in Iceland had been manageable because everything seemed new and exciting. Spring 1955 had come before they could feel depressed by the darkness. In May they took a three-week vacation in Europe, where David’s father, Herbert, joined them. They left Jodie in the care of their housekeeper and flew with Jenny to Copenhagen. There they bought an Opel Caravan station wagon and traveled in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Germany. They spent two days in Nurnberg and visited Martin and Anna Bruening. After Herbert left them in Munich and continued with a tour of the Holy Land, David, Helen, and Jenny returned to Iceland by way of London and Perth, Scotland, where they sailed on a small Icelandic ship, Godafoss.

During the two days in Nurnberg they spent most of their time with Martin and Anna. David’s father was particularly pleased to renew the relationship with his distant cousins whom he had first met in 1949.

“I’m astonished,” Herbert said, “by how much better things look now than when Lillian and I were here in 1949. The shops are full of everything, the flower gardens are beautiful, and people are well dressed and look happy.”

“I think things are getting much better,” Martin told them as they lunched in a restored restaurant in the old city, overlooking the Pegnitz River. “The economy is improving every month, and Nurnberg is now beginning to look as it did in former times.”

“We’ll be even happier when we can have our own house,” Anna said. “Next year, I think.” They were then living in the large house of her father, a prominent lawyer in Nurnberg.

When the conversation turned to politics, Martin said he was happy that President Eisenhower had decided to meet with the Soviet leaders in Geneva, a development that had occurred only a few weeks before.

“Now that Stalin is gone,” he said, “maybe there is hope that we can travel to eastern Germany again.” David had not seen his cousin so hopeful in the nine years he had known him—not since September 1946 when he had visited Nurnberg for the first time.

David later shared with Helen his impressions from this visit to Germany. The first was that ten years after the war’s end, Nurnberg and Germany were prospering. The rebuilding of the city was very far along, more so than either he or Martin had imagined five years earlier. Martin seemed pleased with Chancellor Conrad Adenauer’s management of the economy. David attributed Germany’s rapid recovery from the war to very hard work.
by the Germans and to plenty of economic help from the U.S. government. "It's fascinating to see the self-confidence returning," he said.

In mid-January 1956, Iceland's Progressive Party announced a change in policy regarding the U.S. military presence in Keflavík, and two months later it withdrew from the government. The withdrawal caused the coalition government to fall and forced Iceland's president to call a general election. Before the Althing (parliament) was dissolved, however, the Progressive and Social Democratic Parties introduced a joint resolution calling for negotiations with the United States to terminate its military presence in the country. The measure reaffirmed Iceland's membership in NATO and was approved over the vigorous opposition of the Independence Party. The Communist-led Labor Alliance had provided the margin of victory, and the measure marked the opening salvo in Iceland's historic general elections of June 1956.

Parliament's decision to ask for the withdrawal of American forces, of course, came as no surprise to the U.S. Embassy and the Icelandic desk at the State Department. Ambassador Monroe had followed the maneuvering of the Progressives and Social Democrats since the fall, and he knew their game plan. David's conversation with Jonasson contributed to his impressions. Nevertheless, the news shocked the upper echelons of the State Department and the White House. To Washington's dismay, NATO's smallest, strategically located country, lacking any defense of its own, was now deciding that it no longer needed protection.

One American columnist reported that when word of the Icelandic parliament's decision hit the American press, Dulles "nearly had a heart attack." Ambassador Monroe was called home for consultations, and within a few weeks high-level officials began arriving from Washington to get briefings at the embassy and meet with Icelandic political leaders. One of them was General William ("Wild Bill") Donovan, the famous World War II chief of the Office of Strategic Services. President Eisenhower had asked him, as an old friend, to make an independent evaluation. David attended the briefing session for Donovan and wondered whether the former director of America's wartime spy agency found the situation in Iceland to be even remotely comparable to the difficult situations he had encountered during World War II.

Because of its small population, Iceland's politics were usually very personal and at times bitter. The election campaign of 1956 was one of the most vitriolic on record. The Conservatives charged the Progressives with aiding the Communist cause in Iceland. The Progressives branded the Conservatives as promoters of a perpetual foreign military presence in the country. The Communist Party decided not to run under its own banner and
instead joined forces with the leftist Labor Alliance. Social Democrats, as Helgi Jonasson had predicted, concluded a deal with the Progressives not to run candidates against each other. As the campaign gained momentum, the Iceland Defense Force became the key issue.

A political bombshell fell in May when word leaked out at Keflavik that the U.S. Defense Department was suspending negotiations on contracts for new construction at Keflavik because of the "uncertain future" of the facilities. The Progressives found themselves now on the defensive. Many Icelanders' jobs were in jeopardy if construction at the base was curtailed. The party's response took on an anti-American tone, as reflected in its daily newspaper, Timinn. One of the party's leaders publicly accused the United States of interfering in Iceland's internal affairs by suspending contract negotiations and suggested that the action was intended to help Conservatives win the election.

Shortly thereafter, Brad Wallace asked David to drop by the embassy for a talk. When he arrived, the political affairs officer came straight to the point. "Dave, we are concerned about the Progressives' charging the United States with interference in the election. This is a dangerous line and should not go unanswered, especially in this volatile political climate."

"What do you have in mind?" David asked.

"You know Jon Eliasson, the editor of Timinn, pretty well, don't you?"

"Yes, we've been at his house, and he and his wife have been at ours. I talk to him from time to time about what kinds of articles he'd like to get from us. He says he likes the fact that we translate the material into Icelandic."

"Okay, here's what I'd like you to do, if you're willing," Brad said confidentially. "Go around and see Eliasson, and in as nice a way as you can, let him know that we are not happy about being criticized by his paper for interfering in Icelandic politics."

"Is that all?" David exclaimed, near astonishment. "You want me to give the Progressive Party the word that we think their policy on the base stinks?"

"Look at it this way, Dave. If the ambassador or anyone in the embassy talked to their party leader, it would be taken as an official protest. We want to avoid that. If you, as press officer, talk to your editor friend informally about your reaction to his editorials, the word gets through but the protest is not official. You see the difference."

As in the assignment five months earlier involving Jonasson, David asked Brad to let Jensen know what was being asked of him. That afternoon he called on Eliasson in his office at Timinn. They chatted amiably over coffee for about ten minutes before David said he had another matter he wanted to discuss. Not suspecting the nature of the business he had in mind, the
editor leaned back in his chair and smiled. "What can I do for you, Dave?"
He seemed completely at ease.

"Jon," David began slowly, "I think some of your recent editorials are
not very friendly to the United States. The one yesterday, for example, came
close to accusing us of siding with the Conservatives in the election."

Eliasson's expression suddenly changed. The color faded from his
face. He looked stunned. After a pause, during which he rose from his
chair and took another one nearer his visitor, he responded in a measured
voice. "There must be some misunderstanding here," he said earnestly.
"That editorial is not critical of you, it's critical of the Conservatives. They
are using the suspension of contracts by the Defense Force to beat up on
us. I said in the editorial that they are using the suspension for election
purposes, not that you are supporting the Conservatives."

David searched for the right words to convey his message. "We are
friends, Jon. Let me just say that the last few editorials have been causing
concern. I just wanted to let you know."

"Is that what your embassy thinks?"

"Yes. Some of us worry that relations between our countries might be
harmed."

David stood up, indicating that he preferred not to pursue the matter
further. The editor saw him to the door and they shook hands. Eliasson
said softly, "Thank you, Dave. You've been helpful."

When he returned to the office, there was an urgent call from Wallace.
"Dave, have you talked to Eliasson yet?"

"I just got back. Should I come over now?"

"Yeah, as fast as you can. We have a problem." Ten minutes later David
entered Wallace's office and saw him scribbling some notes.

"The ambassador got a call from the State Department half an hour
ago suggesting that we not go through with your meeting with Eliasson.
They thought it was too risky."

Now it was David who looked stunned. He realized that his friendly
talk with the editor had gotten much higher attention at home than he or
Wallace had anticipated.

"Somebody in the Department got cold feet," Brad said.

David was now concerned that if his talk with Eliasson became an
issue, he could be the fall guy. He sensed that Wallace too felt vulnerable
because he had suggested the idea. He was alarmed when he learned that
Brad had not had time to inform Jensen about their plan. It also occurred to
him that his assignment in Iceland might be in jeopardy.

"Okay, Dave," Brad said, pulling him out of his fantasy. "Let's draft a
telegram telling the Department exactly how your conversation with
Eliasson went and describing his reaction. I'll cover you with Carl. But you
should know that the ambassador doesn’t enjoy informing the Department that their call came too late.”

David weathered the potential storm, but Jensen instructed him to stay away from *Timinn* and to avoid contact with Eliasson. Wallace told him later that there had been a discussion about the feasibility of sending him back to the editor to say that he had acted on his own. Brad had counseled against that course because he had asked David to do exactly what he did. Besides, he said, Eliasson would not believe such a statement. Fortunately, in the following weeks *Timinn*’s editorials were restrained on the base contract suspension matter, even though the party’s leader continued to denounce the Conservatives as “tools of the Americans.”

The election outcome was disappointing to the American embassy and the defense command at Keflavik. The Independence Party increased its popular vote to 40 percent, but it lost several seats in the Althing. The Progressives and Social Democrats lost in total votes but gained seats because, as expected, they did not run candidates against each other. Jonasson’s strategy had paid off. The Communist-dominated Labor Alliance increased its vote and also gained a seat. The outcome was significant because the Progressive Party would form a new coalition government, and the Independence Party would be in the opposition. This was not good news for American national interests in Iceland.

Another political bomb had exploded two weeks before the election when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, still held by the Progressive Party, handed the American embassy a formal diplomatic note requesting that negotiations start in August to arrange for an orderly withdrawal of the Defense Force from Iceland. The move was obviously designed to make the U.S. military presence the issue in the last weeks of the campaign. It was denounced by the Conservatives as “illegal” because Prime Minister Thors, a Conservative, was not consulted on a crucial decision affecting the nation’s security. After the election, the Conservatives claimed that they had won the debate on the defense issue.

In July 1956 a three-party coalition government was formed among Progressives, Social Democrats, and the Labor Alliance. The Progressive leader, Hermann Jonasson, took the prime minister’s post, while the Social Democrats got the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Helgi Jonasson got another cabinet post. The Labor Alliance received two positions, education and social affairs. The announcement, although not unexpected, disappointed the Americans in Iceland. David told a journalist friend at *Morgunbladid* that it was “unbelievable” that a NATO country would bring Communists into its government and ask the United States to withdraw its defense umbrella. His friend replied: “Dave, anything is possible in Icelandic politics.”

Negotiations between the embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Iceland and NATO

got underway in August. Although the leftist government professed to be arranging a date for the Defense Force to leave Iceland, its negotiators seemed more interested in reassuring the United States that there was no hurry. The government wanted to continue the construction projects at Keflavik air base and ensure that Icelandic workers would keep their jobs. They also hoped that Progressive and Social Democratic Party members would get the new contracts.

“So the government wants it both ways,” David said to Wallace after a dinner party.

“That’s right. They satisfy the nationalists that they are negotiating our withdrawal, and they reassure the farmers and building contractors that their interests are being protected.”

“So how do we handle this from now on?” David asked.

“The ambassador and the general are sitting tight. They know how to play this game. Monroe is a real pro.”

Late in October 1956 two international crises erupted, one in the Middle East and the other in Eastern Europe. They had a major impact on Iceland’s attitude regarding defense.

The first crisis was precipitated by a decision of the British and French governments to invade Egypt, return the Suez Canal to British control, and oust the nationalist government of President Gamal Nasser from power. This action caused a crisis in United States–British relations because Prime Minister Anthony Eden had concealed the operation from President Eisenhower. Eden anticipated that Eisenhower might oppose the plan if its objectives were known in advance. The expedition would probably not have succeeded in any case, many observers concluded, but President Eisenhower’s vehement opposition caused the British government to call off the operation. Eden resigned shortly thereafter.

The second crisis followed quickly upon the Suez debacle. Soviet politburo chief Nikita Khrushchev became very hostile and denounced the British and French after he learned that the United States opposed the Suez operation. He even threatened to bomb Britain unless it withdrew its troops. But this bluster was a smoke screen for Moscow’s own intention to invade Hungary and crush a new, popular democratic government that had the support of thousands of Hungarian “freedom fighters.” The Hungarian government had publicly declared the country’s independence from Moscow’s domination, and its leader, Imre Nagy, asked for Western support. None was given.

When Soviet tanks rolled into Budapest to put down the resistance, which caused many casualties, it was a propaganda debacle for Moscow’s “peace offensive” in Europe. The news from Budapest came with photos that showed Soviet tanks in action. In both Western Europe and the United
States people who wanted to believe that the Spirit of Geneva would last for years were shocked. The situation in Eastern Europe raised the possibility that war might break out if other Iron Curtain countries followed the Hungarian example.

The Soviet military action in Budapest had a profound influence on Icelandic public opinion. Suddenly people understood that the Cold War was not over, that Moscow was prepared to use force against a small neighbor, and that a defenseless Iceland might need American protection after all. The turn of events in Europe was deeply embarrassing to Iceland's leftist government. Conservatives had a field day attacking the government's "blindness" in thinking that Iceland should go without NATO's protection. The news was particularly distressing for Iceland's Communists because it shattered their recent political argument that the Soviet Union championed the cause of small countries that had been forced into NATO by the "imperialist Americans." So deep was the negative reaction that a number of prominent Communists left the party in protest. Timinn took a number of days to decide on a new editorial policy. Eventually it admitted that the world situation had taken a turn for the worse and that it was perhaps too soon for Iceland to be left without defense. David and Brad Wallace were delighted at this change.

USIS decided to rent the largest Reykjavik movie theater and show to the public, free of charge, a powerful documentary film entitled *Flight to Freedom*. It was a true story of two young Hungarian ballet dancers who defected to the West in 1953 through Berlin. They were star performers in Europe and the United States. The film showed how they became disillusioned with life in Hungary even though the government had supplied them with all the material benefits that a Communist state provided for its artists. It was a perfect film to show during early November 1956. The theater was packed for several showings, and Carl Jensen was pleased with the results.

At the end of November, Iceland's government decided not to proceed with negotiations for the withdrawal of the U.S. Defense Force. The Progressives and Social Democrats could change their policy without great difficulty, given the repercussions of events in Hungary. But the Icelandic Communists and the Labor Alliance were in a deep quandary. Although they protested the government's reversal of policy on the defense issue, they decided not to leave the coalition because their presence gave them access to much-valued political patronage jobs. As a result, the leftist government remained in power, but it took no action to have the Defense Force reduced in size.

Despite all the excitement and pressure caused by the events of 1956, David had not forgotten his desire to write a dissertation on Iceland. He discussed the subject with Brad Wallace in June, just after the Icelandic
election, and found him enthusiastic about the idea of writing on the relationship between Iceland’s politics and foreign policy.

“Dave, you’ve got a gold mine of information to do this project. With your knowledge of Icelandic politics and the political maneuvering going on, you could do a great case study on the relationship of the country’s domestic politics to its role in NATO.”

“But I need help in finding source materials,” David replied. “And I should interview some of the political leaders.”

“We’ll help you however we can,” Brad said. “I’ll discuss it with the ambassador and a couple of others and get back to you.” A few days later David had his reply.

“We are willing to have you proceed with your research, Dave, as long as you tell the people you interview that you are returning to the States and will write a doctoral dissertation on Iceland’s foreign policy. Some people might be suspicious that your research, coming so soon after the election, is being instigated by the embassy. We don’t want that.”

“Is that likely?” he asked.

“The leftists might think so,” Wallace said. “But you are a legitimate scholar, and you’ll be doing this on your own time. I think it will be a real contribution if the academic community at home gets interested in Iceland and realizes how important it is politically.”

In the next few months David spent weekends collecting a considerable amount of material, much of it translations of articles and speeches done earlier by the embassy and USIS personnel. He also interviewed about a dozen Icelandic politicians and newspaper editors, some at lunch and others in the evening at their homes. They included Jon Eliasson and Helgi Jonasson. By the time the Bruenings were ready to leave Iceland in early December, David had collected most of the information needed to begin writing a history of Iceland’s relations with the United States following the arrival of U.S. forces in 1941. He could only hope that his new assignment at USIA headquarters in Washington would leave him evenings and weekends to spend on the additional research and on writing.

The Bruening family left Iceland by ship, the Godafoss, and after a rough voyage landed three days later in Scotland. After spending a delightful week in London, they boarded the S.S. United States for the trip to New York. At that time Foreign Service officers were able to travel first class, and the family thoroughly enjoyed five days on the world’s fastest luxury liner. As they relaxed one evening in the spacious first class lounge, Helen asked, “How does Iceland seem to you now that you’re away from it?”

“It’s been a fantastic experience, hasn’t it?” David said. “In just two years I’ve learned more about politics and foreign relations than I ever thought possible. Iceland really is on the cutting edge in the Cold War.”
"In what way?"

"It's so strategically located and so vulnerable to Communist propaganda. Moscow was able to convince sensible people there that the country no longer needed defense. All that stuff I learned at Michigan about Leninist propaganda is true. It all came alive in Iceland. And because of Hungary, the whole mood was reversed. It's just amazing!"

Some months later, when the Bruenings had moved into a new, larger home in McLean, Virginia, an Icelandic friend sent them a clipping from the Communist newspaper Thiódvölfjönn that he had translated. The story, prominently displayed, referred to a new East German publication that listed the names of Americans who it claimed were CIA personnel attached to U.S. embassies in Europe and elsewhere. The names of CIA personnel in Iceland included Bradley Wallace and David Bruening. David and Helen were astonished.

"Why do you suppose they put my name in that book?" David exclaimed.

"Probably because you ask so many questions and are so interested in politics," his wife replied with a laugh. "You really sound like an intelligence type sometimes."

"This is so silly," David observed. "They listed me and Brad, but neither of us is with the agency. And they didn't even name the real guy."

She asked if it bothered him. "Not really," he said, "but I wonder what my Icelandic friends must think. I better write Magnus and set his mind at ease."
By the spring of 1960, the detente relationship that President Eisenhower and Soviet Chairman Khrushchev had inaugurated at their first summit meeting in Geneva in 1955 had lasted for five years in spite of the Soviet military intervention in Hungary in 1956. Eisenhower had invited the Soviet leader to tour the United States in 1959, and Vice President Nixon had visited the Moscow Trade Fair in an effort to improve the political atmosphere so that negotiations on arms control and the division of Germany might proceed.

This period of hope for improving East-West relations came to a stunning halt at the beginning of May, however, when Moscow accused the Eisenhower administration of a dangerous act of espionage on Soviet territory. On May 2, 1960, the Washington Post carried a front-page story saying that an American U-2 spy plane had been shot down over the Soviet Union and that Moscow was demanding an apology for a serious violation of its airspace. The White House initially denied the accusation and said the plane was on a weather reconnaissance mission in Turkey and had accidentally strayed into Soviet territory.

The next day Nikita Khrushchev accused the United States of lying and claimed that Gary Powers, the American pilot, had been captured alive. Powers admitted to being on a CIA photographic spying mission over Russian military installations, Khrushchev claimed, and he charged the United States with a dangerous provocation of the Soviet Union. He demanded an apology from Eisenhower and a pledge to stop any further such covert actions.

As the world waited for Washington's reaction, the White House shifted its story and in the process destroyed the last remaining vestige of the "Spirit of Camp David," which Khrushchev and Eisenhower had proclaimed only a year earlier when they met at Camp David, Maryland. The White House admitted that Powers was indeed on a spy mission and refused to apologize. It stated that U-2 spy planes had been flying over Soviet territory for
four years, gathering vital intelligence data on military activities. The White House spokesman said that the United States reserved the right to fly additional such missions because they were vital to protecting U.S. security. The news stunned the media and most of official Washington.

Arriving at his USIA office the morning after Khrushchev had accused Eisenhower of lying about Powers’s role, David quickly read through the press reports from London, as he was desk officer for Great Britain. Then he turned to Gerry Gardner, who shared his office: “What is Khrushchev trying to do, restart the Cold War?”

Gardner had served in Germany and Austria for six years and had an instinctive feel for public opinion in Europe. He leaned back in his chair and smiled. “He’s playing the old propaganda game, Dave. He assumes there won’t be a military confrontation, so he wants to scare the hell out of the Europeans and drive a wedge between them and us. If he can convince the Europeans that we are provoking this crisis, he calculates that he might split the NATO alliance. At the very least, Khruschchev hopes to get concessions from Eisenhower on Berlin.”

“You may be right,” David observed. “He’s been complaining about Berlin being a bone in his throat. He thinks we’ll deal on Berlin to get out of this embarrassment.”

A day later, after the White House admitted to spying, the two colleagues conferred again. “We sure put the fat in the fire this time,” David said. “The British press is howling about the White House response. They say we’re heating up tensions.”

“But the reality is that we’ve been doing it for four years,” Gerry said, “and Moscow knows it. That’s really embarrassing Khrushchev. We’ve pushed him into a tight corner.”

The U-2 episode dominated the foreign policy news for weeks, and it occurred just as the 1960 presidential election campaign was starting. President Eisenhower was scheduled to attend a mid-May summit meeting in Paris, together with Khrushchev and the British and French prime ministers to discuss Germany and other problems. Moscow demanded changes in the four-power status of Berlin and also wanted a nuclear test ban treaty. Eisenhower was prepared to talk about these issues and reluctantly agreed to go to Paris even though he anticipated that Khrushchev would criticize the United States for the U-2 episode. Eisenhower wanted especially to follow through on a previous Khrushchev invitation to visit Moscow in the fall, and the State Department had been working for months to arrange that visit.

When the four leaders met in Paris, but before anyone had made an opening statement, Khrushchev fiercely attacked the United States and revoked the invitation to Eisenhower. The Soviet leader declared that he would deal only with the next U.S. president and stormed out of the meet-
ing. He returned to Moscow. Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union were so damaged by the incident that resumption of the Cold War became a real possibility.

Early in 1960 David began inquiring about an overseas assignment. He had by then completed his dissertation and had received his doctor's degree. His book on Iceland had been accepted for publication, and he had received a promotion. On the family side, Helen had given birth to their first son, whom they named Jason. It was time to move on, David concluded, and he asked his personnel office for a posting in the Far East because his experience had been exclusively in Europe. When USIA personnel eventually offered him the job of cultural affairs attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, he was excited.

"Guess what," he told Helen. "We have a chance to go to Thailand."
"Really!" she responded with surprise. "What's the assignment?"
"I'll be the chief cultural affairs officer and have a fairly big operation. We'd go in December."
"That sounds exciting," she said. "Can you get hold of the post report? I'd like to see what the embassy says about the schools and living conditions there."
"Okay, honey, but it won't resemble Iceland." He laughed. "Bangkok is hot the whole year around. And we need to check out health precautions. I hear you have to be very careful where you eat, and that we drink only purified water."

The post report confirmed that Bangkok had good medical facilities and American-trained doctors. The International School, where children of the foreign community were taught in English, had a good reputation.

The big news in Washington that fall was the presidential election campaign. Vice President Richard Nixon was pitted against the Democratic nominee, Senator John Kennedy of Massachusetts. It was the first presidential campaign in which the candidates faced each other in television debates. Most observers thought that Kennedy appeared more personable and energetic than Nixon, even though the vice president seemed to have a better grasp of many issues. Although Nixon initially had the advantage of being more widely known, Kennedy gained steadily in the opinion polls as the election neared.

On election eve the Bruenings were invited by Bob Harkness and his wife, Betty, to an election party at their home. Bob worked in the same USIA office as David, and many of their colleagues and some of Bob's State Department friends were there. Most of the guests thought Nixon would defeat Kennedy, but Harkness was rooting for the senator. "I hope Kennedy wins," he said while mixing drinks. "Still, Nixon has the edge because he's been in the White House for eight years."
Jack Crosby, who covered France in their office and was an avowed supporter of Kennedy, had a different view. “I don’t think Nixon will win it,” he said, “because this country wants change after eight years of the Republicans. Nixon doesn’t want change. He’s an anti-Communist zealot.”

“Come on, Jack, you’re exaggerating,” David broke in. “Just because he sent Alger Hiss to prison for lying to Congress about his Communist past doesn’t make Nixon a zealot. I think he’s done a good job as vice president. He did well after Ike had that heart attack. And he stood up to Khrushchev at the Moscow Trade Fair when the Russian tried to intimidate him. Also, Nixon understands foreign policy, and I’m afraid Kennedy doesn’t.”

“Okay, maybe I’m too tough on him,” Jack said, “but I think Kennedy will win it because he has ideas. The country is looking for new ideas after eight years of Eisenhower.”

When Helen and David left just after midnight, it appeared that Nixon would win by a close margin. When they awoke in the morning and turned on the radio, they were surprised to learn that during the early morning hours Kennedy had pulled ahead in the electoral count. He was assured of victory when he won the extremely close race in Illinois. Republicans charged that the balloting had been manipulated by Chicago’s Democratic political machine, headed by Mayor William Daley. Some of Nixon’s advisers wanted him to demand a recount in Illinois, but the vice president declined because he said he believed the country would be seriously divided during a new, dangerous period in United States-Soviet relations.

In the transition period between the election and his inauguration in January, Kennedy announced that his secretary of state would be Dean Rusk, president of the Rockefeller Foundation, and that his secretary of defense would be Robert McNamara, president of the Ford Motor Company. He also suggested that the new vice president, former Senator Lyndon Johnson of Texas, would be given certain responsibilities of a policy nature. One of these, it soon became apparent, was to advise the president on the proper course to take in Indochina in light of the renewed efforts of the Communist government in Hanoi to subvert neighboring South Vietnam and Laos. As the Bruenings prepared to leave home in December and begin their journey to Thailand, Washington seemed to be enthralled by the prospect of having a young, good-looking president with a lovely wife in the White House.

The family departed just before Christmas and spent a few days in Hawaii visiting Helen’s sister and her husband, who were stationed there with the U.S. Air Force. They arrived at Don Muang airport in the north of Bangkok on December 28 and were met by Bill Longren and Kathy, his wife, who helped them through customs and loaded their ten pieces of luggage into
an embassy van. Bill was assistant cultural affairs officer and knew Thailand well. He also had a good knowledge of the Thai language. On the way to the Erawan Hotel, where the new arrivals would stay for a few weeks until they found a suitable rental house, the Longrens briefed them on health precautions in Thailand. The first rules were: don’t drink the water without boiling it, and “take it easy” on physical activity the first week or two. It was good advice, because both David and Helen found themselves tiring easily. Kathy said that the Americans who became seriously ill in Thailand had tried to do too much too soon.

The Erawan, Bangkok’s newest hotel, was a delightful place and had a lovely tropical garden and swimming pool. It was the city’s only air-conditioned hotel—a godsend, given the oppressive heat and humidity. David and Helen spent time during the next two weeks looking at houses near the American embassy on Wireless Road, the USIS headquarters on Sathorn Road, and the International School, where Jennifer and Jodie were enrolled in classes. Good rental property was in heavy demand because of the growing number of Americans, both military and civilian, who were being assigned to Thailand. The Bruenings were fortunate to find a small but charming two-story house just off Sukhumvit Road that boasted one of the loveliest gardens in the area. It had been laid out, they were told, by the previous German embassy tenants. It would be their home for two and a half years and the scene of many garden parties that they gave for Thai university and cultural leaders as well as for visiting American writers and artists.

During his first week at the USIS headquarters in Bangkok, just after New Year’s Day, David learned about a serious flare-up of fighting in neighboring Laos. Communist Pathet Lao troops, supported by Soviet and Chinese arms, started to move out from the Plain of Jars in northern Laos toward the capital of Vientiane. This offensive occurred following six months of relative calm, while U.N. negotiators tried to arrange for a coalition government to unite the country and disarm the guerrilla forces. The communist offensive was seen by the embassy’s political staff as evidence that Moscow was preparing a test for the new Kennedy administration, scheduled to take office on January 20. By the end of January, Chester Barlow, the embassy’s political officer, was convinced that a serious crisis was shaping up in Laos. He was proved correct when Pathet Lao troops continued to attack government forces and seemed ready to move on the capital.

David asked Barlow to brief him on the situation in Laos so that he would be up to date when making his initial calls on university professors and Bangkok’s cultural leaders. He wanted to know how serious the Pathet Lao offensive was and what the implications for Thailand were if it continued.

“I think it’s the first step in Moscow’s and Beijing’s strategy to take
over Indochina and intimidate Thailand into leaving SEATO. They’ve already infiltrated the northeast provinces here and kidnapped a few villagers.”

“Why are they doing this now?” David asked. “They’ve been relatively quiet for five years.”

“Quiet, maybe, but not inactive,” Barlow responded. “I’m sure Hanoi has pressed Moscow and Beijing for years to give them the arms they need to finish what they were denied in 1954: victory in South Vietnam and reunification of the country. Hanoi had to accept a half loaf at Paris because Moscow wanted to pursue détente with Washington. Moscow at that time needed time to sort out its leadership transition after Stalin died.”

“Does Hanoi have the power to take over South Vietnam?” David asked.

“Not if we give the Diem government our full support. But Vietcong guerrillas in the south have infiltrated the countryside, and Diem now has trouble holding them back. We think Moscow gave Hanoi a green light to start a campaign against South Vietnam this year and to take over Laos. We may be in for a difficult time in Thailand.”

On March 22 news dispatches from Washington reported that President Kennedy had appeared on radio and television to warn the Soviet Union that if it did not use its influence to restrain Pathet Lao forces in Laos, the United States would act to protect its interests in Southeast Asia. Part of the purpose of the president’s dramatic appearance on television was to educate the American public about the strategic importance of Laos and of Southeast Asia. If Communist forces succeeded in overthrowing the Laotian government, he said, Thailand and South Vietnam would be targets for Moscow’s and Beijing’s designs on Southeast Asia.

The embassy distributed to its officers a summary of a secret speech that Khrushchev had delivered in January to the Soviet Party Congress. In it he pledged Moscow’s support for “wars of national liberation” in order to advance the cause of international communism in the underdeveloped parts of the world. It seemed to support the embassy’s view that Moscow was behind the Pathet Lao offensive.

A few days after President Kennedy’s warning to Moscow, the embassy learned that a company of American marines, with helicopters, had been airlifted into Udorn in northeast Thailand and that the U.S. Air Force and Navy in the Far East were being placed on alert. The 240 marines landed at a small airfield outside Udorn early one morning, without prior notification by the Thai government to the local governor. An embassy officer was dispatched to explain to him why his province suddenly was host to American troops who were already setting up a base camp on the airfield. This was a tense period, and most American as well as Thai officials seemed convinced that a much larger American force was on the way to help stop
the Communist offensive in Laos. Within a week, the Pathet Lao push in Laos was halted, and no additional American troops came to Thailand.

Chester Halloway was the U.S. Embassy’s public affairs chief and David’s boss. A former newspaperman who had been with the U.S. Information Service for fifteen years, Halloway had strong views on the Communist threat to Thailand and Laos, as well as on what the U.S. government should be doing about it. David talked with him about the implications of Kennedy’s warning to Moscow.

“Will this show of force get the Communists to back off in Laos?” David asked.

“I doubt it,” the USIS director said crisply. “Khrushchev is testing the new president. Kennedy is inexperienced in foreign policy, and he has to rely on a bunch of new people who don’t appreciate that Moscow and Beijing are subverting Southeast Asia and plan to put local Communists in power out here.”

“Will we have to put troops in Thailand to stop it?” David asked. “Eisenhower and Dulles guaranteed Thailand’s security under SEATO.”

“It could be. Khrushchev is heating things up in Berlin, and we may have to beef up our forces in Germany. Southeast Asia is a place where we’ve never had troops before. My guess is we will engage in a lot of saber-rattling.”

David’s impression of his new boss was that he was a hard-liner in foreign policy, what some might call a “cold warrior,” who believed that Southeast Asia would become the new battleground in a renewed Cold War period in East-West relations.

In April the Pathet Lao offensive against Vientiane resumed. The embassy waited for a military response from Washington. The Thai government, headed by Marshal Sarit Thanarat, the top military man, was convinced that the Kennedy administration would follow through on its warning to Moscow and send troops to the Thai-Laotian border. The Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG) headquarters, located on Sathorn Road in Bangkok, was the center of intense activity during this period.

The focus of U.S. government interest in Laos took a sudden turn in April when the world learned that a CIA covert operation to help anti-Communist Cubans invade Cuba and overthrow the Fidel Castro government had ended in disaster, with serious damage to President Kennedy’s reputation. After what became known as the “Bay of Pigs debacle,” Washington advised the embassy that the White House was no longer planning to use force to confront Communist forces in Laos. The president was reported in the press to have observed that if he couldn’t solve a Communist threat only ninety miles from Florida, he was not prepared to use U.S. troops to stop another one halfway around the world. As a result, he opted for negotiations aimed at achieving a coalition government in Laos that included the Communists, and Assistant Secretary of State Averell Harriman
was directed to undertake this mission. The sudden reversal in U.S. policy stunned the Thai government and dismayed both American embassy and JUSMAG personnel.

A few days later David had occasion to call on Thanat Sarasin, a Thai professor of politics at one of Bangkok's universities. The two men had met in January when David was making his initial calls at universities, and David found Thanat to be more candid than most Thais in expressing political opinions. Perhaps, he concluded, it was because Thanat had received a Ph.D. from Princeton University and had learned there to engage in frank conversations. The two men first discussed ways of getting books on American history and politics translated and published in the Thai language. Then Thanat asked, “Were you surprised that your president decided against using force to stop the Communists in Laos?”

David chose his words carefully, because the embassy’s official line was that negotiations would produce a satisfactory solution to the political problem in Laos.

“I was a little surprised. But sending the marines to Udorn did put them on notice that we would intervene to prevent the fall of Vientiane. Now negotiations can take place, and we’ll see whether a satisfactory solution is reached.”

“Some of us think Mr. Kennedy got cold feet when his plan to invade Cuba failed,” Thanat responded. “The real question is whether he will defend Thailand if our own insurgents get support from the Russians. What do you think?”

“Thailand is a full member of SEATO,” David answered with emphasis. “Laos is not. Laos is a landlocked country, and the president decided that we should not get involved with troops in its civil war. I agree with that. But I have no doubt that we would honor our commitment to defend Thailand.”

When David was ready to leave, Thanat remarked, “I think we’re seeing the beginning of a much bigger problem in Southeast Asia. Let’s hope you’re right about the SEATO commitment.”

In June the Bangkok World, one of two English-language dailies in Thailand, carried the news that President Kennedy and Soviet Chairman Khrushchev were meeting in Vienna to try to negotiate their differences over policy in Berlin and Germany, nuclear arms, and the situation in Indochina. A correspondent for the New York Times reported a few days later that the two leaders had had heated discussions and that Khrushchev had tried to intimidate Kennedy into making concessions. When he returned to Washington, the president reported to the American people that his several meetings with the Soviet leader had been sobering and that the United States needed to prepare for difficult times in its relations with Moscow.

Press reports from Washington said that the president was shaken by
Khrushchev’s bullying tactics and believed it would be necessary to strengthen U.S. military power and to adopt tougher policies around the world. Some commentators suggested that Kennedy appeared weak to Khrushchev, who had concluded that his handling of the Bay of Pigs episode in Cuba meant that he could be pressured to make concessions on Germany. David and Helen heard from a friend in Virginia that people were being encouraged to build bomb shelters on their property because of the threat of war.

Later that summer Khrushchev tested Kennedy again by erecting a barrier between West Berlin and the Soviet sector of the city, which soon became known as the Berlin Wall. The United States, France, and Great Britain, which had postwar occupation rights in Berlin, protested this unilateral Soviet action. But it was clear that the Kennedy administration had no intention of using force to prevent a permanent division of Berlin.

When they heard the news, David commented to Helen, “If we were in Berlin right now, there’d be no visiting in the east. I hear they’re building a wall right across the Brandenburg Gate.”

“In fact,” Helen said, “East Germany is becoming a prison camp.”

“That’s true, and this sure puts an end to détente in Germany. I wonder what Martin is saying about all this?”

The American marines were withdrawn from Thailand in the summer of 1961, but the military aid mission, JUSMAG, was greatly expanded. Air America, a CIA-sponsored airline, increased its operations out of Udorn and used helicopters to maintain contact with anti-Communist forces in Laos and help monitor Communist infiltration into northeast Thailand. The CIA station in Bangkok also expanded its assistance program among the hill tribes of northern Thailand and Laos, most of whom were fiercely independent and willing to work with the Americans against Communist insurgents.

Surang Pratachai, like most Thais, was known by his first name. A medical doctor trained in the United States, he befriended David and sponsored him for membership in the Bangkok Rotary Club, which was made up of Thai professionals and businessmen as well as senior civil servants. It also had a sprinkling of foreign diplomats. Surang took a skeptical view of Thailand’s politics but was careful, as were most Thais, not to voice them publicly. Fundamentally, he disliked the military-led government then in power but conceded that the country needed strong rule. Prime Minister Marshal Sarit was not a ruthless leader, he said, as some generals had been in the past, but neither was he prepared to allow much dissent or freedom of speech. Surang was active in the Thai-American Society and occasionally visited the United States to attend medical meetings and to keep in touch with the medical school at Columbia University. Over lunch in July, he asked David what he thought about the country after living there six months.
"It's a fascinating place. Helen and I spent a good bit of time in Europe before coming here, and we weren't sure what to expect. We are intrigued by your architecture and culture and the friendliness and easy way you conduct your affairs. And you Thais have a great sense of humor."

The doctor smiled. "Don't let the friendliness and the easy way of life mislead you. This country is facing a lot of trouble."

"How so?" David asked, a bit surprised.

"Under this surface feeling of calm, there is much disaffection among the peasantry in the countryside, and among workers in Bangkok. You've been in Korat. Couldn't you see the primitive conditions up there? The prosperity in Bangkok is not reaching people in the provinces. They listen to the Communist infiltrators who say that they will make life much better when they come to power."

"I thought Sarit had things pretty well in hand."

"This government is full of corruption," Surang continued. "Every senior officer has his hand in the till, as you say. A lot of your military and economic aid ends up in their bank accounts. The peasants in the countryside don't benefit."

"Are you saying that the insurgency in Laos will spread to Thailand?"

"It already has," the doctor replied. "The one thing that holds the Thai people together and may get us through this period is the monarchy. Did you know that our king comes from a dynasty that is older than your country?"

"Yes, I knew that. And I agree that's an advantage you have over your neighbors. It was the wisdom of your King Mongkut in the last century that saved Thailand from being taken over by the British, wasn't it?"

Surang smiled and said, "That's right, and the monarchy is the one institution that Thais can agree on—the peasants, the military, and the educated people. Also, our Buddhist heritage is strong. What we need is democracy. I hope we can move toward it soon."

In October 1961 David visited the USIS post in Udorn, in the northeast part of Thailand. He wanted to see how his office in Bangkok could support George Ritchie, the local USIS information officer, in his contacts with local officials and schoolteachers. David stayed with the Ritchies in their modest house and got an excellent briefing from them and a local American economic adviser on political and economic conditions in this area of the country not far from Laos. They also drove in George's jeep to several villages.

David was stunned to see how primitive the living conditions were and how backward the peasants seemed to be. For the first time he understood why Communist infiltrators, who came from these areas and often knew the villagers, were able to spread their propaganda without serious opposition.

Ritchie also took him to the Air America facility at the airport on the
edge of Udorn. As they waited in the terminal for a meeting with the airline's manager, David looked around at the pilots and crew members, who wore clothes that looked similar to Marine Corps fatigue uniforms except that they lacked markings. After watching these healthy young Americans for a few minutes, he remarked, "It looks to me like the marines never left Udorn this summer."

George smiled. "Nobody here but us chickens." They both laughed. The fliers were ex-marines now working for the CIA.

George arranged for a flight by Air America helicopter the next day to a remote village about forty miles away where he wanted to deliver materials that had been translated to a new school library that USIS had helped establish. The village headman and the school mistress gave a modest reception, with the teachers present. David was impressed by their friendliness and by the obvious pleasure they took in having Ritchie visit them with a guest. On the helicopter trip back to Udorn, David looked down on the miles of dense forests and tiny hamlets below and wondered how the Thai leadership in Bangkok would keep the loyalty of these poor people if more of the wealth being spent in the capital was not soon dispersed in this political battleground sector of Thailand.

Early in 1962 the embassy was informed by Washington that President Kennedy had decided to provide much more military and economic assistance to South Vietnam to help it combat growing Vietcong subversion, and to Thailand, which was seen as a frontline ally in the struggle against Asian communism. Thailand's military-dominated government expected to get a large increase in U.S. aid, particularly military equipment, and additional U.S. military advisers were scheduled to arrive soon.

Reports from Washington indicated that the National Security Council had recommended launching a major aid effort to prevent South Vietnam from falling under North Vietnam's control and to thwart Hanoi's efforts in Laos. Vice President Lyndon Johnson had visited Southeast Asia in 1961 and strongly recommended to President Kennedy that the United States commit itself to the defense of South Vietnam. He reportedly said that if the United States did not stop the Communist menace in Southeast Asia, it would eventually have to do so on American territory.

General Maxwell Taylor, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), visited South Vietnam in late 1961 and came to a similar conclusion. President Kennedy's humiliating experience in Vienna, when Khrushchev had bullied him on the Berlin issue, had apparently persuaded him to take a tougher stand on a range of foreign policy issues. If Khrushchev was using Vietnam as a testing ground for his new "wars of national liberation" doctrine, it appeared in 1962 that Southeast Asia would be a major battleground in a renewed Cold War.

David's job as chief cultural affairs officer entitled him to a place on
the board of the Fulbright Educational Exchange Commission in Thailand. He met regularly with an impressive group of Thai academics and government officials as well as a representative from the American embassy. This group selected Thai graduate students for scholarships in the United States, an award that was highly prized and was a guarantee of success when the grantee returned home with an advanced degree. The Fulbright Alumni Association was an influential group in Thai educational, cultural, and professional circles, and membership on its board gave David entrée to Bangkok’s educational elite.

The Fulbright Board occasionally traveled to other countries in Southeast Asia for the purpose of “exchanging ideas with their local boards,” as the Thai chairman liked to say. On one visit, in 1962, David went to the Philippines, the only Asian country where the United States had established a colonial relationship after the Spanish-American War in 1898-99. On his return to Thailand, he spent two days in Saigon to meet his counterparts at the USIS headquarters and see something of South Vietnam, which was quickly assuming a major importance in U.S. strategic planning. Saigon looked to him like a lovely, tranquil city which the French had laid out during their colonial period. The city was linked by wide, tree-lined streets with their beautiful villas and gardens. Unlike Bangkok, Saigon had few cars and many motorbikes. Flowing white skirts gave the Vietnamese women a gracefulness that foreigners viewed as enchanting.

David was captivated by Saigon’s charm and serenity. Under the leadership of President Ngo Dinh Diem, a nationalist seen by most South Vietnamese as a legitimate leader, the city of Saigon seemed both stable and prosperous. The American presence, although noticeable, was not overwhelming even though Saigon was much smaller than Bangkok. There was no evidence that he could see of the Communist subversion and insurgency that was reportedly spreading rapidly in the north and threatening to split the country in two.

Dorothy Wyman, the American cultural affairs officer and David’s counterpart in South Vietnam, hosted a luncheon in his honor. He had met her at a conference in Bangkok the year before, when she invited him to visit Vietnam to assess its security problems for himself. Several South Vietnamese educators and the director of the national museum joined them for a Vietnamese meal. David concluded that the Vietnamese understood English better than they spoke it, were more reserved than the Thais, and seemed more serious in their conversation. Thais liked to joke and play with words, whereas these Vietnamese were almost somber by comparison. French rather than English was their second language. Dorothy spoke it fluently and did some translating during the table conversation. David learned that Vietnamese students usually went to France for graduate work.
when they finished their undergraduate education. Dorothy said that South Vietnam’s Fulbright program sent a small number of young scholars to the United States, and she introduced Dr. Tran as one of them. He was a lecturer in economics at the University of Saigon and had received his Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley.

After lunch the group moved into Dorothy’s spacious living room with its high ceiling and its slowly circulating electric ceiling fans. Most houses in Saigon, as in Bangkok, had no central air conditioning, but the fans were usually enough to relieve the heat and humidity. David asked the group about the security situation in their country.

“Things are improving,” Tran replied, “but the Vietcong are making much propaganda against the government.”

“Are people listening to them?”

“In the countryside many do, because they have a hard life. The Communists promise a better life for peasants if they join the movement. If a teacher or a village elder criticizes them, they might be killed. They are scaring people into joining them.”

Dorothy said that although Saigon appeared to be tranquil, she thought that some students who had participated in recent protests against the government were Vietcong members. But students were considered in a special class, she said, and the government was reluctant to arrest them for fear of arousing public anger.

“These are idealistic young people who think Vietnam should rid itself of all foreign influences,” Tran added. “They think it was good to force out the French eight years ago. Now they complain about the American presence.”

“I understand that sentiment,” David responded. “It happens whenever a foreign presence is too large in a country.” He remembered his experience in Iceland where many Icelanders viewed American servicemen at Keflavik as a threat to the country’s independence.

“Do you think our presence here today is too large?” David asked.

“Not now, Dr. Bruening. But you must understand that Ho Chi Minh and the Communists got their start because of reaction against French colonial rule. It would not be good if people thought you Americans were replacing the French.”

On the way to the airport, he asked Dorothy her opinion on the U.S. military presence in South Vietnam.

“There are a lot of American uniforms around the embassy and the JUSMAG headquarters,” she responded. “I don’t know if it’s too much. We also see more Americans in the aid mission’s office. Many are here for a big training program we have for the local police. I’m a little worried that we take Vietnamese politeness as evidence that they want our military presence.”
"What about President Diem?" David asked. "Is he a good leader?"

"Diem is seen by most people as a Vietnamese nationalist who wants a country that is not run from Hanoi. But if people think he is bowing to American pressure, they could turn against him. That's what Ho Chi Minh is counting on. If we're portrayed as the new colonial power, he thinks he'll win."

During the next five years, as the United States intervened militarily in Vietnam, David recalled this first visit to Saigon and his conversations with the Vietnamese educators and Dorothy Wyman.

In Bangkok that spring the American embassy was gearing up for a major counterinsurgency propaganda campaign to help persuade villagers in northeast Thailand to support the anti-Communist Thai government. Chester Halloway called his USIS staff together for a briefing on what Washington and Ambassador Yeager wanted done. He invited Major Dan Whitely from JUSMAG to brief the staff on U.S. support for the Thai government's counterinsurgency drive.

"We have a big new mission here, folks," the director declared as he opened the discussion. "The Commies are taking over in Laos, and they are turning up the heat in Thailand. They know they can't take Bangkok or the major towns, so they are going after the villages in the northeast. They use every propaganda trick in the book to persuade the poor peasants to throw in their lot with them. They murdered a few village leaders who spoke against them."

"How will this affect our operations?" asked Randy Reynolds, the information officer who supervised USIS media programs.

"It means your whole shop, press, radio, films, and publications will now focus on the Communist threat to Thailand and our determination to stand behind our SEATO ally. We are going to give full support to JUSMAG's role in support of the Thai military's operations to combat subversion." He then asked Major Whitely for a rundown on his needs.

"Thanks, Chet," he replied in a crisp military manner. "I'll brief Randy and his staff separately. But I want to say here that we have a whole new situation in Thailand. The president has decided that the United States will make a major effort to prevent the spread of communism in Southeast Asia. We have our marching orders from Secretary McNamara, and we will expand our support operations all over Thailand, especially in the northeast. We appreciate the help we've had from USIS in the past. Now we will work even more closely with you to accomplish our mission here."

David asked Halloway what changes he wanted to make in the cultural affairs operation, such as the exchange-of-persons program and the USIS libraries.

"Your culture shop is going to be part of this campaign, Dave. I want
to see more effort among professors and students and the cultural community to ensure that they have books and films and other materials that carry the message about the Communist threat in Thailand. I want the USIS libraries to feature books and magazines that hit hard on the Chinese threat to Southeast Asia. I’d like to get more books with a political message translated into Thai and placed in the schools. And we are also going to send more teachers to the States for education, especially to the new East-West Center in Honolulu. You folks in the culture shop are going to be missionaries in this anticommunism crusade.”

David recalled a similar staff meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, in 1955 when the embassy had asked USIS to help sell the American military presence to the Icelanders. The difference was that David was now the cultural affairs officer, not the press officer. His colleague Randy Reynolds had told him a year earlier that Halloway didn’t have much regard for the programs of what he called “the cultural shack.”

“He’s been a newspaperman all his life, Dave, and his views are pretty well fixed,” Randy said. “He doesn’t have much use for philosophy and conceptual stuff.” He had been right, David concluded.

After the meeting David talked with Ken McIntyre, the deputy USIS director who had been cultural affairs officer before being promoted. He and Ken had gotten along well together, and he wanted Ken’s view of the new situation and his own role in it.

“The State Department and the Pentagon got the word from the White House that we’re now on the front line in the defense of Southeast Asia,” Ken observed. “The ambassador gave Chet specific instructions to get USIS behind this program. I think he wants to impress the White House with his political activism.”

“Okay, Ken, I get the message,” David smiled. “But let me know what programs you and he think we should cut. I’ll certainly do my part on the publications side.”

Sometime later it was announced that Ambassador Yeager would host at his embassy residence a reception for about two hundred Thai village leaders who would be in Bangkok for orientation and counterinsurgency training by the Thai Interior Ministry. Yeager wanted these village chiefs to understand that the United States fully supported their government’s program. Bringing them to the American embassy for food and drink and a pep talk was part of the new U.S. role, and he wanted all embassy and USIS officers to be present and mingle with the guests. It didn’t matter that most of the Americans did not speak Thai. David was skeptical about the idea.

“I don’t understand why he’s doing this,” he told Helen as he dressed for the reception. “This is a Thai government program. Most of these villagers will wonder why the American ambassador is butting into something their prime minister is doing.”
“Maybe he wants to show that the United States supports Sarit’s counterinsurgency program and lend it the embassy’s prestige.”

“I doubt that,” David replied. “He wants to impress the White House with his gung-ho spirit. He doesn’t seem to appreciate that he’s adopting a colonial attitude. Somebody told me the other day that people are chuckling over the fact that the American ambassador has his picture in the press more often than the king. They think he’s acting like a viceroy. I’m glad the Thais have a sense of humor.”

“You’d better be quiet about those views,” Helen cautioned. She was right, of course, and he kept his doubts to himself.

The party was held on the huge outdoor patio of Ambassador Yeager’s residence, which was lighted by torches attached to long poles. It was the largest crowd David had seen there. He could not help noticing how short the Thai villagers seemed by comparison with the Americans and even with many other Thais. They seemed somewhat bewildered by the surroundings. Only a few spoke a little English. Embassy officers who spoke Thai gathered the guests into groups and introduced the other Americans. Most of the Thais didn’t know what an embassy was, and it was soon apparent that most of them had never drunk whiskey before, because those who did quickly showed its effects. Others drank beer and stayed in better shape. Everyone smiled and seemed pleased that the Americans were trying to talk with them through interpreters.

David learned from one man who came from Nakorn Phanom that Communist groups of four or five visited his area about once a month. Speaking the local dialect, they promised the people a much better life when they succeeded in eliminating the corrupt government. He said his people didn’t care about politics, but they were afraid of the Communists.

After half an hour of eating, drinking, and talking, the scene became quiet as a young embassy officer stood with a microphone on a raised platform and said in fluent Thai that the American ambassador wished to welcome them. Yeager took the microphone, spoke a few sentences in halting Thai, which the audience seemed to appreciate, and then switched into English. His message was translated at intervals by the embassy officer.

“Your government has brought you to Bangkok to tell you about the great danger that Thailand faces from Communist infiltrators who are supported by Communists in Laos and Vietnam. These people want to destroy your country. The American government supports your government’s efforts to stop this Communist plan to take over Thailand. I want you to know that President Kennedy will stand by America’s ally. We will give you whatever support you need to help you defend your country. I bid you a warm welcome.”

It was a straightforward message of support for the government, but David wondered what Thai officials thought about the affair. The next day he asked Ken McIntyre’s opinion.
"Good food and good whiskey," Ken laughed. "I don't think it did any harm."

"But doesn't it look like Americans are taking over the counterinsurgency campaign in Thailand?"

"Well, isn't that exactly what we're doing?" the USIS deputy director asked. "Of course we're running this program and telling everyone we're supporting the government's efforts. It's like a lot of other things we do out here. We Americans really do think we know what's good for other people, you know." David noted the sarcasm and smiled.

Early in October 1962, he and Helen were preparing to host a dinner party in their large, beautiful garden. It was a lovely evening, and torches surrounding the area illuminated the tropical trees and flowers. Eight card tables were situated around the lawn with glassed-in flickering candles at their center. Antimosquito coils were placed under the tables and gave off an odor that kept thousands of the tiny insects away in the evening. The three children, who had dressed up for the occasion, expected to meet some of the guests. The first to arrive was Dr. Surang Pratachai, David's Bangkok Rotary friend, who came a bit early and greeted him excitedly.

"What do you think about the news, David?"

"What news?"

"President Kennedy was on American radio and television this afternoon and warned the Russians to get their missiles out of Cuba or there will be war."

David was stunned. "My God," he exclaimed. "What happened?"

"I heard it about an hour ago," Surang said, wide eyed. "Kennedy says the Russians secretly built missile bases in Cuba last summer and that one of your U-2 spy planes discovered them about five days ago."

"This is very serious," David said. "I wonder why he waited five days to alert the world to the crisis? Maybe he wanted to verify the photographs and give himself time to decide how to respond. But why in the world would Khrushchev do such a risky thing?"

Ten minutes later Jack Thompson from the embassy's political section arrived. David pressed him for details.

"We could be at war anytime," Jack said. "Several of us need to get back to the embassy. I'll leave early, if that's okay."

During the next week the embassy and JUSMAG were on a state of alert. David and other USIS officers watched a tape of President Kennedy's address to the nation regarding the Cuban missile crisis and concluded that the president would not back down in the face of this threat to U.S. territory. The real question was whether Khrushchev could retreat.

"How serious is it? Are we going to war?" Helen asked.

"Nobody seems to know," David told her. "We're just waiting for developments. The military is on alert around the world." He paused and
then added: "If we were in Washington now, we'd be talking about evacuation. At least being in Bangkok puts us half a world away."

A few days later the crisis eased when Moscow agreed to withdraw the missiles and the United States pledged not to invade Cuba. Things returned to normal, and the crisis soon seemed very far away. Only when they returned to Washington the following summer did they learn what a traumatic experience the crisis had been for many people who lived near the capital. The wife and children of one of their neighbors had been evacuated to a remote site in West Virginia because her husband, a high official in the Justice Department, had moved to a secret command post.

Press commentaries from the States asserted that the crisis had ended on U.S. terms because the United States had a preponderance of military power and because President Kennedy had convinced Khrushchev that he would use it if necessary to get the missiles removed from Cuba. The Soviet leader had grossly miscalculated Kennedy's response and suffered a humiliating defeat. President Kennedy, on the other hand, won wide acclaim from the NATO allies for his handling of the crisis, and his personal prestige soared. After his humbling foreign policy experiences in 1961, John Kennedy emerged as the victor in his political struggle with Nikita Khrushchev.

David's parents arrived for a month-long visit shortly after the rainy season was finished at the end of October. Herbert had married Martha two years after David's mother died, and they were now on a round-the-world trip. They joined Helen and David in attending a formal ball sponsored by Thailand's king and queen to celebrate Loi Kratong. This was an annual ceremony that involved sending candle-lighted miniature boats down the klongs (brooks and streams) of Bangkok to wash away the wrongs people had committed during the year. The pavilion where the ball was held was dazzlingly beautiful, and all the guests were dressed in formal attire.

On another occasion the Bruenings watched the royal barge procession from the stands on the shore of the great Chao Phya River. This was a spectacular parade of long, ornately painted boats, perhaps a dozen in number, each propelled by two dozen chanting oarsmen. The center boat had a large canopy and carried the king and queen. It was probably the greatest tourist attraction of the year in Bangkok, and David was happy his parents could see it.

Early in 1963 David got approval from Ken McIntyre to take two weeks' naval training duty in Manila. He had been promoted to lieutenant commander after completing naval correspondence courses, and this seemed a good time to get away from Bangkok and see something of the U.S. Navy in the Philippines. Two weeks at the naval station at Sangley Point, in Manila Bay, also provided time to think about his career. When he reported for duty, he was aware, as he had been in Washington when he first joined the naval
reserve unit there in 1952, how much he enjoyed being a part of the U.S. Navy. He also had a chance once again to wear his tropical whites, which he considered the best-looking uniform of any branch of the military.

On the weekend David played golf with several of the senior officers with whom he had worked during the week. They were curious about developments in Thailand.

Commander Vince Leonard said, “We have the impression that Thailand and South Vietnam are the big dominos for the Kennedy administration. How does it look from Bangkok?”

“That’s about how we see it,” David responded. “The Thai government signed on with SEATO to get protection from Hanoi and Beijing. If we don’t deliver, I think they’ll do what Sukarno is doing in Indonesia, adopt a neutralist policy.”

“Hell,” Leonard said, “if the Thais pulled out of SEATO there’d be no alliance. The Filipinos have no choice because they are so tied to us economically and militarily. But the Thais have a choice.”

“What’s more,” David added, “Thailand won’t stand with us if we abandon Laos. That’s their buffer against China and Vietnam.”

“If you’re right,” interjected George Kintner, a lieutenant colonel in the marines, “the White House has no option except to defend South Vietnam and Laos. If we don’t, we’re out of Southeast Asia, right?”

While in Manila, David decided that he wanted to write another book, one that described the growing East-West conflict in Southeast Asia. His book on Iceland had dealt with NATO’s security problems with that Scandinavian country. The new one, he speculated, could deal with the SEATO commitment to Thailand and the U.S. role there. A major question was how to do research and write the book while supporting his family. He could take another assignment in Washington, but he remembered how difficult it had been to write a dissertation while working full time. He needed a research grant, one that would allow him to work full time on this project.

The possibility had first presented itself a month earlier when Robert Carrington, an official of the Rockefeller Foundation, was visiting Bangkok. David had been assigned to make contacts for him in the Thai universities, and he and Helen showed him the major sights in Bangkok and entertained him at home. Carrington expressed interest in David’s views on Thailand’s politics and foreign policy, and he remarked in passing that if David was interested in doing a study on Thailand, he should send him a proposal.

That evening as he walked along a boulevard that looked out on picturesque Manila Bay, David made his decision. Instead of returning to the hotel, he walked to Sangley Point Naval Station, checked in with the security guard, and sat down at his desk to draft an outline of his proposed project. The next day he sent it off to the Rockefeller Foundation in New York. He had no idea whether anything would come of it, but three weeks later he got a reply from Carrington who said another official from his
office would be in Bangkok the following week and would discuss the project with him. The interview went well, and David understood that there was a possibility of his getting a grant for the next academic year.

When the letter arrived at his USIS office in mid-April, he hesitated to open it. When he did, he was elated to learn not only that he had received a Rockefeller grant for ten months, beginning in September, but that he could use it either at the University of Michigan or at the University of California at Berkeley.

Helen was as excited as he was. “Spending a year in California would be just great,” she exclaimed. David knew she would prefer the San Francisco Bay area to Ann Arbor, particularly in winter. That evening the whole family celebrated and talked about what it would be like to live in California.

Before leaving Thailand, David had an exceptional opportunity to lead a team of USIS-sponsored Thai media people on a moviemaking expedition to development projects in northeast Thailand. It was part of the embassy’s program to inform Thailand’s peasant population of their government’s work on behalf of the provinces. Chester Halloway also meant to produce a Thai language booklet with photographs of the projects. They would then be distributed in every village in the north and northeast parts of the country. Ken McIntyre invited David to head the project and suggested that it would give him experience in rural Thailand. “It might even be useful in writing your book when you’re at Berkeley,” he added.

The week-long trip by train, bus, and U.S. Army helicopter turned out to be the highlight of David’s assignment in Thailand. Tern Thamarat, his chief Thai assistant, went along as his interpreter and trip coordinator. Khun Tern was a tall, gray-haired man in his fifties, and David learned more from him about Thai culture and customs than from anyone else. The two men had earlier formed a warm personal relationship, and Tern was usually present at all of the Bruenings’ social functions. On this trip he earned respect wherever they went because of his good manners and his excellent use of the Thai language. The team visited a dozen villages, took many photos, and interviewed local Thai officials as well as nurses in prenatal clinics, teachers in schools, village headmen, and agricultural specialists sent out from Bangkok. They stayed in rather primitive quarters in several towns and ate in local cafés. Although David was careful about what he ate, and drank only bottled water, he still contracted amebic dysentery that remained undiagnosed until his return to Washington in July.

As they headed back to Bangkok from Ubon by overnight train, he and Tern discussed the week-long expedition. David commented, “Those people are really poor by Bangkok standards. It will be a big job for the government to counter the Communists’ line, that life will be better after they get rid of the government. It’s a lot like the problem in Vietnam.”

Tern was thoughtful. “But we have a big advantage over the Viet-
namese. We have a royal family that goes back two centuries. These villagers may not care about the government in Bangkok, but they revere their king and queen."

"But how do you use the monarchy to counteract Communists?" David asked. "They argue that the government is corrupt and that the king has no power to change things."

"That's true," Tern said. "But the king is gaining prestige. I think Marshal Sarit and the others have to listen to his views. That's our hope for Thailand."

One of the most interesting and enjoyable experiences Helen and David had during their tour in Thailand was a reception at the exquisite Thai house of M.R. Kukrit Pramoj, perhaps Thailand's most famous writer and an advocate of democracy, at a time when the military ruled the country. Kukrit was a distant member of the royal family and a descendant of King Mongkut. He had been educated at Oxford, as were many members of Thailand's royalty.

The occasion for this reception was the premier of a new Hollywood movie, The Ugly American, in which Kukrit played the prime minister and Marlon Brando had the role of the American ambassador. Brando was the guest of honor that evening. The festivities included an extraordinary display of Thai classical dancing by the famous classical ballet school, where Helen had taught spoken English during the previous year. There were over a hundred guests at this affair, which was held by torchlight in Kukrit's enchanting garden. About half the guests were Thais. The others were members of the diplomatic and foreign business community.

The following evening, The Ugly American had its premier showing in Bangkok's largest theater, with the king and queen present. Ambassador and Mrs. Yeager were also there. As David and Helen watched the film, which was based on William Lederer and Eugene Burdick's book about the U.S. role in trying to save a Southeast Asian country from communism, Helen whispered: "It sure sounds a lot like the situation here, doesn't it?"

The next day the press quoted Ambassador Yeager as saying afterward, "There but for the grace of God go I."

Before they left Thailand in June 1963, Kukrit Pramoj invited the Bruenings to dinner at his house along with Harry Farley, head of the Asia Foundation office in Bangkok, and his wife, Kitty. The Thai writer took great pleasure in showing them photos of himself with Marlon Brando and other members of the cast of The Ugly American. He had enjoyed being an actor so much, he said, that he wanted to do another film. Kukrit was fated to perform a more significant role in Thailand in the 1970s, however, when he became its prime minister and led his country toward a more democratic form of government.

The Bruening family returned to the United States in June 1963 by way of
the Near East and Europe. They visited Egypt, Lebanon, Greece, and Jordan, which at that time included Bethlehem and the ancient eastern sector of Jerusalem. They also visited David’s cousins in Nurnberg, whom they had not seen since 1955.

Martin and Anna Bruening now owned a new town house with a lovely garden in a suburb of Nurnberg, where David and his family stayed. The reconstruction of the old walled city was all but complete, and in other parts of Nurnberg many new shops and apartments had been opened. Little Volkswagens were everywhere, but the larger Mercedes was also very much in evidence. Most traces of the war’s destruction that had been apparent on David’s earlier visits had all but vanished.

Martin, now a judge on the high court for Bavaria’s northern region, was an important person in legal circles. He was also very active in St. Sebald’s Lutheran Church, where the American and German Bruening families attended Sunday service together. Helen, David, and the three children received a personally guided tour of the Nurnberg castle, now fully restored. Martin happily showed them through the reconstructed rooms and escorted them onto the balcony where he and his cousin had stood eighteen years earlier to view the ruins of the old city. Martin identified the various churches and other landmarks in the distance, including the Dürer House, a museum honoring Nurnberg’s famous artist.

“We love this old city,” Martin said with emotion. “In spite of the destruction in the war, we rebuilt it to resemble the original design. We wanted Nurnberg to look like the historic city.”

They traveled the next day to the nearby town of Furth, where Martin’s uncle Walter and his family now lived in their own house. It had been returned to them in 1959, when the Bavarian government no longer needed it to accommodate American officials. Walter showed them around his spacious home and large garden, which he and his wife had purchased in the 1930s. He spoke somewhat bitterly about the confiscation.

“They should not have taken the house from us in the first place. I was never part of the Nazi Party, but that didn’t matter when they needed our home for the American lawyers who came here for the war crimes trials.”

“Why not look at it this way, Uncle Walter,” David replied. “How many Germans do you know whose houses were destroyed in the bombings? Your house wasn’t damaged at all, and now you’re living in it again. That’s something to be thankful for, isn’t it?” The older man remained silent.

On their last evening, after a fine dinner that included German champagne, Martin asked whether the Cold War would end, following the Cuban missile crisis.

“It’s hard to say,” David replied. “But things seem to be quieter in Europe. And the situation in Berlin has calmed down. Moscow has even agreed to a nuclear test ban treaty.”
"You’ve been in Thailand for nearly three years," Martin continued. "I’ve read that President Kennedy is building up U.S. forces in Asia. Is it dangerous there?"

"The Chinese and Vietnamese are putting a lot of pressure on these countries, including Thailand, and are having some success."

"But surely America isn’t going to get into an Asian war, is it? Your real interests are in Europe, aren’t they?" Martin asked, with emphasis.

"We have important interests in Asia," David responded. "I don’t know if we’ll get into a war there. Before we went to Bangkok I thought we would not repeat the kind of armed intervention we had in Korea, but now I’m not sure. If President Kennedy decides to take a stand against the Communists in Asia, Vietnam is a logical place to do it."

The next morning, after Martin and Anna had driven them to the airport, Uncle Walter appeared. He had walked the four-mile distance to say good-bye and told David that he appreciated his words about the return of their house. He agreed that he was luckier than many Germans. It was the last time David and Helen saw Uncle Walter.

During the summer of 1963 the political situation in South Vietnam deteriorated sharply. Buddhist monks began to protest the government’s policies, and the Diem government moved aggressively against them. Diem and his family were Roman Catholic, a legacy of the French colonial period, and the family’s domination of South Vietnam’s politics was widely resented because the important government jobs went to Catholics. By 1963 the American media were highlighting the government’s jailing of opposition politicians and other incidents in Saigon, including the self-immolation of a Buddhist monk on a main street.

Critics in the United States began to question the Kennedy administration’s support for a repressive government in Saigon. Frederick Nolting, the American ambassador, considered Diem the only true nationalist leader able to hold South Vietnam together. In Nolting’s view, if Diem were ousted with U.S. complicity, his successor would probably be viewed as an American puppet. Nolting’s recall to Washington in the summer and his replacement by Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., a well-known Republican, thus signaled a change in U.S. policy on Vietnam. President Kennedy seemed ready to have the U.S. military play a more direct role, a fateful decision that subsequently cost President Diem his life in a military coup carried out in Saigon with U.S. backing.

David and his family spent a month in Washington before crossing the country by train to Berkeley, California. During that time David worked at USIA headquarters and consulted with people both in that agency and in the State Department about the situation in Thailand. He also talked with Kitty Wendelend, his personnel officer, because he was concerned about the performance evaluation he had received from Halloway.
“You and he didn’t see eye to eye on a number of things, did you?” she said, smiling. Kitty was in David’s navy reserve unit in Washington and had helped him get the assignment in Bangkok three years earlier. She expressed disappointment that things hadn’t worked out as well as she and he had hoped.

“Halloway wasn’t my kind of guy, Kitty, and I guess it showed. How much will it hurt me in the future?”

“Well, it will delay your promotion even though others, including Ken McIntyre, say you did a good job out there. But in your next assignment, you need to have a boss who’s more like you, someone with education who looks at longer-term issues.”

“And how do I find a boss like that?” he asked, looking depressed.

“When you finish up in California, I’ll find something here in Washington for you. It’s good that you have that Rockefeller fellowship. It puts you in a special category and gives you credibility as a policy-type person.” David recognized good advice from a good friend.

The trip across the country extended the family’s educational tour on their way home from Bangkok. Traveling together brought the family closer than they had been in Thailand, where Helen and David were often gone in the evenings. By the time they reached San Francisco, David felt rested and excited about his new life at the University of California. They rented a small house in a scenic section of North Oakland, and David set up a study in the small recreation room downstairs, which also served as Jenny’s bedroom. He spent the first few months attending seminars and faculty presentations and conversing with scholars at lunch in the university’s large faculty club. By December he began writing about Thailand’s foreign policy and continued to write for five months.

Late in November while he was gathering research notes at home, an announcer broke into the regular radio program to report from Dallas, Texas, that President Kennedy had been shot and was in the emergency room at a local hospital. David called Helen into the room. The two of them remained fixed in front of the television for an hour. Eventually a report confirmed that the president was dead and that Vice President Lyndon Johnson would be sworn in immediately. Like other Americans, the family was stunned. When the children came home, they had already heard the news. Jenny and Jodie couldn’t understand why anyone would have wanted to kill the president. The assassination shattered the mood of optimism that had prevailed in Washington during John Kennedy’s last year in office.
The family left California in July 1964 and returned to Washington where, on one typically hot summer day, David had lunch with Bill Beatty, a USIA policy officer. They discussed David’s next assignment and Beatty asked whether he might like to spend a year or two at the Pentagon.

“Sounds interesting, what’s the assignment?” David responded.

“The agency is sending three people in your grade to help the Military Services teach democracy to foreign officers who are being trained in the States. It’s Bobby Kennedy's idea. He thinks they ought to get an appreciation of American democracy while they’re here.”

Beatty was a senior member of USIA’s office of plans and policy and had responsibility for setting up the new program at the Defense Department. He knew that David was a naval reserve officer and thought he might be the right person to fill the navy slot. Bill emphasized that the program was an extension of USIA’s overseas operations, that it sought to introduce foreign officers to the idea that in America the military is subject to civilian authority. David, who had once taken two weeks’ training duty in the office of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and was familiar with its operations, told Beatty that he would be very interested in the job.

After an interview at the Pentagon, he was offered the assignment. He was in good spirits when he described it to Helen that evening. “It’s a chance to start something new, and I’ll be working with very good people on the CNO’s staff.”

“That sounds wonderful,” she exclaimed. “Will you get a promotion?”

“I hope so. The people who interviewed me were great, and they said the program has a high priority. It sure looks more promising than the Bangkok assignment turned out to be.”

David reported for work in OPNAV on the fourth floor of the massive Pentagon building, on the Virginia side of the Potomac River. The walk from the north parking area took about fifteen minutes, half of it outdoors and the other half along the building’s long, labyrinthine corridors. David
was surprised to find most of the offices quite crowded. In July 1964 nearly thirty thousand people worked in the Pentagon, which had been completed in 1943 and was designed to house about two-thirds that number. Part of the cause was a large increase in the size and influence of the Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD), which Secretary Robert McNamara had instituted to give himself greater control of the Military Services.

Captain Robert Kelsey, David’s new boss, was a branch chief and was therefore entitled to his own small office. He greeted David warmly on his first morning at work and explained the office procedures. Kelsey was an Annapolis graduate and had seen action in the Pacific during both World War II and the Korean War. A quiet and friendly officer with the professional bearing of the “trade school,” as the Naval Academy was known, Kelsey at once made a favorable impression. David concluded that his own experience in Thailand and at USIA would be put to good use in the Foreign Officers Information Program (FOIP), as the high-priority project was called.

In August 1964, a few weeks after David started work in the Pentagon, an incident occurred off the coast of Vietnam, in the Tonkin Gulf, that proved fateful for America’s involvement in Vietnam’s civil war. A navy destroyer, the USS Maddox, was attacked by North Vietnamese PT boats in international waters. Although the ship was not hit, President Johnson used the incident and another, less certain one several days later, as pretexts for launching an aerial attack on North Vietnam’s shore facilities. A week later the president asked Congress for a strong resolution of support for military operations to halt North Vietnam’s aggression in Southeast Asia.

Known as the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, this measure was rushed through Congress with limited debate and won overwhelming support in both the Senate and House of Representatives. Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon, one of the few dissenters, warned that U.S. military involvement in Vietnam would enlarge the war and would eventually bring America’s defeat. His view was dismissed by the White House as alarmist. Senator William Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had doubts about the wisdom of giving the president unlimited authority to use force in Southeast Asia, but he was persuaded by Secretary of State Dean Rusk and the White House that a show of unity in Washington would prompt Hanoi to halt its drive to conquer South Vietnam and instead accept the formal partitioning of the country. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara told President Johnson that at a maximum, the United States could win the war in South Vietnam with about 200,000 military forces based not only in Vietnam, but also in Thailand. Despite the favorable vote in Congress, the news media responded with rising skepticism to Washington’s rhetoric about Vietnam’s being a vital national interest and to its prediction that a Communist victory in Vietnam would mean eventual communism in all of Southeast Asia, and perhaps even in Japan.
The Johnson administration in 1964 was expanding U.S. military and economic aid to South Vietnam. That country was now ruled by a group of military officers following a coup and the subsequent murder of President Diem in 1963. None of these military leaders possessed the legitimacy of an elected leader, so Secretary McNamara, who had taken charge of U.S. operations in South Vietnam, visited the country and sought to build support for the military-led government. David uneasily recalled his luncheon conversation in Saigon two years earlier when the discussion had turned to the size of the American presence in South Vietnam.

That August, while the family was on vacation at Linwood Beach in Michigan, David talked about politics and the situation in Vietnam with his father.

"Why are we getting involved in Vietnam?" Herbert asked. "I don't see any reason for us to be there. Do you?"

David found it was a tough question. If he had not spent nearly three years in Thailand and traveled widely in Southeast Asia, including South Vietnam, he too might not have seen any reason for a major American involvement in Vietnam's civil war. But his experience plus his knowledge of international politics led him to conclude that a superpower could not ignore a serious threat to the balance of power in this highly strategic area in Southeast Asia and in the Southwest Pacific, which included Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand.

"I don't think we can walk away from Vietnam, Dad. I doubt if Thailand would survive as a non-Communist country if Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia were under Hanoi's control. Thailand accommodated to Japan in 1942. I think the Thais would ally with China if we pulled out of Vietnam."

"But why does the United States always have to put our troops in these trouble spots?" Herbert protested. "Why can't the British and French do more?"

"Because the French were defeated by the Vietnamese in 1954 and decided to wash their hands of their colonial mess. The British have their hands full in Malaysia and Singapore, trying to prevent Indonesia from getting control over that strategic area. The Brits give us diplomatic support, but they don't want to get involved militarily in Vietnam."

Herbert persisted. "We have so many problems in this country that I don't see how we can also solve the problems of Asia. Look at the problems in our cities and the rising crime here. Kennedy's assassination has made people think our country is in serious trouble at home."

"I know, Dad. But we are a great power. A lot of countries around the world depend on us to keep the peace. If we ignore a serious Communist challenge in Vietnam, why would any other Allied country trust us after we gave our word that we would protect it?"

David had heard the same theme in Washington, at the Pentagon, the State Department, and the White House. "America is the leader of the Free
World, and it must honor its commitments," Secretary of State Dean Rusk had said repeatedly. America's commitment in this case was the Southeast Asia Defense Treaty, which it had signed in 1954 to reassure Thailand and the Philippines that the United States would defend them against Chinese and Vietnamese efforts to subvert their governments. Although David did not yet realize it, he had embraced the prevailing view in the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations that America's vital interests were engaged in Vietnam and that force might have to be used to defend those interests.

The navy assignment gave him an opportunity to see parts of the United States that he had not visited before—in Virginia, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Florida, California, and Washington State—where the navy had training programs for foreign officers. His meetings with U.S. and foreign officers gave him a new perspective on the regions outside the "Washington Beltway." Early in 1965 David made two trips abroad with Captain Kelsey, to Japan for a training conference and to Berchtesgaden in the German Alps for a similar meeting. On his way home he visited Munich and was astonished at the dynamism of that Bavarian state capital, which was becoming an industrial powerhouse in West Germany. He was similarly surprised by Tokyo. Clearly, he thought, American postwar policy on the rebuilding of Germany and Japan had been productive and wise. Both were now good allies of the United States.

That November a second Bruening son, Jeremy, was born on the first anniversary of President Kennedy's death. They were now a relatively large family, with four healthy children, all of whom were to play an important role in helping their parents understand the remarkable events that would occur in the United States and the world during the next thirty years.

Early in 1965 David learned that his book on Thailand's foreign policy would be published. He had completed it before they left California the previous summer, and work on page proofs now consumed much of his time, even when he took navy training duty that spring.

"How ironic," he thought, "that I should be writing the epilogue to a book on Southeast Asia while taking training duty on board this giant aircraft carrier off Norfolk, Virginia!" The USS Independence was preparing for its first deployment to Vietnam, and its air crew practiced both daytime and nighttime takeoff and landing operations. It was David's first experience on a carrier, and it convinced him of the professionalism of the Navy Air Corps, which he had once aspired to join. He talked with the officers from the ship's company as well as the pilots and learned that they expected to be in combat in Southeast Asia within a few months.

After learning of David's expertise on Southeast Asia, the ship's executive officer invited him to give a couple of lectures for the ship's crew to explain the area's history and strategic importance to the United States.
His presentations were made over the public address system and reached many of the ship's four thousand personnel.

That weekend, while writing the last few pages of his book, he concluded with the observation that the American public, when it voted in future elections, would make the final decision on whether the U.S. government had been right about intervening in Vietnam. Three years later, its negative verdict was made.

Opposition to U.S. intervention in Vietnam grew rapidly on American college campuses in 1965. The press was reporting from Saigon that South Vietnam was on the verge of collapse. President Johnson had to decide whether the United States should try to prevent the forcible takeover of South Vietnam by the Communist North Vietnamese regime. The situation was not unlike the one that had confronted President Truman in June 1950 when North Korea invaded South Korea. In Vietnam, however, there was no clear demarcation line between north and south, and a large proportion of South Vietnam's population seemed willing to join the Communist cause. Although the Johnson administration portrayed the conflict as involving two separate countries, in reality Vietnam was engaged in a civil war. David thought at that time that the United States should not abandon the South Vietnamese to the Communists, but he harbored doubts about the wisdom of a massive military intervention, which would in effect establish an American protectorate in Vietnam. "Would the American public and Congress accept the responsibility that such a protectorate entailed?" he wondered.

By June of 1965 David knew he had learned all he would in the CNO's office, even though he enjoyed working with Captain Bob Kelsey. He needed a new challenge and hoped that it would be in the Pentagon because he realized that was where the action in government was that year. He had made some contacts in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). One day a friend asked whether he would like to work for the assistant secretary for International Security Affairs (ISA). This was the political-military affairs staff of OSD and was often referred to as the "little State Department." It was staffed with carefully selected senior military officers, many of whom were being groomed for promotion to general and flag rank. It also had a few senior civilian staff officers, experts on certain countries and special programs, such as arms control and military assistance programs. Working there was an intriguing prospect.

Through a contact with a faculty colleague at the University of California in Berkeley David met with Henry Randall, a political appointee in ISA who was interested in his book on Thailand. After Randall read part of the manuscript, he offered to recommend him for a job in ISA.

In mid-July 1965 David joined the Far East region of OSD/ISA with responsibility for Indonesia, Malaysia/Singapore, Australia, and New
Zealand. Captain Joe Draper, a senior navy officer, had the responsibility for Thailand and would keep the assignment, so David took over a new area of responsibility and welcomed the chance to handle Indonesian affairs. President Sukarno was leading a group of nonaligned nations that were at that time denouncing American and Soviet imperialism. By 1965, moreover, Sukarno was moving into a closer political relationship with Hanoi and Beijing because, he calculated, communism seemed to be in the ascendancy against Western interests in East Asia. The huge area known as Southwest Pacific, southward from Vietnam and Thailand, was of high strategic importance to the United States after President Johnson decided that summer to escalate American involvement in Vietnam.

Ten days after starting his new job in ISA, David watched the president in a televised address advise the American people that he was sending about 175,000 combat troops to South Vietnam to help defend its territory against a North Vietnamese supported insurgency, then threatening to overthrow the government in Saigon. When the president had finished his brief address, David turned to Joe Draper and asked his opinion.

"It's taken a long time for us to get to this point," Draper commented. He had served as the senior U.S. navy adviser to Vietnam's fledgling navy until 1964 and knew how bad the security situation there was. "I just hope the president puts enough force in there to do the job. Anybody who thinks this will be over soon is crazy."

Colonel Chris Melton, another colleague, headed the small Vietnam team whose offices were near David's. They were working fourteen hours a day handling all the decision papers on Vietnam generated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and addressed to the secretary of defense. The Far East division of ISA consisted of only a dozen or so officers plus secretaries and was the Pentagon's key policy center for the Vietnam War. Charles Blackman, a navy rear admiral, was in charge of this division and reported to the assistant secretary of defense for ISA and his deputy for the Far East, both of them political appointees. All the members of the Far East division were either senior military officers or career DOD civilians.

As the Vietnam War escalated that summer, all the members of the staff were heavily involved in directly supporting the military effort in Vietnam and in obtaining support from other countries. In David's area, Australia agreed early on to send substantial forces, and New Zealand sent a small detachment. Malaysia and Singapore, which had strong ties to Great Britain, supported the war effort diplomatically and also permitted the use of their territory for training and for rest and recuperation (R and R) for U.S. troops. But Indonesia was adamantly opposed. President Sukarno condemned U.S. military intervention and gave diplomatic support to North Vietnam and China. During that summer Sukarno organized massive anti-American demonstrations in Jakarta and threatened American interests in the region.
Martin Griffin, the American ambassador in Jakarta, later showed David where a mob of radicals had broken into the compound of the embassy residence. "They were ready to sack my home when their leader called them back," Griffen said. It clearly was dangerous for an American to be visible in Jakarta at that time. Some years later when David and Helen saw the film The Year of Living Dangerously, a story about the Communist-staged anti-Western demonstrations in Jakarta in 1965, he recalled the perilous political situation that existed there that summer. Indonesia was then a country of 160 million people whose loyalty was firmly commanded by their charismatic leader, Sukarno. And the powerful Indonesian Communist Party, PKI, was poised to take over the government with his blessing.

Dealing with the State Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff was one of ISA's principal roles, and David found this an interesting part of the job. His State Department counterpart was James Usher, a seasoned Foreign Service officer with experience in Indonesia. David's colleague for Australia and New Zealand affairs was Ralph Sundberg, another officer with wide experience in Southeast Asia. Both of them were quietly resentful of the Pentagon's growing influence on U.S. policy in Asia. David had an advantage over his military and civilian colleagues in ISA, however, because he had served in the State Department and in two U.S. embassies abroad—one in Iceland and another in Thailand. He didn't fit the State Department stereotype of Pentagon staff: tunnel vision and military minds that seemed to care little about international law and diplomacy. Sundberg had worked with the U.S. military in an earlier assignment and generally took their views in stride.

"Doesn't the military teach these guys anything about domestic politics in a democracy?" Sundberg asked, half laughing as they discussed a JCS proposal for an expanded role in Australia.

"That's their job, Ralph," David replied. "They're trained to think in terms of security and defense, not the history and politics of Australia. That's why McNamara has ISA as a buffer between State and JCS."

"Well, you understand what the diplomatic constraints are. We don't just go and make demands on allies and expect them to jump because some colonel in your planning staff thinks it would be nice to have another facility."

Usher was even more caustic. Unlike Sundberg, he had not worked with the U.S. military. His major responsibility was Indonesia, the largest and most strategically placed country in Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific. When David called or went to see him with an initiative that had come from either the JCS or the navy, Jim often grimaced and asked what the latest Pentagon "wish list" was all about.

A particularly sensitive issue was the navy's demand that it be able to exercise its right of "innocent passage" under international law to sail warships through the Sunda Strait, a narrow body of water separating Sumatra and Java, without notifying the Indonesian government. Sunda
was one of the most direct water routes between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean and had considerable strategic and commercial importance. Navy captain George Weber, from the CNO’s politico-military affairs staff, came by one day to persuade David of the navy’s point of view. He knew that David had taken training duty on that staff the year before and hoped that he might be sympathetic. David’s impression of Captain Weber was that he was a sharp, aggressive officer with strong conservative opinions. He was not easily swayed by counterarguments.

“Dave,” he said as he drew a memorandum from his briefcase, “we want to exercise our right under international law to sail a couple of destroyers through Sunda without notification.”

“That means we don’t tell the Indonesians when or what kind of ships, right?”

“You got it. State says we must at least give the Indonesian navy a courtesy notification when we’re going through. We don’t agree. That’s caving in to a pro-Communist government.”

“If it’s not a formal request, why is the navy objecting?” David asked, knowing the answer.

“Because Sunda is an international waterway under international law. Sukarno’s declaration that Sunda and Lombok are territorial waters doesn’t change their status. Unless we occasionally sail without any notification, we risk de facto recognition of his claim.”

It was a sound legal argument, David agreed. But the State Department did not want to make relations with Indonesia even worse by sending warships close to its shores and, in fact, daring Sukarno’s troops to fire on U.S. ships.

“I'll talk to Usher about it, George. But you guys sure pick the tough times to propose gunboat diplomacy. I don’t think you’ll win this one. Frankly, I can’t recommend to Sec Def [Secretary McNamara] that we stir the pot in Indonesia when we are escalating our role in Vietnam.”

“Give it your best shot, old buddie,” Weber concluded. He knew that he would not achieve his objective, but the talk had served his purpose: it let ISA and the State Department know that the navy took a special interest in Indonesia and that it should not be forgotten in the diplomatic maneuvering then going on.

Since it was a navy matter, David decided it was prudent to check it out with his immediate boss, Admiral Blackman. Even though all military personnel assigned to OSD were in theory detached from their respective services, the network among army, navy, and air force officers was important for finding out what was going on in the vast Pentagon bureaucracy and also for getting things done. Senior officers were acutely aware that their next assignment depended in part on how well they kept their service chiefs informed on what the assistant secretaries and their staffs in OSD were thinking.
“Admiral, you should know about the navy’s initiative on the Sunda Strait issue. They want to send ships through without any notification. I told Captain Weber that there wasn’t much chance we would change the courtesy notification policy but that I’d discuss it with State. Was I right?”

“You were. The navy has to go through the motions once in a while of letting Sec Def know they care about it. You should mention it to Usher, but no need to push this one. If someone higher up in CNO is behind this, I’ll hear about it.”

On the morning of October 1, 1965, as he drove from his home in McLean to the Pentagon, David heard a news report from Jakarta that would transform his job over the next three years. The Indonesian Communist Party, together with elements of the Indonesian air force, dissident army units, and marines, had staged a brutal coup attempt during the night and murdered eight top army commanders, most of whom had been trained in the United States. Early reports said that a young general named Suharto had rallied enough loyal troops in the capital to turn back the attack on government buildings.

When David arrived at his office, there was an urgent call from Admiral Blackman who gave him his marching orders. “This news is very important. You are now the principal action officer for the Indonesian crisis. Your job is to be on top of everything that’s happening and get that word to Assistant Secretary McNaughton and me. The White House wants to know what’s going on and what we should be doing. You need to get down to the National Military Command Center [NMCC] right away and get briefed on the latest intelligence, especially on where the American citizens in Indonesia are located and what it might take to get them out if this turns into a civil war. One more thing. McNaughton is arriving at Andrews [Air Force Base] tomorrow morning at 6:30. You will be there to brief him so he is up to date when he meets with McNamara. Do you have all that?”

“Yes, sir. But I don’t have a pass for NMCC.”

“Just go down to the River Entrance [to the Pentagon]. Look for a sign and a couple of guards at the desk. They have your name and clearance. Just show your ID. And report back to me this afternoon. I’ll follow things from up here.”

It was an exciting two weeks. The next morning, a Saturday, David met Assistant Secretary McNaughton’s plane and briefed him in the limousine on the way to his home in Georgetown. David carried a notebook of classified intelligence reports as well as a copy of the Washington Post, which featured the Indonesian revolt on the front page. McNaughton, who had been a law professor at Harvard before joining the Defense Department in the Kennedy administration, glanced quickly through the material and then fixed his gaze on his new staff officer.

“Who do you think was behind the coup?”
"I think the Communists did it with the help of Sukarno. But they acted too soon, before their people were ready, because they heard Sukarno was seriously ill."

"Any indication that the CIA had a hand in it?"

"Not that I can see. But they may have planted the story that Sukarno was ill."

"Okay, keep me informed," the assistant secretary instructed him as the limousine pulled up to the front of his house. "I'm keeping a tennis date this morning and will be at the office in the afternoon. Henry will drive you back to the Pentagon."

Admiral Blackman invited David to breakfast in the flag officers' mess, an exclusive dining room at the Pentagon that had been set aside for admirals and their guests. He was interested in McNaughton's reaction and smiled when David reported that he would be in his office after a tennis match.

"He's a great tennis player, you know. I guess he didn't think Indonesia was important enough to upset his schedule this morning. But he'll have to focus on it this weekend, because the President wants McNamara's assessment at the Tuesday luncheon in the White House." President Johnson typically met with his inner circle of NSC officials at the White House on Tuesdays at noon.

David recounted his conversation in the car and asked why McNaughton would inquire about CIA's role. Blackman laughed and said their boss suspected the CIA of having had its hand in everything in Southeast Asia and that the Indonesian situation was ready-made for covert operations. He then added, "By the way, Dave, you'll be spending time out at Langley, getting all the information they have regarding what the Indonesian army is going to do—assuming that it crushes this revolt and installs a new government. We are very interested in improving our relations with the country, and the army is our best way of doing it."

"Do I have clearances for the CIA?" David asked. He had never been inside the agency's headquarters at Langley, Virginia.

"You do now, and they will listen to what you have to say because they need DOD support for the covert operations they'll want to undertake. The White House coordinates all this, but DOD has a voice in any presidential decision on these activities."

When they returned to their office, the admiral became very serious. "This turn of events in Indonesia is very important to our whole policy in the Far East right now. As we build up the forces in Vietnam and Thailand in the next months, we need to have a friendly Indonesia on the southern flank. If the Indonesian army takes over control of the government, with or without Sukarno, we should do everything possible to get the military to work with us, not against us as Sukarno has done."
"We trained many of their top army officers, didn’t we?" David asked.

"That’s true, but I think they will find it hard to cooperate openly with us at first. Sukarno propagandized the country for ten years to make people believe that the British and Americans were their enemies and that China and the Soviet Union were their friends. He talked of getting a sphere of influence over Malaysia and Singapore, even the Philippines, after the British and Americans were forced out of Southeast Asia. It’s going to be difficult to turn that psychology around quickly."

That afternoon David wrote a memorandum to McNaughton, through Blackman, summarizing the situation in Jakarta and recommending that DOD be ready to evacuate American citizens on an urgent basis if the political situation deteriorated into civil war. He had talked with Jim Usher at the State Department and learned that Secretary Rusk wanted elements of the navy and marines, then at Danang in South Vietnam, to be moved to Indonesian waters to evacuate hundreds of Americans if violence threatened them.

The outcome of the October 1 affair in Indonesia was never in doubt once the army units rallied to General Suharto’s command. After the Communist leaders were arrested, the Indonesian population went on a rampage and murdered about 250,000 people in Java, most of them members of the PKI. Reports from journalists as well as the embassy told of a bloodbath. Hundreds of bodies were seen floating down rivers. Thousands of people were found slaughtered in their houses. It soon became clear that President Sukarno was deeply implicated in the coup attempt, although his knowledge of its details, including the murder of the generals, was not clearly established. The new army-led government was careful not to accuse the president directly but instead gradually restricted his travel and his public appearances. His influence waned sharply, and he died the following year, a broken man.

The Indonesian episode gave David an education in foreign policy crisis management. It brought him into contact with Secretary McNamara and Cyrus Vance, his deputy, as well as with top officials in the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency. He also met occasionally with staff officers of the National Security Council (NSC) who kept close watch on the unfolding political turnaround in Indonesia.

In mid-October the NSC decided to provide the new government in Jakarta with emergency assistance of every kind. This was intended to impress on its leaders that the United States was prepared to support them in the restoration of order so as to move the country away from its relationship with China and the Soviet Union, which had provided equipment to its air force and navy.

Early in 1966 David accompanied Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Ronald Sturgess on a visit to Indonesia to get firsthand knowledge
from Ambassador Martin Griffin and from Colonel Vince Edsel, the
embassy's defense attaché, on the current situation and on what DOD might
do to help them. One problem was that the Indonesian generals wanted to
deal only with the Pentagon and they practically ignored the State Depart-
ment. The ambassador found himself in an awkward situation, because
Colonel Edsel had far better contacts with the new power structure than
any of his State Department's officers did. David and Ron Sturgess also
met with the CIA's station chief, as well as the ambassador, and were briefed
on intelligence data from before and after the October 1 Communist coup
attempt. David formed a high opinion of both the defense attaché and the
station chief. Washington was fortunate, he concluded, to have a high cali-
ber "country team" in Jakarta at that crucial time.

On returning to Washington, David reported his impressions to Ad-
miral Blackman. DOD needed to convince the Indonesian generals, he said,
that because they now controlled the government, they should work
through normal State Department channels to secure economic and mili-
tary aid. General Hamzah, the Indonesian defense attaché in Washington,
understood the need for the new procedure, but he told David it was not
easy to change the habits of the new team in Jakarta: "They are happy
dealing directly with the U.S. military," he explained.

As the war in Vietnam escalated in 1966 and 1967, the principal task of the
staff in the Far East Region of ISA was to get more support for the war effort
from other Asian countries. For domestic political reasons President Johnson
needed to demonstrate that the United States was not carrying the burden in
Vietnam alone. South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, and
Thailand openly supported the U.S. policy and agreed to send military con-
tingents that would "show foreign flags," as the White House wanted. Japan
supported U.S. policy but was not asked to send troops. Taiwan was willing
to send forces, but such an operation would have provoked China and per-
haps triggered its direct intervention. Malaysia and Singapore took a pos-itive stance on U.S. policy but did not offer troops.

Indonesia too declined to be involved in Vietnam after the army as-
sumed control of the government in 1965. Privately the generals told the
U.S. embassy that they hoped North Vietnam would be defeated and that
the growing Chinese Communist threat in Southeast Asia would be halted.
But Indonesia's national interest, forcefully articulated over sixteen years
by Sukarno, following that country's independence in 1949, was nonalign-
ment. The new government did not alter this stand, even though it began
to cooperate more closely with the Americans and the British. The Johnson
administration accepted this position and approved a sizable economic and
military aid program for Indonesia.

By autumn 1967 American combat forces had been in South Vietnam
for two years, far longer than McNamara and most of his staff had anticipated. The White House was increasingly impatient. Negotiations to end the conflict had all failed because of Hanoi's insistence that all American troops must be withdrawn from the south. Each time a secret negotiation failed, the NSC would persuade President Johnson to send more troops and intensify the bombing of North Vietnam. However, massive bombing failed to stop the flow of supplies and reinforcements down the Ho Chi Minh Trail, through Laos and Cambodia, to the Vietcong forces fighting in the south. Meanwhile, more Americans were being killed. TV photos of body bags intensified U.S. public opposition to a continuation of the war, and protests were growing on college campuses across the United States. Despite the optimistic claims of McNamara and President Johnson, there seemed to be, as critics charged, no end in sight to the loss of American lives "half a world away." Until the summer of 1967, David felt reasonably confident that American firepower would eventually force Hanoi to abandon its campaign to unify Vietnam under its control. But as American casualties mounted, with none of the light that Secretary McNamara had once foreseen appearing "at the end of the tunnel," David began to wonder how long the American public would continue to support the war effort.

In August 1967 President Johnson, in exasperation that none of his peace initiatives had produced a cease-fire in Vietnam, made the decision to allow bombing close to the Chinese border in order to destroy the overland supply route to Hanoi. The ISA staff was beginning to split between those who thought the war could not be won and those who believed that Hanoi could be defeated by more intensive bombing, including the targeting of major cities. The latter view was supported by air force and navy carrier officers, whereas many army officers were concluding that the war could not be ended without an invasion of North Vietnam, an option that was politically unacceptable to the White House.

The policy struggle among the U.S. Military Services intensified. The commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific (CINCPAC) was an admiral and a carrier pilot who strongly believed that airpower would be the decisive element in ending the war. General William Westmoreland, the U.S. commander in Vietnam, an army officer, was convinced that the war would eventually be won on the ground if he was given up to 700,000 men, a figure far in excess of anything that Secretary McNamara and the JCS had contemplated in 1965. The reality in late 1967 was that North Vietnam had sustained enormous casualties and destruction but nevertheless continued to fight and defend its strongholds in South Vietnam. The war was all but stalemated militarily, but President Johnson was not willing to end it on Hanoi's terms.

There had been signs that policy on Vietnam was being critically reappraised in late 1966 when Colonel Michael Walker, U.S. Army, was as-
signed to take over ISA's Vietnam group. Walker, a West Point graduate, had been in combat in Vietnam and was also a veteran of World War II and Korea. He had led U.S. troops in their first encounter with North Vietnamese forces at Indrang Valley in September 1965. When he arrived on duty in the Far East Region, everyone knew that his views on Vietnam were derived from the battlefield, not from a desk in Saigon or Honolulu or Washington. Pentagon statistics on how well the war was going failed to impress Walker. Those who worked with him didn't realize at first that he had serious doubts about the United States' policy in Vietnam. He believed that "winning" there would probably involve taking large, and politically unacceptable, casualties. Walker had a direct, professional, and friendly manner that David instinctively liked, and the two of them struck up a friendship during the colonel's year in ISA.

An office party given by one of the ISA staff officers early in 1967 provided the opportunity for David and Walker to discuss the latter's experiences in Vietnam and his appraisal of the war. They took their drinks, left the dining room, and sat on the stairs, where there were fewer people and less noise. After Mike had spoken about conditions in the countryside in Vietnam, David asked what he thought about the mounting American casualties.

"You know, Dave, all this was predictable a year ago. I came out of Nam with this strong feeling that the North and the Vietcong would never give up. Never."

"Regardless of the punishment? From the air and the ground?"

"Those guys don't think or fight the way we do. It's a holy war for them. Dying for their country is honorable. The French couldn't beat them after eight years of trying."

"We could beat them if we invaded the North and captured Hanoi, couldn't we?"

"Probably. But we won't do it because our casualties would be much higher. And the president doesn't want to bring the Chinese into this war the way MacArthur did in Korea. We're still living in the shadow of the Korean experience, you know."

"What about the people who say we should unleash our airpower, that we haven't gone after the cities and the dams and the industrial targets in the North?" David asked.

"Airpower has never won a war by itself. Maybe the atom bomb on Japan. But not conventional bombing. It didn't work in Germany or Korea. You have to take territory in order to get a decision."

"Okay, Mike, what do you guess is going to happen?"

"I think we'll have to withdraw eventually because the public won't stand for an endless war. And the North won't negotiate until we agree to withdraw."
“That means Johnson will have to admit we failed?”

“We’ll probably have to settle for the best deal we can get. That’s not going to look good to the Allies or to Congress.”

Later, as David and Helen drove home, he said, “I’m beginning to realize how serious things really are in Vietnam. It’s not good news.” He related what Walker had told him and Helen agreed with David’s pessimistic view.

One of the State Department officers whom David came to know during this period was Perry Newlon, who was then in charge of Philippine affairs. Perry had served in Vietnam in the 1950s and had a broad knowledge of Vietnamese history and culture. They had first met fifteen years earlier when both men worked in the State Department’s Office of Intelligence and Research, where Perry did extensive research on Southeast Asia. Although he was now director of Philippine affairs, he had earlier been the State Department’s Vietnam desk officer in 1963 when President Kennedy made the fateful decision to “save South Vietnam from communism.” He was one of the few officials in 1965 who had counseled against sending U.S. troops to Vietnam, from a conviction that nothing short of a U.S. invasion of North Vietnam would deter Hanoi. His career suffered because of his persistence in this view. When the two of them met for lunch in the huge State Department cafeteria in the fall of 1966, David asked Perry whether he still felt strongly about Vietnam.

“Dave,” he responded with emotion, “I feel more strongly now than I did last year when I helped staff the memos that George Ball sent to the White House arguing against sending troops. Time has already showed how right we were. Nothing we’ve thrown at the North has stopped the flow of material moving to the South. These people ousted the French in 1954. They are convinced that we will get tired of this mess and leave.”

“But Perry,” David interjected, “the French were there as colonialists. We went at the request of the South Vietnamese to stop Hanoi’s aggression. Are you saying they equate us with the French?”

“Dave, Vietnamese nationalists, and most of them are nationalists, don’t see much of a difference. These people are not going to give up their dream of ridding the country of foreigners. If we were really serious, we’d have to invade North Vietnam and kill so many of them that they wouldn’t have enough people left to send south. It’s that simple.”

It was a sobering assessment from a veteran Foreign Service officer who had opposed American military intervention in Vietnam and been overruled.

The Bruenings spent two weeks of the summer of 1967 at Linwood Beach in Michigan. While they were there, David and his father discussed the Vietnam War and the changing climate of U.S. public opinion. Under
Herbert’s questioning, David admitted that he was less sure than in their previous discussions that the war could be won, even with the nearly half a million U.S. forces who were then in Vietnam.

David also had a chance to talk with two old friends in Saginaw. One of them was Jim Shuster, a high school chum whom he had met accidentally in Germany in 1946 and with whom he had kept in touch. Jim, a prominent lawyer, had been elected to several terms on the city council. Now, as mayor of Saginaw he had assumed a major responsibility for rehabilitating the city’s decaying downtown area. Before they went to lunch, Jim took David on a tour of the site where a new civic center was being constructed with the help of federal funds.

“This is probably the most important project Saginaw has ever undertaken,” Jim said as they walked around the construction area. “If it succeeds in getting more people to shop downtown, we’ll save Saginaw as we once knew it. If not, this whole downtown area will be vacated by the store owners. They’re already thinking about moving to a suburban mall.”

At lunch they talked about another growing problem that was causing business to leave downtown Saginaw: violent crime.

“You have no idea, Dave, what these recent shooting incidents are doing to people here. Everyone is scared of being mugged downtown. A lot of it is drug related. It’s also true that a lot of it is done by a few blacks who live in the downtown area. As a result, people from the suburbs don’t want to shop here because they think they’ll get robbed, or worse.”

“And you think your civic center can turn it around?”

“I sure hope so,” Jim sighed. “It’s an impressive place and should attract sports events and cultural productions. We’ll have plenty of protected parking for people who don’t want to be here after dark. We’ve got to convince the people that it’s safe here.”

Another old friend was Glen Baker, who had also remained in Saginaw and was now the editor of the Saginaw News. He too expressed concerns about mounting crime and the decline of American cities.

“This country of ours is facing a serious internal crisis, Dave,” said Glen earnestly. “The Vietnam war is part of it. People just don’t know why Johnson hasn’t been able to end it. It’s sort of like Truman in 1952. People concluded he couldn’t end the Korean War.”

“Do you agree with Jim’s worry about the rise in violent crime?” David asked. “Is it true that it’s a racial thing?”

“I’m afraid he’s right. It’s kind of a vicious circle. Our black population has lived right next to downtown Saginaw for many decades. It wasn’t a problem until the militants got into the picture and drugs became prevalent. When whites saw what was happening, they sold their nice homes here and moved to the suburbs. And that made things worse because the stores were losing customers and many were broken into. The new civic
center may be a great cultural attraction, but I'm not at all sure it will bring the shoppers downtown again and keep the businesses here. It's really sad."

Afterward David shared with Helen his sense that mounting domestic problems were fueling increasing public antipathy to U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

"Twenty years ago when I returned home from Germany, which was in ruins, Saginaw was bustling with energy. Now the place seems to be going to hell in a handbag."

"Saginaw is not alone, you know," she remarked. "A lot of cities are going through this."

When the Bruenings returned to Virginia in August, an unexpected opportunity presented itself. Professor John Sutton, chairman of the political science department at George Washington University, invited David to teach a course there.

"One of my professors decided to be away this fall, and I need someone to do his course on American foreign policy. Sorry for the short notice, but are you interested?"

"I might be if I can teach it at night," David responded.

"I know you're very busy, so I propose that you teach one evening a week, on Tuesdays. You can organize the course however you wish."

David mulled over the idea and talked with Helen and several people at his office. It would be a lot of work and not much compensation. But it would be good teaching experience, and he would be in contact with bright students at a crucial time in American foreign policy.

Helen was enthusiastic. "You know, Dave, with all the anti-Vietnam activity on college campuses these days, I think it would be a great time to teach a course on foreign policy."

David needed approval from his office, which was granted readily because the class did not meet during his working hours or involve classified information. In fact, his boss thought it was a good idea. "Maybe you can counter some of the nonsense those liberal instructors are handing out to students," he commented.

David knew that "working hours" was an ambiguous term in ISA and that he might have a problem if urgent matters had to be dealt with on a Tuesday evening. Sutton understood and suggested that he alert the class in advance. As it turned out, he was late only once during the term. Of the twenty-four students enrolled in his course, well over half said they opposed American involvement in Vietnam. This time was also the beginning of the "cultural revolution" on college campuses and David noticed early in the semester that half a dozen students seemed to be on drugs. Several of them were lively conversationalists, making for exceptionally interesting, sometimes humorous, class discussions.
The course consisted of lectures on the history and organization of U.S. foreign policy as well as specific issue areas, with a special emphasis on the Vietnam conflict. At first some students were skeptical about whether David, a Defense Department official, could be objective. But he eventually persuaded them that he was. They read his book on Thailand and discussed its findings. After a month of discussing foreign policy issues with the class, David found himself reassessing his own assumptions about the reasons why the United States had sent troops to Vietnam.

A particularly serious event occurred in Washington in October 1967 when several hundred thousand demonstrators, most of them students, held an anti-Vietnam War rally on the Mall in front of the Lincoln Memorial. The Defense Department was alerted in advance that there would be a march on the Pentagon and that the radicals would try to force their way into the building. DOD personnel whose presence was not absolutely essential that day were told to stay at home. A cordon of armed U.S. troops was placed around the Pentagon and its entrances were reinforced by additional soldiers prepared for violence. It was a dangerous confrontation. Many demonstrators taunted the soldiers for hours at a time in a way that made observers wonder how the soldiers could maintain their composure.

The *Washington Post* and television carried pictures of protesters pressing close against the troops, who stood stolidly at attention with rifles ready. Some students placed flowers in the barrels of their guns. The air was thick with the smell of marijuana, and the noise was deafening. A few radicals managed to penetrate one side entrance to the Pentagon, but troops stationed inside quickly forced them outside. Many observers thought it a miracle that no casualties occurred. When David went to work the next day and walked toward the Pentagon, he was astonished to see that cleanup crews had already removed most of the massive amount of debris from the grassy area in front of the Mall entrance and an adjacent parking lot. When he entered the building and showed his pass to the guards, things seemed to be normal. As he made his way to his fourth floor office, he thought, “This could have been a terrible bloody mess if the troops had not kept their cool.” He concluded that the Pentagon had had a very close call.

The epilogue for David was humorous and somewhat astonishing. When he began class the following Tuesday, he asked whether anyone wanted to talk about the demonstration at the Pentagon, which had been the biggest topic in Washington for several days. Seven or eight students volunteered that they had been part of the crowd that marched and found it exciting. Jon, a particularly talkative young man who was often high in class, boasted that he had not only been there, but that he had been in a photo taken at the scene. David smiled and asked what he was doing at the time. Jon stood up, waved his arms, and nearly shrieked with pleasure.

“Dr. Bruening, I was one of the people who stuck flowers in the rifles.” He held up a page from the *Washington Post* and exclaimed, “Look at this.”
The look of exultation on Jon’s face in class was memorable. All the students laughed.

It was rumored around the Pentagon in October 1967 that Secretary McNamara was not well and might be replaced. Deputy Secretary Cyrus Vance had resigned earlier for health reasons, and it was clear that the strains of an increasingly costly and inconclusive war were taking their toll on many senior officials in the Defense Department. David had occasion to observe some of them at close range and wondered how they could bear up under the seven-day work week, often without adequate sleep.

It was common knowledge in Washington that President Johnson napped in the afternoon and worked much of the night. He would sometimes call Secretary McNamara and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the middle of night to ask questions that would normally have been handled during the day. Secretary of State Dean Rusk was given similar treatment, it was said, with the result that top officials at State and Defense were slowly being worn down. One news commentator said during 1967, “What Washington needs more than anything is a good night’s sleep.”

Australia’s defense minister, Allan Fairhall, was scheduled to meet with Secretary McNamara in October 1967 and David got the job of preparing the briefing book and attending the meeting as “note taker.” He had not seen McNamara for about four months and was surprised to see how thin and tense he now looked. McNamara was glad to see his Australian counterpart, because the government in Canberra was probably America’s most loyal partner in Vietnam. Australia had sent more than eight thousand troops to assist in the war effort and paid their entire cost, unlike South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand, whose forces were heavily subsidized by the United States.

The two defense chiefs engaged at first in some small talk, but the Australian eventually brought up what was really on his mind. “Bob, how is the war in Vietnam going? My government wants me to get your candid opinion on this.”

What a question! David thought, and he began writing. He knew that the subsequent memorandum of conversation (memcon) would have to be approved by McNamara and that it would be read by a select group of officials in OSD and the JCS. The defense minister had put the question that everyone in Washington was asking.

McNamara answered candidly. He said that the North Vietnamese and Vietcong were proving more tenacious than anyone expected and had withstood massive U.S. bombing without any sign of quitting. But he was convinced that time was on the Allies’ side, because “we are training the South Vietnamese army to take responsibility for clearing the countryside of the Vietcong, and our bombing is gradually reducing the war materiel moving south.” The air force and navy were bombing supply routes from
China, he said, and were increasing the air strikes around Hanoi and Haiphong. McNamara thought that Hanoi could not stand this punishment indefinitely, but he admitted he didn’t know when the Vietcong and North Vietnamese might start serious discussions about ending the fighting. In the meantime, it was necessary to maintain the pressure.

The defense minister listened intently, taking a few notes. Then he asked, "Now tell me about this electronic fence that you are building across Vietnam."

McNamara’s face brightened. He got up from his chair and escorted his guest across the large room to a map of Vietnam that stood on an easel. Using a pointer, he showed Fairhall a line of dots on the map running from east to west across the center of Vietnam and into Laos. He explained that the new technology involved would enable military commanders to know whenever anything moved into South Vietnam or Laos along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Airpower would then be called in to bomb concentrations of troops and war materials moving south. David’s notes read, "In response to the minister’s question, the secretary explained the electronic fence in Vietnam."

At the end of their meeting, which lasted about forty minutes, David accompanied the Australian official to the Pentagon’s River entrance where his car was waiting. As they shook hands, Mr. Fairhall smiled and said: "You have an interesting job." David agreed.

Lee Kwan Yew, the prime minister of Singapore, came to Washington in November 1967 to plead with President Johnson and Secretary of State Rusk to provide some economic help for his island nation because of a still-secret decision of the British government to withdraw the Royal Navy and Air Force from Singapore. This was part of an "East of Suez" retrenchment decision by the Labour government then headed by Prime Minister Harold Wilson. Britain’s defense minister had alerted McNamara to the impending decision some months earlier and David soon became aware that the secretary was distressed that America’s closest European ally might withdraw all its forces from Southeast Asia just as President Johnson was urging friendly countries to increase their presence.

David discussed the implications of Lee’s visit with Jim Usher at the State Department.

"The Brits are taking this action mainly for financial reasons," Jim observed. "A Labour government is more willing than the Conservatives to cut defense in a budget crunch."

"Would you guess they are showing their unhappiness with the way we are escalating the war in Vietnam?"

"That’s possible," Usher said. "You know the British. They think the United States should never get too involved in Asia because it reduces our attention to Europe. Churchill argued constantly with Roosevelt about putting the Far East war on hold until we defeated Hitler."
"What will Lee Kwan Yew ask of the president?"

"The embassy says he'll ask the president whether we can use the British naval facilities. He doesn't expect us to assume Britain's role, just to help out his economy during a difficult transition period. DOD will have the ball on this one."

Usher was right. The Singapore leader met with President Johnson at the White House and asked that the Pentagon consider using Singapore's shore facilities for ship repair and services for American ships operating off Vietnam. The president instructed McNamara to meet with Lee and to see what could be done. The meeting was held at Blair House, and Ron Sturgess later told David what had been decided.

"The president wants us to be helpful to Lee because he supports us politically on Vietnam. McNamara committed us to send a technical survey team to Singapore to see what condition the facilities are in and how we might use them. It's a feasibility study, and we will have experts from CINCPAC and the JCS. We want you to lead the team."

David reacted with surprise. "How soon?"

"In the next month or so. Get in touch with the Joint Staff, and alert CINCPAC so that they can select the people who will assess the technical side. You'll be the coordinator and will report to me your overall impressions of the situation in Singapore."

"Are we thinking of taking over the British responsibility there?"

"Dave, who knows what the president will decide to do about Singapore? We know it is a highly strategic place on the Malacca Strait, the main waterway between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. The Brits have been there for a hundred and fifty years. I don't think we can afford to let it fall into unfriendly hands."

It was David's first realization that the American move into Vietnam to replace the French might now lead to yet another extension of an American global commitment to contain international communism, this time in the Indian Ocean area.

When London officially announced early in 1968 its intention to withdraw from East of Suez, including Singapore and Malaysia, the State Department instructed its Policy Planning Staff to assess the strategic importance of Singapore and the Indian Ocean in terms of U.S. national interests. David was assigned as the DOD representative to an interagency group. The navy had a small communications station at Diego Garcia, a British-owned island located south of Iran, so one question for this planning group to assess was whether the facility should be expanded and whether Singapore should be part of a significant American naval presence in the Indian Ocean. The chairman of this group was Roland Clayburn, a senior Foreign Service officer on the State Department's policy planning staff. He convened their first meeting shortly after David returned from his survey trip to Singapore. During the spring of 1968, the two of them frequently
discussed the wisdom of America's assuming the British role in Singapore and the Indian Ocean.

David's visit to Singapore and Malaysia in January 1968 was an extraordinary experience and provided him with new insights into how defense and foreign policy decisions were made. The twelve-member DOD team met at the American embassy in Singapore and was briefed by Ambassador Gardner and by Colonel Jack Raymond, the defense attaché. They then proceeded to the naval base, where they met with British naval officers who gave them a quick tour of the facilities. Thereafter the team split into several small groups and went to work for the next ten days surveying various military facilities.

David was pleased by the competence of the DOD team and chatted with its members occasionally during the first part of their survey. As there was not much for him to do until their survey was completed, he asked Colonel Raymond to arrange for him to visit the Australian air force base at Butterworth in central Malaysia and also to inspect the American rest and recuperation (R&R) facilities at Penang Island. Sturgess wanted him to visit both places and to familiarize himself with Australia's role in Malaysia because the Pentagon was anxious to know whether Australia would remain there when British forces moved out. At Penang the problem was whether DOD should continue the R and R center for GIs from Vietnam, given the reported criticism from local authorities.

David and Colonel Raymond flew to Penang and stayed just one day. The island was as beautiful as David had expected, and he understood why the U.S. command in Vietnam chose it as a rest area. However, the number of visiting GIs there was too large for the small population. Outside business interests had brought in many prostitutes whose activities were harming the culture of this tropical paradise. In a way, the American presence reminded him of the problem he had seen in Iceland, where restrictions had to be placed on the number of servicemen who could visit Reykjavik because of the sensitivity of the local population. He and Raymond agreed that the number of GIs on leave in Penang should be greatly reduced.

The visit to Butterworth air base lasted only a few hours. They had lunch with the Australian commander who gave his opinion that his country would remain in Malaysia regardless of what the British did. "This area is a key part of Australia's strategic interest," he said. He supported the U.S. decision to stay in South Vietnam and was proud that fellow Aussies also were there. In the commander's view, the Malaysians were very cooperative and had no interest in forcing their Commonwealth friends to leave the country.

Back in Singapore at the end of the trip, David assembled the survey team and asked for their preliminary findings. The reports were generally
favorable. The British naval facilities were in reasonably good shape, although lacking in some modern equipment, and could definitely be used for cargo ship repairs. Regarding warship use, however, especially large ships, the team’s initial conclusion was that more than just a repair facility would be required. There was also a need for a small U.S. Navy support facility, and David asked the senior navy officer, who accompanied the team from Honolulu, what was meant by “small.”

“Oh, maybe sixty or seventy people.”

“Really,” David said, showing surprise. “And I’ll bet you’ve got the site for the officers’ club picked out.” He grinned, and everyone burst out laughing. They knew how the navy inflated its needs, particularly at shore installations.

David used the embassy’s facilities to cable Ron Sturgess concerning their preliminary findings. He added his own view that a small facility might be set up to handle repairs and provisioning of cargo ships involved in the Vietnam operation. Port visits by U.S. Navy ships would be useful politically and would help the local economy. Some provisioning of these ships was feasible and he suggested that a small office comprising about twenty navy personnel could handle these various activities. It was important, he concluded, that any American presence be small and not give either the Singapore government or the British the impression that Washington was eager to assume security responsibilities in the Malacca Strait. David was well aware, and so was Sturgess, that Indonesia would have a major problem if the United States assumed a policeman’s role in that area.

The following day David flew to Honolulu, where he briefed the CINCPAC staff on his impressions, including the situation in Penang. He had the impression that the staff was very interested in establishing a facility in Singapore because of the Navy’s growing interest in the Indian Ocean. The Strait of Malacca was crucial to international shipping, and the navy wanted to have a small presence there when the British abandoned their role.

As David waited at the airport in Honolulu for his plane to Washington, he noticed an unusual number of air force planes in the air and asked the navy commander who accompanied him, “What’s going on?”

“Haven’t you heard? The North Koreans hijacked one of our intelligence ships, the Pueblo, yesterday in international waters.”

“What’s the reaction in Washington?” David asked, surprised.

“The president ordered an alert. We’re beefing up airpower in South Korea and in Japan. We might bomb North Korea if they don’t release the ship.”

David returned to Washington at the end of January. A few days later, the political and military situation in Vietnam was shattered by the Communist Tet offensive. The year 1968 promised to be momentous.
Less than a week after David returned from Singapore, he felt as if the roof had caved in at the Pentagon. The Tet offensive, which North Vietnam and its Vietcong allies launched on the Chinese New Year, affected more than a hundred cities and towns in South Vietnam and shattered Washington’s complacency about the progress of the war. A car bombing of the fortresslike American embassy in downtown Saigon was particularly shocking to U.S. officials in Vietnam and in Washington.

Fighting continued in Saigon for more than two weeks before the Communist forces were driven from the city. Desperate battles continued in other parts of South Vietnam for several more weeks, until American and South Vietnamese forces were able to contain the violence. The White House was stunned by this display of Vietcong and North Vietnamese strength and audacity. At the Pentagon, serious questions were asked. Was the war winnable? If not, should the United States withdraw from the conflict? ISA became the center of the growing skepticism, and staff officers in the Far East region where David worked were in the forefront in questioning the judgment of General William Westmoreland, the U.S. commander in Vietnam.

“This Tet offensive is going to destroy our will to stay in Vietnam,” Sandy Kaufman remarked to David and Don Hollister about a week after the fighting started. “The same kind of thing happened to the French after their disaster at Dien Bien Phu. Tet could be our disaster.”

Sandy was an army “bird colonel” and an authority on unconventional warfare. He had been in Vietnam as part of a military mission in 1954 and had acquired his specialty before President Kennedy established the Green Beret training center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in 1962.

“I don’t think so,” replied Hollister, an air force colonel who handled most of ISA’s staff work regarding bombing missions in North Vietnam. “Tet was a desperation move by Hanoi to prevent its own defeat. The Vietcong knew we were gradually winning in the south and decided to go for broke with this attack. And we’ve just about wiped out their cadres.”
Hollister reflected the air force view that airpower would eventually wear down the Vietnamese Communist forces and would persuade Hanoi to negotiate an end to the war. He believed that victory was just a matter of time, and the pressure on Hanoi should be increased.

Australian ambassador Keith Waller asked for a meeting with Assistant Secretary Paul Warnke, who had replaced John McNaughton as ISA chief in 1967. It was about a week after the Tet offensive and the ambassador wanted to discuss the situation in Vietnam. David accompanied him to the meeting and was note taker and subsequent drafter of the "memcon."

"Paul, tell me what this Tet business means," the ambassador asked. "Our press is as absorbed in it as yours, and my government needs to know how serious things are."

Waller was a professional diplomat and seemed to know all the important people in Washington. He had been in his post long enough to know that where Vietnam was concerned, the major player in Washington was the Pentagon. He knew that Warnke was a close adviser to Clark Clifford, the new secretary of defense, and that he would have an "informed view."

"We don't know yet how serious it is, Keith," the assistant secretary observed. "Our information at the moment is that we are driving the Vietcong from all the places that they hit. Saigon is pretty well clear now, but they did a lot of damage."

The ambassador was not only interested in what was happening in Vietnam, however. Having watched television reports and newspaper commentaries in Washington and other American cities, he was concerned with how the Johnson administration was planning to deal with the growing pressure in Congress to end the fighting in Vietnam.

"What effect is this likely to have on your policy in Vietnam?" Waller asked.

David was aware that his boss had doubts about the extent of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, even before the Tet episode. He wondered how he would respond to this probe.

"We'll see this through. But we will have a look at some of our assumptions. We might, for example, get the South Vietnamese to take over a larger role in the ground war." Warnke knew of suggestions from the White House that the South Vietnamese rather than Americans ought to be bearing the brunt of fighting, and the casualties, in their countryside.

General William Westmoreland, U.S. commander in Vietnam, asked the Pentagon for an additional 205,000 troops in order to take the offensive against the depleted Vietcong forces following their failed Tet attacks. Westmoreland's request in mid-February was the spark that triggered a fundamental reassessment of the U.S. role in Vietnam, a process in which the president participated and that continued through the month of March. Before he was named defense secretary, Clifford had personally reviewed
the Vietnam War for the president and had concluded that further escalation was not in the U.S. interest.

Finally, at the end of March, President Johnson dropped a political bombshell when he announced that he would not run for reelection as president and that he had decided to stop the bombing of North Vietnam north of the twentieth parallel in an effort to get negotiations started to end the war. The news had a profound effect on the political scene in Washington because it opened up the 1968 presidential campaign in a way no one had foreseen. David and most of his ISA colleagues were surprised and generally pleased by these developments, but many of them were skeptical about whether Hanoi would negotiate for anything less than a full American withdrawal from Vietnam.

The impact of President Johnson’s decision to halt the bombing was immediately felt in the Pentagon. There was no more talk about sending additional troops to Vietnam or bombing more targets. Plans were made for a gradual withdrawal of U.S. ground troops and for a more limited use of airpower. Suddenly the word “Vietnamization” was employed to describe a new policy of training and equipping South Vietnam’s army to take over the job of fighting the Vietcong and North Vietnamese. When an official memo appeared asking for comments on how to implement that policy, several of David’s colleagues wondered why it had taken the Pentagon so long to understand that South Vietnamese soldiers, and not Americans, should do most of the fighting.

“You know,” Tim Russell remarked, “we started training the South Koreans from the first year we went to Korea, and they became a very potent fighting force. In South Vietnam we told the people in 1965 to watch us while we fought the war for them. Three years later we are getting ready to end the war, and we haven’t got them ready to defend their own country.”

“You’re right about the Koreans,” Sandy Kaufman said. “But they always had the will to fight. I’m of the opinion that it will take ten years to get the South Vietnamese army to that point, maybe longer. And Congress won’t wait so long.”

During 1967, while Robert McNamara was still secretary of defense, he asked ISA to undertake an exhaustive study of the causes of the Vietnam conflict and the reasons for heavy U.S. involvement. It was a huge effort to compile a record of the government’s decision making on Vietnam after France withdrew in 1954. The study project produced twelve volumes that later became known as the “Pentagon Papers.” Many people in the office of the secretary of defense, including David, contributed documents and memoranda. The project’s manager, Len Goebel, was a senior ISA civilian in the office of policy and plans and approached his task with meticulous care.

David contributed materials on Indonesia, Australia, and Singapore,
the countries for which he was responsible. In a memorandum that dealt with Indonesia's policy toward Washington, he argued that the massive U.S. intervention in Vietnam in July 1965 had been crucial in persuading the Indonesian army, after it crushed a Communist coup attempt on October 1, that the United States, not China or Vietnam, would now be the major power in Southeast Asia. When he wrote his memorandum, David could say with assurance that Indonesia had indeed shifted its foreign policy, replacing Sukarno's hostility to the United States with a cooperative stance toward Washington. The U.S. Army was in an excellent position to work with top Indonesian military leaders to facilitate the change. He learned later that McNamara had sent the president a memo containing this assessment.

David ran into Len Goebel in the corridor one day and asked him how his study was coming along.

"Lots of paper," he replied, smiling.

"Why do you think McNamara wants all this stuff?" David asked.

"He wants a full record of what went wrong in our decision making on Vietnam. He thinks it will help the next Sec Def avoid another debacle like this one."

"Well, he should know," David said. "He told Johnson the war would end in 1966."

In April 1968, after the assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King in Tennessee, Washington, D.C., suffered massive rioting and burning. Whole blocks of offices and shops in the city's center were destroyed by fire and looting that lasted for several days. It was a dangerous time in the nation's capital. Many observers thought the city would close down if the violence was not contained. David grasped the magnitude of an uprising by the black population when he carried a memorandum to Assistant Secretary Warnke's office in the Pentagon's E ring facing downtown Washington, and he saw a harried navy enlisted man come into the office after his usual courier run to the State Department and White House. He exclaimed, "You won't believe what's happening in town," his eyes wide. "Look out the window and you'll see the smoke. They're torching the whole downtown."

"Aren't the police there?" David asked in astonishment.

"Hell no," the young sailor retorted. "It's going to take the army to stop this thing."

That night David and the family watched on TV as the police, backed up by troops, sought to restore order in the city. The Bruenings were glad they lived in Virginia, not Washington. Emotions in the city were running so high that some government office buildings had to close until order could be restored. Many civil servants did not go to work the next day. Even though there had been race riots in Los Angeles, Newark, Detroit,
and other cities during the previous three years, this was the first time that Washington had been affected. Many people in and outside the city were scared, because nearly two-thirds of Washington's residents were black. Order returned after a few days, but the damage had been extensive. The entire metropolitan area was in a state of shock. Could this be the capital of the world's leading superpower? David asked himself.

The following Sunday the family drove to church in Washington, on upper Sixteenth Street, after having ascertained that the city was calm. After church they drove downtown to assess the damage. They locked the car's doors and windows and proceeded apprehensively down Sixteenth Street to Massachusetts Avenue, turned two blocks to the east, and drove slowly along Fourteenth Street to the center of the capital's shopping area.

The devastation was appalling. The Bruening children were wide-eyed as they looked at block after block of firebombed and looted buildings. Police were visible on every corner. Few people were on the streets. They kept driving slowly along Fourteenth Street and turned west into G Street proceeding toward the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue. Helen said she had not seen anything like it since she left Germany in 1947. And the ruined area was only three blocks from the White House.

"Take a good look, kids," David said. "Washington may not recover from this."

In June, Robert Kennedy, brother of the slain president and a leading candidate in the upcoming presidential election, was gunned down by a lone assassin in a Los Angeles hotel. The political climate in the country suddenly shifted. The election campaign narrowed to a race between Vice President Hubert Humphrey and the Republican Party's nominee, former vice president Richard Nixon. Humphrey had a huge burden to carry because of the public's growing opposition to the Vietnam War.

The Bruening family took their vacation in Michigan in August to help move Jenny into her dorm at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Before leaving Washington, David learned that he would need to prepare the briefing book and be present for a meeting that Allan Fairhall, the Australian defense minister, would have with Secretary Clifford at the end of August. The visit was an important experience for David, for two reasons: it was his first substantive meeting with Secretary Clifford, and it provided a rare insight into how Australia, the United States' staunchest ally in Asia, was reacting to President Johnson's sudden change of policy on Vietnam. David also wanted to see Clifford's famous charm on display and to compare the new secretary's style with that of his predecessor, Robert McNamara.

The defense minister had important matters on his mind. The Pentagon's plan to reduce forces in Vietnam was at the top of the list because
Australia's opposition party was calling for a significant reduction, perhaps even total withdrawal, of the eight thousand Australian troops in Vietnam. In addition, his government wanted to sell more food and military hardware to U.S. forces as a way of enhancing its political influence with Australia's farmers and military equipment exporters. Finally, David had alerted Clifford to the sensitive issue of the accidental American bombing of the Hobart, an Australian destroyer, off the coast of Vietnam. Because of this meeting's importance, Assistant Secretary Paul Warnke was present as well. David prepared the briefing book and, as usual, was the note taker. He found the meeting fascinating: here was the defense minister of Australia, seeking to gauge the reaction of the U.S. defense secretary to a seemingly fundamental change in American policy on Vietnam. Clifford tried to reassure Fairhall that a halt in the bombing campaign did not signify a lessening of U.S. determination to protect South Vietnam. But he thought that the United States had assumed too large a role in fighting the ground war and should now train the Vietnamese army to do most of the fighting.

Clifford used all his persuasive powers to convince the Australian leader that the Johnson administration had no intention of pulling out of Vietnam. Fairhall kept asking probing questions about how Congress and the public were responding to the new policy. He was keenly aware that his country's dependence on the American security shield dated back to the dark days of 1942, when Japan had threatened Australia's northern coast and had even sneaked two midget submarines into Sydney harbor. If the United States was not going to remain steadfast in Southeast Asia, its credibility as an ally would plummet. Fairhall didn't need to say this, because Clifford well knew that the Australian cabinet might not survive the next election if the opposition could paint the United States as a weak ally.

After their half-hour meeting, the two men adjourned to Secretary Clifford's private dining room, where a group of American and Australian officials had gathered for a special luncheon honoring Fairhall. David asked Warnke whether he thought the Hobart issue would come up at lunch.

"I'm sure it will," he said, "but I don't know which one will bring it up."

Many conversations took place around the T-shaped table arrangement. It was obvious that Clifford and Fairhall were enjoying their conversation, which apparently did not deal with policy issues. When coffee was served, Clifford called for quiet and talked for a few minutes of the need for solidarity among allies to contain communism in Southeast Asia. The defense minister thanked his host for his fine hospitality and seconded his words about Australian-American friendship.

After more talk about coordination of policies, Clifford said, "Mr. Minister, there is another matter that we haven't touched on yet and which I know is on your mind. I want you to know that we deeply regret the loss of
life and damage our forces inflicted on the Hobart. It was a serious mistake, and it shouldn’t have happened. We are prepared to discuss compensation with you.”

The Australian had anticipated this gesture and had his answer ready. “Mr. Secretary, my government recognizes that in time of war these mistakes happen. I appreciate your words of regret and your offer of compensation. But that will not be necessary. Your navy base at Subic Bay repaired the worst of the damage, and the ship is now in Australia being prepared to return to sea. What is of greater interest to us is your willingness to increase procurement of Australian food and other supplies for your military forces. That would help our economy, and my government would be most grateful.”

Clifford agreed to look into the procurement idea and said he was sure something could be worked out. David knew the U.S. Navy would breathe a sigh of relief when he reported the outcome of the Hobart matter, but he was less sure of the reaction of the DOD procurement people regarding Clifford’s commitment to consider increasing purchases from Australia.

That evening the two defense chiefs attended a formal dinner given in their honor by Australian ambassador Waller and his wife at their beautiful residence in the Cleveland Park area of Washington. Secretary Clifford and his wife were present as well as about twenty senior U.S. and Australian officials. David was pleased to have been included and believed that his contacts with the embassy’s political and economic officers had paid off. The discussion was particularly interesting because the Democratic Party’s political convention was then underway in Chicago. Riots led by a group of radicals known as the Chicago Seven had erupted that afternoon and threatened to disrupt the convention hall. Mayor Richard Daley, the no-nonsense boss of Chicago, mobilized a large police force to deal with the thousands of demonstrators. Vice President Humphrey was expected to win the balloting that evening but not unless order was maintained in the hall and the surrounding streets in Chicago.

When dinner ended, Secretary Clifford, a longtime Democratic Party supporter, suggested that they watch the convention on television. Most of the men adjourned to the ambassador’s large paneled study while the women were escorted by Mrs. Waller to another room for conversation. What the men saw on television was astonishing. Police in full riot gear, swinging their nightsticks, waded into the crowd of youthful demonstrators outside the convention hall and were photographed hauling them to police vans for transport to jail. David watched as Clifford sat on the sofa in front of the TV, cheering as the police dragged more and more demonstrators to the vans. Several others joined in the cheering. After a while, David wandered out to the large living room and noticed Defense Minister Fairhall standing alone in front of the fireplace, apparently deep in thought.
"That's some show on television, isn't it?" David said, trying to make conversation.

The Australian smiled at him and asked in a low voice, "Are all your political rallies like this?"

"No sir, this one is quite different. It's the times we live in."

"Well, it is a bit appalling, isn't it?" Fairhall observed.

David smiled and wondered how the scene from Chicago would be reported by him to his cabinet colleagues in Canberra.

By July of 1968 David had served in the Defense Department for four years, three of them in ISA, the political-military nerve center of the Pentagon. He was feeling the strain of the twelve-hour days, to which were added three or four hours on Saturdays and occasionally on Sundays. He was ready for a new, less stressful job. Luck was on his side once more.

Toward the end of July he received a letter from the U.S. Civil Service Commission (CSC) asking if he would be interested in joining the faculty of a new executive training center that CSC was setting up in Charlottesville, Virginia. It would provide executive development, the letter said, for supergrade-level personnel from many departments and agencies. His name had come out of the CSC's inventory of executive personnel, and he apparently had the qualifications needed to teach at this interagency training facility. James Burns, who signed the letter, asked him to call if he was interested and to come in for an interview.

"Should I be interested?" David asked his wife at home that evening.

"Well, you say you're ready for something less stressful. It sounds like something you should at least explore."

"That's true, but it's in Charlottesville. That's a hundred miles from here. Are you ready to move there?"

"Well, not right now," she confessed. "Jodie wouldn't want to leave her high school friends. Maybe they'd let you try it for six months, to see if you want a permanent change."

A few days later he met with Jim Burns who, after explaining the job and answering his questions, told him to talk to Frank Sutherland, the newly appointed director of the center. Sutherland had just arrived from the University of Southern California, where he had been dean of the school of public administration. After the interview David was offered a faculty position as professor of international relations at what was soon to be called the Federal Executive Institute (FEI). Burns arranged during the next week for him to be on loan from DOD for six months, after which time he could decide whether to stay or to return.

Shortly after Labor Day, on a warm Sunday afternoon, David said goodbye to his family and drove two and a half hours southwest from McLean into the beautiful rolling hills of central Virginia and on to Charlottesville.
The famous Thomas Jefferson Inn, located just north of the city, would soon be leased by the government to house the executive training center. By the time David arrived at the impressive-looking hotel, which stood at the top of a hill on U.S. 29 North, instinct told him that he was likely to be there for more than six months. It was an ideal setting for lecturing and writing about his experience at the Pentagon. The job might even leave him the time to write another book.

The first group of nearly sixty federal executives arrived at FEI in mid-October for an eight-week course in executive development. It was an informal environment that gave the top civil servants a chance to trade experiences and ideas with their peers from nearly all the federal departments and agencies. The primary objective, Sutherland emphasized to the first class, was to provide a "learning environment" in which everyone was both a student and a teacher. Most of the executives were convinced that they could teach the courses.

Fifteen executives signed up for David's seminar on American foreign policy. They were a high-powered group. Some, especially those from Defense and CIA, knew a great deal about U.S. policy, and most had strong opinions on Vietnam. David quickly decided to turn the seminar into an informal debating session. He offered ideas and propositions and then invited members to debate them. He was astonished to find that at least a third of his class thought that the Vietnam War was a mistake and that the United States needed to end its involvement as soon as possible. David had come from the Pentagon, where such views were rarely heard. It came as a surprise to realize that people in other parts of the government, particularly in agencies such as the Departments of Labor and of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), didn't share the hawkish views of people in the military departments and related agencies. This discovery increased David's skepticism, which he had developed on his trip to Singapore earlier in the year, that the United States had overextended itself in its international security role and that a new definition of America's national interests needed to be formulated.

The impending presidential election was also a prime topic for conversation among members of this first FEI class. Richard Nixon, the Republican candidate, was running ahead of Vice President Hubert Humphrey in September, but in October the margin started to narrow. Humphrey had a large handicap because he had the burden of defending the Johnson administration's Vietnam policy. Nixon pledged to disengage the United States from Vietnam "with honor," meaning that he would not suddenly withdraw. He won in a close election. Many commented on the remarkable comeback he had made politically after losing the presidential election in 1960 and the gubernatorial race in California in 1962. Even though liberals distrusted Nixon because of his strong anti-Communist views in
the 1940s and 1950s, they were so disillusioned by the Vietnam debacle that many were willing to see whether the “new Nixon” could pull the country out of its serious situation in 1969.

At FEI Sutherland was worried that a Republican administration would cut government personnel and programs and that the new FEI would be a target. His fears were misplaced, because the new administration gave the institute strong support. Some senior White House staff accepted invitations to lecture there. In fact, in the spring of 1969 President Nixon welcomed Class 3 to the Rose Garden at the White House and shook hands with each of seventy people. The visit had been arranged by the president’s White House Secret Service chief, who was a member of the class.

Despite the rancor of the 1968 presidential campaign and many Democrats’ deep-seated distrust of Nixon, he enjoyed a political honeymoon in the spring because he had announced a phased reduction in U.S. troops in Vietnam and a vigorous program to train South Vietnamese to take over the ground war. The Democratic Congress and the public were in a mood to give him a chance to do what Lyndon Johnson had failed to do—devise a plan to take U.S. troops out of Southeast Asia and to reduce political tensions at home.

Unfortunately for Nixon, he decided in May 1970 to launch an armed “incursion” into Cambodia to smash a Vietcong base camp, which he called a “privileged sanctuary,” from which the Vietcong could launch attacks on the remaining American forces. John Ehrlichman and his wife were at FEI on the day that four students were killed by National Guard troops at Kent State University during protests against Nixon’s decision. Ehrlichman, one of the president’s top assistants who later resigned during the Watergate scandal, was the speaker that evening. When news came of the Kent State killings, he talked by phone with the White House. At dinner the conversation did not touch on the tragedy, but Ehrlichman said in response to a question after his lecture that a president sometimes has to make tough, unpopular decisions and that the deaths at Kent State were a tragic and unnecessary result. Following the lecture he and his wife excused themselves from a reception to call their son who was a student at Stanford University in California. Later Mrs. Ehrlichman told a group of executives that their son was very upset. She too seemed upset.

The Cambodia invasion, which lasted less than a month, caused riots and demonstrations on many college campuses, including the University of Virginia, where David was teaching a course at night on the governments and politics of Southeast Asia. The shootings at Kent State triggered large student demonstrations in Charlottesville. A huge rally was held at University Hall, where William Kunstler, a well-known leftist attorney, and Jerry Rubin, one of the leaders of the Chicago riots in August 1968, harangued the crowd of students and faculty for more than an hour. David
went to see the demonstration and was shocked to find several hundred university students, wearing identical T-shirts with antiwar slogans, sitting in the center court and shaking their right arms in unison when they were prompted by their leader. The sight reminded him of films he had seen of regimented youth gangs at rallies in Germany in the 1930s. He watched as Kunstler led this mob to President Edgar Shannon's residence at Carr's Hill and called on him to come out and face the students, who demanded that he shut down the university. David was even more astonished when he met his class the following Monday and learned that one of his students had been among the demonstrators.

President Shannon decided after four or five days of massive demonstrations on and off campus to give professors the option of suspending classes for the remainder of the semester and letting students make up the work later. David discussed this idea with colleagues and decided he would continue classes with or without students. He announced that he would give a grade after the examination in June, and students who decided to go to Washington to demonstrate against the war would get the grade they had earned up to that point. Several grumbled, saying most professors would give them a grade in the fall. Of eighteen students in the class, only one elected to drop out. Attendance was not perfect for the remaining few weeks, but the students completed the course. During one class, demonstrators were heard in the parking lot just below their windows at Cabell Hall. It was a difficult time at the University of Virginia and at many other institutions across the United States.

Frederick Nolting, an alumnus of the university, had entered the U.S. Foreign Service after World War II and rose in the ranks to become ambassador to South Vietnam in 1960. He had lost that job in the summer of 1963 when President Kennedy decided on a change of policy that included supporting a coup d'état against President Ngo Dinh Diem. Now, as a professor in the business school, he had become interested in the work of the Federal Executive Institute and David invited him to meet with his seminar. Nolting had strong views on Vietnam and on the mistakes the Kennedy and Johnson administrations had made. The former ambassador argued that Kennedy had fatally blundered in bowing to media pressure after the public suicide of a Buddhist monk in Saigon in 1963 and in abandoning President Diem. This error had brought to power a series of generals who had no credibility with the Vietnamese people, Nolting argued. He strongly protested the change in policy after being recalled to Washington, to no avail.

"Despite his faults," he told David's seminar, "Diem was a nationalist and the last legitimate leader South Vietnam had. Those who came after him were seen as the agents of the United States. Obviously, Hanoi was able to exploit this reality."

The continuing preoccupation of the Americans with Vietnam, and
its impact on the executives at FEI and on his students at the university, persuaded David in 1970 that he should write a book. This one would focus on the way in which the United States determines its national interests and the process by which a president decides that an issue is so crucial to the well-being of the country that he must, if all other means fail to achieve an objective, use force. David developed his ideas in a series of lectures at FEI and shared them with graduate students and several colleagues at the University of Virginia, where he also conducted a seminar in American foreign policy. His thinking had evolved since 1968 when he had been involved in a State Department planning project to determine the strategic importance of Singapore. Now he speculated that the United States had not only defense, economic, and international security interests abroad, but also what he called a “promotion of values” interest which determined its foreign policy priorities. He discussed these ideas with Professor Harris Collins at the University of Virginia and received encouragement to write the book on U.S. national interests. David’s case study of decision making on Vietnam benefited greatly from the New York Times’s publication, and the subsequent book edition, of The Pentagon Papers in 1971.

In 1971 and 1972 President Nixon and Henry Kissinger, his national security adviser, scored a foreign policy triumph by opening official relations with the People’s Republic of China after twenty-three years of hostility. Suddenly the strategic equation in Asia changed. China might even facilitate an American withdrawal from Vietnam, it was hoped. Nixon thus put Moscow on notice that the United States could play the “China card,” as pundits put it, if Soviet leaders threatened U.S. interests in the Far East or Europe.

Nixon’s policy was tested in May 1972, on the eve of his visit to Moscow to sign the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I) between the superpowers. Communist leaders in Hanoi seemed determined to exploit the American troop withdrawal, which by the spring of 1972 was nearing completion. They launched a massive attack from Cambodian bases with the objective of defeating South Vietnam’s new army and putting pressure on Saigon. The offensive was also designed to humiliate the United States and prove to the South Vietnamese that their government could not protect them. Nixon then ordered the mining of Haiphong Harbor in North Vietnam, thus threatening to sink Soviet and East Bloc ships supplying North Vietnam with war materials. His gamble paid off: Moscow did not cancel the president’s visit, and the North Vietnamese offensive was halted. Eventually the mines were cleared, and cease-fire talks with Hanoi’s negotiators resumed in Paris.

In March 1973 an agreement with North Vietnam was finally concluded, all the fighting stopped and American prisoners of war (POWs) were released. The United States removed all its ground forces from Viet-
nam, but Nixon pledged to the South Vietnamese government that he would restart the air war against the north if it violated the peace accords and resumed the war in the south. Most Americans were relieved at the news that the war was finally over, but opposition remained so strong that returning American GIs were often disgracefully treated with contempt by demonstrators against the war. Eight years of American policy in Vietnam had profoundly affected the attitudes of the American people.

David and a group of federal executives in residence at FEI were watching television in March 1973 as American POWs deplaned in Saigon after their flight from captivity in North Vietnam. Some had been imprisoned for seven years under terribly harsh circumstances.

“What a sad sight,” David remarked as the released POWs, all of whom were very thin, slowly descended the gangway and saluted a senior officer who stood by to welcome them back to freedom.

George Packer, who had flown in the Korean War, remarked, “Yeah, and we’ve just lost this war. We’re going to abandon the South Vietnamese, after telling them for seven years we would protect them.”

Packer was thinking of the peace agreement that Henry Kissinger had finally concluded with Hanoi after more than a year of difficult negotiations and after Nixon had ordered a massive bombing of Hanoi at Christmas time to persuade its government to stop the war and accept the agreement.

Bud Jeffers pointed to the screen. “See the guy with the dog? How did he get it out?”

David looked at the gaunt young man who cradled a dog in his left arm while saluting the welcoming officer with the other. He did not know then that Lieutenant Gary Davis would be in his seminar that fall at the University of Virginia.

The Watergate story broke in Washington in 1973 in a dramatic manner. Judge John Sirica, who presided over the trial of the burglars apprehended by police at Democratic Party headquarters in the Watergate apartment complex, concluded that the defendants were lying about who had hired them. Under persistent questioning, the leader of the “plumbers” admitted that they had been working for Gordon Liddy, a White House employee. The Washington Post, which had tried for six months to connect the break-in at the Watergate offices with the White House, dramatized the story. Soon congressional hearings were held, and Nixon’s top aides were subjected to nationally televised interrogation. In June 1973, Nixon, trying to distance himself from the growing scandal, fired John Haldeman, his chief of staff, and John Ehrlichman, another key assistant.

As David watched Ehrlichman try to defend himself before the committee headed by Senator John Erwin, he recalled meeting the White House aide two years earlier and wondered how such a seemingly decent person
could get himself into so much trouble. When members of Congress spoke of impeaching Nixon, David was stunned, not because he had such a high regard for the president but because the idea of removing a president from office for covering up the wrongdoing of underlings added a serious dimension to American politics.

A few days later Jennifer called home from Boulder, Colorado, where she was then living. She asked, "Dad, what's going on with Nixon?"

"You mean the Watergate affair? I think they are making way too much of it, Jenny."

“Well, I think Nixon knew all about it, and everybody is just protecting him. And you voted for him, didn’t you, Dad?"

David tried to sound calm on the phone. "Jenny, you can’t blame a president every time his staff screws up. The Democrats are out to destroy his presidency. I think that would be a bad precedent for this country."

She was not mollified. His daughter, David realized, was a part of the Vietnam generation, which distrusted government. And Nixon, not Johnson, was now in charge.

As the Watergate debacle unfolded during the next year, Nixon was shown to have been directly involved in the cover-up and to have used secret funds to pay off the "plumbers." David recalled his conversation with Jenny and realized that she had been right. He admitted to himself that he had been too willing to accept Nixon’s version of events, just as he had been too reluctant to acknowledge earlier that President Johnson lied to the country about many aspects of the Vietnam War in order to persuade Congress to give him the funding to wage the war. Still, David felt strongly that what he had told Jenny, that it was dangerous to impeach a president except for unusually serious crimes, was correct. Otherwise a precedent would be established that would encourage the opposition party in Congress to call for an impeachment for essentially political reasons. Any future occupant of the White House who was touched by scandal might then not only receive a reprimand but also be driven from office.

Thirteen years later, as congressional efforts to savage President Ronald Reagan for the Iran-Contra scandal came to a head, David saw a parallel to Nixon’s situation. Reagan was saved by his personal charm and by the public’s unwillingness to see him expelled from the White House.

In the spring of 1973 Helen and David took their boys to Europe to see friends in Bonn and cousins in Nurnberg. At that time Jennifer was out of college and living in Colorado, and Jodie was a student at Virginia Tech. The family flew from New York to Luxembourg and traveled by train to Bonn, where they stayed with Charlie and Millie Goran, whom they had known in Iceland. Charlie, now the budget officer in the U.S. embassy, gave them a tour of Bonn and the scenic Rhine River country.
David was surprised at how much the prices had risen in ten years. "A lot has changed here," he observed. "A dollar used to be worth nearly 4 marks. Now it's only 2.3."

"A lot has changed in the two years we've been here," Charlie said. "The Germans are serious about keeping inflation down and the mark strong. That's why the economy is so good."

"But Charlie, they are getting a free ride from us on defense. We keep large forces here, and we spend 5 percent of our GNP on defense. What do the Germans pay for defense?"

"They do pretty well on defense spending," his friend assured him. "They have a good army and air force. And they cooperate fully with us in NATO."

At dinner that evening the conversation turned to Berlin and the Bonn government's subsidy of tourist travel there to keep international attention focused on the divided capital. President Kennedy had endeared himself to Berliners in 1962 by visiting the city and declaring in a speech delivered at Potsdamer Platz, "Ich bin ein Berliner." After the Russians' erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the city became the symbol of a divided Germany and the focus of serious tensions between NATO and the Warsaw Pact countries. East German guards killed people who tried to flee to West Berlin.

"Wouldn't it be fun to see Berlin again?" Helen exclaimed, looking at David. "We haven't been back since 1947."

"Why not do it?" Charlie asked. "You can get cheap airfare on Pan Am because it's subsidized."

"What about accommodations?" David asked, his interest whetted. "Hotels must be expensive at 2.3 marks for the dollar."

"I can get you into the U.S. Army's Dahlem guesthouse because you're a government employee. At your GS level, you probably qualify for a suite. I'll see about it tomorrow morning if you're interested."

Helen was excited, and the boys thought it would be neat to see Berlin because they had heard their parents talk about it. David had often thought about the city over the past twenty-five years and wondered how it had changed. He recalled his house there, the OMGUS office in which he had worked, and Harnack Haus, where he and Helen had had their first date.

"It would be great fun," he said, "to show the boys around Berlin and maybe see a bit of East Berlin!"

"Do you really think we can do that, out of the blue like this?" Helen asked Charlie. "And we told Martin we'd be in Nurnberg the day after tomorrow."

"I think we could arrange for you to fly first to Berlin and then to Nurnberg," Charlie said. "You wouldn't lose a whole lot of time."

That night before going to sleep, David and Helen talked with much anticipation about seeing Berlin again, about their many good memories,
and about the educational value of the experience for Jason and Jeremy, who would be seeing the central battleground of the Cold War.

Charlie called the next morning to say they could fly to Berlin at noon and that he had reserved rooms in the Dahlem guest house in the American sector. He even arranged for a car and driver from the U.S. consulate to meet them at the airport and give them a tour of West Berlin. They would fly the following evening to Nurnberg.

When the family reached Berlin, the scene around Tempelhof Airport had changed so much since 1946-1947 that David and Helen wondered whether it was the same airport. Instead of huge mounds of rubble and bombed-out buildings, they now viewed a completely rebuilt area of West Berlin. Tempelhof, a U.S. military installation, was also used by some commercial airlines, including Pan American Airways, which made several runs a day from West Germany. After collecting their baggage, the Bruenings were approached by a middle-aged German named Shultz, who introduced himself as their driver and helped with their baggage. Jason was impressed by this service, because he had had to carry the heavy bags when they arrived in Luxembourg and in Bonn. As they left the airport, David pointed to a large monument in front of the terminal and asked what it was.

"It is monument to your fliers in Berlin Airlift," Shultz replied in broken English.

Realizing that the boys knew little about the Berlin blockade, which Stalin had imposed on surface traffic into Berlin in 1948 and 1949, David briefly explained. "Those fliers saved Berlin from starvation in 1948. If the Russians had forced us out, this whole city would be under their control now." He asked Shultz if he agreed.

"Ja, that is so," he answered. "I was driver for Americans then. They saved Berlin. The Russians no good." They learned later that Shultz had fought at Stalingrad.

"Is Potsdamer Platz near where we are going?" Jason asked Shultz.

Assuring them that it was only a short way from their route to Dahlemdorf, Shultz took them to see the spot where President Kennedy had stood and made his famous declaration in 1962. From that platform they looked across an open corridor of land, the no-man's-land between East and West Berlin. They could see in the distance the row of buildings with boarded windows and the barbed wire and concrete barrier which marked the Berlin Wall.

The next day they visited East Berlin, to see the contrast with the western part of the city. The only way they could do so was to leave the car at Checkpoint Charlie and walk eight blocks to the Unter den Linden boulevard, which had been the center of Germany's government in former days. A U.S. Army MP told them as they left the checkpoint guard hut in the American sector to be sure not to wander around the back streets and
to be careful not to lose their passports. They had to sign out of the American sector so that a record was on hand, in case they did not return.

As they walked through a sealed passageway and came to the makeshift office of the East German police, the atmosphere changed. Jason carried his own passport and became apprehensive as an East German guard looked at him intently and then at the photo in his passport. They were obliged to buy about ten dollars’ worth of East German marks, which were all but useless because there was little to buy in East Berlin. They then walked along Friedrichstrasse for about eight blocks, going through a neighborhood that had scarcely changed since 1945, except that debris had been removed and open spaces now replaced some buildings. The difference between this street and similar ones in West Berlin could hardly have been more marked.

“It looks like the Communists haven’t done anything to repair the buildings,” David said.

When they arrived at Unter den Linden boulevard, Helen looked down the broad street and saw the Brandenburg Gate in the distance.

“There’s the famous gate,” she said, pointing. “It’s a long walk from here, though. I’m not sure we have enough time.”

“You’re right,” he agreed. “Why don’t we walk around here a bit and find a place to get something to drink?”

Their search was in vain. There was simply nothing in the area resembling a West Berlin coffeehouse or an American snack bar. In fact, there were very few people on the streets, and only a few shops were open. It was a pretty dismal scene.

Helen observed: “It’s no wonder they had to build a wall to keep the people here.”

Jason asked: “When you and Mom were here, could you get into this part of Berlin?”

“It was easy then,” David replied. “You could drive a jeep right through the Brandenburg Gate and walk all around this area without anybody’s checking you. I remember going into Hitler’s office building and walking out back to the bunker where he committed suicide. There was a Russian guard, but nobody stopped you if you were American and in uniform. Now you need a visa.”

On the walk back to Checkpoint Charlie, they looked for a shop where they might spend their non-convertible East German marks rather than throwing them away. Finally they spotted a dilapidated store that had a sign in front showing that there were some items for sale. They decided to buy a small bottle of East German whiskey even though David knew it would not be worth drinking. He was right, but he saved the empty bottle for many years as a momento of their visit.

When they reentered the East German gatehouse, David, Helen, and Jeremy had no problem getting through. But the police official behind the
window made Jason wait for what seemed a long time while he stared at him, then at the passport, and then at his files. The steely-faced German glared at him and probably thought, "Is this the same youngster who went through an hour ago, or some German kid trying to get out?" Finally, he stamped Jason's passport and waved him on.

"That was scary, Dad. Why was he looking at me like that?"

"He was showing off his authority. You wouldn't want to be a German teenager in there, would you?"

Later when they drove with Herr Shultz along Unter den Linden in West Berlin and came within about a thousand yards of Brandenburg Gate, a German police car pulled up and motioned the driver to stop. The policeman came to the driver's side and asked in German what he was doing in this area, pointing out that cars were restricted. Shultz said he was driving an official car and didn't know he was not allowed there. The policeman then asked David in English if he was American and explained that it was dangerous to drive near the Brandenburg Gate, the dividing line between the two sectors of the city and the area where the Berlin Wall stood. East German border guards were known to shoot if vehicles came too close. He was courteous and suggested that they turn around in order to be safe. Shultz found an area off the main street where he could park the car, and the Bruenings proceeded on foot toward the famous gate. As they passed the vacant Reichstag, the parliament building destroyed by fire in 1933, an East German guard tower came into view, perched on top of the twenty-foot-high wall that blocked their view into East Berlin. The guards were visible.

"Dad," Jeremy pointed, "are those the guys who shoot people?"

"That's right. You remember the photos we saw in the museum at Checkpoint Charlie? They were the people who were killed trying to get over the wall."

"I can see their faces," Jeremy exclaimed. "They look mean." The Bruenings didn't linger.

David told the boys that no one had repaired the damaged Brandenburg tower since they first saw it in 1946. This had been the symbol of Prussia's victories over its neighbors in the eighteenth century, but in 1973 it continued to symbolize Germany's defeat and the division of the country.

David met with Alfred Krause at the American consulate. He and Helen had known the Krauses in Bangkok where Al had been political officer in 1962-1963. Being inside in the consulate compound brought back vivid memories for David because it was the same complex of buildings in which he and Helen had worked in 1946-1947, in the Office of Military Government. The street running in front was now called Clay Alle in memory of General Lucius Clay, who had been the U.S. military governor for Germany.

Krause had been at the consulate for two years as political officer.
Even though Berlin was somewhat confining, because one could not easily leave the city, he and his wife found it an exciting place to be stationed because it was the focal point of the Cold War. He and David discussed the mood of West Berliners and what Al thought the Russians were up to.

"Berliners are resigned to their fate," he said. "They know they'll be overrun if the Cold War gets hot, and they have no illusions about the Russians. They live on the edge of a precipice. Young Germans, except for draft dodgers who are legally exempt here, don’t want to live in Berlin. There’s no future here."

"How do people react to our pulling out of Vietnam?" David asked.

"I can’t speak for the rest of the Germans," Al responded, "but here there is some anxiety that we won’t be so tough on Berlin if the Russians turn up the heat again."

David asked how firm the Social Democrats were in supporting NATO.

"I’m not sure we know, Dave. Chancellor Brandt seems convinced that he can get the Russians and East Germans to moderate their tough policy on family contacts across the Iron Curtain. He says the right things about being a good partner in NATO. But some people worry that he is naive, that the Russians and GDR [East German government] are going along in hopes of convincing West Germans that Washington, not Moscow, is blocking a solution to East-West relations."

Turning to another subject, Al asked: "We hear that the Watergate inquiry has implicated Nixon’s aides. Is he in real trouble?"

"It doesn’t look good for him, David replied. "Judge Sirica forced some of the burglars who did the break-in to admit that they took their orders from Liddy and Colson. That really set off the media. Some of Nixon’s aides will have to be fired. They may even go to jail for the cover-up."

"This scandal is really bad for American prestige over here," Al lamented. "After Vietnam, we sure don’t need more bad news from Washington."

Helen wanted the boys to see Harnack Haus, the American club in which she and David had spent many happy times. As a result they almost missed the plane to Nurnberg but got to Tempelhof in time to be thoroughly frisked by security guards with metal detectors, a first for both David and Helen. They arrived after dark in Nurnberg, and Martin and Anna were waiting at the airport with their two Volkswagens. Martin had reserved rooms at a hotel near his home, but he insisted that they join him and Anna first for cakes and coffee. It was ten years since they had seen each other.

It was striking to see how those years had changed Nurnberg’s physical appearance. The city now looked restored and prosperous. Big cars filled the roads, not just the small ones that had been prevalent before. The old city was crowded with shoppers and tourists. Everything looked very clean. Martin took them on a tour around the larger city, and they stopped at the Palace of Justice where he was now the president (chief justice) of the su-
Withdrawal from Vietnam

The highlight of the tour for all of them was a visit to the courtroom in which David had sat on October 1, 1946, when top Nazi war criminals were sentenced to death for their crimes. He remembered seeing this room from the balcony, but a wall had subsequently been erected, creating two rooms. Martin and his cousins stood where the tribunal and the prisoners had sat. How ironic, David told Helen later, that his cousin was now in charge of this famous Nurnberg court, where Goering and Hess had been convicted.

Martin was strongly anti-Communist and supported the Christian Democratic Party. He was proud of West Germany's accomplishments since 1949, when it elected its first postwar government. During that time the country had both restored the economy and reestablished democratic government in West Germany. But he was concerned because, he said, Communists had infiltrated the left wing of the Social Democratic Party, then in power in Bonn. He did not agree with Chancellor Willy Brandt's policy of building political bridges to Eastern Europe, because he thought it would weaken West Germany's resolve to resist the pressures from Moscow.

"Brandt's eastern policy is very risky," Martin commented. "It gives East Germany leverage to undermine our relationship with NATO."

"But Bonn won't change its policy as long as NATO forces are here, will it?" David asked.

"That's true, but pro-NATO sentiment would erode very fast if Germans were persuaded that Washington, and not Moscow, is prolonging the Cold War."

"Is that possible?" David asked. "Surely the Germans know what Moscow is up to."

"I agree. Still, Moscow's peace offensives do have some effect on public opinion here. People just don't want to think about another war. We have worked so hard to rebuild this country, and many sensible people may be tempted by Moscow's promises of peace."

David remembered this conversation ten years later when the Soviet Union waged its powerful propaganda campaign against NATO's plan to place Pershing II missiles in Germany.

As 1973 drew to a close, the United States grappled with an increasingly dangerous political crisis at home, brought on by the Watergate scandal, and a serious political and economic crisis in the Middle East that had resulted from an Arab embargo of oil exports to the United States. In addition, a congressional ban on funds for all U.S. bombing in Vietnam and Cambodia called into question the Nixon administration's pledge to defend South Vietnam if the Communist Hanoi regime broke the 1973 cease-fire agreement and launched a major campaign to conquer South Vietnam. The future of Richard Nixon's presidency and the credibility of American foreign policy were both at stake.
In November 1973 David had a call from Stan Carver, a friend at the National Security Council, inviting him on a trip with Carver to Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia in December. The purpose, he said, was to "pass the word to local officials and media that the Nixon administration intends to honor its commitments in Southeast Asia."

"That's a tall order, isn't it?" David responded, thinking of the anti-Vietnam sentiment then prevalent in the United States. "What's involved, and how long would we be away?"

"Between two and three weeks," Stan said. "But we'll be home before Christmas."

David had first met Stan Carver at the University of California in Berkeley ten years earlier, when Stan was a graduate student in political science. He joined the ISA staff in the Pentagon as an intern in 1967, and David saw him regularly before departing for Charlottesville the following year. When Richard Nixon became president and Henry Kissinger was selected as his national security adviser, Carver landed a job on the NSC staff and became a specialist on U.S. operations in Vietnam. He traveled to South Vietnam regularly between 1969 and 1973, sometimes with General Alexander Haig, who was then Kissinger's deputy at the NSC.

David invited Stan to Charlottesville in 1972 to address his seminar regarding U.S. policy in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. Carver was also familiar with David's new book on the definition of U.S. national interests. As David thought about making the trip and its objective of building confidence in Nixon's determination to defend America's friends in East Asia, he wondered whether Stan himself fully believed in the message he planned to convey. After further conversation, David understood that he would have freedom to express his own opinions, that there was no "party line" other than that the United States had "vital interests in Southeast Asia" that President Nixon intended to safeguard.

It was an exceptionally interesting experience because David had not
previously been in South Korea. Furthermore, although he had visited Japan briefly in 1964, he had not had serious conversations with opinion leaders there. In this case, he and Carver were speakers at meetings with Japanese and Korean educators and media representatives. David also had not been in Vietnam since his visit in 1962. Now he was scheduled to address a large student audience at Saigon University and, with Stan Carver, to hold a public forum in Saigon. They also spent a few days in Bangkok, Singapore, and Jakarta, where they again met with university audiences and government officials.

David's visit in Bangkok was most enjoyable, from a personal standpoint, because he stayed at the home of Ed and Marge Storing, whom he had known in the 1950s when Ed was David's first boss in the State Department. Storing was economic counselor in the U.S. embassy, and he filled David in on political as well as economic developments in Thailand during the ten years that he had been away.

Saigon was by far the most important part of the Carver-Bruening mission to the East Asian capitals. The South Vietnamese were in desperate need of reassurance that the United States, which had withdrawn its ground forces earlier that year, would remain steadfast in defending them if North Vietnam renewed the war. David and Stan met with top government officials, including the foreign minister. One morning, while Carver spent his time with U.S. and Vietnamese military officials, David spoke to about four hundred political science students at the University of Saigon.

When he went to the university that December morning, it seemed hot even though this was the cool season. The high-ceilinged lecture hall was crowded with students, most of whom were studying political science. David was introduced by a Vietnamese professor, and with the help of a translator, he delivered a carefully prepared forty-minute talk. It reviewed America's role in Southeast Asia after World War II and the U.S. decision to aid South Vietnam after the country was divided in 1954. He outlined the conceptual framework for defining national interests, about which he had written in his recently published book. He concluded that Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon had all decided that it was vitally important for the United States to see that South Vietnam remained a non-Communist state. When he finished he thought he had done a good job of explaining the importance of South Vietnam and the SEATO countries for the containment of Asian communism. He wondered, however, whether it was possible for any American to convince Vietnamese students that the United States, after it had withdrawn its troops, was serious about defending their country.

During the question period, two students asked him easy questions. Then a young man near the back of the hall stood up. Speaking Vietnamese into a microphone, he asked, "Why should we Vietnamese think that
the United States will use its airpower and continue the assistance programs in our country when your Congress recently forced your president to stop bombing? Why is it in the U.S. interest to defend Vietnam if the North reopens the war?”

David was struck by the clarity of the question. He tried to answer with equal candor. “My view is that the United States will not abandon South Vietnam if the North breaks the truce and resumes the war. We have lost so many young men helping you defend your country that it is inconceivable to me that any American president would decide it was a mistake to stay here. I have no doubt we will continue to help you defend this country.”

David believed that his words were true, even though he had doubts about the original size of the U.S. force in Vietnam and the massive amount of military and economic aid that had been given to South Vietnam. He reflected on, but did not talk about, the case of Korea, where the United States had kept troops for twenty-three years to maintain the peace. The United States could do no less in Vietnam, he believed. But within sixteen months, he was proved wrong. An enduring, painful memory of this visit to Saigon in December 1973 was his pledge to four hundred Vietnamese students that the United States would not abandon their country.

When he and Stan Carver arrived at a public forum where they would speak that evening, a young Vietnamese named Dr. Hung introduced himself and said he would be their moderator. He told David that he had lived in Charlottesville and had taken his Ph.D. at the University of Virginia several years earlier. He was now teaching political science and was director of an international relations study group in Saigon. Hung’s English was excellent. He handled the forum in a highly professional manner, doing the translating himself. Afterward, he talked with David about Charlottesville and obviously had very good memories of the university and the people with whom he had studied. David knew a number of his professors and promised to give them his greetings.

In the summer of 1975, David received a letter from Dr. Hung, who was then in California with his wife and two small children. They had become refugees with the fall of Saigon in April. He hoped to settle in Virginia, he said, and asked whether David would recommend him for a teaching job. He was also asking several of his professors at the University of Virginia. David and Helen learned later, when the Hung family visited them in McLean, that they had been among the last Vietnamese to leave Saigon before the North Vietnamese captured the city in April 1975. He told of standing with his wife and children on the roof of the American embassy in Saigon on the day before its capture and being put on one of the last helicopters to leave. The Hungs had then been ferried to an aircraft carrier off the coast of Vietnam.
The Bruenings gave them some household items and children’s clothing. Dr. Hung was no longer destitute because the U.S. government had provided some assistance. It was obvious that the young family felt lucky to be alive. That evening David commented to Helen, “It’s almost unbelievable. Hung was a rising star in academic circles when I saw him in Saigon less than two years ago. Now he’s a man without a country.”

“But he does know Virginia,” Helen remarked. “I’m sure he’ll find a job here.”

“I agree, but think of the agony for him and his wife, not knowing what’s happened to their parents,” David said. “Saigon is a terrible place to be right now. A lot of people are being killed or going to prison for collaborating with us.”

A major foreign policy crisis affecting both the Nixon and Ford administrations had erupted in the Middle East in October 1973 when Egypt launched a surprise attack on Israel’s forces in the Sinai Peninsula and inflicted heavy casualties and the loss of many Israeli tanks. The Soviet Union, which at that time was the major supplier of military equipment to Egypt and was its political supporter, applauded the Cairo government’s drive to reclaim the Sinai area, which it had lost to Israel in their 1967 war. A shocked Israeli government appealed urgently to the United States for help in getting replacements for the lost tanks and other equipment. President Nixon, who was then still in office, ordered an emergency airlift of supplies. Within a few weeks, Israeli forces regrouped and began an offensive against Egypt with the objective, many believed, of capturing Cairo.

Two foreign policy crises resulted from Nixon’s resupply of arms to Israel, and the latter’s subsequent invasion of Egypt. First, the Arab oil-exporting states imposed a ban on the shipment of oil to the United States and Western Europe in retaliation for their support of Israel. Second, the Soviet Union warned the United States that if it did not persuade Israel to halt its offensive against Egypt, Soviet troops would intervene on Egypt’s side. President Nixon, who was then under great pressure at home on the Watergate issue, did not hesitate in the face of this dangerous Soviet threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East. He swiftly ordered a worldwide alert of U.S. forces and warned Moscow of serious consequences if it moved troops into Egypt. Within a few days, the fighting stopped, and Henry Kissinger, recently appointed secretary of state, began negotiations to achieve a permanent cease-fire.

A peace agreement was eventually worked out between Israel and Egypt, but the Arab oil embargo remained in force until March 1974. In consequence, the price of gasoline in the United States doubled between 1973 and 1974, climbing from about $0.40 a gallon to $0.80. Every American was affected by the severe gasoline shortage, by the doubling of the price (which
also severely affected the economy), and by the newly imposed speed limit of fifty-five miles per hour on all highways, a reduction instituted to conserve gasoline. Nixon handled these crises with considerable skill, but the public seemed more concerned at that time with his efforts to shield himself from the Watergate scandal.

The Watergate affair of the Nixon administration came to a head in the spring of 1974 when tapes of the president’s conversations with his aides clearly implicated him in a massive campaign to cover up the wrong-doing of his subordinates and to obstruct justice. The president defended what he called his constitutional right to “executive privilege” to avoid turning over the incriminating material to the court. Finally the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that he must surrender the tapes, and the House of Representatives brought formal impeachment charges against him. Before he was tried by the Senate, in accordance with the Constitution, several Republican senators met with Nixon in the White House and persuaded him to resign. In an emotional gathering at the White House in early August, Nixon bade farewell to his staff and stepped into the presidential helicopter bound for California. He was the only president in American history to be forced to resign from office.

Vice President Gerald Ford was immediately sworn in as the new president. He was the only president never elected either president or vice president. Ford had been nominated by Nixon to fill the vice president’s office when Spiro Agnew was forced to resign in 1973 because of corruption. Ford was then approved by special votes in the House and in the Senate.

At the Federal Executive Institute, the televised departure of Richard Nixon and the elevation of Gerald Ford met with mixed emotions. Some executives thought Nixon should have resigned much earlier. Others thought he had been hounded out of office by a vengeful Congress controlled by the Democrats.

“I don’t think Nixon did anything worse than Lyndon Johnson did while he was in the White House,” Guy Andrews remarked. “The difference is that Johnson had a Democratic Congress that never dared to challenge him.”

“I think Nixon was worse,” Jim Lockhart said. “He may not have known about the Watergate break-in, but he sure used every trick in the book to protect his people. And what about all that money he raised that nobody knew anything about?”

David, who was standing nearby, challenged Lockhart’s view:

“I agree that Nixon was guilty of wrongdoing,” he said, “but I wonder whether what he did was bad enough to force him out of office. I worry about the government’s being in a caretaker status, with the world so dangerous. What if the Russians decide to test us again in Berlin, or Thailand, or Korea? Are we ready to respond after getting rid of probably the best foreign policy president we’ve ever had? I worry about that.”
Gerald Ford was a highly respected congressman from Grand Rapids, Michigan. Like Richard Nixon, he was a veteran of World War II and a former navy officer. He had risen in the House of Representatives to become the leader of the Republican Party's membership and encountered no serious opposition when President Nixon chose him as vice president in 1973. But the job he inherited in August 1974 was the most daunting ever confronted by a vice president, with the possible exception of Harry Truman in 1945. The U.S. economy was not in good shape. Inflation was increasing, largely in response to the jump in oil prices and in interest rates. In foreign policy, Ford kept Henry Kissinger as his secretary of state and gave him considerable authority to deal with the Soviet Union, China, the NATO allies, and the dangerous Arab-Israel conflict. Ford also participated in the Helsinki Conference in 1975, which established the permanent borders of Eastern Europe, including the German-Polish border. Ford met with Soviet President Brezhnev at Vladivostok to build on the negotiations started by Nixon to achieve a SALT II treaty on limiting nuclear weapons. Still, Gerald Ford had never been elected president, and his stature at home and abroad was not that of someone who had won a presidential election.

President Ford's greatest initial challenge was to put Watergate behind him so that he could address the serious economic problems facing the country. Most Democrats and much of the media, however, wanted to bring Nixon to trial in a federal court on the charges made in the impeachment proceedings. Ford had to decide whether or not to pardon Nixon for any crimes he might have committed and try to put the Watergate issue behind the country before the presidential election of 1976. He decided to grant Nixon a pardon, but the political fallout from the decision was so negative that many observers later said it cost Ford the presidential election two years later.

In early 1975 David learned that he had been awarded a Fulbright lectureship at the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth, on Great Britain's west coast. He had been recommended by Harris Collins, a friend at the University of Virginia who had held the position the year before and who said that he and his wife had had a great experience. The timing was good because Jason would be starting college, and Jeremy, who was then eleven, was at the right age for a year of study abroad.

David, Helen, and Jeremy flew to London in January 1976 and traveled by train across England, eventually entering the rather remote and sparsely populated Welsh mountains. A different train wound its way through northern Wales, stopping at every town, and finally arrived in the picturesque coastal town of Aberystwyth, which had once been a favorite resort area for English tourists. A huge winter storm had blown into Cardigan Bay the night before, with waves that shattered the town's sea wall.
When the Bruenings arrived, residents and hotel keepers were cleaning out the ground floors of buildings that had been hit by the high water.

In January, Aberystwyth was not only quaint but also cold and windy. The Bruenings’ apartment, the second floor of a hundred-year-old building, had no central heating, and the windows had no weather stripping. The family had to make do with small electric heaters. Jeremy didn’t seem to mind the cold, but Helen and David did and quickly got more blankets and material to stuff in the window sashes.

The campus of the University College of Wales was situated on a steep hill overlooking Aberystwyth and Cardigan Bay, a lovely setting. The college was small, with only three thousand students, and it concentrated on the humanities. Other campuses of the university, at Cardiff and Swansea, had additional faculties, including engineering and medicine. The university had the distinction of holding the world’s first chair in international relations. It had been endowed after World War I by Lord Davies, one of Wales’s richest men, to honor President Woodrow Wilson for his work in establishing the League of Nations. In 1976 this chair was held by Professor Ivor Jones, a native Welshman, whose specialty was European economic integration. He and Kate, his wife, helped Helen and David get settled in their modest apartment and introduced them to other faculty members. Jones was interested in David’s research project on American presidents who had taken the United States into wars in the twentieth century and their assessments of U.S. national interests. For his part, David wanted to know more about European economic integration and why Britain had encountered so much difficulty deciding whether to join the Common Market. The Welsh professor had questions for David about Vietnam, the Watergate affair, and American politics in the 1976 election year.

Puffing on his ever-present pipe, Ivor observed one afternoon as they talked in his office, “A lot of people over here liked Nixon and don’t understand why he was driven from office. He stopped the Vietnam War, and he dealt effectively with the Russians and Chinese. What’s your view of Nixon and Watergate, as you Americans call it?”

“I know my view doesn’t represent that of most academics at home,” David said, “but I think Congress went too far in threatening Nixon with impeachment. Congress should have reprimanded him for covering up the Watergate scandal and lying about it. But I don’t think he should have been forced from office.”

“Some of our commentators say Congress would not have done it to another president. They say Nixon was hated by American liberals for his anti-Communist campaign in the 1940s and 1950s, that it was pure vengeance. Is that true?”

“There’s some truth in it. Many people argued that Nixon was a threat to American democracy because of the way he manipulated the political system. In my view, he was no worse in that regard than Lyndon Johnson,
who lied to the country about the Vietnam War. I’m not a defender of Nixon, you understand. I’m just not convinced he should have been forced out of office, because it sets a dangerous precedent.”

“It wouldn’t have happened if the Republicans had controlled either house of Congress, would it?” the professor asked.

“You’re probably right. A Republican Senate would have blocked an impeachment.”

Jones summed up the problem. “You Americans do pay a price for your system of checks and balances, don’t you?”

American foreign policy, particularly nuclear deterrence of the Soviet Union, was a burning issue on many British campuses that year. Occasionally, a colleague in the department would ask about American policy in the Far East, or the Soviet Union, or NATO. The questions were polite, but some had an edge. John Roach, for example, was an expert on China and had serious doubts about American policy in Vietnam. His questions were to the point: “What made your Pentagon people think they could defeat the North Vietnamese when the French couldn’t do it in nine years?” Roach didn’t need to mention that the Chinese had had trouble with the Vietnamese for centuries, long before European colonialism, and had never subdued them.

“I think the U.S. military believed that the French didn’t have enough power to do the job.”

“But the French had been there a long time and understood the Vietnamese mentality. They knew what guerrilla warfare was all about. Your military didn’t.”

“That may be true. But the French didn’t have airpower and the resources that we were able to put into Vietnam. I think our leaders assumed that the North would be intimidated by airpower.”

“You and the French had something in common, though,” Roach remarked. “French opinion turned against the endless fighting, and so did yours. The Vietnamese knew you wouldn’t take large casualties. They calculated that they could outlast you, and they were right.”

As a visiting Fulbright lecturer, David got invitations to lecture on American foreign policy from several British universities, including those in Nottingham, Reading, Manchester, and Canterbury. Students’ questions usually centered on NATO and on Washington’s nuclear weapons policy. It was apparent from the posted notices about student rallies that Britain was home to a powerful antinuclear movement, which usually meant anti-American sentiment. A lecturer at Reading University told him that the protests were aimed not only at the United States, as Britain too had its nuclear deterrent force. The objective of Britain’s antinuclear movement was to split Britain from the United States, he said, and ultimately to push it toward neutralism.

David had been invited to deliver a paper at the British International
Studies Association meeting at Birmingham University, on U.S. interests and policies in the Far East. He thought that he had done a reasonably effective job of presenting his paper. But his pleasure was short-lived when a young man rose and asked, "What gives America the right to make defense policies for Europe and threaten to use nuclear weapons that could result in destroying Europe?"

David paused, trying to collect his thoughts and give a reasoned response. Some in the audience smiled and nodded approval of the question. The standard answer was that NATO made these defense decisions, and Britain was a key member of the alliance. But the real thrust of the question was why the United States was threatening to use nuclear weapons in a potential new war in Europe if Soviet forces used only conventional weapons. David responded that nuclear policy was a joint NATO decision. He then added, "I guess I'd have to ask you whether Europe would be better off if the United States had decided after 1945 to abandon Europe, as it did after 1918. It is true that the United States exercises a strong leadership role in NATO, but who else today will assume that role? France? Britain? I don't think the NATO supreme commander should always be an American. But my impression is that most Europeans prefer it that way."

"Professor," the young man persisted, "we understand that America is powerful and should defend Europe. But I don't think Europe should be threatened with nuclear annihilation because your generals think that's the only way NATO can deter the Russians."

After this experience, David sought out colleagues and students in Aberystwyth who knew something about the antinuclear movement and its effect on British opinion. Its appeal was growing, he learned, for two reasons. First, the sheer destructive power of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and their potential effect on British cities terrified many people. Older citizens remembered Germany's V-bomb raids on London during World War II and understood what nuclear armed rockets could do. Second, some British observers who believed in nuclear deterrence nevertheless questioned how firm the American guarantee actually was, because Moscow could retaliate with an ICBM attack on American cities. The issue, a colleague said, was this: would an American president risk nuclear destruction of American cities in order to stop a Russian ground attack in Germany? It was a question that French president Charles de Gaulle had posed ten years earlier when making the case that Europe needed to have its own nuclear deterrent so that it would not need to depend on the Americans in time of crisis.

In April David traveled to Oxford University to call on Henry Barnes, a distinguished Australian scholar, who had lectured in Aberystwyth a few weeks earlier. Barnes was interested in his research on the definition of a country's national interests and invited him to have lunch at All Souls Col-
lege, where he was doing research that year. David walked up a narrow staircase of the six-hundred-year-old building and knocked on a door. The Australian invited him into his tiny office, which was stacked with papers and books. There was barely room for a guest chair.

"It's not spacious," Barnes observed, "but have a look at the view."

Leaning across the desk, David saw the college's old stone buildings and garden and, in the distance, the dome of the Radcliffe Camera, part of Oxford's Bodleian Library, and the spire of St. Mary's church on High Street. "Very impressive," he commented.

"If you want to be at Oxford these days," Henry said, "you accept accommodations that aren't like those in the States or in Australia. But the intellectual atmosphere here is great."

They lunched in a small publike eating room at All Souls, sitting in close quarters with other scholars. After lunch they looked into the college library, the dining hall, and a large seminar room that David thought had an extraordinarily beautiful painted ceiling.

"What a fine place to hold a seminar," he exclaimed. "You must feel inspired here."

"It's one of the great academic meeting halls in Oxford," Barnes said. "I always enjoy it here."

The most interesting trip the Bruenings made outside Britain that spring was to Moscow at the end of April, just as a big parade in Red Square was being readied for May Day. The three-day tour was organized by Intourist, whose guide met their Aeroflot jetliner at Moscow's international airport and accompanied them throughout the visit. The food and service provided at their assigned hotel, the Ukraine, left much to be desired. It was David and Helen's first visit to the Soviet Union, and they didn't know what to expect. Would they be followed? They were delighted to learn on the evening of their arrival that they and Jeremy were free to go off on their own to see Red Square.

They rode the tram from near the hotel but couldn't figure out how to pay. A young Russian, probably a student who spoke a little English, showed them a machine. But when David handed him a large ruble note, he laughed and said not to worry because nobody checked. Red Square, with its ornate buildings spotlighted, was beautiful that evening. Not many people were in the square, and only a short line waited to enter Lenin's tomb. As they stood looking at the high Kremlin Wall, David remarked, "So this is the heart of the Soviet empire!"

When they took a guided tour of the Kremlin the next day, it turned out to be much larger and architecturally more beautiful than they had expected. The churches and museums were exceptionally interesting. They were surprised to hear from the guide that Ivan the Terrible was, in fact, a good czar until old age, when he earned the name by which he is known in
history. In the afternoon David and Jeremy toured the Moscow Science Museum while Helen visited the GUM department store, which she said was poorly stocked with goods. Jeremy was excited to see the first manned space capsule to orbit the earth.

The next day, on Sunday, Red Square was filled with school children practicing for the May Day parade. The huge banners and Soviet flags and crowds of young people showed how well the authorities mobilized the schools for this major Soviet holiday. In the afternoon the Bruenings were escorted to a duty-free store, where they were encouraged to purchase Russian goods for hard currency. There was little worth buying, however, except Russian vodka, which they decided was too heavy to carry. So David and Jeremy looked at a Russian-made compact radio and asked the clerk, who seemed bored by his job, to let them test the radio's sound.

"It doesn't have a battery," the young man replied coldly.

"Could we put one in?"

"No, we don't have any," he said in a tone suggesting that he couldn't care less whether he sold the radio and that he certainly didn't want to be bothered with impertinent questions.


Their Russian guide, a woman in her forties, spoke good English but was not interested in casual conversation. The only time they penetrated her mask was when David asked whether Russian men still ran the country. Her eyes flashed and she said with some emotion, "This country is run by men. And they never let you forget it."

"So much for equality in the classless society," David said. This time Helen laughed.

The Bruenings were certain almost from the first that their hotel room was bugged, and so Jeremy and his father engaged in conversation that they assumed would be overheard, some of it not complimentary to Russians. Whether as a result of this game or not, Jeremy's school notebook was missing when they returned that afternoon. There was no evidence of a break-in, but David concluded that the KGB, knowing they were American, had taken the notebook in the belief that it was his. It did not reappear.

Helen reminded Jeremy that some Russians were kind. "Don't forget that nice woman who gave you an Easter egg yesterday. I think she really liked you, Jerry."

Their tour included a visit to the Bolshoi, where they heard an opera. The famous theater was as large and handsomely decorated as they had heard, but Helen would have preferred to see the Bolshoi Ballet, a treat that had to wait for another visit to Moscow. One other evening they went to the Moscow Circus. For Jeremy, the performing bears were the highlight. The three Americans sat among ordinary Russians who seemed as fascinated by
this act as the Bruenings, who had never seen performing bears. David remarked that the many kids looked just like Americans at a circus.

The final morning they were awakened by the hotel at 4:30 in order to get a bus to the airport at 5:30 for their flight to England, which they hoped would leave around 9:00 o’clock. The process of going through customs and immigration was totally frustrating. No one seemed to know which lines to get in. The officials did not answer questions, and their guide refused to say more than that this was the reason they had to be there so early—"to finish all the checking." When the plane finally lifted off at 10:00 A.M., Helen remarked that she would like to see Moscow again, but preferably when the Russians offered some semblance of service, even a little courtesy. David laughed and Jeremy grinned at her suggestion.

The final touch came just as they reached the bottom of the plane’s ramp at Gatwick Airport. David discovered that he had left his new English tweed hat on the plane and asked a stewardess whether he could go back and get it, or have someone bring it to him.

"That's impossible," the steely-faced young woman replied. No regrets, no smile. David concluded that this was just another example of Russia's rigid society.

To commemorate July 4, 1976, the bicentennial of American Independence, Ivor Jones planned to sponsor a conference on two hundred years of U.S. foreign policy. The site was to be the large country house that Lord Davies had bequeathed to the university. Helen and Jeremy had decided to fly home early so they could celebrate July 4 in Washington with Jason, who had finished his first year at the University of Virginia and was working that summer in the State Department.

After seeing his wife and son off at Heathrow in late June, David had an idea for a way of celebrating July 4 in Wales. He discussed it with Jim Pettibone, a young American scholar who was doing research on British policy in the Middle East. "Jim, what do you think about throwing a reception at my place on the fourth and inviting our British colleagues? We could even invite the principal to come and help us celebrate this two hundredth birthday." The "principal" was the university chancellor.

Jim liked the idea and said he would help. David suggested they put a copy of the Declaration of Independence in a prominent place and see who could guess what the document was. Jim found a copy in the library and arranged for its reproduction. He also suggested that they ask two faculty colleagues, known for their acting ability, to put on a skit depicting King George III's reaction to the American colonists' manifesto. The English friends agreed with pleasure and started writing their script.

On July 4, while Helen, Jason, and Jeremy enjoyed the festivities at the Washington Monument, the invited guests showed up at David's apart-
ment, including the principal, Sir Geronwy Gwyn, and his wife. Harris Collins, David’s friend at the University of Virginia who had come from the States to participate in Ivor Jones’s conference, was also present. By the time Sir Geronwy arrived, the guests knew about the contents of the paper on the mantle. They watched as David led him over to look at it.

"Principal, do you recognize this document?" he asked. The puzzled official put on his glasses and tried to make out the handwriting on the paper, which had not been enlarged as much as Jim had hoped it would be.

"I can’t say that I do," he answered. "The writing isn’t very legible, is it?"

"Let me give you some help," David responded, smiling. "This is a copy of the American Declaration of Independence. The Americans sent it to King George III two hundred years ago on this date. It seemed fitting to post it here today."

Sir Geronwy smiled, put away his spectacles, turned toward the assembled guests, and proposed a toast: "To our American friends!" They all raised their glasses.

Brian Calley and Robbie Wright performed their skit. It was a hilarious imaginary dialogue between George III and Lord North, his prime minister, when the American declaration was received. Wright played the incredulous British king who was outraged by the effrontery of his American subjects, and Calley played Lord North, whose task was mollifying the king. David later wished he had arranged to record the dialogue—ideally, on videotape.

A week later David flew home, deposited his luggage in Charlottesville, and went on to Michigan, where he joined Helen, Jeremy, and Herbert and Martha at their summer cottage in Linwood. Herbert voiced definite ideas about who he thought should win in the November election. "I think Gerry Ford did a fine job of taking over after Nixon resigned," he said. "I like the idea that he’s from Michigan. He’s the first president from this state, you know."

"But won’t his pardon of Nixon for Watergate lose him a lot of votes?" David asked.

"I don’t think so," his father replied. "He’s done such a good job of making the country feel proud this year that people won’t hold that against him. It’s time we put Vietnam and Watergate behind us."

"I hope you’re right, Dad," David said, but was not convinced. "This country needs stability right now. The Europeans wonder if we are tearing ourselves apart these days, first over Vietnam and then over Watergate. It’s not good for our relations with NATO. The Russians know it too."

David was glad to be home again and to begin a new writing project on why the United States decides to go to war and the consequences of that decision. Vietnam and Watergate were closely linked, he believed. Would the country soon recover from these two national political disasters?
President Gerald Ford set a fine example of steadiness during the bicentennial year of 1976 and won plaudits from the media for his leadership during the Independence Day celebrations. Yet the public did not choose him as president in the general elections held that November. Because of Vietnam and Watergate, the United States remained a deeply divided country.

Jimmy Carter, a former governor of Georgia and the Democratic Party's presidential nominee, won a close election and took office in January 1977. He had campaigned as a Washington outsider and had pledged, if elected, to "clean up the mess in Washington." Many thought his victory resulted from President Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon in 1974 for his wrongdoing in connection with the Watergate scandal. But Carter also profited from voters' dissatisfaction with Ford's inability to get legislation passed by a Democratic-controlled Congress. Carter had created high public expectations for a "new look" in government, but he displayed a serious lack of political skill in working with a Congress controlled by his own party. Thomas "Tip" O'Neill, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, remarked in the spring of 1977 that the president simply didn't understand that Congress is a coequal branch of government and that, as such, it expected to be persuaded, not instructed, regarding the president's legislative program. Adding to Carter's difficulties was a bleak economic situation over which he had little control. Growing inflation, high interest rates, and rising unemployment prevailed during most of his term in office.

Carter received credit for defusing a dangerous political backlash in Latin America by concluding two important treaties that provided for gradually turning over the Panama Canal to Panama, a process to be completed by 1999. Nevertheless, many Republicans charged that the agreements sold out a vital U.S. interest in Central America.

President Carter also received credit for establishing full diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China and welcoming Deng
Xiaoping, China’s senior leader, on his only visit to the United States. Republican criticism of this move was muted because Richard Nixon had made the first official U.S. opening to China in 1972.

In addition, Jimmy Carter received much praise for his personal efforts in 1978-1979 to forge a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, culminating in the Camp David accords in 1979, which were signed by Israel’s Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egypt’s President Anwar Sadat. But Carter’s inability to deal effectively with the Iranian revolution in 1978 and 1979 and his response to the Soviet Union’s occupation of Afghanistan in 1979-1980 caused the public to lose confidence in his ability to handle the nation’s foreign policy.

At Christmas in 1978, David, Helen, and Jeremy traveled to Britain, Belgium, and Germany for ten days. The occasion for the trip was David’s presentation of a paper at the British International Studies Association meeting at St. Catherine’s College, Oxford. The family stayed with Jim and Clara Huebner, friends from Charlottesville. Jim was a visiting professor at Queen’s College that year, and he showed them around Oxford and took them to see the famous Boar’s Head procession at Queen’s College.

While in Oxford, David called on his friend Henry Barnes, who was a visiting professor of international relations and who had attended his presentation at St. Catherine’s. They talked about American foreign policy and about the coming general elections in Britain, which Barnes said the Conservatives would win because the Labour Party was so badly split. At the end of their conversation, Barnes offered to make contacts for David if he wanted to come to Oxford to do research.

From Britain the Bruenings went by hovercraft and train to Brussels and spent Christmas with David’s sister and her husband, who were there on a duty assignment with the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). While there David visited NATO Headquarters at Mons and interviewed General Alexander Haig, NATO’s supreme allied commander. He had known Haig casually in Washington when the general was at the NSC, and he wanted to discuss the findings of his recent book on U.S. presidential decision making. Haig, who had been President Nixon’s last chief of staff before the president resigned in 1974, had intimate knowledge of decision making in national security affairs.

When they met, David told the NATO commander that he was gathering information for another book, one that would discuss the view that America was overextended in its security commitments around the world. He asked Haig for his opinion and was somewhat surprised when he did not reject David’s thesis. The general explained that this was a problem not of U.S. military capability but of political will on the part of the nation’s political leadership. He was very disturbed, he said, by the changes in the
view of America’s foreign policy establishment after Vietnam, and by the deep divisions in the country. He visited Washington regularly, he said, to consult at the Pentagon and on Capitol Hill, and it was discouraging to observe the current lack of leadership. He was specifically troubled by the Carter administration’s vacillation in dealing with the Iranian crisis.

At the time, December 1978, Washington’s former complacency about the Shah of Iran’s ability to weather the mounting public demonstrations against his rule had given way to the realization that a revolution was in progress and that he might be forced into exile.

"Here is a case," General Haig asserted with emphasis, "where one of our staunchest allies pleads for advice on what to do, and we tell him it’s his country and he has to do what he thinks is best. Now it’s too late for him to stay, and we are telling his generals not to stage a coup to prevent the Islamic revolutionaries from seizing power. Can you imagine the United States saying that to people who’ve worked with us for years?"

"Doesn’t Carter understand what’s happening?" David asked.

Haig winced and then responded. "The president doesn’t like to use military power. He will do almost anything to avoid an armed conflict. As a result, we’re going to lose Iran as an ally. That’s tragic."

It was a sobering assessment of U.S. policy by a politically astute general, David concluded, someone who had helped hold the U.S. government together during the last desperate months of the Nixon administration. "If he is right about what’s happening in Iran," David told Helen that evening, "the balance of power in the Persian Gulf is going to change for the worse."

After spending a very pleasant Christmas with family in Brussels, the Bruenings traveled to Nurnberg to see Martin and Anna Bruening. The old city was colorfully decorated for the Christmas season, especially the large market square in front of the Frauenkirche.

"You know, Martin," David said that evening as they were having a bottle of his cousin’s favorite German champagne, "I can’t help comparing the center of Nurnberg with the center of my hometown, Saginaw. Your city is so full of people and activity. Mine is becoming like a ghost town."

Martin seemed bewildered. "What do you mean, ghost town?"

David described what had happened to Saginaw in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of racial tensions and violent crimes in the downtown sector. During the 1960s, the city’s government had invested heavily in urban renewal, but it had not been able to keep longtime residents and shopkeepers from moving to the suburbs.

"I don’t understand why your city can’t solve its crime problem," Martin said with some astonishment. "Can’t the police keep the troublemakers out of the city?"

"It’s very difficult, Martin. My father says that most of the whites
have moved because they no longer feel safe. He says many black families are moving too because they don't want their kids growing up in that environment."

Martin Bruening, who had spent his whole life in the judicial system of Bavaria, found it difficult to comprehend what David was telling him about American cities. To him, it seemed impossible that a great country like the United States, which led the democratic world in resisting a worldwide Communist menace, was unable to deal with a different kind of threat in many of its cities.

Shortly after the Bruenings' return to Charlottesville in January 1979, news came from Iran that Shah Reza Pahlavi and his family had decided to go into exile. Two weeks later Ayatollah Khomeini, a bearded Islamic cleric, returned from a long exile in France to a tumultuous reception from the Iranian masses in Tehran. Within days, Muslim fundamentalists took control of the government, rounded up political and military leaders, and had many of them executed. Many Western-trained professionals were jailed, and some were executed for their roles in the Shah's regime. The Islamic revolution had begun with a fury. Anti-Western rhetoric reached huge proportions, and the new leaders began to call the United States "the great Satan."

In view of the huge changes that were about to occur in Iran and the Persian Gulf region, David had a talk with an expert on the area who taught at the University of Virginia. Abbas Zamani was professor of political science and one of the country's leading experts on Iran and the Middle East. Iranian by birth, he came to the university in 1952 to complete his graduate studies, became a U.S. citizen, and stayed on to teach after receiving his doctorate. David met him shortly after the opening of the Federal Executive Institute in 1968 and invited him to lecture there and conduct seminar discussions. He had several conversations with Zamani in 1979, seeking to understand what had happened in Iran and what the repercussions would be on the security situation in the Middle East.

"Tell me, Abbas," David asked, "was there anything the United States could have done to save the shah? He was our staunchest ally in the Indian Ocean area."

"It's a great tragedy," Zamani lamented. "The sad fact is that the shah was out of touch with his people. He did much during his reign to modernize Iran, but he was in too big a hurry. He wanted to create a modern state and make Iran one of the world's five great powers, but many Iranians were not happy about accepting the changes he wanted to institute. That gave the clerics their chance to mobilize the alienated masses against him."

"Nixon and Kissinger encouraged him to establish a leadership role
for Iran in the Gulf, didn’t they?” David asked. “They viewed Iran as a strategic anti-Communist bulwark on the Soviet Union’s southern flank.”

“Indeed they did,” Zamani said. “Nixon praised him as America’s closest ally in the region and offered to sell him the most modern nonnuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal. You could say it was Nixon who gave the idea that he could be the policeman in the Persian Gulf. In return, the shah provided the United States with important air bases, including sensitive communication facilities.”

“So why didn’t Carter want to help him when the revolution started?” David asked. “Didn’t he agree that Iran was a strategic ally?”

“I think the White House couldn’t make up its mind,” Zamani replied. “On the one hand, they were influenced by the anti-shah propaganda put out by Iranian students in the United States. Also, the State Department was convinced that he would overcome the internal dissension, as he had done many times in the previous twenty-five years.”

“But State and DOD must have told Carter how much was at stake in Iran. Did nobody think of the consequences of an Islamic revolution there?”

“I’m sure they did, Dave. But the Carter administration had been preaching human rights in its foreign policy. The president was bothered by the human rights abuses, particularly by the shah’s security police. He was torn between strategic interests and human rights.”

A serious economic outgrowth of the Iranian revolution was the sharp increase in the price of gasoline in the United States, which resulted from a huge drop in Iranian oil production during 1978-1979. The first world oil crisis had occurred in 1973, when Saudi Arabia and other Arab states shut off oil exports to the United States and Europe in retaliation for President Nixon’s support of emergency military aid to Israel during its October war with Egypt. That embargo boosted the price of gasoline in Virginia from about $0.40 a gallon to $0.80. It remained fairly steady until the Iranian crisis boosted the price to $1.30 and more. These price increases caused serious economic repercussions in the United States, Europe, and Japan and exacerbated inflationary pressures that were already prevalent. To make matters worse, interest rates rose sharply, and the unemployment rate began to approach 10 percent. In addition to these economic troubles, Carter was further disappointed in 1979 when the Senate refused to ratify his Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II), which he and Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev had signed a year earlier. Many senators believed Carter had made too many concessions to Moscow on key strategic issues.

In Tehran on November 4, 1979, a band of so-called students invaded the U.S. embassy, seized fifty-two American diplomatic personnel, and held them at the embassy as hostages under terribly cruel conditions. Iran’s government at first said nothing, giving rise in Washington to a hope that it would send in troops, free the Americans, and make a diplomatic apol-
Within two days, however, Ayatollah Khomeini issued a public statement in support of the hostage takers and condemned the United States for its support of the shah’s regime and plotting against the Islamic government. Khomeini’s inflammatory tirade was seen by many as tantamount to a declaration of war on the United States. The world then waited for the expected strong response from Washington. After all, many concluded, seizing a foreign embassy and imprisoning diplomatic personnel amounted to a grievous violation of international law. Shock waves rolled across the United States and Europe, and members of Congress demanded that military force be deployed against Iran.

David’s FEI seminar held a lengthy discussion on the looming crisis. “I think the White House will have to use force,” David responded to a question. “Carter has been patient since Khomeini’s radicals took power, hoping that we could avoid a confrontation with this new regime. Now they humiliate us.”

“I’ll bet he and the State Department waffle it,” Ted Thomas, a senior civilian with the air force, predicted. “Carter hasn’t shown any guts on Nicaragua. Why should he be different on Iran?” In Nicaragua, the Communists, known as Sandinistas, were winning a civil war against a corrupt Somoza dictatorship and were getting arms from Cuba and the Soviet Union.

“The two cases are different,” argued Carl Savage, a Treasury Department official. “Nicaragua is a civil war, and we shouldn’t get involved in it. In Iran, they’ve imprisoned our diplomats and humiliated the United States. We can’t fail to act.”

David took a poll, asking the class whether President Carter would take military action against Iran if the hostages were not released immediately. Nine members said he probably would, and six said he would not.

David sided with the majority. “Within a week, I’ll bet we impose a naval blockade of Iran’s ports if all our people are not released.”

He was wrong. All fifty-two Americans were held hostage in Iran, under awful circumstances, for fourteen months. They were released on the day that President Carter turned over the presidency to Ronald Reagan, on January 20, 1981.

Six weeks after the hostage crisis began, Washington and the world were again shocked, this time by the Soviet Union’s invasion of neighboring Afghanistan, which shared with Iran a long border on its western side. The bold Soviet action was seen as a serious threat to the strategic balance of power in Central Asia and as a potential threat to the United States’ stake in the Persian Gulf region.

From military bases in Afghanistan, Moscow would soon be in position to exert pressure on Pakistan to the east and on Iran to the west. Some experts thought Moscow might eventually establish a naval base on the Indian Ocean. Others suspected that Moscow had simply taken advantage of Jimmy Carter’s lack of action following Iran’s seizure of American dip-
The Carter administration reportedly was in a state of shock after Moscow moved into Afghanistan. Within a week the White House announced that the United States was canceling its participation in the 1980 summer Olympic Games to be held in Moscow. President Carter also embargoed U.S. grain sales to the Soviet Union and took other economic steps to show U.S. displeasure. Unlike Nixon’s action in 1973 following Moscow’s threat to send troops to Egypt, there were no displays in 1980 of American military power in the Indian Ocean area, either to warn Iran against holding American hostages or to signal Moscow that its invasion of Afghanistan was dangerous.

David had recently gotten to know the editorial page editor of the Charlottesville Daily Progress, and a few weeks after Iran seized the fifty-two Americans he invited David to write a commentary on the hostage crisis. He undertook the assignment with pleasure, remembering an earlier time when he had written editorials for the Ann Arbor News. In describing the reaction of the Carter administration to the Iran crisis, he used the phrase “hostage to the hostages.” It became the heading for an article that appeared with his byline in December. Newspaper writing turned into an enjoyable hobby for him during the next few years.

David’s FEI seminars occasionally traveled to Washington for briefings and discussions on major foreign policy issues at the State Department, the Pentagon, the National Security Council, and occasionally the Central Intelligence Agency. These were preceded by lectures that he gave on the formulation of U.S. foreign policy. The lectures reflected his thesis that decision making in foreign policy is based on the policymakers’ assessment of the U.S. national interests involved in any given situation.

In February 1980, some weeks after the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, his seminar was in Washington for briefings at the State Department and the National Security Council. He had asked for a background discussion of the Iran hostage crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It soon became apparent to the seminar that the State Department’s policy regarding Iran’s revolutionary government was to employ economic and diplomatic pressure, not military force, to bring about the release of the Americans. This policy was consistent with the view, taken by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, that a blockade of Iranian ports would not persuade Tehran to change its policy and could result in the deaths of the hostages.

Regarding Soviet troops in Afghanistan, the State Department officer admitted that no one knew why the Kremlin had taken this risky, even reckless step. There was some speculation, he said, that it wanted to be in a position to take advantage of any potential U.S. military moves against Iran and enhance its own strategic position in the Middle East.
“One theory,” the official said, “is that Brezhnev believes the United States will use force against Iran and seize control of its oil-producing areas in the Persian Gulf. If that happens, Moscow would be in position to grab part of northern Iran.”

Another view, he said, was that Moscow was worried about its 40-50 million Muslim citizens who lived on the Soviet border with Afghanistan and that it had decided to preempt subversion in that area by Iranian and Pakistani agents.

“They’ve installed a hard-line Kremlin agent in Kabul to control Afghanistan,” he said.

When asked about reactions of other Persian Gulf countries, the State Department official replied, “Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States fear what the Khomeini regime is up to in the Gulf, but they also fear a United States-Soviet confrontation there.”

When they left the State Department, the members of the seminar walked six blocks to the Old Executive Office Building, located at 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, for their NSC briefing. Dick Raymond from the air force, a “defense hawk” in the seminar, caught up with David and challenged him. “Dave, you’ve worked in the State Department. Was that briefing typical of how State looks at the world these days?”

“Well, you have to understand,” David replied, “that Foreign Service officers are trained to analyze problems and negotiate issues with other countries, not to threaten to use force. Their job is to find compromises that avoid war. The military’s job is to be in position to fight and win if the use of force becomes necessary to defend U.S. interests.”

“Okay,” Raymond replied. “But after listening to those guys, you would never know that fifty-two American officials are being held by a brutal bunch of Iranian thugs. And you’d never guess the Russians are going to build bases in Afghanistan that are within range of the Persian Gulf.”

“I agree with Dick on this one, Dave,” interjected Bob Holland from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). “Carter should have given the State Department ten days to get the hostages released. He should have moved the navy into the Gulf and threatened to bomb the oil fields and ports if Tehran didn’t release them. Now it’s probably too late.”

“But a president needs to know that diplomatic pressure has failed before he uses military power,” David countered, and “Carter is more reluctant than most presidents to use force in this kind of situation.”

“You can say that again,” Raymond said acidly.

Seminar members had to be cleared through White House security control before entering the Old Executive Office building next to the White House. Their names had been given in advance to the Secret Service, and when they arrived, each was given a visitor’s identification badge. They proceeded upstairs to the ornate Indian Treaty Room, sat around a large
table in leather chairs, and studied the artwork on the walls in the room. Soon George Stanton, an NSC official, came in and sat at the head of the table. David had known him for three years, beginning in 1977 when he had taken a similar seminar to the NSC for a briefing on the Middle East.

Stanton was an expert on the Persian Gulf area and was on loan from the Pentagon, one of several dozen experts assigned to the NSC staff from the Defense Department, State Department, CIA, and several other agencies. While on duty at the NSC, they worked for the president's assistant for national security affairs, who at this time was Zbigniew Brzezinski. Former air force general Brent Scowcroft held the position under President Ford, and Henry Kissinger filled it during Richard Nixon's presidency.

David opened the session by having seminar members introduce themselves and then asked Stanton to talk a few minutes about his job. David asked, "How many hours are you putting in these days?"

The NSC official sighed. "I was here until eleven last night and ten the night before. It's exhilarating work, to be so close to the decision making and to see the president nearly every day. But it does wear you down after a while. I now understand what Henry Kissinger meant about working in the White House: you use up capital, and you don't invest because there isn't time."

Stanton talked without notes for about twenty minutes, giving the seminar a rundown on how the shah had gradually lost his grip on power because of an illness and how the Islamic clerics captured control of the uneducated masses through a relentless propaganda program carried out through the mosques. When oil workers went on strike early in 1978, Stanton said, the shah's government did not take strong action, as it had in the past. Its failure to act came as a signal to opposition groups, both Islamic revolutionaries and dissident students who demanded greater freedom, to begin demonstrations. By November 1978 the situation had become so dangerous that only a massive military crackdown could have saved the shah. He apparently decided not to use troops against his own people. When it became clear that the shah would have to go into exile, the U.S. government counseled Iran's military leaders not to stage a coup because doing so might spark a bloody revolution and encourage the Soviet Union to exploit the chaos for its own purposes.

David asked Stanton why he thought the Ayatollah's government refused to release the fifty-two American diplomats.

"There was an internal power struggle going on, and the hard-liners won out," Stanton responded. "These revolutionaries needed a scapegoat to blame for Iran's huge problems. The United States was the logical 'great Satan' because we gave the shah our full support over the years and because we had a number of bases in the country. We were the foreign devils who supported his efforts to turn Iran into a modern country."
A member of the seminar asked whether the NSC had considered using force as a means to free the hostages.

"It would be very difficult in the short term to bring enough force into the Gulf to create a credible threat," Stanton replied. "People talk glibly about a blockade of Iran's ports and the bombing of oil facilities. But very little oil was exported from Iran last year, and the country got along without the revenues. Blockading their ports would not stop goods from getting through Iraq, Turkey, and Afghanistan. Iran is self-sufficient in food, and the masses don't need imports. So a blockade probably would not work."

"What about the threat of bombing military targets and port facilities?" another asked.

"Threatening to do it won't change the current leaders' minds. What would the reaction be in Congress and the media if we bombed and they retaliated by killing some of the hostages? Using force may make us feel good, but the consequences could be severe."

In answer to another question about what should be done about Russian troops in Afghanistan, Stanton cited the trade embargo that the president had recently announced on grain exports to the Soviet Union. The administration had also gotten a U.N. resolution passed that denounced the Soviet move, he said, and the United States would not participate in the upcoming Olympic Games in Moscow.

"But that won't get Moscow to change its policy in Afghanistan," Dick Raymond said. "I don't understand why the president doesn't at least put some airpower into Pakistan as a warning to the Russians."

"We're looking at a number of options, and that might be one of them," Stanton responded. "The Russians are being subjected to intense world criticism, even from their friends in India. I don't want to give you the impression that we will do nothing about Soviet troops in Afghanistan, but we need to weigh carefully the steps we should take."

Back in Charlottesville, members of the seminar talked at length about what they had learned. Raymond took the lead, as usual, and blamed President Carter personally for the "disaster" that was unfolding for the United States in the Persian Gulf. "Can you imagine Harry Truman or Dwight Eisenhower or Lyndon Johnson or Richard Nixon turning off the Christmas lights in the White House to protest a Russian invasion?"

Audrey Collins, a senior manager at the Environmental Protection Agency, had a different view. She thought Stanton's caution about a blockade was persuasive. "We don't want the hostages killed, do we?" she said. "As long as they are alive, we should try to negotiate with this Islamic government, even though we deplore their policies. If we start using force in Iran, the whole Middle East could explode in war."

In April 1980, the United States secretly launched a rescue mission into Iran, using helicopters based on an aircraft carrier in the Gulf of Oman. It was a desperate gamble by President Carter to free the hostages and
thereby to deflect growing criticism of his policy on Iran before the 1980 election campaign got underway. The operation failed because several of the helicopters that were needed to transport the hostages out of Tehran were damaged. The mission was ultimately aborted on orders from Washington. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who had vigorously opposed the plan when it was debated at NSC meetings, resigned after the mission became public, "as a matter of principle," he said. The rescue's failure led to a serious loss of both domestic and international standing for the Carter administration. One of the president's advisers reportedly remarked that Mr. Carter's reelection chances died that day in the Iranian desert.

Another foreign policy issue that became a media story in 1979 and gave congressional Republicans a new reason to criticize Carter's foreign policy was the emergence in Nicaragua of the Marxist-dominated Sandinista government. As in the Iranian situation during 1978-1979, the White House couldn't decide how to deal with the radically new political situation.

Nicaragua too was debated in David's seminars. Some executives wanted the president to adopt a hard line against what they saw as a dangerous intrusion by Cuban and Soviet agents and arms into Nicaragua and neighboring El Salvador. Others said that critics of Carter's cautious policy were making too much of the Nicaragua situation, that the country probably needed a revolution after the Somoza dictatorship ruined the economy through its greed and corruption.

"I don't see why you guys are so exercised about a revolution in Nicaragua," Bruce Angell argued. "After all, Somoza owned 40 percent of the country and didn't give a damn about the peasants and the workers."

"It's what the Sandinistas plan to do outside Nicaragua that concerns me," retorted Jack Hawkins, who was from the intelligence community. "Their leaders were trained in Cuba, get their arms from the Russians, and are shipping guns to revolutionaries in El Salvador."

"Well, El Salvador's army has been murdering their opponents for years," Angell shot back. "Maybe it needs a new government too."

David asked Hawkins whether he could document his assertion that leaders of the Sandinista regime were shipping arms to rebels in El Salvador.

"No question about it. We have the evidence. The problem isn't the facts but getting the State Department and the White House to draw the logical conclusion. A sensible person would conclude that Moscow and Havana see Nicaragua as a base camp for spreading revolution all over Central America, to El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica." He paused and added: "Some day they'll start a big one in Mexico, just wait."

"That sounds like the domino theory," David commented.

"You're right, Dave. While we have our attention focused on Iran and Persian Gulf oil, Brezhnev and Castro are igniting a fuse in our own backyard."
“That’s scare stuff,” Angell interrupted. “The Republicans want to show up Carter as being weak on foreign policy. They’re blowing this way out of proportion.”

Because of the interest in the Nicaragua situation, David suggested to Tom Merrill, FEI’s director, that the State Department be invited to send a senior officer to speak to the entire class on the administration’s policy in Central America. Raymond Arthur, from the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, accepted the invitation and agreed to address the class in the evening after dinner at FEI. Arthur was a senior Foreign Service officer, had served in several Latin American countries, and was well versed on U.S. policy toward Nicaragua and other Central American countries. He launched into his presentation with enthusiasm. It was an impressive review of the history and politics of Central America, with emphasis on Nicaragua and El Salvador. One of the most revealing things he said, David thought, was that the Carter administration believed the Sandinista government faced such enormous economic problems of reconstruction in Nicaragua that it would curb its revolutionary activities outside the country in order to obtain economic aid and diplomatic support from international lending agencies.

“If the United States is patient and willing to deal with the government of Daniel Ortega, an accommodation might be worked out,” Arthur suggested. “On the other hand, a policy of confrontation will probably drive the Sandinistas into dependency on the Soviet Union.”

David thought that this argument resembled one he remembered from 1959, after Fidel Castro’s Marxists seized power in Cuba. The president then had been Dwight Eisenhower, a Republican whose State Department made the case for dealing with Castro’s revolutionary government because it might otherwise turn to Moscow for help. In both cases it was appeasement, David concluded.

One of the executives asked in the discussion period what would happen “if we learned that the Sandinistas are training subversives and sending arms into El Salvador. Would the State Department then take a different view?”

“We hope it won’t come to that,” Arthur replied. “We have to persuade the Sandinista government that it’s not in their interest to foment revolutions in neighboring countries. If political pressure doesn’t work, we’ll have to review our policy. But I don’t think sending the Marines to Nicaragua will solve this problem.”

The State Department official did an excellent job of explaining the Carter administration’s policy in Central America. But it was not surprising that he did not convince some members of this FEI class that it was the right policy to deal with the situation.

The presidential election campaign of 1980 saw the emergence of Ronald
Reagan, a former two-term governor of California, as the clear choice of the Republican Party. He was an exceptionally effective speaker, and his conservative message resonated with many voters who were frustrated by the prevailing high inflation, high interest rates, and high unemployment. Jimmy Carter overcame serious challenges from within Democratic Party ranks to get his party's nomination, but his inability to obtain the release of the fifty-two hostages in Iran was a major cloud over his reelection campaign. By the time the November election approached, opinion polls showed that Reagan would win. The real question was whether his popularity would help elect a Republican majority in the Senate.

The election turned out to be a huge victory for Reagan, and the Republicans captured a comfortable majority of seats in the Senate. As a result, the president got what his supporters called the "Reagan mandate," authority to reduce the size of government and give the country a large tax reduction. His decisive victory also fueled public hope that the hostage crisis, which by then had dragged on for a year, would soon be ended.

In December 1980, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington sponsored a series of meetings in the Library of the Smithsonian Institution on U.S. national interests in the 1980s. The series brought together scholars who were experts on many regions and countries of the world, and David was invited to participate because of his recent writing on U.S. national interests. Most of the sessions were held during the transition period between the Carter and Reagan administrations, and a good deal of partisanship was displayed by both speakers and participants. David was particularly interested in one panel on Latin America because of the strong statements expressed to the effect that Central America and Mexico were the "dangerous backyard" of the United States. After the session he asked David Westbrook, one of the speakers, whether he thought Mexico's security was in jeopardy.

"If we don't prevent the Communist guerrillas from taking over El Salvador, they will quickly infiltrate northward and hook up with Cuban-supported revolutionaries in Mexico."

"Is Mexico so vulnerable? David asked. "I thought the problem was Nicaragua."

"You have no idea how corrupt the system in Mexico is," Westbrook responded. "My guess is that the power brokers there would make a deal with Castro and the Russians if that was what it took to buy off the revolutionaries."

In Charlottesville, a group of executives at the FEI watched television on January 20, 1981, as Ronald Reagan took the oath of office as the country's fortieth president, and as George Bush was sworn in as vice president. At precisely the same time in Tehran, Ayatollah Khomeini's revolutionary government released a plane that carried the fifty-two American hostages to
their freedom. This was Iran’s way of showing contempt for Jimmy Carter, who had tried desperately during his remaining weeks in office to obtain their release.

In his inaugural address, Reagan delivered a strong warning to America’s adversaries not to underestimate his determination to defend America’s citizens and interests. His voice was strong and resonant. He exuded self-confidence.

“He sounds tough,” said Brian Kellog.

“Yeah. What a contrast to Carter,” commented Barry Beckman. “He really looks presidential, doesn’t he?”

Several faculty members, including David, had joined the group to watch what they knew was a significant change in Washington’s politics. David was especially interested in hearing what Reagan would say about foreign and defense policy.

“What do you think Reagan would have done if Khomeini had continued to hold the hostages?” someone asked.

“I think he’d have done what Eisenhower did on Korea,” George Ambrosini responded. “He’d issue an ultimatum: either release them or we bomb you to hell.” George was known among his colleagues as a “superhawk.”

“What about the Russians in Afghanistan?” David asked. “And what about Soviet and Cuban aid to the Sandinistas?”

There ensued a heated discussion about the implications of the Soviet threat and Moscow’s risk taking in Europe, the Middle East, and Central America.

“We’ve been drifting for six years,” Kellog responded. “After Nixon resigned, we spent our time soul-searching. Reagan got elected because people want things turned around.”

“I voted for him,” David said, “because we’ve got to get our foreign policy straightened out. But I’m not sure he can deliver on promises to cut taxes, increase defense, and balance the budget.”

“I agree,” another executive said. “What was it that Bush called Reagan’s economic program during the primary campaign? ‘Voodoo economics?’

“Forget economics,” retorted Nick Summers, who came from the Office of the Secretary of Defense. “Reagan has to push Moscow to the wall economically and force it to abandon world communism. We should spend whatever it takes to win.”

This view coincided with the one that Secretary of State Alexander Haig and Director of Central Intelligence William Casey later advocated in Reagan’s National Security Council. Casey urged Reagan to take a very hard line on Soviet expansionism in the Third World, a view that later became known as the “Reagan Doctrine.” This policy included a huge in-
crease in budget for the clandestine service of the Central Intelligence Agency.

In late March, David, Helen, and Jeremy drove to Florida and spent a week near Fort Myers with David's parents. Herbert, now eighty-three, continued to question David about national and international affairs, often beginning, "Dave, can you explain to me why . . ." He remained in excellent health. On their return to Virginia on April 2, the Bruenings were driving through North Carolina when suddenly the program on the car radio was interrupted with a news flash: President Reagan had been shot outside a Washington hotel and was at the George Washington University Medical Center, where an emergency operation was being performed.

"Good Lord," David exclaimed, "not another assassination!" He thought instantly of the shooting of President Kennedy.

"I hope this doesn't end up like November 1963," Jeremy said. He had been born on the first anniversary of Kennedy's assassination.

"We just have to wait," Helen said. "He was conscious when they got him to the hospital."

For the remainder of their trip the radio delivered regular reports from the White House. Finally, a surgeon who had operated on Reagan's chest reported that the president was out of danger but would need to rest for some weeks. The surgeon expected a full recovery. Only later was the country told how close Reagan had been to death from internal bleeding. James Brady, a presidential aide, was paralyzed when another bullet fired by the same gunman struck his brain.

Public sympathy and support for Reagan in the ensuing months was enormous and contributed to Congress's willingness to pass his tax reduction package and to increase substantially the Defense Department's budget. Efforts by the White House to make Congress curb federal entitlement spending proved unsuccessful, however, leading to ballooning budget deficits.

During Reagan's recovery period, the mood in Washington was upbeat in one sense but grim in another. The White House declared that the new president had a mandate to make fundamental changes in the way the country was governed. The goals, covered fully by the media, included less government, less taxation, and less welfare spending. The "Reaganauts," as some called them, were euphoric about their control of the Senate. They seemed determined to use this new power to change government policies.

In another respect, however, the outlook in Washington in spring 1981 was grim. This mood was reflected in the Reagan team's conclusion that the United States had fallen dangerously behind the Soviet Union in military power. They were determined to bring the Cold War to a conclusion on terms favorable to the United States and NATO. In regard to the large numbers of missiles, troops, and tanks that Moscow had deployed in Europe, Reagan
appointees believed that the USSR was on the verge of persuading Western Europeans to accept what Stalin and Khrushchev had pressured them to do in the early Cold War period: acquiesce to Soviet hegemony over the European continent. The National Security Council, which consisted of Reagan, Vice President George Bush, Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, and CIA Director William Casey, viewed the world in stark terms and believed that NATO was in serious danger of being undermined by Moscow's military threats. It concluded that the United States was being perceived by its allies and by the Russians as weak and indecisive, and it decided to reverse this trend.

In June David took his seminar to Washington for discussions on the new administration's foreign policy. They visited the State Department, the CIA, and the NSC. These senior government officials wanted to know what the Reagan team viewed as its principal foreign policy challenges in the coming year. What they heard contrasted sharply in tone and substance with what a similar seminar had heard in Washington in 1980.

At the CIA the discussion focused on Central America, specifically on what an official characterized as the "Communist takeover" of Nicaragua by Sandinista guerrillas, who accepted massive amounts of military aid from Cuba and the Soviet Union. Another CIA officer dealt with the Soviet military buildup in Europe and what it meant. At this time, the Solidarity labor movement in Poland was emerging as a political force that challenged the policies of its Communist government. Poland was under growing Soviet pressure to crack down on Solidarity or risk Russian military intervention. The thrust of the briefing was that Moscow faced serious problems with its economy.

"They are spending over 50 percent of their national budget on the military," the CIA official said, "and they are squeezing the civilian economy so hard that it is a wonder the Russian people are willing to accept their low living standard."

"You can do a lot of squeezing in a police state," responded one seminar member. "They don't have a Washington Post to contend with." The briefer smiled.

At the State Department, a senior member of the Policy Planning Staff provided a survey of the world and concluded that, although there were serious problems for the United States in Iran, Angola, and Nicaragua, the Russians had a very big problem in Afghanistan, where they had not been successful in subduing the tribes that had fought outsiders for centuries. Possibly, the official said, Afghanistan would become Moscow's version of Vietnam. Even though the senior Foreign Service officer was articulate and knowledgeable about East-West tensions, and handled the questions in a forthright manner, David commented later that their group had not heard the tough new line that Secretary of State Haig was then espousing.
The session at the NSC was different. There members of the seminar met with army colonel Walter Swigart, a highly decorated Vietnam War veteran who had been wounded several times. Swigart, who was part of the defense group on the NSC staff, left no doubt as to what he thought the stakes were for the United States in dealing with a mounting Soviet threat in Europe.

"The Soviet army in the Ukraine is poised to move into Poland and crush the Solidarity movement," he asserted. "If the Jaruzelski government doesn't crack down on Solidarity soon, Moscow will send its own troops to do the job. Russian tanks in East Germany are in an offensive posture. They are training to make lightning thrusts into West Germany, but at the last minute they swing the tanks away from the border." Pausing briefly, the NSC official said, "In my view, they are getting ready to attack across that border, and NATO is not ready."

Swigart spoke with intensity. David understood why he had been decorated for valor in Vietnam. In his world, there were only friends and enemies, nothing in between.

"Colonel," a seminar member asked, "does the White House share your pessimistic views? What you're saying is that we could be at war any time."

"Plenty of people are worried about what the Russians are up to," the army officer responded. "But I'm probably more blunt than most about expressing it."

"Are the Russians convinced that we will fight if they move in Germany?"

"They think we're not ready. They suspect that NATO will cave in if they push," he replied. "But I do believe the president's tough talk has got their attention. They're very worried by the boost in our defense budget and the new emphasis on readiness."

When the seminar returned to Charlottesville, members talked about their reactions. Bob Rosenbaum offered a good summary. "The White House has a credibility problem with the Russians. Unless Reagan convinces them, and our allies, that he's really tough, we'll continue to slide internationally."

During his first year in office Reagan startled many Europeans and Americans with his blistering verbal attacks on Soviet policies around the world. He was ridiculed in European newspapers as being a "Hollywood cowboy," the implication being that he was not a competent leader of the free world. Some Democrats in Congress complained that Reagan had whipped up war fever and might frighten Moscow into thinking he was about to launch a preemptive war. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was one leader who appreciated what Reagan was trying to do and encouraged him to demonstrate toughness toward Leonid Brezhnev in order to persuade the Kremlin that he could not be bullied. Later Reagan began to talk about an "Evil Empire" that threatened world peace. Such talk brought loud protests from American commentators as well as Europeans.
Many thought it was part of the White House's strategy to prepare the country for a Soviet military move in Poland and to justify the president's request to Congress for a huge increase in the defense budget.

In September 1981 David took a seminar to Canada to study United States-Canadian economic relations and to learn more about Quebec's independence movement. In 1976 Quebec's voters had rejected, in a referendum, the appeal of Rene Levesque, the province's premier, to declare Quebec a sovereign country in economic association with Canada. A major factor in the rejection was a pledge by Pierre Trudeau, Canada's prime minister, to put through the parliament in Ottawa a new constitution guaranteeing a Charter of Rights for all Canadian citizens. Trudeau pledged to give Quebecers a better deal for remaining in Canada than they would get by separating. The trip produced an eye-opening discussion for the seminar members because, like most Americans, they had little understanding of Canadian history or politics. David said in private that if Quebec separated from Canada, the United States might have a potential security problem on its northern border.

At lunch with a group of Canadian government officials, one of them asked what Americans thought of Reagan. Canadians were aware that Pierre Trudeau, an ideological liberal, held a view of America that sometimes bordered on contempt. Trudeau's relations with Reagan were reportedly cool.

“Well, Reagan and Trudeau have different political views,” Tom O'Neil replied.

The Canadian laughed. “Their political views are about as different as night and day. We haven't quite figured out whether Reagan is serious about his strong anti-Soviet talk or whether it's primarily for domestic consumption.”

Hank Brody, from the Justice Department, remarked, “I'd say he's very serious. Reagan has been an anti-Communist since he was in Hollywood. That's where he had to deal with Communists in the actors' guild, and it made him very tough.”

“But now he's your president,” a Canadian responded. “Isn't it a bit dangerous to heat up the Cold War again, now that we have an agreement on strategic arms?”

“Most Republicans and quite a few Democrats in Congress think the SALT II deal that Carter signed with Brezhnev gave too much to the Russians,” Brody replied. “The Senate didn't ratify it. Reagan says he wants real reductions in nuclear weapons, not just an upper limit on them.”

“Well, I have to tell you,” the Canadian said, “that Reagan is scaring a lot of people up here. Many think his rhetoric is dangerous.”

Later several members of the seminar asked David whether their conversation was representative of the political climate in Ottawa.

“He's more outspoken than most officials,” David said. “But he reflects a
deep-seated anxiety that many Canadians have about living next door to a superpower without having much influence on its decision making.

At the end of the year, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger issued his long-awaited plan for expanding America's military strength. The buildup he proposed was startling, both in the numbers of planes, ships, and tanks requested and in the overall increase in the Defense Department's budget. Media reports suggested that the Reagan administration, with CIA director Casey and Secretary Weinberger in the lead, was determined to persuade Soviet leaders that no matter how much their government spent on the armed forces, the United States would do much more. Weinberger's plan impressed the NATO allies, as well as the Russians, that Reagan was deadly serious about matching and surpassing the Soviet Union's huge buildup of forces in Europe during the 1970s. From December 1981 onward, there was no doubt in European capitals, or in Washington, that the U.S. government was preparing for confrontation with Moscow.

In April 1982 another FEI foreign policy seminar went to Washington for discussions at the Defense Department and the White House. David had asked for briefings on the situation in Nicaragua and El Salvador because of the increased attention that the administration was giving to the area. At the Pentagon, James Ramirez, a senior official, was outspoken in his views about the Communist menace in Central America and the Caribbean.

"Make no mistake about it, the Soviets and their Cuban surrogates are determined to turn Central America into our Afghanistan. Their long-term objective is to destabilize Mexico, cause us real security problems on our border, and force the United States to divert attention from Europe and the Middle East. They already have their hooks deep into Nicaragua, through the Sandinistas, and they are well on their way to subverting El Salvador and installing a Communist government there. Honduras and Guatemala are next."

Ramirez, a political appointee, reflected the hard line that the Reagan administration had adopted. He was among those, like Alexander Haig, who believed that Cuba was the place where the United States ought to exert real pressure, including a blockade, in order to stop the flow of Soviet arms and technicians to local insurgents in Central America and the Caribbean. David was impressed by the speaker's bluntness and told the seminar later that they had heard the voice of Reagan administration hard-liners "loud and clear."

The briefing at the National Security Council dealt primarily with Soviet-American relations, which the NSC official said were a bit uncertain because of the declining health of President Brezhnev and the transition to his successor. He reported that Soviet troops did not go into Poland, as some had feared they would, after the White House had warned the Kremlin of the potential consequences. Soviet efforts to divide West Ger-
many from NATO had also not succeeded, he said. In fact, he added with obvious pleasure, a new coalition government under the leadership of Helmut Kohl, the Christian Democratic Party’s chief, had just assumed power in Bonn, a very positive development for NATO.

Following the session at the NSC and before returning to Charlottesville, David walked to another corridor in the Old Executive Office Building to say hello to Randy Jordan, his former FEI faculty colleague, who was then working in the Reagan White House. Randy knew many of President Reagan’s lieutenants from the early 1970s when he was teaching in Sacramento and Reagan was California’s governor. Randy welcomed him and, after a short conversation, said he wanted David to meet his boss, a young political scientist named Richard Burrows, a special assistant to the president. Burrows had been with Reagan’s election campaign and now held the job of director of policy planning.

Soon a short, smiling, and intense young man with a cherubic face came bounding into Randy’s office, his shirtsleeves rolled up, and stretched out his hand. “Hi, I’m Rich Burrows. I read your book on national interests. Good stuff. I had a conversation about it in the hotel pool in New Delhi with a professor from Michigan.”

David was nearly speechless at this greeting from someone he had never met. After learning how Burrows had come to read the book, he said, “I hear you’re running a kind of think tank for the White House.”

“That’s a fancy name for advance planning,” Burrows replied, smiling. “It just means looking ahead three months to a year and giving the president options on the issues he should focus on.”

“Dave has some ideas about European policy,” Randy observed. “He says we ought to do a better job of defining our interests in Europe and the Mediterranean.”

“Are you an expert on Europe?” the White House aide asked.

“I guess so,” David replied. “I’ve done a lot of writing about NATO. I expect to be in England this fall on a research project.”

“Well, how about writing me a memo on how the Europeans would react to an announcement that we plan to withdraw some troops from the continent?”

“Okay,” David responded, barely concealing his astonishment. “But what’s the basis, or the occasion, for the announcement? Why do we want to do it?”

“Because the Europeans aren’t pulling their weight in NATO. They need to contribute far more to the cost of maintaining our forces. Our troops are there to protect them against the Russians.”

“Is that all?” David asked, searching for clues as to how serious Burrows was.

“That’s a good enough reason,” the presidential aide said. “We’re having a tough time on the defense budget right now. Weinberger wants a
lot more money, and the OMB [Office of Management and Budget] is objecting. Reducing costs in Europe will save us money."

Later David asked Randy whether Burrows was serious. Had he taken into account the "explosion his proposal will generate with Al Haig"?

Randy laughed. "Rich is a generator of ideas," he said. "Some of them are startling. He's fed up with the Allies' letting us pay most of the bills for Europe's defense. It's his way of passing the word around Washington that we may be rethinking the extent of our role in Europe."

The spring and summer of 1982 brought to the fore two major international conflicts that temporarily diverted the Reagan administration from its focus on Europe and its looming confrontation with the Soviet Union. The first, in the Falkland Islands, off Argentina, forced Washington to choose between its NATO ally, Great Britain, and a Latin American ally, Argentina, whose military-run government had decided to use force to settle an old claim to the Malvinas, as it called the islands. After weeks of intense diplomacy, in which Secretary of State Haig tried to resolve the dispute, President Reagan decided to give political and military support to Great Britain in its determination to retake the territory. In a short, decisive war, British forces prevailed. As a consequence of its defeat, Argentina's military dictatorship was overthrown, a constitutional government was installed, and within a year Washington's bruised relations with the Latin American nations had improved. Reagan's popularity soared in Great Britain, and Prime Minister Thatcher's government subsequently went on to win a decisive election victory.

The second crisis occurred in Lebanon in June 1982 and brought the Middle East close to a major war. Its cause was Israel's sudden invasion of Lebanon and its attempted occupation of Beirut. The White House and State Department were taken completely by surprise, and relations between President Reagan and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin were severely strained. The Lebanon episode also led to the forced resignation of Alexander Haig as secretary of state. He was replaced by George Shultz, who had been director of the Bureau of the Budget and secretary of treasury during the Nixon administration. Haig was known as a strong supporter of Israel, and it was rumored that he had known something about Israel's planned invasion. If so, he had failed to inform President Reagan that Israel intended to settle scores with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which had been attacking Israel from base camps in southern Lebanon.

Reagan was eventually persuaded to send about sixteen hundred American marines to Beirut to assist in the evacuation of PLO fighters and to persuade Israel to withdraw its troops. The plan did not succeed, however. A Lebanese faction allied with Israel murdered many Palestinian dependents in two refugee camps, and this precipitated public outrage in the United States, Europe, and Israel. The incident brought moderate Arab
countries close to another break with the United States, as had occurred in 1973, and it gave the Soviet Union a respite from international condemnation for its occupation of Afghanistan.

Secretary of State Shultz desperately tried to work out an arrangement for Israel to withdraw from Lebanon and find a coalition government that could govern that fractured country. The American peacekeeping force was joined by troops from Britain, France, and Italy in a joint effort to prevent a wider war with Syria and, potentially, the Soviet Union. Regrettably, no settlement was achieved in 1982 or 1983.

Henry Barnes, the Australian scholar David had met at Oxford University in 1976, had accepted a professorship there in 1980. He wrote David in 1981 suggesting that he apply for a one-term appointment at St. Antony's College, Oxford, as a senior associate member of the faculty. He offered to speak with the college's warden (its chief administrator) on his behalf. After a few months David received an invitation to spend Michaelmas term (October-December) at St. Antony's in 1982.

"This is great news," he said after reading the letter. Helen read it with interest and remarked, "How nice it will be there with Jason." Their son, thanks to a Rotary International scholarship, was studying at New College, Oxford.

"Are you worried at all about security in Washington and London?" Helen asked in September as they were preparing to leave. The threat of Arab terrorism was growing, a result of Washington's inability to prevent the killing of Palestinians in the Lebanese refugee camp. Security was tightened at airports in Europe and the United States.

"Airport security is okay," David replied, "but what goes on in London I don't know. It's not just Arab terrorist groups, it's also the Irish Republican Army. They've bombed a number of sites in London."

"It reminds me of 1973," she said, "when Israel and Egypt went to war."

Jason met them at the bus station in Oxford and helped get their luggage into their flat, located across from St. Antony's College on Woodstock Road, about a mile from downtown Oxford. He also took pleasure in showing them around New College, with its beautiful chapel and dining hall.

Life at St. Antony's for a visiting scholar was exciting. It had only graduate students, from many countries, and international relations was the focus of its curriculum and research. After meeting with its head, Warden Dennis Carter, David attended lectures and seminars at St. Antony's and other colleges and spoke with many professors and visiting scholars. Being a visiting fellow at one Oxford college gave him entrée to faculty members of other colleges as well as to the university's many resources, including its excellent libraries. St. Antony's reportedly had the best food in the university, largely because it had a French chef. The college pro-
vided subsidized meals in its cafeteria, where students and faculty usually ate at lunchtime. Several evenings a week, faculty members and guests participated at “high table” but at considerably higher prices. High table provided an excellent opportunity to have leisurely conversations with interesting people. After dinner the diners moved to a different room for “dessert,” which meant fruit, nuts, and port wine. (Coffee and sweets were taken earlier as part of the meal proper.) David learned that high table evenings were a fine way to get to know people in a short time, including scholars from other colleges.

Soon after arriving in Oxford, he called his friend Henry Barnes, and they had lunch at Balliol College where Henry had one of his offices. Balliol, a seven-hundred-year-old institution, had changed only slightly since David and Helen were there in 1950 to attend a Commonwealth Seminar. A large, modern-looking building had been added to the dining hall to provide a faculty lounge and reception area. Barnes explained that Balliol had no particular specialty in his field of international relations, but the university had decided twenty-five years earlier, in keeping with its policy of promoting diversity in its colleges, to locate the chair at Balliol even though St. Antony’s was the one that specialized in area studies and international relations. St. Antony’s had experts on the Soviet Union, the Arab countries, Japan, East Asia, and Latin America, Barnes said. Still, in answer to David’s inquiry, he admitted that American studies was not one of its fields of specialization.

“That’s a sensitive subject,” he observed. “St. Antony’s thinks there are so many American graduate students here that there’s no need for an expert on the United States.”

Puzzled, David asked, “Then who teaches American politics and foreign policy?”

“There’s a professor in American history at St. Catherine’s, and we have two senior people at Nuffield who keep tabs on American politics. Gordon Hughes, at Oriel, is a historian who teaches a course on strategic studies. He and I supervise quite a few American students. Have you met Arthur Rosser at St. Antony’s? He does international relations with me and also conducts a seminar on arms control and strategic policy.”

Rosser’s seminar at St. Antony’s had about fifteen graduate students, a third of them American. Arthur invited David to join him for the weekly sessions and asked him to comment on the students’ research papers. He found it a stimulating experience and looked forward to meeting with Rosser’s students. After one session, an American student told David, “It’s good to see an American prof over here. We take a lot of crap from some of these Brits. You put things in an American perspective.”

David smiled and encouraged him to speak his mind without worrying about the ridicule. “It’s tough being an American in Europe these days. That’s because we’re exerting our power.”

In November two students representing the International Studies As-
association at Oxford asked him to make a presentation at their meeting on American foreign policy. The lecture, which Jason attended, was held in the library hall of All Souls College. David had admired it when he first saw it in 1976. The title of the lecture was "America’s Future Role in Europe." David was acutely aware of the concern in the Reagan administration that many Europeans seemed willing to accommodate Moscow’s demands without confronting them. During the lecture he used the term “widening Atlantic” to describe what he viewed as a trend in transatlantic relations. The phrase became the title of his subsequent article in the British journal World Today.

Following the lecture he asked for questions and comments from the students. He didn’t get an immediate response, which surprised him. Then one student observed that Reagan was not popular in Britain because he sounded so belligerent. He said, “Mrs. Thatcher thinks Reagan is a strong leader, and she applauds him. But many of us fear he may push the world into a war.”

David responded that, in his view, Reagan’s tough rhetoric might be designed to impress the Kremlin that it was not dealing with President Carter and that he would not compromise on key issues affecting the security of the NATO countries.

When he saw Jason the next day, he asked his son for reactions to the session.

“It was fine, Dad, but English undergraduates aren’t used to having a professor ask for their opinion. They didn’t know how to respond.”

“You’re right, Jase, it wasn’t a graduate seminar. Still, I wanted them to know I appreciate other points of view. I didn’t want to sound as if I have all the answers.”

He found himself on the defensive in a number of conversations at Oxford that fall. The antinuclear movement was gaining momentum, much of it directed against the United States for its buildup of strategic weapons. Protestors were mobilized by Washington’s decision, in response to a request from NATO, to go ahead with the basing of cruise missiles in Europe and, in the case of West Germany, also the highly accurate Pershing II ballistic missile. Leftist propaganda against these weapons was intense in Britain. The antinuclear groups had built a large camp for protesters at the strategic air base at Greenham Common, near Oxford. Britain’s media carried many stories and photos of the demonstrations, some of them violent and requiring intervention by police.

Occasionally when David took his coffee in the junior common room at St. Antony’s, students came over and questioned him on one aspect or another of Reagan’s “warlike policies.” Prime Minister Thatcher, the “Iron Lady” whose nickname recalled her determination that Britain would re-take the Falkland Islands that summer, was a strong supporter of Reagan’s policies. When one irate graduate student pressed him into an uncomfort-
able position one evening, David suggested that if Thatcher were the American president, she might be even tougher than Reagan in dealing with Moscow. "In fact," he argued, "these two leaders are doing what their predecessors, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, did forty years ago when they faced the Nazi threat in Europe. That was another 'evil empire' that had to be overcome," he asserted. To this the student responded that in the 1940s a shooting war was going on, but that in the 1980s leaders should try to prevent another one from starting.

 Probably the most personally rewarding experience David had that fall was a seminar arranged by a friend who had been at the University College in Aberystwyth in 1976. Peter Marsden was now professor of politics at a new polytechnic university in Oxford. He asked David one evening over dinner, when he and Helen were at the Marsden home, to talk before his faculty colleagues about American politics and Reagan's presidency. David accepted but suggested that Peter might also want to invite Jason, because he had studied political science and, unlike his father, was a Democrat. Peter thought it an excellent idea. Two weeks later David and Jason were introduced to the politics department at Oxford Polytechnic as a father-son team.

 The discussion proved stimulating. After David made a short presentation about the ways in which Reagan had changed the political landscape in the United States, Jason talked about the prospects for the Democratic Party. Peter then opened the session to questions. One of them was whether Reagan would run for a second term, considering his advanced age and the serious operation he had had after the assassination attempt.

 David answered first. "I'm not sure he'll run again in 1984. He's the oldest president we've ever had, and many think his health is not good. It's even possible that he could resign so that Bush would become president and then run as the incumbent."

 Jason then took his turn. "I can't agree with my father on that one. The Republicans need Reagan to run again, and I'm sure he'll do so if his health permits. And there is no way he'll resign in office and turn it over to Bush. My dad and I don't agree on that."

 The group of academics was fascinated by their exchange, which would probably not have occurred had the two of them been British. David too was pleased and confessed that Jason was no doubt right: the Republicans would pressure Reagan to run again even if he preferred to retire to California.

 The Bruenings returned home for Christmas, and in January 1983 David attended a session on European security at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars in Washington. He used the occasion to stop by the Old Executive Office Building to see Richard Burrows, who had expressed interest in getting his impressions of the mood in Britain. They had a wide-ranging
conversation in the White House aide's office, which overlooked the south lawn of the White House. Burrows remarked that Britain was a key factor in Reagan's coming facedown with the Russians: "Thatcher is taking a real pounding in Parliament for agreeing to accept cruise missiles." He added that the United States was fortunate to have such a realistic and tough partner in Europe at that time. If the Labour Party were in power," he observed, "there would be little chance of forcing Moscow to abandon its drive to split the Atlantic Alliance."

Burrows also talked obliquely about a secret new weapon that he said could transform the military balance of power with the Soviet Union. Two months later, in late March, President Reagan announced that he wanted to build a missile defense shield in space that was theoretically capable of destroying Soviet missiles in flight. David then realized that Burrows might have known something about Reagan's plan for a Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), which the media soon dubbed "Star Wars." Reagan had kept the plan a deep secret because he knew that congressional critics and many scientists in and out of government would try to kill the program before it got a proper hearing. He was right. The SDI proposal was ridiculed by most scientists and by budget experts within the administration and Congress. Some military commanders opposed the plan because it threatened to divert resources from the conventional and strategic weapons buildup. The Star Wars label was quickly picked up by the European media, and skeptics were soon arguing that Ronald Reagan had committed a great blunder.

The criticism was peripheral to Reagan's central objective, however, which was to persuade Soviet leaders, especially the Russian military, that the strategic weapons on which they had spent trillions of rubles would be obsolete once SDI became operational. SDI was designed in part to force the Kremlin leadership to face this stark reality: either find additional funds to match the U.S. effort, or give up the Cold War. As one pundit put it in the spring of 1983, it was "crunch time" in East-West relations.

During 1983 David worked on a book that he tentatively titled America Overcommitted. He had become persuaded that the United States, for all its wealth and power, would not continue to defend all of the countries to which it was committed because of the mounting costs. One of the experts he talked with was Roger Broderick, a professor at Johns Hopkins University whom he had consulted in 1971 when he was writing his first book about U.S. national interests. Broderick was currently on leave so that he could serve on the State Department's Policy Planning Council. He had talked to a seminar from FEI in May and had given what David considered an excellent analysis of the policies that Reagan and Secretary of State Shultz were pursuing. Afterward, over lunch, they discussed David's new project.

Roger had read a preliminary draft of a chapter on Europe and of-
fered a comment. "Dave, some people will say that you sound a bit like an isolationist. You want to reduce our troop strength in Europe, and you want the Europeans to pay more of the defense bill."

"You know I'm an internationalist," David responded. "I'm simply pointing out that the European countries and Japan and Korea are prosperous today and should be contributing much more to the containment of the Soviet Union. I don't say we should abandon Europe, or East Asia, or the Middle East. But we do need to get our obligations in line with our costs."

"Still, as a result of what you're proposing," Broderick went on, "Moscow and our allies will conclude that we're tired of the Cold War and want to cut a deal. The Reagan administration is committed to ending the Cold War on terms that are favorable to us. We can't do that if we make the burden sound too heavy. It will appear as if we haven't the perseverance."

David had a deep respect for his friend's views, which had been consistently hardheaded since the 1950s. This conversation caused him to reconsider how far he wanted to push the "burden-sharing" theme.

"Rog, I'm as tough a cold warrior as you are," he said at length. "Where we may differ is on the cost of trying to defend the whole world, especially when our economy is not in good shape financially and the deficits are mounting. Let me think about it. I appreciate your good counsel."

In late fall he went back to St. Antony's for two weeks and interviewed a dozen British foreign policy experts and a few Americans. He was in London when the House of Commons debated the American cruise missile plan, and many demonstrators were arrested for violent protests. The German Bundestag had recently voted in favor of installing these weapons, together with Pershing II missiles, in West Germany. It was a major achievement for Chancellor Helmut Kohl and a stunning blow to Soviet hopes of turning the Federal Republic away from its solidarity with NATO on deployment of these missiles. Former chancellor Helmut Schmidt, a Social Democrat, supported Kohl on this vital vote.

David spent a long lunch with Henry Barnes discussing the new situation in Europe.

"What will the Russians do now that the missiles are going into Germany and Britain?" David asked.

"My guess is they won't do anything," Barnes said. "They have a leadership crisis, with their old men passing on. They seem baffled by Reagan and worried that he may provoke a war they can't win. If the NATO alliance holds together, I think Moscow will have to change course."

"I wonder if their current leadership has any idea how bad conditions are in Russia?"

"The KGB probably knows. And the military is scared to hell about Reagan's Star Wars. So I think Reagan is in a good position to press them very hard to change course."
"You know," David remarked, "you're talking like some of Reagan's
advisers. They've said for three years that the Soviet economy is bankrupt
and that the Kremlin can't match our defense buildup, especially SDI. What
do you say to that?"

Barnes laughed. "Well, I'd like to be paid as well as those advisers," he
said.
The year 1984 was a crucial one in United States–Soviet relations. It marked another transition period in the Kremlin’s top leadership, and it was the year in which Ronald Reagan campaigned for a second term in the White House. In Moscow, a second leadership transition in three years was occurring because Yuri Andropov, who had succeeded Leonid Brezhnev as president and leader of the Communist Party in 1981, had died and was replaced by Antonin Chernenko, another aging Politburo member. Most Russia watchers agreed that Chernenko’s appointment was a temporary one until the Soviet leadership could agree on a leader from among the younger generation of party members. For the aging Soviet Politburo, the continuity of Soviet leadership was the highest priority. For the U.S. Republican Party, Ronald Reagan’s reelection was the crucial test of whether the United States would persevere in its effort to end the Cold War on favorable terms.

Early in 1984 the White House staff began to think seriously about how to enhance President Reagan’s prospects for reelection. Two foreign policy issues appeared to threaten his chances of serving a second term. One was America’s involvement in Lebanon’s externally supported civil war. The other was Reagan’s image among many voters as a “hawk” where the Soviet Union was concerned. His closest advisers therefore decided to defuse both issues before the presidential primaries got underway in February.

Lebanon had been a festering diplomatic sore for the United States for a decade, and there was no remedy in sight. The issue deteriorated into a serious political wound for Reagan in October 1983 when 241 American marines were killed in their barracks near Beirut airport by a Muslim terrorist driving a truck loaded with explosives. Shock waves hit the American public, and members of Congress demanded to know who was responsible for the deplorable breach of security. Secretary of Defense Weinberger searched for an explanation for the tragedy, but the larger question was political: why had U.S. Marines been placed in an untenable role in Lebanon?
When the president agreed to send approximately sixteen hundred marines to Beirut as peacekeepers in September 1982, the stated objective was to stop a civil war there and persuade Israel, Syria, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to withdraw their troops from the country. U.S. peacekeeping forces, along with those of Britain, France, and Italy, were expected to withdraw from Lebanon after a few months when it was hoped that a new Lebanese government would be in place. As the months went by, however, it became clear that neither Syria nor Israel was willing to withdraw, even though the PLO had evacuated its forces late in 1982. In the summer of 1983, groups of Lebanese militia, supported by arms from Syria and Iran, began sniper firing on American marines stationed near Beirut airport, south of the city. After a year of negotiations, these local Muslim groups concluded that the United States was in reality supporting Israel's objectives in Lebanon. American peacekeepers were thereafter targeted for attack. When the incidents increased that autumn, congressional leaders in Washington demanded that President Reagan declare that there was a threat to U.S. military forces, in accordance with provisions of the 1973 War Powers Resolution.

David's FEI foreign policy seminar met in September 1983 and was preoccupied with the crisis in Lebanon. He asked for a show of hands on the issue of American peacekeeping. "How many of you think we should pull out of Lebanon?" The federal executives divided about three to two against withdrawing. He then asked each side to give its reasons. Bernie Rosenberg, a strong supporter of Israel, spoke first.

"Lebanon is not an independent country, and it has no viable government. Syria manipulates Lebanese politics so that it can set up a protectorate and control the country. If we leave, we'll be turning it over to Syria, a terrorist state. And that's not in our interest."

"I support Bernie on staying," said Bud Ames, "but we'll have to beef up our presence in Beirut if we expect to have any influence on the outcome of this struggle. We need Beirut as a friendly place in the eastern Med. Leaving now would send a message to the Israelis and the Arabs that we don't have a vital interest in that area."

"Okay," David interjected. "Let's hear from the other side."

John Cardenas spoke first. "We should not have gotten sucked into Lebanon in the first place. The Israelis started this whole thing with their invasion into Lebanon last year. Now we are supposed to pick up the pieces. I say we should tell the Syrians and the Israelis that we are pulling out, and they should negotiate the best deal they can get."

"But John," Rosenberg protested, "giving Syria a hold on Lebanon is the same as turning it over to Moscow. They are in bed together. You know that."

"That may be true," Cardenas responded, "but we have to decide what our interests are. I say we don't need to be involved in Lebanon as
long as we have bases in Turkey and Israel and Egypt. That's enough to keep the Russians honest.”

Ruth Enders, a scientist with the Energy Department, joined in the fray.

“I don’t think the State Department and White House have given us a good enough reason to keep American troops in Lebanon. I don’t oppose their being in Beirut if we have a strong national interest there. But I don’t know that we do. So why keep marines in that dangerous place if it’s only to show the flag?”

Bob Hammond, a former marine who worked for the Defense Department, spoke up. “I don’t know why the hell we are there except maybe to save Israel’s face after its disastrous invasion last year. Besides, marines are trained to fight, not to be passive peacekeepers, for God’s sake. If we need peacekeeping, let the U.N. do it.”

It was a fascinating discussion, David thought, and went to the heart of the U.S. foreign policy dilemma in the eastern Mediterranean in 1983.

When the bombing disaster occurred on October 23 and killed 241 marines, another foreign policy crisis was quickly developing in the Caribbean island nation of Grenada. There a Marxist-oriented government, under the leadership of Maurice Bishop, was on the verge of being overthrown by hard-core Communists who were planning, U.S. intelligence sources said, to turn the island into a base for Cuban and Soviet subversive operations in the Caribbean Basin area. Nearly one thousand American students, most of them studying medicine, resided in Grenada, and President Reagan sent a military task force to evacuate them in order to prevent their being taken hostage if a civil war erupted. On the same weekend that the bombing disaster occurred in Beirut, a coup d’etat was staged in Grenada, and Prime Minister Bishop was murdered by the conspirators.

Some commentators in the United States and abroad suggested that Reagan had staged the Grenada crisis as a way to divert public attention from the debacle in Lebanon. But the facts, later revealed, pointed to a Cuban-supported coup d’etat in Grenada. American students were safely evacuated, order was restored within a few days with the help of a U.N. peacekeeping force, and the Communist conspirators were jailed. Several hundred Cuban troops, disguised as workers, were sent home.

American public and congressional reaction against American marines remaining in Lebanon became so strong that the White House decided in December 1983 on a gradual disengagement from Lebanon. Nevertheless, a fierce debate raged in the Reagan administration, the press, and Congress over whether the U.S. troops should instead be reinforced and the American role in Lebanon expanded. The debate caused David to write a newspaper commentary entitled “President Should Disengage Troops from Lebanon.” He argued the case against escalation on three grounds. First, it would put the marines in a combat role and require them
to secure a large area around the city of Beirut. Second, the United States would be taking sides in Lebanon’s civil war, a role that Congress should debate under the War Powers Resolution and one that was certain to stir up a Vietnam-type backlash. Third, America would lose the support of key NATO allies if it took on the role of occupying power in Lebanon. He cited reports that Israel had pulled back its own forces from Beirut because of casualties but was urging the White House to increase the American presence. He ended with this assertion: “President Reagan would be wise to disengage U.S. Marines from Lebanon before the United States loses all its friends and much of its prestige in this Vietnam-type environment.”

When he showed the article to his seminar, Perry Thompson, who worked in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, challenged him. “Dave, do you really think Lebanon is not an important strategic asset for the United States?”

“It’s not a vital interest for us, Perry. We have to look carefully at the costs of any military commitment before we decide if something is vital—worth going to war over.”

“But withdrawing our troops after we staked our prestige on helping Lebanon to get a viable government will hurt our reputation all over the world,” Thompson argued. “Isn’t our credibility an important part of being a great power?”

“You sound like Dean Rusk,” David said, smiling. “He used to argue that if we pulled out of Vietnam under fire, none of our allies would trust us to defend them.”

“But this isn’t anything like Vietnam. We don’t have to secure all of Lebanon, just the greater Beirut area.”

“Okay,” David responded, “but look at it this way: a friendly Lebanon allied with Israel may be a vital interest to Israel, and perhaps to Egypt. But that doesn’t make it a vital interest for the United States, even though we have some interest in it. I just don’t see any real basis for our putting thousands more American forces into Lebanon.”

In January 1984 the Defense Department started withdrawing U.S. Marines from Beirut, and early in February, while President Reagan was in California, Vice President George Bush signed off on the order to put all the troops aboard ships that were stationed offshore from Lebanon. The British, French, and Italian governments were stunned by Washington’s decision to withdraw, and soon they too pulled their forces out. Washington’s decision to withdraw was a serious blow to Israel’s security objectives in Lebanon. The episode was viewed by many as a major political defeat for the United States, and it left bitterness in the U.S. military, which believed that marines should not have been placed in a precarious situation without being reinforced. “Peacekeeping” got a bad name in the United States as a result of the Beirut bombing.
An astonishing aspect of the Lebanon debacle, however, was how quickly the Reagan administration rebounded from it and built momentum in the president's bid for reelection. Within a month of the U.S. withdrawal, criticism on the issue had largely vanished from the media and from the halls of Congress.

"It's one of the most amazing turnarounds in public opinion I can remember," David remarked to a colleague at FEI in April. "In January, I would have bet his defeat in Lebanon would hound Reagan and be a major election issue."

"So what turned it around?" Chuck Brown asked.

"I think the public never believed we should be there in the first place, and Reagan's withdrawal was a big relief. The Israeli lobby in Washington tried to make the case for holding on in Lebanon, but it failed to persuade most of our officials. Reagan guessed that if he cut his losses early, people would give him credit for good judgment."

"I'm no fan of Reagan's," Brown replied, "but I think he cut loose just in the nick of time."

A second major foreign policy problem that confronted Reagan's reelection drive was his widespread image as a hard-liner who might plunge the United States and NATO into war with the Soviet Union. Democrats were expected to make his diplomacy an issue during the campaign, and his advisers decided he needed to demonstrate a willingness to negotiate with Moscow and find a way to reduce international tensions. It was a role similar to the one Dwight Eisenhower had adopted in 1955-1956 and the one that Richard Nixon had embraced in 1971-1972 during their successful bids for reelection. Accordingly, Secretary of State George Shultz and others counseled Reagan in 1984 to open a dialogue with Moscow on reducing nuclear arms and thereby to calm public fears in the United States and Europe. Moscow had broken off arms reductions negotiations (START) in Geneva a few months earlier, after Germany approved the stationing of U.S. Pershing II missiles on its soil. Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko said that Moscow would not resume the talks until the U.S. missiles in Germany, as well as those in Britain and Italy, were withdrawn.

Despite enormous Soviet pressure in 1983, including nuclear threats, the German, British, and Italian governments refused to bow to intimidation. But by the turn of the year, the antinuclear and peace movements on both sides of the Atlantic had aroused widespread public fears that war was about to break out. U.S. officials were aware, however, that the Kremlin was going through yet another leadership transition because of the declining health of President Yuri Andropov. As a result, Secretary of State Shultz convinced Reagan that it was a good time to see whether Moscow was interested in opening a quiet dialogue.

Shultz had an additional reason for pressing the diplomatic initia-
Reagan had stated publicly during his first three years in office that he wished to banish all nuclear weapons from the world. Skeptical observers in the Pentagon and in some Washington think tanks viewed this talk as White House propaganda meant to divert public attention from Reagan's huge military buildup and from his hard-line rhetoric against the Evil Empire. But Shultz told his State Department lieutenants that Reagan was serious about banning nuclear weapons and wanted to renew efforts to convince Moscow that their eventual elimination was in Russia's interest. With the president's blessing, Shultz met quietly with Gromyko for a lengthy discussion and concluded that additional talks might prove productive. Soon the media reported on United States-Soviet contacts that were taking place in Europe, and it became apparent that war was not about to break out. By spring the president's offer to negotiate on arms reductions enhanced the prospects for his reelection.

Ronald Reagan won the November 1984 presidential election in a landslide against Walter Mondale, his Democratic challenger, who had been Jimmy Carter's vice president from 1977 to 1980. Although Reagan's foreign policy during the election campaign emphasized renewed negotiations with Moscow, on arms control and on reducing East-West tensions, it was also clear as 1985 opened that the administration would not abandon its goal to force a fundamental change in Moscow's foreign policy.

The decision to be firm with Moscow on defense and security issues, while showing flexibility on arms reductions and other political issues, was reinforced in March by news that one more leadership transition was occurring in the Kremlin. President Chernenko died in March 1985 and was succeeded by a younger, reportedly more pragmatic Politburo member named Mikhail Gorbachev. British Prime Minister Thatcher told President Reagan that she had met with Gorbachev the previous year and concluded, "We can do business with him." Soon Secretary Shultz and the White House staff began exploring a potential meeting between Reagan and Gorbachev, which eventually took place in October 1985 in Geneva. The two leaders reportedly established a good personal relationship. Although no agreements were reached, the Geneva summit set the stage for additional meetings which, in retrospect, marked the beginning of the end of the Cold War.

The Bruening family had a series of reunions in the spring and summer of 1985, in three different locations: Nurnberg, Oxford, and Saginaw.

Jeremy, who had finished his first year of college, accompanied David and Helen on a car trip in Austria and Germany. After taking a scenic train trip from Zurich into Austria, they picked up a rental car in Innsbruck and drove to Salzburg, Vienna, and Linz on their tour through Austria. As they neared the city of Linz on the return from Vienna, David noticed a road sign for the Mauthausen concentration camp museum. They decided to
stop because of the significance of this site, which had been used for slave labor from Eastern Europe to make Linz, Hitler’s birthplace, into a showcase to honor the German dictator.

It was an emotional experience as well as an educational one. Upon entering the high-walled compound, they saw a huge monument dedicated to the slaves who lived and died there, mostly people—including Jews and Gypsies—from conquered Eastern European countries. An old barracks housed the museum. A walking tour led them to a huge quarry where the prisoners had been forced to carry rocks up long stairs to waiting trucks, which conveyed them to Linz for the building projects undertaken by the local Nazis. An Austrian guide explained that thousands of the laborers had died from malnutrition and exhaustion and from brutal treatment by Nazi guards. Some of them delighted in kicking prisoners as they reached the top of the stairs, causing those behind to fall back and to suffer wounds that were often fatal. The Bruenings viewed a nearby cliff with a sign that identified the place where Jews had been forced to leap to their deaths for no other reason than because they were Jewish. David spoke with a young man who was leading a group of local teenagers on a tour of the camp.

"The Austrian government requires the high school students in this area to visit Mauthausen. I’m this group’s teacher, and it’s my responsibility to teach them about the terrible Nazi period as well as the better parts of Austria’s history."

"How do you think these young people feel about the Nazi period?" Helen asked, as Jeremy listened intently.

"It’s all so distant to them," the teacher said. "They can’t imagine what it was like back then, the brutality of people. They are like youngsters everywhere."

As they left Mauthausen, Helen asked Jeremy what he thought about the place. "Awful," he replied. "It’s hard to imagine anyone being so inhuman."

In Nurnberg the next day, the three of them visited with Anna and Martin Bruening. Martin had suffered a serious stroke several years earlier, and this made it difficult for him to walk. It also caused some slurring of his speech. Still, his mind and his memory seemed as sharp as ever. David asked about recent events in Germany, and Martin expressed optimism because his party, the Christian Democrats, then held power and was following conservative policies.

"Kohl is a very good chancellor," Martin said. "He’s a strong supporter of NATO, and he doesn’t try to negotiate with the East, as Brandt did. Kohl got approval from the Bundestag for accepting your Pershing missiles, in spite of vehement opposition from many Social Democrats. They sounded like pacifists."
"I read recently," David said, "that the antinuclear and pacifist groups here have much influence on public opinion. Is that so?"

"Yes, it's true," Martin replied, "but the pro-NATO forces are stronger. I worry about what will happen if the Social Democrats get back to power. Helmut Schmidt was a good chancellor, but his party has moved to the left. That's why it is very important that Kohl remains as leader during this crucial period."

Martin asked whether Reagan was strong enough to handle Moscow's new drive to get the United States to stop his Star Wars program, and to force NATO to remove medium-range missiles from Europe.

"I think he's strong enough," David replied. "But there's a lot of pressure in the United States not to negotiate with the Russians until they stop promoting world communism."

"They won't agree to that, will they?"

"I frankly don't know, Martin. One theory is that the Kremlin is deeply divided on how to deal with Washington. Some of Reagan's advisers say this is a poor time to make arms deals with Moscow. Secretary of Defense Weinberger and others hold this view."

"What does Reagan think?"

"Most people think he favors Shultz's view, that he should try again to explore arms reductions because the Kremlin is in a weaker bargaining position since we deployed Pershing and cruise missiles in Europe."

"I must tell you frankly, David, that I don't trust the Russians," his cousin said earnestly. "I think they will try to convince America that they are cooperative and reasonable, but they will help the leftist parties in Europe to turn us away from NATO. The GDR [the East German government] is doing the same to West Germany. I think Reagan should be very careful about dealing with them."

Later David told Helen that his cousin seemed to be more hard-line than before, and he wondered whether his physical decline might have contributed to his pessimistic mood.

"Martin and Anna are products of the older generation," Helen commented. "They lived through Hitler's time, and they see the East German Communists as little different from the Nazis."

"You're probably right," he said. "But I'm a bit surprised that he sees so little hope of dealing with Moscow. If we followed that policy, we would never know whether we could end the Cold War without a shooting war."

They drove to Frankfurt International Airport the next morning, flew to London's Heathrow Airport, and took a bus to Oxford. They stayed at the charming Parsonage Inn, located next to an old church on the corner of Woodstock and Banbury Roads, where Jason had left a message and soon came by to meet them. Their arrival in Oxford was marred, however, by the sad news that David's friend, Henry Barnes, had died the previous week from a fast-spreading cancer.
Jennifer and Bill Stevenson, their daughter and son-in-law, arrived in Oxford the next day, and six members of the family had dinner at Brown's Restaurant that evening. Jenny asked Jason if he remembered what he had told her when the two of them were in England and France six years earlier and had visited Oxford. "You looked around all these old colleges and their chapels and the narrow streets and you said, 'I'm going to be a student here someday.'"

Jason displayed a look of real satisfaction. "You're right. It was a good decision."

The family had come for the annual boat races on the Isis River, where Oxford colleges competed to go to "head of the river." Jason was the "stroke" (lead oarsman) for New College, and his team made a valiant effort to win the final race against Christ Church College. It was a close contest, but they were unable to overtake the lead boat. For Jason, it was a big disappointment, but his family had a great time viewing the scene on a warm sunny day and sipping "pimms" along with the rest of the spectators.

While in Oxford, David went by St. Antony's College to see Arthur Rosser, whose seminar he had joined in 1982. The two men lamented Barnes's sudden death, and Arthur observed that it would be difficult to find a replacement for this outstanding scholar who had brought so much prestige to the international relations chair at Oxford. David then asked Rosser's opinion of relations between the West and the Soviet Union.

"Well, things are better than they were last year," the British scholar responded. "At least we've got the arms talks going again. Our Russia watchers here at St. Antony's think Gorbachev is a breath of fresh air, after all the old leaders we've seen recently."

"Margaret Thatcher says she can do business with him," David said. "She thinks he's less ideological than the others. I'm no fan of Thatcher's, but she's probably right on this one. Gorbachev was trained as a lawyer, and he seems more pragmatic. But what about Reagan? Is he an ideologue or a pragmatist?"

A good question, David thought, because most Europeans viewed Reagan as uncompromising in his attitude toward communism and the Soviet Union. "I'd say he's both," he replied. "Reagan said four years ago that he was ready for arms negotiations but that Moscow had first to give up the idea of spreading communism around the world."

"That sounds pretty ideological to me," Rosser said. "He sounds like a person who favors negotiations only if he can win the game."

"It depends on what 'winning' means," David responded. "I think Reagan is no different from Truman, Eisenhower, or Kennedy in pursuing containment of Soviet power. I suspect Reagan would accept a Socialist system in the Soviet Union if he got a real commitment that the Poles and other East Europeans could choose their own form of government. Also, Moscow would have to give the Baltic states their freedom."
The two men agreed that the next several years would be exceptionally interesting ones in international relations. Neither could have foreseen the extraordinary events that would lead, six years later, not only to the end of the Cold War but also to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

In July David and Helen spent ten restful days at his parents' cottage at Linwood Beach in Michigan. Herbert, now eighty-seven, continued to be interested in international events and wanted to know about conditions in Germany and England. He also asked David about Mikhail Gorbachev, and whether he and Reagan might reach an understanding to “stop the war talk.”

“I'm a little more optimistic this summer, Dad,” he responded. “There might be a real chance that Reagan and Gorbachev can do something about arms reductions.”

David called an old friend in Saginaw, Glen Baker, who was retired from the newspaper business and still very interested in international affairs. He invited David and Helen to join him and Dorothy, his wife, for dinner at the Saginaw Country Club. At dinner they talked about the Bruenings' impressions of their trip to Europe, but David had another subject on his mind: What had happened to their hometown, Saginaw? He said they had recently visited Nurnberg and were impressed at how this ruined German city had been rebuilt after World War II and was now a flourishing commercial center. “How is it that Saginaw is nearly deserted while Nurnberg is a humming city?” David asked.

Glen gave this explanation: “People got scared in the 1960s because of the crime. Shoppers stopped coming downtown, and the stores eventually moved out to the new Fashion Square Mall. Jim Shuster and the city council did their best to save the city, but they couldn't reassure the people about shopping downtown. I tried too, as the editor of the paper, but we all failed. It was one of Jim's big disappointments before he died.” Glen paused and added, “Did you know he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery?”

“Yes, I heard that,” David said sadly. “He was a real World War II hero.”

Helen asked why the upscale Jacobson's department store remained in the downtown area while all the other major stores had moved out.

“Jacobson's has a special clientele,” Dorothy said, “much of it from out of town. They have their own parking right next door so patrons don't have to be on the street.”

“This problem is much bigger than Saginaw,” Glen observed. “Nearly every city in Michigan has gone through a bad time. But in Saginaw, people just gave up the fight.”

That fall David's new book, *America Overcommitted*, was published. It came out at a time when many officials in Washington were receptive to its the-
sis, that the United States needed to pay more attention to the trade-off between commitments to preserve world security and the economic well-being of the United States. He had come to the conclusion four or five years earlier that no nation, regardless of how rich and powerful, could sustain a large international influence unless it accorded a high priority to keeping its economy strong. By 1985, the federal budget was seriously out of balance and the U.S. trade balance with other countries, notably Japan, was increasingly negative. In sum, David thought, the country was not paying its bills. Reagan's major defense buildup was not being offset by cuts in other programs, and taxes were being substantially reduced. Could the country continue its role as a great power without taking a hard look at its worldwide international commitments? This point was underlined when Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger told Congress that more than half of the entire U.S. defense budget could be attributed to America's NATO commitment to defend Europe against the Soviet Union. David argued, both in his book and in the commentaries that he wrote for several Virginia newspapers, that many of the defense commitments that the United States had undertaken in the 1950s should be reviewed to determine whether they were still necessary.

While in Washington that fall, he stopped in at the Old Executive Office Building to see Richard Burrows, who now worked at the National Security Council (NSC). The special assistant to the president had invited him to speak to his staff about certain national security issues that concerned him. It wasn't entirely clear what these were, but David understood that Burrows was heading a new operations center to provide the president with immediate, comprehensive information on any foreign policy or national security issue that might arise.

"Would you like to be my consultant?" Burrows asked.

"It sounds interesting," David replied, "but I'm not sure what my boss will say."

He invited Burrows to lecture at the Federal Executive Institute the following month on Reagan's foreign and national security policy. The FEI class had no doubt that the White House aide was a hard-liner on policy toward the Soviet Union. Burrows also talked to the FEI director and got approval for David to write occasional memos and to meet with his staff in Washington. Some months later David learned that excerpts from his paper on defining U.S. national interests had been included in the president's annual report to Congress regarding U.S. national security policy.

In the early months of 1986, international terrorism directed against American citizens became a consuming problem for the Reagan administration. When Muslim extremists seized American hostages in Lebanon with the help of Iran and Syria, there was considerable apprehension in Washington. Reagan's advisers found ways of buying some of the hos-
tages' release. The hijacking of a TWA jetliner between Athens and Rome in June 1985, with more than one hundred Americans on board, focused media and government attention on the threat to international travel. Another hijacking in October, involving the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro*, and the murder of an American passenger, caused outrage in the United States. Early in 1986 Libyan-sponsored terrorist plots were uncovered in several countries, including the United States.

In March President Reagan decided to respond forcefully. If he did not, his advisers argued, terrorists everywhere would conclude that the United States was powerless to deal with threats to its citizens and airliners. When Libyan fighter planes attacked a U.S. naval ship in the Gulf of Sidra, which Libya claimed as territorial waters, U.S. Navy jets shot them down. Shortly afterward, U.S. planes attacked several Libyan patrol boats and radar stations on shore. Then, early in April, a Berlin nightclub frequented by American soldiers as well as Germans was blown up. Intelligence agencies found proof that the bomb was the work of Libyan terrorists.

At the time David was visiting the Naval War College in Rhode Island, where he delivered a lecture and participated in several seminars on U.S. foreign policy. His friend, Bob Walton, a senior official of the college who was always well informed on developments at the Pentagon, told him earlier in the day that something was "brewing." Then, after a TV news flash reported on April 16 that massive air raids by U.S. Navy and Air Force bombers were underway against Libya's military locations, David phoned Walton. "I guess you knew all about this days ago, right?" he asked.

Bob chuckled. "Oh, yeah. Quite an operation too. Getting the F-111s from Britain down there without overflying France or Spain was a real feat."

"Did we need F-111s to do the job?" David asked. "Couldn't our carriers have done it?"

"The navy could have done the job," Bob said, "but the air force could drop bigger bombs. Besides, we needed to have the British act with us on this one."

"I guess this is Thatcher's repayment to Reagan for supporting Britain in the Falklands war," David commented.

The attack on Libya had two important effects on the Reagan administration. First, the public's response was favorable, and Reagan's opinion poll ratings climbed sharply. Second, the action caused a drop in terrorist activity in the Middle East, especially that sponsored by Libya. Media reaction in Europe was negative, however, and Reagan was criticized for overreacting. French President Mitterrand's refusal to permit the F-111s to overfly France met with an unfavorable reaction in the United States, and sales of French wines and cheese in America dropped. France's refusal and Spain's reluctance to permit overflights of their territory complicated the
attack on Libya because the bombers based in Britain had to fly around the Strait of Gibraltar, a significant detour. Amazingly, only one bomber was lost in the operation. In the weeks and months that followed, Libya remained exceptionally quiet, and terrorism dropped off markedly.

The question of how to deal with international terrorism led the White House into a political crisis in November and December 1986 in what came to be known as the Iran-Contra scandal. It nearly ruined Ronald Reagan’s second term in office. This affair generated more media coverage than any political issue since the Watergate scandal in 1973-1974 because of an attempted early cover-up by a few of Reagan’s advisers. It even threatened to provoke Democrats in Congress to bring impeachment proceedings against the president.

By coincidence, David happened to be at the White House on the day after the story burst upon Washington. He had an appointment to see the chief administrative officer of the National Security Council about arranging for another of his seminars to be briefed on national security issues. While they spoke in the official’s basement office of the West Wing, near the White House situation room, he took a phone call that seemed important.

After a few moments, David heard him say, “You’ll have to talk to Colonel North on that. I just don’t have the answer.” He hung up, explained to David that it was a rather hectic afternoon, and asked him to wait outside for a few minutes while he made what was obviously a confidential report to someone. Outside, several Secret Service guards were screening everyone coming into the West Wing. As he studied the mounted colored photos of President Reagan taken during his recent trips, David spotted a handsome man with a closely cut beard enter the lobby and be escorted upstairs by a White House staffer. David knew from press photos that it was Prince Bandar, Saudi Arabia’s influential ambassador, and guessed that he had asked for an urgent briefing on the so-called arms-for-hostages dealings with Iran.

After about five minutes, David was back in the NSC official’s office. “It looks like you have your hands full today,” he remarked humorously.

The harried NSC official looked him straight in the eyes, grimaced, and said softly, “You have no idea.” Several days later David understood what had happened.

In Charlottesville, a major topic at FEI was the arms-for-hostages deal that Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, an NSC staff officer, had carried out in secret.

“It sounds like Watergate all over again,” David remarked to a faculty colleague. “Nixon had to fire Ehrlichman and Haldeman. I wonder who Reagan will have to fire?”

“What if Reagan knew about it?” Roy James asked.
"I can’t believe he is dumb enough to let a bunch of freelancers in the White House sell arms to Iran to get a few hostages released. It’s contrary to his policy on Iran."

"Don’t bet on it," Roy replied. "Reagan wouldn’t be the first president to do something dumb like that."

As information surfaced during the next two months about what had happened, it became evident that NSC staff officers had cut both the State Department and Pentagon out of their secret dealings with Israeli, Iranian, and Lebanese nationals. It was all part of a bizarre effort to persuade Iran’s revolutionary government to intervene with its Muslim followers in Lebanon to arrange the release of about a dozen Americans held hostage by them. A second objective was to curry favor with so-called moderate elements in Iran, in the hope of renewing a strategic relationship similar to one that had existed when the shah was in power there, before 1979. Some Washington observers suspected that the clandestine scheme had been masterminded by CIA director William Casey, who seemed to have a close relationship with Lieutenant Colonel North and Admiral John Poindexter, the president’s assistant for national security affairs. However, Reagan felt great sympathy for the families of these hostages and might have been willing to violate his own arms embargo policy on Iran in order to have them released.

After the full Iran-Contra story broke and Congress started an investigation, Reagan fired both Poindexter and North. Casey, who was seriously ill from cancer in December, left office and did not return before his death in 1987. Reagan also asked Donald Regan, his chief of staff, to resign even though Regan apparently had known nothing about the arms-for-hostages deals and the subsequent revelations about diversion of funds to the Nicaraguan Contras. But Reagan thought he should have exercised greater control of the White House staff. At the end of 1986, Ronald Reagan’s presidency was clearly in disarray.

At lunch in the Federal Executive Institute, David told a group of federal executives that, according to the news he had just heard on the radio, Oliver North had been fired. Nick Torry, a senior official in the Defense Department, put down his fork, shook David’s hand, and said, "That's the best news I've heard in a year."

"You know Ollie North?" David asked.

"No, but I've been on the receiving end of phone calls from that son of a bitch. He gave orders like he was the president himself. The guy is a menace."

Another damaging aspect of the arms-for-hostages dealings by Colonel North was the discovery that funds earned from arms sales to Iran had been deposited in a Swiss bank and been used to support the Contra rebels in Nicaragua—at a time when Congress had cut off CIA funding for this
operation. When the information became public, members of Congress charged the Reagan administration with violating the law. For this violation, Poindexter and North were subsequently tried and convicted, but neither served time in prison. North’s conviction was overturned because he had received immunity from prosecution for testimony he gave to Congress about his complicity in the scandal.

In January 1987, after most of the facts about the Iran-Contra affair had come out, David’s colleague Roy James asked him whether he thought Reagan’s second term had been ruined.

“You know, Roy,” he responded, “what Casey and Poindexter and North have done to the credibility of Ronald Reagan is like what Nixon’s people did to him in the Watergate affair. To let the CIA run American foreign policy with the help of the NSC Staff is dangerous to democracy.”

“Well,” Roy remarked, “what do you suggest should be done now?”

“The whole NSC system needs an overhaul,” David replied. “We should never, in my view, have an active-duty military officer serving as the president’s national security adviser. It’s too much power. I also think it’s dangerous to have a CIA director who is so powerful that he can cut out the State and Defense departments from operations like those that North was running.”

“It’s good to hear a Reagan supporter like you say that,” Roy observed, smiling.

Despite the political turmoil in Washington, Reagan was moving slowly but surely toward a new détente relationship with the Soviet Union’s power structure, headed by President Mikhail Gorbachev. The main stumbling block appeared to be Gorbachev’s insistence that if the USSR agreed to significant reductions in strategic and conventional arms, the United States must give up development of Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative. The Soviet military apparently believed that without concessions from the United States on the Star Wars program, it would be too risky for the Soviet Union to cut strategic missiles or reduce troop strength in Eastern Europe.

In an effort to break the impasse, Reagan and Gorbachev met in Reykjavik, Iceland, in October 1986. After two days of negotiations, the summit ended in failure because, in the final bargaining, Reagan was unwilling to stop work on SDI, the missile defense shield that he believed was a major factor in bringing Moscow into serious arms reduction negotiations. Nevertheless, the two sides continued during 1987 to negotiate limited arms agreements, including one on medium-range missiles, which both sides now had in Europe. The elimination of these weapons was high on the agenda of the NATO countries.

In June 1987 Helen and David joined his brother Doug and his wife on a three-week tour of China, a tiring but immensely interesting trip to seven
cities, plus Hong Kong. They had not previously visited China, and David felt he needed to see the most populous country in the world if he wanted to write intelligently about Asian affairs. The trip had several highlights, but the one David and Helen found most fascinating was a two-day stop in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan Province in southwest China. One reason was that the local Chinese guide, an ex-officer in the Chinese People’s Army, was willing to speak frankly about certain matters. Lin mentioned that he had served in Vietnam, so David invited him to join them for a beer in the hotel garden after dinner. He accepted but seemed uneasy about being seen in public in conversation with Americans. Helen’s presence helped, because together the Bruenings appeared to be real tourists.

After they had ordered their drinks, David remarked, “I didn’t know there were Chinese combat troops in Vietnam when American forces were there.”

“Oh, yes,” Lin replied in reasonably good English. “We manned the antiaircraft missiles that shot at your planes.”

“Really?” Helen exclaimed. “You were actually engaged in the fighting?”

“Yes. We gave the Vietnamese a lot of help during the war, including many supplies.” Lin then paused and frowned before continuing. “But those Vietnamese never gave us any thanks. When the war was over, they treated us badly and told us to leave. They didn’t appreciate our help.”

Later David told Helen, “Isn’t it interesting that they feel the same way about their ungrateful allies as we do about some of ours—they don’t show any appreciation.”

The next day he asked their assistant tour guide, a Chinese student named Jim who spoke reasonably good English, to arrange a visit to Yunnan University so he could speak with a professor in political science or history. Jim went along as interpreter, and after climbing many stone steps to reach the university grounds at the top of a hill, they entered a building housing the faculty of philosophy and public administration. Jim went into the dean’s office, presumably to explain that his guest was an American professor who wanted to talk to someone about higher education in China.

Soon he returned with a gray-haired man dressed in a Mao Zedong suit of the type worn by most of the older Chinese at that time. Professor Chou was chairman of the philosophy department and was also serving as dean. When they sat down to talk, the Chinese professor seemed very guarded and asked Jim a number of questions in Chinese. David tried to put him at ease by saying that he was visiting China for the first time and was making his first visit to a Chinese university. He was also interested, he said, in knowing how things were going in Kunming, under the leadership of China’s reformer and supreme leader, Deng Xiaoping.

Chou said that things were improving at the university but that funds
were needed to build better facilities for the students, whose living conditions were not good. In the course of the conversation, the professor relaxed somewhat and seemed prepared to accept the American as an authentic scholar.

David decided to try a different subject. "I'm curious, Professor, about how things were for you during the Cultural Revolution. We read about it in America during the 1960s and 1970s, but it was hard to decide how much of these reports was true."

The elderly Chinese turned very serious and glanced down at his folded hands. It seemed to be a difficult subject for him. "It was very bad," he said in Chinese after a pause. "I was publicly humiliated in the streets by the radical students. Not all of them were Red Guards, but the radical ones took charge of the university. It was a bad time."

"What did you do? Were you able to conduct classes?"

"They charged me with being anti-Socialist," he replied, "even though I had been a good member of the Communist Party from my student days. They sent me out to the country to work on farms for two years. It was not pleasant. But I came back after that period ended. And now I am the dean." He smiled. He said that Deng Xiaoping was a good leader and that China would one day become a prosperous country.

David was curious about Professor Chou's age.

"I was born in 1925," he said, "here in Kunming. I've been here all my life."

David watched his expression when Jim translated into Chinese that David too had been born in 1925.

"Which month?" the professor exclaimed, with sudden animation. Learning that David was born in June, he smiled and conceded that he was three months older. They posed for pictures, which Jim took using David's camera, and David thanked the professor for his hospitality. Chou shook his hand with warmth and said, "That was a good year, 1925."

On their way to the hotel to rejoin the tour group, Jim observed, "He liked you. At first he was puzzled why you wanted to see him. He was suspicious that you might be with an intelligence service. He told me that he has a son in Los Angeles and had visited him there last year."

"He's a remarkable man," David said. "Like Deng, he overcame the humiliations of the Cultural Revolution and is now building the new China. That's a real achievement."

Another memorable experience in China was David's lecture on American foreign policy, in Beijing at the Chinese equivalent of the State Department's Foreign Service Institute. The visit was arranged by a Chinese exchange student who had recently visited the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville and attended his seminar. When David met with about twenty-five young men and a few women in a small seminar room
at the Chinese institute, he realized that all of them were new diplomats being trained for assignments in Chinese embassies abroad. A translator sat next to him, but she said these young people would not need a translation into Chinese because they were concluding an intensive course in English and understood the language quite well. "They will ask their questions in Chinese," she said, "because they don't want to make mistakes in English." David told them he was impressed that they did not need an interpreter.

In the question period, one of the young diplomats asked him the inevitable question: "Does the United States intend to be the policeman in Asia in the future?"

David knew from his experience in Thailand, his three visits to Vietnam, and his knowledge of Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia that the Asian people were divided in their view of America's military role in East Asia. On one side, they desired American protection during the height of the Cold War, particularly when China appeared to be hostile to its non-Communist neighbors, such as Thailand and Malaysia. But most East Asians were nationalists at heart, David knew, and preferred not to rely on any great power for protection. With the Vietnam War over and America reducing its presence in the Western Pacific area, many Asians wondered whether the U.S. government would cut back even more in the future. The young diplomat's question was therefore on the minds of many Asians, not just the Chinese. If America were planning to reduce its presence in Southeast Asia, for example, might China decide to exert greater influence in that region? And what would be the reaction of countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)?

David replied cautiously. "I don't think America wants to be a policeman in Asia, especially now that the United States and the Soviet Union are working out a new détente. I think it would be best if Asian countries formed a larger association of states to resolve their differences without any outside influence."

"But Professor," the young man asked, in Chinese, "does that mean America will withdraw its military forces from Korea and Japan and the Philippines?"

"Only if those countries request that we do so," he responded, knowing that none of them wished to be without American protection as long as North Korea and China remained committed to communism and to maintaining large military forces. "America's presence today is a stabilizing factor for the countries of Southeast Asia, especially for small states such as Singapore. My hope is that we can reduce our forces as the Asian countries learn to work together and to trust each other."

When he left the institute, David wasn't sure what impression his remarks had made on the students. He had been realistic about U.S. inter-
ests in Asia, he felt. If an American presence is necessary to maintain peace and encourage democratic government, he believed, the United States should continue to be involved, but at less cost.

By the summer of 1987 it was clear that the Cold War was winding down and that a new period of détente had set in. Mikhail Gorbachev had instituted a program of openness, "glasnost," which gave Russians an opportunity for the first time to criticize their government and its corrupt officials openly. He also began a program called "perestroika," a restructuring of the rigid Communist economic system that made room for some free enterprise. These changes were potentially revolutionary in a totalitarian state, and Gorbachev and his reformers took the risk that they might not be able to control the rapid changes then sweeping across the country. But it was imperative for him to open up the Communist system, Gorbachev calculated, in order to persuade entrenched interests, particularly old-line Communists, of the need to end the Cold War and to rebuild the economy. Otherwise, he knew, the whole system might collapse.

Reagan and Gorbachev had met for the first time at Geneva during the autumn of 1985, and they met again in Reykjavik, Iceland, in October 1986 and came close to a comprehensive agreement on strategic arms. Gorbachev was invited to Washington in summer 1987, and he and Reagan made substantial progress on arms reduction negotiations, largely because Gorbachev needed a way to reduce the massive Soviet defense expenditures. Gradually the two leaders created an international atmosphere in which hope replaced the fear created by the Cold War.

One crucial remaining problem that blocked a real U.S.-Soviet accommodation was the USSR's war in Afghanistan, which proved to be as large a problem for Moscow as the Vietnam War had been for Washington. Reagan was determined to force the Russians to leave Afghanistan, and he employed the CIA to provide arms to the Afghan rebel forces, including antiaircraft "stinger" missiles. These weapons effectively stopped the Soviet air force from operating in that mountainous country. By 1987 the occupation of Afghanistan, which had lasted for eight years, was becoming extremely costly to the Soviet military and was deeply unpopular with the Russian public.

That fall David took another seminar to Washington and, after a particularly impressive briefing in the State Department on U.S.-Soviet relations, asked the senior official if he might drop by later that day for further discussion. David told him he was writing an article for several newspapers about the chances of a lasting détente with the Soviet Union.

"I wonder if we're moving toward an end to the Cold War," he asked, "or whether this is just another breather—like the one we had with Khrushchev in the 1950s."
"I think the Russians have run out of steam this time," the Foreign Service officer commented. "Gorbachev and his advisers know this, but the Russian bureaucrats and party bigwigs haven't accepted the reality yet."

"Do you think Gorbachev will survive?" David asked. "What he's doing is revolutionary, isn't it?"

"I don't know if he'll survive, but Gorbachev knows his government has to end the arms race or there will be an internal explosion. The Kremlin bet everything during the last twenty years that their huge military buildup would intimidate Europe's leaders. They failed because NATO held together under enormous pressure from Moscow. Now the Russians must pull back."

"How far?" David asked.

"We want them to dismantle the Warsaw Pact. They won't like it, but they'll have to do it to get us to let up on our economic sanctions." The State Department official paused before adding an observation that David found to be interesting and persuasive. "From Gorbachev's viewpoint, the biggest question in the arms negotiations we're having with them is this: 'Will Ronald Reagan permit a defeated Soviet Union to withdraw gracefully from the Cold War?'"

"Well," David replied, "we helped the Germans and Japanese to get back on their feet after defeating them in 1945. So why shouldn't we help the Russians, too?"
Fall of the Berlin Wall
The Impact in Eastern Europe

A special opportunity presented itself in the spring of 1988 when David was invited to attend a Wilton-Park conference on East-West relations at a resort area in southern Finland, about an hour from Helsinki. He had attended several earlier week-long sessions at Wilton-Park headquarters in Great Britain, the first one in 1976 at the suggestion of his friend Alton Fraser, who taught at the University of Virginia. David came away from that experience impressed by the number and quality of European participants who had been brought together to discuss important international problems.

The conference in Finland was the first one that Wilton-Park had held outside Britain. It was supported by the Finnish government and was designed to attract representatives from the Eastern European countries, which viewed Finland as neutral territory. The meeting gave participants from Western Europe an opportunity to gain new insights into the major changes that had resulted from President Gorbachev’s perestroika policies in the Soviet Union. Officials came from the Soviet Union and from most of the East European countries, including East Germany, and a larger group came from Western Europe, including France, Britain, and West Germany. In 1982 David had addressed a Wilton-Park group on Reagan’s foreign policy, and now, six years later, he was asked to assess Reagan’s policies at the end of his administration.

In the first plenary session the group of about forty participants listened to criticism of American foreign policy from a Soviet Foreign Ministry official and from a few Western Europeans. David listened without comment during formal sessions. But in the informal discussions, at coffee and at the afternoon social hour, he argued that Reagan was trying to end the Cold War, not to expand it, as some were suggesting. The only other American participant in this gathering was an expatriate professor, then teaching in England, who predicted that Vice President George Bush would lose the November election because of the Iran-Contra scandal and his tough stand
on arms negotiations. David challenged his analysis because he didn’t want the Europeans, either east or west, to conclude that Reagan’s foreign policy would be repudiated in the 1988 elections.

“Why do you think Americans would vote against Bush on those grounds?” he asked the American speaker in the question/discussion period.

“Well, Reagan suffered a great loss of support in the opinion polls, and Bush is vice president,” the professor said. “He can’t escape responsibility for Reagan’s actions.”

David responded: “The public gives Reagan high marks for persuading the Soviet Union to negotiate on arms reductions and for reducing inflation and unemployment at home. Bush benefits from that. I don’t think American voters are prepared to switch parties this year.”

The audience seemed fascinated to hear two Americans offer different assessments of American politics. Both were questioned during the coffee breaks and at lunch. David concluded that this American was probably out of touch with public opinion in the United States and paid too much attention to reports in the British media.

He also had several conversations with a senior East German official named Kurt Huebner. This Communist official, who spoke halting English, was cautious yet friendly in their initial discussion over coffee. Huebner probably wondered whether David was really a CIA operative. But that evening, over beers at the conference’s social room, the East German relaxed. He spoke of his service in the German army and of being wounded and captured in Russia in 1944. He had been held prisoner for two years and returned in 1946 to Berlin, where he joined the Communist Party and attended Humboldt University. In 1949 he became a junior official in the German Democratic Republic and worked his way up to the senior position he then held. This was David’s first contact with a person who had lived his adult life in East Germany under the Communist system. Kurt’s eyes appeared sad, and he seemed always to be looking around, rarely betraying emotion but exhibiting what David took for forty years of apprehension.

“I was working in West Berlin when you returned from Russia,” David said, relating his experience with OMGUS in 1946 and 1947. “We might have passed each other on the Under den Linden.”

“I don’t think so,” the German responded sadly. “I was quite ill at that time. But the doctors in East Berlin looked after me, and I regained my health after a couple of years.”

They talked about how bad things had been in Berlin in that period, why the Berlin Wall had been erected in 1961, and what the East Germans were thinking, now that the Cold War seemed to be ending.

“You must be concerned, I guess, about an outflow of population if you allowed free travel,” David observed, trying to detect any hint of emotion in Kurt. But he retained his stoic expression.
“It could be. But we built the wall to protect our people against the materialism of the West. We worry about the return of fascism. You know there is a strong Nazi movement in the Federal Republic. We may not have so many new cars in the East, but we have equality for our people.”

“Do you see any hope for removing the wall and letting people travel to the West again?” David asked.

“I don’t think so. The differences between East and West Germany are so great that I can’t see how the two could mix.”

“I hope a time will come,” David suggested, “before we die, when you can travel easily in the West and I can do the same in the East. That would be good for all of us.”

Kurt emptied his glass, smiled very slightly, and said softly, “I don’t think it will happen in our lifetime.”

David had a conversation with a Polish economist who wondered why the United States was so slow in extending economic credits to his country. When he reminded him that Poland had not used recent Western aid wisely, the Pole assured him that a new group of officials was now running economic policy and that things were being done more efficiently.

Another person at this conference who made a lasting impression on David was a young Soviet scholar who had a key position in the Soviet equivalent of the State Department’s Foreign Service Institute. Unlike his Russian colleague, who held close to the official party line, Yuri was open, friendly, and flexible. His presentation on Soviet reforms under Gorbachev was thoughtful and analytical, not polemical. At lunch David learned that he was a protégé of Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and had been put in charge of reorganizing the selection and training process for new Soviet diplomats. He guessed the Russian was part of a younger group of Soviet officials, the “new thinkers,” who had no qualms about discussing perestroika and economic problems in their country.

One sunny afternoon Yuri and David walked to a park near the hotel and found a bench where they could sit and exchange ideas about East-West relations. A Hungarian who saw them teased them later about their “walk in the woods,” humorously likening it to a deal on arms reduction that an American and a Russian negotiator had proposed several years earlier after a walk in the woods near Geneva.

David asked, “Yuri, will Gorbachev prevail against the Kremlin hardliners? What he’s trying to do is revolutionary, isn’t it?” He wondered whether the direct question would startle his interlocutor.

The Russian did not seem surprised. In excellent English, he responded with equal directness. “Gorbachev must succeed in what he is attempting. My country can’t continue on as we’ve been going. People are restless because of poor economic conditions, and they don’t see any hope of improvement if the arms race goes on.”
"But what about the military?" David asked. "Will the generals accept real cuts?"

"Our military leaders will obey the party. But at present the party is not united on how to end the Cold War. Some of the old leaders think you Americans will treat Russia like a defeated country. That's why Gorbachev must move slowly."

The Russian then asked, "What about Mr. Bush? Do you think he will continue Reagan's policies to reduce tensions if he is elected? And what if he is defeated?"

"I'm sure Bush will continue Reagan's policy of negotiating with Moscow," David replied. "And as I said yesterday, I think he will be elected in November."

Yuri wanted to give him a copy of a book he had recently published, about the administration of Soviet foreign policy. It was in Russian, he said, but perhaps David could find a university friend who would give him a synopsis. Later David gave him a copy of America Overcommitted, hoping that in it he would find the reasons why the United States too hoped for an early end to the Cold War. He had no further contact with this engaging Russian scholar after the conference, but he did get a rundown on the book from a friend at the University of Virginia. It reflected some new thinking, Michael Nielsen told him, but it did not challenge Soviet foreign policy in any significant way.

One other interesting person whom David encountered at this conference was a West German official named George Drexler. They had several conversations, the most important being over lunch, when David asked what he thought about changes then occurring in Eastern Europe. He especially wanted to know what effect Drexler thought the new thinking in Moscow would have on the East German government.

"I think GDR leaders have a very big problem," George responded. "They are opposed to what Gorbachev is doing and have no intention of following his example in East Germany. Still, they may not be able to seal off the East Germans from events in Poland and Hungary. East Germans can travel to those countries and can see that the Poles and Hungarians have more freedom. Also, they know how much better life is in West Germany. So I don't think the GDR can continue its totalitarian system much longer."

"If they did loosen their controls and gave people more freedom, could the Communists stay in power? Or would there have to be a change in regime?" David asked.

"My personal opinion," the German diplomat replied, "is that the government will not survive if they permit real freedom. The whole Communist system could crumble."

"Are you suggesting that East Germans want to unite with West Germany? Is reunification likely, or would there still be two Germanys?"
"I think reunification would come rather quickly if the GDR leadership loses its tight grip on power," George replied. "Kurt Huebner knows this, but he won't talk about it."

On the flight back to Washington, David had plenty of time to think about the things he had heard during the three-day conference. He did not yet believe that the Communist systems in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, or Hungary were in danger of collapse. But his conversations in Finland had made him realize that rapid change was occurring all over Europe. "Could Drexler be right?" he wondered. "If the Communist leadership in East Germany relaxed its tight grip on power, would the whole system crumble?"

That summer, 1988, the Bruening family held a celebration at Linwood Beach in honor of Herbert's ninetieth birthday. It was a big event for him, and the weather was excellent. While they were sitting in the garden at the cottage one afternoon, Herbert asked David and Jason what they thought about the presidential election campaign then underway. He also wanted to know about the "Iran-Contra mess" in Washington.

"I think Bush will win," David predicted. "People give Reagan a lot of credit for getting the Russians to change their policy, and Bush benefits from that."

Jason, who usually supported the Democrats, didn't agree with that assessment.

"People think eight years of Reagan and Bush are enough," he said. "They want a change from Reagan's economic policies, and from the huge budget deficits he ran up. It's time to have a Democrat in the White House. I think Dukakis [the Democratic Party's nominee] has a good chance of winning."

"But Reagan is forcing Gorbachev to stop the Cold War," David persisted. "People in Europe and here may not have to worry any more about nuclear war."

"That may be so," Jason responded, "but look at the deficits Reagan's big tax reductions caused. And what about his selling arms to Iran? That scandal will hurt Bush too."

Jennifer came by and added her view of Reagan. "I think the Iran-Contra mess was a terrible abuse of power. It's bad for the country when the NSC staff and the CIA are running foreign policy."

"I have to agree with you on that, Jen," David said. "When Reagan appointed Casey director of the CIA, I think they agreed to do certain covert operations that neither State nor the Pentagon would know about."

"Don't forget Ollie North. He was a big part of it," Jason added.

"The lesson here," David concluded, "is that no CIA director should be a political buddy of the president's. It gives him way too much power."

Herbert was thoroughly amused by this conversation and remarked
with a smile that he was glad for the chance to "get caught up on Wash-
ington politics."

George Bush won the November election with a large majority of
votes, but the Republican Party failed to regain control of the Senate. As a
result, he would find both houses of Congress in Democratic Party hands,
ot a good prospect for a successful presidency. Divided government, per-
haps even gridlock, would prevail until at least 1990.

David and Helen decided in October 1988 that the time had come for him
to retire from federal government service. He had given the government a
total of forty-one years, including three years in the U.S. Navy. He had
been a faculty member at the Federal Executive Institute for twenty years,
and he had instructed more than a thousand U.S. senior civil servants in
his many seminars on national security and foreign policy. At first, David
was not quite sure how he would use his retirement time. But after two
months of reading and thinking, he decided it was a good time to write
another book.

At this time, in early 1989, the Soviet Union completed withdrawing
its troops from Afghanistan, as Washington had urged it to do, and Mos-
cow took other actions to improve relations with the United States and
Western Europe. David began making notes about the possibility that the
Cold War might be ending, and his enthusiasm increased when the State
Department announced that the Bush administration was reviewing United
States–Soviet relations in light of the encouraging developments during
the previous year, particularly on arms reductions. James Baker, the new
secretary of state, was in charge of planning, and it seemed likely that sig-
nificant changes in U.S. policy toward the USSR were in the offing.

That spring and summer David worked on his book, which would
deal with U.S. foreign policy in a "restructured world." In June, a shocking
event occurred at Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China, when Chinese troops
were used to crush a protest demonstration by students who were press-
ing for freedom. Many were killed. Other startling developments occurred
in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland, where the Solidarity labor move-
ment was seriously challenging the dominance of the ruling Communist
Party. It seemed only a matter of months before a major change of regime
would occur in that country. Hungary too was beginning to change, and
the Communist Party there began to relax its grip on power. If change was
coming to Poland and Hungary, commentators began to ask, how long
would it be before it affected the East German regime, the most intransi-
gent of all the Eastern Bloc countries?

The Business School at Queen's University in Ontario, Canada, invited
David that fall to teach a course on the United States in international busi-
ness. The offer grew out of a relationship that David had established sev-
eral years earlier with two Canadians who were then on the staff of Canada’s National Defence College in Kingston. The first was Ambassador Alex Rodman, a diplomat on assignment from the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa. David had met him when he took a seminar to Canada in 1985 and subsequently invited Alex to the Federal Executive Institute to talk on Canada’s history, economy, and politics. He reciprocated by inviting David to lecture at Canada’s Defence College, and on that occasion he met a second Canadian, an air force colonel named Ron Macmillan, who was in charge of academic programs. Macmillan retired two years later and was contracted to teach international business at Queen’s University. He invited David to teach there.

“Our commerce students are among the brightest in Canada,” Ron said. “We need someone like you to teach a course on doing business in the United States. Are you interested?”

“But Ron,” David responded, “I’m a political scientist, not a business scholar. I can’t compete with economists and marketing specialists.”

“Don’t worry about that,” Macmillan assured him. “We want these kids to know how the business culture in the States differs from ours and what Canadians need to know to be successful in your markets. Some of our big companies have failed when they tried to break into the U.S. market. You could describe the differences in our two political systems and the way they affect business.” Two months later David received a formal invitation.

The Bruenings drove to Kingston, Ontario, in September and moved into a modest apartment near Lake Ontario, about half a mile from the Queen’s University campus. David welcomed the chance to become better acquainted with Canada for reasons that were professional as well as personal. First, Canada was by far the largest of America’s trading partners, and the two countries had a close defense relationship going back to 1940, even before the United States entered World War II. In addition, the two countries had just concluded a free trade agreement (FTA) that would eliminate all tariff barriers between them within ten years. Another important reason for being in Canada had to do with the issue of Quebec’s desire for independence. This was a political dispute with serious implications for the United States as well as Canada.

For seventy years the issue of closer economic ties with the United States had been a controversial subject in Canadian politics. Each of the two major political parties—the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives—had been on both sides of the question. After Brian Mulroney, a Conservative, became prime minister in 1984, he decided it was in Canada’s vital economic interest to enter a free trade agreement with Washington in order to insulate Canada against what might be a new protectionist-minded Congress that would impose severe tariffs on imports from Canada as well as from other countries. This situation had occurred during the so-called Nixon trade shocks in 1971.
Canada is one of the most export-dependent countries in the world, with exports accounting for roughly one-third of GDP. About 75 percent of Canada's exports go to the United States, and the Mulroney government was determined to negotiate a trade deal with President Reagan before he left office in January 1989.

Canada's opposition Liberal Party charged that Mulroney had given up too much sovereignty to achieve the FTA, and in the general election of 1988 it became a major issue. Debates on the FTA were heated, and some anti-American rhetoric was heard. In the end, the Conservatives won a comfortable majority of seats in the House of Commons, and the new trade agreement went into effect, as planned, on January 1, 1989. Nevertheless, the controversy stirred by the election campaign carried into 1989. When David met his class in September, trade with the United States was a hot topic for discussion.

"I don't think the future for Canada's economy is good with this agreement," argued a fourth-year commerce student. "The United States has lower wage rates than we do. Your labor unions are weaker, and free trade will cause businesses and jobs to move south."

"But the alternative is higher tariffs here and more noncompetitive industries," another student responded. "Either we learn to compete in world markets, or we become a third-rate country. That's the choice." David liked the way his students articulated the issue.

The question of Quebec's independence distressed many English-speaking Canadians in Ontario. Mulroney, a native of Quebec, had decided to resolve the problem by forging a constitutional change that would recognize Quebec as a "distinct society" within Canada and give it considerable local autonomy. In the autumn of 1989, the outlook for a deal looked good because most Quebecers believed that the Meech Lake compromise (named for a resort area near Ottawa where it was negotiated) took into account their aspirations. The final agreement, however, had to be ratified by all ten of Canada's provinces, through a vote in each legislature.

David asked Macmillan, a strong supporter of Mulroney's government, how likely he thought it was that "Meech Lake will be ratified."

"Right now the chances look pretty good," Ron said. "But we have a lot of people in Ontario, and more out west, who think too many concessions were given to Quebec."

"In what respect?"

"Well, Quebec already runs its own social services, retirement programs, and much of the immigration. A lot of people think Quebec gets more from the rest of Canada in transfer payments than it pays into the federal treasury. The argument is exaggerated, of course, but critics still claim Quebecers get a free ride. I was born in Montreal, and I think the separatists are nowhere near the majority."
“So it’s in Canada’s vital interest to resolve this soon?” David asked.
“For Canada, it may even be a survival interest, to use your scale of national interests,” Ron replied.

While the Bruenings focused on events in Canada, developments in Germany were taking a surprising turn. On November 9 David and Helen watched in near disbelief as CBC-TV carried footage of the nighttime scene from Berlin showing young East Germans going over the Berlin Wall and being welcomed on the other side by West Berliners. “This is extraordinary,” David exclaimed. They recalled the time, in April 1973, when they had taken Jason and Jeremy to see the Berlin Wall with its watchtowers. The huge barrier had seemed so permanent then.

“Is it really possible,” Helen said as they watched the joyous young people milling about under the glare of floodlights near the Brandenburg Gate, “that the Iron Curtain will disappear?”

“It’s nearly unbelievable,” David said. “I wouldn’t have guessed last summer that it could happen. Remember when Reagan stood in front of that gate two years ago and said: ‘Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall’?”

They had read that large numbers of East Germans had taken refuge in the West German embassies in Prague and Budapest during the previous months and that East Germany’s government had reluctantly decided to permit them to emigrate to West Germany. Soon peaceful protest movements started in Leipzig and several other East German cities and attracted ever larger crowds. President Gorbachev reportedly had told Erich Honecker, the East German Communist boss, that he would not authorize Soviet troops in Germany to help him put down demonstrations. Finally, on November 9, an East German official announced that people would soon be permitted to visit West Berlin. At this news, young people began jumping over the wall.

The following day David and Ron Macmillan met for coffee in the Mac-Correy student cafeteria.

“Ron, my friend, are we watching the end of the Cold War?”

“Not yet,” he responded. “But something big is going on. What I find fascinating is that Gorbachev has done nothing to support the East German Communists in this crisis. If Gorbachev doesn’t back Honecker, he can’t survive.”

“I wonder,” David asked, “whether we should suggest a special student forum to discuss this event? My guess is that a lot of them are wondering what all this means.”

“That might be a good idea. Why don’t you float it in your class and let’s see if the MBA Society will sponsor it.”

That afternoon he discussed the events in Berlin with his students and asked whether anyone would take on the job of organizing the forum.
He had many volunteers. They agreed on the topic, "political earthquake in Berlin."

Three faculty members formed a panel: Ron Macmillan, Harry Thornton from the Politics Department, and David. Macmillan described the strategic implications of the demise of communism in East Germany, Thornton assessed the political impact of the November 9 event on German and European politics, and David discussed the outlook for East-West relations, specifically United States–Soviet relations. Three German exchange students in the business school were invited to share their views, but they seemed as bewildered as the Canadians by the unfolding events in their homeland.

Chancellor Kohl's dramatic call in December 1989 for free elections in East Germany, to be followed by the reunification of the two Germanys, put the subject of David's projected book in a whole new light. Now the focus would be on how the Cold War ended, as seemed increasingly likely at the end of 1989. This was a new world in terms of international politics.

He spoke to the Kingston Rotary Club on the subject of East-West relations just before his and Helen's departure for Virginia in December. During the question period, a Canadian asked, "Why do you think the Kremlin didn't help the East German government to stop the protesters? Moscow must have known what would happen if it didn't act."

"I frankly don't know. I can't imagine any other Soviet leader permitting the Berlin Wall to be torn down. I can only guess that the Kremlin is deeply divided and that Gorbachev decided to cut loose from the Honecker regime."

"Is it possible that we will see German reunification soon?" another person asked. "Would that be a good thing for Europe?"

This was a tough question, David thought, because it asked not only if German reunification was likely, but also whether it was desirable for Germany to become once again the largest country in Europe and potentially the strongest. "I think tearing down the wall is causing a huge exodus of East Germans," he responded, "like the one that occurred before the wall was erected in 1961. But the Communists still hold power and probably can maintain it for a while if they use enough force. Whether a unified Germany would be a good thing depends on how the other Europeans view it. It depends too on how West Germany's leaders go about it. But yes, I think it will happen in the next several years."

Just after January 1, 1990, David received a letter from Australia inviting him to spend three months doing research on his book at the Center for Defence Studies at the Australian National University in Canberra.

"I've never been to Australia," Helen said, her eyes bright with anticipation. "We might not get another chance to go. I think we should do it."
They left home early in February and stopped in Hawaii and Sydney on the way. They then traveled to Canberra by bus for several hours over a rough road through the Australian "bush." Canberra had been a small inland country town when it was selected as Australia's new capital early in the twentieth century. Now it was a large city situated around a scenic man-made lake.

The university had reserved for them an efficiency apartment on campus that overlooked the lake. Although David had visited Canberra in June 1966 for a SEATO meeting, it was in the midst of the Australian winter, when it was cold and rainy. Now, in February, it was late summer and the weather was ideal. Beautiful flowers and plants were everywhere, and exotic birds with brilliant colors could be seen all around the campus.

David decided to spend part of their stay in Canberra working on a chapter of his book that would deal with U.S. policy in East Asia after the Cold War. He was fortunate to be among fine research scholars and graduate students, many of them specializing on China, Japan, Southeast Asia, and India. He needed to update his knowledge of East Asia, particularly China and Japan, and the ANU had excellent resources for doing so.

The Center for Defence Studies, which concentrated on strategic and defense matters, was closely linked to the Australian Ministry of Defence. One senior officer from each military service was attached to the center for a year, and David found these service representatives to be exceptionally broad in their thinking. He learned a great deal from them about Australia's strategic interests in East Asia and the Indian Ocean. The Peace Studies Center was concerned with finding ways to resolve international conflicts. The Center on International Relations dealt with political and economic research. These centers were involved only with graduate studies, and David was invited to join in their seminars and faculty discussions.

He soon became aware of considerable differences in attitude on U.S. foreign policy, specifically the Reagan-Bush policies of the 1980s. At one discussion, a member of the peace studies group asked him, "Why did it take Reagan so long to accept Gorbachev's offer to reduce nuclear arms?"

David had heard this question before, in Britain and Canada, and had his reply ready. "Because the Soviets had an overwhelming superiority of conventional forces in Europe. It would have been extremely risky to reduce strategic and medium-range missiles without an agreement to reduce conventional forces as well."

"Isn't it true," another scholar asked, "that Reagan wanted to end the Cold War on America's terms, even at the risk of pushing the Russians into a war?"

"Not at all," David responded with some irritation. "Reagan knew that the Kremlin had to be convinced that NATO would not be intimidated by its blatant threats in 1982-1983 and that the United States would use its
strategic power if Moscow sent its troops into West Germany. I think that
was prudent policymaking, don't you?"

After this session one of his defence studies colleagues told him that
a few scholars in the peace studies group were always sniping at American
policy. "It's what you'd expect when you're the world's policeman," the
Australian said. "Great Britain provided Australia's defense until World
War II, and since then we've depended on you. That's why we joined
ANZUS [Australia-New Zealand-U.S. Pact] in 1951. Some Australians don't
seem to appreciate that."

David and Helen renewed contact with several Australian friends
from an earlier time in Washington and made some new ones during their
ten weeks in Canberra. Keith and Ellen Fairborne took a special interest in
helping them see some of the country. Keith had been chief political officer
in the Australian Embassy in Washington and had served as ambassador
in several countries. The Fairbornes invited the Bruenings on a car trip and
picnic into the arid hilly areas to the west of Canberra, and here they saw
kangaroos and emus as well as many brilliantly colored birds. At the same
time, of course, they talked politics.

David wanted to know whether the Labour government, headed by
Prime Minister Bob Hawk, would win the general election scheduled for
late March and how the parties stood on Australia's foreign policy. Keith
said he thought Hawk would win again in a close race. Australia usually
holds national elections every three years even though its parliamentary
system allows a government to remain for four years if it has the majority.

They talked about the Bush administration's policy in the Pacific af-
fter the Cold War, and Fairborne expressed apprehension because he had
heard about plans to reduce U.S. forces in Asia.

"You know, Dave, if you pull your navy out of Southeast Asia, there
could be a lot of turmoil. Many of these countries don't trust one another.
Tiny Singapore, for example, is scared that Indonesia and Malaysia will gang
up on it."

"But Congress is not going to fund a huge defense budget with the
Cold War winding down," David replied. "Bush couldn't keep our current
force level out here even if he wanted to."

The Australian cited the growing issue of U.S. bases in the Philip-
pines. "If you pull out of the Philippines, who do you think will provide
security in Southeast Asia and the South China Sea?"

"Perhaps Japan should do more," David said. "After all, Japanese busi-
ness seems to have locked up most of the trade and investment in Southeast
Asia."

"But most of those countries don't want Japanese protection. They
are suspicious of them, and with good reason, because of their actions
fifty years ago."
“I understand that,” David conceded, “but it doesn’t make sense to me that the United States should be the sole peacekeeper in East Asia when the Cold War is over.”

Keith wanted to know whether George Bush would be reelected in 1992.

“He’s done a good job in foreign policy,” David said, “but it’s too early to say what the economy will look like two years from now. That’s what usually decides elections. I hope Bush wins because he and Reagan have done a great job of ending the Cold War without starting a shooting war.”

David asked at one point: “Why do Australians seem more like Americans in their behavior than any other people Helen and I have encountered, including the Canadians?”

“Because,” Keith answered with a smile, “the quiet Scots settled in Canada and the raucous Irish came to Australia. Like you Americans, we’ve always been a rebellious lot. The New Zealanders, on the other hand, are more like Canadians.”

Another Australian friend from the 1960s was Gordon Wilson. He too had retired from Australia’s diplomatic service after being ambassador in several countries. He was teaching politics at the University of Melbourne and invited David to give a lecture there on American foreign policy. The Bruenings flew to Melbourne at the end of their stay in Australia, and they found the city to be more like an English city than either Sydney or Canberra. The university, which was located just outside the city, was large and resembled many in the United States and Canada. Melbourne had been Australia’s capital until 1910.

After David finished his lecture to a large class of fourth-year political science students, he was not surprised when one of them asked why Ronald Reagan had been so popular with the American public, considering how deeply conservative his policies had been.

“I think you have to remember,” David responded, “why Ronald Reagan was elected in the first place. The American public was upset because President Carter couldn’t get the release of the American diplomats who were held hostage in Iran. Americans were disturbed by the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan, and they wanted a strong response. They gave Reagan a lot of credit for bringing the Cold War to an end and for reducing inflation and unemployment.”

“But wasn’t Reagan discredited by the Iran-Contra affair?” another asked.

“Yes, he was, and he bears much responsibility for letting his staff do those foolish things,” David responded. “My guess is that if the scandal had occurred in his first term, Reagan would not have been elected again. But the public didn’t view Reagan the way they did Nixon when he was in trouble over Watergate. Reagan was liked by most Americans.”
That evening Wilson arranged for him to address the Melbourne Foreign Policy Association, a group of influential business leaders and retired government officials. The session dealt with U.S. security policy in the Pacific area. One member voiced concern about whether the United States was likely to abandon its military role in the Philippines and the effect this would likely have on Southeast Asia. David predicted that the United States would reduce but would not abandon its bases in that important country. Within three years, however, the U.S. Defense Department, under growing pressure in the Philippines, decided to close its bases in that country.

Another subject was American policy toward Japan—whether it was “foolhardy” to encourage Japan to take on a wider security role in Asia. David answered cautiously. “It is nearly fifty years since the end of World War II, and Japan is an economic power in the world. It has demonstrated its dedication to democratic government and to the free market system. The United States has carried a very heavy defense burden in Asia for over forty years, and it is now time for others to take up more of the burden. I think we should encourage Japan to become an important partner with other countries, such as Australia, in providing security. We are doing this with Germany in Europe, and we should do the same with Japan in East Asia.”

The Bruenings took a circuitous route home, visiting Cairns on Australia’s northeast coast and seeing the Great Barrier Reef, then flying to the lovely island of Fiji for a restful Easter weekend. Staying in a resort hotel located on a scenic South Pacific beach, they were delighted by the friendliness of the Fijian people. They learned the phrase “Fiji time” when they arrived at a nearby village church for the scheduled Easter service and found no one there. After about half an hour, people began showing up dressed in their Sunday clothes. Helen asked a woman who spoke some English whether the hotel had given them the wrong time.

“Oh, no,” she said. “The time was right. But this is Fiji time.” She gave them a broad grin, and the Americans laughed too. It was a happy Easter celebration, with great singing by the local a cappella choir.

In early June 1990 Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev came to Washington, D.C., for what was heralded as a momentous state visit. President Bush made the welcome a major world event and a demonstration that the two leading powers were on very friendly terms. The leaders signed important arms reduction agreements, and the United States pledged to help Gorbachev with his economic restructuring program.

During his visit to Stanford University on June 4, Gorbachev made a comment that summed up nearly five years of negotiations with Presidents Reagan and Bush: “The Cold War is now behind us. Let us not wrangle over who won it.”

Still, without question, the West had finally prevailed in its gigantic forty-year struggle with the Soviet empire for control of Europe. The Bush
administration wisely decided to remain silent on this subject. Boasting about it would undercut Gorbachev, who had taken remarkable and very risky steps to remake the Soviet system and to forge a partnership with the United States and Europe.

"Do you think we've really seen the end of the Cold War?" Helen asked after reading Gorbachev's statement.

"Now I really do think so," David said. "A year ago I didn't believe it was possible. But with the Berlin Wall gone and Germany about to be reunified, I think the trend is irreversible."

"How much credit should Reagan get?"

"I'd say the credit for ending the Cold War goes to five people—Reagan, Thatcher, Mitterrand, Kohl, and Gorbachev. The four NATO leaders stayed united in 1983 during the Euromissile crisis. And Gorbachev gets credit for turning Moscow around after he came to power."

"And Bush?" she asked.

"He and Baker get a lot of credit for maintaining good working relationships with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze. Managing the transition is a real accomplishment."

Helen agreed. "They managed things very well."

David worked most of the summer on his book. In late July he and Helen flew to Olympia, Washington, to spend a week with Jodie and her husband, Ted Vaughan. Suddenly, on August 2, just as David was preparing to start a chapter dealing with U.S. interests and policies in the Middle East, a political bombshell struck in the Persian Gulf. Iraq, under the leadership of the dictator Saddam Hussein, launched an invasion of neighboring Kuwait, and in a few days its forces had occupied the oil-rich Persian Gulf state. The invasion was an immediate threat to Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf oil reserves, upon which the world depended heavily for its energy needs. "This is a major crisis," David exclaimed.

Within a few days of the invasion, President Bush met with Prime Minister Thatcher and subsequently declared that Iraq's aggression would not be allowed to go unchallenged. The United Nations condemned the invasion and imposed sanctions on Iraq. The U.S. Defense Department was ordered to begin planning for major operations in the Persian Gulf area, and several thousand marines were airlifted to Saudi Arabia to establish a presence and to prepare for the introduction of what would eventually become a military force of nearly half a million Americans plus smaller contributions by other NATO members. President Bush was widely credited with enlisting the support of several moderate Arab states and persuading Israel not to become involved. Israeli intervention would have given Saddam Hussein an opportunity to convert his aggression into a holy war against Israel and the United States.

For the remainder of their stay in Olympia, Helen and David, and
Jodie and Ted listened intently to the news from Washington and the Middle East as war clouds began to gather.

"Do you really think we’ll go to war over Kuwait?" Jodie asked her father.

"Not just for Kuwait. This issue is about the whole Persian Gulf and its oil reserves."

"Well," she said, "I hope this isn’t another Vietnam, where we can’t get out." Jodie had been in college in the early 1970s and keenly recalled the turmoil over Vietnam.

David reassured her that if a military operation were necessary to force Iraq out of Kuwait, he was confident George Bush would use overwhelming force to do the job quickly, instead of engaging in a Vietnam-type protracted conflict.

Jodie smiled and said she had to take back what she had said earlier about her father being a compulsive listener to the news. "Here we were, getting ready for breakfast and I kidded you about always turning on the TV to get the latest news. This time we learned there’s a war in Kuwait. I won’t bug you any more, Dad."

When the Bruenings returned to Charlottesville, David called on his friend Professor Abbas Zamani at the University of Virginia.

"I’m worried that Bush will overreact," Zamani said. "As you know, I’m no fan of the Iraqis. But if the United States launches a major military move against Iraq, Saddam will get a lot of sympathy from other Arab countries. He wants to make this a fight of the Arabs against the Westerners. And he may see himself as a new Saladin fighting the Crusaders. Bush needs to proceed very cautiously to isolate Iraq."

"But Abbas," David asked, "we have to protect Saudi Arabia against Saddam, don’t we? Otherwise, we risk losing our stake in Persian Gulf oil."

"I agree, but Bush needs to take his time and convince the Arabs that Iraq threatens their vital interests as well as ours. We should try to persuade Iraq to withdraw without a war, because war could destabilize the whole Middle East."

Queen’s University invited David to teach again in 1990, and early in September they drove to Kingston and checked into a large apartment owned by the university. From the first day of classes onward, the military buildup in the Persian Gulf, in which Canada participated, was a major topic. Another important issue for Canadians that fall was Quebec and the failure that June of Prime Minister Mulroney’s comprehensive plan, known as the Meech Lake accord.

The mood in Quebec, following the Meech Lake failure, was severe disillusionment. But in Western Canada and parts of Ontario, there was much satisfaction that Quebec would not be given a special status constitutionally within the confederation.
“What happens now?” David asked his friend Ron Macmillan as they drank coffee in the student cafeteria.

“Mulroney will try again to patch things up,” Ron said. “But the Meech Lake failure is a real blow to his government. Many people in English Canada now think the country would be better off without Quebec. I don’t agree, but this is what people are saying.”

Macmillan was also concerned by the war talk about the Persian Gulf and wondered whether a military effort could actually dislodge Iraqi troops from Kuwait. After spending a career in the Canadian armed forces, he remained abreast of Canadian Defence Department thinking.

“I don’t see how the Americans can organize a multinational force big enough to dislodge the Iraqis unless they mobilize the Readiness Command. Even then, you have to get an enormous amount of equipment to the Gulf, and not many of your troops are trained in desert warfare. Naval and air force units can deploy relatively quickly, but it will take time to build up enough ground forces in Saudi Arabia to defeat Saddam’s troops.”

“Are you saying the American public and Congress won’t stand for such an operation?”

“With the Cold War over,” Macmillan concluded, “I think Bush will have a tough time persuading Congress to approve the funds for a force of the size necessary to win this confrontation.”

David agreed that President Bush had committed the United States to a major war in the Middle East.
Two Political Earthquakes

German Reunification and Soviet Dissolution

Events in Germany and in Europe had moved so fast after the Berlin Wall fell in November 1989 that other European governments and the United States were forced to decide very quickly how they would manage the process of uniting the two parts of Germany. David had believed that reunification was just a matter of time after the Berlin Wall came down, but he never anticipated that it would happen so rapidly.

In December 1989 Chancellor Kohl’s government in Bonn startled its British, French, and American allies, as well as the Soviet Union, by setting forth specific terms for reunification. Kohl wanted early elections in East Germany, to be followed soon by economic integration with West Germany and, finally, by political unification. No one knew how soon these developments would take place, but the Germans anticipated that the process would move quickly. Kohl saw a window of opportunity and worried that if he waited, Soviet policy might change and close the window. After all, there were still more than 300,000 Soviet troops on East German soil.

During the eleven months leading up to the October 3, 1990, reunification, Kohl’s government placed enormous pressure on the East German Communist leaders to acquiesce in the takeover. Without support from the Kremlin, the East Germans had no backing for their oppressive rule. Bonn facilitated the transition by proposing to convert the nearly useless eastern currency to the strong deutschmark on a one-for-one basis. This caused the president of the central bank to protest publicly that the action would place an enormous strain on West Germany’s economy. The currency conversion and other economic measures went into effect in July 1990, despite strong opposition from the Social Democrats and other parties. Kohl won Gorbachev’s agreement to withdraw all Soviet forces from Germany by 1994 by offering to build barracks and apartments for them at home. He also agreed to provide billions of marks in loans and grants to help the Soviet economy.
The opposition parties charged that Kohl had bribed Gorbachev with huge sums of money. But public opinion in West Germany supported the government's view that reunification was worth the economic price. President Bush supported Kohl on his accelerated moves. As reunification was inevitable, Bush concluded it was therefore best to give Bonn America's full support even though Britain and France were less than pleased by the pace at which the Germans proceeded.

Several weeks after Germany's reunification took place, and while they were in Canada, Helen opened a letter from Anna Bruening, which had been forwarded from Virginia. "David," she exclaimed, "Martin is dead. He had a heart attack in late September." Tears welled up in her eyes as she handed him the letter.

David read it and shook his head sadly. "You know, we traveled through the entire Cold War with Martin. Now Germany is finally reunited. He must have known that it was going to happen." David paused and added: "I wonder what he would have said about this remarkable turn of history." He remembered the many happy times he had spent with his cousin.

Washington was preoccupied that fall with President Bush's decision to honor his pledge that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait "shall not stand." Without specific authorization from Congress, he sent units of the U.S. Navy, Air Force, Army, and Marines to Saudi Arabia and to the Persian Gulf and Red Sea. American troops were dispatched in such numbers that no one doubted the president's intention of making war on Iraq if Saddam Hussein did not withdraw his occupation forces from Kuwait.

Bush persuaded the British and French governments to join him in sending forces to Saudi Arabia in preparation for an assault on Iraq. He was able also to persuade major Arab states, including Egypt, Syria, and the Gulf states, to join in the operation. The United Nations Security Council approved military action against Iraq if negotiations failed to produce its withdrawal from Kuwait. Even the Soviet Union, which had a long security relationship with Iraq, agreed to support the U.S. operation if the Iraqi dictator refused to comply with the U.N. resolution.

By the end of December 1990, a force of 550,000 military personnel, most of them Americans, was ready to launch Desert Storm, as the operation was called, against Iraq. Norman Schwartzkopf, an American general, commanded the combined force from bases located primarily in Saudi Arabia.

President Bush wisely decided that because American troops would very likely be engaged in combat and many casualties could result, he needed to obtain a resolution of support from Congress before launching Desert Storm. Floor debates took place in both the Senate and the House of Representatives during a three-day period in January 1991 and were tele-
vised nationally. The speeches were heated on whether American troops should be sent into battle soon or whether more time should be allowed for economic sanctions to work. They had been imposed on Iraq earlier as a means of persuading its government to withdraw from Kuwait.

Most Democrats, who at that time controlled both houses of Congress, voted against the president’s request for authority to use the troops. But there was enough support for the administration’s position to give the president a narrow victory in the Senate and a somewhat larger one in the House. As a result, Bush’s position was strengthened at home and abroad when he ordered U.S. troops into battle.

“I’m glad Bush is forcing Congress to stand up and be counted,” David remarked to his wife after watching the first day’s debate.

“Why does he need to?” Helen asked. “Reagan said he didn’t need Congress’s approval when he went into Grenada, or when he bombed Libya. And Bush didn’t ask Congress when he invaded Panama.”

“That’s true,” he agreed. “But those were small operations compared to this one. He’s got half a million people ready to go to war, and he should get Congress to approve before he commits them to battle.” David paused and added, “I think if Lyndon Johnson had asked Congress to approve sending 200,000 troops to Vietnam in 1965, he would have won a close vote. Then congressional critics couldn’t have claimed later that he took the country to war without congressional approval."

President Bush ordered an Allied attack on Iraq, which commenced on January 16, initially by guided missiles and then by American, British, French, and other forces on the ground. It was a short war, lasting only six weeks, and Allied casualties were minimal. The Iraqi army proved incapable of dealing with the Allies’ modern weapons and quickly disintegrated. By the end of February, the fighting was over and Kuwait was liberated. Iraq’s vaunted military was defeated, and George Bush’s prestige soared at home and abroad. Nevertheless, his decision to halt the war without annihilating Iraq’s army permitted Saddam Hussein to remain in power. Contrary to predictions in the U.S. intelligence community, the Iraqi army did not rebel, dissident Shiite Muslims did not rise against Saddam’s repression, and although Iraq was decisively defeated and forced to withdraw from Kuwait, its government was not overthrown. As a result, the United States and the United Nations had a serious problem trying to ascertain exactly what biological and chemical weapons Iraq possessed.

That fall, while the Bruenings were again at Queen’s University in Ontario, David and his colleague Ron Macmillan were discussing the Iraqi situation when Macmillan asked whether he would be interested in teaching in Germany the following spring. Ron said that a former faculty member in the Queen’s Business School, a German professor named Bremer, had been appointed professor of marketing at Kaiserslautern University
Two Political Earthquakes

and was looking for a Canadian or an American to teach international business courses in English for German and Canadian exchange students. Ron said he had taught two courses there the previous spring and thought that David too would enjoy the experience.

“How well do German students handle English?” David asked.

“You’ll be surprised,” Ron said. “They understand very well, but it takes a few weeks before they’re willing to talk in class. Think of it, Dave, they write their reports and examinations in English!”

“What kind of a place is Kaiserslautern?”

“Well, K-Town, as many call it, is not Heidelberg,” Ron said, smiling. “But it’s in a beautiful part of western Germany, just an hour from France. Rhineland-Pfalz is the best wine-growing region of the country. It’s easy to get anywhere in Europe from there, either by car or by train.”

“What about accommodations?” Ron assured him that the university’s guest house would be adequate for four months.

“Okay, I’ll ask Helen,” David said. “My guess is she’ll like the idea of going back to Europe.” He was right.

The spring semester in Germany began in April and ended in late July, but Professor Bremer wanted them to be there a month ahead of time. When George Bush launched the Desert Storm offensive against Iraq in mid-January, the Bruenings worried that Arab terrorists might attack European and American airports. Fortunately, the war ended in late February, and a week later they flew from Washington to Frankfurt. After picking up their rental car, they drove along the autobahn headed south. After about forty minutes they turned west onto another autobahn, crossed the Rhine River, and headed into the wine country of Rhineland-Pfalz. The car climbed up the picturesque Pfalzer mountains, and soon they reached the lovely valley in which the city of Kaiserslautern is situated. As it was Sunday, Professor Bremer had the keys to their guest house apartment and had suggested they stop by his house for coffee. He and his wife drove with them to the university and helped them settle into a modest two-room flat. Helen was grateful that Mrs. Bremer had provided enough groceries to get them started.

The University of Kaiserslautern, established in 1970 as a technical university, had gained a fine reputation for turning out excellent engineers and science graduates. It had about 10,000 students, mostly men. The original buildings were not beautiful, but the newer architecture was more attractive. The small campus was a beehive of activity during the day, but by 6:00 P.M. the university was all but closed down, even the library. It was typical of German universities, David learned.

“This campus sure looks different from those at home, or in Canada,” he commented one evening. “The place is deserted at night.”
"You're right," Helen agreed. "Look at that parking lot. It's nearly empty now. But by nine in the morning it will be so full they'll have to park on the sidewalks."

The university provided a heavily subsidized main meal at noon, and most students and some faculty ate at the large cafeteria called the "mensa." The food was adequate and cheap, and David occasionally joined his student assistants there for lunch.

The University of Kaiserslautern offered one of half a dozen joint programs in engineering and business administration in Germany. The degree, equivalent to a master of science or engineering in the United States, usually took six years to complete, and its graduates were in great demand by German industries and businesses. Most of David's students were in their fourth and fifth years and somewhat older than undergraduates in American universities. Germans finished their high school (Gymnasium) at age nineteen, and the men were then obliged to spend fifteen months in military service. Or they could spend an equivalent period of time in alternative service with a government welfare agency if they declared themselves to be conscientious objectors. In addition to twenty-eight Germans, there were a dozen Canadian exchange students in David's international business class.

Bremer wanted the German students to get the flavor of the informal classroom style used at most American and Canadian colleges and universities. David encouraged this, and within a week after classes began some of the German students began to ask questions at the end of the lectures. The early lectures were on the American political system and its effect on business in the United States. This subject led to discussions about the differences between a presidential system of government and the parliamentary system that prevailed in Germany. Students learned that each of the fifty American states, unlike those in Germany, had its own laws governing business and industry. It was obvious that Germany had many more rules restricting commercial operations, including a law that prevented stores from being open in the evening or on weekends after 1:00 P.M. on Saturday.

The U.S. military effort in the Persian Gulf was evident to every resident of Kaiserslautern because the huge C-5 and C-141 U.S. Air Force cargo planes flew in low across the city before landing at the NATO base at Ramstein, located about ten miles west of Kaiserslautern. The noise was so loud from these planes and from the fighter jets also based at Ramstein that outdoor conversations often had to stop until they had passed over. Normally planes did not fly at night, but during the Gulf War buildup the Ramstein facility was open to traffic twenty-four hours a day.

The university's proximity to this military base generated occasional questions from students about American foreign and defense policies.
"Professor," a student asked near the end of class during the third week, "can you explain why President Bush wanted to make so big a military attack against Iraq? The Persian Gulf is very far from America, isn't it?"

"That's true," David responded. "But an American president can't ignore a major threat to peace, even when it's far away. President Truman sent many troops to Korea in 1950, and President Johnson sent half a million to Vietnam by 1967. The real issue is whether the threat involves a vital interest of the United States. Iraq's aggression against Kuwait was a clear violation of the U.N. charter, and Mr. Bush decided it was also a threat to Saudi Arabia, which is a close friend of the United States."

"But some of our commentators say the real issue was oil," another student said. Others nodded their agreement.

"It's true that Iraq's attack on Kuwait was a threat to all the oil-producing states in the Gulf," David responded. "Saudi Arabia's oil reserves are a vital economic interest not only for America but also for Europe. I think the leaders in Western Europe agreed with President Bush that we could not risk letting Iraq threaten Saudi Arabia's oil fields."

David then asked his class this question: "How do you feel about seeing Germany's EEC partners—Britain, France, Italy, and the Netherlands—send troops and ships to the Gulf while Germany claims it cannot participate because of a constitutional ban against using your forces outside the NATO area?"

The question set off a heated discussion. Most students had done fifteen months of national service in the military, and some of them thought that Germany should be a partner in peacekeeping operations, if the United Nations approved. The Security Council had taken such action in the case of Kuwait. Others asserted that Germany, because of its Nazi legacy, should use force only for self-defense.

David learned from this exchange, and from subsequent informal conversations with students, that many younger Germans tended to be pacifists. They deplored the disasters and disgrace that militarism had brought to Germany in two world wars, and they had opposed expansion of German defense forces during the Cold War. The number of Germans who chose alternative service instead of military duty rose sharply during the buildup of Allied forces in the Gulf. Some students commented that even though Germany did not send troops or planes to the Gulf, the Bonn government had contributed some DM 10 billion ($7 billion) to help pay for the war's costs.

These discussions also made David aware that some students were uneasy about Germany's alliance with the United States because it might oblige the country to accept an active role in NATO peacekeeping missions. They worried that such a course would lead to renewed German
militarism. This was a minority view, however; most of his students supported Germany's participation in NATO.

Not long after they arrived in Germany, the Bruenings began planning a visit to Berlin. They decided to go early in June and to make the trip by fast train. The one from Frankfurt, the newest then in service, traveled at 130 miles per hour on an open stretch of land. As it moved out of the station and Frankfurt's modern skyline came into view, they saw that profound changes had occurred since their first sight of the city in 1946. Helen had arrived there in May and eventually joined her sister at the U.S. Military Government headquarters in Berlin. David in 1946 had been in Frankfurt as a young naval officer on a brief assignment from his duty station in Bremerhaven. Now Frankfurt was one of Europe's most modern cities.

David and Helen had not been in Berlin since 1973, when they took their sons there to see the Wall, Checkpoint Charlie, and Harnack Haus. The former German capital was formally reunited in October 1990 when the Bonn government took control of the eastern states (länder) from the East German Communist regime. Now, in June of 1991, Chancellor Kohl's government announced that it would soon begin the process of transferring the capital from Bonn to Berlin.

"You know," David said as their train sped along, "when Berlin is Germany's capital again, it will probably become the capital of central Europe."

"A lot of Europeans, including Germans," Helen responded, "think Bonn is a better place for Germany's capital."

"That may be so, but every government here since 1949 promised that when the country was reunited, Berlin would be the capital. Kohl couldn't go back on that pledge even if he wanted to."

When the train reached Helmstedt, a border town that previously divided eastern and western Germany at the Iron Curtain, it stopped for half an hour because major repairs were being made to the rail bed in eastern Germany. Crews and heavy equipment worked around the clock to bring the tracks up to West German safety standards and to facilitate the fast trains that now carried tourists and business people to Berlin.

The contrast between eastern and western Germany was striking. As the train moved slowly through villages, towns, and countryside, the Bruenings noted that nearly all of the buildings were drab gray and in serious need of paint and repair. Some relatively new apartment buildings dotted the skyline, but their plain design was always the same, in line with Communist architectural conformity. Even more noticeable were the diminutive autos, most of them East German and Russian made. A few Audis, Volkswagens, and even Mercedes were in view, a result of Bonn's decision in July 1990 to trade the West German mark at par with the east's nearly worthless currency.
The most common car in eastern Germany was the tiny Trabant, or "Trabbie," as the Germans called it. Millions of them had been produced in East Germany and sold throughout Communist Europe. Newer models were as highly prized by their owners as Ford Mustangs had been in America in the 1960s. The lightweight Trabbie was also the worst auto pol-luter in eastern Europe. In 1991, when the Bonn government closed down the plants that manufactured it, many workers lost their jobs. After reuni-fication, the cars became nearly worthless.

As David's and Helen's train crossed the Elbe River, not far from where American and Russian troops had met at the end of World War II, David recalled an experience he had had in July 1946 when he drove a navy jeep on the autobahn between Helmstedt and Berlin. He was in navy uniform, he told Helen, and traveled in a clearly marked gray-painted U.S. Navy jeep with USA serial numbers printed on the hood. About half an hour after leaving the Russian checkpoint at the border, he reached a large section of highway that had been destroyed during the war.

At this point a Russian MP motioned him to stop and pointed with his rifle to a detour, a secondary road leading into a valley below. As he started to pull away, another soldier with a machine gun at his side walked in front of the jeep, got into the passenger seat, and motioned with the gun for David to get moving. Not knowing what to expect, David remained silent and drove along for about five miles before trying to engage the soldier in conversation in his limited German. The Russian knew a few Ger-man words, and something David said about "American" caught his ear.

"American?" the Russian asked in German. "You American?"

"Yes, I am American in Navy," David said, pointing to his uniform, his hat, and the markings on the jeep.

"American?" the soldier repeated in German. "I thought you were German."

David then realized that Russian soldiers in Germany had seen only the brown uniforms worn by the U.S. Army, not navy blues or the gray-painted navy vehicles. The Russian soldier had somehow thought a German officer was driving a gray jeep to Berlin!

"The soldier's behavior changed completely," David told Helen, "when he learned I was not a detested German. He put his gun on the floor and jabbered away in Russian and German until we got to the next check-point, where the autobahn resumed. Then he got out, jogged around to my side, and shook my hand as if we were old buddies. But he wouldn't let me take his picture. He had orders: 'No photos, even with Americans.'"

Helen, who had heard the story before, smiled as she listened.

The train arrived at Berlin Zoo station nearly an hour late. They were surprised to see a large number of police and soldiers on the platform and in the streets, and their first thought was that radical "skinheads" were on
another rampage against foreign refugees. But a policeman explained that they were there to control crowds in a big celebration expected that evening, after a soccer match between Berlin and Bremen. David carried their bags down to the street level, where they got a cab to drive them to the U.S. officers’ hotel at Tempelhof Airport. He was able to use military facilities in Germany because he had served twenty years in the naval reserves and by now qualified as a retired officer. The driver spoke some English, and David asked what he thought about the announcement that the capital would move from Bonn to Berlin.

"Everything will be more expensive," he replied. "Rents are too high now. People say house prices are already going up because of the news."

Tempelhof was the airport at which the Bruenings had landed together with Jason and Jeremy in April 1973, when they spent two exciting days in West Berlin. In 1948-49, it had been the terminus of the massive Berlin Airlift, which overcame the Soviet-imposed land blockade of traffic to Berlin. Tempelhof remained a U.S. military facility during the Cold War but would be returned to the German government when U.S. military facilities in Berlin were phased out in several years.

That night Helen and David had dinner in eastern Berlin at a hotel just off Unter den Linden on Friedrich Strasse. There were only a few patrons, and they realized that tourists did not generally go into the east in the evening. Consequently, three friendly waitresses were eager to serve them and to practice their English. One of them asked whether they were British or American. Helen said "American." The girl obviously had not seen many American tourists. Helen asked how she had felt when she learned that the Berlin Wall had fallen seventeen months earlier.

"It was very exciting," she said. "I couldn’t sleep the whole night. Everyone wanted to go to the west and see the sights. Most of us had never been there."

Another waitress said she lived near the Wall and was studying at home when she heard people shouting in the street and went to see what was happening. "Young people were climbing to the top of the barrier and talking with the policemen. They didn’t seem to know what to do. Soon people were jumping over the top, and a great cry went up from the crowd. Others started chipping at the wall. No shots were heard. We knew that the Wall would no longer stop us."

She said that the next morning her teacher spent most of the time talking about this unbelievable event. That afternoon she and several classmates went to the Wall and found people on both sides hammering away at it. There were now several openings, she said, and people just walked through to West Berlin.

Helen asked how things seemed now that Germany was reunited.

"It is much better," one girl said. "We can buy many things in the West, "but we have to have much money. Everything is more expensive."
After dinner they returned to West Berlin to watch the parade of victorious soccer fans on Kurfurstendamm avenue, in the center of the commercial part of Berlin. They remarked on the sharp contrast that evening between East and West Berlin. Unlike the subdued atmosphere around the restaurant where they had dinner, the streets and restaurants at Kurfurstendamm were jammed with people. Celebrating soccer fans paraded wildly along the wide avenue, singing and waving banners. The Bruenings were lucky to find a table at a sidewalk café from which they viewed the festivities with fascination for nearly an hour. This indeed was a reinvigorated Berlin, they agreed.

Many police vans were visible along the street that night. The authorities were clearly prepared to deal with hooligans who had recently given Berlin a bad reputation by their outrageous behavior. As David looked down the avenue, with its massive glitter and throngs of people milling about, he spotted the lighted Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church. A new modern church had been erected with a tall tower set against the ruins of the old tower, a remembrance of the catastrophe the city had suffered nearly fifty years earlier.

On Sunday morning the Bruenings went by U-bahn into the southern section of Berlin which until recently had been the American military sector of the divided city. Getting off at the Dahlem station, they walked first to the large complex of buildings where the two of them had worked for OMGUS in 1946-47, and where they had first met. The buildings now housed the U.S. consulate and the U.S. military mission in Berlin. They also stopped by Harnack Haus, as they had in 1973, to recall happy memories of their courtship nearly a half century earlier. Another important part of this visit to Dahlem, for David, was seeing his house on Sophie-Charlotten Strasse, where he had lived in 1946-47. While Helen remained at Harnack Haus, he took the mile-long walk along the familiar streets, which were filled with many of the sights and sounds he recalled from forty-five years earlier. The garden at Number 26 was as beautiful as he remembered, and the house was even more impressive than in 1946. While he was engrossed in these memories, a station wagon pulled up to the gate, and Sally Townsend, the wife of an American air force colonel, asked if she could help. When he told her that he had lived in the house many years ago, she invited him in to look around and introduced him to her husband. David looked nostalgically in the living and dining rooms and at the small sitting room near the front entrance where he had taken his German lessons with Ursula. After a short stay, he thanked the Townsends and returned to Harnack Haus. He told Helen it was hard to believe he had been away from this house for forty-five years. He now realized, he said, how deep an impact that year in Berlin had had on his life.
They rode the U-bahn back to central Berlin, and as they looked at the map to see which connections they needed to make to get to the famous Pergamon and Bode museums, several German passengers offered to help. The Bruenings had been told that Berliners were especially friendly to Americans because of the Berlin Airlift and President Kennedy's words at the Wall in 1962. As they rode northward, a man seated across the aisle heard them talking in English to a woman about her experiences in East Berlin. After a few moments he began to speak in German, and the woman translated his story. He told them that he had lived at the Wall, in an apartment in a building that formed part of the barrier. Police were posted, he said, inside and on top of the building to prevent anyone from escaping to the west. Sometimes it was impossible to sleep, he said, because of the gunfire. One night after hearing shots close by, he went to the roof and saw a young man lying wounded on the ground below. No one dared go to his aid, he recalled, and the wounded man died.

After transferring at Wittenberg Platz, they again looked at their U-bahn map to see how many stops came before the station closest to the Pergamon Museum. A tall elderly German man overheard them talking and offered to help. He said in English that he had once been in New York City, in 1944. Surprised by the date, Helen asked how long he had been there.

"Only half a day," he replied, smiling. "I was a prisoner of war, and they were taking us to Canada, where we stayed until the war ended." He told them that he had learned to speak English in a POW camp in Alberta and had been friendly with several Canadians.

After the war, the German said, he had returned to Berlin, where he studied economics at Humboldt University, in the eastern sector. After graduation, he got a job with the East German government. Helen asked what he thought about the reunification of Berlin and of Germany.

"It is good to be able to go to West Berlin again," he said. "But I'm not sure things will be as good as many people expect. Everything is so expensive."

His face showed the strains of one who had lived for years in a closed political system. His sharp, gray eyes seemed constantly to be glancing around, as if to see who might be listening. David had seen that look before, in Bremen in 1946, in East Berlin in 1973, in Moscow in 1976, and in Beijing in 1987, always on the faces of people who were afraid that informers, overhearing them, would report them to the police.

The kindly German suggested that they get off with him at the next stop and he would direct them to the Pergamon. As they left the station, the Bruenings observed that the neighborhood, part of the former East Berlin, looked as drab as cities in West Germany had in the 1950s. War-shattered buildings had been pulled down, but large areas now stood empty or had become parking lots. The man pointed to a building in the distance that he said was near their destination.
Helen suggested they take a cab, but their German escort said it would be impossible to find a taxi on a Sunday afternoon. Slightly embarrassed, he offered to drive them in his very small car, which he said was parked across the street. When they approached it, he said, "Here is my little Trabbie. The government says I should get rid of it because it pollutes the air. But I waited ten years to get it. I paid as much for it as that new Volkswagen over there. Now it is nearly worthless," he said sadly.

David wondered how three grown people would fit into this midget auto. The German suggested that Helen sit in front and that David sit sideways on the back seat, which looked as if it had been designed with small children in mind. On the way, the man cautioned that Americans should understand that unification was not all good. He himself, he said, was like many older East Germans who had enjoyed a reasonably good life under the Communists.

"I was a professional economist," he said, "and had a responsible position in the government. I was not a party official, but I believed in the GDR's social program. I had a good apartment and could afford to buy appliances. I traveled everywhere in Eastern Europe. Finally, after ten years waiting, I was able to get this car."

"Wasn't it difficult," David inquired from his cramped position in back, "to be forced to stay behind that Wall? Weren't you angry that you couldn't go to West Berlin, as you did today?"

"It's true that we did not have freedom like the West Berliners, but we lived well enough and things were not expensive. Everyone had a job and plenty to eat. We were satisfied. I paid 60 marks a month for my apartment in 1989. Now I must pay 400. On my small pension, I can barely live. Food is very expensive. And soon they are going to charge us one mark to use the U-bahn and the buses!"

"Do you have any children who can help?" Helen asked.

"I have a son, but he lost his job last month when his factory closed. The government said it could not compete without a big subsidy, so they closed it. Many people are losing their jobs. And the unemployment pay is too little to live on."

When they arrived at the Pergamon, David asked the German whether he preferred to live in the old system.

"No," he said, "but I can't condemn the GDR either. They may not have let us travel freely, but we didn't have to worry about a job. Things are changing too fast now." He smiled as they said good-bye, and he seemed genuinely pleased to have had this chance to speak English with American tourists.

David remarked to Helen, "His world really has gone with the wind, hasn't it?"

The next day they walked near the Brandenburg Gate, then undergoing repairs for its forthcoming two hundredth anniversary. They also looked
around the Reichstag building, then being renovated for use by Germany's parliament when the capital moved back to Berlin. The infamous Berlin Wall, which stood adjacent to the Reichstag, had been almost completely dismantled. Where it had stood, a grassy open field now ran south from the Brandenburg Gate to Potsdamer Platz. Street vendors were plentiful on the Unter den Linden, selling souvenirs and memorabilia, including Russian military uniforms to the small crowd of visitors.

In this warm, sunny, and festive atmosphere in central Berlin, David's thoughts returned to a time in 1946, before the Cold War started and before the Berlin Wall existed. It had been easy then to drive a jeep through the Brandenburg Gate to the Russian eastern sector, to walk around Hitler's bombed-out government buildings, even his bunker. He recalled looking through the ruined Reichschancellery, once a magnificent structure built by Albert Speer, Hitler's architect. Now, almost half a century later, he wondered how the Germans would handle the responsibility of being united and of being once again the economic powerhouse of Europe.

On the train back to Frankfurt, he and Helen shared their impressions. "What do you remember most about our weekend here?" David asked.

"The old German and his Trabbie," she replied. "He was so proud of that little toy car. Now it's worthless. What's yours?"

"I guess all the memories of Harnack Haus and my house on Sophie-Charlotten Strasse. Of course, seeing the Wall gone was important."

Like the return to Berlin, the Bruenings' visit to Nurnberg was a sentimental journey, particularly for David, who had first met his cousin Martin there in 1946. Now Martin was dead and they would see his widow, Anna. They stayed at the Bavarian-American hotel, a U.S. Army facility located across the square from Nurnberg's train station, a block from the walled city. Much of this area was badly damaged when David first saw it in 1946. Their hotel had been confiscated by the American army in 1945 and used as a headquarters for the U.S. delegation to the International War Crimes Tribunal. Part of the large complex was turned back to the Germans in the 1960s, but the remaining part, now called the Bavarian-American Hotel, was retained by U.S. authorities to house transient U.S. personnel in Nurnberg. When Helen and David checked in, the American manager said he had reserved a suite that he thought they would enjoy. "But I should tell you its history. Hermann Goering used it when he came to Nurnberg each summer to attend the Nazi Party's conference."

"Are you serious?" David responded. "Goering himself?"

"That's right. This hotel was built for the Nazi bigwigs, and they used it for only two weeks in the summer. The rest of the year it was closed up. We learned that Goering had a three-inch-thick carpet put in because he was so heavy."
"I'll have to tell you another bit of history about Goering," David said. "I was there in the room at the Palace of Justice when they sentenced him to hang. I saw him stand there to hear his sentence pronounced."

The manager laughed. "That was before my time."

When they got to their rooms, David looked around and commented, "Now, this is good living."

Anna invited them to join her at home for supper. She looked considerably older, and it was clear that she deeply mourned the loss of Martin, who had died eight months earlier.

"Did he talk about the reunification?" David asked. "Was he aware before he died that it was going to happen on October 3?"

"He knew it was going to happen, but I'm not sure he realized that it took place that day. I remember he said last summer that unification was going too fast."

"He once told me," David recalled, "that the Russians would not leave Germany during our lifetime. He must have been very happy when Kohl got Gorbachev to agree to reunification, and a timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet troops."

"That's true," Anna said. "He was glad the Communists were thrown out in East Germany. But the Russians are still there."

"It's only a matter of time," David said. "They'll be out by 1994."

The next day he and Helen walked around Nurnberg's walled city and had lunch at an outdoor café in front of St. Lorenz Church. While Helen did some shopping for gifts for their children, David waited on a bench in the pedestrian mall outside and watched the people come and go. When he spotted someone about his age or older, he wondered how vividly they remembered January 1945 when this entire area had been completely smashed in the bombing. He saw smiling young people strolling along arm in arm and wondered whether any of them understood what terrible times Nurnberg had gone through after the war, and how hard their fathers and mothers had struggled to survive. And he thought about Saginaw, which had been so vibrant a city in 1947 but now was almost deserted.

That evening David, Helen, and Anna had dinner with David's cousin Dr. Helmut Bruening and his wife, Hannah. Also present were their daughter Clara and her husband, Claus, and their son, Albrecht, and his new wife, Inge. They sat at a large round table, elegantly set in the dining room of an exclusive hotel. It was a fine reunion of the Bruening families from both sides of the Atlantic, and many toasts were offered. Like his father, Albrecht had become a medical doctor and was doing his residency in a nearby city.

The families talked about Germany's universal health care system and the growing debate in the United States on providing some form of national health insurance. Helmut said that universal coverage in Germany had both good points and bad. He was generally satisfied with the Ger-
man plan because doctors were not limited in how much money they made: their earnings depended on how many patients they attracted.

David asked how long it would take to integrate the economies of the two former Germanys.

"I'm optimistic," Albrecht said. "It will take some time for the easterners to learn how to work, but they will do it, especially the younger ones."

"I think it will take a long time," his father observed. "Forty-five years of communism don't go away in a short time."

"I know shop owners," Anna said, "who hired some young people from the east. But these 'ossies' complain about how much harder they have to work here than in the east. They were always cared for, whether they worked or not."

Clara said another big problem for Germany was the refugees. "We don't have enough housing for our own people, and the refugees from many countries come here because our law says we must feed them and house them until their cases are reviewed. That sometimes takes as long as three years."

"Why don't you change the law?" David asked. "You don't have to accept everyone who claims to be a refugee, do you?"

"Because of our Nazi history," Claus observed, "we adopted very liberal laws after the war about asylum seekers. Now that the Iron Curtain is gone, people from Eastern Europe and other countries come to our borders claiming to be refugees. We have a detailed procedure for handling these cases and our officials are overwhelmed today." Claus, a lawyer, worked on such cases.

The next day, before leaving Nurnberg for the four-hour trip to Kaiserslautern, David and Helen went by the Zeppelinfeld, where a Nazi-era monument had been erected in the 1930s as part of the party's headquarters in Germany. This was the place David and Martin had visited in 1946 where Nazi Party members and German troops had marched with their huge banners bearing swastikas and sang booming nationalist songs. On this day the site was crowded with a hundred buses that had transported thousands of people from all over Germany to a rally of Jehovah's Witnesses in a newly constructed nearby stadium.

David and Helen climbed the stone steps to the podium where Hitler had harangued the crowds in the 1930s. It was a massive structure, larger than David remembered from 1946. The site had been abandoned over the years, but it still exerted sinister feelings in David. "It's eerie," he commented. "It makes you realize how close the world came to living under the most savage tyranny of modern times."

In addition to traveling to Berlin and Nurnberg, they visited many other European cities that spring and summer. Two of them, Prague and Budapest,
Two Political Earthquakes

were capitals that had been behind the Iron Curtain and had therefore been relatively inaccessible for many years. Now they were beginning to introduce a free market economy. The contrast with Paris, Vienna, and Amsterdam, which they also visited, was striking. Nothing dramatized more clearly the time warp between Europe’s eastern and western parts than the backwardness of the Czech and Hungarian capitals compared with the vitality and wealth of the other three.

They also traveled by car to eastern Germany during the University’s spring break, visiting Dresden, Weimar, Erfurt, and Eisenach. All four cities looked as West German cities had in the 1950s. As they walked through the streets of Erfurt and surveyed the dilapidated, even crumbling buildings, Helen remarked, “How does Bonn think it can possibly bring this place up to a par with western cities in a few years?”

David agreed that the scene was depressing. Major repairs to the autobahns in the east were underway, and some contracts for repair and reconstruction of buildings had been granted. But it was taking authorities a long time to decide who owned all the property that the Communist government had expropriated.

Dresden was an even more sobering experience. Their hotel, one of the few in the city at that time, overlooked a large vacant area around the railroad station. Nearby was a vast open mall. Allied firebombing of the city in February 1945 had demolished the entire area, and very little had been rebuilt since then. When they strolled along the mall in the evening and looked at the makeshift shops that had sprung up, David said, “In western Germany, they rebuilt areas like this thirty-five years ago. Here the Communists have done practically nothing.”

They drove around the old cultural part of Dresden and learned that the Zwinger museum complex was finally being repaired and that the famous art gallery would reopen in a year or two. They were unable to see a performance in the ornate Semper Opera but vowed to do that another time. On the outskirts of the city they saw Russian soldiers and learned that a large Soviet base was located nearby. Many of these troops were beginning to return home after Germany agreed to pay for building apartments in the USSR for the officers and their families.

The Bruenings traveled by car to Bonn in late June to visit George Drexler, whom David had met in Finland in 1988 at a conference on East-West relations. Drexler, a senior German diplomat, had served in Bonn’s embassy in Washington and had visited Charlottesville in 1990, where he talked to a foreign policy group on the impending reunification of Germany. At afternoon coffee in the Drexlers’ home, the discussion turned to the challenges of implementing that decision.

“We hear that reunification is a wrenching experience for the East Germans,” David said. “Won’t it take a long time to bring the east up to the west’s level?”
"It will take some time, that's true," Drexler replied, "but I think we'll be over the worst part in about three years."

"That soon?" Helen said with surprise. "I should think the economic problems in the east would take much more time to work out."

"Actually, we also have a problem here in the west," Mrs. Drexler observed. "People grumble about the higher taxes they have to pay to subsidize the east. Before unification, nearly everyone was for it. Now many complain about the cost."

"Did Kohl move too fast on this?" David asked.

"Some people say so," George replied, "particularly those who objected to trading the East German mark at par. But most people now agree that Kohl needed to act quickly so that the opportunity would not be lost. After all, he could not be sure what might happen in Moscow. If he had gone more slowly and Gorbachev had changed his policies, we might never have prevailed on the GDR to give up power."

David agreed. "Kohl had to seize that narrow window of opportunity in 1990. But isn't he paying a steep political price? My students tell me he should never have said during the election campaign that there would be little cost. They think he created a credibility problem, sort of like George Bush saying, 'Read my lips, no new taxes,' and then agreeing with Congress to raise them."

Drexler smiled at the comparison. "And what are Mr. Bush's chances for reelection?" he asked. "Will he hold your foreign policy on a steady course against the isolationists in Congress?"

"He's very popular right now," David responded. "He comes out of the Gulf war looking like a hero. Still, my guess is that people will judge him on his domestic policy."

"Speaking as a European, I'd have to say we hope whoever is president in 1993 won't downgrade Europe in America's foreign policy. We need your presence in Europe, not quite so many troops, but your strong diplomacy and good judgment."

"Isn't the European Community supposed to take more responsibility for foreign policy, and eventually defense policy?" Helen asked.

"Eventually can be a long time," George said. "I think we need your active participation for a few more years, to help us Europeans sort out our problems. The situation in the Balkans is one example."

On the way home, Helen remarked, "I think it will take a lot longer than he thinks for the east to stop being a big burden on the west. After living here these three months, I think it will take them at least ten years. What did you think about his point on the U.S. presence in Europe?"

"He's a very smart man. When George asks whether we're going isolationist, now that the Cold War is over, he's not thinking about next year but about the next decade. He knows what happened after World War I, when
Wilson couldn’t get the Senate to ratify his League of Nations. I don’t think we’ll pull out of Europe, but many educated Europeans aren’t convinced of that.”

In July, after David gave his final exam, they drove to the resort town of Garmisch in the Bavarian Alps, where he could read the papers in quiet surroundings. They stayed at the General George Patton Hotel, located on the western fringe of the town facing the Alps, which provided a lovely setting. This turned out to be an ideal place for the Bruenings to spend their final week in Germany.

When they returned to Charlottesville following a visit to Michigan, there was dramatic news from the Soviet Union. A coup mounted by hard-line Communist leaders in August had nearly succeeded in deposing Mikhail Gorbachev as president and replacing his government with Politburo conservatives. They planned to reverse Gorbachev’s economic reforms and, implicitly, to stop the troop withdrawals from Germany and Eastern Europe. The plot came to a halt when Boris Yeltsin, the newly elected and popular president of the Russian Republic, courageously stood atop a tank in front of the parliament building and, on television, urged the public to come to the square and defend the government against the conspirators.

The coup failed after key military units did not participate, but it was nevertheless apparent that Gorbachev’s power had been badly weakened by the events. His policies had stirred so much opposition in the Communist Party that it seemed time for new leadership to emerge in Moscow. Yeltsin became the obvious choice because, in addition to his forceful personality, he was the only person who had been chosen by Russians in a truly democratic election.

These dramatic events in Moscow had an immediate effect on the political situation in the other republics comprising the Soviet Union. Within several months many of them declared their independence, including Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and the three Baltic states. Finally, in December 1991, Gorbachev, at Yeltsin’s urging, agreed to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its replacement by a new coordinating organization called the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Gorbachev’s post as the USSR’s president was abolished in the process, and he went into retirement.

On December 25, 1991, the red flag with its hammer and sickle emblem was hauled down in Red Square for the last time. The seventy-three-year-old Soviet Union, which had threatened Europe with Marxist-Leninist regimes since the 1920s, suddenly ceased to exist. As president of the newly independent Russian Republic, Boris Yeltsin was the de facto leader of what remained of the Soviet empire.

These events in the fall of 1991 were so startling that it took time for
American leaders and the American public to understand their full implications. The new reality was that the United States was now the world's sole superpower, with global interests. Questions began to surface in the country about the continuing need for NATO and for continuing large defense budgets. Some politicians expected a "peace dividend" as a result of the demise of the USSR—funds that might now be used to deal with pressing social needs at home.

But the most important question facing the makers of American foreign policy at the end of 1991 could not be answered until after at least one more U.S. presidential election: "What priorities should the United States establish in the world, now that it no longer had the powerful Soviet Union as its antagonist?"
The spring of 1995 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the collapse of Nazi Germany and its occupation by Soviet, American, British, and French troops. For David and Helen, it was an important time to return to Germany and assess half a century of American foreign policy. Fortunately, David had been invited back to the University of Kaiserslautern to teach that spring.

Before leaving, however, he needed to spend a few days with his father in Michigan. Herbert had said after David and Helen returned from Europe in 1994 that he hoped they would not be gone so long again, that he wished they would be home to celebrate his ninety-seventh birthday in April. He lived alone now, following Martha’s death in 1993, and needed the family’s presence more than before.

To David’s astonishment, his father had driven to the Saginaw airport and insisted on driving back to his apartment eight miles away. Herbert quickly reassured him on the question of returning to Germany: “I understand why you want to go back this year, Dave. You’ve always been interested in history, and this is an important anniversary. But don’t you think you should be letting up a little? You’ll be seventy in June.”

David laughed: “Just look who’s saying it’s time to slow down!”

The next day they drove around Saginaw and observed many of the places that David recalled from his youth. “What’s happened to our city, Dad?” he asked. “You’ve lived here since 1913, nearly this entire century. What explains it?”

“People got scared about crime and didn’t go downtown anymore.”

After some discussion, David asked him: “Do you remember how soon Nurnberg was rebuilt after the war?”

“Why sure. I was there with you in 1955, and with your sister in 1983. Why do you ask?”

“Well, the contrast today between Nurnberg and Saginaw is so striking. It’s as if they had changed roles since 1945.”
Herbert agreed that the Saginaw he had known from 1913 to the 1960s no longer existed. "It was sad to watch it happen," he said softly.

The Bruenings arrived in Frankfurt in early April, rented a car, and drove once more to Kaiserslautern. After unpacking, they stopped by the nearby U.S. Army installation at Vogelweh and picked up several issues of the *Stars and Stripes*. They read about upcoming events to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the final weeks of World War II. On learning that one of them was scheduled in Nurnberg that weekend, David exclaimed, "We should go. I'd like to hear what people there say about Germany's surrender fifty years ago."

"Let's call Anna and see if she'll be there," Helen said. "We need to see her."

They stayed again at the Bavarian-American Hotel, which was only a block from the main entrance to Nurnberg's old walled city. The manager told them that the hotel would close on June 30, exactly fifty years after the U.S. Army seized it in 1945. With the withdrawal of U.S. troops from most of Bavaria now complete, the hotel was no longer needed, he said.

On April 20, the anniversary of Nurnberg's "liberation," an American military band formed at 5:00 P.M. and marched into the walled city, playing lively music and attracting the attention of shoppers and sightseers. Many onlookers didn't seem to know what the occasion was, and some followed along as the band stepped smartly through the main street, past St. Lorenz Church, and down a hill to the large market square. A stage and tent pavilions had been erected there, and a crowd of several hundred had gathered to watch the ceremony.

The "liberation of Nurnberg" commemoration featured 1940s and 1950s music, played by the U.S. military band, a men's choir from Ukraine, a bagpipe troupe from Great Britain, and a group of entertainers from France. The program emphasized the four-power occupation of Germany in 1945 and the growth of democracy in Nurnberg and western Germany in the postwar period. The lord mayor made a brief speech, as did the American consul general. The American band provided most of the music, and the spectators drank beer and ate sandwiches under the tents that had been provided. It seemed like a fitting way to remember fifty years of American-German friendship that had evolved after 1945.

David noted that most of those in the crowd were older Germans, many of whom remembered 1945. The vintage music was familiar to them, and some sang the words. He watched one group and wondered what they might be thinking.

"Excuse me," David said in English to a friendly-looking gray-haired man who stood with his wife at one corner of the group. "Would you mind taking our picture?"
The German smiled broadly and responded in good English. When the picture had been taken, David asked whether he remembered April 20, 1945.

"I was a teenager," he said, "and I remember very well when the Americans told us the fighting was over. We were glad it was the Americans who came here, not the Russians."

"What was it like then?" David asked. "Did you think you were being liberated?"

The German took a moment to respond. "Yes, we were liberated from Nazism, but April 1945 was also a very bad time for us. We were so tired of war and of the Nazis and of all the destruction. When the Americans came, we were scared of what might happen because the SS troops were ordered to hold Nurnberg at all costs. There was a lot of fighting before it was over. The American troops did not treat us harshly, and we came to respect them."

"Now that Nurnberg is rebuilt and prosperous," Helen asked them, "how does it seem to you fifty years later?"

The German looked at his wife. Her English was not as good as his, but she answered readily. "We were lucky," she said. "The Americans gave us a chance to rebuild. We had little practice in democracy and had to learn about it. You gave us Marshall Plan aid, and today our life is very good."

The four of them continued their conversation inside the tent where they ordered beer and sandwiches and sat at one end of a long table with benches. They talked about the 1946 Nurnberg trial. The German man told them that his father, a prominent Nurnberg attorney, had been conscripted to be the defense lawyer for one of the accused and was present in the courtroom on the day when David had been there. The German couple seemed to enjoy talking with the Americans and invited them to their home for lunch the next day. Later, Helen remarked that their gesture of hospitality was indicative of a real gratitude.

Anna Bruening was not in particularly good health, but she looked better than she had when they saw her the previous year. At dinner David asked how she felt about the commemoration of the war's end.

"The last week of the war was awful for us," she said. "My mother and sister and I had to stay in the bunker for three days because the SS fought the Americans so long. I remember when the door to our bunker opened and two young American soldiers came in. We could hardly believe it when they said we should leave, the fighting was over. We didn't know what would happen to us. We were so glad it was the Americans, and not the Russians."

"What was it like when you went back to your house?" Helen asked.

"We had no water or electricity for three months. We were lucky that our house was only damaged, not destroyed. It was springtime, so it was not cold. I remember that my grandfather collapsed and died when he
returned to his house and found that it had been destroyed in the fight-
ing." Her eyes filled with tears at the memory.

"How does Nurnberg seem to you now?" David asked.

"We are very proud of our city," she said. "Today we are doing very well. But I can't forget those bad memories. Young people have no idea what we went through."

The opportunity to return to Berlin that spring was the major reason Helen and David wanted to be in Germany in 1995. In early May they took the express train to Berlin, as they had four years earlier. This time, however, there were no delays because of repairs to the railbed in the east.

Far from being immersed in soul-searching about Germany's surrender fifty years earlier, Berliners that weekend seemed like people in other major European cities in springtime. There were no visible signs of celebration or concern about what the 1945 defeat had meant for Germany. The usual groups of hippies lounged around the steps of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church on Kurfurstendamm, some playing musical instruments and collecting money from passersby. The only indication that the day could be special was a notice posted on the door of the rebuilt church that a children's choir would sing that evening to commemorate the war's end.

Helen and David were lucky to get tickets for a special commemorative concert by the Berlin Symphony Orchestra at the famous Schauspiel Haus, located in east Berlin a few blocks off Unter den Linden Boulevard. The hotel porter suggested that they take the bus, which stopped near the hotel. When David asked how safe they would be, walking through the streets of eastern Berlin at night, he told them not to worry. "It is well lighted and perfectly safe. There is very little crime in that part of Berlin."

They sat in the upper deck of the bus for the twenty-minute ride and had a passing view of Berlin by night, including the newly refurbished Brandenburg Gate, through which the bus passed as it continued east on Unter den Linden. They also passed the Reichstag Building, which had burned in 1933 and was now being fully reconstructed in preparation for the Bundestag's move from Bonn to Berlin in 1999.

To reach the concert hall, they had to walk five blocks through an East Berlin neighborhood that was being renovated after nearly fifty years of neglect by the former East German government. When Berlin was reunited in 1990 under the Federal Republic's administration, this historic part of the city experienced an enormous building boom, much of it sponsored by the Bonn government.

Helen and David had not realized what a magnificent old building the Schauspiel Haus was, or how much the Communist government had spent restoring it in order to promote tourism in the GDR. The performance that evening featured Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, in keeping with the
"remembrance" theme adopted in Berlin that weekend. An adult choir from Denmark and a separate children's chorus from Berlin added brilliance to the performance.

On Sunday, they attended a service at Berlin's newly restored Domkirche. Most of the worshipers were older Germans, and some wept as the priest spoke of the war and its destruction and the Germans' responsibility. David wondered whether they wept only because of their losses in the war or also because of the suffering the Nazis had inflicted on people all over Europe.

The Bruenings spent the afternoon in the eastern part of the city, which the German government and private enterprise were now making great efforts to modernize. New hotels, restaurants, and outdoor cafés were springing up along Friedrichstrasse and other streets near Unter den Linden. From the top of Berlin's prominent Radio Tower, located near the massive headquarters building of the former Communist government, the two of them could see clearly the differences in construction between East and West Berlin. To the east were the examples of unimaginative Socialist architecture, while in the west buildings had a more creative style.

They walked along Unter den Linden that afternoon and as they approached Humboldt University, they saw a police barricade being erected across the boulevard. Traffic was redirected and pedestrians were told by the police, who acted with restraint, to clear the area. David asked a young officer what was happening.

He replied in good English, confirming what David had heard, that most Berlin police learned English as part of their training: "We expect a demonstration by some antiwar activists," the officer said calmly. "They don't have a permit to be here, so we think they may want to cause trouble by marching up the street."

"Where are they headed?" David asked.

"Probably the Guards Hall, where they may hold an anti-military demonstration. You can walk to it on that side of the street, a few hundred meters away."

Arriving at the Guards Memorial, they saw a one-room building from which royal guards had once emerged when the guard was changed during Prussia's imperial time. Since World War I the structure had housed one of Germany's most famous sculptures, by Käthe Kollwitz, of a grieving mother holding her dead soldier son. It spoke to the feelings of many Germans who had lost family members in the war. Since 1945 the site had been used by German Communists for anti-Western propaganda. The Bruenings were told later that no serious incidents occurred that day.

Sitting in a sidewalk café on Kurfurstendamm that evening, the two of them shared impressions of this special weekend. "What do you think of Berlin now?" Helen asked.
"I have mixed feelings. It's hard to comprehend that this will soon be Germany's capital again, and probably the most important city on the continent."

"It does look like a capital city," she remarked.

David reflected on the thought and said, "I'm not yet convinced that the new Germany will exercise its economic and political power wisely."

"I thought you were impressed at how well the Kohl government has managed the reunification, and Germany's relations with France and the other European countries," she said.

"That's true," he responded. "I am. But I wonder how long it will be before some politicians start saying that Germany should be more assertive about promoting its own interests and not pay so much attention to what the French and Americans want."

"I don't think the Germans will go for nationalism again," Helen suggested. "They remember the disaster the Nazis caused. Just look how prosperous West Berlin is now. They won't want to risk losing all this."

The government of Rhineland-Pfalz, where Kaiserslautern was located, sponsored a series of conferences and cultural events called "Nachbar Amerika" ("Neighbor America") during the spring and summer. One was a joint concert by the U.S. Air Force band, from the nearby Ramstein air base, along with a German choral group from Ludwigshaven. A second commemoration, held on May 9 at Ramstein, was hosted by the American commander of NATO air forces in Europe. David was invited as an "honored guest" because he was a veteran of World War II. "This really makes me feel ancient," he said when he saw the invitation.

The Ramstein commemoration started with a reception expertly attended to by smartly dressed air force junior officers, both men and women. David guessed that perhaps one hundred World War II veterans were present, most of them living in western Germany. A few had come from the States for this anniversary.

One veteran who lived in Germany, and whom the Bruenings had come to know on their previous visits to Kaiserslautern, was retired Army Colonel Douglas Westbrook. He had been a part of Patton's Third Army Tank Corps and had seen combat beginning with the initial American landings in North Africa in 1942. He and his English wife, Sue, whom he met in Britain in 1943, had been in Normandy in June 1994 for the fiftieth anniversary of the Allied landings in France on D-Day. "It was an outstanding experience," Doug said, "very well organized by France, Britain, and the U.S." David encouraged him to write his memoirs of the war after reading a long letter that Doug had written to his children about the D-Day commemoration.

Now, on May 9, 1995, David asked him how it felt to be present on the fiftieth anniversary of the war's end.
“Well, I made it,” he replied, smiling. He had not been in good health. David knew that Doug Westbrook, like himself, was very proud to be part of the generation that had won World War II.

After the chapel service and a fine luncheon in the officers’ club, several American and German officials addressed the crowd, the most prominent speaker being Charles Redman, the U.S. ambassador to Germany. He and other dignitaries paid tribute to the servicemen on both sides in the war who had died in the line of duty. Then, at precisely 2:00 P.M., as the U.S. commander was concluding his remarks, four air force jets in formation roared overhead.

As the guests were leaving, the Bruenings greeted a German journalist whom they had met on their previous visits to Kaiserslautern. Frau Brandt looked David squarely in the eyes and said, “This program was very well done. It’s not easy for us Germans to remember this day in 1945.” She had been a young girl at the time.

During the previous week a large group of prominent Germans had placed an ad in the major Frankfurt newspaper, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, challenging the Bonn government’s official characterization of the war’s end. Signatories asked whether Germans should view May 9, 1945, as a “liberation from Nazism,” as the Kohl government preferred to call it, or a “disastrous defeat” for Germany. Their argument was that the Third Reich’s collapse, even though it ended the Nazi tyranny, had brought terrible times for the German people, especially the several millions who were thrown out of east Prussia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and other Eastern European countries after the war. This letter, widely discussed in the news media, raised a profound question for many Germans, especially those old enough to remember what had happened after May 1945.

David asked Peter and Andreas, his student assistants, to collect as many public comments and editorials about the controversy as they could find and summarize them in English. It was soon clear that Chancellor Kohl’s effort to focus public attention on the end of Nazi tyranny was not acceptable to many Germans. After several weeks, the debate ebbed, and Kohl acknowledged the dissenters when he stated in the Bundestag that there had certainly been suffering on the part of all Germans who bore the burden of the country’s defeat. But he emphasized that their tribulations were the result of the Nazi regime’s actions and that future governments had the task of ensuring that such a disastrous path would never be taken again.

“What’s your view of this debate?” David asked his assistant, Andreas, one morning. He knew that the twenty-six-year-old student had spent four years in the German air force and believed that his country needed to take more responsibility for assisting NATO and the European Community to maintain security in Europe.

“Well, I think Kohl has to show sympathy for those who suffered after the war,” Andreas said. “And he is right to emphasize, especially to
my generation, that Germany’s peace and prosperity over these fifty years have resulted from cooperation with our neighbors. We must never return to the extreme nationalism that destroyed us.”

After visiting Berlin, the Bruenings decided to revisit Dresden, which they had first seen in 1991. Fortunately they were able to get tickets for the famous Semper Opera’s performance of Richard Strauss’s *Friedenstag*. This opera commemorated the end of Europe’s Thirty Years’ War in 1648 and was part of Dresden’s month-long “Remembrance Celebration” marking the end of World War II. Ironically, Strauss’s opera had first been performed in Munich in the summer of 1938, a year before the outbreak of the war, as Hitler was preparing to absorb Czechoslovakia into the Third Reich. Following the outstanding performance at the Semper, they walked half a block to the Zwinger Museum garden and viewed a stunning production of Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana*. This was an evening of music they would never forget.

The Bruenings learned that Dresden had lost nearly 135,000 people during the two days of intense British and American firebombing in February 1945. The news magazine *Economist* estimated that the death toll there had been in the same range as that at Hiroshima. During a car trip around the city, they saw many areas where little rebuilding had been done after the 1945 disaster. Near the ruins of the historic Frauenkirche, one of the city’s great prewar architectural treasures, they noticed a large poster affixed to the barricade showing the fiery inferno that had destroyed Dresden. The inscription read: “Apocalypse 1945.” The poster also hung in other parts of Dresden in May and June to commemorate the disaster. Helen concluded that this city would not be able to say that it had finally recovered from World War II until the Frauenkirche had been fully rebuilt, a project that was just beginning and would be completed early in the twenty-first century.

Torgau on the Elbe River, about sixty miles northwest of Dresden, was the site where American and Soviet troops had met for the first time, in April 1945, thereby cutting Germany in two. A friend of David’s from Charlottesville, Dick Inscoe, had been there on that occasion and urged them to see it. The only evidence of the linking up of the two armies was a Russian-built monument on the bank of the Elbe whose inscription praised the valor of Soviet troops in the “great patriotic war” against Germany. It made only slight mention of the Allies and no specific mention of the Americans, who had fought their way across Germany to reach that meeting point.

A major political event occurred in Bonn in late June 1995 that had wide implications for NATO and the United States. The Bundestag, after prodding by Chancellor Kohl, voted to authorize the government to deploy German military units for the first time outside the NATO area. Kohl wanted to send about five hundred medical personnel to assist in the ex-
pected evacuation of U.N. personnel in Bosnia. He also planned to send a squadron of fighter-bombers to a NATO base in northern Italy to support the Allies' reconnaissance operation over Bosnian territory. It was a significant decision, as Germany had been unwilling for fifty years to deploy forces outside the country. David asked Andreas why the decision did not generate more media attention.

"Everyone expected it to happen eventually," he replied. "Last year our supreme court ruled that sending troops outside Germany was not in conflict with the constitution, as the leftists had claimed. The court also said that this was a political decision that should be settled by the Bundestag."

"But why," David asked, "didn't peace groups and antimilitary protesters take to the streets, as they did in the 1970s and 1980s over similar issues?"

"I think the public is showing deep concern about the television photos of the atrocities in Bosnia. Polls say that people want the killing stopped. If our European partners—Britain, France, and Italy—are willing to send troops to help impose a peace, many people think Germany shouldn't say no, if we are asked."

"That's good news for NATO and the European community," David responded. "Four years ago Germany didn't participate in the Gulf war."

"That's true," Andreas said. "What's important now is that the yes votes in the Bundestag included some Social Democrats who supported the government on this issue. That's encouraging because the Social Democrats haven't in the past been strong for defense."

Before leaving for the United States, the Bruenings invited Jürgen Weiss, a historian in Rhineland-Pfalz, to join them for lunch. Weiss had done research and writing on the migration of Germans from this region to Pennsylvania in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These German settlers, many of them Mennonites, later moved into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia near where Helen and David now lived. Weiss also had done research on what had happened to German Jews who left the Pfalz region after Hitler came to power in 1933. He carried on correspondence with American-Jewish families and met with some of them during his occasional visits to the United States to pursue his research. He had the reputation among Germans of being a person who cared deeply about the fate of Jews who had perished in the Holocaust.

At lunch, David asked, "Jürgen, how much anti-Jewish sentiment is there in Germany today? We hear about these neo-Nazi desecrations of cemeteries and the reports of anti-Semitic talk. But we don't know how widespread it is."

"In my view," the historian responded, "you find anti-Jewish feeling mostly among the older people who were around in the 1930s but not much
of it among younger Germans. That’s because anyone over sixty is likely to have been brainwashed by the Nazis. It’s difficult to get rid of all that racial hatred if you grew up with it.”

“But what about the skinheads?” David persisted. “They’re young, and they are vocal against the Jews and foreigners who seek asylum in Germany.”

“They are a small group,” Weiss replied. “We have laws banning dissemination of Nazi propaganda, and we prosecute the offenders. The great majority of our young people are well aware of the Holocaust and are ashamed of it. It is a terrible blot on Germany’s history. I think our government and media have done a pretty good job of educating people about what happened during the Nazi period and our responsibility for it. We won’t forget.”

David remarked later that, although he was persuaded that neo-Nazism was not on the rise in Germany, younger Germans seemed to want to forget about the Nazi period and get on with their lives. He was concerned that apathy about World War II was growing among this group.

At the end of his teaching assignment in Kaiserslautern, David reflected on his impressions of Germany and Europe. He had two somewhat contradictory views about Germany. First, there no longer seemed to be any question that a reunited Germany was the most important country in Europe. The deutschmark was the anchor currency for the European Union (EU), Germany’s economy was the continent’s most productive, and reunification in 1990 had made the country the most populous state. Furthermore, it was situated in the center of Europe, in its heartland. As the EU expanded eastward in the coming years, Germany was in an excellent position to enlarge its trade and investment in the eastern countries, whose economies had historically been tied to it.

The Kohl government was careful not to throw Germany’s new weight around, one German told them, so as not to reignite fears that the country was seeking European hegemony. David wondered, however, how long it would be before opportunistic politicians exploited Germany’s growing importance to press for a more assertive foreign policy. The government had taken the initiative regarding recognition of Croatia and Bosnia in 1991. How would Washington deal with an even more assertive Germany in the future? On the positive side, David applauded Helmut Kohl’s great strides in integrating Germany into the new European Union.

A second question had to do with the German economic “miracle,” whether it could be sustained. The issue was whether German businesses and industry were pricing themselves out of international markets by the very high German wage rates, large social benefits, long paid vacations (Germans were accustomed to six weeks annually), and the high taxes that
were required to sustain this generous social welfare system. The problem seemed to reach serious proportions in the spring of 1995 when the deutschmark rose sharply against the dollar and caused several large companies, notably Daimler-Benz, to threaten to move thousands of jobs out of Germany in order to continue to be competitive in world markets. If industries departed on a large scale, David speculated, would Germany’s social contract begin to unravel?

When the Bruenings returned to Virginia in early August they made plans to visit North Carolina for Jason’s impending marriage to Charlotte Sawyer. Before that, however, they traveled to Washington to see their sons and catch up on the news from the nation’s capital. Jason and Jeremy, both lawyers, worked in Washington and, like many young professionals, lived across the Potomac River in Virginia.

It was a beautiful summer day, and David wanted to visit the Iwo Jima Memorial adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery, the Vietnam War Memorial, located on the Mall in Washington, and the new Korean War Memorial that President Clinton had officially opened a few weeks earlier. Upon seeing these symbols of America’s involvement in three wars over the previous fifty years, he reflected on the sacrifices that millions of American military personnel had made in them.

Seeing Washington that day, David was reminded also that the nation’s capital was in the midst of a financial crisis. The new Republican Congress, which took office in January 1995 following the party’s major election victory two months earlier, had appointed a financial control board to deal with the city’s bloated budget and the massive mismanagement that had brought it to virtual bankruptcy. Fear of crime was causing the increasing exodus of middle-class residents, both whites and blacks, to the Virginia and Maryland suburbs. With violent crime, even in the public schools, on the rise, racial tensions were said to be explosive. The Economist of London summed up the view of many observers that summer when it captioned an article: “D.C. for Disgraceful Capital.”

After the destruction by terrorist bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City in April, the FBI and Secret Service persuaded President Clinton that the threat of bombings to government buildings in Washington had become so great that Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House should be closed to traffic and turned into a pedestrian walk. Some thought Washington was beginning to look like a fortress.

Helen and David had dinner that evening in Washington, D.C., with Jason, Jeremy, and Jeremy’s wife, Katie Mendelson. They related their experiences and impressions of Germany fifty years after the war’s end. David commented on what a dynamic city Berlin had become in only five years since reunification, and contrasted it with Washington, D.C., in 1995.
"Why in the world did Congress ever give the District home rule in 1973?" he asked. "If this capital is a financial disaster and violent crime is out of control, why doesn't Congress just take back administration of the city, or turn it over to Maryland, as some suggest?"

The family agreed that that was not likely to happen. After more discussion about this sorry state of affairs, David posed a question that had bothered him all day: "Does Washington seem to you like the capital of a victorious superpower?"

Helen responded, "Well, at least statehood for Washington won't occur anytime soon."

In late September they spent a long weekend in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where they attended Jason and Charlotte's impressive church wedding. All of the Bruening family was there, and as they watched their four adult children standing in the bridal party before the altar, Helen and David felt a great sense of pride.

That fall, in Charlottesville, David had time to think about a question with which he and Helen had wrestled during their recent stay in Europe. "What had fifty years of effort to win the Second World War and the Cold War meant for the United States and the rest of the world?"

Certainly—and most important, he concluded—the United States had remained a free, democratic country with a strong economy. If the nation had chosen not to challenge Hitler's drive, and later that of Stalin, to subjugate all of Europe under their totalitarian regimes, the United States in 1995 would probably not be a free, democratic, and economically vibrant country. After gazing at the war memorials in Washington, he couldn't help wondering whether younger Americans appreciated the enormous sacrifices that their fathers and grandfathers had made to defend American freedom against unbridled tyranny.

He also concluded that the United States had not dealt effectively with pressing social and racial problems at home during its sustained effort to halt the Soviet Union's quest for domination in Europe. Racial tensions had been rising in American cities for thirty years, from the mid-1960s, when serious violence first erupted in Los Angeles and other major cities, precipitated by frustration in the black community with poverty and a lack of opportunity. Recently, in 1992, Los Angeles had experienced another dangerous race riot following the acquittal of several white policemen accused of beating a black man. That a large area of a major American city could be destroyed in reaction to a jury verdict was shocking evidence, he feared, that some American cities were on the verge of anarchy, as they had been in 1968 following the assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

In the 1990s, with the Cold War past and no foreign military threat
facing the United States, many Americans were asking why billions of dollars should not be transferred from the defense budget and applied to the fight against crime and the social crises of America’s inner cities. David seriously doubted that spending additional billions on American cities would allay the country’s racial tensions, but he was also persuaded that simply turning over responsibility for the problem to the states, as some suggested, would not solve the problem.

He also recalled a question that his father had so often raised with him: “Why does the United States have to be a policeman whenever there is trouble in the world?” If David had decided in 1946 to return home from the Navy as planned and had made his career in Michigan, he speculated that he too would have been asking, “Why is the United States getting mixed up in all these alliances that cost us plenty and get our boys killed in wars?” His decision instead to enter government service and to specialize in international relations had led him to conclude that the world is never safe for personal freedom unless one great power is willing to take the leadership in stopping dictators before they gain control of whole regions. Had the U.S. government not provided Marshall Plan aid to rebuild Western Europe’s economies, and had it not provided a defense guarantee under NATO, David was convinced that West Germany would have succumbed by the mid-1950s to Soviet and local Communist intimidation, just as had occurred in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

He was also persuaded that the American military presence in Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and South Vietnam in the 1960s had deterred China’s Communist dictator, Mao Zedong, and Indonesia’s president, Sukarno, both of whom believed that communism was the wave of the future in Asia and that America would withdraw when the price of defending its allies proved too high. Although the United States had failed to preserve a non-Communist government in South Vietnam, it did buy sufficient time to enable Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia to stop Communists from seizing control of their governments and aligning them with Beijing’s foreign policy.

A potential new danger facing the United States as it approached the year 2000, David feared, came not from outside the country, as it had for half a century, but from within its own territory. He worried about the increasing alienation from the government by the growing number of citizens on the radical Right of the political spectrum, including armed local militias, and on the radical Left by an alienated racial minority. Would the United States be remembered, he wondered, as the country that preserved freedom in the West in the twentieth century, but permitted itself to be torn apart by conflicts within its own society? America’s institutions were strong enough to cope with this danger, he concluded, but it would require a high degree of wisdom and nonpartisanship by the country’s political leader
ship to ensure that the United States entered the twenty-first century as a strong and self-confident country.

As David looked back on fifty years of American foreign policy and his own involvement in its implementation, he marveled at the significant changes that had occurred in the world. Among these was the decolonization of Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and many islands in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and the Mediterranean and Caribbean Seas. In 1945 the United Nations comprised only fifty-one member states. By 1995 that number had passed one hundred and eighty. Absorbing that many new sovereign states into the international system, especially when many would never be economically viable, presented world leaders with an enormous task.

Another profound change was the information and communications revolution that had, by the 1980s, made the American president and secretary of state the near captives of nightly television news. Examples were TV photos of starving children in Somalia, the Chinese government's crackdown on demonstrators in Tiananmen Square, and brutal ethnic warfare in Bosnia. In addition, the recent ability of people in all parts of the world to communicate instantaneously made international economic relationships increasingly complex and the job of formulating sound, longer-range foreign policy more complicated. Furthermore, powerful interest groups with large amounts of money exerted growing influence on foreign policy, especially ethnic minorities with deep attachments for countries such as Cuba, Cyprus, Israel, South Africa, and Mexico. No other country was so heavily influenced by ethnic group pressures in making foreign policy as was the United States in the 1990s.

As David thought about these significant changes, he concluded that, for all of the president's presumed authority in foreign policy, he really had less freedom in this regard than many other world leaders. It was particularly true when the president was of one party and Congress was controlled by the opposition, a situation that had prevailed during the administrations of Presidents Reagan, Bush, and Clinton.

Reflecting on the scope of a foreign policy that the United States should chart for itself in the remainder of the 1990s, he arrived at an additional conclusion regarding the limits of America's international responsibilities in the post-Cold War years. In sum, the issue was whether the United States should pursue policies that are limited to national economic and security interests in North America, Western Europe, and East Asia, or in addition include sending its military forces abroad and expending large resources for essentially humanitarian purposes. The question was not whether the United States has a national interest in promoting democracy and human rights as a part of its foreign policy, which it clearly does. Rather, the issue was the extent to which Washington should give priority to requests from the United Nations and foreign governments for American intervention in civil wars, ethnic conflicts, and other domestic disorders.
Two foreign policy issues during 1995 highlighted this dilemma: Haiti and Bosnia. On Haiti, President Clinton decided to send U.S. troops to restore a popularly-elected president to power even though Congress refused to support his action. On Bosnia, he dispatched 20,000 U.S. forces there as part of a NATO operation to stop ethnic killings and separate the warring parties, also without Congressional support. In both cases the president argued that international security as well as humanitarian interests were at stake and that the United States should not shirk its responsibility to help restore order in those countries. Yet the president carefully avoided being drawn into humanitarian disasters in Africa, as President Bush was in Somalia in 1992.

The fundamental foreign policy task of both the president and Congress in the remaining years of the twentieth century, David concluded, was to carefully define America’s national interests in a way that balanced a desire to promote human rights and justice in the world with the willingness of Americans to bear the costs, both military and financial, of sustaining a policy of global commitments. As the United States approached the end of the millennium, a more limited concept of America’s international role was inevitable, he believed, because the country was not willing, barring a major new international crisis, to send its soldiers just anywhere as peace enforcers. Where the pendulum would eventually come to rest between the internationalism of the Cold War years and the neo-isolationism now espoused by some politicians was an open question in 1995. But the trend, he thought, was in the direction of less, not more, involvement by the United States in local conflicts occurring outside North America, Europe, and East Asia. These regions would continue to be viewed as particularly vital interests of the United States well into the twenty-first century.
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