

= Jack F. Matlock , Jr . =

Jack Foust Matlock , Jr . (born October 1 , 1929) is an American former ambassador , career Foreign Service Officer , a teacher , a historian , and a linguist . He was a specialist in Soviet affairs during some of the most tumultuous years of the Cold War , and served as U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1987 to 1991 .

Matlock became interested in Russia as a Duke University undergraduate , and after studies at Columbia University and a stint as a Russian @-@ language instructor at Dartmouth College , entered the Foreign Service in 1956 . His 35 @-@ year career encompassed much of the Cold War period between the Soviet Union and the United States . His first assignment to Moscow was in 1961 , and it was from the embassy there that he experienced the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis , helping to translate diplomatic messages between the leaders . The next year he was posted to West Africa , and he later served in East Africa , during the post @-@ colonial period of superpower rivalry .

At the beginning of détente , he was Director of Soviet Affairs in the State Department , and began to participate in the summit meetings between the leaders , eventually attending all but one of the U.S. ? Soviet summits held in the 20 @-@ year period 1972 ? 91 . Matlock was back in Moscow in 1974 , serving in the number two position in the embassy for four years . The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in early 1980 ended the period of reduced tensions . Matlock was assigned to Moscow again in 1981 as acting ambassador during the first part of Ronald Reagan 's presidency . Reagan appointed him as ambassador to Czechoslovakia and later asked him to return to Washington in 1983 to work at the National Security Council , with the assignment to develop a negotiating strategy to end the arms race . When Mikhail Gorbachev became the leader of the Soviet Union in 1985 , arms negotiations and summit meetings resumed . Matlock was appointed ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1987 and saw the last years of the Soviet Union before he retired from the Foreign Service in 1991 .

After leaving the Foreign Service , he wrote an account of the end of the Soviet Union titled *Autopsy on an Empire* , followed by an account of the end of the Cold War titled *Reagan and Gorbachev : How the Cold War Ended* , establishing his reputation as a historian . He joined the faculty of the Institute for Advanced Study and he went on to teach diplomacy at several New England colleges . He and his wife Rebecca live in Princeton , New Jersey .

= = Biography = =

Born in 1929 in Greensboro , North Carolina , Jack Matlock graduated from Greensboro Senior High School (see Grimsley High School) in 1946 , married Rebecca Burrum in 1949 , graduated summa cum laude from Duke University in 1950 , and later earned an M.A. from Columbia University in 1952 . He taught Russian language and literature at Dartmouth College from 1953 to 1956 .

He joined the Foreign Service in 1956 , and served in Vienna , Garmisch @-@ Partenkirchen , Moscow , Accra , Zanzibar , and Dar es Salaam . He was Director of Soviet Affairs in the State Department (1971 ? 74) , Diplomat in Residence at Vanderbilt University (1978 ? 79) , and Deputy Director of the Foreign Service Institute (1979 ? 80) . He served as U.S. Ambassador to Czechoslovakia (1981 ? 83) and as Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and Senior Director for European and Soviet Affairs on the National Security Council Staff (1983 ? 86) . His languages are Czech , French , German , Russian , and Swahili .

Matlock was US President Ronald Reagan 's choice for the position of ambassador to the Soviet Union , serving from 1987 to 1991 . His previous tours in Moscow were as Vice Consul and Third Secretary (1961 ? 1963) , Minister Counsellor and Deputy Chief of Mission (1974 ? 1978) , and Chargé d ? Affaires ad interim (1981) .

After he retired from the Foreign Service in 1991 , Matlock reentered the academic world , becoming the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Professor of the Practice of International Diplomacy at Columbia . After five years in that position he moved to the Institute for Advanced Study in

Princeton , New Jersey , where he was George F. Kennan Professor from 1996 to 2001 . Matlock has held visiting appointments at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University , at Hamilton College , at the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs and at Mount Holyoke College . He has been awarded honorary doctorates by Greensboro College , Albright College and Connecticut College . Matlock completed his dissertation and received his Ph.D. from the Columbia University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at their commencement ceremony on May 22 , 2013 .

Jack and Rebecca Matlock now divide their time between a home in Princeton and Rebecca 's family farm in Booneville , Tennessee . They have five children and three grandchildren .

= = Captivated by Russia = =

By his own account , Matlock became captivated by Russia having read Dostoyevsky as an undergraduate at Duke University . He went on to study Russian language and area studies at the Russian Institute at Columbia University , and became convinced that the principal challenge of American diplomacy in the post World War II period would be dealing with the Soviet Union . After his 1953 appointment to a position as Russian Instructor at Dartmouth College , he supplemented his income by preparing an index to Joseph Stalin 's collected works on contract with the State Department . Because in 1956 the Soviet Union was a closed society , he decided his best chance to get to know Russia was to join the Foreign Service and become a diplomat . His ultimate career goal was clear from the beginning :

" when I entered the Foreign Service I shocked a lot of people by what seemed to be overweening ambition when I was asked " What do you want out of the Foreign Service ? " I stated frankly , " I want to be the American ambassador to the Soviet Union . "

= = Moscow : as Third Secretary = =

After a tour in Vienna , Austria and Russian language training at the U.S. Army Russian Institute in Oberammergau , Matlock arrived in Moscow for the first time in 1961 . Initially a Vice Consul , Matlock met with individuals seeking to visit or emigrate to the United States . His most famous case was Lee Harvey Oswald , who applied for a repatriation loan to return to the United States after having previously moved to the Soviet Union .

After a year , Matlock was promoted to Third Secretary in the Political Section . American foreign policy with regard to the Soviet Union , known as containment , had been articulated in 1947 by George F. Kennan , who was later to become a good friend of Matlock 's . The American policy was basically to contain the spread of Communism , in the expectation that it would eventually collapse of internal contradictions . This did not prevent discussions between the Superpowers . In June 1961 , President John F. Kennedy and First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev met in Vienna , and in December the United Nations General Assembly approved a draft joint resolution on principles for negotiating disarmament . This period also saw the beginnings of U.S. - U.S.S.R. cultural exchanges , notably the visit of poet Robert Frost to Moscow .

The containment policy was tested during the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis . Matlock , along with Richard Davies and Herbert Okun , translated communications between President John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev .

= = Ghana and Tanzania = =

In late 1963 , the Matlocks left Moscow for West Africa , arriving in Accra , Ghana . Kwame Nkrumah had become the first president of newly independent Ghana and post - colonial Africa was to be a venue for competition between the U.S. and Soviet Union for influence .

In 1967 , Matlock was sent to East Africa to serve on Zanzibar as consul . It was his first opportunity to be head of a Foreign Service post . His predecessor as consul , Frank Carlucci , was later to become Secretary of Defense , and his successor , Thomas R. Pickering , was later to become

Ambassador to the U.N ..

Matlock 's next assignment was as Deputy Chief of Mission in the capital of Tanzania , Dar es Salaam . Even in Africa , knowledge of Soviet Affairs proved useful . With Leonid Brezhnev in power , Soviet foreign policy as of 1968 was dictated by the Brezhnev Doctrine , which held that , once a country became Communist , it was never to leave the Soviet sphere of influence .

= = Washington : as Director of Soviet Affairs = =

In 1971 Matlock became Director of Soviet Affairs in the State Department . During Richard Nixon 's presidency , a period known as détente , there was a reduction of Cold War tension . Matlock participated in the negotiation of arms control treaties and other bilateral agreements . In fact , he attended every one of the U.S.-Soviet summits for the 20 @-@ year period 1972 ? 1991 , with the exception of the 1979 Carter - Brezhnev summit .

= = Moscow : as Deputy Chief of Mission = =

After four years in Washington , he spent four years as Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) , the number two position , at Embassy Moscow . These years cemented his reputation within the State Department as a Soviet expert . In early 1976 , the State Department made public the fact that the Soviet Union had been beaming microwaves at the Moscow Embassy from a nearby building for many years . This caused concern about possible health effects of the low @-@ level microwave radiation . Ironically , it was Soviet research that documented the psychological symptoms of sensitivity to microwave exposure . In the United States , the standards for safe exposure to microwaves were much more lenient than in the Soviet Union .

The August 26 , 1977 ABC Evening News covered the story of a major fire at the embassy . Despite the severity of the fire , all personnel were evacuated safely , and the efforts of the embassy staff elicited a commendation from President Jimmy Carter . Former KGB agent Victor Sheymov testified before Congress in 1998 that the fire was deliberately induced by the Soviets in an effort to gain access to sensitive areas by agents posing as firemen .

= = Stateside = =

Matlock returned to the United States and taught for a year at Vanderbilt University under the ' Diplomats in Residence ' program . The following year , he came to Washington DC to take the number two position at the Foreign Service Institute , the State Department ' s language training school .

In January 1980 , in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan , President Carter postponed consideration of the SALT @-@ 2 Treaty and imposed a trade embargo . Also in 1980 , the new embassy under construction in Moscow was found to be so riddled with listening devices that it would be unusable for secure work .

= = Moscow : as Chargé d 'Affaires = =

Matlock returned to Moscow in 1981 as acting Ambassador , or Chargé d 'Affaires . By April 24 , President Reagan had cancelled the export embargo , and trade resumed . Matlock signalled the American desire for constructive engagement with the Soviets :

We are seeking an active dialogue on all levels . But a dialogue is useful only if it is candid , and we must learn not to take offense at candor but to use it to help us understand each other . - Jack F. Matlock , Jr . (New York Times Quote of the Day for July 5 , 1981)

On August 6 , 1981 President Reagan ordered the development of a neutron bomb . While contentious , this had the desired effect of bringing the Soviets to the bargaining table , and negotiations on limiting nuclear weapons in Europe started on November 30 .

= = Czechoslovakia : as Ambassador = =

In late 1980 Matlock had been appointed Ambassador to Czechoslovakia by President Jimmy Carter . However , the appointment was not ratified by the Senate before Carter ' s election loss , and so it was with Ronald Reagan ' s re @-@ appointment in 1981 that he became Ambassador to Czechoslovakia . During his tenure , he was able to help resolve a major impediment to good relations : the return of 18 @.@ 4 tons of gold that had been looted by the Nazis in World War II and kept , ever since its recovery by Allied forces , in American and British banks .

On March 23 , 1983 , President Reagan announced the Strategic Defense Initiative , a ground and space @-@ based weapons system designed to protect from nuclear attack . Matlock continued to advise the President on policy toward the Soviet Union and on September 1 , 1983 , when the Soviets shot down commercial flight KAL 007 , Matlock returned to Washington to work with White House officials .

= = Washington : National Security Council = =

Reagan appointed Matlock to the position of Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director of European and Soviet Affairs in the National Security Council (NSC) in order to develop a negotiating strategy to end the arms race . Earlier in the year , the long @-@ standing containment strategy toward the U.S.S.R. had been modified by Matlock ' s predecessor Richard Pipes to include bringing internal pressure on the Soviets while conducting negotiations in the mutual interest . In following years , discussions with the Soviets were conducted under Matlock ' s " Four @-@ Part Agenda " including Human Rights , Regional Issues , Arms Control , and Bilateral Issues .

On November 25 , 1983 , Soviet leader Yuri Andropov announced the resumption of nuclear missile deployment in the western U.S.S.R. , a sign of the increased tension in the relationship . The thaw in relations can be taken to begin with Ronald Reagan ' s January 16 , 1984 speech declaring that the U.S. and U.S.S.R. had " common interests and the foremost among them is to avoid war and reduce the level of arms " in which he added that " I support a zero option for all nuclear arms . " While the speech was commonly seen as propaganda , Lawrence S. Wittner , professor of History at the State University of New York - Albany says of it that " a number of officials--including its writer , Jack Matlock Jr.--have contended that it was meant to be taken seriously by Soviet leaders . " On June 30 , 1984 , the Soviets offered to start negotiations on nuclear and space @-@ based weapons .

= = Gorbachev period = =

Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union on March 11 , 1985 , and the next day negotiations on nuclear and space @-@ based weapons began in Geneva . A few weeks later , he proposed a moratorium on the development of nuclear and space weapons during the period of negotiations , and in July , he proposed to ban nuclear testing . Reagan rejected the proposals .

Gorbachev began a period of internal economic restructuring , known as perestroika , and agreed to a series of summits with the American president . Matlock was instrumental in preparing Reagan for his first summit with Gorbachev , arranging for specialists within the government to write a ? Soviet Union 101 ? course of 21 papers on Russia for Reagan to study . Matlock also participated in a mock summit , playing the role of Gorbachev , allowing Reagan to practice the encounter in advance .

Speaking at a Chautauqua conference in J?rmala , Latvia in June 1986 , Matlock told the crowd that the United States did not recognize the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union . His remarks are credited by Dainis ?v?ns , leader of the Popular Front of Latvia , with galvanizing the independence movement in Latvia .

U.S.-Soviet relations took a turn for the worse with the Soviet ? s arrest of U.S. reporter Nicholas Daniloff , evidently for use as a bargaining chip in response to the August 30 , 1986 arrest of suspected KGB agent Gennadiy Zakharov . Since Daniloff was not engaged in espionage , Matlock advised taking a hard line with the Soviets . While charges against Daniloff were dropped , a

diplomatic row ensued , leading by the end of October , to the expulsion of 100 Soviets , including 80 suspected intelligence officers . The U.S. lost 10 diplomats from Embassy Moscow , along with all 260 of the Russian support staff .

= = Moscow : as Ambassador = =

In April 1987 Reagan appointed Matlock as Ambassador to the Soviet Union . Conditions at the Embassy were tense , as Marine Sergeant Clayton Lonetree had been found to have compromised Embassy security . Within a few months of the Lonetree scandal , all U.S. intelligence assets in the Soviet Union had been exposed . The Americans suspected that the security breach had meant that the Embassy code room was no longer secure and worked frantically to determine how . It was not until 1994 that Aldrich Ames , a mole within the CIA , was caught . Another mole , Robert Hanssen , this time within the FBI , was caught only in 2001 .

During 1987 , relations improved steadily , with U.S. military inspectors present at Soviet military manoeuvres , an agreement to establish centers on Reducing Nuclear Threat , and a first round of negotiations aimed at banning nuclear tests . The thaw in relations was reflected in the cultural sphere . Matlock ' s invitation to ballerina Maya Plisetskaya to attend a reception at Spaso House provided a way for Matlock to judge Gorbachev ' s intentions , as earlier Soviet leaders would have considered it a provocation .

A second embassy fire in February 1988 damaged several floors of the chancery .

Improvements in relations continued during the year , with two summit meetings , the first in Moscow and the second on Governor ' s Island in New York . An earthquake struck Armenia during the second summit , cutting it short . However , a U.S. offer of assistance to the victims was accepted by Gorbachev , and became the first official assistance by the U.S. since World War II .

The Berlin Wall fell on November 9 , 1989 , and on November 15 , the U.S. and U.S.S.R. submitted a joint resolution to the United Nations on the Consolidation of International Peace , Security and Cooperation , the first such joint initiative . A December meeting in Malta brought Gorbachev and George H. W. Bush together for their first summit .

The June 1990 summit in Washington brought several bilateral agreements , covering chemical weapons , trade , aviation , grain , maritime boundaries , peaceful uses of atomic energy , ocean exploration , student exchanges , and customs cooperation . The September meeting in Helsinki provided a venue for discussion of the Persian Gulf War .

A third fire in the embassy occurred in April 1991 , and this time the KGB may have managed to send in agents disguised as firefighters .

In June 1991 , Matlock , received word of a coup planned against Gorbachev , and warned him . It was to no avail ; shortly after his July summit with Bush , Gorbachev was briefly removed from power by the August 1991 coup .

The Soviet Union collapsed by the end of 1991 , just a few months after Matlock , having fulfilled his ambition when he joined the Foreign Service , retired from a diplomatic career spanning 35 years .

= = End of the Soviet Union and the Cold War = =

After retirement from the Foreign Service , Matlock began work on his magnum opus , Autopsy on an Empire : The American Ambassador ' s Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union . This 836 page book details the final years of the Soviet Union , and is considered by many to be the definitive insider ' s guide to the subject .

A subsequent book , Reagan and Gorbachev : How the Cold War Ended describes the relationship of the two men and their efforts to reach agreement on arms reductions between the superpowers . Matlock takes the position that the military build @-@ up by Ronald Reagan in the early @-@ 1980s has contributed to the inaccurate characterization of Reagan as a war hawk . The quote atop the first page of Reagan and Gorbachev is by Ronald Reagan , speaking in 1981 during the beginnings of a one trillion dollar defense spending surge , that states " I 've always recognized that ultimately there 's got to be a settlement , a solution . "

Reagan , according to Matlock , never altered from his goals as announced at his first press conference as President when he stated that , appearances to the contrary , he was in favor of " an actual reduction in the numbers of nuclear weapons . " This would contradict the claims of Reagan @-@ victory @-@ school proponents such as Peter Schweitzer .

His third book , Superpower Illusions : How Myths and False Ideologies Led America Astray--And How to Return to Reality , published in 2010 , provides an analysis of the post Cold War period along with his policy prescriptions .

= = Teaching Diplomacy = =

Matlock has taught diplomacy at Princeton University , Columbia University and Hamilton College . In a 1997 interview , Matlock offers some advice to prospective diplomats : have an optimistic nature , get a liberal education , do not expect to change the world , know the country , know your own country , faithfully represent your government , find the mutual interests , and remember that timing is everything .

Matlock also gives his views on one of the basic distinctions in politics :

I don 't see much difference between a communist regime and a fascist regime . In fact , I think one of the greatest intellectual confusions that many have had over these decades is the whole right and left thing -- fascists are on the right , communists are on the left . Nonsense ! They come together and overlap , and we 're seeing this in Russia today where the allies are the nationalistic chauvinists and the communists . They are natural allies because they are authoritarians by nature . And more than authoritarians , they tend to be totalitarians , which means that they tend to destroy all of the elements of the civil society . To me that 's much more important than whether you 're philosophically right or left . You know , are you willing to create and live in a civil society , in an open society , or not ? That to me is the basic issue .

= = U.S. policy and politics = =

After leaving government service , Matlock has occasionally joined with other experts to criticize U.S. government policy . On June 26 , 1997 , he signed an Open Letter to Bill Clinton criticizing plans for NATO expansion . His reason for opposition , as given in his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee , is the belief that NATO expansion will preclude significant nuclear arms reduction with Russia , and consequently increase the risk of a terrorist nuclear attack .

Matlock drew the ire of many Republicans during the 2004 Presidential election when he signed the Diplomats and Military Commanders for Change Official Statement of June 16 , 2004 , criticizing the policies of George W. Bush and endorsing John Kerry for President .

On Jan 4 , 2007 , Matlock joined with George Shultz , William Perry , Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn to advocate a goal of a world free of nuclear weapons . On 23 September 2008 after a two @-@ day conference at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace , he joined several other former ambassadors to issue a joint statement on how Russia and the United States might move forward in their relations . He has endorsed the Global Zero Initiative , a plan to eliminate all nuclear weapons by 2030 . Matlock has also signed an open letter of May 13 , 2011 asking the implementors of the New START treaty between the U.S. Russia to make public the locations and aggregate numbers of nuclear weapons , in order to promote transparency and reduce mistrust .

On Jan 18 , 2011 he co @-@ signed an open letter to President Obama urging a United Nations resolution condemning Israeli settlements in the occupied territory .

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