

AMBASSADOR EUGENIE ANDERSON



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MINNESOTA POLITICIANS have long left their mark on foreign relations. From Cushman K. Davis and Frank B. Kellogg to Hubert H. Humphrey and Walter F. Mondale, as senators, secretaries of state, vice-presidents, presidential candidates, and ambassadors, Minnesotans have played many roles as America's international actors. One of the most distinguished of these, and yet one of the most neglected by historians, was Eugenie Moore Ander-

son. Anderson combined a prominent career in Minnesota politics with an admirable record of firsts for women in American diplomacy: first to hold the rank of ambassador (three previous female chiefs of mission served at the lower rank of minister); first chief of mission behind the Iron Curtain; and first to sign a treaty for the United

ABOVE: *Eugenie Anderson leaving Christiansborg Palace, Copenhagen, after presenting her ambassadorial credentials to King Frederik IX, 1949*

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States. Anderson's remarkable career in diplomacy and politics was repeatedly shaped by the interaction of her life in Minnesota with international affairs.¹

Helen Eugenie Moore was born on May 26, 1909, in Adair, Iowa, the third of five children. Her father was a Methodist minister, liberal Republican, and internationalist extremely active in the community, although not in partisan politics. Her mother was a homemaker who urged her children to study music. Eugenie enjoyed a humble but pleasant prairie upbringing, from which she seems to have learned to value diligence, modesty, egalitarianism, and grassroots democracy. She was bright, curious, poised, and cheerful, traits that in retrospect prepared her well. "Eugenie has been a diplomat since she was in pigtails," one friend would later recall.²

A fine student, she studied music at various midwestern colleges, including Carleton College, where she met Minnesotan John Pierce Anderson, an artist and son of the inventor of puffed cereal. They were married in 1930 and settled on the 400-acre Anderson family farm, Tower View, outside of Red Wing. There, on the banks of the Mississippi, the Andersons raised two children, Johanna and Hans, and managed the farm, John continuing his artwork and Eugenie her piano study. They seem to have enjoyed financial security but not great wealth. Apart from being a successful homemaker, Anderson later said, she "wanted to be a Bach expert more than anything else." By providing foundation, motivation, and broad-mindedness, her combination of Minnesotan domesticity and cosmopolitan interests would set the stage for a fruitful life in politics and diplomacy.

Anderson embarked on this journey in the spring of 1937 when, at the age of 27, she fretted over the war clouds gathering in Europe and wanted to see the situation for herself. Her tour of the continent opened her eyes, for her first sight crossing from France into Germany was a procession of uniformed, goose-stepping five-year-old boys. "I was sickened . . . and frightened," she recalled, "when I saw those little tykes being prepared for war"—not to mention the grave threat such scenes suggested. Anderson returned to Minnesota painfully aware of how ignorant she was of both global and domestic issues and resolved to educate herself. As part of this process, she joined the League of Women Voters in 1938, her first political involvement.³

Her personal life—the desire to protect her two young children—provided much of Anderson's motivation for public activism at this point. Her next public effort was to co-found, in 1940, the first nursery school in Red Wing.

But she continued to take part in the League of Women Voters and also expanded her activism once America entered World War II, as many Minnesota women did. She worked for the Red Cross and war bond drives, where she discovered her knack for public speaking. More important, through the League of Women Voters Anderson learned about the emerging United Nations and became an enthusiastic advocate. She viewed the UN and American leadership in it as the best hope for keeping the peace once the war was over. Anderson's politicization very much mirrored the trend, especially clear in Minnesota, away from isolationism.⁴

FOREIGN AFFAIRS and domestic life again converged for Anderson in 1944, when her avid internationalism led her into partisan politics. Although she had grown up around Republicans, she had become a New Deal Democrat in the 1930s. Now, she felt that her isolationist Republican congressman, August Andresen, would help jeopardize her children's future. "What kind of a world would they have to live in," she asked herself, if America reverted to isolationism after the war? As a complete novice, Anderson sought the advice of a young Democratic Party activist and Macalester College political science teacher she had heard on the radio: Hubert Humphrey. Thus began a political friendship that would influence Anderson's career for years to come.⁵

Humphrey logically urged Anderson to enter at the bottom, recruiting friends, building support, and seeking



Republican Congressman August Andresen (left) and politician Val Bjornson (right) with their party symbol, about 1948



Hubert Humphrey, candidate for U.S. Senate, flanked by Earl Bester (left) and Lud Andolsek at the state DFL convention, Brainerd, 1948

election as a party delegate. Ironically, so few Democrats inhabited Minnesota's GOP-dominated First District that Anderson was immediately elected Democratic chair for Goodhue County. As the state Democrats merged in April 1944 with the Farmer-Laborites to form the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL), Anderson and her First District colleagues agreed they should attempt to unseat the longtime incumbent Andresen, whom she later angrily dismissed as a "fraud" and a "dumbbell." To her great surprise, she was chosen as DFL chair for her district to manage the upstart campaign, partly because she had no opposition yet "mainly," as she later recalled, "because of my enthusiasm." Enthusiasm alone, however, wins no elections, and her candidate went down to crushing defeat.⁶

As a DFL district chair, Anderson began forging close political ties with other young party activists, especially Humphrey (elected mayor of Minneapolis in 1945), Evron M. Kirkpatrick, Arthur E. Naftalin, and Orville L. Freeman. Anderson had gained significant stature by the time the new party faced its first major challenge in 1946. Reacting to the emerging Cold War with the Soviet Union, the DFL split into rival factions. Using underhanded tactics, the Communist-influenced, pro-Soviet wing, led by

Elmer Benson, seized control of the party from Humphrey and the liberals. Anderson was so "traumatized" by this "terrible experience" that she went home to her family and cried. It was horrible, she later remembered, "for someone who had never really encountered any Communist organization before. I had not realized that this was even possible in a democratic country." Her anti-Communism was firmly ingrained from this point on.⁷

After this stunning defeat, Humphrey embraced unabashed anti-Communist liberalism—a move in which Anderson was instrumental—and marshaled his forces to retake the DFL. This would require learning, as Anderson later put it, "to outstay and out-organize and out-idea" their opponents. Over the next two years, Anderson played a key part in the precinct-by-precinct campaign to build decisive anti-Communist strength inside the DFL. To do this, she and her colleagues first needed to regroup outside the party, so in early 1947 they launched a state chapter of Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), the new national organization of anti-Communist liberals. The ensuing struggle "was tough," Humphrey said later, "and sometimes . . . got dirty. But we were just as tough as the Commies were—and sometimes just as mean." The ADA liberals prevailed in 1948, and the vanquished Ben-



On the campaign trail: Harry S. Truman shares a handshake with Eugenie Anderson, Orville Freeman, and (far left) La Moine M. Dowling, Winona, October 1948

son wing abandoned the DFL altogether for Henry Wallace's Progressive Party. Left firmly in control, the ADA wing chose Freeman as DFL state chairman, Anderson as national committeewoman, and Humphrey as candidate for the U.S. Senate.⁸

In July 1948 Humphrey led the Minnesota delegation, including Anderson, to the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. He considered cosponsoring a strong ADA civil rights plank for inclusion in the party platform, but he knew that President Harry S. Truman, not to mention southern and many other Democrats, opposed it. Forging ahead might split the party and threaten Humphrey's own prospects. Until virtually the last minute, he could not be convinced to take the plunge. Then, Anderson suggested adding a brief line praising the president for his "courageous stand on the issue of civil rights"—a stand Truman had not taken at the convention. (He had previously, but in Philadelphia supported only a cursory statement and rejected the "crackpot" ADA plank.) Anderson's bit of rhetorical finesse would allow Humphrey to promote civil rights without appearing to oppose the president. Humphrey agreed to go ahead, and his speech, in which he challenged Democrats to "get out of the shadow of states

rights and walk forthrightly into the sunshine of human rights," electrified the audience. After a tumultuous demonstration, the throng voted to adopt his plank. This triggered the southern "Dixiecrat" revolt, transformed Humphrey into a national figure, and helped push the Democratic Party toward its historic role as champion of racial equality. Eugenie Anderson, unsung, the sole woman in the liberals' smoke-filled room, had made a major contribution.⁹

Anderson spent the fall energetically stumping for both Humphrey and Truman across Minnesota. Humphrey triumphed and launched his storied Senate career, while Truman took the state by a large margin in his celebrated upset victory. Anderson, exhausted from years of intense political work and feeling as though she had neglected her family, looked forward to returning to private life at Tower View at least until the next campaign.¹⁰

THEN, IN JANUARY 1949, the ancient box phone on the kitchen wall rang. It was India Edwards, vice-chair and head of the women's division of the Democratic National Committee, whose personal crusade it was to land government jobs for women. She wanted to know

if Anderson might be interested in an ambassadorship, perhaps in the Netherlands or Scandinavia.¹¹

Appointment of envoys without diplomatic experience was common at this time; more than one-third of Truman's chiefs of mission were not career diplomats. And, although rarely, women had been appointed as ministers: twice by Franklin D. Roosevelt and once by Truman. Anderson would be the first woman ambassador, because the United States shared the highest level of diplomatic representation with the countries in question.

Anderson was at first "astonished" and "hesitant." But then, especially after gaining the keen support of her husband (who, as an artist, was free to accompany her), she became "intrigued by the possibilities." As Denmark emerged as the likely posting, Anderson's interest only grew. A progressive democracy with a strong labor movement, as well as a western alliance member on the front line of the Cold War, Denmark neatly encapsulated Anderson's domestic ADA liberalism and her internationalist anti-Communism.

But first she had to secure a nomination, and this required self-promotion, which she found thoroughly distasteful. More important, it demanded tireless lobbying on her behalf, performed above all by India Edwards and the now-freshman Senator Humphrey. This support was especially critical because the process of nailing down a nomination lasted almost ten months, held up by an FBI background check and by a patronage struggle between Humphrey and his rivals in Minnesota. In October 1949 President Truman finally nominated Anderson, and the Senate confirmed her with little controversy. The "Pride of Red Wing," as *Time* dubbed her, only 40 years old, set sail for Denmark with her family aboard the Danish freighter *Jutlandia* in December.¹²

THE NEW AMBASSADOR demonstrated her midwestern egalitarian ways almost immediately after presenting her credentials to King Frederik IX. A few dozen Danish workingmen had swiftly refurbished Rydhave, her 37-room official villa in Copenhagen, and Anderson showed her gratitude by throwing a house-warming party for them and their wives. This, the first large function she hosted, was a gesture unprecedented in Denmark. All invitees accepted, although some asked whether they should come to the front door. The guests would never forget the evening, and the Danish press covered it thoroughly. "Nothing could have better expressed American



Anderson, her husband, John, and children Johanna (age 15) and Hans (11) en route to Denmark, 1949, pictured in the Red Wing Republican Eagle

democracy to the Danes," remarked Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft.¹³

By the same token, Anderson quickly developed a strong disdain for the endless formalities of diplomatic life and for the pretentiousness of diplomats, many of whom struck her as "dried prunes and stuffed shirts." Her homegrown informality even rubbed off on her hosts. "In Minnesota," she told the Danish leadership over dinner one hot summer evening, "when we feel really at home, the men take off their coats." They joined her husband in doing so, and "shirt-sleeve diplomacy" had arrived in Denmark.

Such early actions and attitudes reflected Anderson's commitment to what she would call "people's diplomacy." Rather than confining herself to elite circles, representing official Washington to official Copenhagen, as was standard practice, she would link the American and Danish peoples as well. Foreign policy success for the Western democracies, she would later argue, "rests ultimately on the capacity of the peoples to understand and their willingness to carry out . . . the policies." Thus, "The ambassador of a democratic country" must "be continuously and intimately in touch with the decisive majority, and not just 'the ruling few.'"¹⁴

Anderson reached out in part by learning Danish. It came more easily to her children, who enrolled in Danish schools, but the regular lessons she took soon paid off. On Mother's Day 1950, not six months after arriving, she gave a speech in Danish and made a huge splash. Apart from the novelty of being a woman ambassador, nothing

made her better known to average Danes than her effort, extremely rare for foreign envoys, to learn the native tongue. Moreover, ability to speak Danish nicely complemented her decision to travel extensively throughout the country—including towns and villages never visited by diplomats—learning the views of Danes from all walks of life while educating them about America.¹⁵

The result was a level of fame unheard of for ambassadors. Danes selected at random from the phone book all knew her name, as did most middle-school students (few of whom could name any other diplomat). In some cases, her celebrity reached the point of embarrassment; one day, a Danish businessman accosted her on the street, thanked her profusely for “the interest you have shown in getting to know us,” kissed her hand—and then essentially repeated the process three times before the ambassador could free herself, her glove “literally damp from his hand-kissing.” “Now Uncle Sam will be in the background,” said one character in a Danish newspaper cartoon. “Yes,” replied another, “from here on in, it will be Auntie Anderson.”¹⁶

Yet Anderson also succeeded as a diplomat in the more conventional sense. She worked hard pursuing U.S.

objectives, primary among which, especially in the dark days of the Korean War, was moving Denmark away from its traditional neutralism and pacifism and toward a more active role in the infant North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In 1951 she played a major role in negotiating the Greenland Agreement, which granted the United States access to strategic air bases in Danish possession. The ambassador likewise helped hammer out a new Treaty of Commerce and Friendship, the first in over 100 years, and thus became the first American woman to sign a treaty.¹⁷

Her accomplishments came amid American press coverage, which, while extensive for a diplomat and overwhelmingly favorable, was typically sexist. Numerous headlines and photo captions marking her appointment referred to her only as a mother or housewife, ignoring her background as one of Minnesota’s leading political figures. Thereafter, such descriptions as “Denmark’s American Sweetheart” or the “petticoat diplomat” and endless references to her appearance, attire, and home-making imposed on her a tinge of frivolousness with which her male counterparts did not have to cope.¹⁸

Sexism probably also figured in a second challenge—opposition from some Foreign Service colleagues—although the clash of professional diplomats and political appointees was rather common. Anderson worked effectively with most embassy staff and department officials in Washington. She clicked right away with her public affairs officer, William Roll, and relied on him heavily. But this alliance resulted partly from the tense relationship with her deputy chief of mission, Edward Sparks. Sparks, a longtime career officer, was a traditionalist like many in the Foreign Service of 1950. He opposed Anderson’s decisions to throw the housewarming party, to learn Danish (“a waste of effort”), and to speak about American labor at a George Washington Day dinner. The enthusiastic Danish response in all three cases, however, allayed the ambassador’s initial doubts. Sparks also left Anderson uninformed about his handling of personnel issues, and only after some months did she establish her authority in the embassy. His transfer in late summer 1950 eased Anderson’s staff situation immensely, for his replacement was far more cooperative.¹⁹

Anderson overcame all such obstacles and stayed three years in Copenhagen, tendering her resignation in early 1953 with the change to the Eisenhower administration. King Frederik paid only the finest among many tributes by bestowing upon her the Grand Cross of the Order of Dannebrog, which no woman had ever received. Anderson’s boss was equally pleased. “I’ll never forget your won-



Anderson waves to well-wishers from the royal coach and four, which carried her to Christiansborg Palace, December 1949

derful and efficient service,” Harry Truman wrote her in 1956. “A Dane came to see me yesterday and all he wanted to talk about was our Ambassador to Denmark!”²⁰

ANDERSON RETURNED to Red Wing and devoted much of her time to the farm and family. But she kept busy in the public realm as well. After Orville Freeman was elected governor in 1954, he created the Minnesota Fair Employment Practices Commission and appointed Anderson its first chair (1955–60). She also worked as a foreign policy adviser for Adlai M. Stevenson’s 1956 presidential campaign, served on the Zellerbach Commission investigating the plight of East European refugees, handled foreign guests for the 1958 Minnesota Centennial, and lectured widely.²¹

The major event for Anderson during these years back in Minnesota, however, was her 1958 bid for the DFL nomination for the U.S. Senate. At first, incumbent Republican Edward Thye seemed tough to beat, and DFLers urged Anderson to run, in part, she believed, because “We can’t win so let’s let a woman try it.” Here Anderson saw “the problems of being a woman in politics, which I had not really felt previously.” She could, instead, have sought a House seat, as many friends urged; she surely would have been a strong candidate even in her conservative home district. Nevertheless, she had doubts about her prospects, found distasteful the notion of campaigning every two years, and knew the House would not offer nearly the opportunity for involvement in foreign affairs that had drawn her to the Senate. So she declined. Once more her interest in international affairs had helped define her political choices at home.²²

Anderson conditioned her Senate candidacy on winning the DFL endorsement at the party convention in May. But she was up against another rising star, Congressman Eugene McCarthy. She campaigned up and down the state with her usual vigor; indeed, it was a fierce contest, with each side accusing the other of employing underhanded tactics. Early on, Anderson fared slightly better against Thye in opinion polls than McCarthy did, but at the convention McCar-

thy prevailed on the second ballot. His decade of congressional experience and solid support from labor and fellow Catholics certainly contributed to his victory, but Anderson’s sex probably did as well. The DFL “unfortunately wasn’t quite ready for a woman,” party activist Arthur Naftalin later remarked. More specifically, Anderson felt that many assumed a woman could not win. McCarthy went on to defeat Thye in what turned out to be a great year for liberal Democrats, making 1958 perhaps the biggest “what-if?” of Anderson’s life. She returned, as always, to Red Wing, and in 1960 devoted herself to Humphrey’s unsuccessful quest for the Democratic presidential nomination.²³

SENATOR HUMPHREY wasted no time in touting Anderson for a new diplomatic post after John F. Kennedy became president in January 1961. Orville Freeman, now Kennedy’s secretary of agriculture, lent a hand, but it was Humphrey who badgered the administration for months





Anderson, sporting her campaign button, with Governor Orville Freeman (center) and her opponent, Eugene McCarthy, 1958

on Anderson's behalf. After considering her for other posts, the administration finally offered the ministership to Communist Bulgaria. Kennedy apparently thought the people's diplomacy Anderson had practiced in Denmark might be a refreshing alternative to the elite approach of the career envoys who had run every U.S. mission in postwar Eastern Europe.²⁴

Anderson's impeccable anti-Communist credentials undoubtedly helped draw the administration to her; they also helped make the assignment attractive to Anderson. Indeed, although she wondered whether she was insane to have agreed to such a "daring thing," Anderson welcomed the challenge presented by a Communist host. She saw it as a fine opportunity to draw upon her experience battling Communist rivals in Minnesota. Yet she headed for Bulgaria with a sense not only of what she opposed, but also what she cherished. She was taking with her, she said at her send-off banquet, a pair of "sturdy Red Wing boots" for hiking Bulgaria's mountains, and her "roots from Minnesota and Iowa." Her native Midwest, she believed, with its agricultural-industrial combination, its "pioneer traditions" and "love of land," represented "The True America." As a midwesterner, she felt best suited to represent the nation.²⁵

Minister Anderson would need the inspiration of this midwestern vision in such a bleak destination. Bulgaria was one of the most underdeveloped Soviet dependencies, a "dismal, isolated post," in the words of a State Department report, "a communist police state where Mission personnel are subjected to surveillance and the usual attempts at penetration and compromise." When she arrived in Sofia in late July 1962, she was practically driven to tears by the gloomy, dilapidated condition of her official residence. This she could and did improve, but the country beyond the walls remained a source of profound dismay. She quickly took a liking to Bulgaria's citizens and natural beauty but was left with an "intense feeling of horror and hatred for the inhuman, stupid, cruel system" imposed upon them. And, true to her populist inclinations, Anderson never overcame the guilt she felt over the gross disparity between the lavish lifestyle of the foreign diplomatic corps and the privation of the Bulgarians.²⁶

ANDERSON'S BULGARIAN STINT mirrored her first in many ways. Again her fame and popularity, as the first woman chief of mission and a ubiquitous public presence, immediately took hold. There were effusive



Signing the U.S.-Bulgarian Financial Claims agreement, Sofia, July 1963

street greetings and hand-kissing. Again she experienced the favorable but often sexist press coverage, with headlines devoted to the “doll” or “grandmother,” the “Little Woman from Red Wing” or “Belle of the Balkans.” Again she sought to learn the host’s language. Although her Bulgarian never remotely rivaled her Danish, she learned enough to deliver a Fourth of July address on television (which the authorities had tried to thwart by requiring its delivery in Bulgarian). Again she clashed with her relatively traditional deputy chief of mission and relied heavily on the less-senior officer more open to her grassroots approach. And again, she effectively promoted U.S. interests, for example, successfully negotiating a settlement of sticky financial claims outstanding from World War II.²⁷

Yet the nature of her host, a Stalinist, Cold War adversary, demanded much more of Anderson. This was true in terms of her daily life: the restrictions, isolation, and constant surveillance exhausted her and her husband. In the heavily bugged U.S. legation, only the secure room, a giant plastic cube suspended within another room and engulfed in white noise, afforded unfettered conversation. Otherwise, communicating freely required trips to the countryside or handwritten notes read, torn up, and flushed down the “security file.”²⁸

Bulgaria tried Anderson’s diplomatic skills as never before. Minor irritants constantly arose, such as when she felt compelled to defend the right of Bulgarian youth to dance the Twist (even though she personally disapproved of it). But the first major incident occurred at the International Trade Fair at Plovdiv in September 1962, where the Bulgarian authorities tried to withdraw the permission they had earlier granted the U.S. pavilion to distribute exhibit brochures. In the face of this and other intimidation, Anderson refused to back down, even personally handing out brochures at the pavilion entrance. Bulgarian officials soon relented, one of them admitting that they had “misjudged the toughness of the Americans.” Hundreds of thousands of visitors, eager for even the smallest dose of Americana, were now free to crowd around the model kitchen, Mercury spacecraft, and Ford Thunderbird.²⁹

Several weeks later, Anderson stormed out of a Soviet-sponsored reception when Bulgarian President Dimitter Ganev denounced the United States for its “piratical actions” during the Cuban missile crisis. Her walkout, a snap decision on her part, won Anderson widespread praise, the *Washington Star* lauding her for “upstaging a vulgar Bulgar.”³⁰



“People’s diplomacy”: Anderson visiting a market near Turnovo, Bulgaria, March 1963

Perhaps most troublesome, finally, was what one might call the Battle of the Windows. The U.S. legation had once been a department store, and the new occupants placed blown-up photographs of scenes from American life in the oversized display windows. A constant stream of Bulgarian citizens stopped by for a glimpse of America they were otherwise denied, which irked the regime no end. It tried everything to interfere—police harassment of visitors, establishment of a Bulgarian photo shop next-door, even “spontaneous” riots. The worst of these, in December 1963 (interestingly, coinciding with Anderson’s absence from the country), involved a mob of 3,000 that roughed up Foreign Service officers, overturned staff automobiles, and shattered most of the legation windows. But at Anderson’s insistence, the glass was always replaced, the displays constantly updated. In standing up to this regime, and in evading it to reach out to average Bulgarians, Anderson remained utterly tenacious.³¹

Bulgaria took its toll, however, especially on her husband, John. After two years, Anderson decided to submit her resignation to President Lyndon B. Johnson in November 1964. Despite many frustrations, she once again deserved all the plaudits she received. No less a figure

than George Kennan, famed intellectual author of the containment policy and U.S. ambassador to neighboring Yugoslavia, took the highly unusual step of writing to Secretary of State Dean Rusk about his Sofia colleague. Anderson “has shown not only common sense,” Kennan stated, “but exceptional shrewdness and courage in tackling a diplomatic task” that was among the most formidable “faced by any of our Chiefs of Mission anywhere.”³²

Anderson, now 55 years old, returned to the United States with energy and ambition left over. Secretary Rusk considered her for the post of assistant secretary for educational and cultural affairs—which would have been another impressive first for women—but apparently Senator J. William Fulbright, chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, “was not interested in either a woman or a negro.” Ambassador to Canada was also a possibility. Instead, in 1965 Anderson was appointed to the U.S. delegation to the United Nations, with the personal rank of ambassador. She represented the United States on the Trusteeship Council, and at one point sat on the Security Council, the first woman to do so. She officially retired in 1968 to help with Hubert Humphrey’s campaign for president. (She would work for his senatorial and presidential bids in 1970 and 1972, as well.)



In retirement Anderson lectured, served on several boards, and traveled. She died in 1997 at the age of 87.³³

THROUGHOUT THIS post-Bulgaria period, Anderson seldom wavered from her militant Cold War views. Her strong support of America's war in Vietnam only hardened when she undertook a fact-finding tour of the war zone in late 1967. Although she felt that the United States was overemphasizing the military dimension of the conflict while neglecting the political, her report to President Johnson toed the administration line: the war was winnable. It warranted a long-term commitment to a free people struggling "against outside aggression and internal subversion." Although she became more ambivalent about the war in its later stages, Anderson did not soften her overall views. In 1984 the 75-year-old even crossed party lines and endorsed Republican Senate candidate Rudy Boschwitz, in part because his opponent, Joan Grove, supported a U.S.-Soviet nuclear freeze. "We can never be secure," Anderson was quoted as saying, with "policies of weakness and vacillation."³⁴

As a domestic liberal but international hawk, Anderson had much in common with the original neoconser-

vatives like her friend Max M. Kampelman. But unlike many of them, her foreign policy views did not change much between the early and late Cold War. She remained a Wilsonian internationalist and, while newly alive to its limitations, a supporter of the United Nations. At no point in her long public career would Anderson have approved any policy, such as the nuclear freeze, that she viewed as vulnerable to Soviet exploitation or detrimental to American security. Yet at the same time, Anderson on occasion criticized and attempted to redirect U.S. policies she viewed as unenlightened and self-defeating, such as America's "backward" approach to African decolonization or its unfulfilled commitments to its trusteeships in the Pacific. Moreover, she did not oppose arms control on principle; she favored "enforceable agreements" that would "control the nuclear Frankenstein."³⁵

Nevertheless, it is also clear that Anderson the Cold War liberal sometimes crossed the line separating steadfast principles from dogma. When it came to Vietnam, as author Peggy Lamson saw at the time, Anderson's "consciousness of what happened in the past blind[ed] her somewhat to the realities of the present." Confronting Communism was not always the answer. But her critical, formative experience in Minnesota, as well as her



Minister Anderson, visiting from Bulgaria, with new President Lyndon Johnson in the White House, December 1963

successful missions in Denmark and Bulgaria, had been built on battling the Communists; now, toward the end of her career, she had become too inflexibly attached to that formula. As was true of many Cold Warriors, Anderson's anti-Communism served her well overall, but it was not a loose-fitting garment. Nor, for that matter, did the convergence of the domestic and the international always point her in a sensible direction.³⁶

In the end, however, Eugenie Anderson's career should not be judged on foreign-policy issues; neither in diplomacy nor in Minnesota politics was her role primarily one of formulating policy. Rather, she should be judged for the service she provided her state and her country, and in this regard she excelled. Apart from the words of some career diplomats who pooh-poohed her populism and, of course, Bulgarian officials who found her a tough opponent, one searches the historical record in vain for anything but the highest praise for Anderson's

performance. DFL colleagues valued her as a speaker, organizer, and strategist. Three presidents, two secretaries of state, countless host country leaders, and fellow diplomats all appreciated her soft-spoken yet straightforward, unpretentious, and effective representation as an envoy.

Yet it is Anderson's "people's diplomacy" that stands out most. Her career ran the gamut from the local to the global; indeed, she was an amateur who entered public life for personal and international reasons simultaneously. Anderson's subsequent journey was guided by a love of democracy that made her detest both elitism and Communism while connecting with average citizens wherever she went. Overseas, she put her Minnesota concerns and experiences to use and thus represented not just a government, but a people. This made Eugenie Anderson, if not the "ideal ambassador," as Secretary of State Dean Acheson described her, then something awfully close.³⁷ □

Notes

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1. Barbara Stuhler, *Ten Men of Minnesota and American Foreign Policy, 1898–1968* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1973). Anderson has not been the subject of study based on primary sources. The only in-depth analysis (besides contemporary periodicals) is Peggy Lamson, *Few Are Chosen: American Women in Political Life Today* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), 165–94. The literature on women ambassadors remains sparse. Homer L. Calkin, *Women in the Department of State: Their Role in American Foreign Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, 1978) is the nearest thing to a narrative overview (see p. 164–66 for Anderson).

2. Here and below, Eugenie M. Anderson, interviews by Lila Johnson, May 7–July 8, 1971, transcript, p. 6–7, Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) Oral History Collection, St. Paul; Leland Stowe, “U.S. Diplomacy’s First Lady—Mrs. Eugenie Anderson,” manuscript, Oct. 1964, p. 5, Biographical Sheets, Bulgaria Ministry Files, Eugenie Moore Anderson Papers, MHS; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Oct. 16, 1949, women’s sec., p. 1; Bob Daily, “The Music Major Who Became America’s First Woman Ambassador,” *Carleton Voice*, Winter 1982, p. 16.

3. *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, July 8, 1962, women’s sec., p. 3; Anderson interview, 32–33, MHS.

4. Anderson interview, 38–40, MHS; Clarissa Start, “Madam Ambassador,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Oct. 23, 1949; Marjorie Bingham, “Keeping At It: Minnesota Women,” in *Minnesota in a Century of Change*, ed. Clifford E. Clark Jr. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989), 451–52; Stuhler, *Ten Men*, 2–3, 10–11.

5. Anderson interview, 37–38, 41–44; *Minneapolis Star*, Mar. 17, 1949, p. 22.

6. Anderson interview, 47; Eugenie Anderson to Hubert Humphrey, July 31, 1945, Personal Correspondence, General Correspondence, Mayoralty Files, Hubert H. Humphrey Papers, MHS.

7. John E. Haynes, *Dubious Alliance: The Making of Minnesota’s DFL Party* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 125–43; Lamson, *Few Are Chosen*, 168; Anderson interview, 58–59.

8. Haynes, *Dubious Alliance*, 138–40; Lamson, *Few Are Chosen*, 170; Charles Lloyd Garretson III, *Hubert H. Humphrey:*

The Politics of Joy (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1993), 99n37.

9. Steven M. Gillon, *Politics and Vision: The ADA and American Liberalism, 1947–1985* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 47–50; Sean J. Savage, *Truman and the Democratic Party* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 134–35; Carl Solberg, *Hubert Humphrey: A Biography* (1984; repr., St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2003), 11–19.

10. Anderson interview, 74.

11. Here and two paragraphs below, India Edwards, *Pulling No Punches: Memoirs of a Woman in Politics* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1977), 177–79; Anderson to Dorothy H. Jacobson and to Orville Freeman, both Feb. 2, 1949, and Anderson to Max Kampelman, May 7, 1949—all Correspondence Regarding Ambassadorial Appointment, Copenhagen Office Files, Anderson papers.

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15. Anderson to Max Kampelman, July 1, 1950, Topical Correspondence—Eugenie Anderson, Max M. Kampelman Papers, MHS.

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20. Lamson, *Few Are Chosen*, 179–80; Truman to Anderson, Apr. 24, 1956, Anderson, Eugenie, Name File, Post-Presidential Files, Truman papers.

21. Anderson interview, 144–61.

22. Albert Eisele, *Almost to the Presidency: A Biography of Two American Politicians* (Blue Earth, MN: Piper, 1972), 126–27; Lamson, *Few Are Chosen*, 180–81; Anderson interview, 162–68. The DFL had expressed interest in Anderson running in 1952, but she declined, largely out of consideration for her family. Humphrey to Anderson, May 28, 1952, Anderson to Humphrey, May 29, 1952, and Anderson to Dorothy and George Jacobson, June 16, 1952—all Copenhagen Correspondence File.

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24. Humphrey to Anderson, Feb. 9, 1961, Anderson, E-L, Control Files, Senatorial Files, Humphrey papers; Freeman to Anderson, Mar. 6, 1962, Public Affairs Correspondence and Related Files, Anderson papers; Anderson interview by Larry J.

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29. *Washington Star*, June 9, 1963, p. D2; Anderson to Department of State, Oct. 16, 1962, Central Decimal File, RG 59, NARA; Anderson to John F. Kennedy, Oct. 10, 1962, Bulgaria Ministry Files.

30. *New York Times*, Nov. 9, 1962, p. 1; "Good for Eugenie!" *Washington Star*, Nov. 11, 1962. Another speech by the prime minister would trigger a similar protest by Anderson two years later; *New York Times*, Sept. 9, 1964, p. 14.

31. Anderson interview, 276, MHS; Richard Johnson to Dean Rusk, Dec. 27, 1963, Subject-Numeric File, RG 59, NARA; *New York Times*, Dec. 28, 1963, p. 1.

32. Anderson interview, 278, 289–91, MHS; Kennan to Rusk, July 23, 1963, Sub-

ject-Numeric File, RG 59, NARA. Diplomats were not supposed to comment on each other's performance.

33. John Macy, Memorandum for Record, "Eugenie Anderson," July 24, 1965, John W. Macy Files, Lyndon B. Johnson Library, Austin, TX; Anderson interview, 292–343, MHS; Daily, "Music Major," 17; *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, Apr. 5, 1997, p. A16.

34. Anderson interview, 346–53, MHS; Anderson, Memorandum for the President, "Vietnam," Dec. 7, 1967, Political Party Activities, Anderson papers; *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, Oct. 28, 1984, p. B1, B8.

35. Anderson interview, 297–314, MHS; Anderson to Orville Freeman, "Major Foreign Policy Speech in Boston on Sept. 19," Sept. 12, 1968, Political Party Activities, Hubert Humphrey Campaign, 1968, Anderson papers.

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37. Acheson to Humphrey (read at banquet honoring Anderson), reprinted in *Red Wing Daily Republican Eagle*, Sept. 14, 1953.

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