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

WILLIAM DAVID McKINNEY

Interviewed by: Jay Anania
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INTERVIEW

MCKINNEY: I'm here with Jay Anania. We're going to be doing a life chronicle of where I came from, where I was, and where I am.

Q: And who are you?

MCKINNEY: My name is William David McKinney from Roxbury, Massachusetts. I was born on January 27, 1940 to John David McKinney and Margaret Virginia Hoole McKinney. They were married April 1939. We lived on Monroe Street in Roxbury before we moved to Harrishof Street, which would be the family home for the next 52 years. Roxbury was very much in transition when we moved. It had been a fairly solid Jewish community and then black Americans began moving in; my father's family being one of them. My father, John, known as David to all his friends, moved up from Georgia when he was a child. He was one of nine siblings who all ended up living close by to one another in Roxbury. They were very prolific, to say the least. There was a large immediate family. We all were within walking distance of each other when I was growing up. My dad and his family came out of Sparta, Georgia where the family had lived during the slavery period. I have a great grandfather and a great grandmother who were slaves. My grandmother, Eva Dixon, and my grandfather, Aubrey Hill McKinney, were married in Georgia. She worked in the slave owner's house and he worked in agriculture, which is a pseudonym for cotton picking. They all moved to Boston at the same time – I think in the 1920s.

In providing information on my background and my family, it seems to be a habit, if you will, where our children have second names; with first names and second names of fathers and grandfathers. My father's middle name was David, and my grandfather's name was William. So, it's William David. My mother was born in Boston of an English father, Charles William Hoole and a part-Black, part-Indian woman, called Ruth, who was from Virginia.

Q: Would that be Native American Indian?

MCKINNEY: Yes, Native American Indian. My grandfather was Charles William Hoole, and he immigrated to the United States, when I don't know. He worked at Auto Car as a mechanic on their assembly line. He and his wife Ruth, my mother's mother, divorced in the 1920s and later in the 1940s he came to live with us. Our part of the family has very deep connections into the Woodbridge-Occoquan part of Virginia, which is just outside of Washington DC. My grandmother, we call her Mama, lived with her second husband, Jake Bogle, in what was then Occoquan, Virginia. Occoquan was basically a Black suburb; all the property was owned by Blacks and it was all agriculture.

After the McKinney family moved to Boston they got settled and then they began to disperse. The older of my father's siblings were getting married and moving, but only moving to other parts of Boston. I only had two uncles (Burt and George) that broke that model because they were in the army. Once they joined the army they were sent to various places, but at the end of the day, they also came back to Boston.

I grew up in a very challenging period in Boston's history. Boston was a very segregated city in the '40s, '50s, and even in the '60s; East Boston, the west end—the north end—and Roxbury. Each ethnic group had its own little part of the city. I went to my two primary schools, Davis Elementary School and Higginson Primary School, right there in Roxbury. I went to junior high school outside of Roxbury in the Blue Hill area.

Q: Were those schools all fully segregated?

MCKINNEY: No, the schools themselves, like the community I was living in, was transitioning. When I started out in the 1st grade, I would say there were more White students than Black students. As the years progressed, you saw that begin to change. I noticed it most remarkably when I went to junior high school because junior high school was in an area where many Blacks had not moved yet. It was three-quarters White—Jewish and other—and there were a few Blacks as that began to change.

Q: How did going to school with people of different races affect you? Did you feel conscious that these were divisions in society and was there tension between the groups? How did it work for you?

MCKINNEY: Well, as a young kid, I would say from Grades 1–6, you don't really notice that much. I mean, you play with everybody, you do everything, I didn't begin to notice that Roxbury was becoming very much a Black area until I went off to junior high school and I could clearly see the differences setting in between Roxbury and at that time the Blue Hill area, which at that time was mainly White—Jewish.

It wasn't until that time that we really began to notice that there was a difference in social outlook and in how we got along with people. As Roxbury grew to be more Black, it also grew to be more out of the mainstream, if you will, of the city of Boston's caring about it. Let me put it this way, the street that I grew up on, 167 Harrishof Street, where my mother lived for 52 years, there were two Black families, one Jewish family, one Italian

family, and two Irish families. Dennison also was a street that was in transition. There were probably three Jewish families, a large Filipino family, part of my extended Black family, and a couple of Irish families.

Two interesting things stand out to me, both unrelated. During the ‘50s, I lived through the McCarthy era, which was the era where people were being hunted and persecuted for being communist or communist sympathizers; Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were electrocuted in 1953 for spying on behalf of the Soviet Union. We had one White communist family that was discovered on Dennison Street. I used to play with their daughters as a kid. We got along fine, but when his name turned up on the list, they had to leave! They left in the middle of one night and we never saw them again.

The second one was, Roxbury itself was in transition, and Dennison Street was also transitioning. One of the more famous Boston Celtics basketball players who came up from North Carolina College, Sam Jones, when he first got to Boston, he lived in an apartment on Dennison Street. This is before he became as famous as he did. We all knew who he was and what he was doing, and he was kind of proud of his place in Roxbury.

I had an uncle (really a second cousin) that lived on Haley Street, which was the street that connected Harrishof and Dennison. Uncle Neil was the one that took me out and taught me how to hunt. We used to go down to Duxbury on the Cape and hunt pheasant and squall on weekends. That was something that I really enjoyed. It didn’t last very long because they began, like everywhere else, building up Duxbury so the area was soon put into houses. As a young preteen and an early teen, I got to go hunting with my Uncle Neil. That was a house that stayed with a Black family even through the ‘70s and ‘80s. All of the other houses had changed, all the White people in the area had moved on, [but] we kept 6 Haley Street.

My mother was a fantastic cook and a wonderful seamstress. I had three siblings at that time, Thomas Leighton McKinney (born September 1941), Ruth Ellen McKinney (born September 1943), and Margaret Ann McKinney (born July 1947), and my mother made all our clothes. In fact, to this day my brother Tommy won’t wear brown because one Easter my mother made matching brown check suits for all of us, including brown beanies. Tommy has never gotten over that; he won’t wear brown to this day! We’ve got a great picture of the four of us with these almost look-like houndstooth but it’s not, it’s brown and white checks.

My dad graduated from night school at Boston University as an accountant. He was the first of the nine siblings to get a university education. Later on many my aunts and uncles did get university degrees. In fact I have an aunt (Doris) with a doctorate that taught at North Carolina College in Greensboro before she passed away. But that’s another chapter.

My mom was also a fantastic secretary. She held the speed record in Massachusetts for Gregg shorthand. She could take it that fast, and she was an excellent typist. She worked for a number of different organizations during her career, but for her, home was always the first priority. She made sure that we had what we needed in the house before she went out to work or wherever. My dad had an accounting degree and he went to work as a bank examiner. He was the only Black bank examiner in New England.

Q: Was he working for the federal government?

MCKINNEY: Federal government. He enjoyed his work. Unfortunately like many younger Blacks at that time, especially in my immediate family, most had a drinking problem. While my dad didn't drink constantly, he'd binge drink. He worked for the federal government as a bank examiner for probably 10 years. Then he went to work for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and again he was the only Black IRS employee in New England. That was the job that he kept until he retired.

A little side anecdote, because our family was so tight knit in Boston, on almost every Saturday when the weather was good, my father's brothers would come up to our house on the hill on Harrishof Street and they would transact all different kinds of businesses and things that they did. I had one Uncle, Uncle Theos, who worked at Charlestown Navy Shipyard during the war, and he was an unbelievable auto mechanic. My Uncle George worked in advertising and ultimately with Honeywell Computers. One of the most surprising uncles was my Uncle Ray. Nobody knew he had a doctorate from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in electrical engineering, and he got it all himself! My dad did all of their taxes. Uncle Theos made sure all of our cars ran the way they should. Uncle George made sure we were aware of what was happening in the various markets around the electrical trade. And Uncle Ray, anything electric, he had it. He was also a shortwave [ham radio] operator. W1EGR was his call sign, and that was his car license plate—W1EGR. He talked to people all over the world.

My grandfather and grandmother, before they passed away, bought a house on Dennison Street. My grandparents started out living on the bottom floor, Uncle George and Aunt Muriel on the mid floor, and Uncle Ray on the top floor. So the whole McKinney family of that part of my Dad's brothers and sisters, all lived in that one house. Uncle Ray, when you went up the stairs to see how he was doing—Uncle Ray was never married—he'd be on his radio talking somewhere in the world. Then he'd take a break and come in and talk to you. It was quite something. Two of my aunts, my Aunt Ruth, and my Aunt Thelma, they and their husbands lived in another part of Roxbury. Aunt Thelma and Uncle Cooper lived downstairs, and Aunt Ruth and Uncle Howard lived upstairs. They were the Shelton part of the family and the Cooper part of the family and they each had two kids. Aunt Ruth and Uncle Howard had two boys, Don and Julian; and Aunt Thelma and Uncle Cooper had a boy and a girl, Jane and Edward Junior (known as Larry).

Q: Looking back, do you think your Uncle Ray's interest in talking to people all around the world had any influence on you?

MCKINNEY: No, not at that time. I mean I found it fascinating but in terms of what I ultimately ended up doing, no, that really did not have much of an impact.

The only uncle, and he was married, that really did not stay in Boston was my Uncle Burt and Aunt Vivian. Because he was, I think a colonel in the army, they moved all around. In fact, he was trained at Fort Huachuca in Arizona, the home of the Buffalo Soldiers. I don't know all of their history, but ultimately they divorced and Uncle Burt went off, Aunt Vivian went to Chicago, and then we kind of lost contact with them.

As a kid growing up, our family for as many years as I can remember all came together at Christmas on Lynwood Square, which is where my Aunt Thelma and Aunt Ruth and husbands Uncle Howard and Uncle Cooper lived. At any one time, there would be almost 100 people, including all the kids, at their house. Uncle Cooper always got these fantastic sausages that he brought up from North Carolina. He would get people to send him these fantastic sausages so that we would have them on Christmas Day, along with grits and scrambled eggs. Everybody looked forward to it. My Aunt Doris, who was the youngest, she got a PhD in, I think, psychology, and she taught in Greensboro North Carolina at the university there for years until she passed away.

Again, there's a lot of backfilling that I will do at some point. I'm just right now coming out with a stream of consciousness about my family.

Q: So, that was more your father's side of the family in Rebury?

MCKINNEY: Yeah. My mother was an only child; she had no siblings. She lived a very different and very precarious life because, once my grandmother Ruth was divorced, she moved back to Occoquan, Virginia, and my mother went down with her. She worked and went to school in Occoquan. But there was no high school for Blacks at that time, and she wanted an education, so she left her mother in Occoquan and went back to Boston. She found a family that was connected to our family, and lived with them doing housework and childminding in exchange for Board while she finished her schooling. She had not met my father at that point, but she got in touch with her father. So she stayed in Boston and finished school, started work and then married quite young (before she was 20).

Q: What was her family name?

MCKINNEY: Hoole, my grandfather was Charles William Hoole, a very interesting, very likable man, born in England in 1876 and had come as a child with his family to the US. He married my grandmother (born in June 1900) who was much younger than he was, and my mother was born (27 June 1919). In the interim, my grandfather's family disowned him for marrying a younger, Indian-Black woman. In the late 1940s, my grandfather came to live with us at Harrishof Street and passed away when I was about 13, so I have some memories of him (an elderly White man living in a household and neighbourhood of mostly Black folk).

There are certain things that I really remember. Everybody talks about Faneuil Hall in Boston. Well, I was old enough to know the original Faneuil Hall where you would go down on Saturday morning and all of the butchers were there, at work and you'd buy fresh meat, and you'd have newspaper to wrap it in to take home; meat comes in a newspaper! Every Saturday my grandfather Billy—he was known as Billy, and I think that's why my mother ultimately ended up calling me Billy—we would go down and we would do the meat and vegetable shopping. That was his contribution to the house, and it was great, it was fantastic and something that I will always remember.

Q: So your mother's mother was still in Occoquan?

MCKINNEY: Oh yeah, she never left Occoquan. She married a farmer, Jake Bogle, a veteran from the Spanish-American War in 1898. We called her Mama.

Q: So did you have a larger extended family down there too?

MCKINNEY: No, Mama had a few friends and her church. She had a fantastic voice and she sang in the church choir. She raised chickens and hogs, and she and Jake Bogle, her second husband who fought in the Spanish American war, had a kind of variety store for Blacks, because Blacks couldn't go to the White stores at that time. It was little more than just subsistence, but they did okay. They had what they called the bottom, which was the place where they kept all their hogs. People would take all of their vegetable scraps out to the bottom and feed the pigs.

I can remember standing there on any number of occasions and watching pigs devour watermelon. It was truly amazing what they did to a watermelon rind. That's where I learned to kill chickens. We'd always have fried chicken for Sunday lunch when we visited my grandmother. She taught us how to chop off the head of a chicken and throw it under a peach basket until it stopped flapping around and then put it in boiling hot water to pick the feathers off of it; to get it ready. Then she would cut it up and there wasn't any part of the chicken that we didn't eat.

The other thing that I remember vividly was huge tubs of lard that she cooked everything in. In fact Crisco and Spry and all of that other stuff, that was for the upper class. Down at the bottom where grandma lived, all the Black families in that area, everybody cooked with lard. It gave chicken a special taste that I've never found again! It's amazing.

Q: When you went down to Occoquan, were you with your siblings?

MCKINNEY: Yeah, we had a very interesting way of getting there. I mentioned my Uncle Howard who was married to my Aunt Ruth. He was head of the Red Cap Union in Boston and at that time in the '30s, '40s, and '50s, even somewhat today, Red Caps were the ones that carried your baggage. They moved your luggage from the train and they all wore a red cap with a brass number plate in the top of it. Each train station, especially at

main stations, all had red caps, and they all knew each other up and down the line. The other half of that were the Pullman porters. These were the Black men who set the tables in the dining cars and cooked and served the food all over the United States. Wherever the trains went, the Pullman porters were there, and they were also unionized.

Tommy, Ruth Ellen and I—Peggy hadn't been born yet and/or was very little—would go down to visit our grandmother with Uncle Howard's help. My mother would put us on the train in Boston and we would get passed along all the way down to Woodbridge from the other Pullman porters, because the Pullman porters and the Red Caps all worked together. They knew what was going on. We were never in want of food because we got the food that was left over from the dining car. Because we usually rode in the Pullman porter's quarters at the end of the car, they would bring stuff back and give it to us. They would pass us off: Boston to New York, New York to Philly, Philly to Baltimore, Baltimore to Washington. Then we would take the train out of Washington and my grandma would meet us in Woodbridge.

Q: So you had kind of a special VIP railroad system going on

MCKINNEY: Oh yeah, absolutely! Just like Harriet Tubman built!

Q: In reverse!

MCKINNEY: In reverse! It was also very fascinating for us because the normal everyday person that looks at me and my siblings, who are a little bit darker than I am, they would think that we're White. But whenever we got to Occoquan to visit my grandmother, we were Ms. Bogle's "niggers." We were treated just like any other, at that time, "Negro". We had to sit in the balcony of the theater and had to go in the back door of the restaurants. There were certain stores we could go into. Okay, this is the 1940s and '50s and segregation was very much the tune, as it were. Then we'd reverse the travel, get passed back up to Boston. It was always fun.

Q: As a child you weren't necessarily aware of these things, but was there any discussion in the family of that contrast?

MCKINNEY: Absolutely. Yeah, I mean because we were so fair skinned, there was always that temptation to try and pass. It was something that was comfortably discussed when we were old enough to really do it because my mother was very staunch in making sure that people knew that we were a Black family. Looking at my mother you really couldn't tell until my father came in and then it was blatantly clear. My mother spent copious time making sure that we understood that we were Black Americans, being proud of it and acting that way. My dad also was very devout about that.

Q: Were there times when things needed to get done that maybe would have been difficult or impossible for an African-American to do where you or your siblings might have been dispatched to take care of it? No?

MCKINNEY: No, never.

Q: Too much pride of family?

MCKINNEY: Absolutely, my whole entire extended family. At one time I had about 23 first cousins pretty much all living within walking distance, and it was pride of family that that never took place. My Uncle Cooper was very heavily involved in trying to break the Black bond in Boston the way that sections were set up and later history. I'll talk about the integration of the schools in Boston, which was very, very bad, much the same as Alabama and Mississippi. My sister, Ruth Ellen, was the head of the program that changed all of that.

Q: That will be a fascinating chapter.

MCKINNEY: My godfather, Herbert L. Tucker, and my Uncle Cooper, and Otto Snowden who was heavily involved in issues around the racial divides in Boston. Those three finally got Tom Yawkey, the owner of the Boston Red Sox, to integrate the Red Sox. The Red Sox were the last team to integrate and they brought in a player by the name of 'Pumpsie' Green, who was the first Black player in Boston. They worked on that, they met with Yawkey's organization many times.

Roxbury also had its—what we called—the high and mighty area. Senator Edward William Brooke III, who was my other godfather, lived on Huntington Street along with the upper class 'Negros', who shall we say, all Black doctors, lawyers, and businessmen that had made it. My mother was his secretary for a while when he was Massachusetts' Attorney General until he got elected to the U.S. Senate and went to Washington. She wouldn't leave Boston.

Q: She was his secretary when he was doing what?

MCKINNEY: He was the attorney general of Massachusetts.

Q: Well, this is an interesting point. During the periods of segregation, the upside of that was that the professional class of African-Americans lived with the working class, and you had these cohesive communities that could provide service and strength for one another, social cohesion. Unfortunately, I think the downside was that when desegregation occurred, those communities often splintered and then the working class or the poorer people were kind of left on their own.

MCKINNEY: Unfortunately, you're absolutely right, and I watched it happen. When I went to university in 1959—I went to Fisk University, which was probably the second best-known Historically Black College and University after Howard University in Washington D.C. I've watched the demise of so many of those Historically Black Colleges and Universities because the education systems, especially throughout the

South, have opened up for Blacks. I don't think I would be very wrong saying it was led by Black athletes. When you think back to the '60s, the battle to integrate was monumental. But today the whole University of Alabama's basketball team is Black. The University of Mississippi, Mississippi State and the University of Alabama, I mean these were the diehard states of anti-integration. Even today it isn't a very easy mix, but they're there and we're there to stay. The George Wallace's of the world are finished, thank goodness.

Q: George Wallace?

MCKINNEY: Yeah, you got it. And Lurleen, don't forget his wife. She became governor after he died.

I went to high school in Boston, Massachusetts. I went to English High School of Boston as opposed to Boston Latin School. They were tough years. I didn't do very well; I got lost in the mainstream. I had incidents that I would rather not discuss in public. Ultimately I had to leave the Boston school system. At that time, my mother was working as a secretary at the Church Home Society in downtown Boston. She was very concerned, because for her the panacea for the Black community was education. The more Black Americans got educated, the better off we were going to be. Even as an early teen, there were times when I questioned that, looking at the way, at that time, Blacks were treated across the board. I'd wondered if there was any panacea, ever, for us.

When I was politely asked to leave the Boston school system, my mother found a school in Maine that the Church Home Society was willing to help foot the bill. In fact they basically paid for my high school education. It was a small private school in Maine called Bridgton Academy. It was an excellent school, well known as a post-grad school, especially for athletes who hadn't done as well as they could have, but wanted to go to an institution of higher learning that they couldn't get into when they graduated high school. These post-graduate schools helped rectify that, and Bridgton Academy was one of them. So, in November 1957, a 17-year-old Black kid who had grown up in the ghetto was shipped off to Bridgton Academy. I stayed one week and I ran away. It was cold. There were only three other Black Americans at the school. It was all White, something that I'd never experienced that much. When I got home, I was met with my father saying, "Either you go back to school or you go in the army!" I had no interest in going to the army, so I went back. I decided it was clearly in my self-interest to stay there and make something of it because at that time I had no intention of going to college.

Q: Going to college, or the army?

MCKINNEY: College. No, I had no intention when I graduated high school of going to college. Very short-term thinking, obviously. I'd just go back to Roxbury, find a job, and that will be it. Well, I got to playing basketball at Bridgton and I was pretty good at it, I worked out. I played for two seasons and I began to think of college and university in a

different light. I had a couple of friends back in Boston who had gone to Howard and Jackson State and I talked with them and got an idea.

We knew an undertaker who was a very good friend of the family. In fact, Davis Funeral Home still exists in Roxbury; my mother was buried by them. Norris Davis and his wife, Helen, were both Fisk graduates and they approached me about maybe going to Fisk. I knew nothing about Fisk except that it was a Black school. It appealed to me because I did not want to go to school any more with White kids. It was just too tough socially.

Then I began to read more of the news in the papers about the changes that were taking place in the South, the Montgomery bus boycott, the beginning of the sit-in demonstrations. I realized this was something that I'd like to be party of, so I took a scholarship from the Davis' and Fisk (for basketball), and headed to the Deep South—Nashville, Tennessee, the home of country music and the Grand Ole Opry, which I got to know much too familiarly.

I did very well once I applied myself at Bridgton. I won a couple of speaking contests among the private schools in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts. Needless to say, my parents were very pleased that I decided that I was going to go to Fisk University. My father wasn't too sure because once he left Georgia he'd never gone back into the South. He'd never gone back but he remembered what it was like growing up in Georgia. So, in September 1959 I drove with my cousin Don down to Fisk University.

MCKINNEY: We've been talking about my education and I mentioned that I'd like to back up a bit. My going to Bridgton Academy was a little bit more traumatic than I let on, [and] not only because I was one of four Black Americans at the Bridgton Academy. Surprisingly, I knew two of the others from Cambridge—but what I really wasn't prepared for was the athletic nature of the school. It really was set up to give high school athletes a chance at a better educational institution, and these were all extremely good athletes who were very confident and they tended to be very disdainful of the "students" at the Bridgton Academy.

We had outstanding hockey teams, football teams, basketball, baseball. While we played other academies in the area, we also played freshmen teams [like] Colby, Bates, Maine Central Institute, so we had a very, I think, potent would be the term that you would use, since the academy was not that big. There were only about 70 of us for both post-graduate and undergraduate if there is such a thing. There were like five students from Maine and all the rest were from outside of Maine.

The weather was also traumatic for me. I'd never been in a town or in an area that got as cold as Maine did. The academy sat on Harrison Lake, and in the winter Harrison Lake froze to the point where you could drive over the lake and not have to go around it. I think that gives you some idea of how cold it got.

Our graduations were celebrated mightily. Everyone's parents came up for the graduation. My mother came up in June 1959 when I graduated. I'd done very well academically. I'd maintained a B+ average, after having done so badly in the high school in Boston.

I already mentioned I made the decision to go to Fisk. There was a lot of support for it, but I wanted to do a little more research on it, so I sought out individuals that had gone to Fisk and graduated from Fisk, and I got a much better feeling for the school. Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the United States are not well publicized because in far too many instances they were founded because Blacks were not allowed to go to school with Whites. So, they set up what they said were separate but equal institutions within the U.S., but that was far from true. Black universities got the leftovers from the White state universities. We fought hard to get funding. The schools were not very large. When I went to Fisk in 1959, I believe there were about 200 students at the university. We had a multicultural student body and a multicultural teaching faculty. Even at those times we had White professors who had dedicated their careers to supporting and educating Black kids at the university level. They came from all over the world.

In my senior year they decided to teach Russian. They found a professor in St. Petersburg who spoke excellent English and he came and taught Russian at Fisk. Other than that, the only languages taught were German, Spanish, and French.

Being at Fisk during those years was quite an eye opener because they were the period of dramatic change in the southern United States where a cohort of activist students had decided that not only did segregation have to go, but Black Americans had to begin to shine brighter and exert. Even though we had a number of alumni who were lawyers, doctors, and government officials, they were not very well publicized. Again, the ones that were publicized were our athletes, and they did not make up the majority of the student body.

We had Olympic athletes that came out of these Historically Black Colleges and Universities and they were celebrated as long as they were active: Ralph Boston, a track athlete was one, so was Wilma Rudolph, who was 100 meter and 200-meter Olympic champion at the 1960 Rome Olympics. Once they'd brought the credit to the United States and they came back to Tennessee State University, that was it. They weren't heard from again except in the athletic circles.

Fisk had a fine curriculum. I did history and political science. We had chemistry and biology graduates who went on to become doctors, and we had lawyers. Between going to Fisk in September 1959 and when I left in June 1963, things, not only at the university but in Nashville and throughout much of the South were changing. The old segregated ways were crumbling. Black Americans especially were becoming much more aware of who they were, and resisting even more segregation. When I got to Nashville in 1959 there were the usual signs—"colored fountain", "colored toilet", "coloreds not welcome." By the time I left in 1963, all those signs were gone. The governor at that time, Earl

Buford Ellington, had decided that for the peace of Tennessee and Nashville they had to g, along with and support the changing ways.

I'd mentioned earlier that Nashville was the home of the Grand Ole Opry and country western music. I never knew much about that until I got to Nashville and then I learned why I didn't like it very much. The fans of country western, Grand Ole Opry would come into Nashville in late afternoons in '59–'60 when we were sitting in and breaking the barriers of the restaurants and supermarkets and five-and-dime stores. They spent an afternoon beating the crap out of us and then they'd go to the Grand Ole Opry at night while we spent the night usually in jail by the busload at that time.

Civil rights leader and Georgia Congressman John Lewis was in my graduating class. I got to know John pretty well. I have not had contact with him since we graduated and he went back to Georgia and I went back to Boston and ultimately got involved in my career, but I've been aware of all the fantastic work that he's done. He and Diane Nash were very active at this time on the Fisk campus

We were around for the beginning of SNCC, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, that was founded out of North Carolina. It was in my senior year that the White supremacist, blew up a house that the civil rights lawyer Z. Alexander Looby was staying in. Fortunately, the family and Z. Alexander were sleeping in the back and were not hurt, but that was 1963. Even though change was coming, there were those that didn't want to see it.

Q: You talked about these sit-ins, could you talk a little about how the students organized themselves, or whether they had help from civil rights groups that were forming?

MCKINNEY: Like I mentioned earlier, when I got to Nashville, Nashville was as segregated as any southern city. The student body at Fisk, especially the Freshmen—I don't know how it came about, and I never asked why they did it, but the administration asked me to give the welcoming address to the faculty for the Class of 1963. I took that opportunity to reinforce the concept that change was coming. I mentioned the sit-ins in North Carolina at the various department stores. I mentioned the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. I mentioned Martin Luther King…

Q: You were a student who was stuck in some remote part of Maine for much of the previous two years, how were you following the news?

MCKINNEY: I regularly talked on the phone with my mother in Boston during those two years in Maine, and I was and still am a voracious reader of newspapers and the news and now on television and all of the other news outlets that we have. Even in remote Maine the changes that were being made in the bus boycott in Montgomery made news in Maine. I was getting information. I got to go home at Christmas and I got to go home at Easter, and while I was home I bulked up on all of the news coming out of the South. I knew by that time that I was going there to Fisk. Having spent time in

Occoquan-Woodbridge and being familiar with what went on there, when I spoke that second week of our orientation, I wanted everyone to be aware that change was coming and that we were going to be part of it, that we had to be looking beyond the gates at Jubilee Hall, which was the main student hall on campus at that time, and how we had to be ready in helping to facilitate that change.

As far as the sit-in demonstrations were concerned, there was a core group with John Lewis and Diana Nash (a junior), and they organized the first sit-in at a Woolworths in Nashville. I think there were maybe 50 or 60 of us that marched from the Fisk campus to downtown Nashville and waited very quietly for seats to open up at the counter. As people left, we went in and sat down, knowing full well that they would never serve us, and basically causing a major disruption to the way things operated at Woolworths. I would say we were there for three or four hours. They were getting ready to close, so we left and marched back to Fisk.

Q: So is this a store that had a little department store and on the side there was a soda fountain with stools that swivel and all that?

MCKINNEY: Oh yes, it was a typical Woolworths soda fountain.

Q: This was happening so that anybody shopping in the store would also see this?

MCKINNEY: Yeah.

Q: So this was really something.

MCKINNEY: Yeah, that was part of why we did it. We knew that it worked because when we came back the next Saturday afternoon. There were almost 100 of us—all of the seats at the counter were filled, and as people got up to leave, other White people would immediately go into those seats. But our mere presence disrupted everything. Finally there weren't enough White students, so that we did begin to take seats again, and clearly did not get served.

The third Saturday that we went was when the violence really began. They knew we were coming; they prepared for us. There was a plethora of rednecks to challenge us, and our tactic was, we never responded. We didn't talk, we didn't show any emotion, we just went about sitting in the seat and asking politely for something and being refused. Then, like I said, the third and fourth Saturdays is when the violence really began, dragging people off their seats, beating us up. We were arrested for causing a public disturbance.

It was very well organized and there were insinuations in the newspapers that there were outside forces that were organizing this, they really weren't from around Nashville. That was not true; all of this was done between Tennessee State, which was the Black state university in Nashville, and Fisk, which was the private university. We had another Black

college/university in Knoxville Tennessee, but every state in the South had private and public Black universities so that there was no integration at all.

Q: That's how you had the numbers, because at Fisk, there was a very small number of students but you were part of a consortium, you could say.

MCKINNEY: Well, Tennessee State was much larger, it was a public institution. I would say there were more than a couple of thousand students at Tennessee State University because that's where all of the Black population of Tennessee would get advanced education.

Q: At this time at Fisk were you living in dormitories, or were you boarding?

MCKINNEY: No, there was no boarding, everyone had to live on campus.

Q: So you had the chance to regularly interact with your fellow students and talk about these issues.

MCKINNEY: Oh, every day. I was on the Student Council for four years that I was there. My senior year I was president of the Panhellenic Council, which is the council that governed all of the Greek-letter societies/organizations, the fraternities, and the sororities at Fisk. We had four Black men's fraternities and two Black women's sororities.

Q: Which one were you in?

MCKINNEY: Omega Psi Phi. I didn't have much choice because my Dad was an Omega and my godfather, Herbie Tucker, was also an Omega. In fact, the year 1960 when I became an Omega, he was the head of the National chapter of the fraternity in Washington, DC.

Q: What did the fraternities do? What were their activities?

MCKINNEY: The fraternities did a lot of support for the civil rights movement. I wouldn't say 100 percent but certainly a large percentage of the men especially that were in the movement, came from the fraternities. The school was small enough so there was really a lot of integration between sports, the fraternities and sororities, and the general student body.

Q: It sounds like there was an incredible amount of activity going on for a very small student body, only 700-800 students.

MCKINNEY: Well, I'd have to go back and look at that, but there weren't that many students down there. I'll have a chance to get out one of my old yearbooks, the paper hasn't folded yet, *The Oval*. There were roughly 200 students per class at that time. I know that it's smaller right now but at that time it was probably 700 or 800 students in

total, and very active. I won't say the *crème de la crème*, but between Howard in Washington DC, Morehouse, Spellman, and Fisk, those four Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) probably got the best of the Black population seeking a higher education at that time in the South.

Q: What was the attitude of Fisk's administration and faculty when students were doing things that were obviously considered very provocative at the time and maybe spending time in jail and missing classes, and that sort of thing?

MCKINNEY: I guess I can give you an example of that. When I got to Fisk in 1959 Freshmen men and Freshman women were not allowed out of their dorms after 11pm during the week and 12 o'clock on weekends, and you had to sign in and sign out. They were very paternalistic and very maternalistic.

Q: Was there like a door person who was monitoring this?

MCKINNEY: Oh yeah, every dorm had a senior dorm person that made sure that you were in when you were supposed to be and would report you if you weren't, especially for the women. There was a very conservative maternalistic view of the women because they took it very seriously that unmarried Black women were getting an advanced education and even in the late '50s and '60s they were very cognizant of the fact that they had to take care of these women; make sure that they were safe.

That was one of the things that changed. By the time I left in 1963 all those restrictions had been erased. There were no dorm hours for men or women And you were basically on good behavior on your own part.

Q: Was that due to the students who were now developing this sense that they could fight for their rights?

MCKINNEY: Oh yeah.

Q: Externally, doing the same thing on campus?

MCKINNEY: Oh yeah, absolutely.

Q: Again, what was the attitude of the administration, first of all?

MCKINNEY: Again, I can only speak of the period '59–'63 and the three classes that came in behind me. Each class, mine and then the three intakes that came in behind, I won't say that we fought with the administration on the Student Council, but we made it clear at every opportunity that things were changing; that they had to get on board with us. We were very fortunate to have a very far-thinking president at that time, Steven Wright. And we had two very strong women who were deans there. I think the faculty in general realized that the times were changing, and the days of molly-coddling the

students and telling them what to do and when to do it were pretty much over. We had to work together to get the goals that we wanted. They'd never objected to the sit-in demonstrations. They were very aware of when the bomb went off at Z. Alexander Looby's house, where he was staying. I think we were very fortunate that our faculty was far thinking and willing to go along with the changes that were happening.

Q: Did you ever find that the faculty or administration was actively supporting you or advising you on these things, or was it just student led?

MCKINNEY: Advising, no; supporting, yes. They—I wouldn't quite say—turn a blind eye, but they knew when there was a demonstration somewhere that we were going to be attending or that we were going to be leading, and they did not try to stop it. They did not try and make it difficult for us to do that.

Q: Beyond what the students were doing there in Nashville, of course, there were many other events taking place involving nonviolent protests.

MCKINNEY: Everywhere.

Q: There were now national groups that were doing things, so did your student groups have contact now with—you mentioned…

MCKINNEY: No, I didn't, but I know that John Lewis and Diane Nash regularly attended meetings throughout the southern states of groups that were doing the sit-ins, that were forcing issues. When I got to Nashville, Black people couldn't even go in and try on a pair of shoes unless the store was owned by a Black. Okay, you want to buy a pair of shoes? I like those shoes. You bought them, but you didn't get a chance to put them on and see how they fit. That changed also.

Q: You'd mentioned, was it the governor of the State of Tennessee, or the mayor of Nashville who ultimately gave in?

MCKINNEY: The governor. I'm not sure "gave in" would be the right term. Governor Ellington recognized they were not going to be able to stem the tide of change that was coming. They also were not going to be able to stop rural Tennessee from resisting as much as they could, but in the major metropolitan areas—Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville—it was much easier.

Q: Were any of these segregation practices enshrined in the law so that they actually had to change laws?

MCKINNEY: No.

Q: Could the governor just get on and say, "Okay this is over. Just stop it."

MCKINNEY: For toilets, water fountains, and stuff, that was never ingrained like it was in South Africa under apartheid. It was just the cultural law, and I was not aware of any of the states where there actually was a law that said Blacks could not do x, y, or z. A lot of it was just common law, common practice.

Q: So the governor's word actually turned out to be fiat in those places.

MCKINNEY: Yeah, but then you also had governors like George Wallace who stood in the door of the university and said, "Segregation now, segregation forever."

Q: So Tennessee was a little luckier.

MCKINNEY: Yeah, a little bit.

Q: Today is Thursday, March 26. We're in Wellington, New Zealand and continuing with William McKinney. When last we spoke, we were at Fisk in Nashville, Tennessee and we'd talked about some of your activities with the civil rights movement. Maybe we could talk about your arrest, where and when that happened, and what that was like.

MCKINNEY: It was a very frightening experience. I went on the marches to downtown Nashville starting in late 1959 and continuing into 1960. The first few marches were uneventful, but then the White part of Nashville began to realize that we weren't going to stop until we got what it was we wanted, i.e. equality in the city. When I arrived in Nashville in September 1959, Nashville was completely segregated. There were "Colored only" signs up for drinking fountains, toilets, exit and entries to various department stores, restaurants, and it was time that all of that changed.

The sit-in demonstrations were just the tip of the iceberg in terms of not only what needed to be done, but what results we wanted. Around February 1960 the violence by some of the citizens of Nashville and other places set in, and police began arresting demonstrators and putting us in jail. They usually only held you for 24 hours or less, but they wanted you off the streets and out of the stores where we were sitting in. Needless to say, all of the jails were segregated as well. The first time I was arrested I did not have my birth certificate with me, after that I carried everywhere I went, and I was put in the White part of the jail and got a lot of grief from prisoners there. As per the training that we'd had, I just kept my mouth shut and waited until I was released. As soon as I got back to campus, I got my birth certificate so I could show them it said "colored" on it. There was still a look of amazement and awe on the faces of some of the officers or some of the people that gave us a lot of grief. Interestingly, when I got to Fisk there was never ever any question among the student body that I was Black.

After a while, the demonstrations slowed down naturally and things began to change. By the time I left in 1963, while there was still some lingering segregation, but by and large

Nashville was wide open; rural Tennessee not so much. That took longer but eventually that happened as well.

Q: Did you travel to other locations for any demonstrations?

MCKINNEY: No, only Nashville.

Q: You were arrested, so that might suggest there was a record of this, but you told me that's not true.

MCKINNEY: No, there's no record. All of these civil rights violations were wiped out by a Supreme Court decision, I think in 1963, and there was never any pushback from local authorities. Given the career that I had, ultimately going into the Peace Corps and the Foreign Service, if there were any remnants of that, it would have been found and brought to my attention, but it wasn't.

Q: You mentioned that at Fisk everyone recognized you and accepted you as a Black man, but in part of your other college career that wasn't necessarily the case. Where did you go and why?

MCKINNEY: I graduated from Fisk in 1963 with Dean's List honors. My grade point average for the three and one-half years I was there, was 3.5 on a 4 [point] scale.

Q: That was before grade inflation!

MCKINNEY: [Laughter]

Q: That was your major?

MCKINNEY: History and Political Science. I had no idea what I wanted to do when I finished undergraduate, so I ended up going to law school.

Q: But didn't you do a semester at another school?

MCKINNEY: Oh, I went to Whittier College, a Quaker institution, as an exchange student, which was an eye-opening experience simply because the students at Whittier did not understand that there were color gradations in the Black community from people who were fairer than I was to extremely dark. Anybody that looked as fair as I did was classified as White. Another interesting part of that, there were four or five Black students at Whittier, mainly athletes, and I fit in perfectly. There was never any question from them, never any doubt on their part. There was myself and a Black woman from Fisk and there were two Black women from Howard University that also went to Whittier College in California.

Q: Anything notable about what you studied there? Any different philosophies of education?

MCKINNEY: No, I stuck with history and political science. It was the first contact that I'd had with the Mormon religion. At that time—I was there in 1962—there was a large Mormon population, both men and women, and I found it very interesting at that time that Black people could not get to Heaven through the Mormon Church. That's changed now, but when I was there in 1962 that was the rule, rather than the exception. I also found it very interesting that Mormons tended to marry Mormons because if you married outside the Mormon religion you were no longer considered a Mormon. I don't know where that stands now, but, again, that was 1962.

I found it somewhat difficult to fit in at Whittier since I had only been around such a large number of White students when I was at Bridgton Academy. When I was there, I would say Whittier was more than 98 percent White, Mormon, and other Christian religions. Whittier is Richard Nixon's alma mater. It's where he did his undergraduate work.

Q: Unless there's something else you want to talk about, you're now graduating Fisk and you're thinking about law school.

MCKINNEY: No, not just thinking about it, I went to law school. I went to Boston University—basically the last time I ever lived in Boston—and I entered the class of 1966 as a first-year law student in September 1963. It took me approximately three months to realize that I did not want to be a lawyer. There was fierce competition among the men and women who were at BU Law School, which I did not appreciate. Trying to remember back, [there were] hardly any Black students in the law school, although there were copious numbers in the undergraduate and some of the graduate programs.

Again, we need to remember that this is 1963 and the whole consciousness raising for Black studies program really hadn't set in yet. There were programs at the graduate level for African studies, Africa in general. There were very few that targeted countries other than South Africa, but South Africa was because of the apartheid. Black studies programs were much less available than were programs on South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. It wasn't until later that Black studies programs in mainly White universities began to take pride of place.

The real kicker in all of this was, I was politically aware to know that I did not want to go to Vietnam. I felt that we did not belong in Vietnam. This is 1963 and I knew that as soon as I left law school and no longer had that education exemption, I was going to be drafted. I finished law school in June 1964 and I was drafted in August 1964.

At the end of my undergraduate year, I had applied to the Peace Corps on the chance that there might be something that I was interested in. The Peace Corps accepted me to go to Colombia as a basketball coach, but I did not want to go to Latin America, and I did not

want to coach basketball in the Peace Corps. Before I finished my year at law school, I contacted my godfather in Washington, Senator Edward Brooke, the only Black senator that we had, and reinvigorated my Peace Corps application. From 1963, if you went into the Peace Corps, it was still an exemption to going into the military.

Q: What had prompted you to apply to the Peace Corps when you were still at Fisk?

MCKINNEY: Kind of the novelty of it. Being on a Black campus in the Deep South there was very little information about the Peace Corps, what they did, and how they operated, but what came through interested me.

There are two interesting sidelines to this, Jay. I took the Foreign Service exam in December 1962. It was given at Vanderbilt University and at that time Vanderbilt was segregated. There were no Black students at Vanderbilt University. I was the only Black that took that seven- to eight-hour exam that they gave in 1962. It was not only an eye opener, but it was also a shock that I hardly knew anything about the questions they asked. They asked you about medieval art. They asked you about very murky history in the United States. I took the whole exam, and I have no doubt in my mind that I failed it miserably…and I did. I never heard back from the Foreign Service after taking that exam, but it just struck me that this was an exam for basically White southern men at that time that promulgated…

Q: Or White, very well-to-do men

MCKINNEY: No.

Q: There were a lot of people from the Northeast, the Ivy League, for the Foreign Service entrance.

MCKINNEY: Not at that time. In 1963 it was basically a southern male dominated job. I will comment more on that when I get to my discussion of my tour in Ghana.

Q: You can circle back to it if you'd like. So, you've been in touch with Senator Brooke. You've also talked to the Peace Corps.

MCKINNEY: I reapplied, basically telling them, "I will go anywhere that you want to send me." In the meantime, I had been drafted and I had been called up to take a physical exam. Down the road, I had been told I would be going somewhere in New Jersey for basic training. Then about two weeks before that happened, I got a letter from my local draft board saying that my medical exam had shown that I'd had nephritis as a younger person, when I was 13 or 14, and I said, "Yes, that was the case." They said, "Well, we need a letter from your doctor." I had had all of my consultations on this at Children's Hospital in Boston, and my doctor that had led the case was Australian. When I went back to the hospital, they were able to find the file, but the doctor had gone back to Australia. But they had an address, so I wrote to him saying that I'd been drafted and I

hadn't really passed the physical, but they needed something from the doctor that had attended. Within three weeks I had a letter back from that doctor that basically put me near death, and that sealed it!

At the same time, I was worried that there might be ramifications for my going into the Peace Corps, but thankfully there weren't. I got invited in January 1965 to attend the training program for India in Davis, California. Having only been to Southern California when I was at Whittier, and I didn't know anything about what people referred to as "Moo U" because it was the agricultural university of the University of California system. I packed up what belongings I had and flew out to Davis at the end of January 1965 for three months of Peace Corps training.

There were 60 trainees in this program, and 30 of us were going to Andhra Pradesh in South India in the health and nutrition and agriculture program. The other 30 were going in an agriculture program to Punjab in North India. Needless to say there was a lot of hemming and hawing, finally coming to understand that not only did India have multiple languages, but at that time all of the states were set up on a language basis. Andhra Pradesh, where I went, was set up on Telugu, while the group that was going to Punjab learned Punjabi and Hindi. We did three months intensive training at Davis.

These were the early days of Peace Corps. In 1965 Peace Corps had been around for less than four years. There were two psychiatrists assigned to each of the training groups. Peace Corps brought in native Telugu and Punjabi speakers for our language lessons. There was a strong exercise regimen that went with all the training. If you couldn't swim, they taught you to swim. If you couldn't learn to swim, you didn't go. You did a lot of running, a lot of playing softball and basketball. Interestingly, there was no cricket, even though cricket is the national sport of India. You can't open a conversation after, "Hello, how are you?" without being able to talk about cricket!

Q: There were both men and women in this training?

MCKINNEY: Yes. In my group I was the only Black man. There was Black woman, a nurse, from New Jersey, and I'll never forget Violet as long as I live. In the group going to Punjab, there were no Blacks at all. I think a lot of that was because even though there were Black populations at most of the universities in the United States, they were all in a minority. The majority of Blacks were going to HBCUs, and very little of this type of information ever got to us.

There was a grading system throughout the program, and if you were 6–10 you went. If you were 1–4, you didn't go. You were reminded on a weekly basis where you stood, and as one would expect, there were people that left. There were trainees that got upset that they didn't get the 6–10 and complained bitterly and stayed on and still washed out. They had one grade at 5 and this was mainly from the technical people that were doing the training, and the psychiatrists. They were the ones that mainly had input to the 5. Language, to some degree, but 5 was high risk, high gain, that they felt Peace Corps

would really benefit from your going overseas as opposed to your really screwing up, they would give you a 5. As I sit here, I realize that I really wasn't a 5, but I was given a 5, so that I was high risk, high gain.

Q: What do you mean by you didn't think you were really a 5? What were you?

MCKINNEY: Oh, I was a 10. I adapted very easily. I picked up the language very easily. The program that we were in, agriculture, I knew exactly what I was doing. I think part of the issue with my 5 was that I was very outspoken; I was very gregarious. I asked a lot of questions that didn't necessarily apply to India, but as far as I was concerned, they applied to our being Peace Corps volunteers. That's one part of it. The other part of it was, Violet and I formed a singing group, and we sang at local restaurants in Davis as a duo and we did very well. In fact, by the end we were singing the song "What's Your Name" in Telugu! *Mi per amiti* (foreign language) what's your name?!

Q: Today is Thursday, March 26. This is the second recording we're doing with William D. McKinney here in Wellington, New Zealand. So where were we Bill?

MCKINNEY: We had discussed my taking the Foreign Service exam at Vanderbilt University for the first time. It was a very deflating experience, to say the least. I felt that I didn't know anything about my own country. I was the only, at that time we were called "Colored, students that took the exam. I had asked around at Fisk if anybody else was going to go, and they all looked at me like I was crazy. Anyway, I understood why, after I started taking the exam. Most of it was general knowledge of which I knew zip. Having grown up in the ghetto in Roxbury; having gone away for a couple of years to Bridgton Academy where I did get a good grounding; being at Fisk University, an HBCU, was not translatable to working for the Foreign Service. There were no special categories for the Foreign Service. They didn't go out of their way to recruit Black entrants. That became abundantly clear later, after I joined the Foreign Service.

After the exam I went back to finish my senior year at Fisk. As I think I mentioned before, I graduated with a 3.5 grade point average, so I was on the honor list throughout my three and one-half years. When I left and had no idea what I wanted to do, I applied to a number of law schools and, for whatever reason, I got into Boston University. After a short period of time I knew that law was not going to be my forte. It was extremely competitive. I was the only Black American in the class of '66 entering in September 1963. But I stayed for the full year.

Earlier I mentioned about going into Peace Corps, how that happened with law school and the draft, etc., so I don't need to go over that. I did go to Davis, California, "Moo U" as they used to call it because it was the agricultural college in the University of California system, which is one of the finest systems in the world. I would rank it right up there with the Ivy League, easily.

I went there in February 1965 and I was put right back into a White-only milieu. I was a little bit better prepared for it, but there was myself and a woman nurse from New Jersey. We went through the training program. I also previously mentioned that there was a point system, 6–10 you were in, 4–1 you were out, and 5 was high risk, high gain. Well, yours truly was a 5! I was very surprised by that because I felt that I'd done very well during the course of training in all of the areas—cross cultural, technical—although I did tell them that the only farming that I'd seen was the grass growing in the sidewalks of Boston, which generally got a wry smile from everyone. I did complete the program and the last day I was told I was a 5, and did I want to go? Needless to say, I jumped at it! I didn't bring up the fact that I thought it was unfair but I was going to go to India and had spent a lot of time learning about South India. We need to be very clear about that.

India is basically divided into the north, middle, and south. North India and most of the middle area, their languages are all Sanskrit based. The southern states, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana their languages are all based on Pali, which is completely different. The level of English in the south was much higher than the level of English up north because people tended to gravitate to it using English as their link language rather than Hindi. English and Hindi were the official language up until 1970–71 and then the government wanted to change it to Hindi only. Needless to say, these southern states rebelled in a violent manner. There was no Satyagraha i.e. no nonviolent resistance. They burned down government offices and generally told the government that they were not going to have it.

We got to India in May 1965.

Q: How did you travel there?

MCKINNEY: We flew from New York to New Delhi on at that time Pan Am Flight 001 which flew out of New York to London, Paris, Rome, Tehran, Karachi, and then into New Delhi. Our flight took about 24 hours and there were 29 volunteers of the 30 that began in our program, which was an excellent score for the 14th program going into India. But it wasn't without its, shall we say, ups and downs. We had a number of professors and students from Davis that had gotten intimately involved in our program. We were Peace Corps trainees becoming volunteers when we were sworn in at the end of our training, and they had pretty much looked on us as the odd group. Many of them couldn't understand why we wanted to go to India. On the other hand, there were others that absolutely fell in love with us, and really pursued us. Many of them drove across the country in the two weeks that we had after we were sworn in to pack up our belongings, and meet in New York. We met in New York on the 13th of May 1965 and left for India on May the 14th, 1965.

There were bonds that were formed during our training, and our Peace Corps time, that still exist today. My first wife and I met in Peace Corps training, and we worked together in India for two years, and then got married in May 1967 in Lacey, Washington. There were a couple of people in our group that left early because they just could not adapt, but

Ruth and I adapted quite easily. I found that I had a facility for languages and I quickly learned Telugu and after about three months. I was teaching almost all of my classes in Telugu. The most interesting part of that was, as soon as I left Andhra Pradesh I couldn't talk to anybody except in English. Telegu at that time was spoken by 30 million people, and I looked up the statistics a couple of months ago and Andhra Pradesh now has 50 million. It's the only state in India that speaks Telugu and it's the only place in the world where Telugu is spoken.

Q: What classes were you actually teaching?

MCKINNEY: I was teaching basic agriculture. We had a very innovative program in that the government of Andhra Pradesh had set up government basic training schools. These were schools where what we would consider to be 8th grade dropouts or 10th grade dropouts could go and basically work for the government of Andhra Pradesh, mainly in very rural primary schools. They would go out to the far reaches of Andhra. I quickly found out that there are rural villages in Andhra that had not even seen a British person. All of the district headquarters had, as had a number of the smaller more important villages, but where we were taking our students, they didn't.

I should also mention here, one of my proudest moments. We lived for two years without indoor plumbing or electricity. It was really a challenge at the beginning until we learned how things operated, then we were able to live quite easily. I think the first real cultural experience was when we landed in New Delhi at 2 o'clock in the morning. They took the 29 of us by bus to a hotel in Old Delhi. Needless to say, we were all keyed up. We unpacked and tried to get some sleep, but about 5 o'clock in the morning we just had to get out. I'm sure that there are at least 500 pictures of this poor elephant trudging through the old city of Delhi going to work with his mahout. It was like, "Damn, man, that's an elephant in the middle of the city!" It didn't take us long to realize that this was not an odd sight, because as we stood there, not only did more elephants go by, but camels, the sacred cow; it was just a culturally fulfilling experience, and we really enjoyed it.

We were in Delhi for a week for medical purposes. They wanted us to have further—inoculations isn't the right word, I'll talk about that later—to see what we were getting into medically. Each volunteer at that time got a Merck Manual, and as with most things in life, the Merck Manual had an upside and a downside. The upside was you could diagnose pretty much anything you wanted when you were in a local village somewhere in Andhra Pradesh. The downside was that some volunteers began to read it like it was gospel. They would come up with all of the ails that they could, and it didn't do their psyche any good to be doing that. Anyway they stopped giving out the Merck Manual a few years later.

We also got a book locker, books that we could take with us to our post and that we could read. Those lasted about one post. We just couldn't carry them around. We couldn't make use of them, and that's very much an Andhra problem, because we moved every three months. We would go through government basic training school, we would teach those

students a syllabus that had been prepared in agriculture and nutrition and health, and then we would spend two months taking our prospective students out to villages to visit the schools where they were going to be teaching. It was a very interesting period, because many of them had never been that deep into the rural areas of Andhra. Like ourselves, it was a real eye-opening experience [for them].

As I said, we were teaching a syllabus that we'd developed in agriculture, nutrition, and health. The health part of it was---No, before I get into that, it should be known that in 1965 and 1966, India was experiencing one of their worst droughts that had ever hit the country. I don't say this lightly, but we actually saw people dying on the streets in Andhra and in the villages where we worked from starvation because there was no food. The program that we were in, the key to it was CARE, Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere They supplied us with cooking oil, bulgur wheat, and dry milk powder, and as we taught the various syllabi that we had, we introduced a midday meal program to the schools so that any of the primary school-age kids that came to school got a well-balanced meal for the week or so that we were there. We showed all of the teachers and headmasters at these schools how to prepare it and left supplies for it to continue.

I dug backyard gardens and had them plant the most relevant vegetables that they could. That's another thing that I should mention. We went two years in our working areas as vegetarians; there was no meat. As most will be aware, they did not kill cows, and they would get violently upset if the Muslims anywhere around would kill cows or buffalo to eat. It was a strict vegetarian diet, and it was very, very good.

Q: Were you given any instructions on how to make sure that that diet was fully nutritious, with protein, etc.?

MCKINNEY: Yeah, that was one of the things that was talked about and that we got to know during the week that we were in Delhi. When we got to our schools—my first school was in Adilabad, which was north of the capital, Hyderabad—there were very limited vegetables available because of the drought. It took me years to eat eggplant and okra again after being in Andhra, because those were the two main staples that you could get, and rice. The problem with the rice was they would only eat triple polished rice and they took all of the nutrition out when they polished it.

We learned to eat with our hands, with only our right hand. The only thing you use your right hand for was to eat and make gestures. The left hand was considered extremely dirty, and unfortunately in Andhra and I think in other places, if someone was born left-handed, their arm was tied down and they were made to use their right hand. They could not really function in these rural societies being left-handed. That broke down a bit in large cities like Hyderabad, Mumbai, Calcutta, and Delhi, but in the rural areas, no, you did not use your left hand for anything except wiping your ass.

Q: That's interesting because that's also a Muslim custom.

MCKINNEY: Yeah. The most interesting part of all of that was to this day I can sit down with an Indian meal and I can impress the hell out of my colleagues, or even people from India, the way I can eat. I eat southern style. In north India, you eat with your hand, but only up to the first knuckle. In south India, you eat with your whole hand and you tend to make balls out of what you're eating and then you flip it into your mouth with your thumb.

For almost the entire two years that we were in Andhra, our lunch meal was exactly the same—triple polished white rice and red chilies. The first time you'd eat that you'd think, "Well, my life is over as I once knew it." Then you begin to understand that this is the only thing available. You don't eat vegetables, okra and eggplant at lunch; those are for dinners and for special occasions.

Q: Were there certain things that you did as an American that caused you any discomfort with the local people or that they didn't like?

MCKINNEY: That's an interesting question. No, our cross-cultural training had been very good in that area. It was like trying to understand why people blew their noses with two fingers and then would wipe the phlegm on a wall or on a leaf or something. The look of horror on our language instructor's faces if you pulled out a handkerchief and sneezed into it and put it back into your pocket There couldn't be anything much dirtier than that! So you very quickly learned that. But the training that we went through cross-culturally for our India experience was very good. In fact, I used most of it after I finished my Peace Corps volunteer time and was working for Peace Corps on training programs in the United States before I went to graduate school at Berkeley. There were just some givens that you could provide to wake people up to the cross-cultural nature of what you're going into And they're not that difficult. The blowing of the nose and wiping the phlegm is one.

We very quickly learned that there was no such thing as toilet paper, and in the deep recesses where we worked, there were areas laid out in the village on the outskirts of the village, one area for men and the other for women. It did take us a little bit of time to figure out how to stop people gawking or trying to follow you when you went out. Everybody had a *chimbu*, which was a small brass pot that they filled with water and then they would go out. Now people would see you with this *chimbu*, and they knew where you were going and they knew what you were going to do. No problem. What we did was we put our toilet paper in the *chimbu*!

Q: [Laugh]

MCKINNEY: We'd make sure everybody saw us, and then we'd go off and do what we had to do, and we'd cover up the toilet paper. I'd say that lasted about five weeks, and then for the rest of the time, we also wiped our ass with water, because that's the way it was. The one thing that we did do, which I thought was quite extraordinary, we dug a large pit by the places that we lived and had a bag of lye around a big hole that we had

covered with bamboo wrapping. We could go in there and use that instead of trying to walk out to the fields all the time. It was used as a demonstration of hygiene.

All in all, it was an experience that I thoroughly enjoyed. I think I left some good friends in Telugu land. I know the work that we did changed a lot of the lifestyle, because other states looked at what we were doing. When we left in March 1967, the government basic training school scheme had been adopted in about five of the states, all three of the south Indian states as well as a couple in the north. That's not to say it wasn't without its ups and downs, as you can well imagine, but by and large, it worked very well. We got hot food and meals to the kids at these primary schools. We taught the future teachers how to prepare the meal. We taught the headmasters and headmistresses at the schools where we worked how to prepare the meal, and CARE made sure that all of the areas where the 29 of us worked were covered by the midday meal program, and also with bulgur wheat, dry milk powder, and oil. So, it wasn't like we came and went. We came, we made an impression, and there was always something there for them to fix.

Q: Today is Friday, the 27th of March. We're here with William McKinney in Wellington, New Zealand. We're talking about his time in the Peace Corps in India.

MCKINNEY: I was a Peace Corps volunteer from 1965 to 1967 in Andhra Pradesh, South India. I mentioned earlier about the project that we were involved with in very tough times all over India with the drought, with the midday meal program at schools where we took our students to practice-teach before they went as teachers.

One of the things that I'd mentioned earlier was about one of the subprojects that I was involved with, and that was called the "smokeless *chula*," or in Telugu, a *pogolani poiea*. One of the biggest problems that you have in rural India during this time was that there was no electricity and most of the lighting was by candle and most of the cooking done on open wood fires with dried cow dung patties as the main fuel. They emit quite a bit of smoke and a significant number of women in these villages have glaucoma from the smoke that is constantly irritating their eyes while they're cooking and doing things inside the house.

We set about trying to figure out a system not only for the schools where we were working so that they could fix the midday meal, but also how we might be able to bring some relief to the women in their cooking duties in the huts that they lived in. We devised the smokeless *chula* using mud mixed with cow dung, bricks if we could find them, and the metal from the cans that CARE brought the oil in. What we would do was open up the cans and make a chimney and run the chimney from the oven through the roof outside. The oven was just a square of mud with three holes in it and a fuel box in the front that you could put your cow dung and your wood into. By putting in a chimney and taking it out, you've got a draft that would draw the smoke out of the house. It was much cleaner and it was for all intents and purposes smoke-free.

The other feature of it was there were two cooking holes and the third hole you could put a clay pot full of water and you always had hot water. One of the things we did with the health program was trying to get them to understand that if they boiled their water for a significant period of time, it would kill any of the bacteria, or "bugs" that were in it, and they could always have a source of hot water.

Q: Were these cooking holes in the actual ovens or just next to them?

MCKINNEY: No, they were actually a part of the oven. You would build a square box—I deal in feet and inches—probably two and one-half feet long, maybe a foot tall to put the wood and the cow dung in, and three holes that were built into the oven itself. It worked extremely well. We were able to put them in the schools and most of the schools were not thatch roof. They'd been built by the government so they were brick or concrete or slate, but almost all of the huts in the village had thatch roofs. It wasn't until a year or so after we began the project that we began getting information back that there had been an untold side effect in some of the villages with the smokeless *chula*. What had happened was that the smoke as it rose through the thatch had kept a warm space, especially ideal for local varieties of snakes! Looking back on it, we realized that there didn't seem to be too much of a problem in many of the villages with snakes being in any abundance. What happened was, as the thatch dried out because there was no longer that much smoke or warmth from the usual fire method that they had in these huts, the snakes began to seek other places to live, and they left the thatch.

Another byproduct of that was that snakes kept the mouse and rat population down and as they left, the rat and mice population grew—one of the untold side effects. Once that became clear to the villagers, they went back to the old way of cooking because they felt safer with the snakes in the thatch roof killing the rodents than having them run around.

I don't know how that problem ultimately was solved, because as it came to the end of our time, we were moving on to leave India in February 1967. Our group had worked in teams and we had covered six government basic training schools around the state, each team, and there were six teams. We'd have the advantage of teaching at roughly 36–40 of the government basic training schools, and graduating at least one class of Year 8 or Year 10 from those schools and adding a significant number of teachers for the very rural schools. We felt that we had had a successful program and when we got back to Delhi to disband and travel back to the United States after our period, we all felt very positive about our volunteer experience over those two years.

Q: After the first year, did you get reinforcements so that there was sort of a flow of volunteers for this program or were you just self-contained and that was it?

MCKINNEY: No, we weren't self-contained but we didn't get replacements until we were ready to go in 1967. By then we had charted all of the schools that we had done, and all that were remaining. The volunteers that came in to replace us only went to schools that had not been covered.

Q: They didn't have the benefit of working for a year with more experienced volunteers?

MCKINNEY: No. It's very interesting that you asked that question because at one time there were roughly 1,200 Peace Corps volunteers in India and, I daresay, in any month, very few of them would see each other. The country was so large, the activities we were working on were so diverse that the only time you really saw other Peace Corps volunteers would be if you were working in a team. Every six months or so we would have a regional conference just to touch base, see what had been going on, exchange information with each other. But other than that you hardly saw other volunteers.

Q: Did you in fact work as part of a team? You talked about "we."

MCKINNEY: Yes, there were three of us. Usually the male member of the team would do agriculture. We had a nurse and a nutritionist, and that was the team that we worked with, teaching the three parts. So as well as going into these schools, we were also digging a pit latrine, building the smokeless *chula*, and doing a nutrition syllabus for them about the food that we were preparing for them to eat.

Q: You mentioned earlier you wanted to talk about in-country travel?

MCKINNEY: Yeah. In the years I was a Peace Corps volunteer, this was the case all over India, Peace Corps volunteers were not allowed to have motor vehicle transportation. If you worked in an area where you had access to a car, you always had to have a driver. You weren't allowed to drive or ride motorcycles or motor scooters. The Peace Corps staff just felt that it was too risky, if you will, given the traffic situations in much of India. So, our main mode of transport was bicycles. The Peace Corps gave every volunteer a bicycle when you came into the country. Because we were going into very remote rural areas, we usually loaded our bicycles on a bullock cart and the bullock cart would take us into where we were going, and we would have the bikes to ride in the local area. If we were going any distance, we'd get a bullock cart to take us in there.

Q: And what's a bullock cart?

MCKINNEY: Just a square box on two wheels with a bullock pulling it. You made very steady, but very slow progress! (laughter)

Q: (Laughter) I think I might have been tempted to get on the bike and just ride!

MCKINNEY: Yeah, well there were some areas that you couldn't ride the bike because there were really no roads or trails to speak of. There were two ruts that had been formed by the bullock carts going in and out, but there'd been nothing really dug out into roads at that point.

Q: This is the 27th of March. We're with William McKinney. This is the second 27th of March interview. We're in India with the Peace Corps. Bill?

MCKINNEY: Before we leave the Peace Corps, let me share one other interesting vignette with you. Ruth Haugse was a Peace Corps volunteer with me and she was a graduate nurse from Pacific Lutheran University who had had a year at the children's hospital in Sweden, Skanska. She came back to the States and decided to join the Peace Corps. She was in the Peace Corps training that I was in at Davis and we went to India together. In October 1966, we had been in Kashmir on a vacation and we came back from Kashmir to stay with some friends of ours in Bombay for a couple of days. We were at the very, very posh cricket club of India chambers where these friends of ours had an apartment that overlooked the Bombay cricket ground. This was, needless to say, hallowed ground in India with the love that they have of cricket. During that couple of days that we were there, I asked her to marry me, and we got engaged.

We were getting ready to go to our last school for training in Alur, which is in the very deepest part of Andhra Pradesh right on the Karnataka or at that time Mysore border. It was one of the best schools that we had taught at. We were only a two-hour bus ride from Bangalore and we would go to Bangalore many weekends to get out of Alur and be able to have an omelet or go to a movie or do something in Bangalore. At that time Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka, was known as the "air-conditioned city." We would go to Bangalore and for three or four hours Ruth would kind of disappear. She would say she's off doing something, and I would go do something else. I came to find out later on that she had found a seamstress who specialized in making wedding gowns in Bangalore. In the three months before we left India from our last school, she had designed and had made her wedding dress! I didn't even know about this until I got to Lacy, Washington, just outside of Olympia, in May 1967 to get married. She came to the wedding in this magnificent silk gown that she'd had made before we left India! So, these are just some of the things that you get done, or that you see when you're there!

Q: Was the Peace Corps paying you some small stipend during this period? How were you able to go on vacation and travel and…?

MCKINNEY: Our salary in India was the equivalent of $40 a month and that was to cover everything. Fortunately, we did not have much of a food bill because the schools where we worked, we ate with the students from their kitchen. It was always plain, very simple, but nutritious food, except for the triple-polished rice that left a lot to be desired.

Q: That's because they scrubbed the nutrients off?

MCKINNEY: Oh yeah. Like I said, they triple polished it, and took the husk and any nutritious part of it came off. To them, the best rice that you could get was the whitest they could get it, and even talking to them about it at the beginning of our tour and pointing things out, never changed anything. It was the staple, triple-polished rice.

Q: Where were you living? Did you live with families or did you have your own huts?

MCKINNEY: No, we had a classroom at the school where we were teaching. They would usually turn over two classrooms. Most of the teams were comprised of both men and women, so we'd have two end of a building classrooms and we'd build our own latrine. We would bring in string cots to sleep in. We had our own bedding. But we never had a house, except in one instance in Nidubrolu, which was on the coast of Andhra, where we were teaching at a women's government-based training school. They provided a house for us off the compound because men couldn't be on the compound. Nidubrolu was the only all-women's school that we taught at, and because it was not coeducation we got a house. Of the six schools that we ultimately taught at in that area, five were male and one was for women.

Q: As you're finishing the Peace Corps volunteer program, were you now potentially exposed to the draft again or was that considered your government service?

MCKINNEY: No, I had a very nice time with that one. I turned 26 years of age in India and that was the first year that you could not be drafted because of age. I sent a very nice air letter to my draft board in Boston reminding them that I had turned 26, and I hoped that I did not hear from them again. And let go! And I never did!

Q: All right. So what were your plans? You're now engaged to be married, you have no money, presumably because you've been a volunteer.

MCKINNEY: Oh, no we had money now, because at the end of your Peace Corps in-country time you've been paid $40 equivalent in rupees, which you used when you wanted to travel and do vacations, but when you got ready to leave, they gave you $500. They put another $1,500 in a bank account in the States, but that was money that we never saw as long as you were a volunteer. There were seven of us that planned a rather lengthy and involved trip from New Delhi back to New York over a couple of months at the end of our Peace Corps time. Unfortunately, it did not work out.

Sadly, a young woman who was part of our group died in Tehran on the way back. We weren't prepared for the extreme weather when we left India. We went from New Delhi to Karachi, which was fine. We were all grossed out by Karachi because of its size and again, back in 1967 it really hadn't been fully developed. Then we flew from Karachi to Tehran and Tehran was very cold. The hostel that we stayed in supplied each room with a kerosene-fired stove in your room. You had to shut them off at the end of the day before you went to bed because they were very dangerous in that if they went out they would fill the room with carbon monoxide and it could asphyxiate you.

Well, that's what happened. We'd been on a trip up to Tabriz and this particular volunteer unfortunately throughout almost all of our time in India was a Johnny-come-lately; the kind of individual that when you had to move, they would open a suitcase, fill it up, and close it. What didn't fit in, they didn't take, and what was in,

they took. She did the same kind of thing in Tehran and what it did was it put her about eight hours behind the rest of the group in some of our travel. When we came back from Tabriz, we got our rooms and she got a room on her own. About 6 o'clock the next morning we heard a knock on the door and the kid that worked at the hotel said, "Come, come, come, come, come!" I went down to the room and there she was, slumped over in front of the burner. Rather than breaking a window or opening the door, she'd tried to shut it off and she'd been asphyxiated by the carbon monoxide. Absolutely tragic.

So, we went through the whole ritual of getting the body identified and moved. The U.S. embassy was absolutely fantastic in helping. We took her body back to New York and we didn't do any of the rest of our travel. We stayed in New York with her and her family until she was buried. And then we split up and went home. It was quite traumatic because this was a young woman whose parents were opposed to the Peace Corps. They did not want her going into the Peace Corps. They did not want her leaving home. They didn't even want her to go to the training program. Then to have to come back with her body was extremely traumatic for all of us.

Anyway, that happened and it was what it was; Ruth and I went to Boston. She had met my parents the night that we had left to go to India. They'd driven down to New York with my siblings to see me off. We went up to Boston for three or four days just to chill out.

Q: This was after your initial training that they met Ruth?

MCKINNEY: Yeah, after our initial training.

Q: So she was in your training class.

MCKINNEY: We regrouped in New York. Yeah, she was with me at Davis.

Q: Yes. Then you came back and so you went back up to Boston after you finished.

MCKINNEY: Yes, for three or four days I stayed in Boston, I had to get some medical assistance. I guess I should mention this. India in 1965–1967, that period was endemic with malaria mosquitoes. We had a number of volunteers who got malaria, but there was also one other mosquito transmitting disease that wasn't very pleasant. I mean it was easy to stop, but it wasn't pleasant, and that was filariasis, and that's the one that I got. Filariasis is the mosquito-borne disease that attacks the lymph nodes, especially in your groin. You get elephantiasis where you get these huge legs, and in some cases enlarged testicles. When I was tested before leaving India in February 1967, I tested positive for filariasis. I was immediately treated, and it was completely taken care of. The only issue is that you should never go back into a filariasis area because wherever the disease was stopped, if you get it again, that's where it begins. You don't go back to the very beginning; you get to where they treated it and then it picks up again. While it was treated before I left, I still had to have an additional three consultations and tests to make sure

that it was all finished. That was also very interesting because, as you probably well imagine, there aren't too many doctors in the United States that have dealt with filariasis. I had to find one at Boston City Hospital. I had to find a hospital in Seattle, and then the next time I was in Washington I had to go to George Washington University Hospital for my third test. All of them were negative, so there was no problem with that.

In May 1967 I flew out to Olympia, the State capital of Washington. Ruth and I got married in neighboring Lacey, the home of her parents, and my parents flew out from Boston. They were the only people of color in attendance; my father was my best man. We had a really great honeymoon in Canada, then we came back to Lacey. We were notified that we'd been accepted to work for Westinghouse Learning Corporation, which was a subsidiary of Westinghouse Corporation that did Peace Corps training. We bought a car and we drove from Lacey, Washington to Blue Knob, Pennsylvania, and we did a three-month training program for Korea in Blue Knob, Pennsylvania. I was the cross-cultural coordinator and Ruth was the on-site nurse at that training program.

Q: So you were training Peace Corps volunteers who were going to Korea?

MCKINNEY: Going to Korea in a TOEFL program. Almost all the volunteers that went to Korea at that time went to teach English as a second language. It worked out very well. We enjoyed it. We met some very talented people that we would come in contact with, much to our interest, later in our careers.

They then invited us to take on another job in Bisbee, Arizona. We drove from Blue Knob, Pennsylvania to Bisbee, Arizona and did another Peace Corps training program in Bisbee. Interestingly, the sites that Peace Corps chose to do their training, as had been the case when we were in Davis, were areas that were deprived or undergoing some kind of economic change. At the time Bisbee was the world's largest open-pit copper mine. The miners had been on strike for over two years, and it was literally the company store song because they were given an allowance every week that they could charge at the company store. The company would take it back when their jobs resumed, but it was a way of keeping them in Bisbee and working on an agreement for the copper mine.

We were there for another three months and it was an area that we loved to explore. We went to Boot Hill of Gunfight at the OK Corral fame. We were a 20-minute drive from Nogales across the border in Mexico where I first ran into 10-cent shots of tequila, which I learned very quickly to stay away from! We did a part of the training program on the Navajo reservation in Arizona. In the middle of the Navajo reservation is the Hopi reservation, so the only way you get on to the Hopi reservation is going through the Navajo reservation.

We had about 35 trainees and we took them up to the Navajo reservation where they were going to teach at the Navajo school. It was the first instance that I ever ran into where the staff at the school enforced a rule that the students could not speak Navajo while they were there. They would be severely punished if they were caught speaking Navajo while

they were at Toyae, which was the boarding school. They had to really force themselves to learn English as quickly as they could to help communicate because they were very stringent about that no-Navajo rule. I and a number of the trainees balked at that and we raised this a number of times with the staff while we were there, to no avail.

I tell you that because this was in December 1967 and they had a blizzard in Arizona that was one of the worst that they'd had in 25 or 30 years. All of the reservations in the United States are governed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, not by the state governments where they are located. The State of Arizona did not have any jurisdiction over the Navajo reservation or the Hopi reservation. The State of Arizona plowed the roads up to the reservation, but would not come on to the reservation to plow the roads. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, in its infinite understanding of the situation had no plows or road moving equipment on the reservation and we couldn't get off! The blizzard was so bad that we had to rely on what food had been brought into the school before this blizzard hit.

While we were there, we were part of a very innovative Bureau of Indian Affairs solution to solving the problem. They flew in large freight planes with bales of hay and fodder for the sheep on the Navajo reservation, especially because they had large herds of sheep. They ended up parachuting food to the Toyae boarding school until they could get some rental earthmoving equipment to come onto the reservation. While we were stranded there for the better part of a week, we tried to keep up the teaching, but also tried to keep up the morale of everyone because we were snowed in. That was a thoroughly unique experience. We then went back to Bisbee, and we finished up the training program.

At some period during this time I had applied to the universities of Pennsylvania, Chicago, and Berkeley to do my graduate work, because I was interested in getting an advanced degree in South Asian/Indian studies. As far as I could tell from my research, these were the three best universities. I heard back most quickly from Berkeley and they offered me a full scholarship.

Q: This is the University of California at Berkeley?

MCKINNEY: University of California (UC) Berkeley. So, one afternoon in January 1968, Ruth and I got into our 1964 Chevy Impala convertible, loaded it up and drove from Arizona to Oakland to start graduate school.

Q: It's March 27, 2020. This is William McKinney. We're on the third recording for today. We're in Berkeley, California, where he's about to start at the University of California (UC).

MCKINNEY: We were initially in Oakland. When Ruth and I drove from Bisbee, Arizona, we had to find a place to stay while I went in to register at Berkeley. We had identified a one-room apartment in Oakland, California that was right near Berkeley where we could spend a couple of weeks until we got the housing situation straightened

out because I was going to be provided student housing. We got to Oakland early one evening, we found the apartment, and we moved in and got settled.

We looked around the area and we noticed that the Oakland, Alameda County court was just diagonally across the street from us. Thinking nothing of it, we went to bed. We woke up the next morning and we looked out on a glorious day, and there were thousands of people, police everywhere! We thought there'd been a revolution in Oakland that night or something had happened. It was the first day of the February 1968 trial of the Black Panther Party leader Huey Newton, at the Oakland Alameda Courthouse, and it was ringed by Alameda County police, known as the Blue Beanies. People who had come to observe Black Panther Party leaders such as Bobby Seals, Eldridge Cleaver, Angela Davis and other members of the Black Panther movement. Needless to say, that was really an eye opener, and reaffirmed Ruth and mine and others recognition of the need for greater social justice this time. We spent most of that morning, rather than being at Berkeley registering, watching what was going on with people coming and going from the courthouse and setting up for the trial. I was a paid-up member of the Black Panther Party and we joined a number of protests.

Later that afternoon we did get to Berkeley to get the registration done and to find out where we were going to be living and when we would get student housing, all of which ultimately worked out. In about a week or ten days we were living in an old World War II army barracks complex on Dwight Way in Berkeley, about a five-minute drive from the main campus where we were going to be for the next two years. We got moved in. I found my professor, and got my first series of classes lined up for what I wanted to take as a graduate student. That was the first day of a number of, if not rude awakenings, certainly eye-opening experiences that I was to have in the next couple of weeks as I settled in to the South Asia program at University of California (UC) Berkeley.

While I was in Andhra Pradesh as a Peace Corps volunteer, I'd not only learned to speak Telugu pretty well, I'd also learned to read the Pali script so that by the time we left I could wade my way through the local newspapers in Telugu. It wasn't easy but I found it interesting and worthwhile to get another perspective on what was happening in the area through the local press. Over 60 percent of the people that we dealt with couldn't read or write, so there was a very slanted view in much of that. The day that we got back and we got into housing and I got into meeting some of my professors, I noticed that there was a Telugu newspaper lying on the desk so I sat down and started trying to read. It was fairly recent, I would say about two-three weeks old, but I worked my way through a lot of it to find out what had been going on since we left. When the professor walked in he said, "What are you doing?" I said well, "I'm reading the Telugu paper here. It's the Andhra Bhoomi, and I'm trying to…." He said, "You can read Telugu?" I said, "Yeah, and I speak it." He said, "You speak Telugu?"

It turned out that in the South Asia Department the man who had written the final textbook on Hindi as a spoken and written language was a professor there, John Gumperz. But there wasn't one professor that spoke any of the South Indian languages,

or read any of the Pali script languages. I was just appalled. I never said anything, I never brought it up, but it always bothered me that you had scholars writing about parts of India where they couldn't do any local research; where they couldn't look at a local newspaper or read a local book! So, I made it a real point for myself to keep up as much as I could. I couldn't find many Telugu speakers, but I could always bum a newspaper from the library and try to keep that skill moving along as I went through my graduate program.

Q: It's actually fairly extraordinary that they would have had newspapers in Telugu.

MCKINNEY: Yeah, they not only had them in Telugu, they had them in Kannada and Tamil also, but again, they were basically there for Indian students who were at Berkeley who could come in and read a local newspaper. The only other language that one of the professors could read was Urdu, which is the Arabic-Hindi if you will, and Hindi, I mean because Hindi was the largest spoken language in North India. There was Gumperz and some of his language students that could read Hindi. I should also tell you that while Hindi was the largest spoken language in the North, the single largest spoken language in India is English, once you add in all the English speakers of the South.

The two years that I spent at Berkeley were very good for me. I enjoyed the study; I enjoyed the classes. They wanted me to take one undergraduate course on the beginning of studies on India. I went into the classroom, there were six classrooms in total, and there were about 350 students spread out among all of these classrooms and it was taught by a professor in a studio on television prompters. I only went one time and I left. I figured my two years in India, mainly in the South but traveling around the country on trains because that was really the only way we traveled any distances, gave me a pretty good idea of what was going on, so I didn't need that class.

I enjoyed my time at Berkeley and I think it opened my eyes to the fact that I wasn't going to be a teacher; I wasn't going to be a professor at a university. *Ipso facto* I didn't need a Ph.D. I did all the work up to writing my dissertation, and then I broke the hearts of many of my professors at Berkeley when I said, "I will be leaving at the end of this quarter. I am going back to India. I am not going to do a Ph.D. so I would like to get my Masters." There was some resistance, but not enough, and I got my Master's degree.

I'd been contacted by the Peace Corps director in India who I knew previously, and he wanted me to come back and take over as the cultural coordinator for all of the training. By that time India had moved to all in-country training; there was no more training in the United States before you went to India. You got on the plane to India as a trainee and you had all of your training in India. It was less expensive. We had all the language resources we could possibly need and I did the cultural and historical overview training for many of the programs. Those that I didn't do myself, I supervised other staff who were doing it in other parts of the country.

Q: So, at this point you were an employee of the Peace Corps?

MCKINNEY: I was an employee of Peace Corps through the U.S. government.

Q: What did that make you? Did that make you a civil servant?

MCKINNEY: No, we never figured that out until later on. When I went to India in May 1970 with Ruth and our son Raj, my salary was $14,500 a year. I wasn't sure whether I was a Foreign Service employee or a civil service employee, but the one thing I did know was I had a job! That was what counted as far as I was concerned. We were in Delhi at National headquarters for about a year.

Q: National U.S. Peace Corps headquarters?

MCKINNEY: National Peace Corp India's headquarters in New Delhi. We had regional offices in Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. Those were the four others.

Q: How many total Peace Corps volunteers would there have been in that period?

MCKINNEY: When I got there in May 1970, it was somewhere between 1,000 and 1,200 all over the country. We had four programs coming in for training in August 1970—two in the North and two in the South.

Q: What were the programs covering?

MCKINNEY: The ones in the North were mainly doing agricultural engineering. India was mechanizing the huge rice and wheat growing areas of the North. In the South, one was a TESOL program and the other was a health program. But in, I guess it must have been late August, early September 1970 while Indira Gandhi was the prime minister. She decided that the United States had too much influence in India and one of the things she could do was begin to limit the number of Peace Corps volunteers that we could have. Needless to say it set off a ferocious battle between the central government and the states because the state governments were the governments that requested Peace Corps volunteers for programs in their states. However, the Center had to approve them. There had always been little trouble from the Center approving volunteer requests from the various states until Indira Gandhi intervened, even though at that time the central government was Congress Party controlled, and most state governments were Congress. As we all know, in the end she won. She very neatly limited the number of Peace Corps volunteers to the number of volunteers other AID agencies had in the states where we would be going. In some states that was zero and in other states that might be 20 or 30 depending upon what the Germans, Brits, Chinese, or Japanese were doing. Anyway there was a precipitous decline in the number of Peace Corps volunteers.

Q: Did this immediately affect the volunteers who were there?

MCKINNEY: No, the ones that were there were not touched.

Q: They were allowed to finish up.

MCKINNEY: Right, but there were no replacements.

Q: This would have the effect of hitting hard the areas that had no support from other countries.

MCKINNEY: Exactly.

Q: Rather perverse.

MCKINNEY: Yup. Anyway it happened very quickly and the number of volunteers that we had in training nowhere near matched the number of volunteers that were getting ready to leave from having completed their assignments. There had always been this rollover effect that was brought to a screeching halt. And it affected our staffing because the staff that we'd built up to do all the in-country training didn't have jobs anymore, including yours truly. Because I had good language and management skills, I was moved from Delhi to Bombay in January 1972. I was moved there specifically to wind up the programs in Maharashtra and Gujarat. So, Ruth, Raj, and I spent a year in Bombay and the first thing that we did was we closed the office that we had in Bombay, laid off all of the staff, except my driver and one Marathi speaker. I could speak Hindi well enough, but there were areas where Marathi remained supreme, so I had to have one translator at least. I closed the office and sold off everything and basically moved the Peace Corps office into one of the spare bedrooms that we had in our apartment. We lived there for a year. Then in December 1972 I was reassigned to Africa.

Q: In the meantime what was Ruth doing? You had a small child.

MCKINNEY: She was a stay-at-home Mom at that time. She'd done a bit of health training in New Delhi when we were there because she was a graduate registered nurse. She hadn't gone to a three-year registered nurse program; she'd gone to a four-year nursing program at Pacific Lutheran University, so she was well versed, especially after two years as a volunteer and knowing the health system in India. But when we were in Bombay, she basically stayed home and did things with our son. She also learned to play the sitar.

Q: How old was Raj when you left India?

MCKINNEY: He was born in November 1969, so he would have been three in November 1972.

Q: Okay, so the Peace Corps has offered to send you to Africa, again as an employee?

MCKINNEY: Again as Pace Corp staff. The most interesting thing about that was there was no specificity of where I was supposed to go. They just said, "We're going to

transfer you to Africa." So, we took some leave and went back to Boston and spent Christmas 1972 with my extended family in Boston, having Christmas at Uncle Cooper's house, and generally chilling out. Amazing people in many instances.

At that time I only spoke Hindi to Raj. I was very specific about that. Ruth spoke English to him, I spoke Hindi, and anybody who worked for us spoke Hindi to Raj. We had a couple of very interesting side bars on that. I had mentioned to you earlier that my mother had come and visited us at every post. She visited us in Bombay. She'd been to Delhi earlier, but then we were moved to Bombay. She came and visited us in Bombay. She got to know her grandson and picked up a couple of words. We got back to Boston and they were in the kitchen and Raj said, "Pani lao," which means, "Can I have water?" So my mother got a glass and gave it to him. He wouldn't take it. The only way he would drink water was if it was in a bottle from the refrigerator because he knew faucet water was not to be drunk!

Q: [Laughter]

MCKINNEY: It took awhile for him to get used to getting milk out of a carton or a bottle. He very quickly realized that there were no buffalo around. Even in Bombay he was able to go down the elevator in our apartment and go out in the parking lot and watch them milk a buffalo for his milk! Even when he was three years old this was still what was going on for him!

Around the beginning of January 1973, we got the assignment to Ghana. We got our stuff together and flew out on another Pan Am flight from New York to Monrovia, and from Monrovia to Accra. Pan Am did not stop at any of the French capitals. That was all handled by Air France. If you wanted to go from Accra to Cameroon, you had to fly to Europe, get an Air France flight, and fly back down. We went into Ghana in late January and assumed the program officer position that very quickly morphed into the deputy director for Peace Corps in Ghana, and we also covered a small sports program in Nigeria.

Q: Did you receive training for this or was your on-the-job training deemed sufficient?

MCKINNEY: The on-the-job that I had in India was about it; I didn't really require any further training. I did have to do some training culturally of some of the staff that worked for me, because I was not a sit-at-headquarters type; I wanted to be out like I had in India. I wanted to visit volunteer sites; I wanted to see what was going on. I wanted to feel the pace of life. When I showed up in Ghana, that was kind of a new revelation for some of the staff there. There were only four Americans on Peace Corp staff when I got there. We had over 100 volunteers.

Of the staff in Accra there were four Americans and two of them very quickly left with different problems. Then a new director came in. Over the two plus years that I was there, there were basically four Americans. The comptroller was an American, myself, as the

program deputy, the director, and we had an agricultural specialist. Most of our volunteers at that time were assigned to high schools in Ghana. We had a few at the University of Cape Coast, and at Legon campus of the University of Ghana, in Accra. But almost all of our volunteers were in rural high schools teaching math and science.

Ghana was one of the more interesting experiences that I had for a number of different reasons with Peace Corps and working with USAID that had a large program there. Ghana was surrounded by francophone countries, Côte d'Ivoire on the west, Burkina Faso on the north, and Togo on the east. Those were all former French-speaking colonies. The volunteers we had were very committed in Ghana.

There were fewer hardships than we experienced in India, but there was a whole different set of issues that we had to deal with in Ghana. Number one being Black American volunteers wanting to come to serve in Africa to try and find something that they felt was missing in their cultural heritage. Ghana, unfortunately, was one of the premiere places because many Black Americans knew that the largest staging area in West Africa for slaves going out, whether they were going to Brazil or the Caribbean or coming to the United States. Ghana had a slave castle in the middle of the bay that we had at Cape Coast. It was a very unfortunate situation because it was very difficult for any Black Americans to find their heritage in Ghana. It was too difficult to try to identify at that point in time where slaves came from.

I had two aunts. My Aunt Doris and my Aunt Uarda who spent copious amounts of time with the family lineage in Sparta, Georgia where our family came north from. That many members of the family as grandparents, great grandparents, and great-great grandparents had come from Ghana, but that was as far as they could ever trace it. I mean they could trace some lines directly back to Ghana, but once you hit soil in Ghana, that was it. There were no records that told you where to go from there, because basically slaves were a commodity and they were accounted for as a commodity. Once your commodity is used up, you throw away the paperwork.

Q: How did Ghanaians view you when you were dealing with the government, for instance?

MCKINNEY: That's a very difficult question. Many Ghanaians even over the past 100 years feel some if not guilt, they feel some unsettling feelings about their ancestor's part of having the slave trade and not having been traded themselves. When Black Americans, Black Brazilians, and Black Caribbeans come back trying to do their Roots kind of things, they get very, very uncomfortable with that. Dealing with people in the government was no problem. It was dealing with government functionaries at the district level or at villages where it became more unsettling, where White volunteers were at an advantage over Black volunteers in some respects. But that's just the way it was, the way it went down. Like I said, especially in Ghana because Ghana was known as the jumping off point for many of the slave ships that went to the Caribbean, Brazil, and the United States.

I found that part of the experience very unsettling because frankly I was not interested at that point as a Black American being in Africa. I enjoyed that, but I did not feel I had African roots to speak of. I had a Black culture that was centered in the United States, not in Africa. The Black culture in the United States was extremely different from what would be considered the Black culture in almost any of the Black African countries.

Q: Where were you living then? Did you have an apartment, a house?

MCKINNEY: Oh yes, we had a beautiful house in Accra, three bedrooms, nice big airy kitchen. We had a young man that worked with us. I spent a lot of my time on the road. I tried to do a minimal amount of work in Accra as I could get by with. That at times brought me into conflict with other staff. but I felt very strongly that Peace Corps staff needed to be on the road visiting volunteers; making sure, not so much that they were doing their job, but they were psychologically and emotionally supported.

Q: It's March 27, 2020. It's #4 with William McKinney. So, you're in Ghana, Accra.

McKINNEY: I was based in Accra from January 1973 in the program office and as deputy director. I made it a point to travel throughout Ghana as much as possible. We got a new director, and he and his wife had just come in, and we had not had what I would consider a sound meeting of the ways yet because I continued to maintain that I needed to be one-fourth of my time in Accra and three-fourths of my time traveling around Ghana visiting volunteers and seeing how they're doing, how they're holding up, what kind of help they might need.

The incident that I will share with you now is somewhat sad, but on the other hand it's extremely enlightening. About a year after I got to Accra, the current ambassador and his family were leaving and his deputy was going to be the ambassador a.i. (ad interim) for a significant period of time because no new ambassador had been named or had been cleared by the Senate to come to post. So that DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) was going to be the ambassador a.i. His wife would also assume the role of the ambassador's wife a.i. It just so happened that the DCM in Ghana was a Black American, one of the very few Blacks at that time in the U.S. Foreign Service.

I don't think I'm speaking out of character or out of line when I say that even in the early 1970s the American Foreign Service was still the purview of White America. There were not many Black Foreign Service officers at that time, nor were there many in Peace Corps, in fact I was the only Black American on staff in places where I worked and visited. Be that as it may, the Black DCM took over as the ambassador a.i. and his wife also assumed the position of acting ambassador's wife. The rules were changing and the Foreign Service was going through a period of growth. It was going through a period of changing its cultural makes and making as much effort as it could to bring in more different types of Americans. Let's leave it at that.

Up until that time when an ambassador came to post and his wife accompanied, other wives of Foreign Service officers were expected to come in and greet the wife and say "Hello," and the protocol at that time was a hat and white gloves. That's how you did it. Like I say that was all changing, and the ambassador a.i.'s wife was expecting that that was going to be the homage that she would get for her husband having been a DCM and a political officer and one of the few Blacks in the Foreign Service, but it didn't happen because the rules were changing. Wives were no longer discussed in your annual evaluation report. They could not be mentioned when you discussed the role of the employee, you also discussed how well their wife and family did. You could no longer do that. I won't say that it was a put down, but it really caused a ruffle to the DCM's wife because she thought she was due that.

Q: She had come up through the system and had had to follow those rules, now she reaches the top and she's not getting it.

McKINNEY: Right, she's not getting it. Anyway, we got through that, and we moved on. Then lo and behold, a few months later we got the appointment of a new ambassador, and she, her husband, and daughter would be coming out soon. I don't suppose you remember who that was? Come on!

Q: Before my time, Bill.

MCKINNEY: [Humming a tune] The Good Ship Lollipop.

Q: Shirley Temple Black!

MCKINNEY: Yup, Shirley Temple Black came to Ghana as the ambassador. I can tell you there were a number of Ghanaians who were absolutely offended by it, and there were a number of Ghanaians who absolutely reveled in it! A movie star coming to Ghana to take the ambassadorship The night that she landed on Pan Am Flight 1, every radio station in Ghana was playing that song, and you landed on a chocolate bar!

She was a great ambassador. I enjoyed working for her. After she'd been in country a couple of weeks she had a senior staff meeting. The Peace Corps director and I went. She basically said, "I am here as the ambassador and I will cover the PR front for you, but I expected all of you career officers to continue to do your job and keep me apprised of what's going on. I'm not here to take that over." That assuaged the feelings of a lot of people, especially the now back-to-being DCM, because when he heard who was coming, he was not happy at all.

Q: Had Ghana previously had political-appointee ambassadors?

MCKINNEY: No.

Q: This was quite unusual. Typically political-appointee ambassadors go to places that are deemed to be first world, nice places, kind of place you might want to go on vacation.

MCKINNEY: Yeah. Absolutely.

Q: It's very interesting that Ambassador Black would have decided that that's where she wanted to go, and I suppose that's a good sign right there.

MCKINNEY: I think part of it was that she really wanted to get the title ambassador on her resume, because she was a big Republican fundraiser in California. She was a big supporter of Richard Nixon. I would say she did an excellent job by not trying to be the ambassador, but being the person that kept Ghana in the news by what she did, and there were a number of times that I took her to visit one of our training programs. It was down a flight of stairs and when she was going down the stairs she tripped and stumbled a bit. For the first six months that she was in country, there was one or another news service from somewhere in the world doing a story on Shirley Temple Black, former movie star, as the ambassador to Ghana. And she did things, like she tripped and stumbled and she turned around and held up her hand and said, "Let's do that again!" She walked back up the stairs, and walked down the stairs again so they could shoot it again!

She left Ghana under a cloud created by the secretary of state who was on a tour of Africa. He had flown up from Johannesburg to Kenya, Kenya to Nigeria, and then he was supposed to fly Nigeria to Ghana, then Ghana on to Freetown. The ambassador had set up all these meetings with all of the senior Ghanaian people—the president, the foreign minister, on and on. After he left Nigeria, which was about an hour and 45-minute plane ride, and was flying over, he called and said that he wouldn't be able to make it, that he had too much going on, and he was going to fly straight on to Freetown.

Q: Which secretary of state was this?

MCKINNEY: Henry Kissinger! Anyway, Shirley Temple then went around and apologized for what she considered to be a slap in the face. After she'd gone around, she resigned. She went back to Washington where she became the chief of protocol in the State Department because there was a great deal of sympathy for what she'd done and what Kissinger had caused. She was there for a number of years I think, and then she ended up being our ambassador in Budapest, Hungary.

Q: That's it for Ghana then?

MCKINNEY: Yeah.

Q: It's March 28, interviewing William D. McKinney. Bill, you've now decided you have to leave Ghana and you are going off to another career, so start talking about that.

MCKINNEY: I didn't decide I wanted to leave Ghana. The five years I did as a Peace Corps staff representative is the maximum that you could do. The rules in Peace Corps were you could do five years as a volunteer, then you had to leave and you could not be a volunteer again for five years. It was the same for staff. Staff could work for five years and then you had to leave and stay out at least five years before you could apply to work again. So, my five years came up in June 1975 in Ghana after I did two and one-half years both in Ghana and in India.

I was at loose ends when we left Ghana. I hadn't thought very much about what I wanted to do career wise or where I wanted to be except I did know that I did want to continue my Foreign Service career. I enjoyed working overseas, I enjoyed working in new cultures, and I enjoyed learning new languages. So, we went back to the States with the intent to look around and see if we could find some Foreign Service employment. I hadn't really begun to think about a career move even though I was 35. I still felt that there was time for me to hunker down and get a real job if you will and start a career.

I started out looking in Washington but it became clear that in 1975 there was not very much available or what I was interested in in Washington, so I went to New York. I had a couple of friends at the United Nations (UN), especially in UNICEF. I got an appointment and went in to talk with the personnel people in New York for UNICEF. It was quite an eye opener. I wasn't aware that there were systems in place that allowed for the hiring of staff of various UN agencies based on funding contributions and how many people from that country already worked there. I ended up in the personnel office in UNICEF. I'm meeting with a gentleman to talk about opportunities overseas and was basically told that at that juncture, it was August 1975, that there were no positions overseas for persons with my background. We talked for 20–25 minutes, and it became clear to me there were no positions at that time. We said our goodbyes and I was walking out of the office. As with every personnel office that you go into there's usually some kind of a chart that shows who's posted to what countries and how many people are there, etc. As I passed by, I saw a very large open space in Bangladesh, and I turned and said to the gentlemen that I'd been talking to, "I see you have vacancies in Bangladesh."

His immediate reply was, "You'd go to Bangladesh?" I told him, "You've seen my resume, you've seen my background. I speak Urdu which is one of the languages that they speak in Bangladesh along with Bengali. I have five years of experience in India so I know the culture very well. Yes, we would definitely be interested in going to Bangladesh." I had a job in about half an hour. People were not jumping up and down to go to Bangladesh and it never seemed to occur to him that he had someone in his office who not only knew the history of Bangladesh, but that would be willing to go.

I went back to Boston and got my family and we went to Lacey, Washington as our second child was about to be born. Our second son Keith was born on August 19 in Olympia, Washington and a month later we debarked from Seattle and went to Bangladesh with the United Nations.

On the one hand, it was an eye-opening experience. On the other hand, it's one of the saddest experiences I've had in my Foreign Service career. Bangladesh had basically been decimated by the war in 1971 when it broke away from Pakistan and became Bangladesh. Cyclone Bhola in 1970 had killed half a million people, and caused much devastation. There had been huge amounts of aid sent to Bangladesh but very little direction on how to use it, and what to do with it. The country was in very bad shape. There were significant budget deficits throughout the country. Their health systems were in disarray but beginning to come around. There was a clear focus by the government on correcting that and getting health systems in place. When I got to Bangladesh, I was assigned the districts of Dhaka, which was the capital, Tangail, Faridpur, and Sylhet as the four districts that I was charged with overseeing and following various programs, mainly UNICEF programs, but looking at a broad spectrum at who was working where.

Q: Did UNICEF have other people in the country at that time?

MCKINNEY: Oh yeah, there were six of us who were assigned to the various districts in Bangladesh. They had a full staff in Dhaka that coordinated all of our aid with UNICEF in the states and with other international development agencies that were working there.

Q: So, you were reporting to a director who was in Dhaka, or back to New York?

MCKINNEY: Yes, I reported directly to the program director in Dhaka. Kunio Waki was either third or fourth in line in the office in Dhaka. We had a director, a deputy director, and Kunio was the head of programs.

Q: What was your title?

MCKINNEY: Regional director for four districts. The first thing I did after I got there, unlike other foreign service entities, the UN has a very different system because you don't pay taxes when you work for the UN, and you're expected to find your own housing, etc. I came to find out later that the only country that does require you to pay taxes is the United States. The UN then reimburses you for whatever taxes you pay. So your base salary is not that large, but you don't pay any taxes on it ultimately.

The first travel I undertook was after we'd been in Bangladesh for about a couple of months. I wanted to get a feeling for the districts that I was going to be working in; the programs that we were going to be undertaking. I went out from Dhaka at the beginning of 1976 and did a two-week tour of my four districts, following up on what had been going on with UNICEF where our programs were operating and what other programs were going on. That was the first of a gigantic eye-opening experience, looking at the poorness of Bangladesh and the poorness of the villages that I was going to be dealing with. On the one hand, I was somewhat prepared for it after living for five years in India, especially in rural India, but I was not prepared for the level of poverty that I saw in many of the areas.

UNICEF was basically working in the health sector, supporting the Ministry of Health in their district and rural health works, as were other countries. It was very interesting that the government of Bangladesh made it clear to countries providing aid that they were not going to be able to support in the long term many of the programs that were being put in place. They did not have the money for it and they didn't have the trained personnel to support things that were being put in place.

The two issues that stood out for me on that initial visit were, one government, which shall remain nameless, was providing kerosene refrigerators to almost every district and rural health center to help keep the supply chain in place because many of the medicines that were being supplied or that were going to be supplied, required refrigeration training. The only problem was the government did not have enough budget to pay for kerosene to run these refrigerators, so most of these refrigerators were being used as filing cabinets in the rural areas! Even though this was well documented, the refrigerators kept appearing.

The second one was, UNICEF itself, which had a mechanical engineering program where it was training Bangladeshi men and women to maintain these refrigerators as well as any ground transportation that might be associated with these rural areas for health staff to be able to get around. It also became quite clear that in part of the year you could drive almost anywhere, and the other half of the year you needed a boat to get there. You could go out at the beginning of the year and drive and visit your villages, and by the middle of the year, to get to those exact same villages, you needed a boat. All of the water from the Ganges that flowed through India emptied into Bangladesh and at that time there was very little regulation of the flow and a great deal of the time there were severe floods in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has no natural mountains or large hills. It's really just a flat plain.

I became interested in this mechanical engineering program because the government of Bangladesh was very keen on it. They wanted more Bangladeshis trained as mechanics, especially in the automobile side of it. It became clear that not only did the government not have the resources to provide jeeps or 4-wheel drives to most of these places, they weren't that keen to have donor countries bring in more vehicles. I was somewhat perplexed at why they were interested in making sure that UNICEF continued this mechanical engineering program. Over a period of time, I began to realize what the real underlying rationale for this program was. It made a great deal of sense and I never tried to stop it On the other hand I never tried to facilitate it. What was going on was that UNICEF was training a large number of mechanics that could fix these refrigerators and they could work on engines in general. They would become very good at working on cars, especially. If you graduated 100 people, 75 of that 100 would end up going to the Middle East, and they would become a steady flow of foreign exchange for the government of Bangladesh. And they had in place a very active and very reliable program for receiving foreign exchange from Bangladeshis working in the Middle East, exchanging that into taka and providing those funds to the families of those workers in the Middle East.

As far as I could tell, and I looked at this very closely, there was no corruption in that part of the program. The government was so dependent upon that regular flow of foreign exchange from its citizens working in the Middle East that they went out of their way to make sure it was clean and tidy and that the families of these workers got their taka every other month on time. They did not want disgruntled Bangladeshi workers in the Middle East who would not send their foreign exchange back through government channels or try and find other ways to get it into the country, because the government sorely needed that foreign exchange.

Later on in my career, when I got a chance to travel somewhat extensively in the Middle East, it became clear that many of the Middle Eastern countries depended on foreign workers, especially from, India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, to do all of the menial jobs that keep a country working. So that program, while it was for many reasons not accomplishing what it was originally set out to do, was providing a service to the government of Bangladesh that they sorely needed.

I became very disenchanted with the UNICEF program because UNICEF itself has very little control over the countries that provide assistance through the UNICEF program. UNICEF cannot ask individual countries to provide an individual product. The countries will supply what they have in abundance, if you will, or what their economy is very good at. Therefore you get the refrigerators. While I was there, one country donated a million boxes of chalk for schools in Bangladesh. Given the climate of Bangladesh, in many cases before you could even get the chalk out they'd become water soaked and lumped together because of the climate in Bangladesh.

I was in Bangladesh from September 1975 until June 1979 at which time we left and went back to the States. It was at that point that I decided maybe I should begin looking around for some career opportunities.

Q: Before you leave, what was it like for the family to live there? You mentioned you had to go out and find your own apartment, but I think you…

MCKINNEY: Well, we found a house. We had a baby and Raj was nearly six years old when we got to Bangladesh. The experience of having lived in India for both Ruth and I made the transition to Bangladesh quite easy. The similarities between the countries, I mean they were one country until 1947 when Pakistan and India came into being. There was a, I wouldn't say, posh but there was a very good American Club in Dhaka that we could go to that had a very nice pool, four tennis courts, a large field for playing baseball if you wanted, and a restaurant. We did not have a shopping center or anything like that and, unlike many of the countries that were working there, the UN did not have a system for you to be able to buy offshore and bring it into Bangladesh. Other countries received, especially dry goods and alcohol, from off site that could be brought in. You could go to the American Club and they had almost anything that you would want to eat, or if you drank alcohol that you could get alcohol there. In that sense it was quite easy for families that had those availabilities, to live.

Ruth got involved in a number of charitable works in Bangladesh and she had her hands full with Raj and Keith during that period. I think the most overwhelming part of the experience of Bangladesh was the population. Even though we'd been in India for five years, we were not prepared for the size of the population that was housed in Bangladesh. There were two instances that brought that home to us. We began to realize that every night in front of our house there would be Bengali families and persons who would sleep on the rough sidewalk in front of our house. You could look up the street and there would be people sleeping everywhere.

After we left Bangladesh and went back to the States, we had gone to a bookstore and bought a couple of books. We were walking back to my mother's house in Boston and I didn't know what I was feeling, but I said something to Ruth and she said, "Yeah, I know…" Then we began looking around and we were the only people on that street. It was the first time in over four years that we'd ever been just the two of us, without other people around. The feeling that you got in Bangladesh was overpopulation, everywhere.

Q: Especially you living in Dhaka, the capital?

MCKINNEY: Absolutely. The district capitals were very much like that. All of the *zilabads*, district capitals, were very much like that; always a press of humanity.

Q: When you worked with UNICEF, did you have much contact with the American embassy and in particular with USAID?

MCKINNEY: No, not very much. We had contact with other UN agencies working in Bangladesh, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), but where we had contact with the embassy and USAID was at the American Club. On a professional or working level, we didn't do very much with any of the government aid agencies, like USAID, German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), or the Japanese. They all had offices working there, but the UN didn't do much coordinating with them.

There was still a large refugee population in Bangladesh from when the country was originally created back in 1947, mainly the Muslims from Bihar and eastern India went to that part of Bengal that had been set aside for Pakistan. You had serious friction between the Bengal Muslims that lived there or went there, and the Muslims from other parts of India that did not speak Bengali; they spoke Hindi. The Bengalis especially took great exception to people that did not speak Bengali because Bengali was the literary language of India, whether liked it or not. I mean Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali. Many of their movie stars were Bengali. So Bengali was the language of that area.

Q: As you are finishing up in Bangladesh, how did you evaluate the effectiveness of what UNICEF was doing?

MCKINNEY: I would say on a scale of 1 to 10 they were probably doing around 4.5 or 5. A lot of it was not the fault of UNICEF. It had to do with the growth and capacity of Bangladesh itself to accept and use the aid funding, if you will, and the products that were being provided to them. They had a couple of serious institutions that worked very well that were being supported. The malaria control unit was very, very good. They had a facility for making oral rehydration solution that stood out. I would say they were a 5 on a 1–10 scale, but I knew that I would not work for the UN again when I left. I was not interested in it and I'd begun to think about what I wanted to do as a career. We got back to the States in 1979.

Q: It's March 28 and this is the second interview with William D. McKinney. He's talking about departing Bangladesh where he'd been working with UNICEF.

MCKINNEY: We left Bangladesh in late June 1979 and took a vacation. On the way home we took the kids to Denmark to Legoland, and that was quite an experience for them. Legoland was quite a theme park, all made out of Lego [blocks]. We got back to the United States in mid-July and we got settled in an apartment in Lacey, Washington. I contacted a number of our contacts in Washington and New York with the idea of looking at a career move.

As luck would have it, I got a call from a friend that I'd worked with in Ghana who was now working with the domestic Peace Corps, Volunteers in Service to America. He asked me if I could come in and help with a couple of training programs that he was in charge of foster grandparents in Arkansas. So, I ended up going to Little Rock for a couple of months to do some training with him while at the same time continuing to contact various people in New York and Washington. As I was leaving Little Rock, I got a call from Peace Corps as they were transitioning their in-country training programs. They were doing two final programs—partially in the States and partially in Thailand—and they wanted to know if I would be available as the director for those last two programs.

I should also mention, by that time we had bought a house in Baltimore so we were closer on the East Coast to where I needed to be for career moves. I came back to Baltimore, talked to Ruth, and decided I could be available for these two training programs.

Q: Why did you say they were the last two?

MCKINNEY: Because they were loving to all in-country training.

Q: Oh, I see. They were the last ones being conducted in the United States

MCKINNEY: In the States, right.

I had gone in and talked with people in State Department personnel and with persons in, at that time USIS (United States Information Service), and had put in an application, and once again contacted my godfather, Ed Brooke. Anyway I went up to western

Massachusetts to begin these two Thailand training programs, and they went very well. Before they went in country, I went back to Baltimore to see the family for a week and then flew to Thailand with the trainees and we set up a training program outside of Bangkok for about a month. Then we disbursed the trainees to various *changwats* (provinces) in Thailand where they were going to do their practice teaching. Again, these were all English-teaching volunteers.

Q: Was this program a new one in Thailand, or did you have existing infrastructure?

MCKINNEY: No, it was all existing.

Q: Okay, so you didn't have to set up the training camp or anything like that.

MCKINNEY: No, it was all there. In the meantime, I'd heard back from both State and USIS and, low and behold, from USAID expressing an interest in having me come to work.

Q: Had you contacted the U.S. Agency for International Development directly or did they somehow get your name from State?

MCKINNEY: They got my name from a database because this was a time where all U.S. government agencies were trying to significantly increase the number of minorities and women that they had and they were doing every possible outreach activity they could to find qualified minorities and qualified women. Because I fell into the minority category I was contacted by USAID.

I was in Thailand until late October 1979 completing this training program. It was standard, uneventful. We had a few volunteers that left early because they couldn't adjust, but most of the volunteers or trainees that entered the program completed the program and became volunteers and were assigned to schools.

Q: How long did this period working for the Peace Corps last, when you were training in western Massachusetts and then went to Thailand?

MCKINNEY: Three months.

Q: Both the Massachusetts training and the Thailand, okay so this is all in late 1979.

MCKINNEY: Well, I left there in October 1979, so it would have been like late August, September, and October, that period.

Q: In the meantime your family is in Baltimore and your children are in Baltimore schools?

MCKINNEY: Right, unfortunately. I got the training program wrapped up in early November and I had an offer from USIS for a position in Cyprus. They were looking to send someone to Cyprus with USIS. State Department had come back and said it was going to take them a little bit longer to process. I got a call from the USAID director in Bangkok when I came back to Bangkok after the graduation of the training program when I was getting ready to come back to the States. Don said that he'd gotten a call from Washington and basically offered me a position starting in Washington on the Pakistan desk.

Q: Would this have been a foreign service or a civil service career?

MCKINNEY: Foreign Service. I was not interested in Civil Service.

Q: So, you didn't take the Foreign Service exam? This was a direct entry position?

MCKINNEY: Right. We got back to Baltimore and I said, "Yes, what I would be interested in would be the Pakistan job." So, I went to Washington and talked to personnel and did all the paperwork and had a fight about my salary because, again the U.N. paid minimally but you don't pay taxes and if you pay taxes, they pay it. So when I went into US AID and explained this, they were very, very understanding, but my job was at the level that they paid me, not based on the one that I was coming from.

Q: What was that grade at that point?

MCKINNEY: Foreign Service (FS) 2 but I was making about $25,000 a year.

Q: So, they didn't take into consideration your many years of experience and they didn't calculate your previous salary as being the salary plus reimbursement for the taxes.

MCKINNEY: Nope, only the original salary. But as you're well aware, that all worked out in February 1980. By that time I'd gotten to know a number of the USAID staff working in the Near East Bureau, which is where Pakistan at that time was. The Near East and South Asia were together in USAID. I'd gotten to know a number of those people through my work in other areas, so I was very happy.

Q: Were you commuting from Baltimore?

MCKINNEY: Yeah. There were four of us. One of the guys that I came in a car with, he'd pick us up and park at the train station, then we would take the train in every morning from Baltimore to Union station. Then you could just drop right down through the Metro and off to Foggy Bottom.

Q: Were the USAID offices in the Harry S. Truman building at that time?

MCKINNEY: Yes, at that time they were all at main State. It wasn't until later in my career with USAID that they moved to..

Q: The Ronald Reagan building.

MCKINNEY: Yeah, the Ronald Reagan Building, but at that time I joined we were all at main State in Foggy Bottom.

If you remember, November 1979 were rather tumultuous times with the takeover of the embassy in Tehran and the overrunning of the embassy in Islamabad. There was a rather vicious rumor that went around that the American government had violated the Muslim trust in Mecca and Medina, and Muhammad Zia-ul Haq, who was the head of the Pakistani army and had led a coup against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was not very friendly to the United States. They overran our compound in Islamabad and basically destroyed everything except the ambassador's residence, which they couldn't find, and the swimming pool because they couldn't let the water out of the pool. They burned down all of the apartments, the restaurant; they did as much damage as they could. It happened very quickly on a work day and we had a group of American employees that were in the safe area in the middle of the embassy. They set fire to everything.

I'd only been working for USAID maybe a week or two. I got a call from the Situation Room on the 7th floor. They needed an Urdu speaker, because they had communications with some Pakistanis who were trying to be helpful about this group of people who were caught in the middle of the embassy as it was burning. I ended up in the Situation Room for two days talking with these people. There were a number of to-be Senior Foreign Service officers in that room too.

Q*: Trapped in the room.*

MCKINNEY: It was a very dire experience because they cracked the hatch to go out on the roof from that room, because we planned for them going from there across the roof and down the side to the British Embassy, which was next door. But we had no idea of what the physical circumstances would be when they could really crack that hatch and get the people out. Anyway I was on the phone relaying some information and Dave had them crack the hatch and one of the Marines was shot and killed by a Pakistani on the roof.

Q: Who was that?

MCKINNEY: Dave, was a good friend and a first tour political officer.

Q: Okay.

MCKINNEY: They had a couple of Marines in the room too and they cracked the hatch and one of them went up to look around to see what was going on, and was struck by a bullet..

Q: This was one of our Marines?

MCKINNEY: Yes, in total two Americans and two Pakistani embassy staff died. While others eventually got out safely, the relationship with Pakistan suffered as a consequence. However, it was also the period where the Russians invaded Afghanistan and we were going to need to use Pakistan as a staging area to support the Mujahideen. So there was a need to rebuild the relationship.

Q: It's March 28, 2020. This is the third interview of today with William D. McKinney.

MCKINNEY: I joined the Pakistan Desk in November 1979 and I've already spoken about being in the Situation Room while the embassy was burning down after being attacked by the Pakistanis on a false rumor. I went on to the desk itself at that time and after the situation had calmed down in Islamabad, I was the assistant program officer on the Pakistan Desk.

Q: This is USAID's Pakistan desk?

MCKINNEY: USAID/NEA Pakistan Desk. After being there for about a month, I realized that the whole area was about to ramp up and become very busy and a principal post. I was on the Pakistan Desk from the beginning of January 1980 until August 1981. In August 1981, I was moved to the Burma Desk. They needed someone to take over the Burma Desk and my supervisor on the Pakistan Desk was asked if they could have me for a three- to four-month period. He agreed, so I took over the Burma Desk.

In February 1980, I went to Pakistan with the group that was going to be discussing with the government in Pakistan what remunerations were going to be needed to rebuild the chancery building itself, as well as all of the apartments that had been burned on the compound, the restaurant, the Marine Corps billet, and all of the support for the recreation area. We were there for about a month and surprisingly, there was very little if any opposition on the part of the government of Pakistan to—I won't say demands—the requests that we made for them to rebuild the compound in Islamabad. Within a year we had all of the architectural drawings and all up to date, and we had American engineers go out to work with the Pakistani companies that were going to rebuild everything. It all went quite smoothly. Needless to say the most difficult part of it was the security aspects that had to be overseen by American contractors putting in all of the security features that would now be necessary. There was very little resistance on the part of the government of

Pakistan either paying for it or making sure that supplies that would be needed for the construction were there on time.

Q: Was the Embassy completely redesigned, or did they just recreate the same buildings that were there before?

MCKINNEY: No, I think they used new plans. There were new architectural drawings because there were all kinds of security upgrades.

Q: Okay, so it was basically the same footprint then.

MCKINNEY: Same footprint. There was a clear ramping up of interest and of programs for Pakistan that were going to be used to support the country of Pakistan but also make it the lead area in the Pakistan frontier province that abutted Afghanistan when we began supplying the *mujahideen* who were going to be fighting the Russians in Afghanistan. Almost all of the supplies would be going through Pakistan in the Northwest Frontier Province through the Khyber Pass and into Afghanistan. All of that was being set up and gotten ready to be implemented while I was still working on Pakistan for USAID. It was clear the USAID mission was going to grow by leaps and bounds; and that many people at both USAID and the Embassy would go on to have outstanding careers, such as Jim Bever, John Blackton, Skip Boyce, Jonathan Addleton and Jeff Malick.

Anyway in late August–September 1981, I was seconded to the Burma Desk. We were getting ready to re-invigorate the program in Burma, and I had the opportunity to go back to Burma on two occasions to work with the in-country staff to begin a new program there working with the government. In 1981 the government of Burma hadn't really lifted the veil that had encompassed the country since the end of WWII.

I didn't mention during our time in Bangladesh that my family got a chance to spend three weeks in Burma, which at that time was unprecedented, and all because I played tennis with the Number 2 at the Burmese embassy at that time, Jimmy Lwin. During that period, if you wanted to go to Burma, you could fly to Rangoon for two days and that was as long as you could stay, and you could not fly back to where you came from. You had to fly on to another forward destination. In our case you could fly from Dhaka to Rangoon, spend two days, and then fly from Rangoon to Bangkok.

I approached Jimmy and said, "We don't want to do that. We want to go to Burma and see Burma. We're seasoned travelers. We know what we're doing." We got three-week visas, which was unheard of at that time. We had every official at the Rangoon airport come out to look at our visas! We were able to go from Rangoon to Mandalay by train, spent a couple of days in Mandalay. Then we went up into the hills and came back to Rangoon by boat on the Irrawaddy. It was a fantastic vacation!

Q: How did you spend your days vacationing in the hinterlands of Burma?

MCKINNEY: Sightseeing, going to *wats* (temples), looking at all of the tourist places that hadn't been visited for years, doing a lot of walking in areas that had been fought over by the British and the Japanese during WWII.

Q: Could you communicate with people?

MCKINNEY: Yeah, roughly. I mean there were a lot of Burmese at that time that still spoke some English from the earlier times. There were some that spoke Hindi. English and sign language were the norm.

Q: That really gave you an advantage when you were transferred over to the Burma Desk. You'd actually been there!

MCKINNEY: Oh yeah. I'd already been there and done that. I went back to Burma twice before I left the Burma Desk in February 1982.

I was supposed to be going back onto my assignment on the Pakistan Desk, but the head of the Near East Bureau reached out and told my supervisor that they wanted me to go to the Development Studies Program, which was a program for very senior USAID employees who were about to become deputy mission directors or mission directors. I wasn't anywhere near that level of USAID experience, but it was in terms of the experience that I had with my graduate degree, the amount of time that I'd spent in South Asia, and my use of a number of the languages there. I went to the development studies program for three months before I went to Pakistan, because by then I'd been notified that I would be going in-country in June 1982. I was in the development studies program for three months, which was absolutely a fantastic program. What I learned about personnel management, international development, stayed with me throughout my career with USAID.

I also realized we never should have bought a house in Baltimore, but we should have tried to save a little bit more money and buy a house in Northern Virginia or in Maryland, nearer to DC, because it became increasingly difficult for me to adhere to the hours coming in and going home, which were all unfortunately dictated by the train schedule. But we made it work. There were a couple of times it didn't work as well as we wanted, but generally we made it work. And during this time Ruth got her Masters' degree in public health at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Q: What were your impressions of Pakistan during your tour there, especially given the extraordinary growth of all phases of the U.S. presence in Pakistan?

MCKINNEY: When we arrived in Islamabad in June 1982, USAID had about 10 direct hire American staff. When we left in July 1986 USAID had grown to over 35 direct hires. This growth was exhibited in all facets of the U.S. mission, including the military. There was an ongoing influx of refugees from Afghanistan that Pakistan was struggling to cope with. Hindsight is always 20:20, but I have often reflected upon, would we have done

anything differently if we knew how strong and ruthless the Taliban would become. I worked a lot in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) near the Afghan border with a program that focused on agriculture including crop-substitution to help eradicate the growing of poppies. My language and cultural skills were certainly put to the test.

Q: It's March 28, and this is the fourth interview today with William McKinney, who has just been assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Amman, Jordan.

MCKINNEY: We went to Jordan in July 1986. I was assigned as the deputy program officer. I had mentioned that one of the reasons that we'd gone to Jordan was that we were going to work again with Lou Reid, who was the mission director in Jordan and who had been our boss at the first two Peace Corps training programs that we'd worked on in Blue Knob, Pennsylvania and Bisbee, Arizona back in 1967. We knew Lou and Peggy very well and he was very, very happy that I had chosen to come to Jordan as the deputy program officer.

We'd been there about three months when we had a major program office conflict come up. We were just introducing computers into our office programs at that time and we were using Word and the ability to draft on the computer and re-write and change and work it to get a better product, if you will. One of the reasons that I had come to Jordan was Lou Reid, but the other one, the program officer that I was going to be working for had an outstanding reputation when it came to writing. He had been noted by any number of people that I spoke to about his writing ability. I thought it would really help my career to be around someone like that to better hone my writing skills. Unfortunately after I got to Jordan and began to use the computer and be able to compose and re-word work, it became clear that my supervisor, the program officer, was having trouble with it. The trouble was not in the mechanical side of it; it was that he was never satisfied with what he was doing, and he kept changing and adding, modifying until it reached the point where he almost could not come up with a finished product, which frustrated him to the point where he began to drink. Due to his drinking, combined with his inability to really cue up with a final product, the director finally had to send him back to Washington for rehabilitation, on the one hand, and to help remodify his skills in use of the computer.

When that happened, I wrote a memo to the director saying that I wanted to be considered for the senior program officer position rather than bringing someone new in as the program officer, even though I'd only been there for about three or four months. I knew that I could do the job, and it would be easier if I were promoted to the senior position and I recruited a deputy and an assistant to come and assist me. It had become clear even in that short period of time that the programs that we were going to be implementing and the responsibility that we were going to be taking on for the West Bank and Gaza in Jordan was going to necessitate a third person in the program office. To his credit, and to my relief, there was very little hemming and hawing and Lou went back to Washington and said that he was going to appoint me as the new senior program officer and that we would recruit a deputy and an assistant to come into the program

office. That was in late 1986, and in the 1987 promotion cycle I was promoted FS-2 to FS-1, so that all fit in very nicely together.

We had a very dynamic program team. We had a very dynamic project development office, and very strong technical offices. We all worked very well together with the mission director and the deputy director. We had a very strong senior staff. USAID had its own building, we were not on the embassy compound. In fact, they were building a new embassy during the period I was there. The old embassy was in downtown Amman, but we had a very good, if I remember correctly it was a three- or four-story building that was all set up for USAID.

These were very exciting times because, again maybe it's just my luck, we were going to be a very innovative mission because we were going to be working with programs on the West Bank and in Gaza that were being funded from Jordan. The Israelis were very much opposed to any aid going into the West Bank and Gaza and if you were working in Israel trying to support those programs, it was extremely difficult. But the mission director and I came up with a very innovative plan to support programs on the West Bank especially, as well as some in Gaza. What we did was, we identified budget line items in the Jordanian financial year budget. At that time the USAID program to Jordan was about $80 or 90 million a year, which was a manageable amount for the programs that we were doing. We were doing a lot of rural women's programs in support of handicrafts, especially with the Bedouin. But the director and I got together a program and made a proposal to Washington and we upped our budget to $250 million. What we did was, we would offset budgetary line items on the Jordanian budget in U.S. dollars and then we would take the equivalent Jordanian dinars that they had allocated for that line item and we would put it in an account in the Cairo-Amman Bank in Amman. At one point we were generating close to 150–160 million dinar a year into this account.

Q: Was this Public Law (PL)-480 funds?

MCKINNEY: No!

Q: How were you getting this money?

MCKINNEY: It was coming in as part of our operational program budget, in US dollars.

Q: You were buying dinars?

MCKINNEY: No, we weren't buying dinars! That's one of the biggest hassles that we had to combat was people accusing us of buying dinars to put in the bank.

Q: So how did you get the dinars then?

MCKINNEY: I told you, we offset a Jordanian budget line item. Usually the Jordanian government allocated say 55 million dinar for road projects. Well, we would take that and

put it in the Cairo-Amman bank account and we would supplant it with a like amount of dollars.

Q: To the Jordanian government.

MCKINNEY: To the Jordanian government budget, so that they still had their line items and they could do their road projects or other projects like health but they did it with our AID money because we'd put the dinars in the bank. I especially never considered that to be buying Jordanian currency with U.S. currency. I always considered it an offsetting budget program.

Q: Essentially the Jordanian government was funding those programs in the West Bank?

MCKINNEY: Yes, but it was being implemented by us. We were overseeing it. We would then transfer on an as-needed basis Jordanian dinar from the Cairo-Amman Bank in Amman to the Cairo-Amman Bank in Nablus or in Jericho or in Bethlehem, wherever the particular program we were going to be supporting was.

Q: What sort of programs were now getting started in the West Bank?

MCKINNEY: It wasn't so much starting programs. The Israeli government provided no funding for any health, medical, or social services on the West Bank, so a lot of the funds that we were providing were being used to pay doctors, nurses, and teachers' salaries, as well as other projects that couldn't be funded because there weren't any resources, like rural healthcare projects. We paid for the first Arabic programs of Sesame Street that could be broadcast on the West Bank into the Palestinian schools. There were always more than enough activities for us to fund that we had money available for.

Q: How were you able to set up and oversee these projects? Were you working through NGOs who were there, or did you actually have some USAID employees who went there?

MCKINNEY: After I'd been in Amman and had been promoted to the senior program officer's position, like a number of the employees in Jordan, I had two diplomatic passports. One I used to get in and out of Jordan, and one I used to get in and out of Israel because I could not have an Israeli stamp in my regular passport and I spent a significant amount of time on the West Bank.

Q: There was what was called the Allenby Bridge by the Israelis and the King Hussein Bridge by the Jordanians. Was it possible to drive over that bridge from Jordan into the West Bank. Is that what you were doing?

MCKINNEY: That's how I did it! I would drive down to the border and I would leave Jordan on my regular diplomatic passport. I would cross the King Hussein Bridge and I would give them my diplomatic passport that I used for Israeli trips, and they would put an Israeli stamp in it. Then I would go off and conduct my business. When I came back I

would give them my passport and they would stamp it "Leaving Israel." I would cross the Allenby Bridge going back and give them my other diplomatic passport and they would stamp me back into Jordan.

Q: Were you allowed to drive a vehicle yourself?

MCKINNEY: No, I had a driver.

Q: Was the driver able to cross with you.

MCKINNEY: No.

Q: So you had a driver on each side?

MCKINNEY: Yes. The driver would take me down and I would cross over.

Q: Walk over?

MCKINNEY: Yes, I would walk over.

Q: So, you're now starting these programs in the West Bank. Does USAID have FSN employees who are actually working for USAID?

MCKINNEY: No. We were not starting new projects, I explained that previously.

Q: So, who are you engaging with to hire people?

MCKINNEY: NGOs/PVOs.

Q: Which might those be?

MCKINNEY: There were all of the usual mix, Save the Children, Oxfam, Catholic Relief, and so on, as well as Palestinian NGOs.

Q: So you could put out a proposal and these organizations could respond to it.

MCKINNEY: Or they could write a proposal, often unsolicited proposals.

Q: You now had this money that was nominally Jordanian money but which USAID was using to implement sorely needed social activities.

MCKINNEY: Had control of, yup. We also funded non-solicited proposals from Palestinian organizations, not just international organizations. There were a number of very strong Palestinian NGOs that we provided funding for.

Q: Would it be safe to say that none of the USAID technical specialists who were in Amman were able to go to the West Bank?

MCKINNEY: No, they were not.

Q: So, you were pretty much the only person?

MCKINNEY: Yes, myself and the director. He would go once in a while, but it got to the point where I was probably spending half my time in Jordan and half in the West Bank.

Q: What year was this?

MCKINNEY: This would have been 1987–88.

Q: What sorts of security concerns did you have?

MCKINNEY: None. I didn't have any security concerns. I didn't have any bodyguards, no armored car. It was something that I didn't even consider. I don't know if that was wise or unwise, but at that time I felt perfectly safe coming and going. I could probably count on one hand the number of times I went to Tel Aviv, but I spent most of my time in Jerusalem and on the West Bank.

Q: How did it work bureaucratically? Did the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv or the consulate general in Jerusalem, which had separate chief of mission authority, did they have any jurisdiction over any of this?

MCKINNEY: We kept the consulate in Jerusalem very much apprised of what was going on, but not the embassy in Tel Aviv. How much information the consulate general in Jerusalem passed back to Tel Aviv, I don't know; I didn't even get into that. My concern was making sure that our staff at the consulate general in Jerusalem knew when I was there and when I was leaving and what I was doing.

Q: Were there any USAID personnel assigned to the consulate general in Jerusalem?

MCKINNEY: No.

Q: Was there in fact a USAID mission at all in Israel?

MCKINNEY: Yes, there was, but it did not deal with the West Bank or Gaza. It was just there.

Q: You've talked about going to the West Bank but you've also mentioned Gaza. Were you going there somehow?

MCKINNEY: I went to Gaza maybe two or three times. That was much more of a difficult exercise and after I'd done it a couple of times it became clear that the time spent trying to develop programs there was just not worth it.

Q: We should mention that at this time the Israeli government still occupied Gaza. Not that long thereafter they pulled out but at this time the Israelis were there.

MCKINNEY: Yeah. It was also a time where the Israeli government was keeping close watch on what we were doing in the West Bank especially. I was even more involved because there was a program between Israel, Jordan and the United States to measure the water flow of the Jordanian River. We had an unique project where once or twice a month we would go down to a point in the river and measure the flow. That was done by the deputy director of our program in Jordan, who ultimately turned that over to me, to go down and watch the Israelis measure the water flow.

Q: This was a very controversial thing because the Israelis were using water from the Jordan River and water was not reaching the West Bank and Jordan because the river separated the two.

MCKINNEY: Exactly. Like I've said before, it was a very exciting time doing that kind of thing and getting to know the Israelis.

Q: In context, this was also an extremely tumultuous time because the Palestinians had what they called the intifada (uprising).

MCKINNEY: That's when it started.

Q: At first largely a peaceful resistance movement and the Israelis responded. It was very controversial in Israel because many Israelis were agitating very heavily for making peace with the Palestinians, the so-called Peace Now Movement. But the government responded to much of this with violence, a break-their-bone strategy, not necessarily killing protesters, but physically moving them and beating them if necessary. So you're driving to the West Bank in the middle of this. Did you experience or see any of this?

MCKINNEY: No. I saw some of it and it very quickly became very controversial in the mission in Amman in terms of, "Should we be involved with this?" Because of what was going on, it also very quickly ended the program. One bright sun-shiny day some far thinking Israeli economist says, "I know how we could shut down a lot of this!" What they did was, they increased their reserve levels at the banks on the West Bank to $50 million and that basically shut our program down. There wasn't any way we could provide $50 million dollars in dinar into the Cairo-Amman Bank in any of the cities or areas where we were working and still have funds to conduct our programs. So it basically shut us down.

Q: In other words, in order for these banks to disperse that money, they would have had to increase their own bank reserves and there was no way you could help them do that.

MCKINNEY: We couldn't do it.

Q: I see, and so those projects just terminated completely?

MCKINNEY: Yes.

Q: When did that happen?

MCKINNEY: Late '87, beginning of '88? Whenever the *intifada* took on a real violent period, that's when we had to basically pull out.

Q: Yeah, I think you're correct, that would have basically been 1988.

MCKINNEY: I mean there were forecasts of it if you will on some of the trips that I made. On the Palestinian side it was a completely peaceful, nonviolent movement, but the Israelis responded with a, "Don't even think you're going to get away with this," and beat the hell out of everybody.

You asked me about my safety. I think the only time that I really felt threatened was near the end of that period where the Palestinians finally got into it as well, and the peace movement kind of fell apart. They responded in kind and that's when I got out; just couldn't do it.

Q: Did you ever feel threatened by Israeli authorities when you were coming and going?

MCKINNEY: Oh, all the time.

Q: How did that manifest itself?

MCKINNEY: They would take extra care in checking out my visas and wanting to know why I was coming so often and did I hate Israel? Was I anti-Semitic? I would be reviewing a project somewhere on the West Bank and the military would show up and want to know what I was doing there. Even though they clearly were aware that I was there and had been and would probably be back, they were very stern with this, "Don't take us for fools" attitude. I tried everything I knew to get along and be gracious but there were sometimes I just had to get in my car and leave.

It's interesting you asked that, because I can honestly say that I never once felt threatened by any of the Palestinians and Israelis that I dealt with, and by and large, none of the Israelis. But there were some that just wanted to exert their authority and let you know that, "We are in charge, so don't try and screw with us."

Q: I presume this brought you back in your memory to your own days protesting against segregation in the U.S. south.

MCKINNEY: Oh, yes. The thing that was the most interesting about that, and I'm glad you phrased it that way, I never came in contact with any Israeli civilians. All of the Israelis I dealt with when working on the West Bank were with the military. They were the policemen, if you will, of the West Bank. It really brought me back to the Civil Rights period where you ended up dealing with the police and very few civilians. It got even more traumatic later on, when I left Jordan and spent a year at the National War College at Fort McNair, and what was offered to me when I came back, and what happened.

Q: It's March the 29th with William McKinney. All right, Bill, you are assigned to the U.S. embassy in Amman, Jordan, and there you set up programs in the West Bank and Gaza. I was wondering about how USAID headquarters looked at these programs and how they fit into overall U.S. foreign policy at the time.

MCKINNEY: That's quite an interesting subject because this was one of the first programs that I was aware of where there was an integrated approach to American foreign policy between USAID and the State Department. USAID was a separate government-funded organization, but as mission directors and deputy directors of USAID, they still reported to the ambassador in the country where we worked. It was more than just a courtesy, but there was an attempt to try and align what USAID programs were doing with what priority foreign policy activities were taking place in the countries where USAID served. As you can imagine, there was a wide range of cooperation between State and USAID, not because our foreign policy objectives were different, but they varied in many cases on how we approached them.

In the case of Jordan, we had a foreign policy objective of not only supporting Israel in the Middle East, but also the more important countries that had no diplomatic relationships with Israel at that time. I guess the best way to explain it is that in non-military aid. Israel received about $1.5 billion a year and almost a similar amount in military assistance, maybe a little bit more in military assistance.

We were also funding large programs in Egypt and Jordan especially. Our foreign policy objective was to keep the conversations going between these countries in the Middle East that had experienced war on a number of different occasions and trying to get them to ultimately come to an understanding where there could be diplomatic relations. There were varying feelings among citizens in the Middle East, the most critical being Palestinians who felt that they had been duped and overrun by Israel and very pro-Palestinian, but very much aware that Israel was not going to go away, and that the situation was going to remain status quo for a while.

In that regard, Lou Reid and I proposed a program that would support the government of Jordan as well as at that time what we considered to be non-Israeli activities on the West

Bank. There was some assistance to Gaza but even back in the late '80s there was a real difference between assisting Palestinians on the West Bank as opposed to Gaza. That's not to say that our foreign policy and USAID assistance was denied to Gaza; it was just more difficult to provide.

One of the ways that we felt that we could help—and I had mentioned this previously—the Israeli government did not pay for any social services on the West Bank. They did not provide any salaries for teachers, doctors, or nurses. They provided no funds for the upkeep of any of the in-situ buildings or projects that were ongoing, or had been ongoing on the West Bank.

I dealt with the West Bank from late 1986 until the beginning of the *intifada* in its various manifestations, until late 1987–88. It was quite clear that the Israelis were doing what they could to maintain control over the areas of the West Bank. I found it very interesting after I finished my time on the West Bank when the *intifada* turned extremely violent on the part of the Palestinians that 95 percent of the people that I dealt with from Israel on the West Bank were military. There were very few Israeli civilians that I came in contact with on the West Bank, and they were mainly technical people who were helping to measure the flow of the Jordan River at various weirs.

Q: How would you describe U.S. foreign policy in terms of the assistance that we were providing to the Palestinians at that time? What was the objective? We had no relationship with the PLO, so…?

MCKINNEY: I think unfortunately it was an attempt on the part of the various administrations that I served in the capacity of working in Jordan and the West Bank that we were trying to—assuage is too strong a word—but we certainly were trying to let the Palestinian population know that the United States remained interested in them and that we were not going to throw them under the bus as our policies developed.

Q: At that time Ronald Reagan was president and George Shultz was secretary of state and that was a very intense period for diplomacy. In fact, George Shultz conducted shuttle diplomacy and flew in and out of Amman several times as he bounced back and forth between various capitals to try to promote various peace talks concerning the Palestinian issue but I think also between Syria and Israel.

MCKINNEY: There was that, but at that time we had no USAID presence in Syria. We were not providing as far as I remember any foreign assistance.

Q: No, in fact there was a period when relationships between Syria and the United States were very bad and the ambassador had actually been withdrawn from Damascus. I can't quite remember why that was.

MCKINNEY: It was also very interesting because you could drive from Amman to Damascus in a few hours and I clearly remember making five–six trips to Damascus and

my family going all the way up to Aleppo, the second largest city. And we never felt threatened, we never felt out of place in either Aleppo or Damascus, even though relationships continued to deteriorate. But once the *intifada* broke out, that even put a stop to that travel.

Q: What role did USAID headquarters play in this? This sounds like this was a fairly field-driven initiative.

MCKINNEY: It was a field-driven initiative, but as with all field-driven initiatives in USAID, you needed the backing of the Washington USAID bureaucracy. In that regard, while I'm not 100 percent sure, it became clear in later iterations when State took more of a role in the programming of USAID funds. I think the secretary of state at that time was George Shultz, who basically told the USAID administrator that there were certain programs that were going to happen in various countries in support of U.S. foreign policy whether USAID liked it or not and I think this was one of them.

Q: I'd like to hear your views on this, in my memory USAID at the time and perhaps even more so previously had a very strong sense of mission as a humanitarian organization that it should stay above politics or changes in foreign policy and just focus on bettering people's lives, developing people, somewhat regardless of the politics.

MCKINNEY: Developing countries, developing what would be considered the social infrastructure. I think you're 100 percent right. That was first and foremost the mission of USAID from its inception. It was 1961 when USAID came into being as a follow-on to the Marshall Plan in Europe at the end of WWII. The fact of the matter was, every USAID mission director reported to the ambassador just as the administrator of USAID was part of the secretary of state's senior team. Early on USAID was very much independent, and the humanitarian nature of the founding of USAID is what drove our programs. We had major programs in agriculture and health and also especially in rural areas. We did not have many programs in capital cities. I was an USAID officer from November 1979 until August 2004 and I watched the erosion. That's the only word that I can use—of the independence of USAID as it became more and more of a tool of the State Department.

That's not to say it was all bad, but it certainly did distract from what many USAID officers joined for, and that was the humanitarian nature of what we did. We watched that being eroded and ending up in many programs that we did not feel comfortable with implementing. By the time I retired in 2004, the whole of USAID was almost being entirely implemented by contractors. These contractors did not have any real homage to USAID other than that they got the money from our budget. They were well aware by that time that the State Department was calling the shots and was telling us all what to implement.

Q: During Ronald Reagan's presidency, there was a wider movement to reduce the size of the federal workforce and contract out work. In some cases the idea was, if you can

find it in the phone book, you should be hiring companies, the assumption being that somehow they would be more efficient or less expensive. This started a period, which has actually continued until today of a decline of direct-hire federal workers and in USAID, I think that was true in the extreme. During your time in Jordan, you had USAID direct-hires who were medical personnel, agronomists, what have you, who were on the payroll. Nowadays I don't think you would find that pretty much at all.

MCKINNEY: You will now find mainly generalist managers on the payroll in USAID missions who are managing contractors. From my perspective, and having been a Peace Corps volunteer and one of those individuals that joined USAID because of its humanitarian mission, it was very sad by the time I retired in 2004 to have witnessed, and in some cases unfortunately, been a party to the sizing down of USAID direct hires and the advent of increased numbers of contractors.

As I've mentioned previously, contractors did not owe USAID anything other than the money that we paid for the contractor to implement projects in the countries where we were working. From my perspective again, the most extreme case was Iraq. Our humanitarian mission in Iraq was totally devoid of the humanitarian aspect. We had some direct-hire staff that worked on PRTs (Provincial Reconstruction Teams). In many instances they did everything but humanitarian assistance.

Q: Somewhat ironically, I suppose, your time in Jordan when you were setting up the programs in the West Bank, you were sort of a precursor to what would happen, of necessity. You say you didn't have any direct hires in the West Bank, nor could you easily get them there, so you actually worked through NGOs and PVOs.

MCKINNEY: Well there's a real difference between working with NGOs and contractors. Nongovernmental organizations are usually organizations that are composed of individuals that live in the country where we're working. Contractors on the other hand, over 85 percent of them are from the United States. One of the things that many of us object to very vocally was spending hundreds of millions of dollars on U.S. contractors that had absolutely no effect on the countries where we were working other than the money that we provided to implement the programs. The vast majority of the money was going to American contractors and staying in American banks and in the American economy. Needless to say it was an argument that fell on deaf ears as we reduced the federal workforce in favor of contractors.

I would also be remiss if I did not say that we did not save money in doing this. In fact, it cost us more paying huge amounts to these contractors, which ultimately became known as Beltway Bandits to implement the activities that we were funding, than keeping direct hires on the job. The only real control USAID had was our ability to review every program that was proposed to us and decide Yay or Nay if we were going to implement it. As we went further down this track, it even became more difficult for us to ultimately supervise, but at the beginning analyze exactly what these contractors were going to be doing.

Q: There's a distinction between a situation where USAID personnel had devised a program and then put out a request for proposals and hire as opposed to I think what may have ultimately happened in many cases, which is that Congress would direct USAID to implement certain programs and in some cases even to hire certain NGOs or companies to do the work, which means USAID has very little control over anything.

MCKINNEY: That's very true, but unfortunately from my perspective that happened later down the track. I mean…

Q: After your career.

MCKINNEY: Well, not after my career, but we already saw the beginnings of it where USAID ended up working because it was a priority in Central Asia that we assist the five countries of Central Asia after the fall of the Soviet Union, because one of the, shall we say, quieter aspects was that Central Asia had a long border with Afghanistan. If you went to parts of Central Asia, we had air bases, we had boots on the ground in some of these countries watching what was going on in Afghanistan. But in terms of the humanitarian aspects of what USAID did, there wasn't any of that in those five countries.

I was the senior program officer for all five countries when I was working in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Now it was the regional hub for all five of the Central Asian countries. Whether you like it or not, the American government and again, using USAID as a tool, was dealing with basically five dictators. None of those countries had elections after the Soviet Union fell apart, and when they did, they were generally rigged. We knew it, they knew it, and I had to put up with visits of senior people, including U.S. first ladies, into those countries where it was clear they had no interest in what we were doing and were going to march to the tune of a different drummer.

Q: Okay, are there more things that you want to talk about regarding Jordan?

MCKINNEY: I think Jordan was one of the better assignments I had with USAID. It began to fall apart in late 1988–89. I had a very difficult personal time, but it ultimately worked out very well. When I finished my assignment in Jordan I was selected by USAID senior managers in Washington to go to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF). We all referred to it as the War College at Fort McNair, but there were in fact two separate faculties and two separate entities, one being the War College and the other being the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

Q: Yes, the other being, I believe, the army war college.

MCKINNEY: Well, each branch of our service has a separate war college. You have the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, and you have the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island that does the navy and marines, but the War College

and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces are truly integrated. They have officers minimally at the lieutenant colonel level in those bodies from all services.

Q: Yes, State and USAID had a limited number of positions certainly for military officers. That was considered a sure sign that they were headed for promotion, and I think at least in theory that was also true for State and USAID. So, your being selected was an indication that USAID headquarters had evaluated you very positively and felt that you would rise to higher ranks, which you ultimately did.

MCKINNEY: Very true.

Q: So you're leaving Jordan and going back to ICAF at Fort McNair in Washington DC.

MCKINNEY: Yeah, the first Washington, DC assignment that I had since I left to go to Pakistan in 1982.

Q: So, it was your second time in Washington.

MCKINNEY: Right, I'd been out for eight years and as we're all aware, things can change drastically in eight years; and they had. The Republican administrations that I served had changed the framework and the workplace in Washington the eight years that I was gone.

The year that I spent at ICAF was a year that I'll never forget. I met some of the brightest, most committed people. I had had very little contact with our military during my career or prior to my career, and it was an eye-opening experience for me to be in classes with lieutenant colonels and colonels who were clearly being shoulder tapped to move on to flagrank. They knew their stuff. There was no, shall we say, messing around. When you went to the War College and ICAF, you were expected to perform in an outstanding manner. The difference between the two was very marked. The War College were men and women who were going to be front line in charge of our military posts around the world. ICAF were going to be those senior officers that supported our missions everywhere in the world. Each of the bodies at Fort McNair did regular field trips. The field trips that ICAF did were 'industrial'. We went to the heartland of Europe and visited factories like Volkswagen, Mercedes Benz, Swatch. It was always with an eye to looking toward the future. What was coming down the road? What kinds of changes were being made in the industries around the world? The year that I was there, the focus at ICAF was on robotics. We could see that robots were beginning to replace many men and women in the industrial area in the more menial tasks that had to be undertaken.

It was also a very exciting time because that's when the Berlin Wall came down. That's when the Soviet Union really began falling apart so there was a lot of focus in both the War College and ICAF as to what caused that and what was going to be happening. It was a very exciting time to be there. I enjoyed it and I did very well. In fact, I was asked at the end of that year if I would be interested in replacing the USAID employee on the

faculty at ICAF. USAID had one instructor at ICAF and one instructor at the War College. I was asked if I would be interested in replacing the person who was on the staff at that time who was being assigned overseas. I gracefully declined because I did not want to remain in Washington. I wanted to get back overseas, which I felt was where our mission was executed, and I wanted to be part of that. I was very dubious about being in Washington because the whole contractor takeover was well on its way and I did not want to be seen in the early '90s as being part of that.

Q: Weren't you involved with AFSA (American Foreign Service Association) at that time?

MCKINNEY: Yeah, I was the USAID representative for almost three years on the AFSA board as USAID vice president. That was an eye-opening experience from a number of angles. USAID on AFSA was treated as a stepchild. State Department basically controlled AFSA, the president, the vice president; they had the largest number of representatives on the AFSA board. The three years that I was there, for the first year USAID had one, and I lobbied that we really needed two. Interestingly, USAID representatives were expected to hold full-time jobs and not just work with AFSA. Whereas, State Department had three full-time representatives paid by State and their job was to be on the AFSA board. That also changed before I left. I made a very solid case that whoever the senior USAID representative was going to be, that should be their fully paid job. Both State and USAID controlled the messages that were being sent by our representatives to AFSA and I can remember…

Q: You mean representatives in the field?

MCKINNEY: No, no representatives in the field.

Q: Well, post had AFSA representatives at the time.

MCKINNEY: Yeah, but many of them were just figureheads; they were not really involved in what was going on with our 'union.

Q: No, but if there were issues that came up at a post, the AFSA representative could communicate back to AFSA at headquarters.

MCKINNEY: Right.

Q: So, I'm not quite sure what you're saying in terms of control of the messages.

MCKINNEY: There were a number of instances where AFSA negotiated with USAID and State over workplace issues such as salaries, promotions. The people that we negotiated with were also USAID officers, not Civil Service, Foreign Service. They would come to these negotiations, and they'd been told by the heads of the various offices in USAID and State what they would support and what they wouldn't support. It

really troubled me that I would sit across the table from another foreign service officer who, at some point down the road, was going to go back to the field and they were negotiating to reduce what we got in the field. Or they were negotiating to increase the hours that we had to do something in Washington. You could see that it was very painful for them, but their promotions, their ability to function, all hinged on how well they handled the points made by Department of State and USAID.

I thought that was tremendously unfair, but as with all AFSA representatives at that time, and I don't know if it's changed, I really haven't kept up with it, you were usually on the AFSA board for two or three years and then you went back overseas to wherever your assignment was. In some respects it was very disheartening, but on the other hand, it gave me a very privileged insight into how the two organizations dealt with their employees and the benefits that we received.

Q: Are there any particular issues that you worked on or that you were involved in?

MCKINNEY: In the late 1970s the Thursday luncheon group (TLG) had formed, specifically to promote the recruitment of additional Black men and women and supporting their career aspirations. Both State and USAID had very few black Americans at mid-level and senior positions and I played a role in advocating for their issues. One new recruit I quickly identified with was Alonzo Fulgham, he was also from Boston, had graduated from Fisk University and been in the Peace Corp. Home leave was another one. The rules and regulations for R&R and home leave when I came on were in flux. The regulation was if you entered the service from X that was your home leave post. Now you could change your home leave post, but you were only allowed payment of your flights from post to X. We got that changed during my time so that you didn't have to go from post to X. You could go from post to Y and they would still pay for it.

It was the same with R&R. Initially there were specified areas where you could go for R&R and one of the negotiations that I was part of was opening that up. Say you've been working at a 20 or 25 percent post, you could go anywhere you wanted and they would pay for it.

Q: You could go anywhere you wanted in the United States. It used to be that overseas posts had a designated R&R point. If you were in Jordan, say, maybe your R&R point was London. Later it was determined that you could go to London, but you could also…

MCKINNEY: You could also go to the States. In my case, when I was in Pakistan, my first R&R was spent in Indonesia and my second R&R was spent in China. So, that was what was evolving and that was changing. I'd like to think that during the time I was back in Washington after ICAF, that I had a hand in making some permanent changes that advantaged foreign service officers, because from my experience we sure needed it. It wasn't that we were a forgotten arm or department of the US government, but in far too many instances we were Johnny come lately in terms of, "Don't we need to do something for the Foreign Service, or, don't we need to address this?" Needless to say, the downside

of that was that Congress began to get into it and down in the weeds. Before we knew it, they were telling us what to do, where to do it, and how to do it. Because they held the budget whip, that's what we ended up doing in many instances.

Q: Now you're finishing up your one year at ICAF and then to decide where you're going to go next. What was going on with that?

MCKINNEY: I had made it clear that I really did want to go back overseas. I'd done four years in Jordan and I had really enjoyed the Middle East. With my Peace Corps experience and my first USAID assignments I'd spent almost 15 years in South Asia. The only caveat, and I never ever expressed this, was I really had no interest in learning French or Spanish because I did not want to go to Latin America or to any of the francophone countries in Africa. That was of no interest to me at all. Otherwise I was up for wherever they wanted to send me.

After I finished at ICAF I came back to USAID and I was posted to the Near East/South Asia Bureau as a senior program officer. Very quickly I was offered an overseas assignment working with mainly Palestinians on the West Bank implementing our USAID program there, which we finally had. I was ready to jump at the chance, but it was mentioned that the USAID director would be based in Tel Aviv and not Jerusalem. I vociferously objected to that on the grounds that, "What self-respecting Palestinian was going to come to Tel Aviv to talk about assistance for NGOs working in the West Bank?" At that time there were not going to be any direct-hire Americans in that area; it would be basically nongovernmental organizations and as necessary contractors on the West Bank.

Q: At the time, the consul general at the consulate general in Jerusalem had separate chief of mission authority; the same authority the ambassador had in Tel Aviv. Consulate General Jerusalem was viewed essentially as a quasi-embassy to the Palestinians, so it's interesting that USAID was going to have the position, or perhaps already had the position in Tel Aviv. Did you know why that was?

MCKINNEY: Control. You can discuss the overall responsibilities of the consul general in Jerusalem vice the ambassador in Tel Aviv, but the act of the matter is, almost all political networking began at our embassy in Tel Aviv. The consul general in Jerusalem came to Tel Aviv for meetings. The ambassador in Tel Aviv did not go to Jerusalem.

Q: In part, that was a reflection of U.S. policy, which was that the final status of Jerusalem had yet to be determined. It was a sensitive issue because many in Congress wanted us to actually have the embassy in Jerusalem, which ultimately did happen under President Trump. It's interesting to me that we didn't have a USAID mission in Jerusalem. There may have also been logistical issues involved because Jerusalem had very limited facilities and capacity to support and many other things.

MCKINNEY: Security being the major one, whether you liked it or not.

Q: So you didn't go to Tel Aviv…

MCKINNEY: No, I was the senior program officer in the Near East/South Asia Bureau (NESA) and that covered all of the South Asia and Middle East countries where we had missions, the largest still being Egypt and Jordan. We still had a large mission in Pakistan and in India.

Q: At that time the Central Asian countries, sometimes referred to as the Stans, were still part of the Bureau of European Affairs (EUR).

MCKINNEY: Right, they were still part of EUR.

Q: Were you traveling to those NESA missions then in your new role in Washington?

MCKINNEY: Yeah, I made trips out to Tunisia and to Morocco, I went to Egypt. I think that was about it. I was there until February 1993 when I received my next overseas assignment. I was in the bureau so I did travel on bureau business, but mainly it was a pencil-pushing job in Washington trying to support our missions in those countries when it was necessary. A lot of it was also preparing testimony for the administrator when he went to the Hill, as we all ended up doing at some point.

Q: Were you doing program reviews for those countries?

MCKINNEY: Yes, and also for two years I was on the promotion selection panel for USAID. I don't know if I mentioned the second year that I was in Jordan, 1987, I was promoted to FS-01, which is a major step up. When I came back from ICAF, I was shoulder tapped by USAID management to sit on the panels that did promotions. We had one panel that provided promotions from FS-4 to 3 and FS-3 to 2. Then we had a different panel that did the FS-2 to 1s. Then a different panel that did the FS-1s to Senior Foreign Service.

Q: In terms of your program management position, when you were doing reviews of what was going on at the various missions in NEA and SA, can you think of any programs where those reviews resulted in major changes, either that something was going so well that we decided to expand it, or something was starting to go off the rails and we curtailed it?

MCKINNEY: I wish that I could be more positive about that. But by late 1990 and into 1991–92, most of the program control had passed out of USAID's hands in what was supposed to be a very cooperative manner with State Department. Our program reviews were somewhat limited to what we could advise or our analysis could only go so far because whether it was working or not, it was going to be. These were programs that our State Department colleagues at very senior levels wanted implemented. It became even more understandable once Bill Clinton was elected president, that that was the way that we were moving. It got solidified when down the road Hilary Clinton became the

secretary of state. There was very little that was done at the behest of USAID that didn't have to be approved by State Department. Once that happened, the whole mode of our programming changed because we got into programs that very few AID officers were familiar with or supported, for that matter. Small business, financial reform, we did not feel that this was part of the humanitarian mandate, and we kept getting farther and farther away from it.

Q: It's March 29. This is the second interview today with William McKinney who is assigned to USAID in Washington. It's the year 1992 and now he's thinking about another overseas assignment.

MCKINNEY: I was in the Near East/South Asia Bureau after I graduated from ICAF until February 1993. I had not during that two- and one-half-year hiatus really pushed for an overseas assignment, mainly for personal reasons, but I felt that I wanted to get a better feel for USAID and State Department bureaucracy in Washington. At that time USAID was in the process of moving out of the Harry S. Truman building where we had been since our inception and the Near East/South Asia Bureau had moved across the street to a multi-story building where USAID occupied the three floors. I was within throwing distance of Foggy Bottom so we were still right there. You could just walk across the street and you'd be back in the State Department, which is what we all referred to it as. USAID headquarters was still there, but very few of us went across the street to USAID headquarters for various reasons.

During the two and one-half years that I was in Washington, I got a much better understanding of what had happened, what was happening, and clearly what was coming down the road for USAID. During that period I did not make any overtures that I was ready to go overseas. I did not want to spend long period of time in Washington, but I felt I needed to repair relationships that I'd beaten on when I turned down the assignment to the West Bank and I needed to get to know a whole new set of what I considered to be non-development assistance-orientated contractors into USAID initiatives.

In February 1993 I was offered a post as the mission director in Yemen. I knew very little about Yemen even though I'd spent four years in Jordan and had regularly traveled in the Middle East on various assignments or courier duty from Amman to other countries. I appraised the position in Sana'a. I had a very good friend who was the current mission director who was retiring, and he had recommended me to the Bureau. Even in 1993 and that whole period leading up to it, both State and USAID were still trying to diversify their staff and bringing in more women, more minorities. I'm not sure how much that played into my Yemen assignment. By that time I didn't even think about it any longer. I'd made my bones; it was clear that I was going to be promoted at some point, and rather than walk softly and carry a big stick, I just walked at my normal pace and let people see who I was and what I was capable of. The Sana'a assignment came up, and I jumped at it.

Q: How big was the mission there in terms of dollars and personnel?

MCKINNEY: When I got there, there were only two direct-hire Americans, about 15 Yemeni staff, and our budget when I arrived was only about $5 million. The Yemen government had long provided USAID with land for an office compound and paid for maintenance and utilities. The aid program had grown in the 1970s and 1980s, but the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait had seen Yemeni workers expelled from the Gulf and the aid program slashed due Yemen's support for Saddam Hussein.

Q: What was the focus of the programs in Yemen?

MCKINNEY: Health. There was a desperate need for health activities mainly directed at the female population in Yemen at that time. As the recently appointed and sworn-in mission director, I made my first hire, and wouldn't you know, it was a contractor! I had been advised that there was a young woman who had just finished a Master's in Public Health at Michigan who had been a Peace Corps volunteer in the Pacific who had very strong bona fides, especially in the health–family planning area. I met with her on one of my trips back from Yemen in May 1993 and offered her the position as head of my health office, and she accepted it.

Q: When you say contractor, there are different ways to look at that. There are commercial contractors who are hired through companies. That's not this. Was she a personal services contractor (PSC)?

MCKINNEY: She was a PSC.

Q: So, she's like an employee in terms of pay and benefits, but she's not actually a direct-hire foreign service officer or civil servant.

MCKINNEY: We've talked about the distinction, the distinction being that Laurie Noto Parker could be paid out of program funds. She did not have to be paid out of our regular operational budget.

Q: From limited Washington funds which were only for the direct hires.

MCKINNEY: Right. I went to post in April 1993 to meet with the retiring mission director and get a sense of what was happening in the mission. It was another one of those eye-opening experiences. Two years before I got there, the Yemen program had been a $50 million per year program. There had been a foreign policy difference between the administration at that time and Yemen, and the USAID program had basically been slashed. When I got there, I found we had a huge compound, a huge, very beautiful office space all on one level in about a two-acre plot on the outskirts of Sana'a.

I found somewhat later the deserts of Yemen were large training and staging areas for citizens of other Muslim countries who were going to Pakistan and then into Afghanistan to fight the Russians at that time. We had no military presence in Yemen other than the Military Assistance Program (MAP) office at the embassy for the defense attaché, but we

had no boots on the ground or air fields. It was very difficult to keep track of what was going on at that time in Yemen because there was no love lost between North Yemen that used to be part of the Ottoman empire, and South Yemen, which had been controlled until 1967 by the British as part of the Raj.

The most interesting aspect of that was that Aden, which was the capital of the south, had never been independent; it was governed from Bombay and was considered part of the Bombay municipality. Basically South Yemen and Aden had been set up to service ships coming through the Suez Canal and down the Red Sea. When they got to Aden, they would refuel and they'd either go left to India, or they'd turn right and go to Africa. So Aden and the south were basically a refueling station. Their tribal infrastructure ruled everything in South Yemen. Then in 1967 the British left and the Russians filled the void. Unification came in May 1990.

I went to Yemen to take over as the new mission director. I mentioned before my friend, who is now in New Mexico, was the mission director. I spent a couple of months orienting myself trying to understand what programs were going on and what we were doing. It turned out at that time we weren't doing very much. Much of the staff was still reeling from having been slashed because of a political move that the government of Yemen made that did not sit well with the U.S. government, namely to abstain on the UN vote on the Iraq invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

I should mention the Russians came into South Yemen in 1967. Many people remember the People's Republic of South Yemen. They wanted to be treated as a separate country from North Yemen, although North Yemen never used "north;" they just used Yemen. I mentioned they had been part of the Ottoman Empire until the Turks left. The difference between the two countries was night and day, black and white. The tribal infrastructure in South Yemen had ruled everything. In 1967when the Soviets came in, the first thing they did was to have a huge pogrom and killed off all the tribal leaders in the south and basically put in place a socialist communist way of running the south.

They also dragooned any South Yemeni that they saw as being in charge at some point and took them back to Moscow and put them in the Patrice Lumumba University that they had set up to reorient Africans and they were now using it on the Yemenis. During this period, North Yemen never considered the Democratic Republic of Yemen as a separate country. They had borders that were manned by both sides, both being Yemeni. They set up new ports for imports and exports in the north, but after the Russians had bled South Yemen dry of oil, they left, and they left a bill on the table that they said the South Yemenis owed them of roughly $7 billion.

At that point North Yemen moved in and began to reorient the south. I'll get back to that, but one of the things I had to do immediately when I got into country and took over as the mission director was not so much figure out but analyze what it was USAID was going to be able to do with its limited budget. It was very interesting because the overall USAID mandate of humanitarian assistance really applied in both parts of Yemen.

I would not be wrong if I said going to rural Yemen in those years was like moving back two or three centuries. It was a very vibrant society. It was the most armed society that I've ever come in contact with. The men usually put on their gun before they put on their clothes. They put on their *jambiya*, which is a large curved knife that they all wore. There were continual battles, not just fights, but battles, between the tribes about whose land was whose and who was going to run it.

Security for us was very tight. Our office was about 5 km from the chancery. I had to go to the chancery for senior management meetings with the ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM). One of the first things I had to do was not only look at the program side of what we were doing, but I had to somehow infuse a new commitment from our U.S. and Yemeni staff who had been through this horrible reduction in funding and a huge reduction in staff. We had a full garage set up on our compound where we had repaired our own cars. We did not have any residences for USAID staff there, rather staff were housed in the Hadda complex, which had been built to house diplomatic personnel.

Q: Built by the United States to house Americans, or a general larger compound?

MCKINNEY: No, a larger compound built by the Yemenis to house diplomats from all over that worked in Yemen, including the UN. I had a penthouse suite on the compound and my American program officer, and new PSC health officer, who arrived in mid-1993, all lived at Hadda. Staff in positions that were terminated had left. This meant we relied upon expertise from the regional team at USAID Cairo, such as personnel support, contract officers like Donella Russell.

Q: What were the programs that you said they'd been carrying out that were no longer happening?

MCKINNEY: They were mainly large-scale health and maternal-child health programs. We'd also been working in agriculture and in rice production, but all those were gone.

Q: Which ones continued?

MCKINNEY: We had had maternal-child health programs that covered all of North Yemen, but when I got there, I think we were working in four districts.

Q: Can you talk about what work was actually going on under your direction?

MCKINNEY: We were training and building up health workers in rural areas. I was expanding our health programs back to where they had been before the reduction. I guess the best way I can explain this is—again this is 1994–1995—male doctors in Yemen were not allowed to service female patients. If you didn't have a female doctor, then in 95 percent of the cases, the woman was not seen by a male doctor, and that was just a social

given on the part of the society. Fathers, husbands, described the woman's symptoms and a diagnosis and medications or treatment prescribed.

One of the first instances where this came home to me was, we were driving in a very rural area, and there was a woman walking down the road. She heard the sound of the car and she threw herself in the ditch. She was already in burka. In Yemen 95 percent of women were covered in them. The ones that weren't covered were in Sana'a or Hadda and at some point in Aden, but mostly they were covered from head to foot. Other than the Yemeni women that worked for us in Sana'a, I can probably count on two hands the number of Yemeni women's faces I saw in the three years I was there. I have a picture here in our house that I will show you, the woman covered. That was very real.

Q: Were you hiring NGOs to do the work or were you directly funding the Yemeni government? What was USAID doing? How were you carrying out these programs?

MCKINNEY: I had a health officer and a program officer, and the programs that we were dealing with we ran ourselves. We funded the Ministry of Health in Sana'a. We funded individual health clinics in rural areas. The concept of NGOs was just beginning to evolve in Yemen. I can't stress how far back in time the country was. They were basically an afterthought in the Middle East. Their northern and eastern border was on what they referred to as the "empty space" between Saudi Arabia and Yemen. It's one huge area between the two countries that's never been explored for minerals or oil because they cannot agree to who owns it and who should be doing what to it.

Q: If you wanted to have a program in a particular district, you're working through the government Ministry of Health, and a local government office in that district?

MCKINNEY: Yeah. We didn't have an NGO at that point. If you were working, as we were, mainly with the Ministry of Health, you worked with the staff at the local village level and the ministry in Sanaa.

Q: Was your public health officer able to go to the clinics and meet with the providers?

MCKINNEY: Yes. She was a woman and she had to be very careful around Yemeni men especially, but Laurie was very good at that. She was able to get out and do that kind of work with the women in the villages.

Q: How did you rate the efficacy of these programs? Were they working well?

MCKINNEY: They were working very well. I mean, from going to absolutely no health centers or health input to what we were able to provide was the difference between day and night Unfortunately, a lot of the men didn't see it that way, but the women certainly did. Even though as the mission director I was never able to go and sit and consult with these people, especially the women, I was very comfortable getting reports from Laurie and the two Yemeni women that worked for her in the health area.

There were a couple of other issues that we had to deal with. There was a clear disparity between—In the north the vast majority of Yemeni were Sunni, but you had a significant Shia population way up in the north in an area called Sa'dah. Sana'a, and there was no love lost between the two on religious lines. Laurie spent a significant amount of time trying to open up health areas in the Shia community, and as far behind the power curve that a large part Yemen was, the Shia were even further behind. It was almost an impossible task. In fact after the first year, I advised Laurie that she should concentrate our efforts; we didn't have the funds or the ability to expand into Shia areas. Even the Yemeni women staff were not welcome in that area; it was extremely conservative.

I made a mental note I shared with people at our embassy that a day was coming when there would be issues that overflow into fighting, and that's what developed.

Q: You were a member of the country team, and Yemen was a difficult place. The United States didn't have a lot of insights into what was going on, perhaps. Did you find that the USAID personnel were part of those efforts to report on what was happening, _____?

MCKINNEY: Absolutely. I won't say I made it my hallmark, but after I'd been there a couple or three months, whenever any of our Yemeni employees made a visit into the health area, or into one of the now more urban areas where we had been working, I expected a written report on my desk within a week. I assiduously took those reports and reported them to the ambassador and others who might be interested.

Q: Who was the ambassador at that time?

MCKINNEY: Art Hughes in 1993-1994 and then David Newton. Anyway I got to know them very well and followed Art's career. David had been our ambassador to Iraq and had had two other tours to Yemen, he retired in 1997. His fluent Arabic, knowledge of the players, insights into the history and overall comfort level in meetings and travels on field trips made working for him a highlight of my career.

Q: In terms of you personally, I believe this was perhaps an unaccompanied tour?

MCKINNEY: Initially it wasn't, but my wife and I had parted, if you will, at the end of the Jordan period. We did get back together again for a few months and it just didn't work, so she went back to the States. Anyway, that's a very soul-searching time for me and a very personal time. So, I'll just let that go. I met a New Zealand woman, Kirsty Burnett, who was heading the UN Volunteer Programme at UNDP/Sana'a, and we married in 1995.

The three years that I spent in Yemen were from my perspective, brilliant career formative years. In fact, the second year I was there I was promoted into the Senior Foreign Service, which meant that someone had noticed what I'd been doing and what my work was and how it was going. I appreciated the visits from Frank Miller, of the

ANE Bureau in Washington who was very supportive of the work we were trying to progress.

Q: What was life generally like there? We talked about your work. What would people do on weekends? Were you able to get out into the countryside and explore, or did you have Yemeni friends who could take you places, or…?

MCKINNEY: I was there from 1993 until September 30 1996 when I closed the mission and I was transferred to Almaty, Kazakhstan. At that time in Yemen, except for one period in 1994 when there was a civil war between the north and the south when the south tried to rebel against being one country with North Yemen, and the major part of Yemen just overran South Yemen and drove out all of the communist functionaries that had remained behind when the Soviets had left. They were basically expelled to Oman and Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and they were summarily kicked out of Yemen. The South Yemen army was incorporated into the larger army but the damage that they had done before all of this was over would still be felt to this day, unfortunately. The civil war, or rebellion barely lasted two months, but we had to evacuate the embassy in May 1994. We evacuated all of the USAID personnel that were working and…

Q: So that was an ordered departure?

MCKINNEY: Yeah, an ordered departure.

Q: And where did you go?

MCKINNEY: Kirsty went to Jordan with the UN, and I stayed behind as one of the senior diplomats at the embassy. I stayed on for an additional 10 days and then they ordered a drawdown on eight of us that had stayed, and I was flown out to London.

Q: Did the Embassy actually close completely during that period?

MCKINNEY: No, the ambassador, the head of the other agencies, they stayed. There were about six of them that ended up staying through this period, plus the Marines.

Q: How long was your evacuation period to last?

MCKINNEY: I went back to Washington from London—I mean after I went to Jordan and got Kirsty, then we went to Boston. I was there for about two weeks and then was assigned to Washington, About a month later I got a call from the Near East Asia (NEA) Bureau and they sent me back to Jordan. The mission director there had come to the US and had not been well and had to be evacuated for medical reasons. So they sent me back to Jordan in July as the acting mission director for about three months and Kirsty went back to Yemen. I stayed in Amman and then I moved back to my post in Yemen. Very tumultuous times, needless to say.

Q: You earlier alluded to the fact that USAID was intending to close the mission, and then you actually did close the mission.

MCKINNEY: In 1996 I had to. I fought mightily in my own mind with the powers that be in Washington, but Yemen had no senior people behind it in Washington. They were looking at a reduction in force and they did close the Yemen mission.

Q: This was, as I recall, a period after the collapse of the Soviet Union when there was a view that the United States had finished its work overseas and that we had a post-Cold War dividend that would allow us to withdraw personnel from many places and reduce the expenses of U.S. overseas presence. Was this part of that?

MCKINNEY: Very much part of it. I wish I could remember the names of the people involved in this, but it all centered around what was happening in Saudi Arabia when the ambassador there was withdrawn and the DCM took over for about two years. The assistant administrator for our bureau was Margaret Carpenter, and it was her husband, Chas Freeman, that had been removed in Saudi Arabia. Neither of them were great fans of Yemen. As far as I'm concerned, she summarily closed the mission in Sana'a for no good reason, apart from the need to appease U.S. Senator Newt Gingrich, who was seeking a reduction in the US overseas aid program footprint. Because of her husband and her political connections, she was able to pull it off closing USAID Yemen. It almost cost me my career, because I talked to the ambassador at our embassy and I was able to get a room and I put our Yemeni program officer and one of our Yemeni health officers in the embassy and they were able to continue tracking the programs that we had in place, with support from the USAID mission in Egypt, when we had to leave in September 1996.

Q: When you say your health officer, this was the personal services contractor?

MCKINNEY: No, no, the woman that was a Yemeni citizen that worked for her.

Q: These were both Yemeni citizens who were left behind to keep track of things.

MCKINNEY: Yes, both of them, and they got a room in the chancery.

Q: So did they then become part of the Embassy economic section or something?

MCKINNEY: Yes, but to the Yemeni government it was a loss, loss of an ally at a time when the country faced so many internal and external challenges. I ended up being sent to Kazakhstan. It was the worst assignment that I ever had, and it's the only country I served in as a foreign service officer that I would not return to.

Q: Today is March 30 with William McKinney. Bill, you were in Yemen and now you can talk about your transition to Central Asia.

MCKINNEY: We left Yemen in September 1996 on assignment to Almaty, Kazakhstan. We took a month's vacation – visiting family and friends in Jordan, Boston, Washington and North Carolina - and got to Almaty in early November 1996. Winter was setting in in Kazakhstan, one of the former Soviet satellite countries that USAID had only recently had staff assigned to. To say it was cold and dreary would be an understatement. It was bitterly cold when we arrived and basically stayed cold for most the two years we were there! Summers seemed short – one year the last snow was in May and it snowed again in October.

We had an American staff at USAID of nine, maybe 10 direct-hire Americans and a fairly large foreign service national staff (FSNs). Almaty was the regional headquarters for the five "Stans" as they have come to be known—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. When I got there in 1996 all five countries were governed by former members of the Comintern (Communist International) when the Soviet Union ceased to exist. There had been no elections so all of the presidents in the various countries took over in late 1990, early 1991, and intended to remain presidents for life.

It was a very poor region, Kazakhstan being the largest geographically, and it also had a very large ethnic Russian presence. I'll get to talking about what programs we had in the various Stans, but I think it's worthwhile setting the stage a bit because it was unlike any other assignment that I've ever had, or any of the temporary duties (TDYs) that I did. Of these five countries, two of them had significant resources; Kazakhstan had oil and Turkmenistan had natural gas. In fact, Turkmenistan has amongst the largest proven natural gas reserves in the world, and Kazakhstan's huge proven oil reserves were mostly in the Caspian Sea which needless to say has been a bone of contention, especially between Kazakhstan and Russia.

Kazakhstan is also the home of the Russian space program. All of their space missions are launched from Baikonur in Kazakhstan, and they now rent that land from the Kazakh government. Likewise, in a further eastern part of the country is their Semipalatinsk, which was their nuclear testing area. There was no nuclear testing in Russia. It was done in one of the satellite states that made up the Soviet Union.

The basic program that we had in all five of the Stans were small business development, financial assistance, and some health. When I was there, there was one direct-hire American stationed in Kyrgyzstan, and there was one stationed in Uzbekistan. We had no direct hires in Tajikistan or in Turkmenistan. In fact in Turkmenistan, we hardly had any programs at all. It was a very difficult country to work in. Turkmenbashi (Saparmurat Niyazov) was the president, and it was well known throughout the world practically that he was not all that stable. Anyway, there were no programs there.

We had a few health activities in Uzbekistan, but again, the government of Uzbekistan was one that we had a great deal of trouble working with. In Kazakhstan we had a

number of financial and economic reform, small business, governance and health projects. In none of these countries did we do, other than health, any typically humanitarian aid programs that you would associate with USAID. Most of these programs, while being implemented by contractors under the direction of USAID, were State Department motivated programs.

In Kyrgyzstan we had programs in health and in business. One of the things that became abundantly clear after I'd been there for a little less than a year was there had been very little infrastructure development in all of the countries except for Kazakhstan. That was because most of these countries had no main budget line items that addressed this issue. Once they were out of the Soviet Union and all of the former barter-trade agreements fell apart, all of these countries struggled to get foreign exchange to buy things that they used to barter and trade for. The vast expanse of Kazakhstan and the oil that was discovered out in the Caspian Sea within their three-mile limit was what contributed basically to their growth.

It was an extremely difficult program to operate because we were stationed in Almaty and periodically, I would have to visit each of the capitals of those five countries to nominally talk with and see how things were going. I received monthly reports from our staff in the five countries, but you don't get very much from reading paper; you need to go and see what's going on in those countries. So I operated the same way I did when I was on Peace Corps staff in India and Ghana, but it was a vast region, logistics of moving around were not easy, and the work in the Program Office was relentless. Fortunately the Program Office had superb staff with excellent Russian language and cultural skills, people like Brooke Isham, who has gone on to be a Mission Director in her own right, and Aiesha Bostwick, an American who I recruited in-country. Following their careers has been a highlight.

I was there until January 1999. I will not go into details, but it was probably the worst assignment that I had, both personally and professionally. Of all my time in the Foreign Service, Kazakhstan is the only country that I would not return to, although we did make some good friends. The level of crime, often violent crime, that impacted staff, is something I had not experienced, and when my family, my wife, fell victim on more than one occasion I knew it was time to leave. Near the end of my second year, I basically told Washington, "I'm 58 years old, I've [completed] 20 years, move me or I'll just retire." I was not going to keep my family especially, in Almaty. To their credit, I was offered an assignment in Baku. Not knowing anything about the Caucuses, I asked, "Where is that?" I very quickly looked it up, talked with people from Washington, and doing some research on my own, I accepted the assignment. It was a very good assignment because I was going as the USAID Representative in Baku.

My wife was back in New Zealand having our first child, Iain was born in November 1998, and I had a month in New Zealand, then back to Almaty to close out my work and pack up the house. As an aside my trip from Almaty to New Zealand and back was via

Seoul and Tashkent, on Korean Air. Kirsty travelled back to Europe and down to New Zealand on Lufthansa, Singapore Airlines!

I left Almaty in late January 1999 bound for Baku. I was at that time, the only direct hire at USAID in Baku in the Chancery. I had a third-country national (TCN) Khalid Khan, who worked for me and two Azerbaijani citizens, one my secretary and the other a program officer. To say that the starting of my work there was tumultuous would be an understatement. To this day I have not figured out what the political realities were in the early days of the program there, but Azerbaijan and Armenia had been at war since the early 1990s, over an area called Nagorno-Karabakh. It was an area that was part of Azerbaijan with a very heavy Armenian population and the Armenians, at the behest of the Russians, decided they wanted their citizens back, and the way to do it was to take Nagorno-Karabakh, which they did. Since the 1994 ceasefire there have been periodic flare-ups, there are ongoing negotiations between Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia, and the United States to try and solve that in a diplomatic political manner. There has been very little forward movement on that in the decade that it had been going on.

The other problem—I was not apprised of this until I got to Baku—was that USAID considered the Caucuses program to be a regional program headquartered in Yerevan. So the mission director for Georgia and Azerbaijan had been in Yerevan. The Azerbaijan government constantly resisted this and were constantly sending diplomatic notes to the American embassy in Baku that they did not want this person coming down from Yerevan to inspect any programs in Azerbaijan. You could not cross the border directly from Armenia into Azerbaijan; you had to fly down to Georgia, change planes in Tbilisi, which we normally didn't do because you could drive from Tbilisi to Baku in a few hours. So, you would fly from Yerevan to Tbilisi and then drive into Baku.

I immediately got involved because my ambassador, Stanley Escudero, wanted to know why USAID had been doing this, and wasn't there anything that we could do about it? So, I set about talking with Washington and explaining my point of view in terms of it didn't make any diplomatic sense to keep the government on edge by having a representative from Armenia coming into Azerbaijan in what they perceived as a supervisory role. Armenia being at war nominally with Azerbaijan, it did not sit well.

Well, somebody in Washington did finally get the message, so they broke up the regional program and they made Yerevan a separate program. You'll excuse me, but in their infinite stupidity, they then made it a regional program between Georgia and Azerbaijan and put the mission director in Georgia! I'd very rarely seen one of our ambassadors lose it in terms of sitting down and writing a cable that had to be sent on asbestos paper, but Stan did! It shocked Washington, but it woke them up and resulted in programming decisions being firmly made in Baku but a residual of technical and operational support was provided by Tbilisi. This meant that I could reconnect with Alonzo, who headed up the economic development office, and Joakim Parker, regional legal adviser, who I'd worked with in Yemen when he was based in Cairo. Both went on to have stellar careers.

Q: So what was the program then, once this all sorted out. What program did you have in Azerbaijan?

MCKINNEY: What do you think would be the largest program? Do you want to guess?

Q: I don't want to guess.

MCKINNEY: Considering that there's been a war going on between Armenia and Azerbaijan since 1984, there's all kinds of trouble in the Caucuses at the Russian end, the biggest program when I got there was a relief and rehabilitation program for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Azerbaijan and refugees coming into Azerbaijan from the far north Caucasus—Chechnya, Dagestan. They were coming into Azerbaijan as refugees. So when I got there I would say over three-quarters of the program was in relief.

Q: What did that entail?

MCKINNEY: That entailed the import of food products of different kinds. Not PL-480, there was no PL-480 at that time. We were providing subsidies for the government of Azerbaijan to support the refugees and IDPs with clothing, water, and other relief type products, etc. It was a typical UN relief program run by USAID, and that's what the Azerbaijanis wanted. They made it perfectly clear they weren't interested in any of the ancillary programs we had; they wanted relief, and that's where we should focus.

When I got to Azerbaijan, I was the only direct-hire American. One of the first things I did was, I recruited a deputy, Steve Szadek, with an agricultural background, and a personal services contractor (PSC) program officer, a woman who'd been on Peace Corps staff in Almaty that I'd gotten to know very well, who was very sharp. Catherine Trebes knew the region; she liked being in the region, so I recruited her to come to Baku. I recruited her a second time, to go to Baghdad, but that's some years away yet. When I was in Baghdad as a senior program officer in 2006.

Q: So what year are we in now?

MCKINNEY: 2000 in Baku. I'd spent most of 1999 talking with various government departments to try to not necessarily expand the program, but to diversify it. I initially was trying to diversify it within the budget that we had for that fiscal year, and it ran into all types of problems, because the minister for relief in Azerbaijan was a very strong minister, and he had the support of President Heydar Aliyev, he had been on the Comintern in the Soviet Union days. He returned to Azerbaijan and took over as the president. I was able to wheedle a couple million dollars for a business program initially in 2001, because they were interested in financial reform, and I figured this was something that USAID was now doing everywhere. I didn't need a direct hire; I could get a contractor. Let me see if I can get the nose of the camel under the tent, and it worked! We had two I would consider small financial assistance programs, each of about $2

million annually that proved very helpful to their government. I then started working with them to get some general health and specialized mother and child health activities going.

Q: When you talk about financial assistance you're talking about financial management? Technical assistance?

MCKINNEY: [Both] financial management and technical assistance.

Q: With their government, Ministry of Finance or whatever?

MCKINNEY: They worked in the ministry. Now everyone in Washington and around the world, who were I won't say old school, but those that still maintained the patina of USAID basically being a humanitarian organization, look at the program in Azerbaijani as being one of the few left in the world that really addressed that mandate through the large relief effort that we had there. While it was absolutely true, the other part of the mandate to help with the growth of the economy, was not happening. The health infrastructure especially was being run down very quickly all over the country. I took some would say a gamble and recruited a deputy who had an agricultural background, because I wanted at least one person on staff who could look at the possibility of agriculture in all of its dimensions, not just growing food or growing crops, but maybe a farm credit program, or some other way that we could assist rural farmers. I then recruited a senior Azerbaijani who had an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree from Johns Hopkins University to help run our health program. Then I recruited a young woman who had just received a health degree from Indiana State University.

So at the end of 2000, when we'd gone through the Y2K ruckus, I had a staff of myself, three Americans, and about six Azeri's. The program was still heavily relief oriented because that was a very serious need. But the problem that we had was the government of Azerbaijan wanted relief for the internally displaced Azeri's who had come out of Nagorno-Karabakh and that border area with Armenia. They were not interested in expending their resources on the refugees from the various countries in the Caucuses or even some that somehow came all the way across Central Asia from Afghanistan. We walked a very taut tightrope, if you will, in providing relief assistance, because the government only wanted that for their internally displaced Azeri citizens.

Q: Was USAID providing this assistance via the government or were you hiring people directly.

MCKINNEY: No, directly to the government. They did the implementation.

Q: So, if USAID was interested in all refugees and the government wasn't, then they just didn't get anything?

MCKINNEY: No they did get some things. We talked, I won't say ad nauseum, but we had a significant number of meetings to discuss this to try to work out this problem. I

should make a sidebar here, which I think is very important, because I ran into it again in 2005 when I was the U.S. coordinator for assistance and setting up an office in northern Indonesia in Banda Aceh when I went there after the tsunami. There were a significant number of relief agencies working in Azerbaijan and the operative word was the one I just mentioned—relief. They almost all were providing some modicum of relief to the Azerbaijan government to assist IDPs.

Q: You're talking about Azerbaijan now or Indonesia?

MCKINNEY: Azerbaijan. We had a task force of implementing and funding agencies, such as UN specialised agencies, EU and bilateral donors. We met the first Monday of every month to talk about our programs and what decisions we were making. I won't say I bulldozed my way into the meeting, or pushed my way into taking it over, but after the first couple of meetings, it became quite clear that this group was not capable of making decisions on where the aid was going and the kind of coordination that we needed. I worked assiduously to try to correct this in terms of laying out what the U.S. government and USAID perspectives were on Azeri relief programs, and externally-funded other international aid programs.

There were some strong international NGOs in Azerbaijan, and it was the first country in which I had worked with USAID where the NGOs themselves had formed a coordination unit with the government to oversee all of the NGOs' activities.

Q: And what does that mean, NGO?

MCKINNEY: Nongovernmental organizations. I spent the better part of 1999 and midway through 2000 working with this group trying to get some coordination, trying to figure how we could better maximize the impact of the aid that was coming in. Unfortunately, by the middle of 2000 I had become so disenchanted, especially with the assistance from the European Union (EU), that I formally withdrew USAID from the former group and notified the ambassador that I was going to do it. I wanted him to be aware so that he didn't get blindsided. I withdrew USAID because especially on the part of the EU, any decision they made locally in Azerbaijan had to go back to Brussels to be authorized, and if Brussels didn't say, "Yes," they couldn't implement the program. They would send things back to Brussels and wouldn't hear back so they wouldn't be able to do what it was they wanted to do.

But we continued to work with the NGOs' coordinating committee and we provided funds for their secretariat so they could keep Azeris employed to monitor what was going on in various parts of the country. I could sit down with them and talk about what was going on.

Many of the USAID-funded implementing partners also received funding separate from USAID, however those projects they implemented with USAID funding were coordinated with the chief of party, Mercy Corp, headed by Bill Holbrook. Bill and I

coordinated all US-funded IDP assistance in Azerbaijan. Once projects were approved by USAID, Mercy Corp coordinated the implementation. We were very careful not to overlap this with other non-USAID funding for refugees, e.g. through UNHCR, Gates Foundation, George Soros etc. Mercy Corp also implemented projects with other funding and I enjoyed working with Bill and we also enjoyed family time together.

Towards the end of 2000, the government of Azerbaijan was getting ready to hold their five-yearly parliamentary elections, and they approached USAID about assistance with that. I got the International Federation of Electoral Services (IFES), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to come in and talk with the Azeri government about what assistance they could provide, not only in the run up to the elections to be held in November, but during the election process. These were funded by USAID but implemented by those three organizations. It went off very well. President Aliyev's party naturally won, but the monitors that came in to monitor the elections were generally favorable as to how they'd gone. Presidential elections took place in 2003 and Heydar won very easily.

We then got a stronger health program being implemented in terms of a health contractor whose main job was initially to go out and assess rural health clinics to give us some idea of what the most significant problems were, what they needed to improve the medical supply train, were there doctors, were there midwives? No one really had any clear idea. The Ministry of Health said there's this or there's that, but I wanted much more concrete evidence of what was going on there. That took up a lot of 2001.

As we strove to get a better understanding, we continued relief to IDPs, which worked very well, but as the refugees really began to burgeon, especially from the northern parts of the Caucuses, Dagestan, and Chechnya, it was more difficult. Other international donor agencies wanted to figure out how we could provide some assistance to these refugees without ruffling the feathers of the government of Azerbaijan; this was a very difficult proposition. From the USAID side, we continued to only support the IDPs as we were so closely linked with the government in the way we provided our assistance. I supported this and as far as I am aware refugees did not get any of our assistance either through USAID or other branches of the American embassy.

The most interesting part of that was most of the refugees that came in, came in through Baku, the capital. The other half went to the largest of the rural towns or villages and that's where the real problem was. The refugees coming into Baku usually had some family that maybe already lived there, or they had a skill that they could put to work to find a job so that they could live, so there were very few incidents, although there were some, of refugees being a burden on the urban populations. Trans-Caspian [gas] pipeline was being built at that time, from Turkmenistan to Baku under the Caspian Sea and then a huge pipeline in Azerbaijan that was going through Tbilisi, and then down to Ceyhan in Turkey. The Kazakhs had decided they wanted the oil and gas to come down that way to the Mediterranean and be put on tankers to consumer countries in Europe, rather than sending it through Russia, which the Russians wanted, or Iran.

The programs that we had kind of rocked along until mid-2002, when we got a second increase in our budget, we were really able to expand the health activities and we began design and implementation of two new business activities. They weren't in the ministry; one of them was in the Azeri Bank and another one was with a private growth fund in Baku, and both were run by contractors. I had very little to do with the design of those. I brought in USAID staff, one from Washington and one from Baghdad and they helped design those. Implementation went very well. So that was what we did there, kind of how we rocked along.

There was a very good working relationship with the ambassadors I worked for, in particular Stan Escudero and Ross Wilson, as well as deputy Ambassador, Nancy McEldowney. As an interesting sidebar. I got a call from the Israeli ambassador in Baku that he wanted to talk with me about developing a joint program that we might be able to implement in the Ministry of Finance. We met on a couple of occasions to talk about it until I realized that he wanted USAID to pay for an Israeli-implemented project! At that point I said, "No, we can't do that. We can't provide funding for Israel to implement. He told me that I would do it or he would go make sure I did it! I said, "I'm very sorry, but I represent USAID, this is our funding, and we're not going to fund this activity. He said, "I'll go talk to your ambassador." I said, "That's your right, your prerogative."

I walked out of that meeting and went right to the embassy and briefed the ambassador on what was going on. A couple of days later the Israeli ambassador showed up at the embassy. I don't know what the ambassador said to him, but that afternoon he called me and apologized.

I enjoyed our five years in Azerbaijan very much especially as it was my final assignment, I was reaching mandatory retirement age (65). It's a great country. It's got great political significance that I don't think we have fully recognized. This is the second largest Shia population country in the world, although you go there and it's like you're in any other European city. Hardly any of the women wear hijab; you never see any burka. The largest Azeri mother-tongue area is in north Iran, in Tabriz. That all used to be part of Azeri speaking Azerbaijan, and there are more native speakers of Azeri. I can only describe it as a privilege.

I should also add that while we were in Azerbaijan we added to the family, Ayesha was born in February 2001. Of the five and half years we lived there, we lived in three different houses, the last one for two and a half years was large and had a yard outside. We hosted many functions, Kirsty hosted pre-school activities and we had a wonderful nanny/housekeeper Lena. Kirsty worked part-time for UNDP. We both got out and about and saw the country, certainly much more so than was possible in Kazakhstan. Kirsty's dad, well into his 70's visited three times from New Zealand, and I took him on field trips. My mother, aged nearly 81, also came to visit in early 2000.

We had one, no two programs in Nakhichevan, which is a small land-locked area from which Heydar Aliyev, the former president, and his son, who became the president, come from. The only way you can get there is by flying over Armenian territory. So whenever the Azeri flight goes down to Nakhichevan, you have to get special permission. I had the opportunity to go down there a couple of times and it is an absolutely amazing, very interesting place. It has one border with Iran—You can walk from Nakhichevan across the bridge into northern Iran—it has a long border with Armenia, and it has a short border with Turkey. So you have this mélange of people moving around this area in Nakhichevan, which is where both of the presidents' families have come from and have very strong family ties. We had a very good business program and a very good health program there. I found it very interesting that you could only get there by flying over Armenia. It wasn't after the war, or during the war, there had always been that little hook that went out.

We lived in Baku through the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. In 1998 after the attacks on the U.S. embassies in Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi, as a result of the fax that was sent from Baku, the level of activity of Al-Qaeda in the country was discovered. Azerbaijan cooperated with the U.S. on a number of counter-terrorism missions, so as you can imagine it was a fascinating time to be involved in geo-politics in the region. But that's about all I would say here.

Q: Okay, so that's it for Azerbaijan.

MCKINNEY: Up to 2004.

Q: What's next?

MCKINNEY: [Laughter] I retired in 2004. I met my wife when we were in Yemen. I was at USAID and she was at the U.N. I came to New Zealand to get married in 1995 and absolutely fell in love with the country and decided, this is where I wanted us to retire. So we retired here in September 2004, we'd bought a house the year before, and sometime in January 2005 our personal effects turned up. I should also add that I had left stuff in storage when I'd gone to Yemen in early 1993, and these boxes arrived too. So it was quite a big job, and we had to buy furniture and whiteware to set up a home. My only rule was no brands, styles or colors that were similar to any U.S. government issue!

In February 2005 I got a call from the ambassador in Indonesia in Jakarta, who had had a visit from my former ambassador in Azerbaijan, Ross Wilson, and asked would I be interested in coming out to Banda Aceh and helping to set up the U.S. government response office after the tsunami. The role would involve coordinating with the World Bank, with overall responsibility for coordinating all the relief assistance that was coming into Aceh. I accepted the assignment, but going out there was very politically sensitive. There had been no foreign presence in the province of Aceh. In fact they'd been open hostility with the Indonesian army over that area, and it wasn't until the tsunami that the

army withdrew and allowed for foreign assistance. Bill Yaeger has done an excellent interim job and I was there until a permanent staff resourcing solution was in place.

Over 130,000 people were killed in Aceh during the tsunami. The whole capital, Banda Aceh, was wiped off the map. Their main port, Malabo, was also destroyed, and there was a 400–450 km road that ran along the coast between Malabo and Banda Aceh that was totally destroyed. Every relief agency that had an alphabet name was there, almost every organisation was interested in building houses, because the tsunami had come in, indeed some of the pictures were incredible. There would be neighborhood after neighborhood with no houses, but just a squat latrine. The latrines weren't destroyed because they were in the ground the way they were built. There weren't many days that I was there that we didn't find bodies. Coal carriers were washed up into the middle of the city. An aluminum smelting plant was destroyed.

The task that I set myself was working with the government of Indonesia and the World Bank to make some sense out of all the relief assistance that was coming in. Like I mentioned, everybody wanted to build houses. There were a few of the PVOs, international organizations, that knew how to build houses. I stressed to the Bank, I stressed to the UN, and I stressed to the Indonesian government, "Why don't you let those organizations do your housing and let's get other relief agencies to do what they do best? Not what they think they should be doing, but we know what they can do."

In the time I was there, I think we were mostly successful. The Bank began to assume a larger role. Some of the countries began backing off of the housing. I mean there were no analyses done and you had countries bringing in huge supplies of concrete and plaster board and those weren't the houses that needed to be built! The government of Banda Aceh was totally overwhelmed because there hadn't been any foreigners there for years because of the fighting between the provincial government and the central government in Jakarta.

The U.S. army corps of engineers had come in and were in the process of sighting a new road from Banda Aceh to Malabo that would have to be moved inland. As soon as word of that got out, Indonesian entrepreneurs from all over the country came to start trying to buy up land that they could then sell back at inflated prices.

I had met President Clinton and Hillary before he became president when I was doing a project for foster grandparents in Little Rock, Arkansas, when he was the governor. Anyway Bill and George (H. W.) Bush were designated to help assist with the reconstruction on the U.S. government's part in Banda Aceh. I met him while he was there and had a chance to talk with him and explain to him that if there was one thing that he could do, it would be to talk to the government to stop people buying up land where they thought this road was going to be. No decisions had been made about where that road was going to be sighted, but it was clear the Acehnese had very little say in what was going to be happening with that very, very important road project. "If you could go to Jakarta when leaving and talk with President (Susilo Bambang) Yudhoyono about that,

it would be very, very good." And he did do that. It was very timely and he understood the issues very, very well.

I very much enjoyed my time in Banda Aceh because it was a real rescue and relief operation in terms of the work that was going on. One of the biggest activities that USAID was involved with—Aceh was one of the largest rice-growing areas in Indonesia, and when the tsunami came in, it washed across the whole of that northern province and destroyed thousands of hectares of rice paddies. One of the first things we did was to convince a number of the cooperatives in very short order that they could flush these fields, but there would still be saline, but we would get the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) out of Manila to come and provide saline-tolerant varieties of rice and get them back producing very quickly. It worked. They went for it. When I left there in late August, they had already started planting these new varieties. There was some concern that the Indonesians were not going to like that type of rice, but as I tried to explain, "Would you rather have a new variety or nothing?" So that worked.

I got back to Wellington, just as Kirsty was joining the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), so I was at home with our young family. Iain was at school and Ayesha at kindergarten, so I took her to various preschool activities and ran the house as Kirsty got the chance to pursue her career. Just as Ayesha was starting school full-time, I got a call from the USAID mission director in Baghdad.

Q: It's March 30 with William McKinney. He has just completed a post-retirement, temporary assignment in Banda Aceh, is now back in Wellington, New Zealand, and is looking at going to Baghdad Iraq. What year is this?

MCKINNEY: We're in 2006. In late January–February 2006, I got a call from the program officer, Shirley Hoffman, whom I knew. She called and wanted to know would I be available for an assignment at USAID in Baghdad in the "Green Zone." My initial reaction was to turn it down. I had no interest in going to Iraq, I was opposed to the invasion. I had not heard many positive things coming out of any aspect of the American involvement at that time. I sat down and I talked with my wife, who was pretty much in the same view but she raised a very interesting point and that was, "If you're going to be critical and you really want to understand what's going on, maybe you need to go to Baghdad and see what's happening."

After sleeping on it so-to-speak, I called back the next day and said, "Yes, I would be interested in going. So I went to Washington in March 2006 for training they provided for all personnel going into Iraq as it was still considered a war zone. I was in training for about three weeks, and then I flew into Baghdad through Amman, Jordan. At that time when you went into the "Green Zone" from the airport, you only went in at night with helicopter cover and in a convoy.

My wife's nickname for me is "Sunshine," and I have been her sunshine all of our married life. I got into the USAID area of the embassy about 2 o'clock in the morning

and they showed me where I was going to be living. I went in and I was so tired I just went right to sleep. I woke up the next morning, had a shower, and was going out to try to get myself oriented, especially to where we were going to eat, because I really wanted some breakfast! As I came out the door from my hut, a young man came out from the next hut adjacent. He must have known that I was coming or that I'd come in the night before, and when he saw me walking out the door he said, "Hey, welcome Sunshine!" I thought, "Has my wife been in touch with you?"

Q: Was this the Republican Palace that we seized from Saddam Hussein?

MCKINNEY: No, that's where the Chancery and the offices were.

Q: So, you were at a separate compound from which I think USAID had?

MCKINNEY: Right, and a separate working facility.

Q: I think this was right along the river, and it had been seized from some high-ranking member of the Ba'ath party? It was sort of a separate compound.

MCKINNEY: Yeah, but we didn't have a swimming pool or anything like that that they had over at the Republican Palace.

Q: What was your title there?

MCKINNEY: Senior program officer.

Q: How were you hired? As a PSC?

MCKINNEY: PSC. I was there on two different occasions, because I took a break in the middle of this assignment for a few weeks and went back to New Zealand. It was a very close and confined period. You did not get out of the "Green Zone" very often. We did have American personnel working in these provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) and I visited a couple of those. Those were even more depressing, because very rarely did anybody get out of those to go anywhere to look at what supposedly we were implementing, what was being built, what was being undertaken of a development nature.

Q: The concept was that civilian agencies would partner with U.S. military units and the U.S. military units typically had forward operating bases or other nomenclature for wherever they were, and they would provide the security and then USAID, the Department of State, and other agencies would have representatives who would be at these PRTs to help implement whatever programs were going on, although in many cases it was actually the Department of Defense that had the money and authority to do things.

MCKINNEY: Yup. And nobody could really get out of those PRTs to see what was going on anyway.

Q: Any movement to meet local officials or tribal leaders had to be done with extreme security measures in place, which tended to reduce the number of out-bound trips.

MCKINNEY: Also tended to reduce the number of very good people that you could meet with. There were programs going on. There was huge amounts of money being spent, much of which I did not agree with, and I still don't agree with. We were building a hospital that as soon as it got near completion, Iraqi insurgents would come in and blow it up again.

Q: The insurgents, not the government.

MCKINNEY: The insurgents. This was supposed to be a pediatric cancer hospital down near Basra, and it took over 6 years until 2010, to be built. It was a package between not only USAID and the government of Iraq but also a private voluntary organization in Houston, Texas that was going to be providing all of the equipment for this pediatric oncology hospital. Former First Lady, Laura Bush, initiated it out of a desire to provide really good health care for Iraqi children. The whole time I was there in 2006, they could not bring in any equipment. The insurgents would make sure it didn't happen so we just stopped trying. There were more guards on the premises than there were workers building it. That's how bad it was. But we persevered. We kept spending money! We kept pushing it out the door. And years later at enormous cost it got completed.

Q: Did you feel a lot of pressure to keep spending money?

MCKINNEY: Absolutely.

Q: Did you feel that that forced you to do things that we shouldn't have done?

MCKINNEY: Naturally. Unfortunately, whether you like it or not, that's what the whole exercise in futility was about. That and making people rich. Anyway we had a whole raft of the usual USAID programs and people working for USAID. We had more TCNs than we had direct-hire Americans or U.S. contractors. When I got there in 2006, some of our FSNs from other countries (who became TCNs - Third country nationals), especially from Africa, had been there for three or four years and had no intention of leaving. They were going to stay there as long as they could and hopefully get a visa to come to the States, and certainly with enough money to support their families back home.

I'm not going to say that nothing really good ever went on, because I'm sure there were, but sending in the program officer trying to approve the volume of projects and activities that were flowing out—We had one business-oriented project that was larger than every budget that I'd ever worked with except for Pakistan and Jordan. It was over $150 million, one project!

Q: How much time did you spend in Baghdad as opposed to traveling around?

MCKINNEY: I spent over 80 percent of my time in Baghdad. Whenever I went out, I had to go out in double helicopter coverage, lots of security. I got to Basra. I went up to the Turkish border at Erbil. I had the misfortune of going into Baghdad a couple of times outside the "Green Zone." I would say 20 percent of my time was spent out and 80 percent in, and that's because I was in the program office and I wanted to go out. There were employees who had been in Baghdad in the "Green Zone" two or three years who had no interest in going out; didn't want to know what was going on. They were there because they were getting ready to buy a house and it didn't take anybody of much intelligence to realize that was going on, but that's what was happening.

I left there the second time in December 2006. I came back to Wellington, and as soon as I got back, I had to have my right knee replaced. I had full replacement surgery on my right knee so I was laid up for a while.

In April 2007 I got a call from the New Zealand MFAT and they hired me as a desk officer to work in Wellington, and so I worked here in Wellington about 3 days a week covering staffing gaps on the Cooks Islands, Samoa and Kiribati desks. Kirsty, my wife, had an assignment to the New Zealand High Commission in the Solomon Islands, and so we were all going to the Solomon Islands in January 2009. About two weeks before we left, I got a call from the USAID mission director in Beirut wanting to know would I be able to come to Beirut in the program office for an unspecified period of time. I talked with Kirsty about it, and cut a deal with the mission that I would go out to Beirut for two–three months at a time, then would go back to the Solomon Islands for 2-3 weeks, and then I'd go back again.

Q: They hired you as a personal services contractor?

MCKINNEY: Yes, as a PSC.

Q: What sort of programs did USAID have in Lebanon?

MCKINNEY: We gave significant support to the education sector. We provided a large grant to the American University of Beirut, which is one of the premiere advanced universities in the Middle East. We provided education funding to other universities in Lebanon. We had a rather large health project that involved health at high schools, building latrines, that kind of thing, in coordination with the U.S. military. We had a large military presence in Beirut and a large military assistance program (MAP). They were building schools and then we would help put in sanitation facilities.

Although we tried desperately, we did not have a refugee program. Lebanon has one of the largest Palestinian refugee camps in the world, but the Lebanese government, like other governments, was not interested in using what they considered to be their money to support the refugees in Lebanon. It was a very difficult situation because it was a

non-family post. Everyone had to live on a compound. I do not enjoy living on a compound, a significant number of security guards.

Q: Well, there was Baghdad.

MCKINNEY: Yeah, but I mean Baghdad was a bit different because while we had a very heavy military presence on the USAID compound, we didn't have many guards at all. When you drove between compounds or you went to the commissary, you got in a bus and you went. There was no military following you around, although there was heavy military in the area in Beirut. You couldn't leave the compound except in an armored car with two bodyguards, and if you went shopping or you went to the movie or anything like that, you had to have a bodyguard physically present.

Q: Did you go out and work with any of the programs?

MCKINNEY: Almost never.

Q: So it was strictly on the compound.

MCKINNEY: Right, but it shouldn't be that way. I did get a chance to work with some of the education programs. I did get a chance to visit many of the educational institutions that we were providing assistance to, especially the American University of Beirut, where I did not make myself that popular because I kept trying to have a discussion about reducing the aid to this fantastic educational institution in the Middle East to do something of a more humanitarian nature. The university was providing scholarships for ministers' kids, for businessmen's kids, who could easily afford to go there. By and large, I was very unsuccessful, but I enjoyed it. I'd always wanted to go to Beirut. Beirut is a very vibrant, alive city. Even with having to have a bodyguard wherever I went, it was still enjoyable. One of the most enjoyable parts of this was we had two local employees who came from southern Lebanon down in the area that was almost on the border with Israel. Not Hamas, but there's another group in south Lebanon.

Q: Hezbollah.

MCKINNEY: Hezbollah. That has gotten it on with the Israelis a couple of times. I went down there and spent an afternoon at one of their houses and had lunch with their family. We had to go down in a convoy, but it was well worth the effort and I enjoyed it.

I went back to the Solomon Islands for the last time in mid 2010 and was prepared just to sit back and enjoy our last six months or so in Honiara, and be with Kirsty and the kids and generally explore the Solomon Islands because the WWII Battle of Guadalcanal took place there. I was able to go out and visit that site and other military sites.

After I'd been back about two weeks I got a call from the deputy minister of health in the government of the Solomon Islands. He said he'd been contacted by the United Nations

Population Fund (UNFPA) out of Geneva and they were looking for someone to oversee a program that they were going to be implementing in the Solomon Islands. I said, "I have no health background. I'm a good manager, but I don't know anything about any of the tropical diseases that you've got going here or what you want me doing." He explained that what they wanted was a manager. They had the professional personnel to do what needed to be done in terms of this malaria program that they were going to be working on. So the UNFPA in Geneva finally got hold of me. I said, "I'm really not interested in working full time. I'm back, I just want to take it easy." They said, "How much longer do you have there?" I said. "We've got about five-six months. They said, "We've got about two months of work and if you want to do that two months in the four-five months that you have, that's not a problem." I said, "When you put it that way, I'll be glad to do it!" So that's what I did for the last four months that we were there. It was a very interesting project because it was mainly with the Ministry of Health. It was very rural because they were trying to get people in rural villages to use mosquito netting as well as these sprayers on the water around to kill off the malaria mosquitoes.

I must tell you I did ask were any filariasis carrying mosquitoes. They said, "No." So I said, "Okay that's fine, because I couldn't go back in a filariasis area.

We left the Solomon Islands at the beginning of 2011 and came back to Wellington and Kirsty decided to take a break from MFAT and she was working for Save the Children New Zealand on leave-without-pay from MFAT. I wasn't at loose ends, I was enjoying just taking it easy for a while, and the kids were very involved in sports and I was busy around the house. In early 2013 got a call from USAID in Embassy Kiev. And as you are well aware, Kabul is an unaccompanied post and the program officer in Kiev was a single man. He worked for me in Azerbaijan and when he was told by USAID that he was being reassigned to Kabul, Peter told his then mission director that he thought that maybe he could give me a call and wondered if I was free if I could come in and replace him. So, that's exactly what happened. I ended up being there for about a year. I did it in two phases.

When I got there and I got settled—Again, I'd discussed it at length with Kirsty and we decided that it was a good move—I found there were daily flights from Kiev to Beijing and we had some very good friends at the New Zealand Embassy in Beijing. She was the deputy Ambassador. I got a hold of Kirsty and I said, "Why don't you fly into Beijing via Singapore and I'll fly in from Kiev and we'll spend a couple of weeks visiting with Pam and Ross Dunn and seeing some of China. I'd already been there in 1984. So we did.

We met up there and we had some friends that were working at the American International School in Nanjing, so we took the bullet train from Beijing down to Nanjing. At one point I looked up and we were doing 300 km per hour, which is fantastic! We did a trip to the Yellow Mountains with a group of the Morin family's friends, while we were there. Then I flew back to Kiev and Kirsty and the kids came home to Wellington; back to school and to work. I was there for another couple of months and then I flew home for R&R in early February and went back in March. Then I

met Kirsty and the kids in the States. We were in the United States for a few weeks visiting with my family and some friends and that was it. The State Department and USAID were having to cut back on PSCs and anyway I'd had enough; I was not going to go out any more.

Q: What year was that?

MCKINNEY: Mid 2013.

Q: So you were 73 at the time?

MCKINNEY: Yeah. I keep using the word interesting, but Kiev, Ukraine was a regional post. We had charge of the programs in Belarus, and Moldova, neither of which I got to visit and I don't think I missed much, especially with Belarus. We had some good ongoing democracy and governance and business programs in Ukraine. We had a couple of "well intentioned" health programs, but it was very difficult to assess what their impact really was, but they were there. I got a chance to go down to Sevastopol in the Crimea to look at a couple of programs that we had down there in business development and one in financial management. Then I was able also to go all the way out to the Polish border to Lviv where they would appreciate it if you didn't speak Russian. The two languages out there were Ukrainian and Polish and the link language was English. Real patriotic Ukrainians would rather that you use Ukrainian because of the nonsense that's going on there now. Out in western Ukraine they are much more staunch, I mean, they're very pro-Ukrainian. In fact, there are large numbers of Ukrainians that fought with the Germans against the Russians in World War II; that's how much they disliked the Russians. That has not changed.

All in all it was a good tour. I met some good people. I met some really dedicated American staff that were working under tremendous pressure because of the political nuances that were going on between Ukraine and Russia, and also the fact that it was a regional hub. That's why I mentioned the other day about President Alexander Lukashenko, the last of the Stalinists in Belarus. One fine day he told the American embassy from now on you can only have five people at your embassy. If you have somebody that's coming, like a building officer like yourself, someone has to leave so that there can only be five. The guy's a bit of a nut case in a long line of nut cases. Anyway, that is what he did, and so staff numbers were drastically reduced.

Q: Okay, thank you. We will wrap it up then.

End of interview