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

AMBASSADOR GRETA N. MORRIS

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 5th of September 2008 and this is an interview with Greta N. Morris, G-R-E-T-A N. M-O-R-R-I-S. What does the N stand for?

MORRIS: It stands for Nance.

Q: N-A-N?

MORRIS: N-A-N-C-E which is my maiden name.

Q: OK, and this will be done on behalf of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy, if I hadn't mentioned that before. What do you go by? What do people call you?

MORRIS: Greta.

Q: OK, Greta let's talk a little about you. When and where were you born?

MORRIS: I was born in San Bernardino, California (CA) on October 8, 1947.

Q: All right, can we talk a bit first on your father's side? What about the family there? What do you know? Where did they come from?

MORRIS: My father's family had come from the Eastern part of the United States, frankly I'm not too sure where originally they came from but they settled first in Arizona and then came to CA – this is my grandfather – and settled in the San Bernardino area. My father, who was born in 1907, graduated from University of California Berkeley with a degree in chemistry, research chemistry. He worked at the Kaiser Steel Mill as a research chemist; this was in Fontana, CA.

Q: On your grandfather do you know what your grandfather was up to on that side of the family?

MORRIS: I know he worked for the railroad for a while. I don't have as much information about my father's side of the family as I would like to have because my father passed away when I was four years old. So I didn't, of course, get to know him all that well. I do have some information from other members of the family but not a lot of information. But I do know that my grandfather did work with the railroad.

Q: Your father went to the University of California at Berkeley as some kind of chemical degree?

MORRIS: Yes, yes he did.

Q: All right, on your mother's side what do you know about that side of the family?

MORRIS: I know a lot more about my mother's side of the family. My maternal grandfather's family had been in the United States for many, many years; in fact, since the American Revolution, and they lived in New York. My maternal grandmother came originally from Germany; a town called Mehlis, which I understand is in what used to be East Germany. She came to the United States when she was 19 years old. Her step-mother had already come and, I think, a couple of her sisters and brothers had already emigrated to the United States so she came over on a boat as everybody did, of course, in those days and settled near Syracuse, New York. That's where she met her husband and his name was Willis Wiesmore. They got married and their two oldest children were born in New York.

Then my grandfather decided that he wanted to go to Hawaii and work there and take the family there. Before taking my grandmother and the two children out to what he hoped would be Hawaii, he went out to look at things first but he only got as far as California before the money ran out. So he settled in Redlands, California. He was a carpenter by trade. He settled in Redlands, CA and then he sent for my grandmother and the two oldest children. They came out there and that is where my mother was born. She was born in Redlands, CA and she was the next to the youngest of seven children.

Q: Now on your mother did she go to college or what then?

MORRIS: Yes. She was very fortunate, I think, in many ways because my grandmother and grandfather didn't have much money and my grandfather actually got a job working with the Big Bear Electric Company and he was doing some work in Big Bear, CA, and was killed in a boating accident. My mother was only three years old at the time. So my grandmother, who only had an eighth grade education from Germany and had some English but it was pretty limited, basically she raised the family, these seven children and did all sorts of work…

Q: This is in Redlands, CA?

MORRIS: This is in Redlands, CA. She made cheese, she sold milk, she raised chickens and did ironing and some sewing; she was very talented with her hands but really had to make ends meet. But my mother had a natural talent for music and when she was quite young, through her church, the Presbyterian Church in Redlands, she caught the eye of a rather wealthy woman who loved music and could see that my mother, Gretchen, had a gift for music. So she provided piano lessons for my mother and my mother learned to play the piano very well. Then this patroness also sponsored my mother to go to the University of Redlands.

Q: Now where is Redlands?

MORRIS: It's in Southern CA. It's near San Bernardino, I don't know if you are familiar with San Bernardino. It's in San Bernardino County, near the San Bernardino Mountains and near the desert getting out toward Palm Springs. So it's about 70 miles southeast of Los Angeles.

Q: When your mother went to the University of Redlands, was she a music major?

MORRIS: She was a music major; she played both the piano and the organ and graduated in 1930, I believe, right in the Depression. So, of course, as a music major she was trying to get some music teaching jobs, but none of the schools were having music courses at the time; there just weren't jobs for music teachers. Again, through the help of her patroness, she was able to do some further study at Berkeley. She didn't get a masters degree but she did do some further study. Then when she was finished at Berkeley, she came back and had some music teaching jobs and did some other teaching of elementary school; she got an elementary teaching credential. That's what she spent most of her career doing, teaching, and she also played the organ in various churches. She played in the Presbyterian Church in Redlands for a while and then later at the Methodist Church. She was a really wonderful organist.

Q: How did she meet your father?

MORRIS: They were both working with the Social Security Administration. This was in the early 1940s and they were both working in the Social Security Administration. I'm not sure why they weren't working in their chosen fields but maybe it was still difficult to get jobs at that point. So that's where they met.

Q: You grew up in San Bernardino?

MORRIS: I grew up in Redlands.

Q: In Redlands? OK, how long were you in Redlands?

MORRIS: I lived in Redlands from my birth until I graduated from college because I also went to the University of Redlands for my first degree.

Q: OK, well we can go into Redlands in depth.

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: In the first place did your mother's musical talents pass on to you?

MORRIS: I would like to think so and I think they did. I, of course, loved music from the time I was very young because I heard my mother practicing and she loved to listen to

music so she would turn on the radio. I remember a wonderful program called Opera is for Everyone that would broadcast operas; I think this was every Sunday night so we would listen to that. Then she had favorite records she would play. I remember one was Claire de Lune by Debussy and I would listen to that and then, of course, listen to her practicing also. So I have very early memories of that and also attending church and hearing her play the organ and hearing the choir so I developed very early a love for music.

Actually, I really wanted to study the piano when I was young… my mother had started playing the piano when she was eight years old. But for some reason she decided eight years old was too young to start playing the piano; so I wasn't able to start studying the piano at age eight. When I was age ten and my elementary school in Redlands had instrumental music classes, I decided I wanted to play the cello. The instructor was a man named Emmanuel Heifitz who was a relative of Jascha Heifitz. So I started playing the cello in the school orchestra and then I was able to start taking private music lessons when I was eleven. I took private music lessons all through high school and college. I was a music minor in college; I thought about majoring in music but again my mother, I think seared by her own experience during the Depression, felt that music was not a very reliable thing to study unless you were destined for greatness. She encouraged me to do something else so I was an English major with a music minor.

Q: Well let's go back to you as a kid. In the first place what was family life like when you were quite young?

MORRIS: Well I had a twin sister; she was my only sibling. Of course, when you are a twin you always have this other person who is just really almost a part of you. You almost feel like you're two halves of the same person and in a certain sense you are. So of course, as we grew up together, we were very close. I have early memories of my father and they are very, very positive memories even though as I mentioned he passed away when I was not even five. I remember he was someone who was very patient; he loved to read to my sister and me. He would always explain things so if we asked questions about various things he would always give a very adult response. He really treated us like we were intelligent human beings and that is something that has always stuck with me. Of course, I didn't understand much about death when I was four years old but obviously I felt it was a void in my life when he died.

At that point in my life, my mother, who had to support my sister and me and also help my grandmother, went back to teaching full time. She was teaching fifth grade at the local elementary school. I would say that obviously our family was not terribly well off because teachers didn't get paid a lot of money and I don't know how much of a pension my father had but I don't think it was all that much. But I think I enjoyed a lot of things about my childhood. I'm not sure what all you would like me to talk about.

Q: In the first place, I have half brothers who are twins and until they died when they were eighty. They were very close, they were mirror twins, they were very close but God they would argue with each other all the time. Their wives would sort of roll their eyes up

and go back into a corner and let them have their thing. How did you get along with your twin?

MORRIS: I think we got along well. Of course, we had our spats from time to time and it was usually if we thought something was not fair and one twin was getting something better or more or bigger than the other twin. But generally I think we got along very well. We played together and we used to have these wonderful imaginary games that we would play. Living in a college town we, of course, knew people at the local college and we thought college girls were really the greatest. So we decided we were going to play college girls. We had a huge fig tree in our backyard and that was our dormitory and so we would have this imaginary play about being college girls. That was a phase we went through.

Q: Where did your mother fall politically? I mean in domestic politics, was that an element?

MORRIS: Well, yes I think so, particularly later on in my life; she was a Republican. Her mother, who came from Germany, became a U.S. citizen and was a Republican. I'm not sure quite why she decided to become a Republican but she did and so my mother became a Republican also.

My father, and of course I didn't know this when he was alive but I learned it later, was a Democrat and his whole family was staunchly Democratic and they are still very, very staunchly Democratic.

My own political awakening occurred in 1960 and I became absolutely fascinated with the political campaign and riveted to the television.

Q: I think that…well what we are going though in 2008 probably is the equivalent to the 1960 campaign. There are sometimes when things really grab a generation and I suspect this time is one. What about religion? How important was religion in your upbringing would you say?

MORRIS: I guess it was important to a certain extent and I'll try to explain that. My mother, as I mentioned, played the organ in the Methodist Church when my sister and I were growing up and so we went to the Methodist Church every Sunday and went to Sunday school also. It was something certainly I was aware of and my mother would talk about Bible stories from time to time. I remember she would always tell this wonderful story about the creation…She had the Time Life books about the natural history of the world. When we would have split pea soup and the split pea soup would get cool and sort of coagulated it would look kind of like lava that was coagulating, so then she would tell the story about how God created the earth and it was very hot and fluid and then it became cooler and solid.

When I thought about it later it was kind of an interesting combination of the Biblical story of creation but also of the more scientific story. I suppose that that had some kind of

influence on me at some point along the line. I wouldn't say that we were a terribly religious family but religion was certainly a part of our lives. My sister and I knew we came from a Christian family; we knew that we were Protestants. My sister and I were baptized in the Presbyterian Church because that was the Church that my parents were members of even though my mother played the organ at the Methodist Church. Then after my mother stopped playing the organ at the Methodist Church, my sister and I had friends who were going to the First Baptist Church, an American Baptist Church that was affiliated with the University of Redlands which was an American Baptist college at that time. So then we started going to the Baptist Church. In a way we had a somewhat confused childhood experience with religion but it was all mainstream Protestant.

Q: How important was your grandmother coming from Germany in your life?

MORRIS: My grandmother was a very loving and wonderful person. I used to love to hear her tell stories about her childhood in Germany. She loved to bake and so every once in a while she would bake German delicacies. At one point she taught me a German prayer; I think I was four years old at the time. I remembered this German prayer for quite a few years and I could not remember a word of it now, unfortunately. My grandmother who was fairly old at the time because my mother was the next to the youngest of her children and then my mother was 37 when my sister and I were born so my grandmother was already fairly elderly. When my sister and I were eight years old she started suffering from dementia so her ability to relate the stories of her youth and her experience in Germany was not so good after that. I certainly remember quite a bit of what she told me about Germany and her experiences there.

Q: With that large number of children you had were they settled around Redlands or not or did you have sort of a big family around you?

MORRIS: Not really immediately in Redlands. The only other sibling of my mother who settled in Redlands was my aunt, Aunt Ara; she was the second child of my grandparents. She and her husband settled in Redlands when my sister and I were about six; so they were always there. Then there were other relatives who lived in the Los Angeles area, two other brothers who lived in the Los Angeles area and then there was one who lived in Seattle, Washington, so we didn't see them very often. Then two of the children, two of the seven children had died and my sister and I never met them. One had died of smallpox. He was working on a freighter ship line and he had caught smallpox in China and the other died in an accident.

Q: Redlands you say was sort of a college town in a way.

MORRIS: It was a college town yes.

Q: How about as kids elementary school and all? Let's talk about elementary school was this college dominated or how would you say?

MORRIS: I went to two elementary schools. The first one was the one where my mother taught, Franklin Elementary School. It was fairly near the University but it was also in a part of town where the people were not very affluent. There weren't a lot of people from the university community who had children there. Then we moved when I was eight to another part of town and went to another elementary school, McKinley Elementary School. There were a few more people there who were associated with the university. They were both public schools and I think I thought they were just fine. I don't know if they were by today's standards.

Q: Well by that time was there much of a Hispanic population?

MORRIS: There were some yes, but not a lot at either of the elementary schools that I went to; there were a few at both schools but not a lot. Of course, when I got into junior high and especially in high school because at that time there was only one high school for all of Redlands so there was quite a large Hispanic population.

Q: As a small kid were you much of a reader?

MORRIS: Yes, I was a reader. I actually, and I'm not sure why, but when I was in first grade I really had a hard time learning to read, it somehow didn't make sense to me. Then when I was in second grade I suddenly started to catch on to reading. I remember I got a Bible as an Easter present when I was seven years old so, of course, I wanted to read this Bible. I was reading the Easter Story in the Bible and suddenly I realized I was reading it all by myself. I had this wonderful sort of epiphany that I could read and there were all those books out there and no matter what happened in my life I could always read a good book. It was just a magical moment and from that moment on I read everything I could get my hands on.

Q: Do you recall any books or serious books that really, we're talking when you were a young kid, grabbed you?

MORRIS: Yes, when I was eight I got Little House in the Big Woods by Laura Ingalls Wilder for Christmas. So I read that and I'm sure I read it several times, which is what I did with every single book that I really liked. Then I read all of the other books in the Little House series; I just loved those books. I loved books that had to do with American history and my mother taught fifth grade and she always spent a lot of time teaching American history and preparing for it so I was totally enthralled with American history. I loved to read books about the pioneers; I loved to read books about the pilgrims and about the early settlers. I loved to read biographies of famous Americans; so those were the kinds of things that I enjoyed reading.

Q: At an early age did you have any sort of female role models or people you looked toward?

MORRIS: Florence Nightingale was one of my…

Q: The lady with the lamp.

MORRIS: Yes, and Clara Barton, also.

Q: In elementary school how about various subjects were you a good student or any studies you particularly liked and some you didn't care for so much?

MORRIS: Well once I really caught on to reading yes I think I was always a good student and I really enjoyed school. I loved reading especially, I think it's fair to say, and I also enjoyed writing. When I was eight years old I decided I was going to write my own story about the first Thanksgiving. So I wrote this story just from things that I had read and that I had heard from my mother. That was my first creative writing project but I enjoyed writing, I enjoyed reading, of course, and I enjoyed music also. I enjoyed arithmetic and later math but perhaps not quite as much.

Q: Did your sister parallel you?

MORRIS: Yes, I would say we were fairly similar. I don't think she enjoyed reading quite as much as I did, but later she enjoyed reading a lot as well.

Q: How about spelling? Were you a good speller?

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: You were one of those horrible little girls I remember because I could never spell. Those little girls would stand up there and spell away. We would have these spelling bees and all of that. Oh yes…were you getting stories of the Depression or World War II? Were these elements that people would say back when and all that? Was this part of your upbringing, did you hear about this?

MORRIS: Definitely the Depression. I mean this was one of the critical experiences in my mother's life. She talked about the Depression a lot and whenever anything seemed to be going awry with the economy she would say, "Oh, it looks like we're going to have another Depression." That just kind of, I think, governed everything that she did. Certainly as she tried to guide my sister and me in our career choices, the Depression was a very important part of it. "It's good to go into teaching," she said, "because they always need teachers, but don't go into music teaching because music is the first thing they cut out of the schools." So yes, the Depression was something we heard about all the time.

Q: Were African-Americans part of the scene while you were there?

MORRIS: There were a few at both of my elementary schools but not very many.

Q: How about Asians?

MORRIS: I don't recall meeting any Asians until maybe I was in high school. I certainly don't recall meeting any in elementary school.

Q: What was happening in the county around you other than the school? Was it agricultural? Was it business? What was going on there?

MORRIS: Redlands used to be the largest orange growing center in the world. When I was growing up there were still quite a few orange and grapefruit and lemon groves. One of the things that I remember from my early years was when the weather would get cold and they would have to put the smudge pots out. So my mother would always listen to the weather report every evening and if it was going to be below freezing then we had to cover all the furniture because otherwise the smudge would come into the house and get everything very dirty; it was the Sunkist plant and that was still a fairly active part of the economy. Of course, they started cutting down the orange groves when they wanted to build more houses. So it became almost a bedroom community in a way for people who worked closer to the city.

Q: I'm a generation kind but I lived in San Marino.

MORRIS: Oh, okay.

Q: We had orange groves all over the place but now they are long gone. We used to have great orange fights.

MORRIS: Oh really.

Q: By the time you went to high school…you went to?

MORRIS: To Redlands High School.

Q: Redlands High, what was it like?

MORRIS: It was a huge high school. In my class there were over 700 people.

Q: Good heavens.

MORRIS: So it was a three-year high school so we did junior high through 9th grade and then started high school. I would say it was a good experience; I enjoyed high school. I was a bit of a…well I was certainly a bookworm; I was very studious and not terribly sociable. Well, I was sociable but I was never part of the cheerleader group…

Q: You weren't a pom-pom girl.

MORRIS: No I was not a pom-pom girl. Of course I was studying music and I played in the orchestra, I always regretted I couldn't sing in the choir because there was a wonderful choir there but I just couldn't fit it into my schedule because, of course, I was

doing all the college prep stuff. But I enjoyed music very much. I did two years of Latin in junior high and then I did French in high school. It was interesting because even though my grandmother was German, my mother had learned French and I used to just love to hear her speak French. She remembered quite a bit of French and so she would speak quite a bit of French. So I fell in love with French culture and decided that I had to study French, so I studied French in high school.

Q: Did the outside world intrude in high school? Let's take the election of '60. What interested you in this election? This was Nixon versus Kennedy.

MORRIS: Kennedy yes. Well, I guess I revolted from my Republican roots and decided I was a Kennedy supporter. I thought that John F. Kennedy was the greatest and the whole Kennedy family. I'm sure it was partly that I was admiring a very handsome young president but I really liked his ideas also. I became politically aware then and started forming some political views at that time. For me, that was an extremely important experience. I think that was when, as it was with a lot of people, I first started thinking about the whole idea of public service, of going to Washington and working for the government; something that never would have occurred to me before. But it was something then I really thought about as something that yes I think I would like to do this. That was a very influential thing in my life.

Q: How about international things? I'm sure you had the duck and cover type thing about the Cold War and in case of nuclear attack you had to get under your desk and all.

MORRIS: Yes, we did but it didn't become real until the Cuban missile crisis.

Q: But how were you getting your news at home? Was there a paper; was there a TV, radio or what?

MORRIS: There was the Redlands Daily Facts which, of course, some people jokingly called the Redlands Daily Fallacies, but for a small town paper it wasn't too bad. It did certainly have some national and international news, not a lot but it did have some. Of course, we listened to the radio. My mother resisted getting a television until my sister and I were eleven so then we had a television. Then during the campaign of '60 I watched the Democratic convention – that was during summer vacation – I watched it from gavel to gavel. I'm sure I watched the Republican convention as well and watched the news. We had those three sources of news.

Q: Did you take much interest in any foreign countries in high school?

MORRIS: I think the only foreign country that I took a lot of interest in, as a country, was France. I was really interested in France and, of course, wanted to go to France. I also knew a little about Austria because I loved the music of Mozart. I knew about other countries and I think I'd always wanted to travel. That was something that was always part of my life. It's a cliché, but I used to hear the train whistle every night and think I wanted to travel to far away places.

When I was in high school there was a woman who came to an exchange-teacher program at the University of Redlands; she came from India. She wore a sari and she came to the First Baptist Church where I was attending at the time and would wear her sari and sometimes she would fix Indian food. I thought this was very interesting and very intriguing. I didn't really know that much about other counties though I did enjoy world history. Of course at that time, the way world history was taught focused on European history. I found it fascinating – the stories about the Greeks and the Romans and all of that.

Q: How about in the Cuban missile crisis in '62 so you would have been fourteen?

MORRIS: I would say I was a sophomore in high school, yes, a sophomore in high school. I was really afraid. I remember sitting in church one Sunday morning and praying that we were not going to have a nuclear war because it really did seem like the world was on the brink of catastrophe. So it really did have a very strong impression on me and certainly when the crisis ended I was extraordinarily relieved and thankful.

Q: Did you date much in high school or not?

MORRIS: No, I didn't. My mother did not encourage us to pursue boys and I was pretty focused on my schoolwork in part because I knew that if I were going to go to college I was going to have to do pretty well in high school and get some kind of a scholarship. Even though I was interested in some of the boys in high school I did not date at all in high school.

Q: Did you have summer jobs?

MORRIS: Not in high school. I went to summer school almost every year that I was in high school. I did not have a summer job until the summer before my senior year in high school; I didn't go to summer school that year. I was doing house cleaning at a couple of people's homes in Redlands; that was my summer job.

Q: While you were in high school getting ready for college were you aware of what I would today call the "glass ceiling", but basically it used to be secretarial work, nursing or teaching. I mean this was kind of it for an upward mobile young woman. Was this sort of the atmosphere that you grew up in you would say?

MORRIS: Yes, it was very much the atmosphere. Girls all thought about getting married and there were even a few girls in my high school who got married when they were still in high school, usually because they were pregnant, unfortunately, and then some who got married shortly afterward. Of course, I didn't want to do that; I wanted to go to college, but getting married was something that I wanted to do eventually. Yes, I think the idea that if you were a girl, you could aspire to be a secretary, a teacher or a nurse: those were the generally accepted options. I should add also that Francis Willis who I think was the first female ambassador…

Q: Yes, I think she was.

MORRIS: She lived in Redlands for a while; this was after she had retired. So every once in a while there would be articles in the newspaper about Francis Willis. I was aware that there was a woman who was an ambassador who had lived in Redlands; I never met her. But I was certainly aware of her and I was also aware she was not married. Of course at that time, female Foreign Service personnel had to resign if they got married. I don't think I even thought that I would be qualified to be in the Foreign Service but also it didn't appeal to me for the reason that female Foreign Service Officers could not be married.

Q: So you went to the University of Redlands and you were there from when to when?

MORRIS: I was there from 1965-69; I graduated from high school in '65, so it was from '65-'69.

Q*: You were there during what was known as the '60s?*

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: Which usually meant the latter part of the '60s.

MORRIS: Right.

Q: What was the University of Redlands like at that time?

MORRIS: It was quite a traditional place in many ways. Most of the female students were interested in getting married when they graduated, having families. A lot of them were planning to be teachers; there were some people who were sort of outside the mould. I should add that as someone who was interested in music that was also an option that was always out there: women could be musicians because I knew about women who were musicians. So that was an option but it was also something that, as I said before, there wasn't a lot of encouragement to pursue music as a career. It was quite a traditional place; most of the boys were either going to go into business, several of them were accounting majors or pre-law or pre-med or in some cases going into teaching. There were also people who were in the drama department who were hoping to be great thespians. I would say by and large it was fairly traditional.

There were a lot of protests there but the protests that did occur related mostly to the enforced twice a week attendance at "convocation," it was called. The Tuesday convocation was usually a secular convocation where you would have a lecture on what was supposed to be an important topic—and often the speakers were very interesting. The Thursday convocation was a religious service. It was particularly that Thursday convocation that there were a number of protests against—the fact that it was mandatory. Finally, during my time there that policy ended; convocation was no longer mandatory.

Q: How about the Vietnam war? How did that play there?

MORRIS: It really didn't play much at all. There were a few people who were concerned about it and towards my senior year more people were concerned about it. Of course, some of the male students were concerned about the draft. Most of them were going to go on to some kind of graduate school, so I think they saw that as something that would help them escape the draft. I remember that there were a few people, even people that I knew from Redlands high school, who had not gone to college and were drafted, who went to Vietnam and there were reports from time to time in the paper about people from Redlands who had been killed. It was certainly something that we were aware of but it wasn't really a big issue at the University of Redlands.

Q: Well Redlands is a part of the University of California system isn't it?

MORRIS: No.

Q: It wasn't?

MORRIS: It was a private school founded in the early twentieth century. As I said, it started out as an American Baptist University but basically it's secular now.

Q: Hence the convocation, because I was thinking that you wouldn't have that at a University of California campus.

MORRIS: No, no.

Q: Were you all sort of looking over your shoulders of what was happening at the University of California and also the Haight-Ashbury, the hippie movement and all this because this would be kind of fun for students, wouldn't it?

MORRIS: Yes, I think there were a few people who were looking at that but it was a relatively conservative campus and a relatively conservative town. Again I think the '68 election – this was something that made a lot of people much more aware of the Vietnam War, certainly the campaigns of Bobby Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy. People were very much aware of the conflicts over the Vietnam War. But…

Q: I take it because of the mixture there the Civil Rights movement didn't have much resonance where you were.

MORRIS: Not…again I think it was something that probably many of us at the university, people who considered themselves more liberal were certainly in support of the civil rights movement. But it wasn't something that had a great impact because at the University of Redlands when I was there were very, very few African-American students. I'm having a hard time really remembering any when I was there; there were a few Asian students, some who were exchange students from Hong Kong. There were a couple

students from Hawaii, there were a few Chicano or Mexican-American students but basically it was, I mean even more so than say Redlands High School, it was a pretty homogenous environment.

Q: Did your sister attend with you?

MORRIS: Yes, yes.

Q: Were you raised diverging at all?

MORRIS: Yes, I would say that we did start to diverge in college. We roomed together for one semester and then we decided we should room with other people so we could get to know other people and become more independent; so we did. I decided to major in English and minor in music. My sister majored in sociology and minored in French. I guess it's fair to say we did diverge somewhat.

Q: You graduated in '69; what did you have in mind?

MORRIS: To tell the truth, I didn't have a very firm plan in mind. As I mentioned, I think I had a pretty traditional upbringing. I loved English and I was thinking of going to graduate school. My professors, particularly my major professor, urged me to go to graduate school and get a PhD. but I just wasn't sure that was exactly what I wanted to do. Of course, my mother thought I should become a high school teacher; I really wasn't sure I wanted to do that. Instead I opted to do a masters degree in English and I went to UCLA. I applied and got into UCLA so that's where I went to get my…

Q: For how many years?

MORRIS: I did it for a year and then one extra summer.

Q: So that would be '69-'70?

MORRIS: Yes, that is correct; that is when I was at UCLA.

Q: Did you find UCLA a different mix?

MORRIS: Very different.

Q: I would imagine so.

MORRIS: Very different, yes.

Q: Did you feel like the country girl coming into the big city?

MORRIS: I did, yes. It was very exciting obviously; it was the first time I had really lived on my own. My sister was not there; she went to University of California at Santa

Barbara to get her teaching credential. I was really there on my own in this graduate dormitory. It was very interesting as there were people from all different fields and a lot of people from different parts of the United States and people from different countries. It was very stimulating and exciting.

Q: And the campus, I assume, was in a certain amount of turmoil wasn't it?

MORRIS: Yes, we had the demonstrations in May of 1970.

Q: That was at Kent State.

MORRIS: That's right, and there were some very major demonstrations there and a lot of discussion about what people's responsibilities were. I remember attending a couple of these protest rallies. I was very sympathetic, but I also felt very discouraged because it seemed like you would have these meetings and then all of the different groups would start fighting over their own interests rather than focusing on a central issue like the war, for example. So I got a little discouraged. Some of the students also wanted to go on strike and not go to class. I remember I had one very fine English professor who talked very frankly about how he felt; he wasn't going to compel people to come to class and if people wanted to take an incomplete and finish their work later, he would agree to that. But he felt that the way he could contribute to making the world a better place was to continue to teach his course. I was really very impressed by his sincerity and his frankness and commitment. I continued to go to class and to complete the semester.

Q: Did you find yourself at all challenged about what the government was about? In other words you had the Kennedy thing but all of a sudden the government was it the enemy or what?

MORRIS: Well I don't think I felt that the government was the enemy but I did feel that it was important for people to work within the system to change it. I think that's how I would describe my views. I did not want to tear down the system, I did not feel that our system of government was inherently bad just because I didn't agree with the policies but I did disagree with the policies and I did feel that it was incumbent upon people who were responsible to do something about it.

Q: When you say you didn't agree with the policy was this our involvement in the Vietnam War or was there more to it?

MORRIS: Yes, I would say it was basically the involvement in the Vietnam War.

Q: Were you, again, not coming from within you might say the University of California system and coming from Redlands you said you were noticing how these various groups of activists never seem to get together. Do you think this was the beginning of being almost the disinterested observer or so as a Foreign Service officer where you look at the political life and sort of say these are peculiar creatures or not?

MORRIS: I think to a certain extent, yes, I think it was a very important part of formulating my own political identity in feeling that you can't just blindly protest or fight against something; you have to be fighting for something and doing it in the right way. Certainly I think I was becoming more conscious of women's rights and even seeing in some of the things that were going on that women were not being treated as equal partners even within some of these various protest movements; I felt very strongly that women should be equal partners. Even though I had never thought of myself as a feminist, when I was growing up, I realized that I had in my own family my own mother who had raised my sister and me by herself and had been a professional both as a teacher and as a musician. I had a role model of a woman who was very capable and believed that women needed to be recognized for their capabilities.

Q: Did you find sort of a growing awareness as most of us term as sexism, males putting women down and all that?

MORRIS: Yes, yes.

Q: The jokes and all; it's still there.

MORRIS: Oh yes, very much so. In graduate school I didn't experience this myself, but there was certainly a lot of talk about various female students who had been approached inappropriately by their male professors.

Q: Was there…well this is the time of early on Better Freidan and Gloria Steinem.

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: Was this movement going on, you are not supposed to call them the feminist movement but it's an awareness of by God we are equal. Were you picking this up at grad school than you were at Redlands?

MORRIS: Oh yes, definitely and there were some women at UCLA who were very much part of the kind of the bra burning set so I was very much aware of it.

Q: How did you feel? Did you subscribe to this or take it with from a distance? How would you say you fit into the movement?

MORRIS: I was not part of any sort of anti-male movement, let's put it that way, because I still was hoping that I was going to get married some day. I didn't feel that it was incumbent upon me not to shave my legs in order to be a strong, independent professional woman. I supported a lot of the goals of the feminist movement, but I felt that some of the methods were inappropriate; I didn't support all the methods.

Q: Well looking back on some of these things and even today somebody's got to get out in the point of the revolution. They usually over do it and they usually are sort of burned up

by revolutions devouring their young or something. But it's all part of the process. While you were there did the Foreign Service or going abroad enter your purview?

MORRIS: As I mentioned before, I was very interested in traveling and so I was thinking that maybe I would go to France and study French for a year. I thought this would be a wonderful thing to do. I really didn't think about the Foreign Service; I didn't think about it as a career. I was aware it was out there, I didn't know anybody at UCLA who was going into the Foreign Service but I did have one friend whose brother was going into the Foreign Service so I was interested in hearing about that. I thought perhaps it would be very nice to be married to someone going into the Foreign Service but it didn't really occur to me that I could join the Foreign Service or that I would necessarily want to since even at that point women would still have to leave when they got married.

Q: It wasn't until the mid-seventies where really you might say; the beginning was still going on the revolution of women in the Foreign Service. Although I have to say that looking at government work the Foreign Service was the first and for along time the only real place in the government where you could, as long as you didn't get married, enter and move up in the ranks, it was one of these oddities. But then you had the marriage thing, which screwed everything up.

Well then you graduated in 1970, whither?

MORRIS: Well, at that point, I still hadn't really figured out what I wanted to do with the rest of my life, so I thought maybe I would teach for a while. At Claremont Graduate School there was a program called the intern-teaching program. Basically, if you were selected for this program, you could go to summer school and do about four weeks of practice teaching during the summer. Then you could get a full time paid job – if you could get one and at that time it was pretty hard to get teaching jobs – you could teach with a provisional credential and then you would continue to study, take a couple of courses each semester and then you would finish up at the end of the year with your California teaching credential. So that is what I did: I went to Claremont Graduate School and got a job teaching English at Upland High School. Upland is a community very near Claremont.

Q: Now put Claremont into perspective for someone who doesn't know the area.

MORRIS: OK, Claremont is in Los Angeles County but it's a part of Los Angeles County that is the closest to San Bernardino County, so it's inland. The Claremont Colleges include Pomona, Harvey Mudd, Pitzer, Scripps College and then, of course, the Claremont Graduate School.

Q: I might point out to someone who is not familiar with these schools. These are excellent schools; it's sort of a hidden valley of real academic excellence.

MORRIS: Yes, Pomona is fabulous.

Q: It's absolutely top rate.

MORRIS: Yes, yes, definitely.

Q: So for teaching you were putting yourself right into the top-level academic swim, I'm mixing all sorts of metaphors. How did you find Claremont Grad School there?

MORRIS: I was in the education department so I didn't really have that much exposure to the other departments but I was living again in a graduate apartment complex. I was living in an apartment and I had two roommates; basically all the other residents at these apartments were graduate students at Claremont Graduate School. Again it was very interesting. There were a lot of foreign students there; there were students from Japan, Pakistan, Egypt, Ethiopia and many different countries so it was a very interesting experience.

Q: You taught at Upland?

MORRIS: Upland High School and my first year I taught ninth and tenth grade and then the second and third years I taught tenth and eleventh grade. My first year of teaching was quite a shock. I was 22 when I started teaching and I looked pretty young, so it was not easy always to maintain discipline; that was a big struggle my first year in teaching to get the kids to shut up and listen.

Q: How did you maintain discipline?

MORRIS: I would give the students assignments that I hoped would instill learning but also would be things that they would have to work on. We did things that would involve participation. A lot of students who are required to take English don't really like English very much but they have to take it. I tried to do things that I thought they might find interesting. For example, when we did Shakespeare, I had the students act out the plays in class. I did not give them lectures, but they would have to prepare to discuss a piece of literature whether it was a short story or part of a novel and they would have to be prepared to discuss it. I tried to…

Q: You survived.

MORRIS: Yes, I tried to be tough and ask them tough questions and make sure that they paid attention.

Q: What was the student body like? From what sort of community were they drawn?

MORRIS: Upland in some ways was a fairly upper class community and there were a lot of fairly well-to-do people there. There was also quite a sizeable Chicano population. The tended to be less economically well off and there was a problem there definitely between the Chicano students and the Caucasian students. In fact, it was during that time that Chicano awareness was becoming much stronger and I remember there were a couple of

incidents where there were fights in the restrooms between Caucasians and Chicanos. Finally, at one point we had a kind of student recess. The students were dismissed for the day and the teachers all had to meet to talk about all of these issues. We had some representatives from the Chicano community; we talked about some of their concerns to try to put some things in place that would make the environment less hostile; it was a challenging time because of that. Also, it was at a time when a lot of kids were getting into drugs and that was a problem; there were students who were smoking pot and some taking harder drugs also.

Q: Well you mentioned the term Chicano, which I guess is not used very much any more is it or not?

MORRIS: No, I don't think so.

Q: It's basically Mexican.

MORRIS: Yes, I think Hispanic is the appropriate term now.

Q: I've seen something quite recently, I mean; it is still a huge problem. The Mexican immigrants unlike many other immigrant groups doesn't, I mean this is over simplifying but, doesn't seem to put the same emphasis on education but it does on work getting out and getting a job. The families still seem to push the work as opposed to getting ahead. As one who has dealt with Orientals or some other populations, latch on to the American system is based on good education.

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: I guess I don't know how much you were seeing of this but was there an indifference toward education would you say or not?

MORRIS: I think that one of the problems was that by high school, people who have not been focusing a lot of attention on education (perhaps it has not been emphasized in their families) all along, by that time they are pretty far behind. This can manifest itself in having problems as far as not having the background, maybe not being able to read that well and generally not being a strong student. That can lead to embarrassment or frustration and translate into behavioral problems and truancy and that sort of thing. I guess you could say it was indifference but by high school it was manifesting itself in other ways.

Q: How long did you teach there?

MORRIS: I taught for three full years. When I was at Claremont I met my husband who was a graduate student; he was studying international relations and his focus was on Southeast Asia. We actually got married the summer after my first year of teaching. Then he took the Foreign Service test and as he was finishing up his doctorate he got into the

Foreign Service in 1974. At that point, I resigned from my teaching position and we moved to Washington.

Q: What was the background of your husband?

MORRIS: My husband's name was Charles Morris, he went by Chuck. His father was a minister, a Baptist Minister. Chuck was born in Chicago. Then his parents felt called to be foreign missionaries, so they decided they were going to do that. When Chuck was eleven and his younger brother, Eric, was around eight they went out to Malaysia, which, of course, at that time was still Malaya; it was not an independent country yet. That was where his parents had their first missionary assignment. During the first year, his mother home schooled both Chuck and Eric but that wasn't working out that well because both of the boys really missed the school atmosphere and their friends. Chuck had played in the band when he was back in Illinois and he really missed all of that. So their parents decided to send both of them to Singapore to stay with some other missionary families so that they could go to the Singapore American School. So Chuck went to Singapore American School and he graduated from Singapore American School. He got a scholarship to go to Baylor University, which was a Baptist school…

Q: In Texas.

MORRIS: Yes in Texas, in Waco, Texas, and being the child of a missionary, he could get a good scholarship and basically have his way paid there. So he went there and majored in international relations at Baylor. Then he was in ROTC and after he graduated he went into the Air Force and was stationed in Little Rock, Arkansas, working with the missile program there. Since his experience of living in Southeast Asia, Chuck had always thought that he wanted to go into the Foreign Service and he certainly wanted to go back to graduate school. So he did a lot of reading while he was in Little Rock and he applied then during his last year in the Air Force to go to Claremont Graduate School. He started at Claremont Graduate School at the same time as I was at UCLA. 1969 was when he got out of the Air Force and went to Claremont Graduate School; he was studying international relations. His background living in Malaysia and Singapore was very instrumental both in his interest in international relations and the Foreign Service but also specifically in Southeast Asia.

Q: When you got married were you thinking about the Foreign Service for your husband. In other words, were you sort of gearing yourself to get out of this Southern California area and try something different?

MORRIS: I was ready for an adventure, yes, and in a sense this was something that I had always thought would be a wonderful thing: to be able to be in the Foreign Service as a spouse because at the time it didn't seem like you could both be married and be in the Foreign Service.

Q: Did you have any feeling at that time of resentment about this policy or was this just sort of this wasn't in the cards so it really wasn't a factor?

MORRIS: I don't think I felt any resentment at all about it. Actually by the time, yes I'm sure by the time he joined, I think they changed the law in 1972. So by the time he joined it was actually possible for married women to serve in the Foreign Service. But as an English major it wasn't something that I thought I'd ever be qualified to do.

Q: Let's talk about that a bit. In 1970 where did you go and how did you prepare yourself?

MORRIS: His first assignment after A-100 was in INR (Intelligence and Research). Because he had a doctorate, they wanted him to go to INR. So he worked as the Thailand-Burma analyst in INR. He really wanted to go overseas.

Q: Of course.

MORRIS: He did not want to stay in Washington so basically he sort of negotiated with his career counselor to be able to work in INR for just one year and then go to Indonesia, to Surabaya, to the consulate. We were very excited because when he was in graduate school he was studying Indonesian and Indonesia was a place we both wanted to go to. I'd heard a lot about Southeast Asia and I really was very eager to go there. Anyway he was very excited about that. When he finished up with his work in INR, then he was going to have Indonesian language training. It was supposed to be for five months, which, of course, is not even a full Indonesian course. I think he ended up getting only sixteen weeks; anyway I was very happy because they let me study Indonesian as well. So I was in the Indonesian course with my husband at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and it was a wonderful experience.

Q: Because this going on to your much later career did you get any feel for the teaching of language here at FSI?

MORRIS: Yes, and in a lot of ways it was quite different then than it is now – similar in some ways but also quite different. Back in those days there was a scientific linguist for every language and this scientific linguist would have a very active role in telling the teachers how to teach. So the teachers themselves (who were all native speakers) didn't have much autonomy in the classroom. I think we were also going through a period then when the teachers were not encouraged to give very much in the way of explanation about the language, so you were kind of expected to figure things out by listening and then trying to figure out what the grammatical structure was from what you were hearing. If you got really frustrated, you could ask the scientific linguist but, of course, we could ask our teachers and sometimes they would tell us.

Q: In a way I guess it was the idea to replicate childhood but the problem is if you are an adult you want to know what the bloody hell why am I using this infinitive and not that infinitive.

MORRIS: You are not a child.

Q: You're not a child.

MORRIS: Yes, that's right. I think that's why that method was dropped because it wasn't working very well and people were not happy with it.

Q: How did you find Indonesian?

MORRIS: It wasn't a terribly difficult language; it was a fun language. The Indonesian teachers were absolutely wonderful. They were such kind people and very friendly and just delightful people to work with. For me to be able to study language full time I thought was the greatest thing; I really, really enjoyed it.

Q: You went to Indonesia?

MORRIS: Yes, we went to Surabaya.

Q: When did you go there?

MORRIS: in 1976.

Q: You were there from when to when?

MORRIS: We were in Surabaya for two years; there was an international school there so I was teaching at the international school. I guess it was there I first met people in the U.S. Information Agency and I thought, "wow this is the kind of stuff that I'm really interested in and it's the kind of stuff that maybe I could do." They were doing educational exchanges, Fulbright programs, and international visitors programs. They were doing media relations, which involved writing; they were bringing in cultural groups and these were all things that I really enjoyed. So I thought maybe this is something that I could do. So I began thinking that maybe I would like to join the Foreign Service myself.

Q: Let's talk a bit about Surabaya and your teaching. What was the situation in Indonesia and then talk about Surabaya?

MORRIS: Well it was 1976 and, of course, General Suharto had been in power since '65, basically since the overthrow of Sukarno. It was really a little bit before Indonesia had started taking off economically, so the vast majority of Indonesians were very poor and most of them were still quite traditional in terms of their attire. The women, for example, would all wear sarongs and blouses, the kebaya, as they called it. The Muslim men especially wore small hats, the pichi hats, as they called them.

We went to Jakarta after Surabaya, so we were in Surabaya for two years and then Jakarta for two years. In both cases, of course, this is part of Java and so it was very much influenced by the kind of traditional Javanese culture. At that time, the majority of

Indonesians were Muslims, just as they are now, but it was very much the traditional Indonesian Islam that includes elements of some of the more syncretic Javanese beliefs. It was not terribly strict. Of course they would celebrate the end of Ramadan – that was always a big holiday – but it was not necessarily because they had fasted strictly and done all the other things during the Ramadan period. Rarely did you see a woman who was covered in Islamic garb.

Q: At the high school whom were you teaching?

MORRIS: It was actually a junior high school.

Q: Junior high.

MORRIS: Yes, it did not go up to high school; it went up to ninth grade. These were children of expatriates. It was quite small because there was not a large expatriate population in Surabaya. I was teaching ninth graders and I would say that my class had about 10-15 students.

Q: Were any of the Indonesian children coming in to learn English at all?

MORRIS: Not at the International School, but there was a binational center. It was called the Lembaga Indonesia America and was run by USIS. That was where expatriates could go to study Indonesian and where Indonesians could go to study English.

Q: Were relations pretty good would you say with Americans at that time or was it really strained? How would you say?

MORRIS: I would say they were pretty good. A lot of Indonesians had studied and were still studying in the United States, the so-called Berkeley mafia. The Indonesians went to Berkeley and studied economics. The Ford Foundation was very active in sending people to the U.S. as well as the Fulbright program. I think there was generally a positive feeling about the U.S. There were some people who felt that somehow the United States was to blame for the fall of Sukarno so there was some criticism about the United States for that. Generally because Suharto had a pretty firm grip on the situation and one would only talk about Sukarno and the events of '65 in very hushed tones. It was not an active subject of discussion – any role that the Americans might have had. I would say generally relations with the United States were quite good.

Q: You and your husband were you able to make much contact with the Indonesians socially?

MORRIS: Yes, I would say we were able to get to know Indonesians and I would say that again the fact that I had been able to study Indonesian was such a magnificent thing for me because then I really could communicate with Indonesians. Of course, we had household help. We had a maid who didn't speak much English at all but the fact that we could speak Indonesian meant we could communicate with her well. We had a guard and

so we actually got to know our household staff and in the case of the guard, we got to know the guard's family and they invited us over to their house one time, which was a very interesting and quite a humbling experience.

We both got to know the Indonesians who worked at the consulate. Javanese Indonesians, for the most part, don't invite Americans to their homes because their homes are not very prosperous or luxurious by American standards. There were, of course, Chinese-Indonesians who tended to be quite wealthy because they were involved in business and so we got to know several of them on a good personal basis. In fact, there was one Chinese-Indonesian woman who played the piano beautifully so I used to play my cello with her and that was a delightful experience. Yes, we did get to know Indonesians.

One of the most wonderful parts of the experience of being in Indonesia was some of the trips that we took. The most memorable one was the first year that we were in Surabaya. My husband was asked by the consul to go out to Eastern Indonesia to do some reporting on the political situation and also on the drought, as there was fear of starvation. So we went out to Flores and Sumbawa and Lombok. It was an absolutely wonderful experience. We were there at Christmas time in Flores; Flores is a Catholic island unlike the majority of other parts of the country and there was a very strong Catholic presence there. They had a wonderful Christmas Eve mass at the big cathedral in downtown Ende and then the next day, Christmas morning, we went up to one of the hill stations and attended a folk mass with all the women in all their brightly colored traditional clothing singing these beautiful Flores folk songs. It was an experience that I have never forgotten; it was just truly a magnificent experience.

After the Mass on Christmas morning, the Bupati took us to visit one of the natural wonders of Flores: three no longer active volcanic mountains that are situated in the same place. In the crater of each volcano is a lake. Because the lakes are dead—there are no fish or vegetation in them, only different kinds of minerals – each lake was a different color from these minerals: one was blood red, one was bright turquoise and the third was a deep chocolate brown.

It was such a wonderful experience to be able to travel around. We stayed in both Sumbawa and in Flores with local government officials because they had to keep tabs on this vice counsel and his wife who were traveling. So the Indonesian officials put us up in his homes and we had traditional Indonesian food, we talked and spoke in Bahasa Indonesia with these people and, of course, experienced traditional Indonesian ways of sanitation and sleeping habits and all of these other things. It was a wonderful and unforgettable experience.

Q: You were in Surabaya for two years. This will bring us up to '78 was it?

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: Then you went to…?

MORRIS: Jakarta.

Q: I was just looking at time. This might be a good place to stop now.

We will pick this up in '78 when you had just come to Jakarta and I will ask what was happening there.

MORRIS: OK.

Q: OK, today is the 16th of September 2008 and this is interview number 2 with Greta Morris. Greta where did we leave?

MORRIS: We left off it was around 1978-1980. I was in Jakarta at that time as a Foreign Service spouse and was about to begin my own Foreign Service career. I took the written Foreign Service test at the embassy in Jakarta in December of 1978. I took the oral exam in the spring of 1979 and was then offered an appointment in 1980 for the June class; this was for the U.S. Information Agency.

Q: Let me just try to set the background. You had been observing this stuff; you had been in the system.

MORRIS: Right, yes.

Q: What did you feel were the opportunities for women at this particular point?

MORRIS: I knew that women were now permitted to join the Foreign Service and, of course, be married at the same time. There had been married women in my husband's Foreign Service class and I knew some tandem couples, not very many, but a couple at the embassy in Jakarta. So I knew that this was very possible. I knew that this was something that I was very interested in, particularly the U.S. Information Agency since its focus was on education, educational and cultural exchanges and also on advocacy through the media; these were things that I was very interested in and felt that my background had prepared me for.

I guess a couple other things really made me very interested in going into the Foreign Service around that time. The first was the Indonesian entrance into East Timor and the take over of that former Portuguese colony after the Portuguese left in '75. Then all of the reports of the human rights violations and other problems connected with that; I became very interested in that issue. The second thing was the situation in Cambodia with the Khmer Rouge; I read the original New York Times piece on the killing fields and was really very moved by that story. I felt that doing work to promote human rights was something that was very important; I knew that that was part of what was done in the Foreign Service. So that was another thing that made me feel that this was something I could be very committed to.

Q: Did you feel that being in the American Foreign Service in a way you would be part of performing a mission?

MORRIS: Yes, I think so.

Q: This is something that often, I think, we all tend to shy away from but it's expressing but I think it's been there for good or ill.

MORRIS: Right.

Q: I mean sometimes it doesn't work out when we intervene but its very much sort of American.

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: I'm not sure if we've covered this but when you were in Indonesia what was the reaction in your circle and the people you knew and were dealing with and all about the East Timor let's say invasion and subsequent subjugation?

MORRIS: Of course, the official policy was that this was something we did not really have an official position on. This was an Indonesian matter but we did not recognize (I think the phrasing was) that a legitimate act of self-determination had taken place. I think that certainly there were a number of people who were concerned about what actually was happening there. Of course, the reports from the Indonesian government were that there were not human rights violations; they contended that reports of any killings had been grossly exaggerated. But I think, nonetheless, there were certainly some concerns and that was fueled in part by Congressional interest in the whole situation in East Timor. In fact, because of this interest, the Embassy sent my husband to East Timor in early 1980. He prepared a series of reports on the situation there and was a runner-up for the Director General's award for reporting as a result of these reports.

Q: Where did you take your oral exam?

MORRIS: I took it in Washington, D.C.

Q: This was when?

MORRIS: I believe it was in March of 1979, March or April of that spring.

Q: Can you remember any of the questions or how things constituted?

MORRIS: Actually, this was the first year that the all-day oral assessment was being piloted. Actually I believe it was in Rosslyn. I don't think it was in Washington; I think it was in Rosslyn.

Q: Yeah, Rosslyn.

MORRIS: The assessment included something they called the "in-basket test," where you were given some sample documents and you had to decide what to do with them, how to assign action or take action yourself, basically, to see how you would deal with taskings coming at you. There was a written essay and I'm sorry to say I don't remember what the essay was about, but I believe it focused on the Middle East. There was a one-hour oral interview that was just conducted by one person at that time. I honestly can't remember any of the questions except I was asked if I were going to arrange a festival of American films, what American films would I choose and why. So I do remember that question because that was an interesting question for someone hoping to enter the U.S. Information Agency.

Q: Let me ask. If you were to arrange a festival of American films what films would you have chosen?

MORRIS: Well, I'll try to remember. Certainly The Grapes of Wrath was one of them. I think that Casablanca was another one and I think I was thinking of my favorite films certainly as much as of films that I thought said important things about the United States or about American film history. I may have also included Splendor in the Grass. I can't remember what other films I may have chosen. The reason I chose Splendor in the Grass was not only do I think it's a truly wonderful film but also, of course, it's a depiction of the events leading up to and during the Great Depression and the impact that had on the United States. I felt it was a very interesting film; of course, The Grapes of Wrath, for a similar reason; it is also a wonderfully acted film.

Q: Well then all right, when did you come into the Foreign Service?

MORRIS: In June of 1980.

Q: Sort of the nuts and bolts, how did this work? You're coming into the Foreign Service, your husband is in the Foreign Service, where was he at the time and…

MORRIS: He was in Jakarta, of course, his assignment was continuing in Jakarta so I came back to Washington by myself. I rented an apartment and started my training. At the time actually this was during the U.S. International Communication Agency period; that was sort of the hiatus during the Carter years. So I was a member of the sixth USICA class.

Q: How did you find the class both the people and the subject matter?

MORRIS: It was a very exciting experience just to be in the Foreign Service and I think maybe there is part method in the madness of the very long, at least at that time, selection process from the time of first taking the written exam to the time when you would actually get in. For most people in my class it was at least a year and for many people it was, as in my case, a year and a half or even in some cases longer. So, of course, it was very exciting to finally be there. I found the people in my class very interesting and very

impressive from a lot of different backgrounds; I think there were about thirty of us all together. It wasn't a terribly large class but I guess at that time in USICA it was about an average class. I found parts of the training very interesting—particularly the discussions on policy issues. Some of it was very hands on; I didn't enjoy that part quite so much. I guess they thought that all good USICA officers should know how to do things like being able to work a film projector and that sort of thing. Of course, as a former teacher, this was something I was pretty familiar with. So that wasn't something that I enjoyed all that much, but the ambience of getting to know my classmates and then certainly the more substantive discussions were very interesting.

Q: Did you get a feel that maybe you hadn't quite picked up as a Foreign Service wife of a sort of them and us as far as USIA? Here you are in a USIA family and they were the Foreign Service; they are in a way different organizations, which now they are not but anyway. Did you get any feel for that?

MORRIS: Yes, I did. Certainly, for example, when we had the joint Harper's Ferry experience and you had some of that feeling from the State Department FSOs that "we are the real Foreign Service and then there are you people over there in USICA."

Q: I must say as a regular Foreign Service office I always felt that USIA had not only an extremely important job but in a way a lot more fun. I mean I'm a consular office so management appeals to me and they got to manage things and do things and they didn't have to get into the artsy fartsy of analyses and all of that. This was the last year I guess of the Carter administration?

MORRIS: It was, yes.

Q: Did you pick up…was there a very strong thrust of human rights then at that point?

MORRIS: I guess I had found it more when I was still in Indonesia because, of course, there were real human rights issues – not just in East Timor, but people were still talking about what had happened in Indonesia in 1965 and how many people who were suspected Communists had been killed. There was a lot of continuing debate on that subject. I think that the emphasis on human rights in the Carter administration was probably something that I was more aware of when I was in Indonesia than when I got to Washington. But certainly we did have some discussions on human rights issues.

Q: So you finished your training when?

MORRIS: I finished my training in August. The training was eight weeks altogether so we started on June 15th and finished the middle of August. My onward assignment was in Nairobi, Kenya. One very important reason for that was because that was basically the only tandem assignment available on my list of possible assignments; in other words that was the only place where there was a possible job for my husband. All USICA officers went out first as trainees, so to speak, which I've always thought was a very demeaning

thing. In some ways it was great in reality, but it always sounded kind of terrible to be called a "junior officer trainee."

Q: Yes.

MORRIS: My husband's job, which was in the economic section even though he was a political officer, would not open until October. So I stayed in Washington for another six weeks, during which time I worked in the international visitors office for about a month at the USICA headquarters.

Q: Did you pick up any feeling for them…it was an extremely important program.

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: Did you get any feeling for it sort of at the center of it?

MORRIS: Yes, I really enjoyed it. This was in the office for African visitors, so it was very appropriate for someone who was going to Africa. I really enjoyed it. I had an opportunity to work with one of the program institutes – because the International Visitors Office always worked with a program institute – I think this was the African-American Institute. It was the main African Institute. I worked with the program officer there actually in arranging the Washington program – all the meetings for a visitor from Africa – and then also the visitor's national itinerary. I attended the program session when the visitor came and it was really very exciting; I enjoyed it very much and thought it was a wonderful program. I think it gave me a real appreciation also for how important it was for the embassy, the post, which prepared the nomination, to send in a really well crafted nomination so that the program officers in Washington could design an excellent program that would really meet the needs of the visitor and of the post. I think it gave me a very good appreciation of the program as well as an opportunity to interact with a lot of different offices in Washington.

Q: Did you get any feel…had you ever been in Africa before?

MORRIS: Never. I had never been in Africa.

Q: So you are up against African future leaders?

MORRIS: Right.

Q: How did they impress you?

MORRIS: I think the ones who came to Washington on the program were certainly the crème de la crème so to speak. They were very well educated and very impressive young people so I was certainly impressed with them. I will have to say that both my experience working in the visitors office but also my experience in Kenya were wonderful experiences because I really didn't know much about Africa except what I had read in

Ernest Hemingway and that was my exposure to Africa; so it was a very different feeling to be there.

Q: At least Hemingway was writing about your part of Africa.

MORRIS: Yes, he was.

Q: The *Snows of Kilimanjaro* and that sort of thing.

MORRIS: Yes, that's right. It was very nice to at least have that background. Of course, being in Africa in the independence period was quite a different experience.

Q: Did you get involved, I think in the visitors program, not just about Africa, but in fact all of them sometimes you have these people who come in from outside and for one reason or another take the wrong subway or something like that and get into problems. Did you have to clean up any problems?

MORRIS: No, I don't think so. There were very good people at USICA who actually went out to the airport in most cases to meet these visitors. I'm not sure that this is always done anymore, but they would help them get to their hotels and make sure that they were well situated before they would show up for their program meeting.

Q: You went out to Nairobi when?

MORRIS: It was at the beginning of October.

Q: Of 1980?

MORRIS: Of 1980, yes.

Q: And you were there until when?

MORRIS: I was there for almost four years until June of 1984. During the time that I was there I started out with my assignment as a junior officer trainee, which actually turned out to be a really fascinating assignment. What they did with new U.S. Information officers is have all of them rotate and serve for certain periods of time in different parts of the embassy as well as in both the information and the cultural sections of the U.S. information service; of course, it was still called the U.S. Information Service overseas.

I had an opportunity, for example, to work in the information section during a UN conference on renewable energy. That was very exciting because since the information officer was on home leave at the time of this conference, I got to be essentially the press officer for this major UN conference; that was a very exciting time.

Q: It was and maybe still is it is really the site of an awful lot of if something is being done African wise it was often considered the best equipped capital to deal with this sort of thing.

MORRIS: Yes, yes and I would say that that was certainly the case. At the time that I went there, Daniel Arap Moi had been president for two years. He had been the Vice President and came into power with the death of the first president, Jomo Kenyatta. At the beginning of his term things were still relatively good. The economy was still in relatively good condition; the political system had a lot of democratic aspects. There was a parliament; there was a relatively free press as long as the press wasn't too critical of the president; so things were still relatively stable. It was, of course, a very nice place, there were still very nice homes there and it was a wonderful place to go on safari. We went on several safaris that were really wonderful experiences. In many ways Kenya was an absolutely marvelous place to be.

I loved being in the Foreign Service. I would get up in the morning to get ready to go to work and I would think, "I would pay somebody to let me do this; I'm having so much fun;" it was really a great experience. To get back to some of the things I was doing, for the election of 1980 there was an American cultural center in Nairobi...

Q: This was between Carter and Ronald Reagan?

MORRIS: That's correct, yes. We had an election watch program at the Cultural Center and we invited a lot of people to attend the election watch and, of course, had the television, and this was in the days before CNN so it wasn't all that easy. We had to depend a lot on the Voice of America to get the news, but it was a very interesting experience. I remember one of the people who attended was Oginga Odinga who was a very strong opposition leader at the time and was, I believe, the father of Raila Odinga who is now part of the government and was the opponent of Mwai Kibaki during the most recent Presidential election. Mwai Kibaki at the time was the vice president, the man who is now the current president of Kenya. I believe Mwai Kibaki also came to our election watch. It was very exciting and a wonderful opportunity to meet these people. I was impressed with how interested they were in the American electoral system and in the American system of democracy. That was a very nice experience.

Q: Did you have any problems…I was the consul general in Naples and I remember having to adjust my thinking with Ronald Reagan running for president because the Italians the night of the elections they were running a Ronald Reagan movie on one of his swashbuckling things about World War II. I had to work up my spiel because I wasn't sure about Ronald Reagan personally but you do what you have to do. I was explaining to the Italians, the ones I met, Ronald Reagan was a governor of a state that had a higher gross product than Italy.

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: That sort of thing but was Ronald Reagan sort of a known figure or not?

MORRIS: No, he really wasn't. Of course I knew Ronald Reagan mainly as the governor of California because I came from California so I was very much aware of his role in California; actually I'm not sure that I've seen any of his movies. I wasn't so aware of his role in the movies. But, no, he was not a very well known figure so certainly we had to provide information to the Kenyans about Ronald Reagan, particularly after his election.

Q: What about here you are in Kenya at that time. How did you find the media, the press, the TV, the radio?

MORRIS: I remember that there was a sort of opposition newspaper; it was a weekly. It was quite interesting and often quite critical not only of the Kenyan government but of the United States. There was a daily paper, I believe it was called The Nairobi Times, which was sort of the standard. It was kind of a middle of the road newspaper, I would say, relatively balanced and included some international news, not a lot of international news but they certainly picked up news from the wire services. Of course, there were American correspondents there from AP and from UPI; I think there was a New York Times correspondent there. We had a Washington Post correspondent; of course, Voice of America was there; so there was a fairly large international press corps there as well. For our international news – this was in the days of the wireless file, so we depended on the wireless file for much of our official news and international news.

Q: How did we view the press in Kenya? Was it reachable?

MORRIS: Yes, it was relatively reachable. They wouldn't, of course, always print our press releases but usually they were pretty good about carrying our press releases if we sent them.

Q: Did you sense was there a difference between the view of the Kenyans toward the United States and Great Britain? Were we differentiated because we had not been a colonial power or not?

MORRIS: Yes I think so. I think that we were considered the democratic model, not perfect, not a perfect model but we were considered really the democratic model. This was also a period well it was really right after a lot of Kenyans and other East Africans had gone to the United States to study on the famous East African airlift. One of the things that I was able to do also – still in my "junior officer trainee" period when I was working in the political section – was a long paper on the education of the Kenyan elite, which was a fascinating thing to do. That included a lot of information about the airlift and which Kenyan leaders had studied in the United States. There were a lot of Kenyans who had studied in the U.S., including people in the government who had studied in the United States and who knew the United States and were quite favorably disposed toward the United States.

Q: Would you explain about the airlift, it has certain relevance today.

MORRIS: Yes, it does.

Q: You might explain that too.

MORRIS: Yes, well the airlift actually was the brainchild of Tom Mboya, who was one of the independence leaders in Kenya which, of course, was still part of British East Africa at the time. He went to the United States and appealed to leaders there, including John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy, for scholarship funds and funding for the plane travel to be able to send people from East Africa – Kenya, what became Tanzania, Tanganyika at the time, and Uganda – to go to the United States for study. There was funding that was provided – some of it came from the government. I believe some of it came from the Kennedy family's own resources, some came from various colleges and universities; so several hundred young people from East Africa were able to go to the United States to study; one of those people was Barack Obama's father. I think it was a very important initiative.

Q: This was done in the late '50s?

MORRIS: Late '50s and in the '60s also. I can't remember when Barack Obama's father went to Hawaii but, yes, it started in the late '50s and then continued in the early '60s. So, just as Africa was making that transition from being a colony to an independent nation.

Q*: What was your impression of the impression of this trip to the United States had had on these young people; mostly men I suppose?*

MORRIS: Mostly men; there were a few women but very, very few. Of course, there were Kenyan women later who went to the United States but not many on these early airlifts. I think certainly it provided them with an excellent education and knowing about this program made me more convinced than ever of the important role of educational exchanges, the value of sending people from other countries to the United States for study.

Q: This I've said in many of these interviews and I will make this aside but I think this is probably if not the most one of the two or three most important arrows(?) in our foreign policy program.

MORRIS: Absolutely, it's very important. Of course, these people and anyone... I found this throughout my Foreign Service career, that people who have studied in the United States don't come back necessarily as fans of the administration that happens to be in power or of all aspects of the U.S. policy. Sometimes they are very strong critics, but they understand the American psyche, they understand American democracy. They are people that we can engage with really on an equal level because they have an understanding of us. I think it is just so absolutely valuable, the fact that they understand American democracy. I think that many of these former scholars are so convinced of the value of American democracy that that's where their great disappointment and frustration

sometimes with the U.S stems from – they feel we are not always living up to our own ideals, our own constitution.

Q: What were you doing, were you involved with trying to place articles and that sort of thing?

MORRIS: I was not the press officer, except really during this UN conference. I know that our information officer was placing articles with the media and arranging interviews and the standard thing that the press officer does. But that was not specifically my role at the time that I was there.

After my junior officer training experience, I had an opportunity to have a real job; my real job there was as the director of the American center. This was absolutely a wonderful job. I've loved all of my jobs in the Foreign Service but I will have to say this was one of the best; it was a fabulous job. The American center, it was called the American cultural center though we were really supposed to be doing information, but it was over in a separate building in what was called the national bank building so it was about two blocks away from the embassy proper. We had a library of about 6,000 volumes of American books about American policy but also American literature. We did outreach by sending information to Kenyans about the United States. But also we had a small auditorium and so we were able to do all kinds of programs; that was the part that I really enjoyed.

Q: I imagine Nairobi being such an attraction that you get quite a few pretty good lecturers and also English being a language there. In many ways you didn't have to really work, I mean I use that in the wrong term but you didn't have to try…it would be hard to get people to come to Chad.

MORRIS: Right.

Q: Who spoke French or could do something but to go to Nairobi particularly in those days I think you would get good authors, good speakers, how did that work?

MORRIS: Of course we did it mainly through what they called the American participants program, which was part of USIA, and they would recruit. I should say with Reagan in office we went back to USIA, it was no longer the U.S. International Communication Agency. We did get some speakers; I don't remember any terribly notable speakers that we had except for Coretta Scott King who…

Q: The widow of Martin Luther King…

MORRIS: …yes, yes she gave a talk at the American center and it was very nice having her. I don't remember any other notable speakers that we had. We did other things; we had an exhibit of books, for example, that had been published by various American University Presses; some very good books, very good quality books. One of the officers of the American University Press association came out to talk about this collection of

books. That was very nice and we were able to invite people to the opening of the book exhibit and have a small reception; so it was a very nice occasion. We had a photo exhibit and I would put together film programs. Yes…

Q: You're back. Did you get to show Casablanca?

MORRIS: We showed both Casablanca and The Grapes of Wrath. Some of these were films that made the circuit because in those days USIA still had films that would go from one country to another. These were the sixteen millimeter films and so I guess I was glad that I knew how to thread a film projector although I did have someone on my staff who also had had training, a Kenyan, in running the film projector. We showed these films on the sixteen-millimeter film projector. Sometimes we would have special themes. I remember one time we arranged an American literature in film festival; we would have a different film each week. I think that's when we did The Grapes of Wrath and A Place in the Sun (based on Theodore Dreiser's An American Tragedy). I can't remember what the other ones were, but they were all American films based on various works of American literature. I think we did Moby Dick and The Great Gatsby as well. It was very interesting and just a lot of fun.

Q: How did you treat I think this would be both responsive but also a ticklish audience about race relations in the United States as they were at the time. When you talk about a movie I'm thinking one that might have been on your circuit or not To Kill A Mockingbird. It's not…

MORRIS: We did show that.

Q: …I was wondering these things you…

MORRIS: Yes, and there was definitely a feeling in Kenya that America still had a lot of problems with racism and there were concerns about that. Of course, Kenyans, having been part of a British Colony, had had some of their own experiences with racism; so I think they were certainly sensitive to it. Sometimes we even felt that there was this "edge," the kind of feeling of "can I trust you, how do you perceive me?" It took a while to get beyond that, to develop real friendships with Kenyans because of that sort of perceived feeling.

Q: How did you find your Foreign Service nationals as being the Kenyans who were employed by the embassy?

MORRIS: Some of them were very good. My two senior people had studied in the United States – I think one at Michigan State and the other one at Indiana – so these were people who were well educated; they again had some understanding of the United States. They were very good people to work with and very nice people. I think again like most Kenyans they had some reservations about American society particularly about American treatment of African-Americans. But nonetheless they were people with whom I felt I was able to develop a good relationship.

Q: Did you find yourself in competition with the British Council, which is the equivalent to our program or not? How did that work out?

MORRIS: I guess not really in competition. Actually there was a British Counsel, there was an Alliance Française and there was the Goethe Institute. All of those institutions, I would say, had a lot more resources than I did and the heads of those three institutions also functioned as the cultural attachés for their Embassies, because they had responsibility for the scholarship programs also, where as I did not; that was run by our cultural affairs officer who was over at the embassy. I only had responsibility for my little cultural center. But it was very nice because actually we used to get together on a regular basis. The heads of these four cultural centers in Nairobi would get together for lunch on a monthly basis and it was just delightful. All of my counterparts at the other centers were very nice people and very good people to get to know and I learned a lot from all of them.

Q: Did you have a feel for the universities there or the university?

MORRIS: There were two universities; there was the University of Nairobi and then another institution called Kenyatta National University. The University of Nairobi was kind of the center of intellectual ferment. From time to time there would be demonstrations at the University of Nairobi and the government would threaten to close down the campus; I don't think that ever happened during the time I was there. But it was very much where the intellectuals were; this is where the people would be more on the radical side. Certainly on the left would be people who would be critical both of the Kenyan government and also of the U.S. government. But it was a very interesting place. Again, the Fulbright program was not under my administration, but we did have American Fulbright lecturers who were there; so there was an American presence on campus.

The Kenyatta National University had been a teachers college and even though it had been upgraded to university status, it was still much more focused on teacher training and it was not…it was outside of town so it wasn't right in the middle of town where it could stop traffic if they had big student demonstrations. It was much more conservative, much less the sort of center of ferment but also not the intellectual center that the University of Nairobi was.

Q: Did tribal matters play a part in what you were doing? Who came when, who did what and that sort of thing or not?

MORRIS: Certainly, I was very much aware of the tribal differences and some of the problems between the tribes because I could even see it in my staff, for example. One of my senior staff members was a Kikuyu, the dominant tribe and the of Mwai Kibaki who was the vice president. Another one of my senior staff members was a Luo from the western part of Kenya and you could see the friction between them. There were other members of the staff who were Kikuyu, Luo or Abaluhya or one of the other tribes from

the west. I could feel the ethnic tension even within my own staff and the staff of the embassy at large.

As far as other kinds of activities, it was something that I was aware of but it really had a greater impact, I guess, in 1981, when there was an attempted coup against Daniel Arap Moi. It was by a group of people from the Air Force trying to overthrow Moi. There was a situation of chaos for a day and then Moi was able to reassert control. But after that he became, I think it is fair to say, very concerned and really kind of paranoid about people from outside of his own tribal group. He was a Kalenjin, which is a very small tribe from the western part of Kenya. So he began to surround himself with his fellow tribes people in the government. This was really kind of the beginning of a lot of very serious corruption, nepotism and a lot of the economic and political problems that went along with that. I think all of us then became much more aware of the role of tribalism in Kenya after that attempted coup.

Of course, it was difficult when we would have various kinds of scholarship programs or even short-term grants. There was a program called the Eisenhower Fellowship; I don't know if it is still in existence but it was a wonderful program run by the Eisenhower Fellowship Foundation, a private foundation that sends people from different countries to the United States for basically a ten-week kind of professional studies tour. It was kind of like a long IV (international visitors) program that really included very intensive meetings and discussions with professional counterparts; it was very prestigious. The selection is made by a bi-national committee of Americans and people from the host country. In choosing the recipients, something we had to be very mindful of was the role of tribal tensions. If you had someone on the committee from one tribe, then there was a tendency to want to select a fellowship recipient from that same tribe. You could feel that there were these tensions, with people very much mistrusting people from the other tribes.

Q: Then did the heavy hand of the Cold War hit you all there with the Soviet Union and all?

MORRIS: Yes, certainly the Soviets were there; they had a very active program. It was something that we were aware of. For example, the press (particularly the more leftist media) would flirt with the Communists. Oginga Odinga, the opposition leader, was quite close to the Soviet embassy. I certainly don't think that the majority of Kenyans (or even a minority) wanted to have a Communist government, but particularly if they became disillusioned with the United States or the Kenyan Government about something, there was this kind of flirtation with the other side.

Q: This is almost the left. My understanding and again earlier on I got some reflection on this in various places. The Soviets were not very successful in bringing students from Africa to Lumumba University because the Russians are violently xenophobic and they are just not well treated there.

MORRIS: There were some who had gone there but not so many in Kenya as in Uganda, which we will get to later. There were certainly some who went to Patrice Lumumba University but I would say not very many.

Q: And didn't take very well or at least my understanding that the experience wasn't overly positive.

MORRIS: Not particularly positive. Of course, most of them didn't learn Russian so their experience was quite limited.

Q: Were you teaching English…did you have an English language institute?

MORRIS: No, we did not.

Q: How good was English training would you say in the country?

MORRIS: English was certainly taught in the schools; at the best schools it was the language of instruction. It was certainly the language of instruction at the universities. The well educated people had very good English, British English. Among the less well educated people, and particularly if you got outside of Nairobi, then the level of English was not so good. You could communicate in English but the English was not so good.

Q: Was Swahili useful or not?

MORRIS: Yes, Swahili and English were really the national languages. For example, my staff, if they all communicated with each other, in most cases they would use Swahili rather than English. If the Kikuyus were communicating with other Kikuyus they would use Kikuyu and the Luos would use Kiluo. But if they were all trying to talk to each other they would use Swahili.

Q: What was the East Asian or East Indian, I'm not sure but anyway, basically the Indian influence there? I know they were heavy in Uganda at one point, I can't remember when Amin kicked them out from there. Was that during your time or not?

MORRIS: No, that had been before and it was very interesting, actually both in Kenya and Uganda and probably all over East Africa. They were referred to as Asians; they were not described as Indians or Pakistanis, they were considered Asians. Some of them of course, had come from India, some of them had come from Pakistan, but they were all called Asians. There were certainly quite a number who were in business. There were a couple who were in the media. I remember Salim Lone was a journalist from, I believe his family originally came from Pakistan, and he was a journalist with one of the local newspapers. He later became a spokesperson for the UN. There was another Asian-Kenyan named Mohammed Amin who is a very famous photographer. He did a lot of wildlife photography as well as other photography. There were certainly quite a few Asians; they were in the minority but there were quite a few. At the time, one sensed that there was some resentment by the African-Kenyans because a lot of these people were

fairly well to do, but basically people got along pretty well. We had some Asian-Kenyans who worked at the embassy, some from Goa. Those people were Christians and some of the others from India would be Hindus; there were some Muslims as well and many more Muslims on the coast of Kenya.

Q: What else were you doing? I'm really out of questions on this particular…

MORRIS: Of course I was working as the director of the American cultural center. Kenya was a wonderful country for travel, so I enjoyed doing that very much, going down to the coast of Kenya – Mombasa and Lamu – which are very, very different from the highlands, from the Kenyan highlands; so that was a wonderful experience.

I remember one time my husband and I went with another couple – it was actually the public affairs officer and his wife – to a game park and we decided that we were going to camp out in this game park. This was in the Masai Mara, which is the biggest game park in Kenya. We had our camp built, two tents, and we decided we were going to have a nice dinner, so we built a campfire and cooked our steaks and had our steaks with a nice bottle of Pinot Noir. It was a wonderful evening but around three o'clock in the morning we heard something outside of our tent. This was actually in the days when people were very worried about the Somalis, they called them shiftas, these were basically Somali bandits who came across the border and attacked people; I think there had been one attack of some tourists up to that point. That was my immediate first thought – that this was a Somali shifta. But then – and particularly when I heard sort of a sniffing sound – I thought well maybe it was an animal. So my husband stuck his head outside the tent and the wife of the public affairs officer said, "Don't come out, Chuck, we are surrounded by lions." There was a mother lion and her two half grown cubs who were within our campsite. Apparently we had not cleaned off the grill as well as we should have and there was still some smell of that wonderful steak that we had enjoyed. The lions, I guess, were scared by the sound of the human voice and left shortly after that carrying away our lawn chairs we had brought to sit on – very light aluminum lawn chairs – in their mouths. I don't think we slept the rest of the night or the next night either. Anyway, that was quite a dramatic experience. We saw lots of lions.

Q: Tell me going way back to this UN conference what was this about that you found yourself in charge of or…

MORRIS: Well I wasn't in charge but I was kind of in charge of the press. It was a UN conference on renewable energy. This is way back in July of 1981 and the UN had a conference on a subject that is still obviously very relevant today. There was a U.S. delegation, headed by an ambassador, and a number of other people who came with the U.S. delegation; then, of course, there were journalists who came. It was an interesting conference; I don't know that the United States got everything out of it that we wanted. Obviously, there was a lot of push by some countries to do more work on renewable sources of energy, which the United States was perhaps not as supportive of then as some of these other countries might have liked.

Q: Who was our ambassador when you arrived there?

MORRIS: It was William Harrop, a very fine career diplomat.

Q: I've interviewed Bill.

MORRIS: Robert Houdek was the DCM. They were very good people to work with.

Q: Were they there or did they change while you were there?

MORRIS: Bob Houdek was there for the whole time. Bill Harrop left and it was Ambassador Gerald Thomas who replaced him. Ambassador Thomas was a political appointee.

Q: Gerald Thomas.

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: Did both give due accord to the USIA program?

MORRIS: Yes; I would say that Bill Harrop was a particularly very fine supporter of all aspects of the program. He attended all of the events that we had at the American center and was very, very supportive of the program. Gerry Thomas was also interested but I think he was more interested in the media side.

Q: What was life like in Kenya at the time? Now we are deluged with stories about attacks, carjacking, rapes all these things. What was the situation then?

MORRIS: As I mentioned, the situation was relatively OK when I first got there. Then because of a lot of economic problems and I'm sure many other kinds of problems played into it as well, the crime situation deteriorated quite significantly during the four years that I was there. During the same UN energy conference there was, I think, certainly the first carjacking that affected the U.S. embassy directly. This was a reporter who had come out from the wireless file to do a story on the UN energy conference, a woman named Everly Driscoll. She was in a car with the Voice of America correspondent. The car was followed by another car and when they got to the driveway of the VOA correspondent, a man got out of the other car, came over to the window where Ms. Driscoll was riding and told her to roll down the window. She did not roll down the window and they shot her through the glass and she died later at the hospital. That was a terribly, terribly dramatic and tragic event that I think certainly made all of us at the embassy very aware of the deteriorating crime situation.

Then there were other examples; there were break-ins at various homes of people in the embassy including a very dramatic break-in at the home of our political counselor. The groups that carried out the break-ins were called "panga gangs" and these were basically groups of Kenyans who had hatchets they called pangas, the kind of thing that they would

use to cut the grass with. They were actually trying to chop down the door of the safe haven. It was a time when people were very much aware of the crime situation. That situation I would say deteriorated with the increasing corruption and nepotism. The economic situation started getting worse and the crime situation also got worse.

Q: Let's take you and your husband. What did you do? Did you have a strong room?

MORRIS: Yes, everybody in the embassy, all the embassy houses, had safe havens. This was the locked area, with a very heavy door, and you had to set your alarm at night. They were taking the security seriously. We had a night guard, of course, not that the night guard was very helpful because the night guard was not armed, so if there had been a panga gang, for example, I don't think the night guard would have been able to do much.

Q: Did that circumscribe how you worked functions at night and that sort of thing?

MORRIS: It didn't really that much. No, certainly, for example, one would never and particularly a woman would never walk around alone at night in the city. So if you went out for dinner you would make sure that you were with somebody else and you would not walk around by yourself. You would park near wherever you were going and you would be very careful obviously because there were stories – very true stories – of a woman having a gold chain ripped off her neck even in broad daylight. So I think that was the other thing; you were very careful about not wearing flashy jewelry and that sort of thing. It was something that people were certainly very conscience of.

Q: Well then where did you go then, this is in '84?

MORRIS: Right.

Q: This is a pretty long time to be in well your trainee period and…

MORRIS: I really had two assignments in Nairobi.

Q: Well how old were you at the time?

MORRIS: I was 32 when I joined the Foreign Service.

Q: So in many ways you really didn't need that and you'd been a Foreign Service spouse and all that. It probably made more sense to show you all the ropes and all that. Where did you go after that?

MORRIS: Then we went back to Washington. But I want to say one other thing about Kenya, to provide the flavor of the life there. There were still a lot of British people and other expatriates who lived there. There was quite a large expatriate community. There was a pretty active social life that included a lot of these expatriates but also, and this was very nice for me, there was also really a wonderful musical community. Since music was and still is one of my great interests, this was wonderful. There was an orchestra; they

called it the Nairobi symphony orchestra. My understanding was that at the time it was the only full-scale orchestra in sub-Saharan Africa, and so I played in the orchestra.

Q: What instrument?

MORRIS: Cello.

Q: Cello.

MORRIS: Cello. We did some really nice things. We did all the serious orchestral works – the Brahms symphonies, Beethoven, Mozart – so that was a great experience. The orchestra I would have to say was mainly expatriates, there were perhaps a few Kenyans, but it was primarily expatriates. Then also I did a lot of chamber music with, again, other diplomats. There was a couple of Dutch diplomats and I was part of a piano trio with them – piano, violin and cello – and we had some wonderful times playing together. Then I played in a string quartet with some British people. They, probably it was not very nice, but the Americans would refer to these people as the "old Brits," but although they had been there for a while, they weren't really old. But they were wonderful people, wonderful musicians, and it was a great experience.

There was a choir there, the Nairobi music society. So every year or a couple times a year the orchestra would accompany the choir. We would do the major choral works: Haydn's Creation, the Brahms German Requiem, and of course, we would do the Messiah at Christmas; we also did Mendelssohn's Elijah. It was a wonderful experience.

Q: On the music side were the Kenyans…one gets these wonderful recordings and all, I'm not familiar with them but I don't know what you would call it but the African vocal sounds which are quite distinct.

MORRIS: Wonderful.

Q: Was that part of the …

MORRIS: It was very much part of the culture and, in fact, there would be these big choir festivals, choirs from different churches and schools would come together and compete. It was a wonderful sound, beautiful harmonies, so yes, there was some really marvelous singing.

Q: Were churches important there?

MORRIS: Yes, there was the Anglican Church and there were quite a few Kenyans who were members of the Anglican Church. There were also more Evangelical Churches, Protestant and Evangelical Churches. Of course, there had been some American missionaries in Kenya. I think the Presbyterians had been there; I don't know if the Baptists had been there but they had played a role in education, in setting up some of the schools during the colonial period. There were still some missionaries there; there were

even some Mennonite missionaries there. But the majority of Kenyans were Christian; there were, as I mentioned, some Muslims, there were a few Hindus, not too many Catholics but there were a few. The majority of people were affiliated with a Protestant denomination.

Q: Moving away from Ecclesiastical was there any residue of what was known as Happy Valley there? This is the British colony where swapping around of various couples. I mean the whole thing sounded sort of exotic…

MORRIS: The Out of Africa sort of Happy Valley.

Q: Was there any of that around?

MORRIS: I think there were still some people who had been there during that period.

Q: Getting a little long of tooth.

MORRIS: Yes, but I would say that that kind of activity at least as far as any kind of public show of it had more or less died out.

Q: How about sort of the British Colony? Was it getting assimilated at least into the international set or did it stay off to itself more or what?

MORRIS: You mean the…

Q: I'm thinking the Brits who were there. Was it…

MORRIS: Had they become integrated with the Kenyans?

Q: Well, integrated is almost not the right term but at least part of the international set as opposed to a specific…

MORRIS: Yes, very much so. For example, certainly in these musical circles they were very much integrated with foreign diplomats. So, yes, and many of them were in government holding various positions in government still. For example, the chief justice of the high court was British. Others were teachers at various schools so yes I would say they were very integrated with the international diplomatic community.

Q: Well then in 1984 you're back. What did you do?

MORRIS: I was at USIA headquarters. I was in the African office; they called it the African area office, and during my first year I was the assistant country affairs officer for East Africa. I guess it is kind of similar to being a desk officer at the State Department except at USIA, one desk would handle several countries. So there was a country affairs officer for East Africa and then I was the assistant. So Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia and Tanzania were the countries that our desk handled.

Q: First place talking to USIA officers I've always been struck by the overseas and the Washington assignment. Overseas you've got real responsibility running things and you come back to Washington and whereas a desk officer of particularly smaller countries has some control over policy and all this. The USIA officer seems to be consumed with nuts and bolts and doesn't have quite that feeling. Did you find a certain frustration there?

MORRIS: It certainly was, shall we say, it was quite a contrast to being the director of the American cultural center, which for someone who has just joined the Foreign Service sounds pretty grand. I had this staff of if you counted everybody on the staff it was about ten people and was running all of these programs. Then coming back and the only person I supervised was one secretary; it was quite a change. Having my little cubbyhole, not even a separate office, it was quite a contrast. In some ways you do feel a little bit like you are shuffling paper. I guess I found it wasn't the most exciting job in the world; certainly it was an opportunity to learn a little bit more about some other countries in East Africa. I had, in fact, had a chance to visit three of the other countries in my portfolio when I was still in East Africa. I visited Somalia, Tanzania and Ethiopia before I left Nairobi.

Q: Never Uganda?

MORRIS: No, I did not.

Q: That's odd because I would have thought Uganda would have been first.

MORRIS: If I remember correctly, I think I was supposed to go to Uganda but the situation at the time was not very good. That's why I didn't go there.

Q: Well let's talk about what was happening. Let's talk about the Horn of Africa first, how about Ethiopia? This was during the Mengistu time; things were not looking up for us.

MORRIS: No, no it was certainly not a good time for Ethiopia or for the Ethiopian people. When I went there I was struck, first of all, with the beauty of Ethiopia; it is a strikingly beautiful country. I was certainly struck also by the poverty that one would see in contrast with the international facilities…I was staying at the Hilton Hotel in Addis Ababa, which was a very lush hotel that had a wonderful swimming pool with heated water because it was quite chilly in Ethiopia even in June, because of the elevation. I was also struck in talking to some of the ordinary people; you really had this palpable sense of fear; they would talk in very hushed tones about some of the things that were going on. I visited a Coptic Church, which was a wonderful experience; it was a beautiful; there was beautiful artwork in the Coptic Churches. I met with the priest there. You could tell that he felt he had to be very, very careful in what he said. So yes, it certainly wasn't a very good time in Ethiopia.

Q: What were we doing, USIA wise, in Ethiopia at the time when you were back in Washington?

MORRIS: In fact, this was one of the more interesting parts of my job. At that time, there was no public affairs officer in Ethiopia. But during the time when I was still in Kenya, USIA decided to appoint a public affairs assistant who happened to be the wife of the charge, basically to do at least some public affairs programs. It was mainly a few IV grants and a few Fulbright grants. I don't think that the climate was very amenable to bringing in American speakers who were going to talk about American policy. So one of the reasons and, in fact, one of the main reasons for my visit there was to see what was happening with this program. So I did and I was very impressed. David Korn was the charge and his wife Roberta as the Public Affairs Assistant. She was a committed person; she had had a role in the human rights bureau at one point, I guess, during the Carter years, and she was totally committed to what she was doing in terms of these exchange programs.

When I got back and I was working in the African office one of the things that I did was to really talk up what she was doing and try to encourage USIA to establish a PAO position there; and they did eventually so I was very pleased by this because there were opportunities, although it was very difficult, there were opportunities to do things there and it was something that was very much needed.

Q: Well would we have a problem giving IVs, international visitors, grants or Fulbright grants to people when you had Mengistu who was I think he walked into one cabinet meeting and killed most of his cabinet members. Wouldn't this single people out in Ethiopia to go to the United States for possible retribution of being suspicious or not?

MORRIS: It was difficult and, of course, one of the problems – and this was a problem also in Somalia – is trying to choose people who then would go back because a lot of the people would get to the United States and they would not want to go back because they would fear for their lives. They would try to stay, particularly people who would come on Fulbright grants; they would try to extend their stay.

Q: They would technically have to but how did you deal with that? In other words we give one of these grants and then he comes and says I'm in fear for my life and with justification just because they'd been singled out as being friendly to the United States. How did you deal with that?

MORRIS: It was very difficult and I will have to say it was sort of a shared responsibility. It was something the Institute for International Education, which managed the Fulbright program, was concerned about; the Fulbright office at USIA and, of course, the geographical area office as well. The challenge was in the process of trying to select someone who you thought would go back but it was very difficult. Consequently, what sometimes happened is the bureaucracy would decide that we were not going to given any more grants to Somalia or we were only going to give a few grants to Somalia because people wouldn't go back. It was very, very difficult.

I remember one thing we were able to do. There was a person who worked at the Ethiopian television station and he was trying to modernize the television station and make it more like a genuine television station that had at least some autonomy. He wanted to do a kind of study tour in the U.S. so we were able to put together a group of four Ethiopian television journalists and bring them to the U.S. for a one-month program. I think we did this through the University of Syracuse, Syracuse University. The University arranged a very good program for these people and I think all of them went back, but it was very difficult. It was difficult getting them cleared to come but since they were government people I guess they felt that it was safe for them to go back.

Q: What was happening again during this period for the optic of your desk job over in Uganda?

MORRIS: Of course this was a very difficult time in Uganda; this was actually the second Milton Obote regime: after Milton Obote had thrown out Idi Amin and then he had come back. In his second time as president he was much more repressive than he had been the first time around. He was probably not as extravagantly oppressive or violent or brutal as Idi Amin but in many ways he was very, very repressive and very, very cruel as a ruler.

There were obviously a lot of problems there; there was a growing insurgency through a guerrilla war, carried out by a group called the National Resistance Army led by Yoweri Museveni, and that was gaining strength. So there was a lot of ferment going on in Uganda. I remember even when I was still in Kenya there would be times when the American embassy family members would be sent out of Uganda and they would come to Kenya for their safe haven for a while. It was a very difficult place to work; it was a very difficult time to do any kind of programs certainly, particularly the USIA programs.

Q: So, I mean did USIA have sort of a foot in the door or something? Or was it almost a symbolic presence would you say?

MORRIS: We weren't able to do much in terms of exchange programs but the PAO who was there was a man named Eddie Deerfield; he was very gregarious sort of person and very energetic. He was very interested in drama, so he worked with the Ugandan National Theater and they did a production of <u>The Skin of our Teeth.</u>

Q: The what?

MORRIS: <u>The Skin of Our Teeth</u>?

Q: Yes by Thornton Wilder.

MORRIS: Yes, I thought that was such an appropriate play to do in Uganda at that time. But this was really Eddie Deerfield doing this almost single handedly. He was that kind of a person – really very energetic, almost a legend, I would say, in USIA in those days.

But to do normal programs was very, very difficult. The country in many ways after the Amin years and then during Milton Obote was kind of collapsing within itself.

Q: How about Somalia?

MORRIS: Somalia was also a very, very repressive…

Q: Siad Barre was there.

MORRIS: Yes Siad Barre was the leader and so again this was another place that was very difficult to do any kind of programs because Somalis never wanted to go back to Somalia; if they got to go to the United States they did not want to go back.

Q: We have quite a community right within three miles of us here in Arlington.

MORRIS: Yes. But it was an interesting place to be. There were still, in Mogadishu at least at that time, there was certainly relative calm within the capital city because everything was so well controlled. I think some Italian ex-patriots had remained in Mogadishu in particular and there were Italian restaurants. I remember one thing that struck me; this was the first time I had ever had fresh-squeezed grapefruit juice because, the Somalis are mostly Muslims and they did not drink wine. Their drink was fresh squeezed grapefruit juice and it was absolutely delicious; so sweet and fresh tasting.

Q: But we couldn't have much of a program there?

MORRIS: No, it was really difficult to do much of anything. Again because the government exercised such tight control, it was very difficult to bring in speakers or do any of the other normal kind of programming.

Q: Moving down to Tanzania what was up?

MORRIS: Tanzania, of course, was much more like Kenya both in terms of the culture, this East African culture. Swahili was even much more important there as a language because this was during the time of Nyerere and Nyerere was very much an African leader and he wanted everybody to speak Swahili. Of course, the economic situation was not good in Tanzania; Nyerere was a socialist, in contrast to Daniel Arap Moi, who was a capitalist. Tanzania had a kind of a shared poverty. You didn't have the same kind of economic inequities in Tanzania that you had in Kenya. I think the crime situation was not as bad there either; I was only there for a few days but if I recall correctly it was not the same kind of crime situation that you had in Kenya. They didn't have the carjackings, for example, the panga gangs and that sort of thing.

Q: Again from the desk what sort of programs could we have there? Were we circumscribed or…?

MORRIS: Tanzania was pretty open. You could do really basically the same kinds of things that we were able to do in Kenya. In some ways even more because you didn't have some of the paranoia of the leader that you had in Kenya.

Q: What were we doing?

MORRIS: In Tanzania?

Q: Yeah.

MORRIS: I would say the usual panoply of USIS programs, certainly an active international visitor program, Fulbright program, speakers, and some programs in Zanzibar. I never was able to go to Zanzibar unfortunately, but that was always a treat when people at the post were able to go to Zanzibar to do a program because Zanzibar was very rich in vibrant culture and very different, from Dar es Salaam.

Q: Did you find in your group in East Africa were you involved in recruiting the speakers or programs at all?

MORRIS: You mean from my role as the desk officer?

Q: Yes.

MORRIS: No, not really, no.

Again, a lot of that job was really – as I finally figured it out during my year on the desk – it's really keeping track of what was going on and making sure that our post got the answers that they needed and hopefully the answers both that they wanted and what we thought was right for them. I would say in terms of any accomplishments that I had during that time, I think that I would look to the Ethiopia example one of the things that I felt the best about, being able to establish a full USIS presence in Addis Ababa and then also in putting together the TV journalism program. In the other countries, it was really more helping make sure that people got the answers that they needed, that nothing dropped through the cracks.

Q: Did you have much contact with that other foreign power called the U.S. Department of State, the desk officers for these countries?

MORRIS: Some, not a lot.

Q: Distant relations.

MORRIS: Yes, distant relations, not really very much.

Q: I think this is almost one of the rationales for merging the two services together, which probably in the long run was rather a serious mistake in my opinion. But one was

the lack of USIA input into the State Department policy when overseas all of us have served overseas realize how important the agency was but it just seemed to get lost in transition.

MORRIS: Right, no I think that that is true.

Q: What did you do after a year there?

MORRIS: After a year, the person who was in the position called the cultural exchanges coordinator in the same office, the African area office, moved into another job. I think she moved into a special assistant job to the director to USIA. So that position was vacant and I was able to take that position.

That was a very interesting job. Between my East Africa job and the cultural coordinator job, as a kind of a transition, I went out to Africa for approximately a month, a long trip, to see some other parts of Africa. In my new job I was going to have responsibility for coordinating the cultural and exchange programs for the whole continent. I also spent two weeks back in my old haunt of Nairobi during the time of another UN conference. This was the UN conference for the international women's decade in 1985.

Q: Oh yes this was very important.

MORRIS: So I was out there at that time helping the embassy and specifically helping them serving as the liaison between the embassy and the official delegation and this very large NGO delegation that came out.

Q: This was Maureen Reagan? Was she there?

MORRIS: She was there, yes. She was part of the official delegation. So that was very exciting too.

Q: Why don't we talk about that and then I think we'll move on to the next time.

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: But let's talk about what you were doing. What was your view of how this operated and what you were doing?

MORRIS: It was a very interesting conference obviously and very important conference. I guess one thing that certainly struck me and I think this is true of so many of these conferences is what I would call extraneous issues or at least different issues, different might be a better word, got involved in the discussion of the conference. Concerns about racism, for example, in South Africa, became a sort of a central issue which in many ways drove a wedge between the official American delegation, the African delegations and delegations from other parts of the developing world. Israel, of course, and the Palestinians were another issue, which then served to divide the attention of the

delegates. I mean it was difficult in a lot of ways to come out with a document that everybody was happy with. But it was certainly very interesting to be there and to be associated with this event.

Q: Did you get a feel there or how was our constructive engagement policy with South Africa playing with this UN group and all?

MORRIS: Not well. Certainly not with the other African countries or even most of the developing countries or even I would say, with a lot of European countries. Its constructive engagement was not particularly well viewed.

Q: On women did reproductive birth control and all of that come up? Was that an issue?

MORRIS: It did, yes, that was certainly another issue.

Q: Did you get any feel for sort of the worldwide what was called the woman's movement? I mean was this really an active movement or what was going on?

MORRIS: I would say, yes, it was certainly an increasingly active movement. I remember one of the Kenyans who was very active at that time was Wangari Maathai, who even in those days had her green movement, the tree planting movement, in Kenya. It was very much linked with the larger women's issue. This was a woman's issue because as all the trees were getting cut down, then women had a harder and harder time finding wood; because it was the job of the women in Kenya to go out and get the firewood for the fires. As the trees were being chopped down, it was harder and harder for women to find wood. It also affected the environment; there wasn't a way to trap the water in the soil, so it was harder for them to plant and it was harder to get water. All of these jobs were done by women who were really the agricultural backbone of Kenya and of much of Africa. So trees were very, very important and Wangari Maathai was one of the most active people in this women's conference. I was, of course, very interested and very pleased frankly to see that she won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Q: Did you get any reverberations from Maureen Reagan who apparently was quite a personality on her own?

MORRIS: Not really, no, I didn't have that much interaction with her. So, no, I didn't really.

Q: Well then let's stop at this point and we will pick this up…we are talking about 1985 is it?

MORRIS: Right, 1985. Let me just add if I could that on this same trip I also made my first visit to South Africa; that was very, very interesting.

Q: What was your impression of South Africa?

MORRIS: My impression certainly was that it's a very beautiful country and I had an opportunity to go not only to Johannesburg and Pretoria but also to Capetown; it is certainly a very beautiful country. I was struck by the ethnic diversity not only the Blacks, the (as they called them) Coloreds or mixed race, and then the Whites, including the Afrikaners, but also a fairly large Asian, and particularly Malay, community in Capetown. These were people who had come over to build a railroad and there was this very vibrant cultural element in Capetown, a sort of Malay culture. It was…

Q: You would have been particularly attuned to it having your Indonesian time.

MORRIS: Yes, so it was a very interesting place. There were a lot of cultural activities, particularly in Capetown, again a very active cultural center. In South Africa they were able to put on plays, for example, that were fairly critical of the South African government so there was certainly a certain amount of freedom of expression. Going out to Soweto was quite an experience. I did go out to Soweto because the U.S. Information Service in Pretoria had opened a small – it wasn't really a cultural center but it was like a cultural center – in Soweto, a very small library, trying to do some outreach with the people in Soweto. I remember that it was kind of the situation where this was on the schedule, my visit to Soweto; but they had to keep checking: is it safe there? Are they having any demonstrations? Are there tire burnings? This was the days of the necklacing as I'm sure you remember and some very terrible situations. So they had to check to make sure that this was a day when it was going to be safe to go out to Soweto. For me it made a very profound impression, I think it is fair to say, but also of how much that we could do.

So one of the things then, if I can just finish this thought, when I went back to Washington I was very committed as the cultural coordinator to try to reestablish a Fulbright program for South Africa. Basically, the Fulbright Board, I guess I should say, in the United States is really very independent and it had decided that because of the apartheid policy, we were not going to have a Fulbright program in South Africa. Obviously, our embassy wanted very much to have Fulbright grants because they saw how much value this would have. This was not just constructive engagement. It was constructive engagement but in a very "constructive" and very important way and a very needed way. That was one of the things that we certainly worked on. Eventually, of course, they did get the Fulbright program back there.

Q: When you were there you were the new girl on the block, you hadn't been there before. What were you picking up from the embassy? Wither South Africa? Was it going to be a night of long knives or was it many more decades of repressive rule or what?

MORRIS: I think that there was not a lot of optimism that things were going to get better right away. Obviously, we were still trying to push the South Africans but at the same time we saw South Africa as a country that stood with us in the continuing Cold War. It was a delicate balance should we say but we were obviously, the embassy, the official presence, was obviously trying to push South Africa into the direction of getting rid of apartheid. A lot of reporting on what was going on, a lot of reporting on the human rights

situation, a very active international visitors program again mainly trying to take some of the young South Africans and send them to the United States to give them some exposure to American democracy. These were mainly Black South Africans but also from time to time we would send some of the South African journalists.

I had an opportunity to meet some South African journalists including from the White press, the Afrikaner press, and the English language press as well. Some of them were supporters of apartheid but some of them were really impressive people. I remember it was a time of great intellectual ferment there and a lot of very exciting discussions. People were truly engaged on the big issue of the day, it was impossible to be in a conversation with anyone in South African for just a few minutes before you didn't get into the big issue, apartheid. Wither South Africa? What was going to happen in the future on South Africa? It was a very exciting and a very interesting place. It was a very sad place in so many ways, and a tragic but fascinating place and I was very glad I had the opportunity to visit there.

Q: OK, well we'll pick this up the next time when you've taken on the job of overall exchange coordinator for Africa; this is below the Sahara.

MORRIS: That is correct, yes.

Q: We covered your visit to Kenya back again for the woman's conference and also…

MORRIS: To South Africa.

Q: Your visit to South Africa. So we will pick it up there. Great.

MORRIS: That sounds great.

Q: Today is the 22nd of September 2008 with Greta Morris. Greta, where did we leave 1980?

MORRIS: 1985.

Q: What were you up to?

MORRIS: I was working in Washington at the U.S. Information Agency in the African office. I was the cultural and exchanges coordinator for Africa. I think we had discussed the trip that I took to Africa in the summer of 1985 both to visit some other parts of the continent including South Africa for the first time but also to attend and work with the NGO liaison to the UN Women's Decade Conference in Nairobi. So that's where we left off.

Q: What were sort of the centers of African studies in the United States at the time of exchanges and all of that?

MORRIS: Certainly UCLA had a very important African studies center. I believe Columbia and also Harvard had African study centers.

Q: Were there sort of...

MORRIS: Indiana University also.

Q: ...for visitors coming here, the visitors program, what did you want the visitors to see?

MORRIS: I think this is really the same for all visitors regardless of where they come from. We want them to certainly leave with a better understanding of the United States so that they have an understanding of American values, American democracy, the American system of government, our economic system but also the American people. I think one of the things that always impressed visitors at least in my recollection was the spirit of volunteerism here. The idea of volunteering of doing something not for pay but for idealistic reasons to help other people is something…is a concept that is not necessarily universal. So I think this is something that really impressed visitors. These are the kinds of things we like for people to understand, certainly for our visitors from Africa and particular at that time we wanted them to see that the United States was not just completely a racist country. Of course, we know there had been a history of racism and, of course, it goes to civil and human rights violations against African-Americans but the situation was changing, society was changing and that certainly this was not something that was universal. We wanted them to have a better understanding of the diversity of the United States and how that diversity was playing out, how people were interacting with people from different races, different ethnic and religious backgrounds and points of national origin. These were all things that we wanted our visitors to get while they were here.

In most cases the visitors programs were focused on the visitor's professional interests or maybe non-professional interests. For example, I know at that time we did a lot of programs focused on women, of course this was during the time the woman's movement was very active in the United States, so there were a lot of women who would come to learn more about how the National Organization of Women and other women's organizations were operating in the United States. So there was the professional aspect and then there was also just learning more about American society, having a greater appreciation for American society, an appreciation both in terms of understanding but also of being able to see something positive.

Q: Did we have or were we working on a program to take, say Fulbrighters or people who had been to the United States, bring them together in their home countries from time to time to show we haven't just sent you there and everything. We want to keep in touch with you and have you spread the word.

MORRIS: Yes, well I think this is something that has been done informally in a lot of countries by the Fulbright Commission, for example, or by the embassies. Jumping ahead just a little bit later in my career, when I was in both the Philippines and then in

Indonesia, this is something that we did regularly through the commissions: bringing former Fulbright grantees together for conferences or just to get together to talk about their experiences so alumni networks were very, very important. I think that here in the United States both the Board of Foreign Scholars, which runs the Fulbright program, and also the educational and cultural exchanges bureau have also started having more organized ways of trying to be in touch with Fulbright alumni to put them on various kinds of list serves or blogs to be able to communicate with them on a more regular basis. There have been even some conferences here in the Untied States bringing together Fulbright alumni. I don't know that so much has been done with international visitors.

Q: Looking at this the program I think for all of us who are familiar with it these programs are extremely influential and one of the major foreign policy tools. But did you have the visitor program from hell that you can think of during your time? Things that just didn't go well?

MORRIS: I can't right now recall any specific visitor program but there certainly were programs from time to time. Both those where the logistical aspects of the program didn't work well, for example, maybe the escort and the visitor just couldn't get along at all; those are really very bad situations. Of course the escorts were very important particularly the escort interpreters who were with somebody who couldn't speak English very well. Sometimes there was a problem with the hotel; maybe it was a horrible hotel, bed lice and those types of things happen every once in a while, not very often but they did happen from time to time. Then, of course, there would be situations where it would seem like the program in every aspect had gone extremely well, everything had gone just very smoothly but for some reason when the visitor went back the net impression was a very negative one. Sometimes I think this was perhaps because the visitor was not somebody who was very open to being able to accept that there were things that were good about the United States.

Its always a risk when the embassy chooses someone for one of these programs; do you want to choose somebody who already loves the United States and in that sense it is a wasted program or do you want to find someone who is a critic of the United States and try to show them a different perspective that might change their view? I think it's a real balance between those two. Obviously you want to have someone who is perhaps ready for a change in their view, receptive and open. I think that takes someone at the embassy who knows the potential visitor well and knows this is the kind of person who is going to be receptive. If we show them things about the United States they are going to be able to sift out the positive things and come back with a nuanced picture of the United States, certainly they are going to recognize it's not all perfect but that there are things that are very positive also. It is also important, of course, that the Embassy select someone who is likely to have an important role in the future in that country and in that country's relations with the U.S. Various factors are going to influence the visitor's impressions: if a visitor really has a horrible time, a horrible escort, horrible hotel, then that's probably going to influence their overall impression of their trip.

Q*: By the way when you see the transcript of this and can think of any instances…not all negative but some things that just sort of happened that were really so positive that it was just circumstantially put them in here.*

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: OK, then you did this for how long?

MORRIS: I did this for a year and, as I said, one of the issues that we were focused on was the Fulbright program for Sought Africa. It was the view of the State Department and of the U.S. Information Agency that we should have a Fulbright program with South Africa despite apartheid. Of course, the Board of Foreign Scholarships had a kind of different view; they did not really favor engaging with the South African government in that kind of a program. But I think we made progress along those lines during that year. Shortly after that the Fulbright program did restart for South Africa. I did that for a year; then I went back to Africa, to Uganda, as the public affairs officer.

Q: OK let's talk about…you were there from what '86?

MORRIS: To '88, yes.

Q: Let's talk about Uganda and how stood things there? What had been the recent history before you got back?

MORRIS: The recent history was, of course, going back a few years, you had Milton Obote who was the president. Then you had the long and terrible period of Idi Amin, which of course is very well known in the United States. Then he was thrown out in 1979 I believe it was, by Milton Obote, who then came back into power. Milton Obote, as I think I mentioned before, was perhaps not as notorious because he was not as colorful as Idi Amin, but he was a terrible and very cruel leader; so the situation had been just getting worse and worse. Actually, in January, I already knew that I was going there. That was when the guerrilla leader Yoweri Museveni defeated Milton Obote. His guerrilla army, the National Resistance Army, arrived in Kampala after a very long guerrilla struggle throughout Uganda. Milton Obote went to a neighboring African country to cool his heels and Yoweri Museveni took over and started his new government the National Resistance government, he called it.

The embassy was basically almost closed and everyone evacuated but because of at that time communications were not quite so sophisticated as they are now, the embassy didn't get the word that it might be better if everybody left and so basically the embassy stayed open. Of course, they had a very serious draw down; all the families had to leave. It was basically the ambassador and a few other trusted members of his staff who were there but that was the situation in January.

Then I went out in August of that year. So this new government had been in power for about eight months when I got there and was still very much finding its way so to speak.

Basically it was pretty far to the left and of course the Soviets were very active then and they had a big embassy in Kampala. The Libyans were there and, in fact, the first day I arrived Qadhafi also arrived. Muammar Qadhafi was one of our real sworn enemies in 1986; he arrived with about 800 of his crack troops. That evening we watched him on television as he marched through the streets of Kampala with his cohorts shouting "down, down U.S.A., down, down U.S.A." This was our welcome to Uganda; it was perhaps not the most auspicious beginning. It was a time when the Soviets and Cubans were very active there. The Cubans were providing a lot of assistance to the Ugandan government, medial assistance. They were sending doctors there, for example, and providing medicine. It is hard to imagine in a way the Cubans as a donor country but it worked.

Q: They are very heavy into doctors.

MORRIS: Yes. The North Koreans were there and the Libyans as I already mentioned. Then, of course, there was the Western diplomatic establishment and we were all kind of working together trying to moderate the Ugandan government. President Yoweri Museveni was in many ways very friendly when you would go to meet him. He was always very friendly so he was clearly happy to get assistance from any side that was willing to give assistance including the United States and we had a USAID mission there. But it was a very challenging time both from the standpoint of physical security because there were many Ugandans, just ordinary Ugandans, who had guns. These were guns that they had gotten during the long history of the guerrilla war and they still had them. Basically every night outside of our house you could hear gunfire and sometimes it would be quite close.

Q: Who would be shooting at whom?

MORRIS: In most cases it was people who got drunk in the bars and were just sort of shooting for the heck of it or it might have been a personal fight. It wasn't really…in very few cases was it ever political. But nonetheless it made for a kind of scary situation and a situation where you didn't really want to be out that late in the evening.

Q: Who was our ambassador there?

MORRIS: Robert Houdek was the ambassador. I think he was a good ambassador to be there at that time because he's a very positive person and really very fearless in many, many ways.

Q: As public affairs officer what were you trying to do and how did you do it?

MORRIS: Again, the whole mission of the embassy, I would say, was to try to develop a strong relationship with the National Resistance government, the National Resistance Movement to call it by its complete name, and to develop good relations. Of course, this was during the Cold War so obviously we wanted their support, but we were also trying to help the country develop and help it to develop a more democratic system of government. So both recover from the years of devastation, develop economically and

develop a democratic system of government. The country itself, of course, was just devastated. Everywhere you would go in the city the streets were full of potholes; in virtually all of the buildings, the glass had been shot out, a lot of the buildings had been burned. It was really pretty much of a wreck. Of course, there were still many parts of the country where we couldn't even travel as Americans.

Q: Had there been any movement to replace the Asian shopkeeper class and all?

MORRIS: Of course they had been thrown out during the Amin period and very, very few of them had ventured back. This was one of the big issues, whether their properties were going to be given to Ugandans. Museveni was very sympathetic to that point of view; he wanted to give these properties, these establishments, to people who had supported him; some of the property was transferred but not all of it. He also recognized, I think, a very shrewd person, very smart, that he could use the talent of some of these Asian business people so there was an effort to get some of them to come back. But there was still obviously a lot of skepticism on their part about whether or not they trusted this guerrilla leader and if they really did want to come back to Uganda. I'd like to get back to your question, as I don't think I really ever answered your question, about what was the role of the U.S. Information Service and my role as the public affairs officer. As part of this effort to develop good relations and to try to get support for the United States we tried to work very closely with the press there.

There was one government newspaper and I believe it was called The New Vision, if I'm not mistaken. It very much, of course, towed the government line in every way. The person who was the editor and chief was a man named William Pike who was British and he was a journalist by training; he had been an early supporter of Museveni even during the guerrilla movement. So Museveni brought him to Kampala to run this newspaper so that's what he did. There were quite a number of expatriate journalists who worked with him, a few Ugandan journalists but there weren't a lot of Ugandan journalists, the more independent journalists had been driven underground or they had escaped after many years earlier in the Civil War. This was in many, many ways a professional newspaper but it was not by any means a free or objective newspaper; it was not really a free press and for us it was very, very difficult to break into it and get anything that we wanted to have published, any press releases from the embassy or other things printed in The New Vision. So that was a big effort.

Then there were other independent newspapers; there was one called the Financial Times. It was a newspaper actually run by a Ugandan, he mainly ran it with his own budget trying to have a responsible pro business, capitalist perspective. Of course, he didn't have much money to pay journalists and most of the journalists were just people he picked up off the street who didn't really know anything at all about journalism. You could always tell which pieces he had written because they were the ones that were well written and actually made sense; in a lot of the other articles in the newspaper it was very difficult to figure out what they were talking about. This was a newspaper that was sympathetic and we were able to get things published from time to time.

Then there were other newspapers that would appear on the scene: the "newspaper of the week" or maybe of the month. In many cases they were basically tabloids or rags that were sponsored by other embassies. The North Koreans would support a newspaper for a while or the Cubans would support a newspaper or the Libyans would support a newspaper. The disinformation in these papers was really pretty appalling including very personal attacks on members of the embassy staff including myself, I might add; so it was a very difficult challenge to try and work with the media there.

We did send a few of these journalists to the United States on international visitor programs and I would say in a couple cases it helped. At least they had a little bit more nuanced feel for the United States when they came back; but it was very challenging to work with the press. I think our real breakthrough, frankly, occurred when Museveni went to the UN and he was giving a speech to the UN General Assembly. His own team, even thought they sent some journalists and ministry of information types with him, they were not able to get the text of this speech back in time to publish it the next day in the paper. But we were able, using our channels through the wireless file, to get the text of the speech and get it to the editor of The New Vision in time to print the next day. I'll have to say William Pike was very grateful; he expressed his gratitude and frankly amazement to me personally so that was a great thing. I think it really changed the dynamics of our relationship with that newspaper.

Q: How did you find…were the Soviets doing much there outside of building stadiums or whatever they do?

MORRIS: No, they weren't really building stadiums at that time but they were certainly trying to send Ugandans to Moscow for education. They would send them on their own equivalent of the international visitors program during which the visitor would be escorted everywhere and never allowed to get out of sight of their escort. They did a lot with media placement; the advantage that they had was that they could pay; they would pay a newspaper big bucks to carry an article particularly one that was critical of the Untied States. This was during the time, you may recall, when the aids epidemic was just really getting started. One of the disinformation stories was that this had been created by the U.S. military at Fort Dietrich; a virus had actually been created by the U.S. military. This was a story that would not die and just kept reappearing in the press in various guises. I'm not saying the Soviets necessarily had a hand in that but that was the kind of thing they were very active in as far as the press placement was concerned.

Q: What different did it make? You referenced the Soviet efforts, what do you think looking back in retrospect do you think this was just a game that was being played or were there real stakes?

MORRIS: I think there were real stakes with the Ugandan people certainly in being able to develop their country so that they could have a better life. Of course, the other thing that we were doing was to try to help the university get back on its feet; we were able to reestablish a Fulbright program there. The Fulbright program had basically become moribund during the guerrilla war. We were able to reestablish the Fulbright program;

start sending Ugandans to the U.S. to get their masters degrees and also to bring American professors to Makerere University to get that university back on its feet. Ultimately, I think it made a difference even though I wouldn't say that Uganda, even now, does everything that we want it to do, obviously it doesn't, but I think the country was able to have a better understanding of economic realities, for example. They were able to develop their economic system, they were able to get the university sort of functioning again and I think now Uganda is in many ways one of the success stories of Africa. It still has plenty of problems but certainly economically it is much more successful than anyone would have imagined.

Q: Were we trying to promote not unity but friendship between Kenya and Uganda? Or how did that play?

MORRIS: That, of course, wasn't specifically one of our roles. I would say at that time there was certainly some mistrust between Kenya and Uganda because Kenya's Daniel Arap Moi was very much in the capitalist camp, so to speak, staunchly anti-Soviet. Museveni was weighing both sides trying to play both sides against the middle, so to speak, to get what he could from one side and then get what he could from the other side. He was constantly playing back and forth.

Q: Did Rwanda, Burundi play any part on influencing what was happening in Uganda?

MORRIS: Not really at that time. Of course, there was a lot of cross border activity and a lot of people from Rwanda and Burundi who lived in Uganda and some Ugandans who lived in those countries. At that time Rwanda, in particular, was a place where people would go to visit the gorillas and it was…

Q: This is G-O-R…

MORRIS: This is correct yes.

Q: Not G-U-R

MORRIS: It was a time when it was possible to do that.

Q: How did our South African policy of constructive engagement play there?

MORRIS: That was something that we constantly had to be trying to explain and not very successfully, I hate to say. The Ugandans, of course, not just the government but ordinary Ugandans, were very supportive of South African Blacks and also Nelson Mandela and they were very anti-apartheid.

Q: Was Zaire breaking up at that time?

MORRIS: No, Mobutu was very firmly in control. It was still at a time when there was a lot of unity among Black African states so there was great reluctance to criticize someone

like Mobutu despite the very gross human rights violations that were occurring there. Museveni wasn't going to criticize a fellow African leader.

Q: How did you find the embassy as a social creature, tool or what have you?

MORRIS: Of course, it was a very small embassy at the time. Consequently it was a very close-knit embassy for the most part. There was the ambassador and his wife, my husband was the DCM and I was the PAO. There was an administrative officer, a general services officer; there was a USAID director and his wife, the deputy USAID director and his wife and a then few other members of the embassy staff. So it was a very, very small embassy and consequently getting along was a very high priority.

There was a small expatriate community; the embassy actually shared the property of the British High Commission so we had a lot of interaction with the British High Commissioner and members of his staff. The World Bank was there so there was a World Bank director; the IMF was there. Uganda was getting some funding from the IMF but the IMF was always sort of the villain that everybody loved to hate because the IMF funding always came with various stringent requirements for restructuring. I remember one time one of the newspapers, The Financial Times, which I mentioned was favorable to the United States, had a great headline: "The IMF Is Not All That Bad," That was actually based on an interview that I did with the paper…

Q: How about though, I'm thinking of gunfire, how about social life there? Did you take your pistols out and go shoot it up too or what?

MORRIS: No, we were fairly cautious about going out at night but we did go out from time to time and did some socializing. People did a lot of home entertaining. There was a very, very small American club in Kampala that had a nice little swimming pool and had a very basic cafeteria where you could get pretty good hamburgers and they would have a few other things there but not a lot of variety in the food. But there would be social events there. There was one Chinese restaurant and I think that was the only restaurant where expatriates ever ate. The opportunities for entertaining were pretty much limited to entertaining in our homes; people did a lot of home entertaining and that was quite nice. Sometimes it was a Saturday or Sunday lunch because it was safer to go out for lunch than it was to go out after dark.

Q: How did you find USAID and USIS side Foreign Service nationals?

MORRIS: I would say a few of them were quite good; some of them again were people who didn't have a lot of educational background and so they took quite a bit of coaching. They were very well liked and very nice people; fortunately, we were able to send a few of them to the U.S. for training.

Q: In a former British colony unlike the former French colonies did the system prior to independence foster an intelligencia social commentators and professors who…

MORRIS: Well there were certainly a few; some of the people who had graduated from Makerere University and, of course, some of those had gone to Britain or had gone to the United States. Some of them had gone to the Soviet Union, to Moscow University or Patrice Lumumba University, so there were some intelligent and well-educated people. People like the vice chancellor of Makerere University, for example, but a lot of those people had fled and were no longer there because of the dangerous situation.

Q: What about Makerere University? It had the reputation of being the best university in Africa at one point. At that time how stood it?

MORRIS: It was in very bad shape again because so many people had left. There were very few really well qualified professors who were still there; they were trying to get people to come back, very few really qualified people there at the time. The facilities, like most facilities everywhere in the country, were in very bad shape. I remember we brought a jazz singer with her accompanist to perform in Uganda and she was going to perform at the university. So my staff had to actually go and put the electrical plugs in the sockets on the stage at the university because all of them had been ripped out. There was tremendous looting during the guerrilla movement and fighting before Museveni took over; that affected every place including the university. The university was in very, very bad shape but with the arrival of Museveni and the National Resistance Movement government, other countries started to bring in some foreign scholars to teach at Makerere and as I mentioned we were able to get some Fulbright professors to come and teach there. Things were starting to improve but it was still in pretty bad shape.

Q: Had there been a heavy London School of Economics socialist outlook at the university before reflecting the government would you say?

MORRIS: To a certain extent; I don't think all that much. I would say that the more socialist viewpoint was frankly more from people who had studied in the Soviet Union but not really the intelligencia.

Q: In Tanzania the area had so directed it that he was doing it fairly well it was a disaster.

MORRIS: Right. I would say that Uganda's problems were a bit different.

Q: Was there any spill over from, I guess it was going on at the time, in the Sudan, the Civil War in Sudan North versus South? Did that have any affect on Uganda?

MORRIS: Not so much at that time. Of course, the problems in Somalia and Ethiopia had a greater impact because there were refugees from both countries that would show up in Uganda, as they had in Kenya.

Q: What were our interests in Uganda?

MORRIS: I would say our main interests certainly were in getting Ugandan support and trying to make sure it didn't fall in the Soviet camp. We were trying to help it develop so it wouldn't be a very unstable country in the midst of Africa. Part of that, which I mentioned before, was trying to help with the AIDS crisis; Uganda was very badly affected very early on by HIV aids.

Q: How did that happen because I'm told much of it was transmitted by truck routes?

MORRIS: Yes, and there were lots and lots of truck routes between Kenya and Uganda and also from Zaire. Then there was the guerrilla movement; a lot of people felt that that contributed to the spread of HIV AIDS.

Q: Was the Lord's Movement, or whatever it was called…

MORRIS: The Lord's Resistance Army? The Lord's Resistance Army started around the time that I was there and frankly, at that time, I think a lot of people regarded it as something that wasn't terribly serious. It was almost ludicrous in a tragic way: that the leaders and members of the Army would think that by rubbing grease on their bodies and saying certain religious incantations, they could save themselves from the bullets or the arrows of the other side. It was pretty much a rag tag movement then, but it turned out to have tremendous staying power and it still has not been defeated.

Q: Were the Soviets doing their thing? We are right on the cusp of the beginning of the collapse of the Soviet Union at that time, did that manifest itself at all or was that from the weakening of Soviet interest or Gorbachev was in?

MORRIS: I would say that one change that I did notice was that toward the end of the time I was there, the Soviets became a bit more friendly and they were actually willing to come to some of the events that we arranged – some of the cultural events, for example.

One of the things that I certainly remember was when we had our first WorldNet broadcast in Uganda. You may remember that WorldNet (a live television broadcast from USIA in Washington) was the creation of Charles Z. Wick, who was the director of USIA during the Reagan administration. Uganda wasn't the last country (but maybe close to it) to get one of the big satellite dishes necessary to pick up the signal for WorldNet. It was something that I thought would be very beneficial as part of our effort to get more information about the United States into Uganda. So USIA sent the satellite dish in a big box and then we had to find somebody who could construct the cement pad and put the dish up. I was able to find a Ugandan, a very enterprising young man, who put the pad and the dish up, got it all hooked up and then we tried it – and lo and behold, it worked! We got the signal, the WorldNet signal, and we were able to receive these broadcasts from Washington. To launch WorldNet in Uganda, we decided we had to have a special program. We invited some Ugandans, including journalists and people from the government, but we also invited the diplomatic corps including the Soviet ambassador. He came over for this and I think he was really impressed with the live broadcast from Washington, but he was really, really amazed when by moving the dish around, we were

able to pick up a live broadcast from Moscow. It was a program from Moscow television. So there was the Soviet ambassador at the USIS headquarters in Kampala watching a live broadcast, it was a cultural program of some kind, from Moscow television. He was very complimentary and I guess that might not have happened in the pre-Gorbachev era.

Q: Did you have disputes with the deputy chief of mission? I mean as the public affairs officer and how were these resolved, if you did?

MORRIS: I think we usually got along pretty well. We were usually on the same sheet of music.

Q: Being your husband I would say.

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: You were there almost four years?

MORRIS: No, two years.

Q: Two years?

MORRIS: Only two years.

Q: In '88?

MORRIS: In '88, yes, it was a two-year assignment because at that time it was still considered a greater hardship post. I would say it earned that.

Q: When you left how did you leave things there?

MORRIS: I felt like we had been able to accomplish quite a bit even in that short two-year period. We had a much more solid relationship with the Ugandan government and I think with the Ugandan people. The worst of the disinformation had died down and I won't say it was just because we were so effective in countering it; I would hope that that helped a little bit, but I think also the atmosphere was changing. I think the Ugandan government was more interested in working with us and receiving our aid and therefore doing some of the things that we wanted and was also less tolerant of some of these really blatant lies. I think when we left the situation was certainly much better; we had been able to create a better relationship between Uganda and the United States and also help the Ugandans get back on their feet and start to address the HIV aids problem, start to have some of the basic structures of development in place, start to get the university back on track. I felt that our small team, which really did work very effectively as a team, was able to accomplish quite a bit.

Q: How did you address the HIV problem?

MORRIS: USAID was very critical in that regard but also the Center for Disease Control was very active. There was a big CDC center in Entebbe.

Q: CDC being the…?

MORRIS: The Center for Disease Control out of…

Q: Atlanta.

MORRIS: …Atlanta, yes. They were very, very active in doing research but also in trying to promote education and distributing condoms. President Museveni was pretty receptive because he could see the devastation that this was already starting to cause. It was even something that within our embassy staff we were very concerned about. I remember I had one person on my staff who just started losing a terrible amount of weight and I was very concerned; he was very concerned also that he might have HIV aids. It turned out that he had tuberculosis, also not a good thing, but it was treatable. But this was something that everybody was very concerned about and everybody knew people who had succumbed so I think there was quite a bit of receptivity to trying to address this problem. Once they were able to get beyond accusing the United States of causing it in Fort Dietrich.

Q: Did the British have much influence there? It had been a colony.

MORRIS: Right, actually it had been a protectorate, I believe is what they called it; it was not actually a colony. Yes, they still certainly had some influence but not as much, I don't think, as the United States because they weren't putting such extensive resources into Uganda at that time. But they certainly still did have some influence.

Q: Then '86 whither?

MORRIS: '88.

Q: '88.

MORRIS: In 1988 we went back to Washington. I was very fortunate in getting a job that I wanted very much as the director at the office of public affairs in the African bureau at the State Department. Of course, this was at a time when USIA and the State Department were still two very different entities in Washington. That job usually went to a State Department Foreign Service officer, so I felt very privileged that I was able to get this job. It was a very interesting job working basically as the press officer for the African bureau at the State Department during an extremely interesting time. This was at the time of the resolution of the Angolan crisis and the Angolan and Namibia accords that Chester Crocker, who was the assistant secretary at the time, worked out. It was very exciting to be essentially the press officer for the African bureau at that time.

Q: Chester Crocker whom I've interviewed we talked about this constructive engagement, which was really his thing. You are saying when you were in Uganda the Black African countries had quite a jaundiced view of this whole thing. It seemed to be making too many concessions to the White South Africans. Did you find a different view of it when you got back to Washington on the African bureau seeing this really bear fruit? Or had you been a supporter before?

MORRIS: Officially, I was a supporter of U.S. policy; that's our job and we support policy…

Q: I'm talking about there is support and there is support.

MORRIS: Right, right.

Q: When you were in Uganda were you skeptical or not?

MORRIS: I think certainly all of us were somewhat skeptical that it was going to have a major impact on the South African government until the people in the government themselves decided that it was in their interest to change. There a was a great deal of ferment going on in South Africa at that time as people were discussing this and how to resolve this crisis. I was able to visit South Africa again in 1989 and you could really see it then. The journalists, for example, and even people in the government – you could sense that there was a desire to change, but how could they change without opening up the flood gates, what they feared would be perhaps another Zimbabwe of throwing out all of the White South Africans who felt this was their home. They had been there for many, many generations. I think that there was a lot of interest in changing, and I'll have to say I was never very certain that constructive engagement was going to bring about that change, but I had a lot of respect for Chet Crocker and certainly what he was doing in terms of Namibia and Angola trying to resolve those crises. It was a very difficult job.

Q: Well now you were over at the State Department at this point. Did you find the atmosphere different?

MORRIS: Oh yes, it was very challenging at first, of course, just the whole physical atmosphere, a huge, huge building trying to find out where all the different offices were. In the public affairs offices – and every geographical bureau had one at the time – the main job is to prepare press guidance every day. We would get our taskings in the morning – these are the questions that we think the spokesman might be asked about your area, Africa, at the noon briefing. So we now had to come up with the press guidance on these questions; what should the spokesperson say if this question came up? That would involve telling the appropriate offices in the bureau what the questions were and tasking them to prepare the answers. Then you would have to go around and start collecting the answers, get them cleared – they had to be cleared by the assistant secretary of the bureau – then you had to march them up hat in hand to the spokesman's office. I think our deadline was eleven o'clock to give the spokesman time to get ready for the noon briefing. The morning was extremely busy and very much focused on trying to get that

press guidance. I would say we had questions virtually every day and a lot of them had to do with South Africa. We'd get other questions from time to time about perhaps some outrageous thing that Mobutu had done or about the situation in Somalia. It was very challenging but very interesting.

Q: I would think the one thing that has been lost but certainly has been gained by the conjunction of USIA and the State Department has been that the Washington assignment for USIA is sort of service, like running a gas station making sure the gas gets in the car and do that sort of thing. The State Department's much more operational and is bringing USIA people into the operation. I would think this would be more fun wasn't it?

MORRIS: Yes, now that USIA is part…

Q: Part of it, it is no longer…

MORRIS: …it is no longer a separate agency. I'm not sure that those public diplomacy jobs in the State Department are necessarily all that different from the way they were when they were over at USIA. But this job that I had was very, as you say, very operational because it was very much focused on what was happening in Washington, on getting that press guidance ready, on responding. There were journalists who would call every day – they were regular members of the State Department press corps – who were following Africa. They would call virtually everyday and they would want to know what were we saying about this or that issue. Much of it, particularly the first year I was there, was focused on South Africa. The second year it was focused more on the situation in Liberia, which was rapidly unraveling at that time and it became a full-scale catastrophe toward the end of my time there. At any rate, it was a very operational job, responding to all these questions, arranging for interviews with the assistant secretary. The second assistant secretary I worked with was Hank Cohen who was also a very competent professional.

Q: I've interviewed Hank. What was your impression of the press corps, the ones you had to deal with?

MORRIS: They were very tough, they were very smart, very well informed; they asked very good questions. Of course, it wasn't just the American press corps; there was a whole international press corps there, and among the toughest were the South African journalists who always had very challenging questions to ask about South Africa and our policy on South Africa. But it was fun to work with them; they were great people. It was during that time that I met Thomas Friedman from The New York Times for the first time. I felt very fortunate because I was able to keep in contact with him after that from some of my different posts and he is a journalist I have tremendous respect for.

Q: What were you gathering about developments in South Africa at this time? Were you seeing Angola and Namibia in a way to be considered cutting ones losses on the White South Africans part? Were you seeing something happening in South Africa? Did you feel things were going to go well there?

MORRIS: It certainly seemed like things were changing and when Nelson Mandela was freed that was a tremendous step really by the South African government and I think it was something that all of us felt very hopeful about, that there was going to be a major change in South Africa. Then, if I recall correctly, when I was still in this job when Nelson Mandela made his first trip to the United States and that was very interesting. That was very challenging to try to put that together because he was not coming as an official visitor; he had been invited by a non-governmental organization to visit. So was the U.S. government responsible for providing security, for example, for Nelson Mandela? I believe we ultimately decided that we were and we did provide a security detail for his entire trip, although he was not an official visitor.

Q: What was happening in Liberia that was such a disaster?

MORRIS: That was the time of the Civil War when Samuel Doe was eventually thrown out but at the same time he was brutally murdered. This Civil War was growing all the time and Samuel Doe was not making the kind of changes that he needed to make; he wasn't making changes or taking the actions necessary (including leaving the country) to be able to forestall the disaster. So it was obviously a very difficult situation for us because we had been so closely associated with Liberia and with the government of Liberia.

Q: Did you get much feel for the interest of the National Security Council, the White House in African affairs? Or Congress?

MORRIS: Of course, many members of Congress were quite critical of the State Department, of the U.S. government, as far as South Africa was concerned but also of the human rights situation, for example, in Zaire, of our support for Mobutu which again was very much a part of the Cold War mentality. I don't think we would have put up with Mobutu if it hadn't been for the Cold War and the fact that he was very supportive of the United States and similarly with Liberia as well. Many members of Congress were very critical of our continuing support for the Liberian government. Many members of Congress were very critical of our support for Jonas Savimbi and UNITA. Eventually a lot of things came out about Savimbi's own human rights record that were very unsavory despite his support – at least verbal support – for democracy and the United States. A lot of members of Congress were quite critical of the State Department as far as our Africa policy was concerned.

Q: Did they throw you out into public speaking and hostile audiences or such?

MORRIS: I had a few experiences like that. I remember I represented the State Department at a conference on South Africa that took place at Chapel Hill; I believe it was, at the University of North Carolina.

Q: In North Carolina.

MORRIS: Yes, and it was a very critical audience, so that was a challenge. I drafted the speech that I delivered, but, of course, it had to be cleared by many offices in the State Department before I was allowed to give the speech to make sure that it reflected U.S. policy. It was clear that most of the people who were attending this conference were not people who supported the U.S. government's position on South Africa; they did not support constructive engagement.

Q: As I'm looking back on it do you think that we probably given the complexity of the problem and the fact that we were not dealing with essentially a colonial situation. I mean we had the White tribe and the Black tribe of both of them they are almost as long. Were we instrumental in bringing about a peaceful solution? Did you think we were on the right track?

MORRIS: In South Africa?

Q: Yes.

MORRIS: I think that this is the case in so many places. American ideals of democracy were very important in South Africa among the Black population and certainly, for example, the international visitors program we had in South Africa which was a very active program, one of the largest if not the largest in the whole continent. I think, again, that exposing Black South Africans to American democracy was very important in helping to push that country in the right direction. Would it have happened sooner if we hadn't had the policy of constructive engagement? I don't know frankly; I'm not sure that it necessarily would have, because again I think the change came when the South African government was ready for it, when Frederick de Klerk, who had a much greater understanding of the need to change, became the president of South Africa. Then things did start to change.

Q: We are moving up to '88 is this it?

MORRIS: I was there from '88 to '90.

Q: '88 to '90?

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: Then what happened?

MORRIS: Then I decided I would really like to try to get into the East Asian area.

Q: Back to Indonesia?

MORRIS: Yes, and also to develop expertise in another geographical area. I basically spent the first ten years of my career either working in or on African issues. I went back over to USIA and I was able to get a job in the East Asian office; the title of the job was

policy officer. Since USIA didn't make policy, I'm not sure that the title was all that appropriate, but basically I was the person in that office, the number three position, who was responsible for making sure that the programs that we were overseeing were supportive of U.S. policy in East Asia. I was very happy to be able to get this position in the East Asian office. I did that for two years.

Q: That takes us up to '92?

MORRIS: To '92 yes.

Q: What were some of the issues you had to deal with there?

MORRIS: One of the issues I dealt with during that period of time – this was not strictly a policy issue – was "whither U.S. government broadcasts." We had the Voice of America and the Voice of America had language services to several countries in East Asia at the time. There was the Chinese language service, there was one in Khmer and one in Indonesian and at that time there was even one in Thai, but there were a lot of concerns about the resources going into these services and were they really necessary. During this time the Voice of America developed an editorial office that was broadcasting almost daily editorials. "This is an editorial of the Voice of America," they would always have to say at the beginning of these editorials; most of them were critical of the governments in the region – they were particularly critical of leftist governments. They were very critical of China, for example, and very critical of the Vietnam government, but all of these editorials had to be cleared by the State Department. At least they were supposed to be cleared by the State Department. We would have flaps if an editorial was broadcast without going through the appropriate clearance process. This was one of my jobs – to try to make sure that all of these editorials were cleared and that they really did reflect the views of the U.S. government rather than the views of the editorial writers at the Voice of America.

At the same time (and perhaps because some of the people in the bureau of international broadcasting felt that there was too much oversight of the editorials and that the Voice of America had to be an objective news service and was limited in its ability to advocate a particular point of view) there was an effort to create Radio Free Asia.

Radio Free Asia did take shape at that time and this was certainly another issue that we were dealing with. How was it going to be broadcast? This (Radio Free Asia) was something that was going to be very critical, for example, of human rights violations in various East Asian countries. Its perspective was very critical of the Chinese government and this was after the Tiananmen Square crackdown, so this was another issue, but Radio Free Asia was created. I don't know how it's doing now but at that time there was a lot of interest and support for Radio Free Asia.

Q: How about Suharto? Had we lost confidence in Suharto by this time?

MORRIS: No, Suharto was still very much our man. Of course, there were lots of problems and the East Timor issue was continuing to be a problem. But Suharto was still someone that we supported; Indonesia during the '80s and the early '90s was developing at a great pace. At the same time we were also trying to encourage Suharto to introduce greater democracy, to be more supportive of human rights and also the corruption issues were becoming a greater concern in Indonesia. This was a time when people talked about Suharto's wife, Tien Suharto, and called her "Madam ten percent," because she was at least perceived as taking a percentage off the top of any development assistance project or any other project for her own use. There was certainly a lot of concern about Indonesia and about Suharto but still we basically supported Suharto.

This was also a time I would say that there was a growing perception of the role of non-governmental organizations in several countries in East Asia, including in Thailand which, of course, during this period of time had yet another coup and a military government, this was in 1991; but the NGO movement was gaining momentum in Thailand, in Indonesia and other parts of Southeast Asia. I think many people in the U.S. government saw that NGOs could be engines for democracy so we were working more with the NGOs and providing support to the NGOs as a way of trying to help foster democracy in some of these countries.

Q: How about Vietnam? Were we treating them gingerly or what were we doing about them?

MORRIS: At that time we still didn't have relations with Vietnam.

Q: But we were dealing with them in a way. We were sending teams in to…

MORRIS: Well for the yes for the…

Q: Missing in action.

MORRIS: Yes, for the MIA issue.

Q: And I think we had an orderly departure program.

MORRIS: We did have an orderly departure program.

Q: So in a way things were I would imagine that you didn't want to over criticize because things were sort of delicate. But we were beginning to come together with regards to being welcomed back into…

MORRIS: Well starting yes…

Q: Maybe I'm pushing this.

MORRIS: Yes, I would say it was starting but it was still a way off. We did not reestablish normal diplomatic relations until 1995.

Q: Well China after Tiananmen Square, which is June '89, I believe…

MORRIS: That is correct, yes.

Q: …really stopped things cold for a while didn't they?

MORRIS: Yes, and every year China's "most favored nation" trade status would come up for review and the Administration would have a big battle with Congress over whether or not China should continue to be a most favored nation. The review would be an occasion for many discussions about the abuse of human rights in China and numerous Voice of America editorials about how terrible the situation was in China and ultimately the most favored nation trade status was always approved again; but it was not without a lot of criticism.

Q: How did you find this office compared to the African office?

MORRIS: Again it was not the same sort of hands on experience. I enjoyed my work there and I saw it as part of an effort to be able to get back into East Asia and to look ahead to an assignment in the East Asian region. It was not the same kind of operational hands on daily activity where every morning you would go in and wonder what was going to hit you that day, which was very much the case in the African bureau and made for a very adrenalin filled two years; a very exciting time to be there.

Q: So did you have your eye on a country?

MORRIS: I did; I wanted to go to Thailand and the…

Q: You hadn't served there?

MORRIS: No, I hadn't served in Thailand. I'd visited Thailand just for a week but I felt that it was a very interesting country and a place where I would like to serve. I probably was naive at the time; I'd always had pretty good luck in learning foreign languages and so I thought I could probably learn Thai. At any rate the press officer job in Thailand opened up and that was what I decided that I wanted to do next, and I was able to get the job. I was assigned to full time Thai language study for a year at the Foreign Service Institute.

Q: How did you find it, the study?

MORRIS: It is a very difficult language; it is tonal (five tones) and uses a completely different writing system than does English. I enjoyed it because I'd always enjoyed studying languages but it was very challenging. It was not like studying French; it was not like studying Indonesian; it was very, very tough.

Q: We've got two factors. One it is a more complicated language and two age is moving on.

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: As you know in your later thing age one doesn't get these languages as well.

MORRIS: That is very true; the combination made it very challenging, but ultimately I was able to succeed and meet my goal and went off to Thailand.

Q: You went off to Thailand when?

MORRIS: In 1993.

Q: You had a new administration, the Clinton administration. Did you feel that was making any difference in our view of Asia or not? It was sort of business as usual wasn't it?

MORRIS: I think the big difference as far as Thailand was concerned was that Thailand was able to restore its democratic government. This was really about when I got there; it was not quite a year into the new democratic government of President Chuan Leekpai but people were very hopeful about Thailand and its new democratic government. So U.S. relations with Thailand were at a pretty good place at that time. We had a democratic administration in Washington; we had a new democratic government in Thailand.

Q: You were there in '93 to when?

MORRIS: From '93-'96.

Q: OK and who was our ambassador?

MORRIS: David Lambertson was the ambassador the first two years I was there and then after he left in '95, there was a hiatus between ambassadors and Will Itoh came out early in '96. There was a long period of time when Skip Boyce who was the DCM was the charge.

Q: Your job?

MORRIS: I was the press officer, press attaché. Well, what did that entail? Thailand of course was a very big press center, very big media center. There was a large Thai press corps, two English language newspapers and several Thai newspapers. Bangkok was a huge city, over ten million people, so it was a very large city and these newspapers were very active. There was lots of opportunity to interact with the media, there were television stations there, and one of the television stations was owned and managed by

Thaksin Shinawatra who later became the prime minister of Thailand and didn't do perhaps quite so well as prime minister as he was doing as head of this television station.

In addition to the Thai press there was also a very large foreign press. The foreign correspondents were focused really not so much on Thailand, about which everybody thought: OK Thailand was boring, it's kind of an economic success story and democracy has been restored here so we don't have to worry about Thailand anymore. But there was still a lot of problems with Cambodia and then there was the situation with Vietnam and the fact that the U.S. still did not have diplomatic relations with Vietnam. So there was a lot of interest with both Vietnam and Cambodia; the journalists went back and forth into those countries and then used Bangkok as their headquarters, almost their R&R spot in a sense. But there was a large foreign correspondents club in Bangkok that would have regular meetings, so that was a very interesting place to get to know the journalists, some very colorful figures who were the correspondents there.

The other big issue was over on Thailand's other border and that was with Burma. Of course all of the problems in Burma, the human rights problems there, the continued house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi, and then all of these various tribal groups that were on the border between Thailand and Burma, several of which were actively involved in the drug trade, so that was a big issue. We had a very active drug enforcement agency presence at the embassy in Bangkok.

Q: How did you find the press? Were some papers responsible and others weren't, did they run the spectrum or how?

MORRIS: Some were certainly more favorable and more responsible than others. The Nation and The Bangkok Post were the two English language newspapers. I would say that of the two The Bangkok Post was more conservative in many ways but I would say The Nation was usually more favorable to us and we were usually able to get things published in The Nation. There were some very good journalists there, including some who had had training overseas. By and large I would say the two English language newspapers were pretty good to deal with; there was more discrepancy in the Thai press.

Probably the best Thai newspaper was one called Matichon and it was quite a good Thai newspaper. There was another one called Thai Rath that was more focused on populist issues. Every day it would have a column that would describe little issues that people were having, perhaps in their neighborhood – the trash department wasn't picking up the garbage and so it was causing an outbreak of flies in the neighborhood – and the efforts of the people to try to get this problem resolved. Then the newspaper would actually try to publicize these issues and try to embarrass the government or the authorities into doing something about this problem. The newspaper served a very good purpose from a populist standpoint, but it wasn't always something that was of interest to us.

Q: In that part of the world and other parts of the world there are some sort of rags that basically goes to a politician or a businessman we've got this story on you and we're

going to publish it unless you give us some money or something like that; it was basically a tool for blackmailing. Was there much of this or any of it?

MORRIS: I didn't find that in Thailand; no, I did not find that in Thailand.

Q: Did the Chinese Communists have an active press there?

MORRIS: The Chinese News agency was there, but I don't recall any other Chinese language press that was affiliated with the Chinese government. The Vietnam news agency was there also.

Q: What sort of things were the Thai press and media interested in about the United States?

MORRIS: Certainly our relationship with Thailand; that was the biggest issue for them. They never felt that we were giving them as much assistance as they would like so we had to sustain some criticism for that. The Thai, of course, felt that they had supported us and they did during the Vietnam War in very real ways that weren't always popular with their neighbors and they felt that we owed them a bit more than we were supplying at the time. I think that was certainly the biggest issue. Some of the other issues were things that perhaps we were more concerned about. There were lots of problems, as I mentioned before, along the Thai-Burma border with the drug dealers, so we were constantly trying to get the Thai authorities to work with us to try to capture the main drug dealer, who was called Khun Saa. Eventually we were able to get the Thai authorities – the drug enforcement agency was working very closely with the Thai authorities – and they did work with us in getting this major drug dealer so that was a really very big success. But we had criticized the Thai government, not usually publicly except on rare occasions when we didn't think they were cooperating enough, and they would constantly explain to us how difficult it was; they had to work with their neighbor, Burma, Myanmar, which was right next door.

Another issue was human rights and we were very critical of the Burmese government for its human rights abuses, for the continued house arrest for Aung San Suu Kyi and the Thai again would say, "This is our neighbor, we have to do things in the Asian way, we are not going to criticize the Burmese government." So there were those kinds of issues between our two governments.

Q: Did the Thais have a pretty good representative of press media in the United States?

MORRIS: Not too many, no. There were a few Thai journalists who were in Washington at the time, I think there still are, and a few in New York; but that was pretty much it. They depended quite heavily on the various media outlets like the Associated Press and others. They had their own subscriptions to those news services and depended on them for international news and from time to time they would carry things that we gave them as well. They did like to do interviews so they would interview our ambassador and other visiting dignitaries and usually do a pretty good job of covering those kinds of things.

Q: Did you sort of baby-sit the ambassadors? Was that part of your job when they were being interviewed or not? It's the wrong term but in other words…

MORRIS: Yes, that's always part of the press officer's job to be there, to record the interview, to make sure that when it's reported that it's reported accurately; that was a big part of the job. I remember we had the ASEAN, the Association for Southeast Asian Nations, meeting there one year, their annual meeting. There is always the post-ministerial conference, the post ASEAN ministerial meeting, which the United States and other partner nations to ASEAN attend. One year Winston Lord, who was the assistant secretary for East Asia, was there for this meeting. All the Thai newspapers wanted to interview Winston Lord, so how were we going to do this. We worked out an arrangement with which they all agreed and Winston Lord agreed to do two interviews, so we had representatives from two of the newspapers there for the first interview and then two of the other newspapers for the second interview. Of course, I sat in on both of those interviews, but Winston Lord was masterful in dealing with the press and he did a wonderful job on both of these interviews on practically no sleep at all. The media were very, very appreciative of having this opportunity.

Q: The Royal family how was that treated?

MORRIS: The royal family was pretty much out of bounds as far as any kind of media criticism. That, of course, made for a very interesting situation because there was a lot going on just below the surface.

Q: The crown prince remains still, I'm told, not a very loveable person.

MORRIS: There may be private criticisms, but publicly all members of the royal family have to be treated with the utmost respect in the press. So that was something that was just completely off limits as far as any press criticism was concerned. The royal family, of course, continues to be very, very important in Thailand. During the time that I was there the mother of the king, she was referred to as the princess mother, passed away. She was very old. There was a very long period of mourning and I remember everyone in the country had to wear either black or white or maybe a very light beige for basically almost a year. We all ended up getting a number of black things to wear. The embassy was very lucky in that we had someone on the embassy staff, from the U.S. Information Service, who was related to the royal family in a very distant way. She knew all of the protocol and all of the things that, for example, the ambassador and other people on the embassy staff needed to do in terms of going to pay their respect to the Princess Mother, who had been interred in an urn after her death. The people would go and visit at the temple; this all built up to a tremendous cremation ceremony. The day of the cremation ceremony was a Thai holiday. It was an event that was very, very important to the Thai people. I think that this love of members of the royal family and the royal family as an institution was something that was really very genuine and was very important to the Thai.

Q: Were there any, I'm looking at the time and maybe we'll at this point and for the next time you left there in '81?

MORRIS: No, I got there in '93 and left there in '96.

Q: Were there any coups or anything of that sort?

MORRIS: No, there was an election, Thailand has a parliamentary system so there were constantly threats of no-confidence votes and finally there was an election and a new party and a new prime minister came into office. Perhaps not what the United States would have chosen but nonetheless somebody that we continued to work with. Basically it was a pretty peaceful time in Thailand, it was a time when there was really very rapid economic growth. You could see that the Thai people themselves were becoming more affluent all the time, a lot of very fancy cars on the road, a lot of cars period. The traffic in Bangkok was absolutely horrendous at the time, but it was at a period of great prosperity. There was a lot of hope in Thailand because people there really felt that the bad old days of coups in Thailand were over, Thailand was firmly on a path to democracy. Thailand was experiencing tremendous economic growth, the region was basically peaceful, and the United States had reestablished diplomatic relations with Vietnam. Cambodia was still problematic during that period of time, there were still some problems with Burma but basically the situation was better. There were also problems, that would flair up from time to time in the south of Thailand with the Separatists movement there. Basically it was a good time I think for Thailand and the Thaïs felt that this was a very good time. Later, as we know, the economic crisis hit.

Q: That was a couple years away?

MORRIS: That's right; that happened in 1997.

Q: OK, we will stop at this point and we will pick this up the next time in 1996?

MORRIS: In 1996, that is correct.

Q: Where did you go?

MORRIS: To the Philippines, to Manila.

Q: What was your significant other doing during this time you were in Thailand?

MORRIS: My husband passed away in 1992, before I went to Thailand, so I was there by myself.

Q: OK so we will pick this up in 1996 when you were off to…

MORRIS: To Manila.

Q: To Manila.

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: Great, wonderful.

Q: OK, today is the 29th of September and this is with Greta Morris. Greta we are going to pick this up in 1990 what?

MORRIS: '96.

Q: All right, what happened in '96?

MORRIS: In 1996, I finished my posting in Bangkok and I moved to the Philippines as the counselor for public affairs.

Q: You were there from when to when?

MORRIS: I was in Manila from 1996 till 1998.

Q: What was the political situation and all in the Philippines when you got there in 1996?

MORRIS: It was a very interesting time to be there. The people power revolution had taken place in the mid-1980s-'86 I believe it was – when Marcos was thrown out. Fidel V. Ramos was the president of the Philippines at the time that I got there. He had been a military leader but at least he said he was very committed to democracy and I think he certainly was. He was a very smart man, very well organized, and was I think a good leader but I would have to say that the issue of democracy and how to have a genuine democracy was still very much part of the Philippine scene. It was democracy trying to move toward greater democracy, but it still a lot of the vestiges from the past.

There had been no success in renegotiating a new agreement for the two U.S. bases in the Philippines, so they had been closed.

Q: Basically Clarke Field and Subic Bay.

MORRIS: That is correct, yes. In Subic Bay, basically the U.S. military left; Clarke had been very much affected by the Mt. Pinatubo volcanic eruption.

Q: This is before you…

MORRIS: This was before I got there, but the feelings and connection with the negotiations of the bases agreement were still very close to the surface, shall we say. Even though a lot of Filipinos said "we are glad that we don't have the U.S. bases here anymore," a lot of Filipinos felt somewhat bereft that the U.S. military had left. Of

course, there had been hope on the part of a lot of the negotiators that the U.S. would agree to pay a higher price and be able to stay; but that didn't happen. So there were still some feelings left over from that. One reason that I mention that is because one of the big issues that we were dealing with at the embassy the whole time I was there was how we were going to get a new Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Even though the U.S. no longer had bases there, the Philippines remained a U.S. ally, we had regular military exercises with the Philippine military and with no status of forces agreement to protect the U.S. military, there was a lot of concern about whether or not we could even continue to do any of these exercises or even have any U.S. military in the country. This was a very big issue; there were elements of the Philippine government that basically wanted to end the diplomatic immunities for U.S. military. That was a very important issue while I was there. We did a lot of public affairs, a lot of public diplomacy (working with the press) in connection with that, trying to persuade the Philippine government that this was really in their interest because it was very important to be able to continue our strong U.S.-Philippine military alliance and to be able to continue these exercises.

I guess that I could say that the first thing I had to be concerned with when I arrived in the Philippines in August was the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit that was going to be taking place in Manila in November. Actually, the leaders meeting was going to be taking place in Subic; the former base was being reconfigured for the visit of (I believe at that time) twenty heads of state, including President Bill Clinton and the First Lady Hilary Clinton. This was, of course, as with all U.S. presidential visits, a major task and I would say especially for the public affairs section trying to deal with all the media. With twenty leaders there for the leaders' meeting, it was an extra big task. Basically for the first three months I was there, August, September and October, until the meeting took place in November, the whole embassy was focused on getting ready for the visit of Bill Clinton and the meeting of the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation ministers and also leaders. That was a very major event. Of course, the president traveled with a big press corps and there were lots and lots of international media there. I think there were about one thousand journalists that came to the Philippines for this event.

Q: How were Clinton and the United States perceived in the Philippines at the time?

MORRIS: In many ways the Filipinos really love Americans. You could feel that in your personal relationships with Filipinos, you could feel it in their love of American popular culture; but there was also some degree of resentment left over from the colonial period and also, as I mentioned, the whole era of the U.S. bases and the rather contentious negotiations which basically ended in the U.S. leaving, but not in a totally satisfactory way for the Philippines, since they didn't get the additional money they were hoping for. It was really more love than hate but there was that element of resentment too. Bill Clinton for the Filipinos seemed to represent everything that they loved about the United States. When Bill Clinton came for the APEC Summit he was treated absolutely like a rock star; one would go to the official banquets and everyone, all the Filipinos, were racing over to try to get as close to Bill Clinton as they possibly could. They often ignored their own leaders because they were so enthusiastic about being able to see and

be around Bill Clinton; he really was welcomed as a real rock star and I think, had a very successful visit.

Q: How did you find dealing with the press there en mass?

MORRIS: It's a very lively press scene; some of the newspapers exemplified yellow journalism at its best – tabloids with the latest shocking story about a sex scandal or something that a Philippine politician was involved in, or maybe that the United States was doing something that they didn't like. There were also some newspapers that were quite good and that we dealt with on a regular basis. There was one called Today that was edited by a man named Teddy Locsin, a very talented journalist who had been the press spokesman for Corazon Aquino when she was the president of the Philippines. Teddy was not always flattering about United States policy, but he operated from a very strong set of democratic principles, so everything that he wrote about, even his criticisms of the United States, were based on his understanding of whether or not the United States was doing the right thing in light of his own democratic values. He was somebody you could really deal with because you knew where he was coming from and he was basically quite a principled person. That is what I would say was one of the better newspapers.

There was another newspaper called the Philippine Inquirer that was also quite a good newspaper.

Q: Were there papers that were the personal tools of the political party in taking stands for political purposes?

MORRIS: There were, certainly. There was a presidential and senatorial election campaign in 1998 and certainly then some of the papers became very closely allied with various candidates. You could tell even before the campaign started, for example, the newspaper called Today, as I mentioned, was very closely aligned with Corazon Aquino and with the more democratic elements of Philippine society.

Q: When you arrived there in the embassy…who was the ambassador by the way?

MORRIS: John Negroponte had just left, he had been the ambassador; he left actually the same day that I arrived and I hope there was no connection. Tom Hubbard then came shortly after that; he had been deputy assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs before that. He was the ambassador the entire time that I was there.

Q: Being the new girl on the block arriving at an embassy you get a different view than if you had been around for a while did you have a feeling that OK we've got the status of forces problem but basically from the embassy point of view thank God the military has left? The military has a different view, obviously, but I think from a parochial point of view I would think that the embassy would feel this is one more thing we don't have to worry about as much or not?

MORRIS: I think there was general relief that we didn't have to deal with the negotiations. I was certainly glad because the public affairs counselor who had had to deal with being the spokesman, essentially, during the negotiations, a man named Stan Schrager, was on the nightly news almost every night and was bombarded by the media there. So I think there was certainly relief that that issue was behind us and a desire to get on with the relationship, but I didn't sense that there was a feeling in the Embassy that this was a good thing that we didn't have these military bases.

Q: Was Clarke basically, particularly after the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, was gone wasn't it as far as we were concerned?

MORRIS: Yes, and Subic. The military had left and it had basically gone to wrack and ruin; it almost looked like a ghost town. We went up to Subic early on to survey it, because this was going to be the sight of the APEC leaders' meeting and the Filipinos were working to try to get it ready. Of course, this was one of our constant worries at the embassy before the APEC meetings: would the Filipinos be able to get all of this done in time for the visit of Bill Clinton and all the other leaders. The person who was in charge of Subic at the time was a man named Richard Gordon, whose father had been an American; his mother was a Filipina. After the APEC summit, Subic was going to be a free trade area where people could come and buy things duty free. Richard Gordon was our partner in trying to get Subic ready. He was a very charismatic and energetic person and he had a group of young volunteers who were helping him. And they did it; they managed to get Subic ready in time; even the sites in Manila, as well, were really in very good condition by the time everybody arrived.

Q: How did you feel about the Philippine society as you looked at this? What struck you about it?

MORRIS: As I mentioned, the Filipinos were very friendly; they are people who really do enjoy socializing with other people; they enjoy music and they enjoy festivals and basically having a good time. Of course, there was a real contrast between the part of the Philippines where I lived in Manila and the southern part of the Philippines, Mindanao, which was predominantly Muslim. Shortly before I had arrived, I believe it was in July of 1996, the Moro National Liberation Front, which was one of the two Islamic Separatists groups that had been fighting the Philippine government, signed an agreement with the Philippine government to establish something called the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM was the acronym). The person who was put in charge of this was a man named Nur Misuari, who had been the leader of the separatist movement, the Moro National Liberation Front. He was then supposed to work with the Philippine government; Mindanao and the ARMM were supposed to get a significant amount of assistance to be able to develop the region and in return for this, Misuari was supposed to give up the fight. There were a lot of problems with the implementation of that project, the ARMM. Part of the problem was that Nur Misuari didn't seem to know how to manage money; he spent a lot of the assistance money on very lavish trips, taking his entire entourage with him on overseas trips. Consequently, he didn't use the money that he did have (or at least not a sufficient amount) to develop the region, so that the people

remained very poor. I visited Mindanao several times while I was there. I visited the strongly Islamic part three times, I believe; it was quite different from Manila or even other parts of the Philippines, a predominantly Catholic country.

Q: Was it just that it was poorer or that it was…?

MORRIS: It was very Islamic and, in a way, a taste of what was developing in Indonesia, including some of the more strongly Islamic parts of Indonesia. I remember my visit to a place called Marawi, a city which is right in the heart of Mindanao. I knew that it was a strongly Islamic area so I needed to be conservatively dressed, but I didn't realize until I got there that the women there would be completely covered. They didn't wear burkas, but they wore very colorful scarves covering all of their hair, none of their arms were visible and their clothing came down to the ground. It was very conservative in terms of the way of living; there was absolutely no alcohol in that part of the country.

Q: As the public affairs officer you've got this strongly Islamic group; how did you reach them or did we reach them?

MORRIS: Yes, we did. I think we were able to reach them, at least to a certain extent. The reason for my first visit was in connection with the embassy's pledge to work with the Philippine government in trying to help develop this region; our USAID presence in the Philippines was very actively engaged in Mindanao and we were going to try to do more in terms of Fulbright and other public diplomacy programs for people from Mindanao. I went down with the person who was the head of our Binational Fulbright Commission in Manila to visit Mindanao State University. The head of Mindanao State University had done her study in the United States and I think she had done it through the Ford Foundation because the Ford Foundation had a very active program in Mindanao back in the '60s. At Mindanao State University, there were still houses that had been set up for the Ford Foundation scholars who had come to teach there. I stayed in one of them overnight. But the people of Mindanao, particularly those we met at the University, were very interested in education, they were interested in getting more scholarships and having more educational assistance from the United States; that was certainly one way that we were able to reach out to them.

Another thing that we did on a later trip was to establish what we called an "American corner." This was really right at the beginning of the period during which the State Department decided to set up American corners in universities or libraries in different parts of the world as a way of replacing our centers that we were closing very rapidly; all the USIS centers were being closed. We set up an American corner at Mindanao State University; Ambassador Hubbard and his wife went to Mindanao to open the American Corner officially. The people of Mindanao and particularly the university were very interested in having American books, in learning English, in getting scholarships, so this was a way of being able to reach them.

Q: How about did we see a problem in promoting scholarships to universities particularly for the women or going there in a traditionally Islamic people's dumping in

the middle of Colombia University or something? I could see where there could be problems because they are not really attuned to dealing with fundamentalist Islamist's.

MORRIS: I guess that there are different degrees and kinds of fundamentalism, so to speak, and the woman who was the president of Mindanao State University, even though she dressed conservatively, was a very dynamic woman and very well educated. She spoke beautiful English, she was clearly a very strong leader and she was somebody whom the male members of her staff clearly respected. She reminded me of the Indonesian women whom I met later who were also traditional Muslims but very well educated and were therefore people who would be able to be successful in a U.S. academic setting. I don't think we felt that there was anything contradictory about this.

Q: So you didn't have to over tailor things?

MORRIS: No, these were people who obviously had to do well enough on their TOEFL tests and on their GRE tests to be admitted to an American graduate program and they went through the same very rigorous competition for the Fulbright program that any of the other scholars did.

Q: Well I take it you were spared having to deal with a tremendous immigration or non-immigration flow to the United States, or nurses and all that? Your piece of the action was well controlled was it?

MORRIS: I was not responsible for visas, so that was good. We had a very, very large visa section and in fact, it still is the largest in the world; it's a major operation there. It's always terribly interesting because even when we were having some of the demonstrations, for example, about the SOFA and even going back further when there were demonstrations against the bases, there were always people standing in front of the consular section waiting to apply for a visa to go to the United States. It was a major issue. There was always a concern on the part of the Embassy and the State Department about the people going to the United States, even for study or for a short term exchange program, or maybe they were going as tourists: were these people really going just to visit and were they going to come back to the Philippines or were they going as intended immigrants? There was a lot of concern certainly about that.

Q: You were saying about the demonstration about the SOFA? SOFA is Status of Forces Agreement.

MORRIS: Status of Forces Agreement, that's correct yes.

Q: This is making sure American military don't end up in the local jail or something.

MORRIS: That's right, yes.

Q: How did you work with the ambassador?

MORRIS: I think we had a very good relationship; he was very keen on getting our message out to the press. He was willing to do interviews and also to do speeches; he was good from that perspective. He also was very interested in exchange programs as well, so he was willing to participate actively. During that time we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Fulbright program in the Philippines. The Philippines has the oldest continuous Fulbright program in the world; it began in 1948. The widow of Senator J. William Fulbright (who initiated the program), Harriet Fulbright, came out for the anniversary. Tom Hubbard and his wife were very active participants in all of the events surrounding the anniversary of the Fulbright program. They were very good to work with because public affairs was something that they saw as important to the mission of the embassy, very important to getting our word across to the Philippine people; so they were very active participants in public affairs programs.

Q: How was Filipino TV?

MORRIS: You could get the news from Philippine television. There were some stations that did their news mainly in Tagalog, with a lot of English mixed in. This combination of Tagalog and English was referred to as "Taglish" (I'm not sure that all Filipinos were very enthusiastic about that name). We sent a number of Philippine television (as well as print) journalists to the U.S. on IV programs to help them in making their television news broadcasts more professional and objective.

Q: Was CNN a factor?

MORRIS: Yes, you could get CNN there. It was helpful for those of us at the Embassy to be able to get our international news on CNN.

Q: Did you find yourself to some extent having to respond to CNN? If they've reported on something happening and we have to make sure that we put the right spin on it or whatever?

MORRIS: Yes, sometimes. I can't think of any specific examples of that occurring there but we were dealing with a situation, and had been for some time, where news was basically instantaneous. If a major event occurred any place in the world, it was reported virtually instantaneously on CNN. The Filipinos were getting the same news, and at the same time, in the Philippines as people in the United States, Europe and those parts of Africa where CNN was available were getting it. There was always that need to be able to react, to respond, to comment on something that was on CNN.

Q: Was the American expatriate community an important element for you all?

MORRIS: There was a fairly large American expatriate community. I lived in a large apartment building in the area of Manila called Makati and the apartment building had people from all different countries: there were other American diplomats living in this building, diplomats from other countries, business people. The person who lived right above me was Imelda Marcos. I used to see Mrs. Marcos in the elevator from time to

time; I lived on the 44th floor and she lived on the 45th floor. When she was running for election to the Philippine congress in 1998, her big campaign bus was parked out in front of the Pacific Plaza, as the building was called.

I went to a church that had a lot of Filipino members, so I interacted a lot with Filipinos. That was one of the things that I enjoyed very much about the Philippines. I think because the Philippines had been a U.S. colony for basically fifty years and we had continued to maintain a very close relationship with the Philippines, there were close relations between the U.S. and the Philippines on a people-to-people level as well as on an official level. Many Filipinos had studied in the United States or had family members in the United States and they spoke English well. There was, I think, a pretty easy rapport between American's and Filipinos.

Q: I've never served in the Philippines but one of the things I've heard was that sometimes the American diplomats got sort of engulfed or overly embraced by the powerful families and really didn't get out to the non-powerful family areas and all that.

MORRIS: That certainly was true for a number of reasons. In the Philippines, the powerful families were very important: the Aquino family, for example, was a very powerful family that owned an immense amount of land in the Philippines. Members of the rich and important families held many of the key positions in government, in business, in the media, in every facet of Philippine life, so they were our natural interlocutors in our daily work. They also spoke English well and were used to dealing with Americans. It was particularly difficult to meet other Filipinos if one did not speak Tagalog. As PAO, I was very thankful for my contacts with the academic and media communities because they enabled me to meet many Filipinos.

Q: By the time you left in 1998 was it? Had things changed at all politically or not?

MORRIS: Getting back to politics, I think I mentioned at the beginning that democracy was still a kind of fragile concept in the Philippines. As we were moving toward the elections, there was a lot of concern about who was going to replace Fidel Ramos, who had been quite a good leader and also very favorable toward the United States. He was barred from running again by the Philippine constitution, but one of the things that he kept talking about was that maybe there should be a change of the Philippine constitution so that he could run for another term. Of course, it was kind of a delicate dance for us when we were asked to comment on this. Our response was, "This is really an internal matter for the Philippines to decide, but all parties should respect the constitution of the Philippines and we strongly support Philippine democracy". Ultimately that didn't happen; Ramos didn't move forward with trying to change the constitution.

They had an election and it was a fascinating experience to be in the Philippines during an election because their election campaigns are very lively. Campaign rallies were really more like shows, with music and singing and dancing and everything else along with the campaign speeches. One of the candidates that was especially good at this was Joseph Estrada, who had been a movie star and his persona in the movies was that of the

champion of the little guy, somebody who would always fight for the working man, for the peasant, to help them get what they needed, their just desserts and their rights in Philippine society. Basically he ran almost as his movie character and people seemed to identify him very much with the persona that he had had in the movies. He was elected as the president of the Philippines. He was someone who had not had extensive education and had not had much preparation for being the president of a large country – even at that time the Philippines had over 70 million people. He served as mayor of San Juan, a municipality of Manila, at one point and he was Fidel Ramos' Vice President. At any rate, he was elected, and, of course, as we all know now his presidency was not successful; there was a lot of corruption and other problems from the start. Finally, he was deposed, tried and sentenced to life imprisonment. He was pardoned by his successor, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. But it was fascinating to be there during this election campaign.

Q: How did you find your staff in the public diplomacy side both American and Filipino?

MORRIS: On the American side, there was a cultural affairs officer, assistant cultural affairs officer, information officer, assistant information officer (that position was eliminated by USIA during my tour) and I had an American secretary as well. It wasn't a terribly large staff but they were a good staff, very hard working and talented Foreign Service officers. The Filipino staff were by and large very good and just absolutely delightful to work with; they were very nice, hard working and dedicated. Of course, I also had the privilege of working with the head of our Fulbright Commission who didn't report to me directly because he was the head of a binational commission (reporting to the Commission Board) but, nonetheless, we worked very closely together on the Fulbright program and he was a wonderful and very capable person to work with. They were a very fine staff.

Q: Well I can't remember exactly but President Clinton, had he gotten into Monika that's not the term…

MORRIS: No.

Q: Had the Monika Lewinsky affair taken place at this point?

MORRIS: No, I think that was, if I recall correctly, that was a bit later.

Q: But he was having problems with Congress?

MORRIS: Oh yes.

Q: Very hostile. Did you have problems explaining it?

MORRIS: When I was in Thailand, of course, that's when we had the furlough, as you may recall, when basically much of the government was shut down. There were actually some people on the embassy staff who were furloughed and that had an impact on us

because the second furlough was right at the end of the Christmas holidays when students, and there were many, many Thai students, I think well over 20 thousand, many of whom had come back for the Christmas holidays, and they needed to get back to their universities. Of course, they were not able to get back because there weren't enough visa officers to take care of their visas. It had a real impact on our relationships in Thailand and I'm sure that was the case in the Philippines also, but I wasn't in the Philippines yet. We didn't have that particular problem.

The other thing, of course, that happened during that time was the Asian financial crisis in 1997.

Q: How did that hit the Philippines?

MORRIS: The Philippines was quite fortunate in some ways. The perceived truth at the time–and I think it probably was true–was that because the Philippines wasn't as well developed and perhaps not quite so well integrated into the world economic and financial system as a country like Thailand was, the financial crisis didn't seem to affect the Philippines quite as badly, particularly not at first. So in some ways the Philippines did not suffer quite so badly. Nonetheless, that was a very difficult period, I think certainly for the whole region.

Q: When you left in '98 where did you go to?

MORRIS: In '98, I left at the end of July and I went back to Washington, to what was still the USIA headquarters at the time, to be the deputy director of the office of East Asia and Pacific affairs. I was there at the time when the decision was made – and actually it was made right at the beginning of fiscal year 1999 so that would have been October 1, 1998–that USIA was going to be merged with the State Department. There would be a one-year transition and the integration would take place on October 1, 1999. That was, I would say, a big focus of my time when I was there, trying to figure out how this was going to affect the public diplomacy operation. I was able to work on the consolidation task force; this was a task force that was set up, with Pat Kennedy as the head of the task force, and it included representatives from both the State Department and from USIA trying to figure out how the consolidation/integration was going to work. We had regular meetings to discuss this and to try to work out all of the details. That was something I was certainly involved in, looking at it both on the Washington side and how it was going to affect our posts overseas. For example, would the PAO still have a separate vehicle, or (as was ultimately decided) would all vehicles be part of the embassy motor pool? Would the PAO still be provided with representational china? (No, there would be no PAO china.) The consolidation included things like this that were very much "in the weeds," so to speak, as well as what might seem to be more important issues, such as how all of the HR (human resources) and financial operations, which had always been separate, of course, for the USIA posts – how were they going to be handled? Would they still be handled separately by the public affairs section or would all of these things become part of the B&F (budget and fiscal) section of the embassy and the HR (human resources) section of the embassy? Eventually that's what was decided.

One of the things that I think former USIA officers are very thankful to Ambassador Pat Kennedy for was his successful effort to preserve for public diplomacy some of the funding that had been USIA funding, so that we were still able to have some separate funds for public diplomacy activities. Some of the funding that was saved as a result of the integration was also used later to expand FSI.

Q: When you got there obviously this is a job that has to be done. But personally how did you feel about this and what was the mood of the people on the USIA side about this?

MORRIS: I would say that a lot of USIA people and I think well it's hard to say if it was more on the civil service side or the foreign Service side but I think in some ways it was even more on the civil service side for a lot of people because they hadn't had the experience that those of us in the Foreign Service had had of being at an embassy where everybody reports to the ambassador, where you are all part of the same team, where, for example, the press spokesman or the public affairs officer is doing public affairs for the whole embassy, so you already have this sense of integration. Some of the people in the civil service who had not had that experience felt like this was a hostile take over, frankly. Of course, people were very concerned about their jobs and what was going to happen to their jobs. So this phrase, "the crosswalk," came into usage, which basically was used to describe what position each person at USIA would go into once integration had taken place. What would the new job title be after the crosswalk? (In some cases, it was the same.) This was something that had to be done for every single position. I think in most cases just about everybody was placed into direct hire positions. I don't think any direct hires in Washington, at least, lost their jobs as a result of the consolidation.

But yes, I would say that there was a lot of angst and certainly for a lot of public diplomacy officers in the Foreign Service, as well, there was a feeling that the integration was going to be to the detriment of public diplomacy and perhaps ultimately to the detriment of U.S. policy, because there wasn't an appreciation of how important public diplomacy was over the State Department. There wasn't a real understanding of public diplomacy and there was the fear that public diplomacy was just going to get lost in the concerns of the State Department, the policy concerns.

Partly because of my experience working in the African bureau over at the State Department, I don't think that I was quite as concerned about this as were some of my colleagues. Nonetheless, I think a lot of people were concerned about how we were going to be received, if we were going to get the kind of support that we needed.

There was also concern about the impact that this might have overseas, since "USIS" was an entity that was known and respected overseas.

Q: My impression was and is but I haven't been dealing with it but the role of what you would call public diplomacy had been diminished since you didn't have people just concentrating on it and with their own budget and all which I think is a detriment to the diplomatic process. But I've only observed this from outside.

MORRIS: I think the other feeling that came into this was that USIA as a separate agency had been losing support for a number of years – ever since Charles Wick, a close friend of President Reagan, had been the Director. Charles Wick basically got the resources that he needed for USIA. After he left, USIA started losing resources and that was at a time when for, example, libraries were closed overseas. There was a reduction in English language programs; I saw this in Thailand, for example, when the support from USIA for the binational center in Bangkok was significantly reduced. In Manila basically we had to vastly reduce the size of our Jefferson library and make it into a reference center. With the exception of a very few places, we had reference centers, not libraries. Things were already pulling back as far as public diplomacy resources were concerned; perhaps there was a feeling that now that the Cold War was over, public diplomacy was no longer necessary, or at least it was not so important. I also think some people at USIA felt that perhaps if public diplomacy were part of the State Department, the State Department might take it more seriously and try to protect the assets. I'm not sure I'm ready yet to make a judgment yet on how this has worked out but certainly at that time when the integration took place the glory days of public diplomacy – when we had, for example, in Thailand, USIS branch posts all over the country—were over. We had English language programs and libraries all over the world; those were things of the past already.

Q: What was other than the tremendous operation of integrating two separate entities how about the East Asian side of things? What was going on?

MORRIS: Right before I left the Philippines in 1998, things were really coming to a head in Indonesia. Suharto stepped down and the process of democratization was beginning to take place in Indonesia. One of the things that lead to Suharto's downfall was the Asian economic crisis and countries in Asia were still very much dealing with that crisis.

Also, in Indonesia, the issue of East Timor was coming to a head. The Government of Jusuf Habibie, Suharto's successor, agreed that there would be a referendum, or "popular consultation" (as it was called) in East Timor, scheduled to take place in September 1999. The popular consultation was supposed to give the people of East Timor the opportunity to decide whether or not they wanted to be independent or continue to be part of Indonesia. They had the popular consultation and immediately after that, when the vote went in favor of autonomy for East Timor, violence broke out, with rampaging by the Timorese militias that had been sympathetic towards Indonesia and, certainly, the U.S. and the international community believed there were elements of the Indonesian military that were also very much involved in that violence. People were killed and their homes destroyed. That violent confrontation and all of the destruction in East Timor had a major impact on our relations with Indonesia, which really had not completely recovered from the end of the Suharto era. We saw this as the Indonesian government going back on its pledge to allow the people of East Timor to make their own decision on autonomy or integration, to have an opportunity for genuine self-determination. This put a tremendous strain on our relationship with Indonesia and particularly any military to military relationships (military relations with Indonesia were cut off in 1999 for several years). I think that was certainly the big issue in East Asia. There were always continuing issues

with China and with the human rights in China but I would say that a lot of the focus was on what was happening in Indonesia.

Q: Did this require or were we on the public diplomacy side what were we doing? Were we keeping our heads down or promoting something? What was that?

MORRIS: The embassy and the public affairs section at the embassy – I was still back in Washington at the time – was very involved in trying to encourage democracy, trying to promote democracy, trying to work with the new government to promote democracy. At the same time, they were dealing with all these issues and very serious riots in Indonesia, including some terrible riots against the Chinese population, so there were a lot of human rights issues, there were a lot of democracy issues but certainly on the public diplomacy side the embassy was very active in trying to promote democracy. We had to fight to keep our programs going, because there were some in the State Department who were suggesting that to punish the Indonesians after East Timor perhaps we should cut off all their Fulbright Programs, we should cut off all their IV programs. So we argued this was exactly the wrong thing to do; through these programs we were trying to help them understand democratic values, we were trying to help them understand U.S. policy, where the United States was coming from, to help them understand human rights. With a lot of these grants we were bringing some of the people who had had problems, to try to help them develop their leadership skills so that they could be more effective. If anything, we should increase these programs; we should not decrease them. I think we were successful in making that argument because the programs did not decrease.

Q: You are pointing out a fundamental problem in diplomacy. There are those that destined as how if you really want to pull press to understand how we are doing there is another side that says let's cut off all conversation and have no dealings with these people. It's simplistic and basic and very counterproductive policy.

MORRIS: Yes, absolutely. While I think again it shows a lack of understanding on the part of some people about what exchange programs are all about. I think some people see them as a reward. This is a reward for our good friend who has helped us out with this trade deal. Of course, that's not what they are supposed to be about. They are intended to be leadership grants, to help people become leaders in areas that are important to the United States and that are important to U.S. relations with that country. So it is a matter of trying to make sure that people in the Congress as well as in the administration to understand what the purpose is of these exchange programs and why it is important for them to continue. This goes back to South Africa and the whole issue of the Fulbright program, whether or not you should have a Fulbright program in South Africa during the time of apartheid.

Q: No I think time and time again these exchange programs have proved their value; sometimes short term but mostly long term. People take a look at us and we come out fairly well, we wrestle with problems, we have our own difficulties but we are a nation that takes a look at them and tries to do something about them. I've watched the results from a different vantage point way back when the Soviet Union tried this. A lot of people

came back thinking my God what a horrible place to be particularly if they are coming out of Africa or some place. We don't always win some people come back having bad experiences but most have good experiences. How did the battles rage in the Department about Indonesia and the exchange things? Did you find was there a certain line up or not of those who opposed those who were for?

MORRIS: Stanley Roth was the assistant secretary for East Asia and the Pacific at the time and he became totally absorbed with Indonesia. Ultimately, he was very helpful to us because he was very supportive of the kinds of things that we were trying to do in Indonesia. Clearly it was a big concern of the Department and was part of the effort to promote democracy. I believe it was around this time that Secretary of State Madeleine Albright designated four priority democracies – four important countries in four different regions that were in transition toward democracy, or we hoped were in transition toward democracy, and that were going to be a very strong focus of the United States. Indonesia was one of the four priority democracies; the others were Nigeria, the Ukraine and Colombia. Indonesia was very much at the top of the policy concerns in Washington at the time.

Q: How did Roth stand with you on exchanges? Was he trying to protect exchanges to Indonesia?

MORRIS: I think he was thinking of the whole picture and I don't think he was thinking specifically of exchanges, but we worked with the head of the Indonesian office, the Indonesian desk, and I think we were able to get them to see that it was very important to preserve these exchanges. Stanley Roth was supportive of continuing the exchange programs, so we were able to continue doing that.

Q: I take it by the time you got this Suharto had no constituents in the United States. I mean he was pretty much…

MORRIS: That's correct; he had no constituents in the United States.

Q: How about the successors of Megawati, and there was this almost blind man?

MORRIS: Yes, yes Abdurrahman Wahid.

Q: How did they seem?

MORRIS: Abdurrahman Wahid was elected president in November of 1999 by the parliament. Megawati had been one of the real leaders during the pro-democracy movement and she had her party, PDIP (the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan). Perjuangan means "struggle." So this was the struggle faction of the democratic party of Indonesia and Megawati was the leader of that party. Many people felt that she, the daughter of Sukarno, should be the rightful leader. However, in Indonesia, the country with the largest Islamic population, there were many people who just couldn't see their way clear at that time to having a female president, first of all, and also someone who

was not strongly Islamic. Megawati, like her father, was part of the Javanese tradition. Yes, she was a Muslim, but she was no a strict Muslim. Her belief system included elements of Javanese mysticism.

Abdurrahman Wahid, popularly known as "Gus Dur," was a Muslim cleric and a scholar, a very brilliant man and someone who had been also very much part of the democracy movement in many ways. Even before Megawati became the leader of the democracy movement, Abdurrahman Wahid was out there doing things that could have gotten him into serious trouble with Suharto and others. He was elected president in November 1999. I think there was a lot of skepticism about him in Washington. How was this man going to do as president? He is practically blind and really hadn't had any practical experience in government. He had started out as the head of a "pesantren" (an Indonesian Muslim boarding school) and how was he going to do as the president of Indonesia? I guess feelings were kind of mixed the first year. In many ways he was very advanced in his thinking, but too advanced in some ways for a lot of his country people. For example, he wanted to open relations with Israel and most Indonesians just were not ready for that at the time. He did a lot – and I think he was more successful in this – in improving the situation for Chinese-Indonesians, for example, in doing things like allowing materials to be published in Chinese where this had not been allowed basically since the '65 events. He launched or at least moved forward the decentralization program, which I think had really been launched by his predecessor Jusuf Habibie, the caretaker president after Suharto. He was able to move some things forward but ultimately, he was not able to be very efficient and so in the next election (in 2001) he was defeated by Megawati who then became president. I'm getting a little bit ahead of the story there.

Q: Speaking of that the interesting thing is here in America we've never had a female president and yet the three biggest Islamic countries Indonesia, India and Pakistan all had…

MORRIS: A female president, leaders.

Q: ...female leaders...

MORRIS: Prime Ministers.

Q: ...premiers or whatever you call them...

MORRIS: That's right.

Q: ...but elected leaders.

MORRIS: Bangladesh is a large Islamic country; so it's amazing.

At any rate, the integration of USIA with the State Department did then finally take place October 1, 1999. After that then it was an issue of the physical move and the first offices from USIA, the former USIA, that were going to move over to the State Department were

going to be the regional offices. So the issue was where can we put these people? They found a place in sort of a dark corner on the first floor, I believe it was, for the East Asia and Pacific office that I was the deputy director of. We moved into that office and I think it was about three weeks before I left; so I didn't have a lot of experience with the actual physical integration before I left that office to do two months of Indonesian study before I was going to go out to Jakarta as the PAO.

Q: You might point out that there are great policy matters and tremendous issues of state but when the rubber hits the ground or whatever, rubber hits the road the real thing is who gets parking spaces and where are your offices put?

MORRIS: That's right, yes.

Q: In a bureaucracy this tells everything.

MORRIS: This is absolutely correct, yes.

Q: OK you are off to…

MORRIS: Off to Jakarta.

Q: How did your Indonesian come along? Was it an easy one to re pick up and all?

MORRIS: It was relatively easy, yes. Indonesian is not a terribly difficult language. I had lived in Indonesia before I joined the Foreign Service for about three and a half years and had studied some Indonesian before that so my Indonesian had gotten pretty good while I was there. Actually, when I was still in the Philippines, I had gone to Bali one Christmas and I had always hoped to be able to go back to Indonesia. I had not been back in basically in about 18 years. I went to Bali for Christmas and while I was there, I had a lot of interaction in Indonesian with the driver of my tour car and with other people that I met. I felt so happy that my Indonesian seemed to be coming back and this really furthered my desire to go to Indonesia again. So I was very thrilled when I was assigned to go to Indonesia. I was hoping to be able to have a little more time to study Indonesian and really get my Indonesian up to a very strong level, but in two months I worked very hard and my teachers at the Foreign Service Institute were absolutely wonderful and really helped me a lot so I was able to get up to a pretty good level by the time I got to Jakarta.

Q: You were in Indonesia from when to when?

MORRIS: I arrived on the 3rd of March in 2000 and I was there until July of 2003, so a little over three years.

Q: What was the political situation in Indonesia when you arrived?

MORRIS: When I arrived Abdurrahman Wahid (or Gus Dur) was the president of Indonesia. Again, it was a very confusing time in Indonesia because things were moving forward in many ways as far as trying to consolidate the democratic gains. On the other hand, there were still all these issues connected with East Timor and trying to help East Timor move toward independence while at the same time trying to have some accountability for the militia groups and the elements of the Indonesian military that had been involved in helping the militia groups with the rampaging in East Timor; there was a lot of concern about that. There were concerns about the Suharto family about all of the millions and millions of dollars that the Suharto family had siphoned off from assistance money and other things.

Q: This is Madame fifteen percent?

MORRIS: Ten percent.

Q: Only ten percent.

MORRIS: Only ten percent, yes, but there were a lot of concerns about that; would there be any accountability at all for the Suharto family? Madame Suharto had passed away while Suharto was still president but Suharto was still living at the time and so there were a lot of concerns about whether or not there was going to be any accountability for his family and for some of his former colleagues. Then, of course, the events in Maluku were really heating up at the time.

Q: Could you explain what that was?

MORRIS: Maluku was formerly called the Moluccas or Moluccan Islands in Eastern Indonesia and this was a part of Indonesia where the Catholic element had always been quite strong. Gradually the population there, partly through the transmigration program of Suharto – taking people from overcrowded Java and trying to move them into other parts of the archipelago – as well as natural migration had increased the Islamic population in Maluku. Tensions had been building and finally things really started to break out – I believe it was in November or December of 1999 when the violence really started to become rather extreme and there were lots of massacres of Christian populations. Then, of course, the Muslim population said that the Christians would counter attack. There was a lot of violence there and President Wahid just did not seem to be able to get a handle on this or do anything about it. There were many charges that the former defense minister, General Wiranto, was very much behind this as well as other people who were in the Indonesian government.

It was a time when there was a lot of confusion or at least concern in the U.S. embassy and the U.S. government about where Indonesia was going. The Indonesian Government said it was our friend. President Wahid said he was really committed to democracy and yet there were all these issues: the lack of accountability for the folks involved in the East Timor situation, the feeling that there was an unwillingness to do something about this killing in Maluku. Then we started having some isolated incidents that appeared to be

terrorist incidents, including an attack on the Philippine ambassador's car, in which his driver was killed and the Philippine ambassador in Jakarta was very badly injured. There was a lot of concern by the U.S. embassy and I would say the ambassador in particular – Robert Gelbard was the ambassador – that this was a terrorist incident and the Indonesians needed to be looking at this very seriously to try to get a handle on it.

There were some mixed signals in other words and we weren't really quite sure which way things were going to go in Indonesia. Then, in 2001, the September 11th terrorist attacks in the United States took place and those attacks really defined the U.S. relationship with Indonesia and the work with the embassy for the remaining time that I was there. I would say that that has continued: all of the ramifications and the fall out from September 11 have continued to be very definitive in terms of our relationship with Indonesia. In many ways at first it was very, very difficult. I remember the next day (September 12) I came in to the embassy; the embassy was basically closed but some of us came in. The country team came in to find out how we were going to deal with this situation; there were some wreaths out in front of the embassy that Indonesians had placed there to express their condolences. I think we felt that this was a wonderful sign that there was some sympathy, but almost within days there started to be these criticisms particularly from some of the hard line Islamic leaders when President Bush started talking about a war on terror and particularly when he started talking about the issue with Al Qaeda in Afghanistan – that the Afghan government needed to give up Al Qaeda or we would go in to find them ourselves. Of course, that met with a very strongly negative reaction on the part of many Indonesians. We were faced with a very serious problem of a resurgence in more militant Islam in Indonesia, just at a time when we were facing this extremely serious crisis in the United States and we needed all the support that we could get from the international community and particularly from the world's largest Islamic population. That issue really defined our relationship. When the new ambassador Skip Boyce came, he basically asked the embassy – and as the public affairs counselor I was in a leading position on this because so much of involved public diplomacy – to come up with a strategy for how we were going to engage the Islamic community and explain our position and try to win people over to what we were trying to do. Public diplomacy was a key part of it – but there were other parts also and our USAID mission was very much involved in this as well – from the full gamut from press availabilities for the ambassador and others on the country team.

In those days we had many visitors who came out. We did a lot of electronic interviews. For example, Paul Wolfowitz as the deputy secretary of defense and a former ambassador to Indonesia did a number of electronic interviews and also visited Indonesia at the time. So there was a very heavy press element to our strategy, but also we did a lot with outreach and dialogue. One of the things that I arranged was for Ambassador Boyce to go out to meet with the leaders of about 50 different Islamic organizations and they included some of the moderate organizations that wanted to have friendly relations with the United States even if they didn't always agree with us, but the group also included some of the much more radical organizations. It was, as I remember, a very hot day when we did this; we were in a non- air conditioned room and we were all sitting there just sweating, both from the heat but also from the emotional stress of the situation, as many of the

Indonesians were attacking the United States. But the headlines in the paper the next day were essentially very complimentary: "Ambassador Boyce meets with key Muslim leaders for dialogue" – that was the sense of the headlines in almost all the papers. So it was very well received that we were willing to engage in this kind of dialogue.

But another very important part of our strategy was again through exchange programs and we were able to beef up our international visitor program and essentially double the size of our Fulbright program to send people to the United States, to learn more about the United States and to study in the United States.

Q: I would think there would be a certain amount of concern at that point to bring Muslims to the United States. Were you sort of checking to find out how they were going to be received and that sort of thing? There was a lot of very anti-Islamic…I think the government worked very hard on this at all levels because making sure that Muslims in the United States weren't picked upon; I think it was done well. Early on there must have been concern on your part wasn't there?

MORRIS: Yes, and there was certainly concern on the part of some of the people who were going. In fact, there were some people who refused to go; they said they did not want to go to the United States at that time; there was a lot of concern. I think most of our visitors were treated pretty well – those who were able to go – though I remember we did have one person, quite a prominent person, who when he got back from his program called me up to say that he was taken to "secondary" – his way of describing his experience at the airport where when he went through security they took him over to a separate section and basically grilled him, went through all of his stuff and he was incensed that he had been treated like this. Now, this was also the time of the policy of having the extra check in the visa application process for all males between the ages of I think it was 21 and 45 from specified countries. They were all Islamic countries…

Q: If you are going to do it of course…

MORRIS: They were all Islamic countries and that just enraged so many Indonesians. They said this is insulting, it is discrimination, and it's anti-Muslim discrimination so we had a lot of bad press over that or that issue. I mean it made things quite challenging; in fact we even had a couple cases of Fulbright grantees who had names that maybe were similar to the name of somebody from Pakistan who had been on some black list at some point and because their name was the same it popped up on the screen and it was very difficult, it took a long time before these folks were able to get their visas. So there were a lot of challenges, no question about it.

I want to mention another experience that I had when I was in Indonesia that I think demonstrated the importance the State Department placed on dialogue with Islamic communities at the time. This was the "Engaging Islam" conference, which took place at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo in October 2002. The conference was organized by the Policy Office at the State Department, under the leadership of the Director of the Office, Richard Haas. U.S. Embassies in countries with significant Islamic populations were asked to

prepare a "strategy" for engaging Islamic audiences. These embassies then were invited to send a participant to the Conference in Cairo. I was asked to represent our embassy in Jakarta and also to present our strategy at the Conference. It was a fascinating and stimulating conference, with lots of good ideas from Embassies in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. It was also my first opportunity to vest a Middle Eastern country. While "dialogue" can't solve all problems, I think the idea of "engaging Islam" is an excellent one that I hope will be continued.

Q: How did we view Al Qaeda or its offshoots in Indonesia at the time?

MORRIS: We were certainly concerned that there were groups, shall we say, affiliated with Al Qaeda. The major one was the Jemaah Islamiyah, a group that had started in Malaysia but then moved to Indonesia when the leader of this group who actually was Indonesian moved back to Indonesia after several years of exile during the Suharto regime. This organization, we suspected immediately but learned quite definitively later, was directly responsible for the Bali bombing, which occurred in October of 2002. So yes, there were these groups. As far as we know, they didn't originally start out as being part of Al Qaeda but certainly they shared goals and they had affiliations with Al Qaeda. Again, and I'm not an expert on Al Qaeda but some of the members of the Jemaah Islamiyah like some of the members of Al Qaeda had been fighters in Afghanistan during the period of the Soviet occupation and had gained some of their military skills as well as the more radical brand of Islam during that period in their formation and their development.

Q: I'm not sure I'm pronouncing it correctly but Aceh…

MORRIS: Aceh.

Q: …Aceh did that play a part of this rhetoric…I don't know what was happening there and what were we concerned about?

MORRIS: Aceh, of course, was a part of Indonesia that had been at odds with the Indonesian government for many, many years. It was the last part of the whole archipelago that the Dutch were able to conquer. It had long been a very strong Islamic area of the country. The Acehnese and many other Indonesians called Banda Aceh "the front porch of Islam." It's very close to the Islamic world; it was a transit point often for people going on the Hajj, for example. So it had always been a very unique part of Indonesia. The guerrilla movement there had been going on and on and on for many, many years and it would flair up during different times: the Free Aceh movement, the "Aceh Merdeka" movement would go through very strong periods and then it would go underground for a while.

One of the things, of course, in this decentralization that the Indonesian government was trying to implement was to give Ache a bit more autonomy but there were lots of disagreements about that because the Acehnese felt that they were providing a lot of the revenue of the country through all of their oil but they were having to give most of it to

the government in Jakarta; they weren't able to keep the wealth from their natural resources. That movement again was another source of concern for the United States because there were certainly a lot of reports of very, very serious human rights violations there. It was an area of great instability in the country, it was an area too where we were concerned about certainly the possibility of Islamic terrorism. I think though that this Jemaah Islamiyah was really stronger in Java than it was in Aceh. Nonetheless, we were concerned about Ache and both Ambassador Gelbard and then later Ambassador Boyce visited Ache and I was able to go with both of them.

Q: Were you able to have any sort of program there?

MORRIS: Yes, we were. The Acehnese people in many ways were very friendly toward Americans and wanted us to help them. At the Syiah Kuala University, which is the main university in Aceh, there had been an American center for many years that we had provided books to and other kinds of modest support. When we went up there we visited this American center and met with some of the students and the teachers at Syiah Kuala at the American studies center. When Ambassador Boyce went he gave a speech at the Islamic University also. So we were able to do things there but obviously there were a lot of concerns on the security side because it was a very unstable area. There were always concerns that there could be attacks. In fact, when I went with Ambassador Boyce our car was attacked by some students, or at least they looked like students, they might not have been students at the university; they may have been outsiders. The driver, in some very quick thinking was able to get out of the area of danger and take us to our destination.

Q: Was this rocks and things like that?

MORRIS: Well they hadn't thrown any rocks but they were clearly trying to block the car and we weren't sure what kind of…they didn't seem to have guns but we weren't sure if they had rocks or other kinds of weapons; clearly they were trying to keep the car from coming into the university grounds.

Q: Well now way at the other side what was happening in East Timor when you were there?

MORRIS: Of course East Timor was moving gradually toward independence. The UN transition authority for East Timor was there and I was able to visit East Timor I think three times during my time there, all before the actual independence. The first time was in June of 2000 so the territory, I guess I should call it, was still in very bad condition. Virtually all of the buildings were without real roofs but the UN had provided blue plastic sheeting to put over the roofs of the buildings so people could live in them. Many of the buildings had been burned out and were in very bad shape. It was certainly an area that was in shambles. People were starting to come back and the UN was extremely active. During my second visit I was able to meet with Sergio Vieira de Mello and I was very impressed with his commitment and energy…

Q: This is a UN diplomat killed in Iraq?

MORRIS: Yes, that is right and, of course, he was head of the UN mission in East Timor. He was very committed to trying to make East Timor work as an independent country and I think the UN really did very good work in East Timor.

Q: at a certain point did they cut you, our Jakarta embassy, off from East Timor and pass it on to somebody else?

MORRIS: Basically we were taking care of the U.S. diplomatic presence for East Timor including doing any kind of exchange programs for East Timor; we did do some exchange programs including one training program for ten future East Timorese diplomats who had been picked out by the Foreign Minister Jose Ramos Horta to be the future diplomats for East Timor. He wanted them to have some training in diplomacy skills in the U.S. So we did arrange a training program for them. But, yes eventually we did have a liaison office in Dili and then, of course, at the time of independence that became the U.S. embassy in Dili.

Q: Well now we've talked about Aceh, how about Irian is it called West Irian or East Irian?

MORRIS: Irian Jaya.

Q: Irian Jaya.

MORRIS: Irian Jaya.

Q: I mean we are talking about two or three thousand miles apart.

MORRIS: Right.

Q: But anyway I always think of it as West New Guinea but did we have much going there?

MORRIS: No we didn't but again that was another area of concern because there was an independence movement there. The people of Irian wanted to have more autonomy, the government in Jakarta was determined that it would not become independent, that neither Aceh nor Irian would become independent. Maintaining Indonesia's territorial integrity was of paramount concern to the Indonesian Government. So, of course, there were also charges and, in fact, there was one very serious case where one of the leaders of the autonomy movement in Irian was killed and it was linked to Indonesian security forces. That was certainly a very big concern.

Q: Do we have anything there public diplomacy wise?

MORRIS: The Fulbright program as well as the international visitors program and all of our exchange programs were open to everyone throughout the country. We did send

people to Irian Jaya to interview for Fulbright fellowships. For the international visitor program it was mainly people, mainly folks in our political section who would get out there to do reporting tours and would meet people from Irian Jaya and then would nominate them for international visitor grants. So we did have public diplomacy programs but primarily exchange programs.

Q: The exchange programs did you find was there sort of a distinction between the New Guinea natives and the Indonesian settlers?

MORRIS: The Indonesian settlers in the Javanese settlers and…

Q: The Javanese settlers as opposed to the…

MORRIS: Irian…

Q: …the New Guineans?

MORRIS: Oh yes, there certainly are differences, there is no question about that. The Irian people whom we selected for Fulbright grants or even for international visitor grants were people who were well educated because they would have to be people who had some English and be able to do well in the United States particularly those going on Fulbright grants because they would have to be able to function in a university setting. I would say in terms of their capability they were very capable people but it was clear that they had not had all the advantages of people say from Jakarta, Surabaya or Jogjakarta.

Q: Given your previous assignment how stood things between the Philippines and Indonesia during this time?

MORRIS: I would say that relations were generally pretty good, perhaps not as close as the relations were with Malaysia, which of course is another Islamic majority country. I think there are always some concerns in Manila about whether or not more radical elements in Indonesia were helping some of the more radical Islamic elements in Mindanao. Generally I would say that their relations were fairly good between the Philippines and Indonesia.

Q: This is right after say the amalgamation of USIS and State. How did you find it was playing in the field? Was there really much difference?

MORRIS: When I first arrived I noticed the public affairs section, the former USIS office was now down to just one administrative person (an Indonesian national), whereas before there had been a whole admin section. Now there was one admin person who was responsible for keeping track of our budget and then basically working with the various admin units, GSO over at the embassy. I think this was a difficult task for him because whereas before he had been the B&F person for USIS, now he was being asked to handle all the admin functions. I think he felt very much out of his depth; that was something that I noticed right away.

After the September 11th attacks certainly in Jakarta and I think probably in many countries but most definitely in Jakarta, we noticed that there was suddenly an awareness in the State Department and in other parts of the U.S. government that public diplomacy was very important, that we needed to be able to get our message out, we needed to engage with people that didn't see eye to eye with us and to try to help them understand our position, to try to help them understand our values and hopefully develop a relationship with these people. I think that in some ways, very ironically, the terrorist attacks made people aware of how important public diplomacy is.

At any rate, following those attacks we got a lot of additional resources. I already mentioned that the Fulbright program basically doubled in size; we got more international visitor grants. This was the period during which the undersecretary for public diplomacy was Charlotte Beers; she was coming out of the advertising, public relations world so she was very keen to work with some public relations organizations to try to help craft the message in a way that she thought would be very successful. I would say that the results were somewhat mixed in Indonesia; we were the guinea pigs for all of these things.

Among these projects were the Islam and America television spots. In many ways it was a good idea but I think it showed the limits of using advertising when you are getting into sensitive areas. These spots, for example; one was about an Islamic bakery in Dearborn, Michigan. Another was about an Indonesian, actually an Indonesian Fulbright student who was studying in the United States. These were very short little interviews and we were supposed to place them on Indonesian television. Well we did get a few television stations to carry them a couple of times, I think mainly just to be nice to us. It was a lot of money to spend for something that then a lot of the newspapers and others picked apart afterwards and said this is just propaganda, this is not really reflecting the views or the lives of Muslims in the United States.

I think we found that it was probably more effective when we were able to send people ourselves from Indonesia. For example, we sent several groups of Indonesian journalists to the United States, sent them to Dearborn, Michigan, to interview Muslims living there, sent them to New York to talk to an Indonesian who was a preacher at a mosque in New York and then they could come back and write about it in their own words. This was a more effective way of getting the message across to Indonesians. But I think at this point there was a realization that public diplomacy was important and there was almost a desire to try to reinvent public diplomacy, how can we have a public diplomacy, and perhaps some of the ideas went a little overboard.

You will probably recall that this was also a time when the U.S. military got very involved in public diplomacy as well and sent teams of military public affairs people to several embassies (we did not have any at our embassy) to put together public diplomacy campaigns. There were some challenges at some embassies in coordinating work between these two sections.

Q: As part of an on-going attempt, particularly at a time when Donald Rumsfeld was in the military and the Pentagon was basically taking over our relations. How did you find the Indonesian Foreign Service national staff in public diplomacy?

MORRIS: They were a wonderful staff and they really rose to the occasion when we were faced with this very great challenge of developing a public diplomacy strategy to reach out to the Islamic population. The staff included mostly Muslims but there were also several Christians on the staff. Of course, you could tell from time to time there were some tensions – there were also people of Chinese ethnicity, Chinese-Indonesians – but particularly at times when there was a real need to work together they worked together and they worked together as a wonderful team. I've had very good staffs but they were truly outstanding and truly did rise to the occasion; they were just a wonderful, wonderful group of people.

Q: Did you feel that you were having to combat sort of the immigration authorities in the United States and some of the police and all? We were going through for obvious reasons great concern about anybody who was Islamic after 9/11. Did you find that this was something you had to deal with?

MORRIS: Oh yes, as I mentioned the regulation for the extra step for approving the visas for men between the ages of 21 and 45 from Indonesia and other Islamic countries; that was something that caused a lot of problems. It would include any of our male grantees who would have to go through this extra step. One of the projects that we developed which I think turned out to be very successful was to send leaders of the Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, a group of them, to the United States to learn about American education and Islam in America. We worked with an NGO in Amherst, Massachusetts, the Institute for Training and Development, on this. This involved taking – I think each group was about 14-15 people – Indonesian men all of this prime age and we had to get them cleared to be able to go to the United States on this program. So it was a big challenge and obviously there was some skepticism on whether or not these individuals were going with good intentions. In most cases, we were able to get them cleared to go to the United States and they really had a very, very successful program.

Q: Were we concerned that the Saudi's had funded a lot of Madrassas, the Islamic schools which at that time we hadn't paid much attention to them and then all of a sudden we were discovering that they were preaching pretty violent things including in schools right here in Northern Virginia.

MORRIS: Right, oh we were we were very concerned. In fact, there were many schools that the Saudi's had provided a lot of assistance to. They had provided books to them, they had provided scholarships, they were providing teachers and in some cases they had trained the teachers. There was a lot of concern the Saudi's had been very active in Indonesia.

Q: Do you know were we informing the Saudi embassy what they were doing like AFSA? I have a feeling this was going on without much adult supervision on the part of the Saudi government.

MORRIS: I know there was dialogue yes with the Saudi embassy. I think it was at the level of our ambassador and DCM. I don't know how much they had been involved frankly in those kinds of projects. I think a lot of them were done independently by Saudi NGOs and Saudi religious organizations rather than the Saudi government; I'm sure there was some Saudi government funding but a lot of it was more independent.

Q: Was there much overt support for Al Qaeda after the 9/11?

MORRIS: Not a lot, but there was also an unwillingness to believe first of all that Al Qaeda really existed, that Muslims could be responsible for this dastardly deed, that Islam was being unfairly accused and certainly there was a great deal of skepticism – and this remained for a long time – that there could be any elements of this kind of radical Islam in Indonesia. The feeling was that the United States had declared war on Islam, this was opposition to Islam not opposition to terrorism, and that this was something that was very unfair particularly to link Indonesia with any of this, Indonesia was not responsible for this. So I think there was anger at the United States when they thought that we were accusing Muslims and particularly Indonesian Muslims of having anything to do with this kind of terrorism.

Q: Were you able to come up with publicized links?

MORRIS: Eventually yes after the Bali bombing.

Q: When was the Bali bombing?

MORRIS: It was in October of 2002, a year after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Q: This must have had a tremendous…a lot of Australians basically…it must have had quite a…

MORRIS: Well there were quite a number of Americans not as many as there were Australians but there were quite a number of Americans who were killed, others who were very badly injured. So yes, after that attack basically we had a mandatory draw down of the embassy. All families were evacuated and it was only essential staff. Essentially well over 50 percent of the embassy was evacuated and that occurred for the maximum six months period and then actually they made us go another week before they finally said that the situation had improved enough that our families could come back. It was obviously something that was of great concern to the embassy, a great concern to the State Department.

Q: Well then did this Bali bombing change public opinion in Indonesia? In other words did they feel that Islamic extremists were a problem?

MORRIS: Again it really did take a while before people were willing to accept that Indonesians could have anything to do with this. Finally, I think there was some acceptance of this. I think one of the things that first began to turn the tide, frankly I would hope that some of the things that we were doing helped, but I think one thing that really began to turn the tide was when Indonesians were seeing even in a place like Bali that in most of these terrorist attacks most of these people being killed were Muslims. So these attacks were very devastating to the Muslim community and to the Indonesian community. So many of the people who were killed in the Bali bombing, for example, were people who were working at this nightclub and so I think that that really started to turn the tide when people saw that wait a minute these things are starting to have a devastating impact on our own people. Of course, the other thing about the Bali bombing was that this was really destroying one of the greatest revenue sources for Indonesia, tourism. Particularly tourism in Bali, it really destroyed it for a very, very long period of time. At first there was a lot of anger at the United States and Australia and other countries for imposing these very, very strong travel warnings but then gradually there was a realization that they needed to do something about this situation if they were going to get the tourists back and they knew that they needed to have those tourists back.

Q: Well then you left then in 2003, is that right?

MORRIS: Yes, in July of 2003.

Q: We will pick up next time; where did you go?

MORRIS: Then I went to the Republic of the Marshall Islands. I had been, of course, nominated to be the ambassador, I had to go back actually in early June to Washington to have my Senate hearing and then I returned to Indonesia for another month and then I came back in July to finish the preparation to become the ambassador to the Marshall Islands where I went in August of 2003.

Q: So we will pick it up then.

MORRIS: OK.

Q: OK, today is October 14, 2008 with Greta Morris. Greta where are we now?

MORRIS: We left off when I was finishing up my tour as counselor for public affairs in Jakarta, Indonesia. I was there from 2000 until July 2003. At that point I left Jakarta and moved to the Republic of the Marshall Islands as the ambassador.

Q: OK, how did this ambassadorship come about?

MORRIS: I was in Jakarta and I was thinking about my next assignment. I was very interested in the newly independent Republic of East Timor but there was someone else in mind for that ambassadorship; so they suggested the ambassadorship in the Republic

of the Marshall Islands instead. I said, "Yes, I would like to be considered for that post." The process, of course, went forward in the way that it always does with all of the forms you have to fill out and the Senate confirmation hearings and all of that.

Q: Talk a little about all the forms and all this. I take it this was full disclosure?

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: This must be quite a process isn't it?

MORRIS: Well it is I mean it is the full financial disclosure, security, basically you lay out your whole life and then they evaluate that and decide whether to move your name forward first of all from the State Department to the White House and then if the White approves then the nomination is made.

Q: Did you have the feeling that there are some political appointees breathing down your shoulder or something?

MORRIS: Not for this post, no.

Q: My association with the Marshall Islands, what's it called? The Marshall…

MORRIS: The Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Q: The Republic of the Marshall Islands I landed there coming from the Federated…

MORRIS: Federated States of Micronesia?

Q: …Federated States of Micronesia because out in around '95 or '96 I went out there as a counselor or consultant. When we landed there I was a little worried that the plane would have enough room to land practically.

MORRIS: Oh, yes.

Q: Tell me what were you getting as you read up on the Marshall Islands. What was the situation that you were going to?

MORRIS: Let me say first of all when I agreed to have my name put forward it was with I guess a little bit of concern because although I had had a lot of experience in South East Asia and even working on other parts of East Asia I had never been in the Pacific other than in Hawaii and Tahiti. I really didn't know anything about the Marshall Islands.

Q: Well welcome to the club.

MORRIS: So it was a lot to learn and, of course, it is an extremely unique place and we have an extremely unique relationship with the Republic of the Marshall Islands, as you

probably know. It was originally part of the whole Micronesian area and then that became the trust territory of the Pacific, which the United States was given the authority to govern as a trust territory after World War II. The U.S., of course, defeated the Japanese who were basically in control of the Marshall Islands and Micronesia and that whole area – after World War I it was a UN trust territory and the Japanese were in charge. When the U.S. defeated Japan and that included the battle of Kwajalein, a major battle in World War II, Kwajalein being one of the atolls in the Marshall Islands, then it became a U,S.-administered trust territory. The part that is the Marshall Islands became an independent country in 1986; the U.S. was trying to bring all of the territories along toward independence and the Marshall Islands and Micronesia became independent in 1986 as two separate countries.

The Republic of Marshall Islands is comprised of twenty-nine atolls and each atoll is made up of many, many islands that are roughly connected; much of their connection is underwater of course, coral atolls. There have been a lot of studies about how the atolls actually came into being; but they are coral atolls. There are 29 coral atolls and then five free standing islands and that makes up the Republic of the Marshall Islands. So it is a very small amount of land as you saw when you landed, very narrow, but a lot of water. The Republic of the Marshall Islands' land mass is about the same as Washington, D.C. if you squashed all of those atolls together but the water area is 750,000 square miles; so it's a lot of water.

Certainly geographically it's very unique. The people are considered Malayo-Polynesian; there is some evidence that some of the people, if not all of the people, came originally from the Malay Peninsula but that was perhaps 3,000 years ago so it certainly has been a long time. It was basically very isolated until the Spanish became the first European country to discover it in the 16th century and then for a while the Germans actually bought it from the Spanish and it was used for German business deals and then after World War I that's when it became a Japanese administered territory.

As far as our relationship is concerned, since it was a trust territory and during that whole period of time the U.S. was administering it through the Department of Interior providing assistance and basically providing for all of the administration of the Marshall Islands as well as other parts of Micronesia. As you probably know during that period of time, the U.S. also conducted over 60 nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands.

Q: This is where the Bikini Atoll…

MORRIS: Bikini Atoll and Eniwetok Atoll were the two atolls where the nuclear testing was conducted. Actually the largest test was conducted in Eniwetok Atoll; these were really very major tests that were conducted. The Bravo test, which was conducted in Bikini, of course, was one of the most famous, that was conducted in 1954 and the Marshallese contended that the winds were changing and that this was something the military should have known about but they went ahead with the test anyway. Of course, the U.S., as I said, did not know that there would be the fall out from the testing that did take place. This is still a very contentious issue between the Untied States and the

Marshall Islands because it damaged a lot of the land in not only Eniwetok and Bikini but also in some of the neighboring atolls, Utirik and Rongelap specifically. There have been…although in 1983 I believe it was the United States provided significant amount of funding, over $180 million basically for clean up and for claims, to help the Marshall Islands set up a claims tribunal, to administer these claims for injury and damages as a result of the nuclear testing, but the Marshall Islands government and the people of those atolls have claimed that this was not enough so they have submitted a request for significantly more money. As of the present time, the people who originally lived on Bikini Atoll have not returned there; they returned once and then the Department of Energy said, well actually it really isn't as safe as we thought it was, so then they were moved off again and they haven't been back. There are just a few people who have been living there to manage the underwater diving program to view some of the wrecks that are underwater in the Bikini Atoll.

Q: Is this from that very famous test where they took a lot of World War II ships and tankers; I'm an old Navy buff…

MORRIS: That's correct.

Q: …seeing the old aircraft, Saratoga and others there since the explosion there are German ships, Japanese ships and American ships.

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: But those are…one can dive around them now?

MORRIS: Yes. This was actually supposed to be an income-generating project for the people of Bikini. There was a small staff that was stationed there including expert divers. People could come and stay for a week and dive these wrecks. I'm not a diver myself but people who have done this have said it is really one of the great diving experiences of their lives,; if not the greatest.

Q: I would think so.

MORRIS: It is deep and everything is intact in these ships and it's really a fascinating experience. Anyway, that was a very important money making venture for the Bikini people. I believe now there have been some problems because the airline, Air Marshall Islands, is having serious problems so they are not able to fly there regularly, which makes it difficult to schedule any tours there. At any rate, the Bikini people have not returned there; there are a few people who have resettled the south island of the Eniwetok chain but much of Eniwetok is still not populated now. This is a continuing issue and I would say that this was one of the most difficult issues that I faced when I was in the Marshall Islands because many of the Marshallese people claim that they have suffered cancers and thyroid problems as a result of this nuclear testing.

Q: Before you went out I would image there would be some people you have to deal with one of course is the Department of the Interior which I take it has never really given up its almost claim to the Marshall Islands. The other would be the Pentagon which has got the Department of Energy and the Marshall Island lobbyists, which I assume like so many, I mean I've just heard about them, some rather high-powered lawyers have taken this on as a cause and actually there is money to be had essentially from the U.S. government by making claims? Did you have to touch with all these people?

MORRIS: Yes. The Department of Interior, through the Compact of Free Association – when the Marshall Islands were granted its independence, we signed a Compact of Free Association. Under this compact the U.S. would provide very significant assistance to the Marshall Islands but the U.S. also had certain rights, for example, to the Marshallese waters, and the government of the Marshall Islands could not make agreements with other countries that could affect the defense of the islands or of the waters without consulting with the United States. The United States provides for the defense of the Marshall Islands, there is no separate Marshall Islands military.

So we signed the Compact of Free Association and under the compact the Department of Interior is the government entity through which all the assistance flows to the Marshall Islands. The Department of Interior has the USAID function in the Marshall Islands, which was another thing that was completely new thing to me.

Q: This was all politics and I think there are several congressmen on the Appropriations Committee or something who had both a low four and interest in all these islands and they had close ties to the Department of Interior. Is that correct? I mean did you feel that there were Congressional watchdogs who were keeping a close eye…there were certain people in Congress?

MORRIS: Well there certainly are people in Congress who were very interested in the Marshall Islands. At the time that I was going out, in fact, the compact had just been amended, the Marshall Islands government and the U.S. government had signed the amended compact but it still had to be ratified by the Congress and the head of state of each nation. There was a lot of discussion going on about the compact including a lot of hearings that were going on in Capital Hill after I first got out to the Marshall Islands. That was certainly an issue that was discussed in my confirmation hearings.

Q: Well there was I think during the initial negotiations there was sort of a nasty thing on some of this where apparently we were bugging the negotiators on the other side. Did that come up at all?

MORRIS: I'm not aware of that, no. That was not something that was ever raised with me.

Q: That was back a ways and I may have my facts wrong but…

MORRIS: Well it's possible but it's just not something I'm aware of.

Q: I think it was just intelligence gone wild but anyway did you find were there any significant private lawyers and all that were wanting to get to you about the…as representatives of the Marshall Islands here or was there a lobby or anything do you recall that?

MORRIS: Not really with regard to the compact, no.

Q: I guess by this time things had settled.

MORRIS: The Marshall Islands Government did have lobbyists but they weren't lobbying me about the Compact. Of course, there was a lot of interest in the Congress as these debates were going on and the head of the negotiating team for the U.S. was a Colonel Al Short, a retired colonel, who I think did a very good job in negotiations and he was involved in a lot of the hearings. It was passed on the U.S. side prior to the end of fiscal year 2003; on the Marshallese side it was not finally passed until January of 2004 when the new parliament came into session.

Q: How did you find…you were in the EAP bureau or was it…

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: Did you find that East Asia Pacific Bureau was not exactly a dominant bureau; did you find that coming from Indonesia, of course, which is an extremely important country, did you find that you had sort of fallen off the edge of the cliff?

MORRIS: Yes, I think that would be a fair assessment. It certainly wasn't a major priority and as is so often the case it was really only when there were problems that it was on the radar screen. So there was a lot of concern about getting the compact passed and the U.S. side was pretty adamant that the deal was not going to be sweetened with any additional assistance even though the Marshallese were trying to get some additional assistance. Getting that passed was considered a major success and then it kind of dropped off the radar screen again; but yes, I think it is fair to say it was not a high priority.

During the time that I was there we had one visit from a deputy assistant secretary of State who had the Marshall Islands in his portfolio but otherwise the department that was mainly interested was the Department of Interior. David Cohen was the political appointee at Interior who was the deputy assistant secretary in the office of insular affairs. The office of insular affairs reported to him and this was the office which was responsible for the Micronesian states and of the compacts. He was somebody that I met before I went out and then he visited the Marshall Islands several times when I was there.

I would say in many ways it was an interesting situation because the Marshallese in many ways, I think it is fair to say, looked upon the Department of Interior as their friend because it was the Department of Interior that was providing them assistance. It was

really the U.S. Congress, the U.S. government, but since it was channeled through the Department of Interior and they had had a long relationship with Interior, Interior was their friend. Their relations with the State Department were a bit more complicated, because we were the ones first of all enforcing some of the new immigration regulations that were in the compact.

Secondly, there was what they called the Changed Circumstances Petition, we always referred to it as changed circumstances request. This was the big request that the Government of the Marshall Islands had submitted saying, "There are changed circumstances because we have more information about the damages from the nuclear testing and so therefore we want to reopen the whole issue and we want additional funding from the United States government." What they wanted amounted to around a billion dollars and this request was being evaluated by the State Department. The petition went to Congress but Congress asked the State Department and the Department of Energy to take a look at it and to come back with an evaluation to the U.S. Congress so that then Congress could see that evaluation, could consider all that and have hearings. The request, had been submitted I believe it was in 2001 and now we were already in 2003 when I went out there and there had not been any report yet from the State Department; again that was another thing about which the Marshallese people were not very happy with the State Department. They said, "This is not a high priority for the U.S. and in the mean time people are dying and the State Department hasn't done this evaluation yet." That was another issue.

I guess the third major issue was the ongoing issue with Kwajalein. This was a more specialized issue because it really focused more on the landowners of Kwajalein. Just to back up a minute, all of the land in the Marshall Islands is owned privately; there are landowners who are chiefs. This includes the land that the military uses for the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Test Site and space tracking station—it is also privately owned. But, the U.S. had basically negotiated an agreement with the government of the Marshall Islands to use some of this land for the Reagan test site and then it was up to the Marshall Islands government to work out an agreement, a lease arrangement, essentially with the land owners so that the government of the Marshall Islands was leasing this land with funding that the U.S. government gave it to give to the land owners. This was a sore issue with the land owners because the land owners wanted more money and they were very upset with their own government as well with the U.S. government for essentially negotiating an extension to the original land use agreement without involving them or taking their request for additional funds into consideration. This was yet another issue and the embassy was associated with the U.S. government position, naturally. Again, I would say that the Marshallese had a more wary view of the State Department than they did of the Department of Interior.

Q: Was there a Department of Interior representative permanently in your embassy?

MORRIS: Not when I first arrived. This was one of the issues that was discussed when the compact was being renegotiated. One of the things that Congress was very concerned about was oversight. There was a feeling that under the original compact a lot of the

funding had just been wasted; people would go out from Congress or Congressional staff would go out and visit the Marshall Islands. They would see a capital that really in many ways didn't look all that good, there was a lot of trash; trash is a major problem there because where do you put it? You put it in the lagoon and you ruin the water or you just keep it there and it looks very unsightly. The educational system didn't seem to be doing what it needed to be doing to help the young people in the Marshall Islands. Basically, it seemed like the funding that had been provided under the first compact, the original compact had not been very well utilized; so Congress really was concerned about oversight. They wanted to have the Department of Interior play a much more active role in oversight and the original idea and my understanding is that this was what the embassy and the State Department had originally favored was to have somebody from DOI stationed in the Marshall Islands. Well, DOI worked out a compromise and they were going to establish an office in Hawaii, in Honolulu, and then they would have one person who would be stationed in the Marshall Islands. The people in Honolulu who would have responsibility for different sectors like education and infrastructure would make periodic visits to the Marshall Islands and also to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). There was a person already in Pohnpei, in FSM, who represented Interior there, someone who had been locally hired.

So that was one of the things that happened during my first year there. We recruited and hired somebody who was the Department of Interior representative and that person now works at the embassy. The officers in the office in Hawaii do come out and make periodic visits. There is a lot more oversight over the funding now.

Q: You were there from when to when?

MORRIS: I was there from August 2003 to August 2006, for three years.

Q: When you got there what was the government like?

MORRIS: The government has a legislature called the Nitijela, which has 33 members. Then there is someone who is elected by the legislature so it's really like a parliamentary system but this person is called the president; that person is both the head of state and of government. When I got there the President was a man named Kessai Note; he was the head of a party called the United Democratic Party. There were only two parties in the Marshall Islands and they were more affiliated with personalities than with ideology. The UDP was a party that certainly professed strong support for democracy and also was very supportive of the United States.

Kessai Note had one challenge, a really big challenge there, and that was that he was not of a chiefly family. He was from a commoner family so he didn't have the same sort of traditional authority that the first president, Amata Kabua, who was considered the paramount chief who was one of the largest landowners (if not the largest) in the Marshall Islands. He was the person who was the architect of Marshallese independence and then became the first president. He died in late 1996 and it was at that point that his first cousin, a man named Imata Kabua, was elected president. Imata Kabua was one of

the representatives of Kwajalein Atoll and was elected president by the Nitijela. Imata Kabua had a lot of problems as president; he had some problems with alcohol, unfortunately, and he would show up for diplomatic meetings intoxicated and was not able to represent the country terribly effectively. He was defeated in a vote of no confidence and Kessai Note then became the president after that vote of no confidence. He was elected in 2000 and then re-elected then in 2004. He was a very good friend of the United States. He certainly supported the United States as far as the compact was concerned, as far as Kwajalein was concerned, but even with Kessai Note we had this difficult issue of the nuclear testing because he had relatives from Bikini so he, of course, was very supportive of their requests for additional funds. In addition, he understood that this was a major political issue in the Marshall Islands.

You had asked about the role of lawyers earlier. I would like to add that the four nuclear-affected atolls each had their own lawyers who were trying to help them gain additional funding for injury and damages, which they claimed resulted from the testing, from the Congress and the Administration. These lawyers did contact me from time to time, but I was not the person to make these decisions. In addition, the Kwajalein landowners also had their own legal team that was trying to help them gain additional compensation for their land.

Q: What was your embassy like?

MORRIS: It was a very small embassy. There was the Ambassador, the DCM, a Foreign Service office management specialist and then another officer who was the consular/GSO and IMO (information management officer); he was a very multitasked person. Then after about a year we got the additional person, the DOI officer. It was a very small embassy; we also had a locally engaged staff that included two American citizens one of whom was actually born Marshallese but became a U.S. citizen and had a full top secret security clearance and then another American who had lived there for a number of years and was locally hired. The whole staff of the embassy, not counting the security guards, was 15 people, a very small embassy.

Q: What was…

MORRIS: No Marine security guard.

Q: What does information management officer mean?

MORRIS: Basically this is a person who is responsible for all the communications systems, what we used to call a communicator, but also with responsibilities for all the computers and other electronic communication. That was very challenging there, I would have to say because particularly at that time there were all sorts of problems with band widths and basically just trying to get a decent signal and being able to have adequate communication particularly for classified communication. There would be long periods of time where we wouldn't have classified communications because the system just

wasn't working. It was very difficult. We were able to work out an arrangement and get some additional bandwidth so that helped a lot but it was very challenging.

Q: When you got there and while you were there how did you feel about the health claims? Was it apparent that there was a major problem or was this just a way of getting money?

MORRIS: The health situation in the Marshall Islands is not good. I think my feeling was that there probably was more of a link between the testing and some of the thyroid problems and cancers that were affecting some of the people there than perhaps the U.S. government was willing to acknowledge. On the other hand, there were a lot of very serious health problems that had nothing to do with the nuclear testing. Diabetes is a major problem there. All of the problems associated with obesity and with diabetes were major problems there and the health care really was very inadequate so that is why health is the major focus of the amended compact, trying to do something about the health situation.

Q: When I was in the FSM, this was only for a week; the topography is quite different at least on Pohnpei. It's kind of forested and all but I got the very distinct impression that the people there really had been hit hard by our take over because they no longer fished, they depended on subsidies and it seemed to be pickup trucks and six-packs of beer and it looked like a depressed mountain town in West Virginia or something. Had that happened in the Marshall Islands?

MORRIS: Yes, of course there are no mountains there. I think it was a similar situation and how do you describe those situations and then ascribe responsibilities; it's very complicated. I think it's accurate that a dependency syndrome had developed where people were very dependant on U.S. assistance and also on importing a lot of food. Because of the low income – and because these were the kinds of things that were exported there even during the trust territory days – a lot of the food was really not very healthful. They imported things like spam, canned corn beef; now that there are more frozen foods that are being transported people import turkey tails, for example. That is sort of a staple of the diet; white rice is another staple of the diet. People still do fish but they don't fish so much for food as they do for sport. They love to go out fishing and have fishing competitions and that's a very big form of recreation. They still do eat some fish – sashimi is a carry over from the Japanese period. Sashimi is on every single buffet table when there is a big party; people always have sashimi. It is delicious, wonderful fresh tuna which is …

Q: This is raw?

MORRIS: …raw fish and it is just marvelous. A lot of the diet is very bad and people also were not using and fixing a lot of their native foods like they did in the past. For example, there is a lot of breadfruit there and because there weren't a lot of other kinds of fruits and vegetables people were very imaginative in all of the things they did with breadfruit; and you can do a lot of different things with it. If you bake it or broil it and

make it into almost like mashed potatoes it tastes very good, but people weren't doing that so much any more; they were eating more processed starch. They were eating a lot more white rice and that was contributing to their health problems.

Q: White rice being what? Nutritiously it's not very good.

MORRIS: No, no it's not.

Q: The hulls of rice are the nutrition isn't it?

MORRIS: Yes. The health care that was available was poor and it was not available in many of the outer atolls. There was not a habit of going to the doctor when you got ill, so a lot of the medical problems that people would have would just get worse and worse. There were unfortunately numerous cases of people with diabetes and then it had affected their limbs and they got gangrene and they'd have to have their limbs amputated. So there were some very heart rending health problems there.

One of the things that I think was really important that the U.S. helped set up–and it was part of this nuclear claims tribunal – was a special health program. It was originally supposed to be for people from the nuclear affected atolls to provide primary health care to them. The Marshallese extended it to provide some health care to people in all the outer atolls. They would station a health practitioner and they would try to have one on each atoll. Then the doctors, there were very few doctors, would go out on visits from time to time to provide primary health care to people in the outer atolls; otherwise, they had nothing. I think this was a very good thing and hopefully that is continuing because health is a major problem there.

Q: What's the population or was the population of the Marshall Islands?

MORRIS: It is about 60 thousand. It's fluid in many ways because the Marshallese under the compact, those who are native born Marshallese have the right to come to the United States without a visa. They can stay for as long as they want unless they get into trouble with the law. They can work in the United States; they can go to school in the United States. They don't have to become immigrants, they don't have to become U.S. citizens or get a green card; basically they have the right to come to the U.S.. It's one of the features of the compact that the Marshallese prize the most. So there is a very large Marshallese population in Springdale, Arkansas.

Q: Good heavens why? Chickens?

MORRIS: Yes, the Tyson's chicken plant. This was one of these things that started with one or two Marshallese families going there, someone getting a job with the Tyson's chicken plant, writing back home that this was a very good place, they had good jobs, that their children were able to go to school, that they were able to get health care, they had a home to live in and so it was a good thing and more and more people came. Now,

again, it's hard to have a firm number but they estimate there are perhaps 8,000 or even more Marshallese living in Springdale, Arkansas.

Q: Looking at that a built-in going to the United States some countries prize education very much and the kids really take off and the families press the other of sub cultures want the kids to start working as soon as possible. Where would you put the Marshallese?

MORRIS: Unfortunately, I think education has not been something that was traditionally given a high priority. Traditional education, knowledge of the culture, was considered very important and, of course, in traditional culture all the boys would have to, for example, learn navigation, have to learn to sail their canoes…

Q: And lineage I suppose?

MORRIS: …lineage, and being able to navigate using not even just the stars but the currents of the water. It was a marvelous system that they had worked out on how to fish, all of these kinds of things. Some of the traditional stories and all of this were very important. For women learning some of the traditional handicrafts, the cooking, and traditional ways of acting; all of these things were very important. As far as formal education was concerned this was not something that traditionally was terribly important.

Q: Of course when you look at it sitting on a set of atolls, what the hell do you do with it? You get masters in something and it really doesn't go anywhere unless you get out of the country.

MORRIS: That's very true certainly in many ways. I think now in the current generation there are more people that are recognizing that education is important, that education is their hope for the future and for the future of their children. As you say, the whole idea is get a good education, go to college in the United States and maybe get a masters degree and then you can get a very good job probably outside of the country because the good jobs in the Marshall Islands are few and far between; there are just not a lot of them.

Q: How did you find working with the government there?

MORRIS: It was very interesting, very challenging in some ways but very interesting. I have to say there are some wonderful, wonderful people there that I truly enjoyed working with. The president was just an extremely nice person and was always very supportive. Sometimes we felt like we were on two different wavelengths and it was hard to communicate certain things; for example, some things on the nuclear testing issue. Even when we were working on the college there; there is a college of the Marshall Islands, it's a two-year college. It has U.S. accreditation though the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, which means that the students can get Pell Grants to go to college there and that's the only way they can go; otherwise they could never afford to go there. In order for it to keep its accreditation and it was just about to lose its accreditation one of things that was required was for the government to provide more of the funding

the U.S. gives the Marshall Islands; they needed to provide more of it to the college. Communicating this sometimes with leaders in the government on how important this was, it was difficult because they had lots of other things they wanted to use that funding for.

On the other hand, I remember this was shortly after I arrived, we had a commemoration of the second anniversary of the 2001 September 11 attacks. The main high school of the Marshall Islands, Marshall Islands High School, decided they were going to have a special program. They gathered all the students together in an open-air auditorium and they showed a film, which has some footage from the attacks. I think it was a program that originally had been shown on U.S. television but it was a very, very moving program about the September 11 attacks. The foreign minister, a man named Gerald Zackios, spoke at the commemoration. He had spent part of his growing up years, junior high and high school, in Northern California and then he had gotten his first degree in Papua, New Guinea and his masters degree in law in Malta. He was a very well educated, very articulate man who wrote beautifully and spoke so eloquently and he got up and gave a wonderful tribute to the people who had been killed in the September 11 attacks and to the strong relationship between the government and people of the Marshall Islands and the government and people of the United States and the compact and our shared commitment to working together to rid the world of terrorism. I still get chills down my spine just thinking about what a wonderful experience it was to hear this man give this truly, truly moving tribute.

So there were things like that that made you realize that in many ways it is a very special relationship even though we didn't always understand each other that well. Still there was a special relationship not just from the compact and from all of the assistance we were providing but I think from our shared history. After all these two countries had really shared a very close history since the 1940s when the Japanese were defeated and it became a U.S. territory.

Q: Did you get many visitors or commemorations or something particularly the Battle of Kwajalein and all of this? Was this still a living memory?

MORRIS: It was a little after some of those World War II commemorations but every year the people of Kwajalein and working with our military facility there would have a commemoration of the U.S. victory of Kwajalein. They would invite all of the diplomats; it was a bit of a difficult situation for them, of course, because they had very close relations with Japan. There were only three full time diplomatic missions in the Marshall Islands: The United States, Japan and Taiwan. So inviting the Japanese when they were celebrating the defeat of the Japanese on Kwajalein was kind of delicate.

Q: What happened to the population of Kwajalein? You never think about that; you hear about the Japanese. I'm a history buff but there wasn't much room to get out of the way for the people there.

MORRIS: I don't think there was a lot of population on the part that the military is now using but those who were there basically moved to other parts of the atoll. Most of them are concentrated on this island, which is part of Kwajalein Atoll, called Ebeye. It is one of the most crowded places in the world, certainly in Asia. The number of people per square mile is really quite astounding. It's again a difficult issue in our relationship because people are in these very small little houses many of them basically look like cardboard shacks. It looks like a horrible, horrible slum. Of course, people come out: journalists, people come out from the Congress and wonder why the military is not providing housing for these people because these are people many of them who work at the ballistic missile site. The workers come over on the ferries every morning and then they go home to Ebeye every evening, so it is a difficult issue. Of course, what the people in the military say first of all is they don't own this land, they don't own Ebeye, they don't have any rights there; these are houses that are owned by some of the land owners who do own the land. They are leasing these houses to the people who are living there. So they are really the ones who have the responsibility to fix up the houses and basically the people who are living there are leasing so they don't want to fix up the outside of their houses, they don't own it. But it is a difficult issue.

The other reason why it's so crowded is because in the Marshall Islands the extended family is very important. If one person in the family is making money that person has the responsibility to share that money with everybody else in the family. So people from other parts of the Marshall Islands who don't have jobs or are not getting any money move in with their relatives on Ebeye. Most of the people on Ebeye are not working on the military test site; they are living with their extended families and maybe one or two people in each household actually has a job at Kwajalein. Again it's a very, very complicated situation.

Q: Again, going back to my Micronesian experience reading up about it there was the problem of starting businesses there because the person would start a business and stock up a little store and then all his friends and relatives would come in and basically say charge it. At a certain point the store would be denuded and nobody would pay it back. It was this type of thing so it didn't allow for entrepreneurship. Was this a problem?

MORRIS: Yes, it is a problem. I would say it is a serious problem even with the main hotel, or at least one of the two main hotels in Majuro, the capital. This hotel was owned and built by the government of the Marshall Islands basically for a large regional conference, conference of the Pacific Island leaders. So they built this hotel, they asked the Outrigger Hotel Company to come in and manage it for them but it was owned by the government of the Marshall Islands. One of the really serious problems that the hotel had was that people in the government especially would come and have lavish parties there or they would stay there and they wouldn't pay their bills; so the indebtedness of the hotel was quite serious. That meant that they were having a hard time paying essentially the management fee to the Outrigger and also to doing any kind of needed repairs to the hotel. So the Outrigger finally decided they couldn't stay any longer unless the government was willing to provide the funding to make the necessary repairs. The government decided that no they weren't going to do that. I think it's still a problem that

people from the government and others go there and they don't pay their bills so it is a real problem. What you have in Majuro now is a lot of foreign owned businesses so there are quite a number of people from Taiwan, as well as from Mainland China, who have opened up say restaurants, grocery stores and other kinds of …

Q: And they demand payment.

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: Was there again going back to my other experience and a very short one but yams played a big part. Was there a yam culture or not? People would describe their wealth in yams I think or something.

MORRIS: No, it's not such a big deal there. They did have some yams that grew there, taro root wasn't used so much because it is quite labor intensive, you've got to really pound it. There was also pandanas, which is a very unusual kind of fruit for Americans. It is very fibrous but people use the juice for various things and the juice actually tastes quite good; then the fiber is used for handicrafts. Breadfruits, I mentioned, and then coconut; coconut was a very big thing. People not only would use the coconut liquid for a drink but they would make coconut milk and use it for different food items. Then they would also dry the coconut meat and make it into something called copra, which are basically cakes of dried coconut meat. Then the copra could be exported. It has various kinds of industrial uses.

Q: So it made palm oil?

MORRIS: Yes, yes, that was one of the big industries there. The problem over the years was that copra was basically government subsidized and so the price would go up and down. Sometimes people wouldn't want to bother to produce it because it was a lot of work for hardly any money at all. My understanding is that the price of copra has now gone up finally. The government is providing some additional money so people are making more of it again.

Q: Did you have problems with typhoons?

MORRIS: Not when I was there. The Marshall Islands was very lucky; it seemed to be off the main path for the typhoons. Most of them would move farther west and would hit Yap or other parts of the FSM (Federated States of Micronesia) whether they were coming from Japan or the Philippines or they were coming from other parts of the Pacific. They did not seem to hit the Marshall Islands, at least they didn't when I was there and my understanding is that it had been a very long time since they'd had a typhoon. There had been one where a very huge wave basically washed over the whole island; that was back in the early 1990s. It was not a frequent occurrence.

Q: What about fishing? Particularly all the countries, the Japanese, the Russians, the Norwegians, you know anybody in what amounts to territorial waters. How did that stand?

MORRIS: That is another challenge. The Marshallese people enjoy fishing and they really like to do recreational fishing. They'll go out and they'll catch fish for their family as they need it and for special occasions; but as for developing any type of a real fishing industry this was not something that they did. Instead, the government had sold fishing rights to the Japanese, those that would come in, and to the Taiwanese. There were even a couple of companies from Mainland China that were starting to come in but it was mainly Japanese and Taiwanese that had the fishing licenses. This was a source of revenue for the Marshall Islands government but then in the meantime these foreign fishing boats were basically taking a lot of fish out of the waters. There was a lot of concern about over fishing and then most of this fish was being sent directly to Japan or in some cases it was being sent to mainland U.S. and the Marshallese weren't really getting any income from the fish; the only income they were getting was for the fishing licenses. When I was there, there was what they called the "fish loining" plant. Fish loining basically is stripping out the filet and then they would flash cook it and it would be sent for canning. I believe this was being done in Samoa. This was through a company called the PNO Line…

Q: Pacific and Orient or something like that?

MORRIS: Yes Pacific and Orient. They were having a lot of financial problems so finally they had to close down their plant. The thing about this plant again the Marshallese weren't making much money out of it but it did employ about 500 Marshallese workers; so it was a major source of jobs in the Marshall Islands. This was a major loss really when PNO decided that they just couldn't do it anymore and the Marshall Island government wasn't willing to work with them to give them credit and that sort of thing so they left. At least this was a way of doing some of the processing in the Marshall Islands; but after that then none of the fish were really being processed there.

Now my understanding is that a new company has purchased that operation and is starting again; this is a company from Shanghai. I don't think they're hiring as many Marshallese as they are bringing in more people from China to handle the operation.

Q: I suppose part of the problem is as with many places the culture is such you don't get much work out of certain people. The Chinese are very industrious, I assume the islanders are not that industrious and I suppose it almost goes with the territory doesn't it?

MORRIS: I think there's a certain amount of truth to that. I think actually in the case of this fish loining plant one of the major problems was that most of these workers were women, not well-educated women, but these were women who needed some income. My understanding is that when they came they worked very well and I would have to say Marshallese women tend to be very, very hard working. The problem was that if they

were having problems at home, a sick child or they had to take care of an ailing parent or other relative they just didn't come to work. So it was very hard to know how many people you were going to have on any one day at the fish loining plant. Once they were there they were fine but it was a very unreliable kind of work force situation.

Q: It is such a family reliant area.

MORRIS: Right.

Q: How were relations for you as the ambassador with the Japanese at the time?

MORRIS: The Japanese embassy was headed by a charge; the Japanese did not have an ambassador there for some reason. Then there were a couple other people at the Japanese embassy including one young man who was basically responsible for all of the Japanese assistance projects. The Japanese had really quite a lot of assistance they provided to the Marshall Islands including providing the funding to build a brand new hospital in Majuro, which was really a major thing; it was a beautiful new hospital.

But the Japanese charge was a very nice person and we got along well. We'd get together from time to time and I think it was a good (relationship.

Q: Of course with Taiwan we have this peculiar relationship. How did you have to play it? It wasn't much room for maneuvering.

MORRIS: Yes, that was a very challenging relationship and Taiwan was represented at the ambassador level. Actually when I first arrived, we had a charge from Japan the Taiwan ambassador was the dean of the diplomatic corps, such as it was; there were a couple honorary consuls also there. The Taiwan ambassador was a very charming and engaging person; he was just a wonderful diplomat in every sense of the word. He was a very nice person, very sociable and wanted to have really close relationship with the United States. So it was very challenging. I could not go to his embassy or to his residence and I could not invite him to my residence or to the embassy but we did meet from time to time at a restaurant for lunch or dinner. Of course, I would see him all the time and whenever there would be official events he was there, so it was pretty hard to avoid him.

For the Taiwanese, of course, these relationships were very important. Every relationship that Taiwan has is extraordinarily important for them because it helps them out in the UN. They did have the relationship with the Marshall Islands; they had diplomatic relations with Kiribati, another very small Pacific island country. Actually, Kiribati had relations with China when I first arrived, but the Kiribati government decided to kick the Chinese out and establish relations with Taiwan so they had relations with Kiribati. When I was there they established a relationship with another very small country in the area, Nauru. The Federated States of Micronesia, of course, had relations with the People's Republic of China.

Taiwan was trying everything they possibly could to make sure they kept that relationship with the Marshall Islands so they provided all sorts of assistance, unlike U.S. assistance that had to go for specific things, if the government was having a hard time doing its pay roll one month they would call up the Taiwan ambassador and the Taiwan ambassador would say, "Oh sure, we've got some additional aid you can use this to do your payroll." So they were very popular.

The president of Taiwan was going to pay a visit because the president of the Marshall Islands had paid several visits to Taiwan so now the president of Taiwan was going to visit the Marshall Islands; this was I believe in the spring of 2005 that he came with a huge entourage. It was really a very large entourage. They came for Marshall Islands national day and so, of course, there was a big official commemoration of the national day as there always was; all the diplomatic corps was invited but I couldn't sit with the Taiwan delegation. They decided they were going to have a lunch – they would always have a lunch after these things and normally it was in honor of national day – but this time they decided they were going to do it in honor of the president of Taiwan and his delegation. Of course, I could not go to that so it was a very awkward situation. The Taiwan ambassador was somebody who understood this, he'd served in Vienna and other places in Europe and in the U.S. and he knew very well all of the issues surrounding the U.S.–Taiwan relationship. But the government of the Marshall Islands... getting them to understand these issues was a bit more difficult and, of course, they were not very happy that basically I went to the national day ceremony and then that was it, I was not able to participate in any of the other events because they were all in honor of Taiwan. It was a very challenging kind of relationship but on a personal level the Taiwan ambassador was a delightful person to know.

Q: In the Marshall Islands how did you deal with that other political power the Department of Defense on Kwajalein and all that? How did that work out?

MORRIS: We had very close relations. I would go to Kwajalein on a very frequent basis because this was not only a very important U.S. facility in the Marshall Islands but also we had this major issue of trying to make sure that the U.S. Army could continue to use this facility, which basically meant that the government of the Marshall Islands and the land owners were going to have to come to some kind of an agreement about extending the land lease. The U.S. government and the Marshall Islands government had already agreed to extend it up to 2066 and the landowners said, "Wait a minute we have an agreement with the Marshall Islands government that only goes to 2016; so there is a problem here." At any rate, it was important for me to maintain close relations with the military folks because I was very much involved in working with the Marshall Islands government on this whole issue of the continuation of their presence. I would say that I had very good relations with the colonel; there was always a full colonel who was in charge of the Reagan test site facility. I had very good relations with the commanders there.

Q: This is a place where we fired rockets to and they plunked down in the middle of the water in the atolls?

MORRIS: That's right, in the lagoon.

Q: Does this make one nervous?

MORRIS: No, I wasn't really nervous. Of course, there was always a lot of anticipation when there would be one of these tests on whether or not it was going to be successful. Some of them were and some of them were not successful.

Q: By this time at one point we had a policy of vis a vis the Soviet navy as strategic denial. We wanted to make sure that none of these island states allowed the Soviets to build bases and the Soviets were sniffing around. But I take it by this time that was no longer an issue at all.

MORRIS: No but one of the things that some of the Kwajalein landowners, for example, would talk about was that they had had discussions with the PRC.

Q: People's Republic of China.

MORRIS: Yes, and that China was very interested and would pay a lot more than the U.S. so they would try to use this as a way of getting us to up our assistance because that is basically what it boiled down to, they wanted more money for their land; they thought it was more valuable than what we were paying. So they would use this as a kind of threat or stick to wave at us to get more money. Of course, the problem is they couldn't do that (lease it to the Chinese) without forfeiting the compact because they would have to get permission from the U.S. to do this and I don't think we would provide that kind of permission.

Q: Did you make much contact with the landowners at all?

MORRIS: They, of course, wanted to be very much involved in the discussions. So they would alternate between trying to win our favor and then if they didn't seem to be getting them what they wanted then some of them at least were not above blasting the United States. Certainly I knew all of them, they would come to the embassy from time to time if they had a big event of some kind and they would always invite me and the other members of the diplomatic corps; so I knew all of them and had some discussions with some of them about the issue. When they were together they were very unified that they were not going to sign a new agreement with the Marshall Islands government unless they were going to get more money. Individually some of them were much more willing to sign an agreement because if they don't sign an agreement then they stand to lose in a fairly significant way. Yes, I did have contact with them.

Q: You were there during obviously this was the Bush II administration and we were going through a very unpopular time by many of our foreign policy the war in Iraq and all that. Did that play any role at all for you or was that just too far away?

MORRIS: No, it wasn't and I'm glad you brought that up because the Marshallese, of course, also have the right to serve in the U.S. military. Nobody seemed to know exactly how many Marshallese did serve in the U.S. military but there certainly were a number and a number of them were sent to Iraq and Afghanistan. The Marshallese who joined the military saw it again, as a good job, it was an opportunity to get an education after they had finished with their military service, and so they saw this as a very positive thing. There was a military recruiter who would come in usually a couple times a year to administer the test, as they had to do a written test first. Unfortunately, because of the poor educational system a lot of the Marshallese were not able to pass the military test. But usually then there would be a group that would be sworn in a couple times a year and usually would be ten to fifteen each time who would be sworn in. We don't know exactly how many Marshallese were in the U.S. military and frankly we tried to get that number from the U.S. military several times and they just couldn't provide that information. Of course, with the Marshallese in the United States – the ones in Arkansas, the ones in California and other parts of the country – undoubtedly a number of these people also joined the U.S. military but they would not have been recruited out of the Marshall Islands.

This was a source of pride; it was a source of income, of education. The Marshallese people then tended to be very supportive of U.S. military effort; they had people who were in the military so they were generally very supportive of the war against terror. They were supportive of Iraq; of course I left there in 2006 so I don't know if the attitude has changed. There were – at least as of the time I was there until I left – there had not been any Marshallese who had been killed in either Afghanistan or in Iraq. There had been one who had been fairly badly wounded but he was getting good care at a U.S. military facility. I think the only sore spot as far as that was concerned is that Marshallese were not eligible to become offices; they would have to become U.S. citizens in order to become officers. Basically that was something that they saw as very positive.

Q: Did UN votes play any role for you?

MORRIS: Yes and again this was very important. We wanted the Marshallese to support us in the UN and UN organizations and generally they did. They and the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau, the other compact nation and generally had the best voting records in the UN in terms of their support for U.S. positions. So sometimes you would have resolutions on Israel, for example, and the U.S., the Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau and Israel would be the only ones that would be supporting it. So, yes, they were generally very supportive. The one issue where unfortunately they did not support us was on whaling, the Japanese were very, very persuasive; they wanted to over turn the ban on commercial whaling and the Marshall Island government supported them to our great disappointment.

Q: Was there any other issue that we should discuss here while you were there that you can think of?

MORRIS: I think we've discussed the major issues. Again, I saw one of the most important issues and it wasn't so much an issue between our two countries as an issue that the Marshallese people really needed to deal with; this was the whole issue of education. The educational system was not providing the kind of education for the Marshallese children that it needed to. When the students finished high school, many of them, if they were tested objectively, they had to have a test. For example, if they wanted to go to the College of the Marshall Islands they had to take an entrance exam. Most of them would come out at about the eighth grade level in terms of their English and math skills. Many of them when they entered the College of the Marshall Islands would be basically in a remedial or developmental program until they got up to the level where they could be considered in their first year. Of course, if they wanted to go someplace else to school, if they wanted to go to Hawaii or the mainland it was very, very difficult for them.

Q: Did we have a Peace Corps there?

MORRIS: We did not have a Peace Corps there when I was there. The Peace Corps had been there but had left; I believe it was during this time of Imata Kabua, the second president. I guess there had been some problems with the Peace Corps program; they weren't too certain of the support of the Marshall Islands government so at that point the Peace Crops pulled out. When I first arrived we had an assessment team that came out from the Peace Corps. They were very interested in seeing whether they should come back in; they wrote a very positive report after their two week visit but I think because of financial issues with the Peace Corps and demands that they open up in other places in the world they never did open up another program again in the Marshall Islands. I think that was very, very unfortunate because the Peace Corps was beloved when it was in the Marshall Islands. Many Peace Corps volunteers there have actually stayed and either married Marshallese – in most cases Marshallese women, raised families there, taken on very important positions. Others have just stayed even though they didn't marry Marshallese women, they've just stayed there and continued to work and live there and contribute a lot to the country. I think this was a wonderful program contributing so much there and particularly to the educational system. It's a shame that it's not there.

There were a couple volunteer programs; the largest one was something called World Teach which actually had been started by a woman named Helen Claire Sievers who had lived on Kwajalein for a while and decided that there needed to be more volunteer American teachers there. So she started this World Teach Program. As of the time that I left, I think there were over 40 World Teach volunteers and basically these were people who would go out like Peace Corps volunteers to various parts of the country and would teach. They had a commitment of only a year but some of them stayed for longer than that.

Through Dartmouth College there was also another small teacher volunteer program. There were some other volunteer teachers; the Japanese had a volunteer program and even Taiwan sent a few volunteers. There were concerns about the safety of the

volunteers, particularly the female volunteers. A couple of the female volunteers had been attacked.

Q: You left there in 2006? Whither?

MORRIS: I came back to Washington and that's when I became the dean of the school of language studies at the Foreign Service Institute.

Q: You did that from 2006 to 2008.

MORRIS: I did yes.

Q: Talk about the FSI when you came here.

MORRIS: First of all I can say that this was a job that I really wanted because of my own experience with language study at FSI. I had two experiences studying languages at FSI, one in Indonesian and one in Thai. In both cases it was a very positive experience and I had very positive experiences in using my language in my Foreign Service postings. I felt and still feel that being conversant in a language is just absolutely critical for diplomats. When this opportunity came up I was very eager and I'd have to say I lobbied Ruth Whiteside fairly vigorously.

Q: Ruth Whiteside being…

MORRIS: Being the director of the Foreign Service Institute…to be selected for this job. So I was very pleased to be selected for it. When I arrived the school of language studies had been without a dean for about six months but it was under the very capable supervision of an acting dean, a civil service officer who was also a linguist by training, which I am not. It was being certainly very competently managed when I arrived.

Q: I was wondering I would think a real challenge would be…how many languages were there?

MORRIS: We had the capacity to teach over 70 languages and basically as my associate dean for instruction, the linguist, would say, "you send them, we teach them." That was basically our philosophy; if the bureau of human resources and the geographical bureaus decided OK we needed to have somebody learn Kyrgyz, we would take it upon ourselves to go out and find a Kyrgyz teacher and start a Kyrgyz program. That was our responsibility: to train U.S. diplomats in the languages that they needed to meet their responsibilities.

Q: I would think overall that being the dean of this group would be a little bit like herding cats.

MORRIS: It is.

Q: Because of the linguists are linguists and they are not necessarily trained to be good bureaucrats or anything else. I would think they would be all over the place.

MORRIS: I don't know that I'd want to say herding cats but it was a very challenging job for a Foreign Service officer. First of all, it's not like anyplace else in the Foreign Service. It's not even like any other school in FSI; it is so specialized. All of the teachers are from the countries where the languages are spoken. There is a staff of 450 people so it's really basically like a United Nations and a lot of the conflicts between these various countries play out in miniature in the school of language studies. It is very challenging certainly from that perspective.

Q: I know for example I studied something called Serbo-Croatian back in the '60s and now they're Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian and…

MORRIS: Croatian and now

Q: Macedonian.

MORRIS: That's right. What was one language has become four.

Q: And all the Balkan…

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: …sensibilities I'm sure get involved.

MORRIS: Absolutely, absolutely yes. It's a very challenging place but, of course, very fascinating. While I guess I saw…well obviously I had a lot of responsibilities that were I won't say imposed on me but that I was obviously directed to do, but one of the major challenges at that time was to try to increase the number of Arabic speakers that we had so that there would be more people who spoke Arabic who could go to Iraq and other places where Arabic is spoken. So that was one of our major challenges. Certainly there were other big challenges, the Afghan program, the Dari program, Dari and Pashto being the two major languages of Afghanistan. So we were trying to increase the sizes of those programs.

One challenge that I didn't expect to find was our Vietnamese program. Our Vietnamese program was having many, many problems and the embassy was complaining that people would come out and they would have a 3-3 which meant that they should have professional proficiency and they were not really able to do their jobs. So we embarked on a major effort to improve the Vietnamese problem.

Q: What had been the problem?

MORRIS: There were a number of reasons, but Vietnamese, first of all, is a very hard language.

Q: I known I sampled it at one point, I had 18 months in Saigon.

MORRIS: Oh my, it's a very difficult language by everything that I've been told.

Q: Tonal.

MORRIS: Yes, five tones. It's also not just one language because the northern dialect is quite different from the southern dialect. Many of the teachers in the program are people who had been there for a long time and were people who left after the fall of Saigon. These were people who spoke southern dialect and now we needed more people who could speak the northern dialect, which is basically the national language, but also, of course, it is absolutely essential for people who are posted in Hanoi. That was a major effort that involved some studies of the program. We had a large conference where we brought Vietnamese linguists and teachers from all over the United States and from Vietnam to Washington for a conference to talk about some of the challenges of teaching Vietnamese and some ideas for how to do it more effectively. We even talked about whether or not Vietnamese needed to be more than a 44-week language, which is what it is now; it is basically 44-weeks like Thai and I guess Serbian, Croatian and all those hard languages of 44-weeks, or basically one-year programs.

Another thing that both former students but some of the experts suggested was that there needed to be more of an immersion experience. So we have been experimenting with efforts on how people can do more of their language in country. If they were going to do the 44-weeks, they would do the first 36 weeks here and then go out to Vietnam to do intensive language, the last phase.

Q*: But not do their regular job but to go…*

MORRIS: That is right, to do full time language training in country. There were a lot of things we were trying to work on to improve this program. I think that by the end of the two years at least there was a feeling that things were moving in the right direction with Vietnamese.

Q: This immersion experience has always struck me as being most important because when you are here and I know I've done my learning here in taking various languages you go home and you have the family and you're doing everything in English and you are just not doing it in the country. It's quite a different experience. In my generation and I guess in this generation there is a problem that so many of the people are married or have significant others or something, which means that they are not quite as mobile as a single person would be. Did you find was there was a change in attitude toward this immersion?

MORRIS: It's something that it's obviously discussed a lot and I think that the general consensus is that immersion is very valuable as long as it's a well-structured immersion. In other words, I think we've all seen this in our Foreign Service careers you can't just

plunk somebody in the middle of a country and expect them to learn the language. They have to be actively involved in a learning experience whether that's a one on one tutoring, whether it is being in a formal language-training program. It is not enough to just say I'm going to go to Paris to learn French because you could be in Paris for two years and not learn any French if you are not actively engaged in trying to learn the language. I think that the feeling is that if it is a well run and well-managed immersion then that can be very effective. The challenge, of course, is that it is an extremely expensive kind of a program to manage. We have now more and more students at the Foreign Service Institute who are actually paying for their own maybe two week or three-week in country immersion experience during the middle of their language training. Say it is somebody who is doing Russian or maybe Russian is not a very good example; let's say somebody who is doing Spanish. They might go then down to Latin America for two weeks during the middle of their Spanish course to basically do an immersion experience there. We had a couple of students who were doing Finnish and they went over to Finland and stayed with a relative of one of their teachers at FSI for two weeks, interacted with the family, I think they had some tutoring while they were there but basically to try to solidify the language.

One of the benefits of the immersion experience is that you actually have an opportunity to use your language and it becomes more real, you develop more confidence. From that perspective it becomes very valuable even if it doesn't necessarily advance your proficiency that much. But, as I say, it's very expensive so so far we have not provided any funding for it with the exception of these few rare circumstances.

Q: I've talked to people who have gone to Israel and they…of course the Israeli's have a huge language program because they are getting so many immigrants and they have to learn to speak Hebrew. We've had our people so they've gone to Hebrew, gone with the immigrants, which is great because they are also picking up the Israeli society and the new people coming in.

MORRIS: Yes, that's right, yes it's a wonderful cultural experience.

Q: Were we able to tap into this?

MORRIS: Yes, we tapped into that. You know we have the post language program and there is some direct funding that comes through the school of language studies for post language programs. Some of that funding went to our post in Israel, for example, for people to participate in the Hebrew language program called the Ulpan program. By all accounts that was a very good program. In Russia there is a program called the Tver program, a similar kind of thing where people actually go and live in this village of Tver and study Russian intensively. Again through the post language program funding people who have gone to Russia then have been able to participate in this program, some for as long as six weeks. The post language program has also provided funding for shorter immersions in some other countries but not a lot of funding obviously.

Q: Did you have a program of children who either came from a country or particularly from a family of immigrants where often I don't know if it's true today but often to what amounts to a peasant dialect at home, particularly true in the old days in Italy.

MORRIS: Right.

Q: Where you can de-peasantize them and move them from the dialect of Abruzzi to regular Italian?

MORRIS: I think this is one of the issues with a lot of the changes that were taking place in language in the Foreign Service. We have more people coming in to the Foreign Service who are native speakers of Arabic but maybe they are not really fluent, they are heritage speakers, as we call them, because they are people who have maybe grown up in an Arab speaking family here in the United States but they have a street Arabic; they don't have the professional Arabic. Particularly after September 11 the State Department wanted to recruit more people who had Arabic, who had Farsi, who had Dari and so now actually for the Foreign Service test people who have proficiency in one of these what they call super critical needs languages, those also include Chinese in addition to Dari, Farsi, Urdu, Hindi and Arabic. I think I've gotten all of them. Those people can take a test and if they do well enough on the test, say basically get to the 2 level on this spoken telephone test, they get extra points in the Foreign Service application process.

Q: This is a telephone test? It makes sense.

MORRIS: It's about a half an hour telephone test. If they do well enough then they get extra points that helps them get in the Foreign Service. Now we have a lot more people coming in through that program and others who are heritage speakers of languages. Just as you say, they have kind of a peasant version of the language but it's not really professional diplo-speak. Now what we are finding in a lot of our language programs is we have people coming in and they have all different levels of the language. You might have somebody coming in to study Chinese; maybe they are a heritage speaker of Chinese. They can speak Chinese say at the 2 level but they don't read it at all. Where do you put a person like that? You can't put that person in a class with people who haven't had any Chinese at all; it's made things a lot more challenging in terms of how we structure our program, how many different classes we have.

Another thing frankly that has affected language training in the Foreign Service is the fact that we have many more tandem couples now, for example. You might have somebody who needs to study a language but their spouse already has the language or maybe the spouse isn't in a language designated position, so they are already at post on assignment. That person wants to study their language completely in country. There is a program in the bureau of human resources through which people can apply for funding to do that. Again, I think that language training is not the language training that I experienced say when I first started out in the Foreign Service. There is a lot more flexibility now in how we do this because we have to be more flexible.

Q: How about distance learning and machine learning?

MORRIS: Yes, we are doing a lot more with that. We have a very active distance-learning development. I think there were over thirty distance-learning courses at the time that I left in everything from French and Spanish to Arabic and Dari, Italian and Russian. This would not just be beginner courses but some more advanced courses including courses to improve reading and that sort of thing. These were mentored courses so that you would work on line on the program but then once a week you would have a telephone conversation with your mentor where you would engage in the language, of course. You would send back assignments to your mentor and the mentor would provide feedback on line. They are very interactive courses and now we are using even more of the on-line resources that are available that we don't even have to develop. We are doing web pages for different languages that bring some of these resources together. The idea is that somebody who may be over in the department working on the Bosnian desk and might want to start studying Arabic can do it even while he or she is still working on the Bosnian desk. Or somebody who is over in Iraq and may have a little bit of spare time and wants to start studying Chinese can do it using these various distance-learning tools. We are doing more and more with distance-learning and on-line resources.

Another thing we started doing during the time I was there was using more technology in the classroom, specifically the smart boards, which basically are like big computer screens that have access to any of the materials that are available on the internet. Plus they allow the students to write on the board, to highlight specific things. Material can be saved; it can all be downloaded to an I-Pod so people can take all of this material with them to study. This, I think, was really a great thing that we were able to do and it has revolutionized language training.

Of course, one of the things that this meant was that we had teachers who had never experienced any of these things before maybe didn't even really have that much experience using a computer, for example. That meant that we needed to do a lot more training for our staff to make sure that they were able to use all of these tools. Training was a very important part of what we were involved in at the school of language studies, not only training of the students but training of the teachers.

Q: You mentioned hard languages as Hindi. I can't tell you how many people I've interviewed who served in India and said taking Hindi said it was all very nice for going down to the bazaar but the never used it professionally. Maybe things have changed.

MORRIS: Yes, I think that they have changed. I think there is more national pride in being able to use the language and with public diplomacy and transformational diplomacy it's absolutely essential to get out and interact with people and not just people in the government.

Q: You are using a term I don't know, transformational diplomacy.

MORRIS: Transformational diplomacy is something that was announced by former Secretary Rice, I believe, in 2004 or 2005 and basically the idea is that diplomacy is transformational; we can make changes in society. Of course, that involves a lot of very interactive diplomacy, really public diplomacy, but engaging with people from all sectors of society, students, small business people, teachers, farmers so not just going to the foreign ministry and doing a demarche or a diplomatic agreement but really working with the people; that requires someone who is able to speak the language. Consequently I think with transformational diplomacy, public diplomacy, language has gotten to be much more important. (Even with a new Administration, I expect that activist and public diplomacy will remain very important, although the term transformational diplomacy may change.)

Q: You are talking…I have in my lifetime, I'm now 80 years old, been exposed to I think eight different languages. I am a graduate of the Army language school.

MORRIS: Wow.

Q: I took three…and I'm a lousy language person, I've never really been very good but I've gone to the Army language school, in prep school I had three languages, Latin, French and Spanish. Then I have taken Serbo-Croatian; I've taken Greek and I've taken Italian. If there is one thing that is clear and I think as a matter of absolute fact the older you are the harder it is to learn a language. What do you do when you've got a 49 year old man or woman that you are sending off to let's say Italy as I was in a place where it really helps to speak Italian?

MORRIS: This is another challenge. Obviously, it makes it a lot easier on everyone including the officer, I think, if it's somebody has had some exposure to the language before so that perhaps if they are doing some language training it's a brush up rather than starting from scratch with a brand new language. We don't always have control over those issues because there are many reasons why someone might be assigned to a particular post and it's not just somebody who has already had the language or experience with that country; it's not necessarily if it's somebody say who has a strong language learning aptitude. There might be a whole host of other reasons and we do the best that we can obviously with whomever is sent to us. We hope and pray, I think it is fair to say in the language school, that we don't get too many people who are trying to learn Arabic starting out from scratch at age 50 because that is a very, very challenging thing to do. It is hard enough to learn Italian but to learn Arabic would be very, very difficult. We work very closely with the bureau of human resources. They make the assignments along with the geographical bureaus but obviously we are trying to make sure that we all have an understanding of what the demands are of language training so that least that can be considered as part of the assignment process. I think it's fair to say we've had some people who have been learning languages, even hard languages, for the first time at older than optimal age and it is challenging but they have been able to learn the language.

Q: Do you want to talk about your relationship with other academic institutions because language, of course, is very important and the State Department has always been

considered if not the top…well often the acme of this because we put more resources in it. How about with universities and other places? During your time how did you find this?

MORRIS: I went out and visited the Defense Language Institute in Monterrey.

Q: My old alma mater.

MORRIS: Yes, and it is a wonderful place. We had very close relations with something called the Center for Advanced Study of Languages, which is actually based at the University of Maryland but does get U.S. government funding from intelligence agencies. They were involved in a lot of studies of language including of Vietnamese. They also did a very, very interesting study of Foreign Service officers who had achieved advanced language capability, in other words a 4-4 in at least one other language and this was a fascinating study that they did; so we worked very closely with them.

I was a member of an organization called the Foreign Language Executive Committee which basically was an organization comprised of representatives of other government language institutions including DIA and CIA and all of these institutions, ODNI, that have language training programs and language training needs. Then I also interacted from time to time with other language training institutions, for example, I visited Georgetown University, the Arabic program there and talked with people who were involved with their Chinese language program.

I visited the Arabic program at the University of Maryland, which actually has received some sponsorship from the Defense Department as part of what they call the Flagship program for learning Arabic. This is a very innovative program that the Defense Department is sponsoring through the National Security Education program to provide advanced language training again in Arabic, Chinese, Mandarin, Korean, in Dari at various university campuses. So we did have interaction with other institutions and also through something called the interagency language roundtable, which again included representatives from various language-training institutions throughout the Washington, DC, area which had regular meetings at the Foreign Service Institute. For me it was a very interesting experience because I was being exposed to this whole wonderful world of linguistics and linguists that is very different from the Foreign Service but it is very important to the Foreign Service and increasingly so.

Q: Did you find did the normal academic world; we are talking in the last eight years, the academic world has not been friendly toward the Bush administration? I can state that without qualifications for the most part but did you find when here you are with the State Department did you find at your linguistic professional language level this didn't play factor? You didn't find hostility or this sort of thing or not?

MORRIS: No, I did not find hostility because I think that language and the belief that language was very important for not only diplomats but for everyone in our really very global society this was a shared bond. I think when I would talk to people who were handling Arabic programs at a university we had a shared goal. How can we help people

learn Arabic to a really proficient level so that they are able to use their Arabic effectively? I think this was something that brought us all together so the political issues didn't really come into play. The fact that we all felt that language training was very important and using language because after all I think that is really what we need if we are going to be able to have effective diplomacy that is going to hopefully enable us to resolve issues peacefully without going to war. Language is a very important part of that communication and I think everyone recognized that. This was something we were working on together, it was a shared goal and I think that brought us together and we didn't worry about the political differences.

Q: Speaking of politics though, you're a trained Foreign Service officer dealing with the politics of foreign institutions and all. How did you find the politics of one, the FSI and two, the FSI vis a vis the State Department?

MORRIS: Of course, it always had its challenges as does any kind of bureaucracy. Our main concern was getting the funding that we needed. Frankly the school of language studies is so different from any other place in the State Department and even any other school at FSI that sometimes it was challenging to explain to our leadership the particular needs of the school of language studies. For example, let's say you have ten Italian students and you have five teachers. Why can't you get rid of three of those teachers you only need two Italian teachers after all to take care of those eight students. Well then you have to explain that OK you've got one already at a 2+2 level and they need to get up to a 3-3 and then you've got someone else who doesn't have any Italian and then you've got an ambassador and ambassadors are entitle to have their own private class. All of these things then have an impact on the number of teachers that you need. I think just explaining those special needs that we had in the language program was always a challenge.

Q: Did you find…often direction comes from the top and Colin Powell was before your time there coming from the military had extremely positive attitude toward training. Did you get any feel for Secretary Rice?

MORRIS: Secretary Rice came over to FSI when we had the ground breaking for the new facility and much of that is an extension onto the langrage training building. She spoke a lot about the importance of language training. So I think she certainly recognized that language was very, very important. I will say that I think we were able to do relatively well with our budget even during very, very difficult budget times. Sometimes it took a lot of effort and I know it took a lot of effort on the part of the director of FSI to maintain our resources but I think we were able to do pretty well and certainly language was really, I think it is fair to say, right at the top of the list of the list of needs for additional training.

Q: Did you find that you had any particular champions in the Congress or was that above your pay grade?

MORRIS: I think that was probably above my pay grade.

Q: Well then you retired in 2008.

MORRIS: I did, I just retired at the end of September.

Q: What are you going to be up to?

MORRIS: I'm planning to do some WAE work for…

Q: That's when actually employed.

MORRIS: That's correct, with the office of the inspector general and then we'll see. I may decide to do something else eventually but I may also decide to do more things that are of a volunteer or part time nature. Again, one of the things that I've found through out my career (and, of course, I came into the Foreign Service having been a teacher) is the importance of education and the importance of educational exchanges. This is something that I would like to continue to work on because I do believe that both of these things are very critical. Having more interaction is, I think, essential to having effective diplomacy in our world today. I think education is absolutely critical for all kinds of development whether it is developing democracy or developing a strong economy. I certainly saw this in all of the posts where I served so I would like to continue to be able to work in these areas.

Q: OK Greta well thank you very much.

MORRIS: Thank you. This has been a pleasure.

End of interview