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

WILLIAM SCOTT BUTCHER

Interviewed by: David Reuther
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Reaction to the fall of Saigon

Kuala Lumper, Malaysia—Deputy, Political Section 1975-1977

Kuala Lumper, Malaysia—Chief, Political Section 1977-1979

- Arrived during a Japanese Red Army hostage situation
- Description of embassy offices
- Political section had Malay and Chinese language officers
- Malaysia stand on Arab-Israel and other third country issues
- Vietnamese boat people refugee issue
- Anti-narcotics cooperation
- Relations with Singapore, Thailand
- The domestic mosaic
- Insurgency and security threats
- Introduction of human rights reports under Carter Administration
- Rebuilding a military relationship
- Thoughts on Ministry of Foreign Affairs interlocutors
- Change in ambassadors

State Department, Operations Center (S/S-O) 1979-1981

- Description of S/S-O functions
- Iran hostage crisis November 1979
- Working with senior Department officials
- The hand-off between administrations
- Assassination attempt on President Reagan

Jakarta, Indonesia—Political Counselor 1981-1984

- Five-week conversion course Malay to Indonesian
- Duties and personalities in political section
- Mystery why Ambassador Mort Abramowitz not accepted by
    - Indonesian government as ambassador
- Few trips around the country
- East Timor
- Indonesian economy
- Control officer for Vice President Bush
- Control officer for Secretary Shultz to ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference
- Congressional visitors
- List of main political section reporting topics
- Cooperation with other western embassies, NGOs
- As a family post
    - Experiencing a volcanic eruption

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia—Deputy Chief of Mission 1990-1993

- The FSI Deputy Chief of Mission course
  - A focus on managing financial and personnel resources
  - Training to be chief operating officer
- Usefulness of an Airlie House conference on Malaysia
- Overview of staff and issues
  - Vietnamese refugees
- The progress Malaysia had made since last assignment
- Mahathir's energetic leadership
- Malaysia-U.S. interactions
  - Handling Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in UN
- ASEAN Post-Ministerial banquet
- Embassy infrastructure
  - New embassy building in 1980s
  - Staff housing
  - Later budget problems
- Meeting old friends now in higher positions
- Positive evaluation of Public Affairs program
  - IMET and IVP programs invaluable
- Trade and investment relationship
- Malaysia's relations with its neighbors
- DCM's management responsibilities from officer evaluation reports to
  - American community incidents
- Integrating new ambassador John Wolf
  - Observation on value of foreign investment
  - Wolf highlights commercial opportunities

State Department, East Asia and Pacific Bureau, Office of Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore Affairs (EAP/PIMBS)—Office Director 1993-1995

- Clinton Administration emphasis on APEC
  - APEC Ministerial and Leaders meeting Seattle November 1993
  - APEC Senior Office meeting in Jakarta November 1994
- Working with Washington embassies
  - The Michael Fay canning
- Working with Congress
- The Philippines and political-military issues
- Freeport-McMoRan story in Irian Jaya

Retirement September 1995

State Department retirement course
Established international business consulting in Southeast Asia 1995-2002
State Department, Political-Military Bureau, Political-Military Action Team (PMAT) 2003-2016
Successor to the 9/11 task force
Stand-alone office acknowledging State's need to liaison with Pentagon on 24/7 basis
PMAT product was a twice daily (Monday-Friday) all source situation report on global pol-mil issues staffed by retired FSOs on WAE status and former military personnel

INTERVIEW

Introduction – Brief Biographic & Career History Note

Scott Butcher is from Cincinnati, Ohio, where he graduated from Western Hills High School. He received a bachelor's degree from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, in 1964 and a masters from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Washington, D.C. in 1966. He entered the State Department in 1966. His overseas Foreign Service assignments were to Rangoon, Burma (1967-69); Dhaka, East Pakistan (now Bangladesh – 1967-71); Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (1975-79 and 1990-93); and Jakarta, Indonesia (1981-84). Scott was trained at the Foreign Service Institute in Burmese, Malay and Indonesian. His assignments in Washington, D.C. were as Pakistan/Bangladesh Desk Officer in the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs (NEA - 1971-73); Staff Assistant in that bureau's front office (1973-4); Senior Watch Officer in the Operations Center of the Executive Secretariat (1979-81); Deputy Director, Office of International Security Policy, Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs (PM - 1984-87); Deputy Director, Office of Philippine Affairs, Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs (EAP – 1987-88); Director, Office of India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Maldives Affairs, NEA (1988-1990); and Director, Office of Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore Affairs, EAP (1993-5). Scott retired in September 1995. During his career he received numerous performance awards, including the John Jacob Rogers Award for career achievement. After retirement he set up a small Maryland-registered consultancy to help American companies with their business development efforts in Asia, facilitating joint ventures between U.S. companies and Asian counterparts. He currently works part-time as a WAE shift director on the Political-Military Action Team in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. In recent years he and other retired Foreign Service colleagues have helped U.S. military commands in exercise planning and execution. He also serves on the boards of some volunteer organizations

Q: Good morning. It is December 23rd, 2010. This is an Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training oral history with William Scott Butcher – who goes by W. Scott

Butcher – or Scott. We are conducting this interview on a bright winter day in Washington, DC. I am David Reuther.

Pre-Foreign Service Background

Scott, can you tell us when and where you were born, and provide some family background?

BUTCHER: Very briefly, I was born in Dayton, Ohio, in December 1942. I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio. I attended Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, about 45 minutes away from my home.

Q: What did your dad do? What was your family background?

BUTCHER: My dad was an accountant with Proctor and Gamble, a noted Cincinnati company. He didn't do much traveling, but he was in charge of the accounting section of their traffic department, which took care of a lot of their logistics. I used to get a lot of interesting stamps that he would bring home from the office from mailings from various suppliers overseas. That got me interested in stamp collecting, and in turn interested as a kid in foreign countries and global affairs.

Q: If you great up in the 1950s, was your mom a stay-at-home mom?

BUTCHER: Yes. After the war years and immediate post-war years my maternal grandparents were my day care providers.

Q: Cookies and the whole business?

BUTCHER: Yes.

Q: You were born during the war, so your father was not drafted?

BUTCHER: My mother divorced my biological father shortly after I was born. As far as I know from family conversations he was not involved in the war. My mother remarried in 1948 and my adoptive father – who after the war and university under the GI Bill became an accountant at Proctor and Gamble - was in the Army Air Force. He was stationed on Tinian in World War II. I had known that he ran a PX (Post Exchange) on the island of Tinian, but it turns out he also was involved in some of the bomb damage assessments for General Curtis LeMay for the B-29 bombings which flew out of Tinian – including the two which dropped the nuclear bombs. It seems he had a range of activities while stationed there. He had lots of pictures of B-29s, including the Enola Gay. He talked about witnessing heavily laden B-29s failing to get airborne, crashing into the sea on takeoff, and exploding. Also shot-up planes landing.

Q: You were talking about the stamps and a growing interest that stimulated. At that same time, what might you have been reading in school that interested you?

BUTCHER: I read a lot. I read some war novels. I remember reading Audie Murphy's To Hell and Back. Again, being a child coming out of the World War II era, I remember collecting a kind of bubble gum cards, but instead of having the baseball stuff, a lot of them had division insignias, pictures of medals on them, and things like that. In school, I was very interested in history and got interested in world affairs.

Q: You would have been about eight years old when the Korean War broke out.

BUTCHER: I remember it vividly. I remember that I was walking to school, Carson Elementary School in the suburb of Price Hill which I attended through the third grade, and saw the headlines in the newsstands. As a kid, I used to enjoy doodling and drawing pictures of F-86s chasing MIG-15s.

Q: As the paper came out and maps were in it, were you following those circumstances?

BUTCHER: Not with a very scholarly type approach. I was just an inquisitive kid. This was very much in the news. A lot of this was during the time of the radio. We didn't have a television until I was probably about 11 years old. It was mostly listening to the radio and following events that way. I was quite aware of that. I was aware of McArthur's firing by Eisenhower, and there were very mixed feelings on my parents' part, because McArthur was a World War II hero.

Q: I remember when McArthur came back; they had a parade in Seattle. My mother took us down there. We were standing on the corner.

BUTCHER: Old soldiers never die, they just fade away.

Q: When you went to high school in 1956, was that in Cincinnati?

BUTCHER: Yes, after attending elementary school from the third to sixth grade in the Cincinnati suburb of Cheviot, Ohio, I went to both junior and senior high at the same school, Western Hills High School. Both my parents went there in the 1930s. I was the classmate of one notable person, was Pete Rose. Interestingly in high school Pete was actually a better football player than baseball player – he played halfback. He was a serious athlete, and when a number of us were playing softball at a class outing Pete was the only one of us to wear cleats – the rest of us played in our bare feet! Each time he was at bat he hit the ball over the fence and then would charge around the bases. I was playing second base and when he came roaring around I made sure I got out of the way so I wouldn't encounter his cleats! West Hi, as it was called, produced a number of professional ball players under its outstanding baseball coach at the time, who also coached American Legion ball. Additionally, the school had an active theater group, one of whose members, Harvey Hohnecker, who graduated a few years before me, went on to a successful career on Broadway, and sang and danced in both the stage and film version of West Side Story.

Q: Cincinnati had its own professional team at that time, or did they?

BUTCHER: Yes, the Reds are one of the oldest baseballs teams there is, from the 1870s or 1880s. I think they were originally the Cincinnati Red Stockings. My dad and I would often go to old Crosley Field to watch them play, and I became a life-long baseball fan.

Q: How would you describe your high school experience in terms of your future interests? Was this where you were doing a lot of reading about history and World War TWO?

BUTCHER: What really got me focused on it was an American History teacher by the name of Henry Hess. He was the faculty advisor for what was called the Western Hills High School Chapter of the Junior Council on World Affairs. They had a Council on World Affairs that was subsidized by the big corporations that were present: Proctor and Gamble, GE (General Electric), and so on. GE in Evendale made a lot of jet engines. That was another thing when I was growing up. One of the kids who lived near me whose father worked at the GE engine factory would bring home pieces of turbine blades when they had a testing mishap due to flaws in the materials.

Henry Hess had some physical problems – "the shakes," purportedly from shell shock in his wartime experiences, but for me was an inspirational person. He took a lot of interest in his students.

What got me interested specifically in the Foreign Service was after hearing one of the speakers at a Council on World Affairs presentation, a State Department Foreign Service Officer. I thought gee, that sounds like an interesting career.

Q: What was the topic?

BUTCHER: I think it was on the Foreign Service and what it was like being a Foreign Service Officer. In retrospect I believe it was an outreach effort to acquaint people outside Washington, DC, with the Foreign Service and its role.

Q: Would your high school have been participating in things like Model UN (United Nations) and those kinds of events?

BUTCHER: I don't recall specifically that they participated in anything like Model UN. Again, a lot of us went to various programs at the Cincinnati Council on World Affairs in downtown Cincinnati. They did have speakers like U.S. representatives to the UN, as well as other dignitaries. I recall that then Secretary of the Treasury, Douglas Dillon, spoke on the international dimensions of finance.

Q: At this time, from time to time world events could have impacted. The Second Quemoy Crisis in Asia was in 1958. Would you have paid any attention?

BUTCHER: Yes. This was the height of the Cold War, and the nuclear threat. We were all doing the duck and cover stuff. You would hide under your desk or lean against your locker in the hallway. My Boy Scout/Explorer troop as one of our activities was affiliated with the civilian Ground Observer Corps, so we would participate in exercises. We would have flyovers and identify the type of aircraft by the sounds. In this connection we were invited to visit Clinton County air base where C-119 twin-engine transports were stationed, and toured the aircraft and facilities. Because of the Cold War, we were all far from innocent as to international events and flashpoints. We all lived under the threat of potential nuclear holocaust.

University

Q: How did you decide to go on to Miami University, in Oxford, Ohio after high school?

BUTCHER: We were of pretty modest means. I applied to the University of Cincinnati and to Miami. I chose Miami as I decided I would rather be a live-in student and not have to commute to a local college. I was just far enough away from my parents to have independence. It turned out to be a great school, and I received a surprisingly good education – which I realized after I attended graduate school along with graduates of Ivy League and other schools renowned for their academics, and was able to more than hold my own with Miami background. Miami also afforded an opportunity for me to serve as a class president, participate in student government, and assume leadership roles in other campus organizations.

Q: How big was it at that time?

BUTCHER: I think it was about 6,000-7,000. It was fairly small. It's several times that size now.

Q: How far away is Oxford, Ohio from Cincinnati?

BUTCHER: It's about 35 miles and 45 minutes on country roads. It's a beautiful campus on rolling countryside. Our youngest daughter also attended Miami, and thrived there.

Q: The year you entered college was the Kennedy-Nixon election year. Did that impact on your activities or did you notice that event?

BUTCHER: Yes, everyone was glued to the television. It was a turning point for TV news broadcasts. Famously, there was the classic case of the viewers who watched on television felt the debates were clearly won by JFK (John Fitzgerald Kennedy) whereas the radio listeners thought Nixon won, because they couldn't see the body language. It was a fascinating time.

Q: The academic program at Miami University, you probably didn't select your major until your junior or senior year?

BUTCHER: Actually, I selected my major right from the start. When I was in high school, my career choices were medicine, law, and the Foreign Service. Initially medicine had the edge, as I liked science and had a high school double major in science – i.e., I had taken six science classes. However, I decided for two reasons, undoubtedly wisely, not to pursue this as a career choice. First, after experiences with chemistry – I was not strong in math - and second, with my family name, that Dr. Butcher was probably not in the offing – it might be hard to attract patients! I should also say that when I was in high school, I was very aware of developments in Vietnam. I followed Diem Bien Phu. I read Bernard Fall's works. I had developed an interest in, among other things, Southeast Asia. Developments in Vietnam were burbling along. Of course, when I went into college, it started getting hotter out there as the Viet Cong insurgency intensified.

Q: That's what we're interested in here, sort of the intellectual awareness development aspects of it. So, what was your major?

BUTCHER: I was in the Government Department. They basically let me call my major "Government-Foreign Affairs." I kind of made my own major. There wasn't anything called that, but they all kind of accepted that. The Department was not called Political Science. It was called the Government Department, and it had some very strong professors. My advisor for most of my time with the Department was Dr. John Badgely, a Cornell graduate. He was a Southeast Asia hand and a Burma specialist, a Burma scholar. My initial advisor was Gary Best, a very bright young professor from Northwestern University, who tragically died of a brain aneurism one summer. He was very much into the behavioral school of political science and foreign policy. After his death, Dr. Badgely became my advisor. Overall, Miami had some really outstanding, inspirational, professors. They made a major impact on my knowledge and intellectual development.

Q: When you mention Burma and Southeast Asia, would I presume that you focused papers that you might have had to write in this regional area, getting more expertise or familiarity?

BUTCHER: Yes. In fact, I wrote several papers on Vietnam at the time. I had a number of courses, everything from diplomatic history to political geography. Again, it was a large enough school that they had some fairly interesting breakdowns in terms of specialization among the various aspects of political science. I could look at problems, issues, and policy development from various angles, which was quite fascinating. Because I was also active in student government, I sometimes had a lot of difficulty getting everything done. I remember at one point I wrote five papers, all on Vietnam, from totally different aspects. One was diplomatic history; another was geopolitics. I was able to use some core references and then spin off in different directions from there, economizing.

Q: What was going on in student government in those days?

BUTCHER: There were numerous issues. What rights students have, among other things. It was a school where you were not allowed to have a car on campus, so there were issues

as to parking regulations for the kids who did have cars. There were very few of them. They had very special reasons. But in comparison with circumstances later on, the matters we dealt with were pretty minor. This was pre-Vietnam time and the attendant anti-war activism, and so on. We focused on much different things than the kids did later on. In many respects, other than concerns of the Cold War, and various tensions and crises around the globe, student activism was not focused on foreign developments and U.S. involvement.

Q: One of the things that were beginning to bubble up in American society at this time though was the civil rights movement. Meredith had entered the University of Mississippi under federal protection and whatnot. Did those kinds of things ripple through the university campus?

BUTCHER: They did, but again they had not accelerated to the point that it did a few years later. However, some of the students, some of the activists who went down south had some of their training programs – my wife went to Western College for Women, which is right across the street from Miami. Western closed in the 1970s because it didn't have enough of an endowment base and it's now part of Miami. Several of the students who were killed in Mississippi had actually been at a training program there. So after their deaths, that certainly raised the level of awareness among the students. This was a fairly conservative Midwest environment where there was not much what we would call social or political activism. That accelerated out a few years later, after my time there from 1960 to 1964.

In 1965 and on into the 1970s, there was a considerable activism on the campus, as recounted by my sister who arrived at Miami in 1967. They had things like, by way of campus protest at a given time in the late 1960s, the famous flush-in. This was when everyone turned the faucets on and flushed the toilets at a certain time, and drained the entire town of Oxford, Ohio's water supply. They also had more serious demonstrations, I understand, in which the police used tear gas during student protests.

Q: Did you enter academic studies with a thesis or just courses?

BUTCHER: It was courses, with lots of paper writing. It was not a thesis-type program.

Q: It sounds as though you are quite convinced on this foreign affairs trend. Once you graduated in 1964, you then directly went to Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, D.C.

BUTCHER: I actually passed my written Foreign Service exam at the very beginning of my senior year in college, and after passing that stage – the exam was held in downtown Cincinnati – I went up to Columbus to take the oral exam later that fall. That somewhat unusual for Miami – although there had been a few Miami graduates who later entered the Foreign Service, as best anyone knows few if any had taken and passed the entry exams and been accepted while they were still undergraduate students.

Because I went to Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington DC immediately after Miami – a two-year program – when my actual appointment to the Foreign Service came through in 1965 – I requested and was granted a year's leave without pay so that I could complete my graduate studies. Undoubtedly they thought it was worthwhile for me to receive another year of focused graduate work at SAIS before I came on board. When I did, it was at the junior-most level as an FSO-8, at the age of 23. Probably had I been a little more self-assured, I could have negotiated to come in as an FSO-07 instead of an FSO-08, as I had a graduate degree. They said no, I was too young for that. Other A-100 classmates my age – including Arnie Raphel, a long-time friend who as ambassador to Pakistan was killed along with President Zia in the mysterious crash of Zia's aircraft in August, 1988, who was three months younger than me, also came in at the 0-8 level.

That's the problem being someone who was born in December. You're always the youngest one in your class.

Q: I was always the oldest.

BUTCHER: Did your parents hold you back?

Q: Yes.

BUTCHER: I wish mine had too. In sporting activities, I was always the last one in the class to catch on. Once I started enjoying it, and they would move on to something else. Then I would be behind again.

Q: So, actually you're passing all the tests and whatnot in your senior year in college.

BUTCHER: This is something else when they talk about affirmative action programs. You know, they have a weighted score on the written exam. I think my weighted score was 72, and passing was 70. I always felt that there weren't that many people being taken from Ohio in those days. I talked to people later on. They said yes, they were looking to have more geographic diversity, rather than the more traditional northeastern and Ivy League colleges, which I thought was interesting.

Q: Do you recall anything about the test or the oral interview?

BUTCHER: The test was very much along the lines of college entrance exams. I actually did, in a sense, study for it in that I read books on world culture, history of Western civilization, etc. The exams, especially the written exam, had both broad-ranging and specific knowledge questions on art, architecture and other things. My readings of some thick tomes before my senior year – and after coming home from my summer job as an "excavation engineer" – i.e., ditch digger for the Cincinnati Gas and Electric Company – helped prime me for the test. I kind of enjoyed the test. You take so many of these over the years. I was surprised that I passed, but I also didn't think it was that daunting

because I read broadly and enjoyed the types of matters that I was being questioned about.

Q: What was the oral test like in 1964?

BUTCHER: I think I took the written in Cincinnati in September 1963. A couple of months later, I took the oral exam. I remember going up to Columbus, Ohio. I remember this rather stern panel of oral examiners. They made me sweat. After it was over, they said well, you could have been stronger on your economics, but you've passed. I do remember sweating a lot, and it was in the middle of winter.

Q: Do you remember any of the questions or any of the atmospherics that they created?

BUTCHER: They were solid interviewers and these were impressive guys, I thought. I don't remember the nature of the questions. They were very broad. I think a lot of it clearly tested your ability to think on your feet, even if you didn't know the answer, and how to respond appropriately.

Q: Here, you've passed the Foreign Service exams, written and oral, but you go on to John Hopkins first. How?

BUTCHER: Well, because I wanted to get a graduate degree. I thought it would help me. Apparently, the Foreign Service felt this is a freebie for it too, as I already the basic requirements as laid out in the tests and security background check. By the time I entered the Foreign Service in the summer of 1966, then they really needed a lot of bodies for CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support) for Vietnam. They were taking much larger classes, so I was under no pressure to join an entering class really. It was fine with them for me to go ahead and complete my two-year graduate program at SAIS. I applied for a number of programs: the Fletcher School at Tufts, Princeton University, American University, Georgetown University, and SAIS. I was accepted to all except Princeton because my French language capability wasn't strong enough. The one I liked best, SAIS, was the one gave me basically a free ride with a scholarship. So it was a no-brainer. And being in Washington was also good, both as a setting for someone interested in politics and foreign policy, but also because SAIS was able to a roster of practitioners on its staff for teaching night courses. I benefited by instructors in international finance and international trade who held day jobs in those fields.

Q: I was going to say that SAIS is in Washington. Talking about being away from your family…

BUTCHER: What happened is that I got engaged while still in college. My wife Carol and I were married in November 1964, a few months after I graduated from Miami and she from Western College for Women, also in Oxford, Ohio, just east of the Miami campus. This was on Thanksgiving break, while I was at SAIS, and she was teaching in in the Alexandria Virginia school system. The wedding was in Birmingham, Michigan.

So I had a short bachelorhood! I was on my own in Washington for just a few months. Those were they days when you didn't live together before you got married. She lived with some of her college friends, who were also working in Washington. I lived in an antiquated old rooming house near SAIS. By the way, when I told my family that I was going into the Foreign Service, they looked at me askance, like I was going off to the moon. Why would I ever leave Cincinnati? The entire family had been born, schooled, married and died in Cincinnati. I was the first one in anyone's memory to leave the old earth of Cincinnati, as it were. But they were supportive, dubious but supportive.

Q: Was Cincinnati much of an immigrant town? Was it German?

BUTCHER: It was German originally. During the Depression, a lot of folks moved in. There was a large migration from Appalachia and the south to jobs in Cincinnati. Proctor and Gamble, because of its making basic necessities like soap, and things like that, did very well making it through the Depression, and again through World War Two. They had a lot of jobs. There was the aircraft industry around there, in Dayton and elsewhere. There was Curtiss-Wright plant. For a while, my mother was a Rosie the Riveter, working on aircraft built by Curtiss-Wright, such as C-46s, and so on. General Electric also had an aircraft engine plant in the industrial suburb of Evendale. There were machine tool plants and other industries in the so-called Mill Creek industrial corridor.

Cincinnati, as I noted earlier when talking with the Council of World Affairs, is a city that has had a lot of international exposure in terms of its exports and its industries.

Q: You were in college at the time of the Kennedy assassination.

BUTCHER: Yes.

Q: That is something I assume you remember vividly.

BUTCHER: Absolutely. I not only recall it vividly, but when I came to Washington with some other friends who also were doing grad school interviews, we went up to the Kennedy gravesite, which had an eternal flame but had not been completed. This was in December. That was quite an experience. I recall it absolutely vividly, the whole thing. We all were glued to the television in our Delta Chi fraternity house. We saw the Oswald killing as it happened, the "day of drums" for the funeral, the whole bit.

Q: What were Washington and SAIS like? They were certainly different from Cincinnati.

BUTCHER: Yes, but it was thoroughly enjoyable. There was a high level of foreign affairs. SAIS was perfect for my needs. I did a lot of my research projects in the stacks at the Library of Congress with the original documents. I did papers contrasting British imperialism and colonial development in Malaya, with original sources written by people, and books dated from the 1860s. The Library of Congress holdings were fantastic. I also did some research at the British Embassy on Massachusetts Avenue.

Q: What kind of program did they have? How did you shape it to your interests?

BUTCHER: SAIS had basic courses that everyone took. One of the things that I tested weaker on was economics, so I made sure I had some good economic courses. I took some basic economics and an international economics course at Miami. I had maybe ten hours total of economics, not that much. At SAIS, I took development economics, international finance and trade, and a couple of other courses. Some of them were taught by people who were working at the World Bank. International finance was taught by an expert from the IMF (International Monetary Fund); i.e., a practitioner. They had some very good people on the politics of emerging countries. I had Howard Wriggins, who later became Ambassador to Sri Lanka. Another professor was an expert on Africa. The SAIS experience was outstanding, intellectually stimulating, fun.

I was a little worried when I came in. I thought how is a guy from Miami, a relatively small liberal arts school in Oxford, Ohio, going to do against Ivy League graduates? I thought how am I going to compete against these whiz kids, as it were. It turned out quite well, because I had some very good professors at Miami.

In an interesting series of connections, most of which I was unaware at the time, my advisor at Miami, John Badgely, wrote a letter of recommendation to SAIS on my behalf. My advisor at SAIS, a fellow named William Johnstone, turned out to have been John Badgely's advisor when John Badgely was working toward his at SAIS (I later learned that John had been a Fulbright Fellow at the Rangoon-Hopkins Center in the late 1950s). Thus both of were Burma hands, had written on Burma, and to this day John Badgely is still actively involved with Burma. Later on, while many of my Foreign Service A-100 classmates were heading off to Vietnam, my first assignment was to Rangoon – after six months of Burmese language training. I shouldn't have been so surprised, given the background of my academic advisors.

We're getting a little ahead of the story.

Q: Right. That was Washington in 1965 through 1967. Was there anything about the atmospherics of Washington?

BUTCHER: I was at SAIS from 1964 through 1966. We were there for the Goldwater versus Johnson election. Things were starting to heat up on Vietnam, the draft, and the large amounts of troops going there. One of my professors was a fellow named Paul Linebarger, who has written on psychological warfare. Odd but very interesting individual. Well known in science fiction circles for his books written under the pseudonym "Cordwainer Smith." He had been in China in some military intelligence capacity in Chungking in World War II. One night we had dinner at a Chinese restaurant on Connecticut Avenue with Bernard Fall. It was fascinating stuff. I found my SAIS experience spot on for preparing me for the Foreign Service. It was very interesting and I encountered many fascinating people. Again, for some of my work, one of my research projects was on the British pulling back east of the Suez. I spent a lot of time doing research at the British Embassy library on Massachusetts Avenue. Periodically, I would

visit the State Department, go to the library there, visit various desks and pick up materials related to my various projects. Those were the days you could more or less just walk into the building. There weren't any turnstiles or anything.

Q: One of the things that you said you did for sustenance was work on the U.S. National Commission on Technology.

BUTCHER: Its formal name was the National Commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress. That was a summer job between my first and second years at SAIS. I don't recall exactly how I got on to it – perhaps via a bulletin board posting at SAIS for a staff position. Labor leader Walter Reuther, Civil rights activist Whitney Young, Inventor/CEO Edwin Land of Polaroid were among the members of the Commission. There were a number of high profile individuals involved. Although I was part of the administrative support staff, I was able to sit in on meetings, and enjoyed the work, and my name was cited in the final report as one of the supporting cast. It was a fun summer, followed by part-time work until the end of that year, and I met some interesting people.

Q: Vietnam is starting to get interesting. Tonkin Gulf was during this period. Did that begin to impact? I mean, if you met Bernard Fall, then you would have discussed Vietnam.

BUTCHER: It was becoming a growing debate in terms of what we doing, the conduct of the war, and so on and so forth. By and large, again this was still fairly early. The major build-up was just underway. It was pre-Tet. A lot of people were more or less with the program. We realized that a lot of this had started under JFK and JFK was very popular among young people. Johnson was seen as inheriting that mantle. There was very little dissent at that time among the student element I was with. That happened later. We were very interested in what was going on, how we were going to defeat this insidious enemy, the worry about North Vietnam being backed by the Russians and the Chinese, and so on. It was a much different atmosphere than developed later on. The Cold War was always the backdrop to our foreign and security policies.

Q: For your master's degree at SAIS, was that a paper or thesis degree?

BUTCHER: It is an oral exam process. It is a two-year program. You do papers and tests for your various courses. Except for some of these kind of basic required courses, almost all of them were very small seminars. There was a very good student-faculty interaction. You got to know your advisors and professors very well. It was a very stimulating environment.

It wasn't a nice beautiful campus. You're on Massachusetts Avenue, but we had access to embassies, government facilities, the World Bank, the IMF (International Monetary Fund), and so on. It was really quite a great environment. It was very good for those who were going to go in as practice, as opposed to scholarship and teaching. Some of my classmates did stay on and get PhDs from SAIS, but SAIS is not known especially for its

PhD programs. It is known more for training practitioners, be it international commerce, government, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), and so on. Although a number of my classmates went into the Foreign Service and other government activities, several excelled in the private sector, and became notable executives in the corporate world.

Q: You would have graduated from SAIS about May or June?

BUTCHER: It was May.

Embarking on a Foreign Service Career

Q: Did you go down the street to pick up your ticket to the State Department?

BUTCHER: It was almost that way. I completed my SAIS studies, but had a surprise with the final pre-graduation oral exams. In brief, a long-time professor felt SAIS was "too easy" on its orals, almost everyone passed, so he was going to try to turn things around. So in about a two day period a number of us, including the top scholar in my class, the son of a prominent African leader, and others, were told they hadn't passed and to try again. So that was a bummer. But it was obvious something was amiss.

Q: Yes, I can imagine.

BUTCHER: I told my wife. She was stunned. I said, "I just don't know what's going on."

Well, I think it was kind of a scandal with the school. Because we were students and not faculty, we didn't have all the back-story to this. The school went out of their way to make sure we were retested fairly soon on and got our diplomas with 1966 dates. I thought that was very interesting. That's just a little sidebar.

Basic Training – the A-100 Course

I went almost directly to State. I entered a class in June 1966, a large class whose members included long-time colleagues such as Arnie Raphel, Dave Passage, Lange Schermerhorn, Larry Lesser, Carl Cundiff, Bob Pastorino and many others. It was a large class. I have a list available of the entire class, which I'll try to get to you.

Q: You were coming off six straight years of academic training. As a training experience, what did you think of the A-100 course?

BUTCHER: Alexander Davit was one of the instructors in my class. When did you go through?

Q: In 1970.

BUTCHER: I thought there was a lot of material to take in. The hardest was some of the consular affairs. I remember a number of us being tested on the passport and citizenship

matters, where much depended on what legal regime was in effect at the time of an individual's birth. Consular affairs was the area most of us were least familiar with from our academic background. But we were young, enthusiastic and eager to learn. It was a big hoot. I had a lot of fun. We went out to visit the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). There was a lot of orientation-type stuff that was fascinating, visiting agencies around town, the Port of Baltimore to practice observation and reporting skills, etc.

Q: Where did the training take place?

BUTCHER: It started out in the basement of the old FSI (Foreign Service Institute) in Arlington Towers in Rosslyn, Virginia. Then we moved over to the new FSI high-rise buildings in Rosslyn where FSI had rented space, before they had the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, the Shultz Center. We literally started in the basement and worked our way up!

Q: One of the observations of A-100 people at this time, particularly the middle-class people that were being brought in, was that the protocol of the Foreign Service such as the turning the corners of the cards and setting your table properly, was an eye-opening experience. This was not the way they were raised. Did you see that in your colleagues?

BUTCHER: I think we just kind of rolled with the punches. We were a pretty submissive lot. I think the people who came later were much more willing to question authority. You didn't question authority too much. We listened to our drill instructors. If they said you've got to do the cards this way, we did the cards that way. It was one of those things where if you were a real free thinker, you wouldn't enjoy the Foreign Service because of its discipline. There's an esprit that comes with it. We all saw at as an elite service, proud of its high standards for entry, it's professionalism, and its meritocracy and up-or-out ethos – akin to the military, but you had to conform to its requirements.

Q: Yes. It's interesting. You talk about being a guy from Miami University in a small college town in Ohio. How am I going to do at SAIS? Here [in the Foreign Service A-100 entry class] are people coming from all over the country into this environment, which has its own cachet. They are looking around and wondering gee, how did he get here? Why am I here?

BUTCHER: It was a fascinating class. There were people with engineering degrees and a former Miami Florida cop. I think at least one person did not have a college degree, but was very smart and very well read. There were interesting and eclectic backgrounds. Some of these people didn't last very long because they just didn't like it, didn't fit in, or what have you. There were others who obviously prospered, with the late ambassador Arnie Raphel as an illustrious case in point.

I was just going through some materials and saw a note that I received from Arnie. It was about one of our class reunions or something. Arnie and I were friends until he died. In fact, I saw him a couple of weeks before he died when I was visiting Islamabad on a "circuit ride" of South Asian posts – I was Director of the Office for India, Nepal, Sri

Lanka, the Maldives and Bhutan [in the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs - NEA] at the time.

Q: Had the group kept together over time?

BUTCHER: Unfortunately, a lot of times they would have the reunions when I was overseas. That's just a problem with the Foreign Service. We would encounter people sometimes late in our career and forget that we were classmates, having to remind each other "say, weren't we in the same A-100 class back in 1966? It was kind of fun.

Q: Did you think the group as a whole did fairly well in the Foreign Service?

BUTCHER: Well, it was a huge group. It was so large they had to break us into two sections for basic instruction. I think there were 88 in our group. In addition to Arnie, who was perhaps our most successful – and fast – achiever, a number of others, also reached senior ranks, several becoming chiefs of mission and/or high-level positions in the State Department, the NSC, USIA, and other agencies.

Q: That is large. That must have been the State Department plussing up for Vietnam.

BUTCHER: Yes. In fact, when we finished the program, they announced the assignments, which is always a great thing. A huge chunk of the class went to Vietnam, probably about a third. In fact, one of my classmates was killed during the Tet offensive. He actually volunteered for Vietnam because he and his wife had infant twins, as I recall, and he needed the extra hardship pay. He was stationed in Da Nang as a consular officer. He went up to Hue for the Tet holidays, was captured by the North Vietnamese, and executed.

Q: Who was that? The name must be on the wall.

BUTCHER: I forget his name now. I used to know it. I believe it was Steve Haukness. I will check. (I checked – indeed it was. The entry reads: "Steven A. Haukness, Killed in Tet Offensive – Vietnam 1968")

The day we received our assignments there would be cheers when people were assigned to hardship posts, boos for others headed to garden spots such as Paris. Then they announced "Scott Butcher to Rangoon." Silence. It didn't compute. It was pretty funny, actually. I forget what I put down for my preferences, but Rangoon was not one of them. I had indicated Southeast Asia. Unbeknownst to me at the time, it appears in retrospect this was in my academic genes in view of my former academic advisors being Burma experts.

Q: Were the preferences in relation to a list that you had been provided earlier of what was going to be available, or were people just asked generally? Do you want to be in Asia or Latin America?

BUTCHER: This was long before we were able to have more of a role in choosing our assignments. This was a real kind of wish list I think. I indicated a preference for Southeast Asia – thinking perhaps of Thailand – but more likely with the luck of the draw to go to Vietnam, as were many others.

Q: You got this interesting assignment to Burma as your first assignment in the Foreign Service. Between the time that the A-100 ended and you left for post, what did you do during that period?

BUTCHER: The first thing you have to do is pass a foreign language test. At some point after my A-100 training – maybe it was during or before, I don't recall exactly when it was – I had my French test. I had taken by then a couple of years of college and graduate school French. I had a lousy accent, but I could talk about balance of payments in French. I could talk about international law in French. I could read and write it fairly well. Again, I had not been in an immersion environment to really speak it, learn informal idioms, etc. So the FSI testers gave me, among other things, a story to read from a French movie magazine on Liz Taylor's visit to Moscow. It was full of all kinds of French movie slang. I had lots of trouble with it. I could talk about foreign affairs and various international topics like Vietnam, whatever you wanted, in French, but not deal with the French movie magazine and French pop culture!

Burmese Language Training

Instead of getting off language probation by giving me a little FSI training so that the FSI instructors would pass me – probably two weeks of their immersion would have done it – I got off language probation after six months of Burmese. I had a two-plus-three in French and I ended up with the reverse of that in Burmese after six months. I got off language probation with a really useful language, Burmese! Actually, language fluency helped greatly in my Rangoon posting – it just wasn't of help in onward assignments. Not exactly a widely-spoken language.

Q: Was that a function of the language requirement or in preparation to go out to your assignment in Rangoon?

BUTCHER: Yes. I think it would have been so easy for me to get the language requirement out of the way with a couple of weeks of French training at FSI. Then they could say he's had FSI French; he is blessed, the laying on of hands by the FSI linguists, etc. Then I would have had the Burmese for Rangoon because of the utility at post. Frankly, it was very useful in my confidence level in my work and travels around Burma. I always felt comfortable moving around. Burmese is a tonal language. It's a difficult language.

You've had Thai, I believe? They are somewhat similar. As I understand it, Burmese script derives from Buddhist texts that were based on Pali, in the early scriptures that I believe came to Burma out of Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. Thai script is less curlicue-y. I

couldn't understand Thai, but I could kind of make the sounds out from my Burmese ability – which some Thai speakers said were close to the Thai pronunciation.

Q: Thai is very phonetic. If you can read it, you can say it. Is Burmese the same way?

BUTCHER: Yes. Burmese has four tones. I don't know how many tones Thai has.

Q: Who else was in your Burmese class?

BUTCHER: I was basically the sole student. At one point, there was also a fellow by the name of Sylvester, an Army Special Forces officer, a Green Beret. I was later told he had been killed somewhere in Indo-China. Subsequently, a few years ago, I found out he had not been killed. I was kind of mixed in with other people at various points, but essentially, I was the sole student for six months of training, which really helped. I was getting one-on-one training. There was one main instructor – U Khin - and one other, a young man nicknamed "Mountain Lion" – Maung Tin Hlaing. That's when I met the Southeast Asia Department at FSI. One of my A-100 classmates, Tom Spooner (who died in 1994), was taking Indonesian in a nearby classroom. On breaks we would socialize. One of his other Indonesian language classmates was a fellow by the name of Al La Porta, who I have crossed paths with over my career – I succeeded him in my first tour in Malaysia - and Al has remained a good friend and colleague to this day.

Q: Did your wife have a chance to take some language?

BUTCHER: She had a little bit of Burmese, but mainly at post. She took classes from the widow of a former YMCA head there, David Tin Hla. Mainly, she learned a great deal about Burma and its cultures from Mrs. Tin Hla. I did the translations in the family.

Q: Did you do any work with the Burmese desk before you went out? What kind of Washington side preparation did you have?

BUTCHER: Actually I did. I spent some time on the desk helping with preparations for a state visit by General Ne Win hosted by President Johnson in the fall of 1966. It was in the context of Ne Win wanting, as leader of a "non-aligned" nation, to keep his options open and have a relationship with the U.S. so as not to be too dependent on China, its large neighbor. At that point, although having overthrown the elected civilian government of U Nu and imprisoned him and members of his cabinet, Ne Win's regime had not yet become the international pariah as it did later with large-scale human rights abuses. On its part the U.S. wanted, in view of what was happening with the communist threats in Indochina, and with Chinese-supported opposition movements or insurgencies ongoing in neighboring countries, to enhance its influence in non-communist countries such as Burma. I recall going over to the Mall in D.C. and seeing Ne Win arrive by helicopter, and then get into a limousine for the short drive to Blair House.

<u>On to Rangoon</u>

Q: So here you are. You're going to your first Foreign Service post. How did you get there?

BUTCHER: We got there on one of the famous Pan American Airways "round the world flights" – Pan Am Flight 1, which traveled westward from San Francisco (Pan Am 2 went eastward out of New York City. When I entered the Foreign Service, I hadn't been to Canada. I hadn't been to Mexico. I had never set foot outside the country. I did go with my grandparents on a road trip out west in the pre-interstate highway times. That was quite an experience. We were pretty much stay-at-home people. Other than Cincinnati being a pretty international brand city, locked in the hinterlands my own family experience was fairly insular.

So here we are. It's my first trip outside the U.S., heading to Burma.

We departed on Pan Am 1 on a Boeing 707 out of San Francisco to Honolulu, where we spent a couple of days as a rest stop. We puddle hopped via intermediate stops in Wake, Midway, or Guam – I don't recall specifically which, and then on to Tokyo. We spent several days doing some touring of Japan. We were there three or four days. We went up to Nikko one day, Mount Fuji and Hakone another day. It was beautiful. This was in April 1967 and the cherry blossoms were out. We saw Mount Fuji. That was our first experience with Asia.

It was also interesting because it was also our first experience with some Asian customs. We were standing there with a number of Japanese tourists and suddenly heard the sound of water splashing and noticed that a man standing just to the right of my wife as we took in the scenery was urinating. I guess if you're an Asian lost in the crowd and away from home, you can do certain things. Anyway, it was kind of a surprise. By then my wife was more of a traveler than I was, as she had gone on lengthy visit with fellow Western College students through much of Latin America the summer between her junior and senior years. But she had not experienced something like this, and the crowds in Tokyo, shoving and pushing to board the "bullet" trains. On our final day we had a guided tour of Tokyo. All totally new experiences.

After Japan, we continued on the Pan Am flight to Hong Kong and we spent maybe a day or two in Hong Kong because not every flight stopped in Rangoon. There were various tops after Hong Kong – Bangkok, Rangoon, Calcutta, New Delhi, Karachi, etc. I remember the Hong Kong stopover as where the Asian odors finally hit us. It was a mixture of cooking and sewage odors, which to my Ohio sensibilities were kind of a shock. Japan didn't cause any culture shock. It was different, but it was very orderly, with clean air. It was interesting seeing the rubber duckies in the windows as we walked around Tokyo. There were plastic meals showing what their menus were. That was a different experience. It was more interesting, rather than culture shock. When we hit the crowds and saw some of the squalor in Hong Kong, that's where it first really hit us that Asia is different. Also it was dreary, overcast weather, with what might have been a temperature inversion that kept the odors and air pollution from dissipating. The harbor tour was more notable for the garbage in the water than for the scenery.

Our flight went on to Bangkok. We picked up some passengers. This was in the middle of the night. Then we flew into Rangoon. After all the lights of Bangkok, coming into Rangoon there were a few flickering lights. It was past midnight. Everyone on the plane was asleep. My wife and I grabbed our bags. We were the only people on the plane to get off in Rangoon. Those who stirred and awakened seemed curious that we were getting off in Rangoon.

We were met and taken to the Inya Lake Hotel, a Russian-built hotel on a lake north of the main part of downtown Rangoon.

It was an interesting experience, wending our way through multiple stops en route to Rangoon.

Embassy Rangoon

Q: Arriving in Rangoon, what was your job?

BUTCHER: I started out as a Foreign Service Officer Generalist, in other words a "junior rotational officer." It kept my interest because I spent everywhere from a few weeks to a few months with different elements of the U.S. mission. There was a joint political-economic section. I spent time with them. I spent some time with the admin section. I spent time with the USAID office there, because they had a fairly sizeable aid program over the years, although it was kind of winding down because dealing with the socialist government was not easy at the best of times, and local officials under the military administration were wary of foreigners, and especially Americans. These weren't exactly the best of times. The second Ne Win government – he had first taken power during an unsettled political period in 1958, but stepped down and restored civilian rule in 1960. However, having had a taste of power, in 1962 he toppled U Nu's government in classic military coup, rounding up and imprisoning U Nu and key members of his government.

What came as somewhat of a surprise is that the embassy had a "Military Equipment Delivery Team" – MEDT – attached to it. I came to learn that the U.S. was still supplying spare parts to MAP – Military Assistance Program [a military grant program] equipment that had been delivered to Burma a number of years previously, when we had closer relations with the Burmese. These "follow-on" spare parts had continued despite cooling in relations after Ne Win's coup in 1962.

Burma was kind of a cockpit for the Russians, the Chinese and the Americans to compete for influence. The Burmese were still "neutral," but they were not terribly well disposed to the U.S. at that point. They just wanted to do their own thing, and were quite xenophobic, as illustrated by their expelling foreign businessmen, professionals, moneylenders and laborers, many of who provided services indigenous Burmese lacked the skills or motivation to provide. Expulsion of foreign doctors was especially damaging to national health services.

Q: Were these set rotations?

BUTCHER: I started out for the better part of a year rotating through these various parts of the embassy. It was good learning experience and, in a couple of cases, provided fascinating insights into the Burmese environment. When I was in the General Services Office (GSO) of the Admin Section, the local national who ran the Embassy's contract local guard force fled the country. The Embassy had a network of night watchmen at the various residences because there was a lot of petty thievery and "dacoits" – robbers who were known to come shimmying up the drainpipes or downspouts to break into people's homes and rob them. We used to sleep with a Burmese sword under our bed in case we had any unpleasantness. Apparently, the contractor who managed the guard force ran afoul of the government and absconded to Thailand. Thus we were stuck with a guard force without any leadership, and were compelled to take over its supervision. We established roving vehicle patrols would do little bed checks on the guards to make sure they were more or less awake. We would find some all wrapped up in sleeping bags. This provided a window into the former British Empire. There were Nigerians, Gurkhas, and others who had been serving the British forces in World War II, who had married locally and stayed on. There was a whole hodgepodge of people who we would usually find sleeping – never knew who might turn up when we jostled their sleeping bags. We would occasionally find one or two awake. It was an interesting experience to see the colonial remnants there.

For the second part of my tour, I became the Embassy's sole consular officer. That was a good fit for my Burmese language background and enabled me to converse with Burmese seeking visas or other consular services. Most of the people who were wanted to get out as immigrants were non-Burmese. A number of Burmese were allowed to travel because they had government affiliations, influence, or what have you, but most were NIV (Non-immigrant Visa) applicants. We had a huge backlog of applicants for Immigrant Visas (IVs), but the government wasn't releasing travel documents to enable them to leave, so we only had a smattering of people.

I was dealing with the occasional wayward American – the only visitors allowed in were on transit visas and had to have onward tickets. There weren't too many of these. I did have to deal with one mentally ill person, prominent as a coin collecting author, whose family apparently funded his extensive overseas travels as a way to keep him occupied – but who unfortunately ended up stranded at Rangoon 's Mingaladon Airport. A considerable focus of my time was devoted to helping official Americans who would have difficulties with various Burmese documents, getting in or out of the country, or having a medevac when they had medical emergencies and had to retrieve their passports from Burmese government offices where they often languished while awaiting various types of Burmese approvals. When we were in Rangoon the only private American in Burma was the Pan American Airlines local station manager. I believe his name was George Selwyn.

My Burmese language skills were invaluable, both professionally and when my wife and I traveled around the country. I felt there were two people in the embassy who had good

jobs: the Ambassador and me. He was at the top, and I was at the bottom. We each had access. He had access because he was number one, but they had to deal with me because I was the visa guy.

Q: The backlog of IVs, my impression was that when the Burmese got their independence, the first thing they did was to transfer out the Indians. The second thing they did was to *try to throw out the Chinese community.*

BUTCHER: It was not after independence. It was after Ne Win and some of the more nationalist and xenophobic elements came to power. They were actually packing Indians out by the boatload when we got there. The Indians were especially victimized, not only on racial grounds as a non-Burman minority, but also because some of them were the rural moneylenders. These, the Chettiar or money-lending class, were seen as being rapacious, charging usurious rates. Unfortunately, when the Burmese booted them out, Burma lost the principal source of rural credit, a means for farmers to at least be able to get some seasonal temporary credit between harvests to buy various fertilizer, seeds, or whatever. When we arrived, there was a huge amount of animus between indigenous Burmese and these "outsiders." In the colonial period, many of the Indians had been brought in as coolies and stevedores, to service the colonial economy. Also, many were from south India, dark-skinned, and viewed by the locals as "blacks." I thought there was racism in the U.S., but I was struck by what I saw in parts of South and Southeast Asia where people as much as possible avoid sun exposure keep because they don't want to darken their complexion. The color of one's skin often alluded to your caste.

Compared to the Indians, in general the Chinese were not as much of a problem, because many Chinese were Buddhists, a number of whom had over the years intermarried with Burmese. Although a portion of the overseas Chinese population in Burma were insular, spoke various Chinese dialects and were oriented toward Beijing or Taipei, a number also spoke Burmese and were more integrated, and acculturated, whereas most of the Indians were seen as a more distinctive and visible racial minority. So while the Burmese authorities were kicking out the moneylenders, they were also expelling poorer Indians who were not an economic treat, but who were providing valuable labor for the economy. They were just eking out a living. They were being shipped back by the thousands, by the shipload, at the time we were there. Undoubtedly a huge problem for India in terms of resettling them, many of who grew up in Burma and had never set foot before in India.

Q: When I went to Rangoon in the early 1970s, we went to a Chinese restaurant. At that time, I was told that there were only one or two in town. In the Chinese community, one family would own a restaurant. When they made enough money to leave, they would sell it to another Chinese family. This was the mechanism to get out of the country.

BUTCHER: There was not much scope for free enterprise. In general, the government was trying to control all the economic instruments, and it had a stifling impact. But little shops and stalls continued to operate. Despite its privations, and self-imposed isolation from much interaction with the world under its military rule, Burma was a truly exotic place, and because of my Burmese language capability, I had a great time. On Saturdays,

I would pick up the mail. Our APO (Armed Forces Post Office) mail service was not a traditional APO but rather an APO box; the Embassy had its own APO box in Bangkok. The attaché aircraft – initially an old Douglas C-47 transport and later a newer Beechcraft C-12 - would fly over to pick up supplies every so often and bring back the mail. We would get our *Washington Post* subscription about three months late. It was still entertaining to read, however, to catch up on states-side news.

Typically, I would go in to the Embassy on a Saturday morning, read the cable traffic, and catch up on any new or leftover office work. On the way home, I would stop for an hour or so at the Shwedagon Pagoda, schmooze with the vendors, have some tea, haggle over some of their arts and crafts, etc. It was great. I really enjoyed that. The Shwedagon complex is wonderful, a glittering golden glory with the main stupa surrounded by highly decorated shrines – although when on the platform it's necessary to go barefoot – and clean the betel nut spittle off one's feet later!

One of the key things that happened while I was there – perhaps the most noteworthy of a number of developments, took place in1968 at the height of the Cultural Revolution after the Chinese ambassador had been called back to Beijing, along with a number of his colleagues, for a pep rally. The PRC leadership felt they needed to get more of the word of the Cultural Revolution out to the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. It happened that was a time when the Burmese had a really bad rice harvest. There were no incentives for the paddy farmers to produce. You couldn't buy anything locally because they were killing private enterprise. So the farmers would grow just enough for themselves. Why bother to grow more? Also, there were certain types of insurgents who were saying don't sell your surplus to the government. The government rice purchase teams would come out with these buying missions, but they had nothing to offer. In fact, at one point we were going to work a deal where we were going to use excess currencies – we were holding a lot of excess Burmese kyat – to make a currency swap between the Burmese and Indian governments using excess local currencies we had accumulated through the PL-480 (Public Law 480) "Food for Peace" program. We would swap the excess kyat for excess Indian rupees with which to purchase Indian textiles. The Burmese would then be able to take these textiles and put them into the economy as an inducement for the farmers to grow and sell their crops. The people who were going out to try to encourage the farmers could actually take some of the textiles with them to say hey, if you produce a certain amount, you can buy this stuff for your family. The Burmese let the whole idea languish. It went away. It was a great win-win situation and we would have gotten a lot of these excess currencies off the books. Countries such as Burma and India technically would be paying for our assistance in local currencies – which we called "counterpart funds." Over time we ended up holding large unconvertible accounts of these local currencies. This would have been a good deal for all three parties.

So they had this terrible harvest. People were really in a funk. The Chinese Ambassador went off to Beijing – called back to home base along with other PRC ambassadors from overseas postings to for indoctrination on the Cultural Revolution, came back and started whipping up the students in the local Chinese schools. They were all wearing their Mao badges. Both the populace at large and the government were turned off by the pro-Mao,

pro-Communist China proselytizing. Purportedly some government agents – provocateurs - said hey, the Chinese are tramping on our national dignity, our sovereign rights. They are ripping off our national treasure. They got the crowds whipped up in late June. During one protest mobs came over the walls of the Chinese Embassy and killed at least one embassy worker and injured others. I believe it was on or about June 27, 1967. They attacked a lot of the local Chinese. They burned Chinese buildings and apartments. The death toll was high, in the hundreds, and thousands, mostly Chinese, were killed.

By the time I left in 1969, things were at a real nadir in terms of the relationship between Burma and China. That presumably carried on. There had been a certain amount of latent animus, but the Burmese government used it to distract attention away from the fact that their economy was in the pits. The Burmese Road to Socialism was turning into a Burmese "road to ruin."

Q: Yes, did you see any of that in the Consular Section? Were the Chinese trying to get out?

BUTCHER: Yes, but again this became a citizenship issue. If you were a Burmese citizen, especially if you were an ethnic Burman, you could get travel documents. The Burmans weren't leaving because they were being told that they were going to now get more access to natural resources, everything that these blood-sucking Chinese and Indians were taking. They would be taken care of. There wasn't the same inducement for them to leave. For the many, those not considered Burmese citizens, they generally would qualify for what were called Certificates of Identity, which would be an internationally recognized travel document, but the government wasn't releasing them.

Do you know Gene Martin?

Q: Yes.

BUTCHER: Well, Gene (d. 11/9/2011) was my successor – and later good friend - arriving in April 1969, before I had received my own onward assignment. We had met Gene and his wife Joyce during a brief R&R in Hong Kong in November 1968, after we learned Gene had been assigned to Rangoon as my replacement. I told Gene: hey, this is a really great job. There's a certain amount of activity and it is interesting. No terrible pressure. You'll be able to enjoy the country. And because you are a section head – albeit of a one-man section - even as a junior officer you sit on the ambassador's country team meetings.

As a parenthetical note: for the first year of my Rangoon assignment our ambassador was Henry Byroade (d. 12/31/93), a colorful figure. He had a fantastic career. He was Ambassador in South Africa, Ambassador in Egypt. He was kicked out because he opposed our approach on the Aswan Dam. After Burma, he ended up being Ambassador to Philippines and Pakistan. Reportedly, he was one of the youngest brigadier generals in World War Two serving in the CBI (China-Burma-India) theater. He was a really interesting guy. He was as big-game hunter, and had many of his trophies mounted in the

Residence. In addition to hunting, his other hobby while in Burma was refurbishing a classic old Rolls Royce sedan he acquired from a prominent Burmese figure, when he observed it rusting away at the Burmese friend's home. When he finished, it was in better than new condition.

Ambassador Byroade was succeeded by Art Hummel (d. 2/16/2000), who had been in Burma before as a USIA officer, spoke Burmese and was also a really great ambassador to work with. As a junior officer, I had all this access. Housing was very good. We were living in these old British colonial houses in a compound. The compound and its houses I believe formerly belonged either to a British company for their executive housing, of for British colonial officials. In any case, they were elegant colonial homes, situated on the south end of Inya Lake. I believe these properties, along with the stately buildings on the western shore of Inya Lake now used as the ambassador's and DCM's (deputy chief of mission) residences, were given to the U.S. government after WWII in partial payment for our "Lend Lease" assistance to the UK. The good housing offset some of the hardships of living in Burma – the isolation, widespread disease, lack of satisfying contact with Burmese officials, etc.

After I left, Gene Martin settled in, and the government decided hey, we want to get rid of all of these people, and released thousands of identity cards. Gene was driven to distraction. He suddenly became a one-man visa mill. On top of that, because he had Cantonese language background, it turned out that the long-time critically important consular assistant, this Anglo-Burmese employee – or Anglo-Indian, I'm not sure which but she was of mixed ethnicity – it turned out he overheard her, in Cantonese, getting kickbacks on placing people in the visa line, or something. The embassy put out some lines of inquiry and found out that indeed this woman was involved in all kinds of illicit activities, abuse of her position. I don't know if there was a criminal charge against her or if they just fired her as the simplest course. Poor Gene, he got caught up in all kinds of stuff. It was a totally different experience for him.

Q: Getting back to your experience, when you arrived, what did the embassy look like? Ambassador Byroade is there. He's been there since 1963.

BUTCHER: He was a fascinating guy.

Q: How did he run this mission? Who else was there?

BUTCHER: Donald L. "Don" Ranard was the DCM (deputy chief of mission) the whole time I was there. Don later became very much involved with whistle blowing on the "Koreagate" affair (exposing lobbying by South Korean government elements in the U.S. in the 1970s). I don't know if he was retired prematurely. Don died in 1990. I thought he was a very solid officer. He became Korea Office Director in the East Asia Bureau sometime after his time in Burma.

Rangoon a very interesting place because it was "action central" for all the various foreign embassies intelligence folks because everyone was there - all the major powers,

plus lots of others of various ideologies and allegiances: North and South Korea, North and South Vietnam, both Chinas, etc. Everyone could spy on everyone else! It was a third world capital, and before the military government was very prominent on the world stage. Prime Minister U Nu had been one of the moving forces behind the "NAM" – the Non-aligned Movement, the so-called "spirit of Bandung" that grew out of a formative meeting, the Bandung Conference in Indonesia in the 1950s. Everyone was listening to everyone else. On the phone, we always knew we were being monitored. Lots of clicks; everything but heavy breathing! Phones going dead at inopportune times.

The embassy was in a converted warehouse in downtown Rangoon. It was in a very central location. Later on, the media reported in the late 1980s how, in the midst of pro-democracy demonstrations and violent military repression against them, our ambassador – to his great credit - opened the embassy for some of the people being fired on to seek shelter. The embassy was right off the main downtown square not one of the downtown pagodas, Sule Pagoda. It was kind of a ramshackle building, a rabbit warren of different offices.

Q: How do you put offices in a warehouse?

BUTCHER: It was converted. It's like changing industrial buildings to lofts in urban settings in the U.S. It was well located but nondescript. You would wend your way around. A bathroom would be up the stairs in a little cubbyhole somewhere. It was a pretty broken down place. There were interesting little things. One of the funniest things was we had two political officers next to each other. Kam Wong was next to Bill Wright, so we had Wright and Wong next to each other! These were very professional people. There were probably a lot of former World War Two veterans among the senior leadership of the various sections, very solid people. These were all people you could look up to. Maxwell Taylor's son, Jack Taylor – who later wrote an excellent biography of his father - was in the political section for a while. There were several people who had various language backgrounds.

At the time of the anti-Chinese riots, we operated under a curfew. We would be stopped at roadblocks by the Burmese military, hard-bitten guys who had been fighting insurgents for decades. Typically a soldier would stick his rifle right up to your eye and shine a flashlight at you. Doubt they knew much about diplomatic license plates or diplomatic immunity. It was an interesting environment.

Q: You were in the country team meetings. Who were some of the other people there? Who was the DCM?

BUTCHER: Don Ranard, who I mentioned earlier. He was the one I reported to. He was a very seasoned professional. I learned a lot from him. He was kind of a gruff but caring individual.

Q: In that kind of a small environment, you had this access.

BUTCHER: Right. Overall, it was a pretty flat structure. The diplomatic community was variegated but small. Fairly junior people, staff people, or secretaries might be playing bridge with ambassadors. It was a very open environment. We would go to the British Club or the Marine House. There was an embassy recreational compound. One of the fun things was we would play softball. One of the players wrote a softball column that appeared in the government-run Working People's Daily, one of the two English language socialist rags - the other was the Guardian - that pretended to be a newspaper. So my name was in the paper if I hit a fly ball and the other guy dropped it. It was a very small country environment.

One of our Marine guards, a very athletic guy, popped the ball and it went right over the fence of our recreational compound and bounced into Foreign Minister U Thi Han's personal pagoda.

I remember being with our Indian driver in a pouring monsoon rain. There was a huge king cobra crossing the road. It was a two-lane road. Somehow our driver missed it. He was a very strict Hindu, don't take any life, was his precept. As we looked behind us, there was a monk. My wife said, "Did the monk see the cobra?"

I said, "Yes, he's seen the cobra." He was holding up his robe with a look of fright on his face.

There were still a lot of vestiges of World War Two around. You would see some hulks of burned out tanks in areas near the airport. There were Japanese gun emplacements. Visiting Pagan, an old capital on the Irrawaddy, not far from Mandalay, I found a fragment of a Japanese grenade, a strange juxtaposition with all the ancient pagodas and stupas. We would find ancient artifacts, pieces of Burmese clay pipes, pottery shards, etc., along the eroded banks of the Irrawaddy. But a grenade fragment was a surprise. During World War Two British forces mounted a major amphibious crossing of the Irrawaddy in that area. In a similar vein one could go up Mandalay Hill and some of the corrugated roofing on walkways is still full of shrapnel and bullet holes from the fighting during the British assault on Mandalay Hill, a Japanese strongpoint that overlooked the city below.

Q: We had a consulate in Mandalay at the time.

BUTCHER: Yes we did. We would stay there in a guest room when visiting Mandalay. To be assigned as consul there one had to have interest or hobbies. There were three consulates up there: ourselves, the Indians and I forget whom else – perhaps the Chinese. It was a pretty lonely environment. But great for a visitor – Mandalay was Burma's final royal capital until the British dethroned the last king, Thibaw, in the 1880s.

Burma was a fascinating, beautiful country, resource rich, but run to the ground by the regime for decades. For years, they had been smuggling goods, gems and other natural resources across the Thai border. Now I understand they're doing it across the Chinese

border via sweetheart arrangements between the military regime and the Chinese. It's a pretty sad situation.

Q: For a junior officer on a first tour, you picked up quite a bit of skills. You've got your hands in all kinds of different things – admin, consular.

Lee Bigelow…

BUTCHER: He was one of my predecessors. He did the junior officer rotation, and then did the consular job. I knew him by Stuart, his middle name. He had to use that name because the word in Burmese pronounced "Lee" referred to a certain part of the male anatomy. I replaced a young officer by the name of Mike Joyce who became a Russia specialist. I don't know if he ever became DCM in the Soviet Union. Mike was Consular Officer and then, as I recall moved up to the Political Section after I replaced him. There were a series of us who would rotate through. We would have rotation, then each of us ending up as the consular officer. Most of us had Burmese background, although I don't think Mike Joyce did.

Q: What would have been some of the policy interests of the Political Section? What were they reporting on?

BUTCHER: Frankly, there wasn't much going on in terms of politics in Burma. I think there was much more of a focus on what the Burmese might be doing in the international arena, such as UN (United Nations) issues. Again, a lot of what we were doing, both on the intel side as well as on the open diplomatic side, was looking at others, trying to get the Burmese to vote with us on certain key UN issues, finding out what their views were on the Non-Aligned Movement, and things like that. There was very little to report on in terms of domestic political developments. But there were ongoing insurgencies. These included "red flag" and "white flag" communists, ethnic insurgencies – Kachin, Karen, Shan, etc. Government forces were continually engaged against these insurgents, who in turn would occasionally blow up trains and engage in various hit-and-run actions. As a result, certain parts of the country were off-limits to foreign diplomats, and advance approval was required for travel elsewhere outside an area around Rangoon. Train travel in particular was constrained.

It was more of the foreign affairs, third-country issues that were of interest. The embassy had a combined political-economic section, which made sense in a country like Burma. AID had some projects, but a number were winding down. Those dealing with Burmese officialdom had interesting experiences. For instance, members of MEDT (our Military Equipment Delivery Team recounted some of these. Often we would sell something, like 87 pounds of number 3 bolts, a certain bulk amount. We would hear back from the Burmese that they needed x-thousand and they were seven short, or something like this. Of course we never heard back from the Burmese when there was an excess amount. We would hear other stories – these weren't from us – that for their military recreational facilities, they would get tennis balls. These come sealed in pressurized cans to keep them

fresh. The Burmese would open them and count them: one, two, three, etc. It was a pretty backward, xenophobic place.

Q: Do you recall if the Japanese had an active presence?

BUTCHER: The Japanese were very active. Of the Western-oriented countries, the Japanese were the biggest there. They sold a lot of Hino buses. During WWII, when the Japanese occupied Burma, the Japanese were seen as very supportive of Burmese independence. A number of people like General Ne Win came out of a system where a number of nationalistic Burmese had been very heavily influenced by the Japanese. Aung San. Aung San Suu Kyi's father, who in effect was the George Washington of Burma, was one of these anti-colonial Burmese trained by the Japanese. The so-called "Thirty Comrades." At the time of independence, they became the core of the Burmese military leadership, although some went into the jungles to head communist and other insurgent groups against the Rangoon government after independence. For the Burmese, they always had a fairly benign view of Japanese, compared to some of the other Southeast Asians, especially the overseas Chinese, who were brutalized in places like Singapore and Malaya by the Japanese. The Japanese were probably more active commercially with Burma than any other countries during the time we were there.

Q: In traveling around the country, did you get a chance to get up north, in the Kachin area?

BUTCHER: No, that was off bounds. I remember they wouldn't let us go because of either their own sensitivities or because of the worries about insurgents. I did go on a very interesting river trip with our Navy and Air Force attachés, which they worked through the military. We went by riverboat from Rangoon to Bassein on the Irrawaddy River delta. We visited some of the Burmese gunboats. It was something out of a different century. On these winding rivers, you couldn't really see anything and there was this plume of black smoke. It was a big river steamer coming the other way. It was kind of fun. Recalled the days of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company under the Brits.

Q: What were Thai-Burmese relations like at this time?

BUTCHER: Not good. Typical. You know.

Q: Nothing unusual there.

BUTCHER: We would go out to Bangkok to get some freedom and buy things, as so little was available in Rangoon. I remember hearing some of the Burmese saying something to the effect of "boy, I'm glad we're not like Thailand and Bangkok." We saw a booming economy, with all that goes with it. The Burmese saw crowded roads and the helter-skelter of a modernizing city, which perplexed them. Burma was like a hermit kingdom, and the Burmese ruling elite was proud of that. In saying we don't want to become materialistic like the Thai is in effect saying aren't we glad we don't have

anything? Or at least that appeared to be their self-justification for the poor state of the Burmese economy.

Q: Art Hummel came in as Ambassador. Did the atmospherics in the mission change? How was it working for him?

BUTCHER: Byroade was a very strong, colorful personality. He had dark hair, blue eyes and was a very striking individual with a military bearing. Reportedly had a reputation as a ladies' man. He had been ambassador at a number of posts before and after Rangoon. He had an unvarnished, direct personality. I liked him a lot. When he would phone me at home outside office hours he would say "Butcher, it's Byroade. Can you do such-and-such." Or "I need such and such." He was kind of a gruff military guy, but very bright. He wasn't a Burma expert, unlike his successor, Art Hummel, but seemed to me from the perspective of being the junior-most officer as being highly competent, confident and comfortable in a difficult setting. As a former general officer himself he probably had greater personal standing with the Burmese military leadership than most other ambassadors in town.

Ambassador Hummel's arrival was a return engagement. He had been in Burma as a USIA (United States Information Agency) Officer and spoke Burmese. He would go out with hunting buddies and would tramp around in the jungle. Later, when he was Ambassador in Beijing and his other roles, people wouldn't probably imagine this guy off in the boonies, as it were. He was pretty dignified. But he was good. He had a very different personality than Byroade. It was fun to work with both of them as a result of their differing personalities and operating styles, yet both highly professional.

It was a very professional embassy run by both men. We had a number of agency people who were top-notch because it was a fertile operating ground for them.

So, Gene Martin arrived there in March 1969, and we still don't have our orders. He's in the Inya Lake hotel, as we hadn't moved out of the residence he and his wife Joyce would inherit. We've got our belongings all packed up, in lift vans, but we don't know where we're going. We had no onward assignment. I arrived in April 1967 and I was leaving in April 1969, a two-year assignment. On April 1st, orders came in assigning me to Dacca (now called Dhaka) as Political Officer.

I went up to the guys in communications and said okay, it's April's Fool's Day. Do you have my real assignment? If so, where is it? They can't be sending me from Rangoon to Dhaka, I exclaimed. They seemed puzzled, and assured me these were my real orders. Ambassador Art Hummel went to bat for us, contacted Washington, and expressed surprise they would be sending a young couple with an infant after two difficult years in Rangoon, to Dhaka, and could they reconsider. By then we had a young daughter who was born in November 1968 at the Bangkok Nursing Home. Although people had babies in Burma, it was not advisable, the embassy doctor warned us. The embassy medical unit was not equipped for possible complications, and the nationalized medical facilities in Burma were terrible. So we went to Bangkok two weeks in advance of Carol's due date,

and stayed at the Chao Phya Hotel – a "transient officers' billeting facility," in military parlance – officers on R&R from Vietnam stayed there. I used up the last of my leave the day my daughter was born on July 1st, 1968 in Bangkok. So we had a young child and after two difficult years in Rangoon – they were interesting, we traveled and enjoyed it, an exotic country, but it was hard on family life. We all came down with different diseases like paratyphoid, various types of dysentery, exotic fungal diseases. All in all it was a wonderful place to explore, housing was excellent, but Rangoon lived up to its designation as a hardship posting.

To make a long story short, it turned out I was assigned to Dhaka. Ambassador Art Hummel asked the Department, how they could send this couple with a young child from Rangoon to Dhaka? Meanwhile, we were reading the local press about the East Pakistan going to hell in a hand basket. There were "Naxalites" and similar rural communist uprisings originating from West Bengal in India and spilling over into East Pakistan (East Bengal in British India days). Local English language newspapers in Rangoon reported all kinds of instability in East Pakistan. We got a message from NEA (Near East and South Asian Affairs Bureau) saying frankly, this is compliment for Scott because we consider the Dhaka position the best Political Officer job in the entire bureau that's available for him at his grade.

Q: It sounds like you had given some indication to NEA that you were interested in going with them?

BUTCHER: No. I had no say at this point on where I was heading. My feeling at the time was the real reason was it was the cheapest move. From the Department budget standpoint you ship the household effects from Rangoon to Chittagong, then by road up to Dhaka. It's a very easy move by sea, with just one transit point. The closest U.S. post to Rangoon was the consulate general in Dhaka.

Q: The Admin guys were making money on you.

BUTCHER: My predecessor in Dhaka, Frank Corry, who just died fairly recently, had already left Dhaka by the time we returned to the U.S. on home leave between assignments. Frank was assigned to the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia. So while in Washington on consultations I called him and asked him about the post. He told me about different things – what the job entailed, and so on. It sounded very interesting. I asked, "How would you kind of sum up what living in Dhaka is like?"

He paused and said, "A pestilential hole."

I said, "Can you maybe draw it out a little more? I have to talk to my wife – then at her parents' home in Michigan, which was our home leave address - and tell her what the place is like. The way he put it was, frankly, rather harsh, and might be somewhat of a shock for her."

"Well frankly, that's what it's like," he responded. No help from him!

Q: Now, you get this wonderful assignment to Dhaka. Of course, there is home leave in between. So you fly back to the States, see the folks in Cincinnati, and then go on to Dhaka. What was it like arriving there?

BUTCHER: I think we flew TWA (Trans-World Airlines) to Rome where we spent several days. My wife's sister was residing in Florence, studying and working. So she came out with us for a couple of days there.

Then I had my first Mideast experience transiting the airport in Beirut. I saw the burned out spots on the runway where some Palestinians had torched some MEA (Middle East Airlines) airliners. I guess this was late spring 1969.

We flew from Beirut to Karachi. We spent a couple of days for orientation in Karachi. I remember getting off the plane in Karachi and it was like a furnace, a blast of hot dry heat. It was very Middle Eastern in appearance, with a lot of sand and dust. We saw our first camels in a local setting, as opposed to in a zoo.

We then flew up to Islamabad for orientation with Embassy personnel, a number of whom were real experts on Pakistan and South Asia, with language and area experience I lacked. Then we went to Lahore for consultations, with some sightseeing. They said it was a cool spell. It was 111 degrees in the shade. We went to Shalimar Gardens. We had our year and a half old daughter. My wife stayed in the air-conditioned car with her. I spent five minutes walking until I wilted, trying to tour the Shalimar Gardens. It was very interesting, never having been to South Asia. Burma was more Southeast Asia, although the Indian influence was there, in the form of local Indian residents, temples, and other religious and architectural elements – including old examples of colonial British public building architecture, with its Indian and Mughal motifs.

We then flew from Lahore across India to Dhaka. The contrast between the grays, the browns and the reds of the West Pakistan landscape to the greenery of largely deltaic area of East Pakistan was almost harsh on one's eyes. It was just so green. Emerald green. We landed at Dhaka and there we were. There were thousands, multitudes, of Pakistanis, mostly Bengalis everywhere. Only in Tokyo and Hong Kong had we experienced such population densities. But not the everyday poverty we witnessed.

Q: What was your assignment?

BUTCHER: I was a political officer, and the one responsible for covering for most of domestic politics in the province – contact work and reporting and analysis. There was a senior political officer who was also deputy principal officer. While he did a certain amount of political work and political reporting, he was also doing a lot of backstopping the consul-general/principal officer, and serving as acting principal officer in the consul-general's absence. There was a large USAID program; it was a fairly good-sized "constituent post," as the U.S. diplomatic facilities outside the embassy were characterized. Because of the distance from Islamabad, there was a certain amount of

autonomy. Due to the geography, we had to be much more self-contained than consulates might be in some other countries where there might be a little more access to the capital.

Q: Who were the senior officers at Dhaka?

BUTCHER: When we arrived, the Principal Officer was Lesley Squires formerly a USIA officer. He was only there for a few months. I'm trying to think of when he left. Maybe it was within eight or nine months of our arrival. Then Archer K. Blood came in the spring of 1970.

Q: And who was the Deputy?

BUTCHER: Initially, the Deputy was Andrew I. "Andy" Kilgore, a Mideast specialist, an Arabist.

So we had a strange, totally circumstantial coincidence of names after Arch Blood's arrived. Thus, Butcher would draft a cable, it would be cleared by Kilgore, and the signed out by Blood. So we had Butcher, Blood and Kilgore. At one point, one of the Islamist parties, an anti-American party, translated our names into Bengali. Our local translators gave us a copy of this because it was pretty funny. It said something along the lines that "with people with names such as Butcher, Blood and Kill at the American consulate, things are likely to go bode ill." Things indeed later went badly, but we weren't the cause.

Q: The whole mission in Pakistan was awfully large. There was the embassy and quite a few consulates and consulates-general.

BUTCHER: When we first set up an embassy in Pakistan it was in Karachi, Pakistan's initial capital. Karachi remained the commercial capital, even after the capital relocated to the new planned capital of Islamabad, adjacent to the city of Rawalpindi. Our consul general inherited what had been the ambassador's residence; the deputy principal officer lived in the former DCM Residence, and so on. Housing was quite good. Lahore, a cultural center, was the capital of Punjab Province – Pakistan's most populous province - and the U.S. maintained a good-sized consulate general there. We also had a consulate in Peshawar, the capital of the Northwest Frontier Province bordering Afghanistan. There were USIS (U.S. Information Service) facilities throughout the country

Q: What was Squires like to work for?

BUTCHER: He was a pleasant guy, but I didn't get to know him that well. I just don't have very strong memories of Les Squires because Andy Kilgore may have been acting for some time. As I recall, Arch Blood arrived in Dhaka in the spring of 1970 as Les' successor, and Andy departed several months later for his onward assignment, with Bob Carle replacing Andy as deputy principal officer/senior political officer.

Q: In this green paradise, what was the office building like?

BUTCHER: It was in the original high-rise building in Dhaka, the Adamjee Court Building. There were a number of major trading companies, jute-manufacturing companies. There were some industrial families, like in India where you have the Tatas and some of the others who were major corporate families. There was a group called the Adamjees. They were one of the wealthiest Bengali Muslim families in East Pakistan. It was their building in the central commercial part of Dhaka. We occupied a couple of upper floors of this building. By the time I arrived in June 1969, the building was pretty run-down. You would take a decrepit elevator. You could walk up when there were power outages – or needed exercise – it was eight or ten stories up. We had the top floors of that building. Odd construction. Round building, with a center atrium all the way to the top story. To go between some of our office suites you had to go outside, circumnavigate the non-air-conditioned outer area, to the destination office. We had no Marine Guards, and security left a lot to be desired by today's standards. Another downside to the building's open design was that it was wildlife and bug-friendly. One day my secretary went to pick up what she thought was a tea bag on the floor by our coffee and hot water pots. I heard a piercing scream. Turns out the "tea bag" had fur – it was a dead bat.

There was a fairly sizable foreign diplomatic community there. There were a number of different consulates and deputy high commissions of Commonwealth countries, probably 30 or so countries were represented. It actually was the most populous province. Pakistan was divided into what was termed "East Wing"- the province of East Pakistan - and the "West Wing" – the three provinces of West Pakistan. There were probably 75 million in East Pakistan, and maybe 60-some million in West Pakistan. The economy of East Pakistan was predominantly agricultural. The industrial base was very much related to the jute industry, used for carpet backing, burlap bags, twine, etc. Rice was the prevalent food crop, whereas in West Pakistan the staple grain is wheat, used for various types of bread. Agriculturally, and climatically, East Pakistan was much closer to Southeast Asia than to the drier climate of West Pakistan, which relies heavily on irrigation.

Jute has for some time been a major cash crop and export commodity, requiring lots of water for its growth. The jute stalks grow out of the water, are harvested, dried, and processed in jute mills. East Pakistan was largely independent on that industry, kind of a one-shot thing. Plus, there were some fisheries, some aquaculture production, including shrimp, as well as frog legs, of all things! An American company set up a frog leg industry. East Pakistan's extensive alluvial lands were quite fertile and suitable for agriculture, although prone to seasonal flooding.

Much of our focus in East Pakistan by U.S. government agencies was humanitarian, on economic development, disease prevention and eradication, etc. Some said that East Pakistan was "the Mount Everest of development economics." USAID and other foreign and international development entities, plus a range of voluntary organizations, were active. The Pakistan-SEATO Cholera Laboratory in Comilla was doing landmark work on Cholera research, and many American Public Health Service medical personnel were assigned there. Comilla also was the location for rural cooperative projects, demonstration projects for elsewhere in the province. These included ones for pooling of

farm equipment, as well as marketing cooperatives. Rural electrification also made its mark. I remember visiting one village, part of which was electrified, part not. In the electrified portion women were able to do piecework with sewing machines, adding to family income and helping integrate them into local economic activity. I was told that a by-product was lower birth rates, as villagers stayed up later and spent less time in bed! A West Pakistani, Akhtar Hameed Khan, was legendary for his efforts to promote agricultural cooperatives. This was also the time of the so-called "Green Revolution" whereby through the efforts of Norman Borlaug and others high-yielding hybrid rice varieties were introduced into rice-growing areas of Southeast and South Asia.

Although the crowds, the dense population, the jarring poverty and crippled beggars pervaded our daily lives, there was a vibrancy to the place. Excursions into Old Dhaka, a twilight trip by a district officer's river steamer thanks to one of his SDO's (sub-divisional officer) prerogatives – a bright young west Pakistani Civil Service officer, Syed Javid Akram (known as "Topsy," because of he always came out on top in his examinations) – led to an evening party of younger diplomats and Pakistani guests at Topsy's sub-divisional headquarters overlooking the sleepy town of Munshiganj, and cultural activities lasting well into the night with Bengali musicians, were among our memorable activities. In the humanitarian sector, Catholic and protestant missionaries were active in providing succor to the needy. On one official visit to the town of Mymensingh north of Dhaka we overnighted at a mission station at Jalchatra, in the jungles of the Madhupur forest, where Holy Cross priests ran a leprosarium. Impressive, dedicated and selfless caregivers. Closer to home, my wife and other wives helped with milk-distribution programs in an extremely poverty-stricken part of Dhaka.

As for family life, we had a lively schedule of social activities, both of an official nature and with friends within and outside the official community. We had volleyball games in our yard, and our location on a meandering man-made lake enabled my toddler daughter and me to enjoy netting colorful tropical fish for our aquarium. We also had visitors - one of my wife's sister's came for a visit, and we were able to make a short trip together to Nepal, and my wife and she later traveled to New Delhi and Agra for sightseeing. An old college friend visited us from Vietnam, where he was serving as an air force intelligence officer.

We also had numerous official visitors, including prominent academics the Regional Labor Officer I worked closely with in my role as post labor reporting officer. In the fall of 1969 the Apollo 11 astronauts visited Dhaka as part of a global tour; I helped with some of their arrangements and got to spend some private time with them, which was a thrill.

In 1970 we were able to take R&R back to Southeast Asia, visiting Penang and the Cameron Highlands in Malaysia, Singapore, and then visiting with our friends Gene and Joyce Martin in Burma on our way back to East Pakistan. In the Cameron Highlands we stayed at the famous "Fosters Smokehouse," and in Singapore at the distinctive Cockpit Hotel, which I believe has been torn down and replaced with high-rise buildings.

Q: This is kind of interesting because you've got East Pakistan and West Pakistan at this point. The embassy is in West Pakistan. India is in between. What was your relationship with the embassy? How often did embassy people come over?

BUTCHER: Because there was a lot of political ferment, we would have visits from the political counselor, others in the political section, as well as the DCM and other mission personnel. The political counselor was Steve Palmer, a fine, genial officer who was a good mentor for me. We traveled together on at least one field trip to the upland area of East Pakistan, Sylhet District, a tea-growing area. He died a few years ago (5/3/2000). Did you know him?

Q: Yes. I remember him in NEA.

BUTCHER: I lost touch with him after the late 1980s, when we would be together on some contingency planning exercises. The embassy would host political officer conferences. We would all assemble from the various outlying posts to meet in Islamabad, or sometimes go up to the ambassador's hill station retreat in Murree. That's where I met some folks like Bruce Laingen, who was DCM in Kabul at the time. He would come over to some of these meetings. A representative from the embassy in New Delhi might come. It was a way of keeping in touch and comparing notes on developments.

We used to say that Pakistan was held together by fairly minimal glue: Pakistan International Airlines and Islam. The interesting thing was that for East Pakistan, the cultural center was Calcutta. Bengali Muslims and Bengali Hindus shared a very strong culture. They are a very lyrical people. Artistic, music-loving. There were recitals by sitar players, sarod players, tabla players, and so on. It was a big deal. The West Pakistanis looked at this as a culture that was heavily Hindu influenced, and they always thought that their brethren in East Pakistan were lesser people in terms of their practice of Islam. Islam likely may have been more influenced by local culture than probably was the case in West Pakistan. Like Indonesia, where Javanese culture has a huge impact on the practice of Islam, the same was true of the Bengali culture. With the Bengalis, you had the feeling that there was not a real cultural affinity with West Pakistan.

Natural Disaster

Q: Shortly after you arrived, East Pakistan started to run into some terrible circumstances. I think there was a hurricane that came through.

Do you have a picture of a hurricane here? (BUTCHER displayed a binder with 8x10" photos)

BUTCHER: In South Asia they call them cyclones – actually a hurricane is a cyclonic storm, as are typhoons, etc. Local terminology varies. The cyclone that struck southern East Pakistan on the night of November 12/13, 1970, was horrific. They had actually had a cyclone come a few weeks earlier on October 23 that brought damaging winds to

Dhaka. I had been flying in a small twin engine Fokker F-27 airliner to one of the outlying cities in East Pakistan and we got caught in some pretty rough weather on our return flight – observing the telltale circular cloud patterns of a cyclone. Dhaka was actually hit harder by that earlier one, which came roaring up from the coast inland. It had very heavy winds – press reported 90 miles per hour - and caused a lot of damage to the plantings and fencing around our house. The later catastrophic one did not affect Dhaka that much, but it coincided with high tide at a time when the rice harvest was coming in. What happens in an alluvial delta area where there's a lot of new land, people come down to this area, migrant workers come in to plant and later harvest the rice. The land is just a few feet above sea level. There was a high tide combined with a tropical bore. If you look at the map, it's an enclosed bay, the Bay of Bengal. The storm pushed waves 30 feet high.

Initially, when we received reports about tremendous loss of life, we thought it was just the usual hyperbole. You'll hear of a couple hundred people drowning in ferry disasters, and things like that. When we started seeing pictures of the bodies and the tops of trees, then you realized the scope of this. It was horrific. Merchant vessels would find bodies 60 miles out to sea when the water receded. Villages were wiped out. The U.S. and international community came in with a huge relief effort. It was impressive.

Q: Let me back up for a minute regarding the cyclone, the hurricane, which went through. You were saying it didn't really affect Dhaka that much?

BUTCHER: When it reached Dhaka it was no worse than some of these bad storms that we have come through Washington sometimes that blow stuff down. We had some small trees in our yard blown down. Things like that. It was severe, but not disastrous and less damaging than the earlier October cyclone that more directly affected Dhaka. It was like when we in the Washington D.C. area have experienced remnants of east coast hurricanes that came with steady winds that were damaging and kind of scary. By the time the November 1970 cyclone came inland and up to Dhaka, the winds were probably 75 miles per hour. They were damaging, but not catastrophic, since Dhaka was far enough from the sea. Dhaka had flooding problems, but these were more due to seasonal flooding from runoff upstream in India and beyond, such as from snowmelt coming down from the Himalayas, and monsoon rains.

Here are lots of pictures of assistance we brought in, including the first 747 I had ever seen. It was actually from Boeing…

Q: … with the company logo on it.

BUTCHER: This was in November 1970. Interesting labels on the relief supplies. "Survival supplies furnished by Office of Civil Defense, Department of Defense." "Survival Ration Biscuits."

That's the AID Administrator.

This is one of our top AID people, talking with Admiral Ahsan, the East Pakistan governor.

There were hundreds of flights coming in with relief supplies.

Here are Arch Blood, Ambassador McFarland, and Press Officer Eddy Deerfield.

The U.S. flew large cargo flights in. We brought in C-141s with knocked-down Hueys from MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa. They were flown out on C-141s to Dhaka and they brought in aircrews from Vietnam to pilot these helicopters. We had a dozen or so Hueys ferrying relief supplies down to the delta area, helping to deliver relief goods around in the delta area.

I went down one time on one of these flights and took some of these photos. They aren't terribly clear. There was a lot of devastation.

This is flying en route down there. It was very flat land.

They were all pretty well wiped out.

These are some of the official photos from USIA. That's a USIA photo.

Q: Those are fields with drowned cows.

BUTCHER: Yes.

Our pilot was flying back from the coastal area where all the devastation, flying back to the airport in Dhaka. The lights from the instrument dials cast a red glow through the cockpit. It was nighttime. Pretty dark outside. Lots of different deltaic waterways below. The navigational aids weren't quite what they were used to, I imagine. They were trying to figure out where they were going. It was rather humorous – at least for me it was, traveling with these experienced crews from the Vietnam theater. At one point, I said, "We're lost, aren't we?"

They confessed, "Yes we are." We had plenty of fuel, so they circled around until they found some landmarks that were obvious, and we made it back o.k.

There's Arch Blood. There's the leader of the team that came in. This is Meg Blood.

Here are the locals doing their thing. (Photo of several men pushing a heavily laden cart up a steep hill)

You mentioned you were interested in Joe Galloway.

Q: Yes.

BUTCHER: That's a copy of his card.

Politics, Elections, and a Surprise win for an East Pakistan-Based Party

All of this happened in the context of oncoming national elections, scheduled for early December, and the first after years of military rule. The foreigners brought in these supplies, point to point, to help with relief. The Pakistani central government appeared to really be in the backseat, compared to the abilities of all these foreigners with their planeloads of relief supplies, helicopters, and all this other stuff. Frankly, it made the government look really bad. In contrast with the foreigners, the central government didn't seem to be doing very well at all.

On the eve of the elections, and even before the cyclone calamity, there was already a certain animus with West Pakistan among many East Pakistanis. Locals said all these West Pakistani businessmen are raping and pillaging the resources of our golden East Bengal. What do we get to show for it? Obviously, not very much. We had a terrible disaster and the foreigners helped us more than our own government did. It translated at the polls.

General Yahya Khan, the Chief Martial Law Administrator, had taken power on March 25, 1969, when then President Ayub Khan was ousted following civil turmoil. Later that year Yahya announced legalization of political party activities effective January 1, 1970, and holding of national elections later in the year. Despite the cyclone disaster, the elections were held as scheduled on December 7 in all but the most affected areas in the delta region. By all accounts, these were free and fair elections, perhaps the best by international standards in Pakistan's history.

In the past, there were multiple parties in Pakistan, but the overall governing party was the Pakistan Muslim League, the PML, which basically had been riding high since independence and had strong representation in both wings. Well, lo and behold in this election, because there was so much dismay and dissatisfaction with the central government, the East Pakistan-based party, the Awami (Peoples) League with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as its leader, won all but two of the parliament seats at stake from East Pakistan. On Pakistan's one-man, one-vote electoral basis, this meant that the more populous East Pakistan had a clear majority of seats at stake for the National Assembly, as the Pakistani parliament was called. Then Awami League surprised everyone by winning outright a majority in the prospective National Assembly, and that Sheikh Mujib as party head was on track to become the new prime minister of Pakistan.

However, ambitious populist West Pakistani politician Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, whose Pakistan Peoples' Party had won the majority of National Assembly seats contested in West Pakistan, along with other power brokers in West Pakistan, could not countenance the prospect of the Bengali nationalist leader becoming prime minister. Bhutto saw Mujib as an obstacle to his own goal of becoming prime minister; others, including the military, saw Mujib's "Six Point Plan" for East Pakistani autonomy, which would devolve key budgetary and other powers to the East, as threatening their vested interests and

constituting a roadmap to independence. The military and the traditional Pakistani ruling elite saw India as Pakistan's existential threat, and in that context viewed Mujibur Rahman as a handmaiden of the Indians.

The Awami League and its supporters felt the East would finally have its day in the sun, whereas key elements in the West saw the Awami League's platform as irreconcilable with their key interests. Easterners felt too much spending had gone to the military, and that the long-standing confrontation with India over Kashmir was not a critical issue for them. This divide, exacerbated by the unstable election results with the majority parties being exclusively regionally-based, without national reach, evolved into a huge crisis, as the gulf between the evolving political forces in the East and West wings widened, and positions hardened. It was especially clear that ruling elites in the west found it hard to reconcile with the fact that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Bengali-centric Awami League had won a clear-cut majority of the National Assembly seats.

Man-Made Disaster - the Tipping Point for Pakistan as a United Country

The die was cast when on March 1, 1971. Yahya announced the indefinite postponement of seating of the National Assembly, in effect annulling the election results. In East Pakistan, there was an immediate outcry, people poured out onto the streets in protest as word of the announcement got out, leading to a province-wide civil disobedience movement that went on for several weeks. To their credit, despite growing anger directed to them, being spat upon and having their movements disrupted, the Pakistani military overall was remarkably restrained in the face of the province-wide non-cooperation movement. In the third week of March, Yahya, Bhutto and other West Pakistani officials and figures flew over to East Pakistan, ostensibly in good faith efforts to negotiate a resolution to the impasse with Mujib and his team. After several days of talks, with reported ups and downs, there was no breakthrough.

By March 25th things looked like they were approaching a crisis. There had been clashes previously between the Pakistan military and local groups, including some fairly radical Bengali nationalists. That night I got a call from visiting *New York Times* journalist Sydney Schanberg (who later achieved fame for his book, The Killing Fields, about the Khmer Rouge's genocidal acts in Cambodia). Syd, who was staying at the Intercontinental Hotel, said that the talks had broken off. He had learned Yahya Khan and Bhutto had just left for the airport. The Pakistani military were tearing down the so-called Bangladesh flags around the hotel that had been placed there by Awami League supporters. He said he was told if he stepped outside the hotel, he would be shot. In an understatement, he said, "Something is going on!" Syd then dictated a dispatch to the New York Times over the phone that he hoped I would be able to have sent out over the consulate's communication channels. He indicated this essentially was a pooled report on behalf of himself, and his colleagues with him, John Woodruff of the Baltimore Sun and John Bradsher or the Washington Star. I was unable to send it, although I did read it to my boss who was at a social function at Consul General Arch Blood's house.

There's more of a story than that, but I wanted to take it up to this point.

Interviewee's note of June 2015 – Subsequent Events and The Blood Telegram:

There indeed was more of a story about this period, which we did not take up at the time of the interview. The brutal and bloody army crackdown on the night of March 25/26, 1971, as pent-up military emotions were unleashed with vengeance. The automatic gunfire about 1:30 a.m. outside our residence as the army moved in to seize Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who lived about nine houses away down our street. The curfew that confined us to our house for the next 36 hours as we listened to heavy gunfire and viewed smoke from burning structures all over Dhaka. And then after the curfew, all of us gathering at the office to compare notes, and systematically seek out information on developments. Reliable reports of atrocities, summary executions, killings on Dhaka University campus. Acquaintances dead; others terrorized. Bodies on streets, fields, stacked in park. Evacuation of dependents and non-essential personnel. In the context of what we saw as silence from Washington on the brutal crackdown, widespread killings and atrocities, and lame appeals for all parties to eschew violence – when it was clear the violence was being meted out by the Pakistani military and not the initially cowed public – we decided to convey our concerns to the Department. After consulting colleagues – all unanimous in our views – I drafted a telegram dissenting with U.S. policy toward the crisis, and for failure to decry the brutal military action. Consul General Blood not only agreed to authorize sending the message out through our official channels, but also added his own comments, in effect endorsing the thrust of our message. By this heroic act he put his own career on the line, and suffered as a result. The message has come to be known as "The Blood Telegram."

Note continued: Subsequent to this specific interview, later in 2011 heightened interest in the period, with the approach of the 40th anniversary of the events and the "liberation" of Bangladesh, led to a BBC radio program on "The Blood Telegram," commemoration events at the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, D.C., and various articles and academic publications. I participated in some of these programs and interviews, and contributed to a Bangladesh Embassy publication, Vibrant Bangladesh, which had articles related to the events of 1970-72. Subsequently, in the fall of 2013, Princeton Professor Gary Best published an award-winning book, The Blood Telegram – Nixon, Kissinger and a Forgotten Genocide, drawing on interviews and access to hitherto unresearched documents, including the "Nixon Tapes" which recounted private conversations between President Nixon and then National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger about the crisis. For reference, the BBC Radio program on "The Blood Telegram," can be found on the internet at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0183r3l My article contributed to the March 26, 2012 issue of Vibrant Bangladesh can be found at:
http://www.bdembassyusa.org/uploads/Vibrant%20Bangladesh_26%20March_2012.pdf
The Blood Telegram – Nixon, Kissinger and a Forgotten Genocide, by Gary J. Bass (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2013), now out in paperback, is widely available at bookstores and online, and was reviewed by the *Foreign Service Journal* – see http://www.afsa.org/FSJ/0614/files/assets/basic-html/index.html#81 - and later cited by the president of the American Foreign Service Association in his "President's Letter"

column in the *Journal's* Jan/Feb 2015 edition - http://www.afsa.org/PublicationsResources/ForeignServiceJournal/FeaturedContent/JanFeb2015PresidentsViews.aspx . Arch Blood's own book, The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh – Memoirs of an American Diplomat (Archer K. Blood, The University Press Limited, Dhaka, 2002), was written before some key documents of the period were declassified or otherwise available. The most comprehensive compendium of key official U.S. documents from that period is contained in the State Department Office of the Historian's Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-76, Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 2005. Release of this volume was the subject of a conference hosted by the Historian's Office, "South Asia in Crisis: United States Policy, 1961-1972," held at the State Department June 28-29, 2005.

End of interviewee's note of June 2015

Q: So actually, you were the senior political reporter at the time, and you get this call from a journalist…

BUTCHER: I can't say I was senior because my boss was technically the senior political officer, but he was also the deputy principal officer, with the responsibilities that entailed. I was the guy who did the main scut work, the grunt work. I was on the street a lot. The journalists knew me and tried to reach me. It was interesting.

Q: You had been there long enough to ingratiate yourself with the other members of the diplomatic community. You had a whole set of contacts and whatnot that you were working.

BUTCHER: It turned out that the personnel folks in NEA probably were right when they told Ambassador Art Hummel in Rangoon that this was the best political job for my rank among NEA positions available at the time. If you look at political officers as being essentially ambulance chasers, it was a great job. The place was going to hell in a hand basket on my watch, and I was a political officer. What more could you ask for?

Q: Good morning. Today is January 28th, 2011. We are returning to our conversation with Scott Butcher.

Assignment Washington – As the Crisis Evolves

Scott, I think we finished last with your tour at the consulate in Dhaka, East Pakistan, and everything that flowed from that, the cyclone and whatnot. After Dhaka, you came back to a Washington assignment, to the desk that handled Dhaka. How did you get that assignment in the first place?

BUTCHER: I think there was sound logic to the assignment as Pakistan desk officer. The overall office in the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs at the time comprised Pakistan and Afghanistan, and was known as known as the Office of Pakistan and Afghanistan Affairs - PAF. They obviously wanted someone who had field experience in

East Pakistan, because at the time of my assignment things were already coming undone because of the rising tensions between East and West Pakistan. It made a lot of sense to have someone back in Washington, albeit a relatively junior officer, as the new Pakistan desk officer covering political developments – there also was a fairly senior economic officer following economic issues and developments, but my position was the more "generalist" slot as a traditional State Department desk officer.

When I went back, William "Bill" Spengler headed the office. His deputy I believe was Craig Baxter. Later Craig Baxter was replaced by Doug Cochrane. In the middle of my tour, maybe a year in or a little less, Bruce Laingen who was then DCM in Kabul, came to head the Office. His new deputy was Peter Constable, who I had known in his previous assignment as deputy principal officer/political officer in Lahore.

When I got back to Washington, things were really quite hot on East Pakistan: the army crackdown had prompted lots of controversy over U.S. policy.

When the Army crackdown occurred the night of March 25/26, I already had my onward orders to Washington. In fact, our household effects were already packed and in lift vans in our driveway, which had the benefit of enabling our household staff to move safely between our house and their quarter and not be hit by any stray rounds.

In late April, I began wending my way back to the U.S. Arch Blood, AID Provincial Director Eric Griffel, and I flew out of Dhaka on to Islamabad, where we met with the country team and were debriefed on developments in East Pakistan following the army crackdown. Like the situation when our wives had to leave Dhaka via PIA aircraft, our flight could not overfly India but had to go the long way around, over Sri Lanka and then off the west coast of India to Karachi. I carried our pet cat in a hand carry-on bag and when we changed planes in Karachi for onward travel to Islamabad I handed her over to the general services personnel from the Karachi consulate general for onward shipment to our home leave address in Michigan, where my wife and daughter we staying with her parents.

After home leave, when I got back to Washington the desk was very busy. There was a heavy load. In fact, they brought in some additional people to help out. One young officer, Joel Waldman, was brought in to help. As the situation developed, you may recall that with the army crackdown, lots of people were killed in the fighting. There was resistance by the paramilitary police, the East Pakistan Rifles, as well as some units of the regular army. Some Bengali formations from the Pakistan military mutinied or defected and joined the insurgency. The insurgents were known as *Mukhti Bahini;* i.e., "Liberation Army." They received aid and sanctuary from the Indians. As the crackdown continued, and the Pakistani military embarked on counterinsurgency operations, millions of refugees, largely Hindus, fled to neighboring India, posing a huge burden on that country. Perhaps 10 million refugees entered India. After the crackdown lots of friends, acquaintances and contacts dropped from sight. Among these was my local Bengali instructor, a young, slightly-built bespectacled man who as I recall at one point had told me he had a heart condition. I learned much later, after the fighting ended, that he had

gone underground and ended up leading a guerilla band in the Sundarbans region of the delta, notable as a habitat for Bengal tigers.

The Pakistani Army was s a very elite force, with British martial traditions, and its leaders thought that they would be able to quash this insurgency fairly easily. I think they were somewhat taken aback by the effectiveness of the guerilla tactics, especially in some of the rural areas.

We had a great deal of congressional interest. A lot of it was stimulated by the refugee flow. Senator Kennedy and his staff held hearings. We had to do a lot of paperwork on that. People from the South Asia wing of the Near East and South Asia Bureau spent a lot of time on the Hill to address concerns by Congress. The confidential cable we at the Dhaka consulate general had drafted, dissenting from U.S. policy, was leaked shortly after we sent it on April 6, 1971. It was intended as an in-house dissent, not a public document. It became very much a cause célèbre. Jack Anderson wrote pieces on it. Lots of opponents of the Nixon Administration leaped on the bandwagon criticizing U.S. policy. The Russians and Indians were supporting the East Pakistan "liberation movement" in favor of an independent Bangladesh. The U.S. government supported Pakistan as a long-term ally, a lynchpin between both SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization) and CENTO (Central Treaty Organization) in our Cold War efforts to contain the spread of communism.

It later turned out the Pakistanis been assisting us in our opening to China. One of the interesting developments when the air cleared somewhat was that we understood a little better why our policies seemed to be so paralyzed, and the U.S. government seemed so constrained against speaking out about atrocities committed by the Pakistani forces. In the big power game as it were, we were using the Pakistanis to gain the opening to the Chinese, which we hoped could extricate us from Vietnam. So we were seeing things in a very micro circumstance. People were being killed on the streets literally, and we were wondering why our government was so silent. It became clearer when we got back that there was a cost-benefit assessment going on as to whether the U.S. government should speak out and take a stand on a human rights basis, or remain mute, and continue using the Pakistani channel to the Chinese.

Q: As to the work of the desk, normally you were walking into a situation where this insurgency and all that is going on. Therefore, the desk is having to do a lot more, if you will, than just normal desk officer work: liaising with Congress, probably writing a lot of stuff for the Front Office of NEA. Who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary?

BUTCHER: That was Chris Van Hollen, Sr. A fine gentleman. He is the father of current congressman from my district in Montgomery County, Maryland. (Note: He died at age 90 on 1/30/13).

When I joined NEA, it actually had three disparate country groupings. It had GTI: Greece, Turkey, Iran and Cyprus. It had South Asia. And it had the more classic Middle East Arab countries and Israel. So traditionally there was a lot of attention devoted to

more pressing Mideast trouble spots, rather than to South Asia. Suddenly, South Asia loomed very large on everyone's radar, given what was happening. I think everyone was rather taken aback that things came unstrung so quickly. It was a congruence of events. First, just the oddity of the country itself: two non-contiguous wings separated by a hostile India. India was seen by the West Pakistanis as more of a threat than by the East Pakistanis. The East Pakistanis were not as smitten by the Kashmir issue and so on. The Bengali majority of East Pakistan, both Muslim and Hindu, had very strong cultural ties with Calcutta and West Bengal. There were issues with India, but they were more over things like water sharing and other border type issues, as opposed to what for the West Pakistanis was the burning issue of Kashmir, seen as having been stolen from Pakistan by the Indians at the time of Partition.

Q: So the desk was in crisis mode. What did that mean in terms of interacting with the rest of the department or other agencies?

BUTCHER: Again, one of things that struck me coming from two relatively small posts overseas, Rangoon and Dhaka, was the amount of work, physical labor as well as mental labor – obviously we were responding to hundreds, if not thousands of congressional inquiries. By physical I mean we had to hand carry documents around the expansive layout of the State Department to get the necessary clearances – this was the pre-email era. And if a document was substantially altered, we had to repeat the re-clearance process. In some instances I recall having to literally run the hallways to get clearances to meet tight deadlines. This was also a time when standards were such that no official document could leave the State Department unless it was letter perfect – no whiteout or type-overs! Labor intensive for secretaries, too.

I may have mentioned the last time that a quantity of inquiries was prompted by some of the wives who were so upset by U.S. Policy. When they came back to the U.S. they sent lots of form letters my wife had mimeographed by her father at Ford Motor Company. Hundreds of such letters were sent to members of congress. They in turn conveyed their concerns and queries to the State Department, which went to the desk, and which I had to answer. Kinda in the "no good deeds go unpunished," unintended consequences, etc. category! Thus, due to the passion of the wives and others, especially humanitarian workers such as the U.S. Public Health Service medical doctors working at the Pak-SEATO Cholera Lab, such letters generated a flood of congressional queries to the State Department that the besieged desk officer had to answer – and in an era before word processors and computers!

We had extraordinarily long hours. There was a lot of drafting. Again, there were some very qualified people. The leadership of the bureau was strong. The desk itself had some very good people. Some were much more expert in South Asian than I, with years of field and language experience under their belts.

The thing that was so extraordinary coming from these small posts was seeing how much had to be done in terms of clearance. This was before word processing, before computers, before e-mail. That meant that we had to physically take things around. Policy papers had

to be taken by hand from office to office, usually by officers, even though we had very good secretaries. There were such things as secretaries. There was one secretary for every two officers. They would help a lot, but they were so busy typing that we, the officers, often had to run around the building, literally up and down stairs. The State Department is a pretty sprawling edifice. To get something cleared by seven or eight offices, sometimes someone would make a change. You would have to redo it and re-clear the thing around. It was extraordinarily tedious. We were just really burning the midnight oil. Lots of pressure. People on the ground in East Pakistan – and refugees in neighboring India – were dying.

It was an evolving crisis that was of the highest interest. Kissinger, when he was National Security Advisor, was deeply involved in this. He clearly thought that there were miscreants, the rabble-rousers, not only among the Bengali or East Pakistani population, but miscreants of the consulate general, these uppity people who had gone local and didn't have a clear view of the big picture.

Well of course we didn't have a clear view of the big picture from Dhaka, because nobody would share it with us. Our view of the small picture was that matters were pretty bad, atrocities were being committed. Those were the ground truths as we saw them. I think a lot of us felt very upset that some of the officialdom were not treating us as serious professionals and were discounting us. They thought we were alarmists, that we were sensationalists, that we were overstating what was later termed a genocide. It probably didn't fit into the big picture – as they saw it.

Q: The issue here really is the sharing of priorities.

BUTCHER: Balancing priorities and keeping people informed. I don't want to jump ahead, but it is very clear there is a trade-off between trust and information sharing, and the need for secrecy when you have very sensitive diplomacy ongoing.

In the current days of Wikileaks, where we tried after 9/11 to devise ways to share information, we would have still had our concerns, but we would have been somewhat more understanding of the policy constraints that we were operating under. As it was, there was just silence from Washington. We were getting no real feedback like yes, we share your concerns or, this is bad and we will try to make some appropriate statements. Instead, the Soviets and certain other elements that were not necessarily friendly to the U.S. filled the vacuum.

Back on the desk, it just added to an extraordinarily busy workload. We had concerns about the safety of American citizens with the ongoing fighting. It was pretty nasty. We had missionaries in the field who were likely to get caught in the crossfire. We had clearly major strategic and humanitarian interests.

Q: Also, if you're sitting on the desk, the environment you're living in is congressional interest, editorial writing. You're seeing other parts of the American government and

public coming to this issue in a particular way and all the letters that you're getting from the Congress.

This is during the last years of Vietnam. I wonder if any of the atmospherics as to how people approached Vietnam spilled into public appreciation of this problem.

BUTCHER: It was extraordinarily complex. I have only skimmed some of the Kissinger writings. As part of my own education, I should go back. I've seen bits and pieces of his considerations. I have a lot of respect for Kissinger as a brilliant man who had some ability to get opportunities out of crises, as he did in 1973 with the Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur War. I felt he had a couple of areas where he was not strong; economics being one, and more importantly, human rights. If a country treats its citizens well has more staying power over the long haul, and therefore more legitimacy. If you are looking at components of power, human rights figures in. I think that this was one of his failings. While he was a balance of power practitioner, he failed to really appreciate that human rights can be seen as a component of power.

We were right in the middle. Again, it's one of these things where you are so busy and so involved, so immersed in the constant crisis. You have a feeling that you're doing things that will ultimately save lives, and feeling somewhat powerless because you are in a bureaucracy. On the other hand, as a desk officer, you find that you are the one who sets on paper what often can become policy. It goes through a clearance process. It's like sausage making and may come out looking quite different. On other occasions, it turns out that you have been able to set something moving in a certain direction. I think this is one of the things where a lot of State desk officers do come to realize that they are appreciated. Especially those who have field experience can speak with authority, with the expertise of being able to say I was there, here's what I saw.

When I was in Dhaka, I had choices of writing things that were really kind of sexy or things that were ultimately more relevant. I chose the less sexy and more relevant. One of my airgrams on the Awami League became basically a primer for what became the new government after Bangladesh independence.

Again, as a relatively junior officer, you don't necessarily appreciate these things. It does show that there is an ability to analyze, if not influence, events.

Q: It must have been an interesting exposure. This was your first Washington job.

BUTCHER: Right.

Q: It's hot. Normally, you would probably come back and be the junior officer on some desk, and you get to right the press briefing material. Here you were doing a lot more than that.

Were there other aspects of the Washington experience that you found interesting, exciting or so different from the field?

BUTCHER: You mentioned the press briefings. Basically one of the things I did learn was that when you are preparing press guidance that basically is an articulation of U.S. policy. Again, it's not necessarily something you would appreciate in the field, but it one of the ways to understand what American foreign policy is at any given moment is to read what is prepared for contingency press guidance, especially what is actually used in response to media queries. The daily noon press briefing at the State Department is a huge guide to the current policy of the day. That was something that was very educational for me.

The evolution of policy was very iterative and sometimes not always clear. As the crisis continued to evolve, refugees continued to flow. There were refugees fleeing to areas in India that were pretty squalid to begin with. The reports of their suffering, obviously were played up to the hilt by the Indians who had their own agenda, although in fact they were put upon by having to care for and feed 10 million people. Refugees were also coming out with their horror stories of mass murder, rape, looting, burning of villages, and so on. They had their relatives across the border in India. India is a democracy. So the plight of the Bengalis of East Pakistani, especially the Hindus as a persecuted class, became an issue within the political system in India. Plus there were cold and calculating Indian agendas where they always try to kick the Pakistanis when they're down type of thing, as well as the very real political concerns stemming from the human tragedy unfolding.

This situation festered, worsened, continued, and there seemed to be no end to the crisis. Then, in late November 1971, following pre-emptive airstrikes by the Pakistan Air Force against Indian air bases, the Indian Army invaded East Pakistan. It was actually another of these two-front wars. The Indians made fairly quick work of the Pakistanis who couldn't really sustain their forces with that long of a supply line, essentially unsustainable, from their main bases in West Pakistan. They were unable to overfly India. The Indian Army, aided by local *Mukhti Bahini* insurgents who knew the territory, pretty quickly overwhelmed the Pakistanis. Pakistani forces in East Pakistan surrendered on December 17, 1971.

In the meantime, we were concerned that India might move against West Pakistan in a way that they might be looking at regime change or something else. We weren't really sure. The U.S. moved the ENTERPRISE carrier battle group into the Bay of Bengal.

Those of us on the desk thought this was also useful for any emergency and evacuation contingencies, and only later learned of the intentions behind the deployment – that it was intended by the White House and National Security Advisor Kissinger to send a strong signal to the Indians not to get carried away in their military action and move beyond defeating the Pak military in the East.

Q: So this all peaked then?

BUTCHER: Also, Security Council action regarding the crisis and the Indo-Pakistan War came at the time Mainland China being seated as a permanent member of the Security

Council, and hence having veto power. So you had the U.S. and China basically supporting Pakistan in this whole fracas, and India supported by the Soviet Union. It was complex, but interesting.

Q: I have down that on December 17th the Indians won the war. Then I suppose the clean up in East Pakistan began. In fact, East Pakistan declared itself independent?

BUTCHER: Well yes, India as a midwife, as people would often say, for the birth of Bangladesh. Bangladeshi independence became a reality – which they celebrate as "Victory Day" each December 17. Bangladesh observes its independence day on March 26, because that is the date, after the military crackdown, when independence supposedly was declared by Bangladesh freedom fighters – possibly in a broadcast in Chittagong by defecting army personnel – I don't recall.

There are some really great stories that I've heard second-hand, but from people who were in the consulate general during the war. One involved my former boss, Bob Carle, who replaced Andy Kilgore. We had the Butcher, Blood and Kilgore group together for several months after Arch Blood's arrival in 1970. Then Andy Kilgore left and was replaced by Bob Carle, who had previous Pakistan experience. Bob had been consul in Peshawar earlier in the 1960s, during a previous Indo-Pak war in which Indian bombs were dropped on Peshawar. He showed me around there when we traveled together to Peshawar and up the Khyber Pass to the Afghan border at Torkham following a political officers' conference in January 1970.

After the outbreak of the 1971 war in late November, everyone was being evacuated. An Australian or British C-130 came into Dhaka from Bangkok, with Bob hitching a ride on the inbound flight – he had been visiting his wife and family, then safe havened in Bangkok. By then, the Dhaka airport had been bombed by the Indians. There were verbal pictures of Bob Carle coming off the C-130, crunching his way over the broken glass in the terminal as he entered, while numerous evacuees were exiting to board the C-130 on its outbound flight. The evacuees must have really wondered about Bob's sense of direction….or sanity! Bob was a tough guy, so I was not surprised he was heading to the sound of the gunfire, so to speak.

Another amusing story in a sense was about our household effects, which sat at our house for some time before they were eventually from Dhaka some weeks after my wife was evacuated, and I left on my onward travel orders to the Department. As I heard it, because the road to Chittagong was unsafe, the customary land route to the port was untenable. Eventually, the general services folks found an intrepid Pakistani entrepreneur willing to handle our shipment, and presumably those of others in similar circumstances. The arrangements supposedly were made in his darkened office, where he sat, wearing sunglasses, with a revolver conspicuous on the desk in front of him! We had our travel orders and everything when the crisis exploded the night of March 25th / 26th. Later, consulate personnel got authorization to send their personal effects by airfreight, rather than sea shipment. Unfortunately, a lot of those American employees' airfreight was at the terminal when the Indians bombed the airport. So it was either destroyed in the

bombing or looted. In our case, we didn't see our items the better part of a year. We were packed out in March 1971. We finally received our shipment in February 1972, after having been further delayed by a longshoremen's strike when it reached New York in January. After that long adventure we were surprised to find the only damage was a little bit of mildew on one of my wife's shoes, whereas a lot of my colleagues had all their personal effects burned, bombed, looted, and what have you. Luck of the draw. Life in the Foreign Service.

The whole period was so intense. We did get reinforcements. I started out as Pakistan desk officer. Then they brought in someone else who had been a junior officer in Lahore, Jim Holmes. He served as West Pakistan desk officer. So we divvied it up. I did East Pakistan and he did West Pakistan. We had a great working relationship. There were a couple of people doing Pakistani economics. Robert "Bob" Flaten served as Afghanistan desk officer, and I backed him up and occasionally filled in for him. Got to take notes in meetings between Chris Van Hollen and Afghan Ambassador Abdullah Malikyar – who we affectionately referred to as "Mumbles Malikyar" for his indistinct speech (he served in Washington from 1967-77). Later in our careers Bob was office director for Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, and I held a similar role for India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and the Maldives.

The U.S. government recognized Bangladesh in April 1972. One of my interesting "closing the loop" actions involved the presidential statement that Nixon signed, announcing formal recognition of Bangladesh by the United States and our intention to open an embassy in Dhaka – actually upgrading the existing consulate general – then operating without any formal diplomatic status accorded by either government – to embassy status. I drafted the official recognition statement, which went through largely intact the way I drafted it. I have a copy of that with Nixon's signature on it, somewhere in my files. It's kind of cool; especially after all we'd been through.

After diplomatic recognition of Bangladesh, I became Bangladesh desk officer. Some of the people who were following West Pakistan became Pakistan desk officers. I lost part of a country, but I gained a country. Lawrence "Larry" Lesser, a Foreign Service classmate, became the Bangladesh Desk economic officer. Bruce Laingen continued to head the overall office, now renamed the Office of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh Affairs (NEA/PAB).

Q: Under these very stressful conditions, what were the management atmospherics? Was your boss good?

BUTCHER: Everyone was very troubled by developments. The people at what I would call the desk level – in other words, the office director and all the people we worked with – were very much realists. As experienced South Asia hands they knew what was happening. They could see the handwriting on the wall that the Pakistanis were losing in the East. It was going to be very hard for the Pakistani authorities to hold this place together after what had happened. It was hard enough in the best of times. As wags said, what held the country together were Islam and PIA - Pakistani International Airlines.

Someone else said also the English language, but the main glue was PIA, sometimes known as Pray It's Airborne. Actually PIA was a good airline, I thought, with skilled pilots – many probably ex-Pakistan Air Force – who flew safely through some very difficult weather and geography.

The West Pakistanis, by their active repression and killing large numbers of people, essentially killed the country as a unified entity. You could go into lots of other details as to why it happened and some of the personalities. It was a Shakespearean tragedy playing out. It was sad to see. In retrospect, too many irreconcilable differences between East and West. We had friends among all the communities – local Bengalis, Hindus/Muslims, Biharis – the generic term for non-Bengali Muslims who moved to East Pakistan at the time of Partition in 1947, and West Pakistanis. I'm not sure once they made the decision to crack down there was any going back. Had the Pakistani power brokers allowed Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to assume the prime ministership, given the majority of seats his party had won in the National Assembly, perhaps there could have been a different outcome. Perhaps Mujib, as Prime Minister of the entire country, would have tempered his Six-Point Demands that were anathema to the West Pakistani ruling elite, including the military. But the way things unfolded, neither side appeared willing to compromise. And the Awami League's victory, and the prospect of Mujib's ascension to power with his stated agenda, and even rhetoric about moving the nation's capital to Dhaka, was too much for Pakistan's ruling class to accept.

Q: Getting back to the desk: this was your first assignment and it was a very active one. How did your boss direct the staff? Or was this one of these everybody was supposed to know what he or she was supposed to do anyway?

BUTCHER: I don't recall exactly when he left, but Bill Spengler was there for the earlier part of the crisis. Bruce Laingen came later, but I don't recall exactly when. I think Spengler was only there for a few months. As I recall Bruce was the Office Director during the war itself, and for the following year or two.

Bill Spengler struck me as having a very formal personality and style. Bruce Laingen was more congenial, and had a much softer touch in terms of letting people have their own rein to do their professional jobs, less directive. It was a high morale operation, with dedicated personnel working in a collegial manner. The down side of course was that everybody was upset with what was happening on the ground. In terms of a group, they respected each other and each other's talents. I think it was a very high order of effectiveness. Bruce Laingen was a very open officer with his subordinates.

We worked with Chris Van Hollen who was a South Asia hand. He knew South Asia well. South Asia within the Near East Bureau had had a certain amount of autonomy. Assistant Secretary Joseph "Joe" Sisco himself within the State Department, and indeed within the overall U.S. government foreign policy apparatus, had a certain amount of autonomy – with the White House and National Security Advisor Kissinger focused more on the Cold War, our involvement in Vietnam, and as it turned out, with an opening to China. Secretary of State William Rogers was not a major player in the policy arena. In

fact, because Joe Sisco was a very masterful bureaucratic operator – he was really good. I don't know if you've had any encounters with Sisco, but he was a very sharp operator in knowing how to wend his way through the bureaucracy. A lot of people resented that he was considered a Foreign Service Officer and had not served overseas – I believe his only posting outside Washington was on the U.S. Mission at the UN -but he was very effective. Sisco was assistant secretary for International Organization Affairs (IO) before the NEA assignment. He was a loyal civil servant in terms of complying with instructions, but within those he effectively expanded his scope for operations and influence. Again, at the time I did not have direct access to Sisco. I had access to Chris Van Hollen, who as deputy assistant secretary covering South Asia reported to Sisco. I don't think I ever sat in any meetings with Sisco when he was assistant secretary and I was desk officer. A lot of this was delegated to the Deputy Assistant Secretary – Van Hollen – who was a conduit to and from Sisco. All the office directors, which included Bill Spengler, and later in 1971, Bruce Laingen, had weekly access to Sisco via weekly bureau staff meetings.

We did a lot of things in terms of information transmittal. We made sure that what information and recommendations we sent up the chain was as straight and unspun as possible. The ultimate decisions in terms of U.S. policy as reflected at the UN and Security Council clearly had a very strong input from the National Security Council and Henry Kissinger.

Q: One of the standard jobs for a desk officer is inter-agency coordination. I would think in this crisis there would be working groups. Would you be attending these? Or the desk director? Or were you just preparing the paper for these?

BUTCHER: We had lots of telephonic coordination going on. We used the classified Washington facsimile transmission facility – WASHFAX -to do inter-agency clearance of papers. A lot of actions had to do with our relief assistance for the refugees, support for the refugee camps in India, and so on. USAID was very much involved on that front. There was relatively less coordination that I was personally involved in with DoD (Department of Defense), compared to other assignments that I had later on. Our military assistance to Pakistan became a major point of contention after the military crackdown, with congressional and other critics of the Nixon Administration urging a halt to arms supplies. When the Administration agreed to do so, critics noted shipments were continuing, despite the purported ban. Then the Administration clarified that supplies still in the "pipeline" were being allowed to proceed. This did not mollify critics, who continued to press for a total ban, including halting materiel in the so-called pipeline.

Q: On the intel side of determining what was going on, were you getting any first-hand accounts from the defense attachés or the military side of the thing?

BUTCHER: Among other things, we had no defense attaché presence in East Pakistan. This was a really unusual situation where there was more autonomy with East Pakistan than the posts in West Pakistan. There were subordinate posts in Karachi and Lahore, and then the small operation in Peshawar. When I was in Dhaka we would send a number of

reports to Islamabad if we had time for clearance. Frankly, a lot of the reporting went out unadulterated just because of the time sensitivities from Dhaka straight back to Washington. We infoed the other posts in Pakistan. On some occasions we would contribute to broader "think pieces" along with input from the other three posts to a report the embassy would prepare and send on to Washington.

The other very important part of this story is that we had a non-career ambassador in Islamabad who a lot of people did not think was the most competent, shall we say, being polite. Joseph Farland was his name. As I recall he came from a business background. I believe it was coal mining in West Virginia or something like that. His was not the surest hand at the helm. So we had a non-career person in Islamabad and a career person, a Foreign Service professional, in Dhaka who was closer to the scene and was pretty upset by what he saw and the lack of what he thought was an appropriate reaction from Washington to unfolding events.

So although the post benefited from a degree of autonomy in terms of reporting, on the downside the Dhaka consulate general was at the long end of the policy information supply chain as it were, i.e., for feedback, and information sharing in our direction. You would have a lot of the policy-related information from Washington going to Islamabad and then, if at all, filtering down to the constituent posts as appropriate.

Q: When you were on the desk and you became the Bangladesh desk officer, did we still have a mission in Dhaka?

BUTCHER: As noted previously, we had a mission, a consulate general, even though it had no formal diplomatic status after the Bangladesh government was established in Dhaka. Earlier, in June 1971, Arch Blood was called back, as the "powers that be" were unsatisfied by his reporting and association with our dissent message. He was replaced by Hebert "Herb" Spivack, who served as consul-general for a number of months. Not long after we recognized Bangladesh, Daniel "Dan" Newberry went out and served as Chargé. The first U.S. ambassador to Bangladesh was Davis E. Boster, who presented his credentials in Dhaka on April 13, 1974.

The civil war from the military crackdown to "Liberation" in December left major unsolved matters. Tens of thousands of Pakistani troops had been captured, were being held as POWs pending repatriation, but there also was the question of the fate of local pro-Pakistan militias that had being used to support the Pakistani forces.

As noted earlier, the East Pakistan population comprised some main groupings. There were the locals – Bengali ethnically, linguistically and culturally, the majority of whom were Muslim but a sizeable minority – perhaps ten percent – were Hindus. Then there were those grouped under the term *Biharis* – these were Muslim immigrants, people who had left India from the State of Bihar –hence the name *Biharis* - at partition and migrated to East Pakistan. Most didn't speak Bengali. It was harder for them to be assimilated. A lot of them spoke Urdu. Occupationally, many of them were in technical areas like telephone line repairmen and other skill sets. They didn't own land in many cases,

because they were themselves refugees. They sometimes would have disputes with the locals and call upon the West Pakistani elements to support them. The West Pakistanis would come in as businessmen and military. These non-Bengali immigrants tended to support the Pakistan Muslim League, or Islamist parties such as the Jamaat-i-Islami Party.

After the military crackdown, the military used the pro-Pakistan elements among the Bihari community who were already somewhat alienated and not well-integrated into the larger East Pakistani Bengali community – to form local militias to do their dirty work. After the liberation, there were reprisals against a lot of these people, many of whom themselves had been involved in atrocities against the Bengalis, such as the mass killing of a number of Bengali intellectuals on the eve of the Pakistani defeat in December, 2017. After liberation there were some pretty gory pictures of people being bayoneted in the national stadium. There were some pretty repulsive reprisals. Again, they were shown in the media.

After a relatively short period after the war ended, the Pakistanis released Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who had been in captivity in West Pakistan since he was seized at his residence down the street from us on the night of March 25th-26th, 1971. Early in 1972, he and a number of his colleagues who had been arrested and taken into captivity in West Pakistan were allowed to come back. They headed the newly established Bangladesh government in Dhaka.

Q: We sent our mission back in…

BUTCHER: As noted previously, we maintained a consulate general through the period, although for a while it had no formal diplomatic status in either the eyes of the Bangladesh or U.S. governments – but functionally, it kept operating, reporting on local developments and providing some basic services.

Q: At the time that we recognized Bangladesh, were you aware of whether we were encouraging other countries in the West to recognize the Bangladeshis?

BUTCHER: A lot of them had recognized before we did. We went slowly, again because of the Chinese and the Pakistanis. As you recall, in the summer of 1971 the Pakistani's facilitated the secret Kissinger trip to Beijing via Islamabad that paved the way for Nixon's subsequent China visit in February1972. Recognition was also delayed, as I recall, by the continued presence of Indian troops there.

Q: After the recognition of Bangladesh, did things calm down for the desk?

BUTCHER: Yes. It was busy without being quite as crisis driven.

Q: I forgot to ask earlier: was there a task force?

BUTCHER: Oh yes. Again, I'm not sure what the timing was. It was probably when the fighting broke out. We had various types of working groups. There were various policy groups, inter-agency groups. They had gone through various name changes over the years and I'm not sure what the operative levels were. From the principals types groups to Assistant Secretary type groups to probably DAS level type groups; they would meet intermittently as events warranted. I think the actual task force was set up in the Operations Center in probably in November and went through the period of the hostilities.

Q: Who would have staffed that or be represented on it?

BUTCHER: I was up there. There were people from the bureau. There were people from other bureaus. Consular Affairs was there of course because of the safety of Americans being a consideration we have with that type of conflict. Especially when it became a shooting war and we had to move people out.

Q: Did that put you in a position of being on the task force for so many hours and then having to go down to the desk and do that job?

BUTCHER: Yes. The hours were long.

It was an extraordinarily educational experience. Again, it was a huge contrast: the complexity of the inter-agency play, the inter-office coordination. The clearance process itself was just extraordinarily frustrating and time-consuming, but good exercise running from Point A to Point B to get clearances, especially on fast breaking developments.

The NEA Front Office – Welcome to Middle East Issues

Q: You must have acquitted yourself well on the desk, because your next assignment was Staff Assistant.

BUTCHER: Yes, I don't think Assistant Secretary Joe Sisco, who I worked closely with for a number of months in 1973, ever really drew the connection that I was one of the miscreants in Dhaka. That was a very interesting situation.

Q: So in mid-1973, you started as Special Assistant.

BUTCHER: I'm not sure, but it may have been late spring that I moved up to the NEA front office. I actually replaced Arnold "Arnie" Raphel, an A-100 classmate, friend, and overall superlative officer. In fact he had met my wife and daughter planeside after they reached Tehran after their evacuation from Dhaka in April 1971 – Arnie was an aide to Ambassador MacArthur at the embassy there. We overlapped for a couple of weeks. Arnie was always fun to be around. Warm, personable and great sense of humor. He was giving me guidance about "Jumping Joe Sisco, who really did keep you on your feet. They did not have special assistants in the NEA Bureau, so the two staff assistants really played the role more of special assistants than staff assistants. We sat right outside the

assistant secretary's office. We actually had a back door into his office. We had a lot more influence in terms of advising him than most staff assistants, who were just paper pushers.

Arnie gave me lots of good advice, helpful hints for care and feeding of the boss. He said he got along really well with Sisco, the son of an Italian immigrant tailor in Chicago. Arnie, who was Jewish, ascribed the mutual rapport as stemming from the fact quote we're both ethnic unquote. Arnie was great. He gave me lots of good tips on dealing with a pretty hyperactive, gruff, rough and ready boss.

Q: How would you describe a day in the life of?

BUTCHER: It was fascinating. We were really plugged in, because those were the days when you could monitor conversations. A lot of people just assumed that the other guy's secretary was on the phone. He would have note takers. I recall lots of high-level phone calls coming down to Sisco. We would monitor them. We would help take notes. He might come and say do you recall exactly what so-and-so said when he called me yesterday? We would coordinate very carefully with his secretary, who was very competent.

Sisco, and his successor, Alfred L. "Roy" Atherton, had super secretaries who each received the Department's Secretary of the Year award, I believe in consecutive years. They had to be really sharp, top notch, hardworking individuals. There was sometimes a little tension between us, because our focus was more the substantive, and policy-oriented. Theirs was more of what is now called office management specialist, an executive secretary in terms of a very alert, bright and professional individual who could really understand – and handle – the boss. Occasionally there was a little dynamic tension between the staff assistants and the assistant secretary's secretary as to who was doing what. We would tend to collaborate. One of the staff assistants and the secretary might be monitoring a phone call, and we would compare notes with each other afterwards on follow-up, etc.

Some of these monitored calls were fascinating. We would listen to Sisco as a master bureaucrat in operation. While Kissinger was dealing with Vietnam and certain other European-type crises, Sisco was running Middle Eastern affairs, the Arab-Israeli stuff, and had his own categories of secure or limited communications, NODIS (No Distribution) CHEROKEE captioned messages, for instance, for Arab-Israeli matters. This involved a lot of the high-level sensitive diplomacy on the Arab-Israeli issues. Sisco was just masterful. He knew how to move the policy process forward, incrementally, whereas others might try bold moves that failed for over-reach.

I remember one time when Joseph Scali was our ambassador at the UN. He was a former journalist. I don't know if he was a newscaster or a print journalist, but he was a very prominent journalist who was our man at the UN. There was an incident when the Palestinians did something, from Lebanon as I recall. Israel retaliated. Sisco wanted to head off anything punitive against Israel in the Security Council. He called Kissinger and

told Kissinger that we've got to do something to head this off. Sisco said I'll tell Joe (Scali) that we should do such-and-such. Kissinger's reply was a grunt. He didn't say yes. He didn't say no.

So Sisco gets on the horn to Scali at the UN and says, "Hey Joe. I just talked with Henry. Henry and I think you should do A, B and C."

Scali in turn said, "Well, if you both think so, okay. That's what we'll do."

So they put out some kind of a resolution that slapped Israel on the wrist before the Libyans, Syrians, Russians, or whoever could get organized to put something out that was much harsher. It was very amusing to hear Sisco in action, working his bureaucratic wonders.

Q: He used you on the phone. Did he also use you as a note taker in various inter-agency meetings?

BUTCHER: He would tend to use his office directors and so on for what I recall as the set piece meetings. It was just a lot of fun though being around him. I remember either Arnie Raphel or me asking Sisco something along the lines of "what do you think about X?" He replied, quote How will I know what I think until I hear what I say? Unquote. We would jot down these Sisco-isms, some of which I retained in my files. They were pretty funny.

A lot of senior people would be waiting to see him. I remember Pat Moynihan, who was then Ambassador to India and back on consultations. He was obviously pretty pie-eyed, obviously having come from a multi-martini lunch. He was sitting on the edge of one of our desks. He was an animated guy, ruddy complected, voluble, just babbling away. Despite the pressure-cooker, fast-paced environment, it was always lively and fun being in the center of action like that, with notable visitors just hanging around Joe Sisco's office. One morning when I came on duty I noted someone had raided my peanut butter and jelly and sandwich bread stash in a desk drawer. It turns out it was Sisco and Larry Eagleburger, at the time Kissinger's executive assistant, had working late the previous night, got hungry for a snack and somehow discovered my supplies.

Q: Being in that position, you would have interaction with the other DASes.

BUTCHER: Yes. They were outstanding. The DAS who was handling Greece, Turkey and Iran was Rodger Davies, who was the Principal DAS. He was our ambassador who was assassinated in Cyprus on August 19, 1974. Roy Atherton (d. 10/30/2002) did the Middle East. Later, Bruce Laingen moved up to become the DAS for South Asia, as I recall, replacing Chris Van Hollen. I believe that was the way it worked.

In any case, one of the things that we found as staff assistants was that because a lot of information was being very close held, we needed to surreptitiously share NODIS messages with the office directors, who were counted upon to draft the responses, and

really had a need to know that information. They were expected in some cases to draft responses to NODIS messages without having access to the message they were responding to – a clearly untenable and impractical situation. So we staff assistants would have to head down to the various office directors and, in a plain brown wrapper, show them the NODIS messages so they would have the necessary background to do their jobs properly, and perform their essential roles in conduct of our foreign policy.

Q: Because NODIS was one way to compartmentalize.

BUTCHER: Again, it was the need balance protecting sensitive information, with the necessity of sharing it with officers with a compelling need to know.

I am trying to think of who all my staff assistant colleagues were. John Craig, who later became Ambassador to Oman. And I replaced Arnie, who was Ambassador to Pakistan when he was killed in 1988 in the plane crash that also killed President Zia. Do you know Ned Walker – Edward S. Walker? He succeeded John Craig. Ned had a distinguished NEA career, becoming ambassador to a number of Middle East posts, including Egypt, Israel and the UAE, and also was Assistant Secretary for NEA. Tain Tompkins replaced me when I left for Malay language training in 1974, and I don't know much about his subsequent career.

The NEA front office job was busy, stressful, but educational. Several months after I came on board as a staff assistant, I was actually on duty one week after having seen the movie Tora, Tora, Tora, which showed all the different ways the word of the impending Japanese attack did not reach the people it should have reached. So when I was on late duty on a Friday night in September 1973 I recalled the events portrayed in the movie. At the time – which also happened to be the Yom Kippur holidays for our Jewish colleagues - a number of our people, including Assistant Secretary Sisco, as was Secretary Kissinger, were at the UN for the annual General Assembly session and the various bilateral meetings that occur along its sidelines. The staff assistants had duty shifts whereby one would come in early and stay until mid-afternoon or so, and the other would come a little later in the morning and stay until fairly late in the evening, about ten o'clock or whatever, and close up the place, lock up for the night.

I was in the process of locking up when a guy from INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research) came down, rather breathless, with a hot intel piece that the Russians were evacuating their dependants from Syria. I thought, hmm, this sounds serious; I had better alert someone. So I alerted Roy Atherton. He in turn alerted some of the people at the UN. At least I didn't end up sitting on that piece of information. The next morning is when the so-called "Yom Kippur War began. That was an interesting period.

As backdrop, around this time – I guess we are talking about 1973 – was Watergate. I remember one time Kissinger was calling to Sisco and saying to Sisco, and saying something to the effect, quote Now Joe, don't say anything about Watergate. Unquote

Sisco said something like, "What's Watergate?"

It was pretty funny. It was clear that Sisco was not going to be talking, because he didn't have any knowledge of what grew into a huge scandal.

Every day people were pretty glued to the little televisions in our office in to follow the various Watergate hearings. That was the backdrop for our other ongoing activities.

So you had the Yom Kippur War, and the Department task force that dealt with it. Then later, Kissinger became secretary of state, along with his national security advisor role. One of the things that happened after all the dust settled from the Yom Kippur War was that Sisco announced he was leaving the department. He would go off and become the President of Hamilton College in upstate New York, which by the way, was Arnie Raphel's alma mater. Sisco had gone up to visit Hamilton and was introduced to the students. However, Sisco got another offer he couldn't refuse. Kissinger said Joe, I would like you to stay on as under secretary for political Affairs.

Before that, Sisco felt that because he had been so autonomous in running the Middle East portfolio, his own fiefdom that occasionally brought him into conflict with Kissinger, he didn't think Kissinger would want him to stay as NEA assistant secretary. Instead, Kissinger asked him not only to stay on at the Department, but also to assume the key job of under secretary for political affairs, traditionally the top Department position to which an FSO could aspire. Compared to heading a small college in a remote corner of New York, Sisco would remain in the foreign policy cockpit. No contest for the option he chose.

So Joe moved up to the Seventh Floor as a key aide to Kissinger, and was replaced as assistant secretary by Alfred L. "Roy" Atherton, who had been his Middle East deputy in NEA.

Meanwhile, the Greece/Turkey/Iran/Cyprus desk had been hived off to EUR as part of a realignment of three geographic bureaus. One of the sad things was that just before all that took place, Rodger Davies had had a medical hold, not being assigned overseas because his wife had been having cancer treatments. She had been in remission, but had been having treatments for years. Apparently, she had a reaction to some chemotherapy and died from the reaction. On the positive side, he was now cleared to go overseas. He was assigned overseas as Ambassador to Cyprus. He had a young adult daughter who took off from school to be his hostess. But not long after his arrival, tensions between Turkey and Greece over Cyprus spun out of control, with Greek and Turkish Cypriots vying for control. In the midst of increasingly violent hostilities, Roger and his local secretary were killed by a Greek Cypriot sniper from a nearby building on August 19, 1974.

I saw Rodger off at the airport when he left for Nicosia, and I saw him when they brought his body back to Andrews Air Force Base, with President Ford, Secretary Kissinger, and many of Rodger's friends and colleagues – his many admirers – on hand. It was very sad. He was a great guy, and a caring mentor, who wrote my EERs while he was in the NEA

front office as principal deputy assistant secretary. A terrible loss for his nation, and his family, especially his children, who had lost their mother and father within a year.

In December1973, a Middle East Peace Conference was convened in Geneva. That was my only travel as a staff assistant. I flew over with one of the NEA office directors, David Korn, who as I recall headed NEA/ARN – Arab Region North, which included Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Kissinger led our delegation. Joe Sisco was there. L. Paul "Jerry" Bremer was there from the Executive Secretariat. For a while, Jerry and I were the last remaining people who appeared in a wire service photo of the conference while underway in the Palais des Nations and who had not yet retired from the Foreign Service.

It was hard work, but a worthwhile experience. Several of us arrived in advance of the Secretary and his accompanying team. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker was there as an advisor to our delegation. He was in the middle of Panama Canal negotiations at the time. In addition to my staffing our delegation with Roy Atherton and Joe Sisco, I also helped support Ambassador Bunker, as he had no one from his personal staff to assist him, pulling together cables regarding the Panama negotiations for him to read and keep current. Years later, I ran into him in the State Department. It was the early 1980s. He was well up in years. Having met me only during that short time together in Geneva, he nevertheless said hello to me by name in the hallway. What an amazing memory. It always impressed the hell out of me.

In retrospect, being in the NEA Front Office at the time of the 1973 war was a memorable experience. Top quality people around, extremely dedicated professionals. In many regards it was a lot of fun. I was not a Mideast hand, but learned a lot on the job. I remember one time during the Yom Kippur War when someone from the Israeli Embassy came over to the Department and dropped off some maps showing disposition of forces. We had analysts from INR and the CIA going over these maps. The Israeli Embassy delivered them and our analysts were going over them. They had them all spread out on this one conference room table. I remember them reviewing one particular large map, and going on and on about the various dispositions - the troops are here, the tanks are there, and so on. This went on for half an hour or so. Finally, one of the analysts, presumably Jewish, said, "I wonder why the Hebrew script is upside down?"

It turns out that our map experts and had been looking at the maps upside down for half an hour. It was very funny. They were somewhat chagrined.

Q: Let's go back to the Geneva conference for a moment. If Secretary Kissinger is there, S/S-S provides his communications and controls. So you were supporting the NEA component to this.

BUTCHER: Correct.

Q: You were working off the communications that S/S-S provided. You were all in the same building.

BUTCHER: The formal meetings were in the Palais des Nations in Geneva. We were working out of the facilities of U.S. mission in Geneva. We were staying at the Inter-Continental Hotel. It was somewhat amusing in that they had all these delegations housed in the same hotel. And meanwhile there were intel reports that some Palestinian terrorists were loose, and European security authorities had lost track of their whereabouts. There was a lot of concern. The Swiss had all sorts of heavy armed guards around the hotel, including special armed jeeps with Bofors guns mounted on them. Really, it was an armed camp. There was kind of a central atrium in the Inter-Continental Hotel and we were all somewhat concerned about all these heavily armed groups – the Egyptians, the Jordanians and the Israelis with their Uzis and all – everyone was packing heat. We were afraid that if a car backfired in the street, there would be a huge shootout in this place. Seriously, we were really concerned.

There was the issue of the seating arrangements and whether there should be a round table. I remember Joe Sisco trying out about 18 different possible seating arrangements. At the last minute, I think it turned out that the Syrians were no-shows, so you had the Israelis, the Egyptians, the Jordanians, and an empty seat labeled Syria. It was quite interesting trying to sort out the protocol and the modalities of how you deal with people who had been shooting at each other a short while ago.

Q: What were some of the things that you were doing?

BUTCHER: What I was doing at that point was typical professional staff support, trying to facilitate things, working very closely with Roy Atherton's secretary, Helen Kamer. I did get to meet Kissinger at the time. When you are on an overseas mission, there are just a lot more opportunities for interaction than you would have in the Department, where things are compartmentalized. At such conferences things get up close and personal.

One notable sidebar was Kissinger greeting our group as we were getting ready to convoy over to the conference venue. His purpose was to tell Helen, Roy's secretary, that she had just been named the Department's Secretary of the Year. While standing in the doorway she was informed by Henry Kissinger of the award, which, as the kids would say now, was awesome – a spectacular way to be surprised.

Q: Was this one of those circumstances where the State Department delegation traveled on Air Force planes?

BUTCHER: The delegation itself did, on one of the Air Force Special Air Missions VIP 707s. What happened was that I, along with some of the office directors who were involved, went on ahead. We were to be there three or four days ahead, but it ended up being close to a week in advance of our official party's arrival. This was when shuttle diplomacy started. So there was some shuttling going back and forth with Kissinger, Sisco, Atherton, and Hal Saunders from the White House. They had some really sharp people. I don't know if you've encountered some of these people in your career. Some really good people. A number were World War Two vets, "Greatest Generation" types, and were very high quality people. They ended up shuttling extra rounds and getting to

the conference later than had been scheduled. There was a lot of redoing of briefing books. Cables had come in, so we would have to have to the latest updates, talking points, etc., incorporated. There was lots of paper work.

The Russians were at this conference. So were the U.S., the UK, and France. It was a big multinational conference. There were also the antagonists themselves, minus the Syrians. Plus various UN representatives. There was a lot going on just in terms of bilateral stuff. I remember at one point that we staff weenies would kind of stay in the back – Jerry Bremer and myself, we were the paper pushers, not policy types – we would keep our distance and wait until the VIPs exited the hall for the plenary sessions.

On this occasion, when a plenary session had ended and the delegations were all heading toward the exists of the conference hall, Jerry and I got into the tail end, with delegation heads and senior officials in the lead. Suddenly, this mass, this large group of VIPs, turned around, with Jerry and I trapped in their midst. I ended up right beside Sisco and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. Gromyko is asking about Sisco's future plans. This was when Sisco was planning on leaving to go to Hamilton College. Abba Eban was right behind me, and he points up at the 1930s era murals on the wall and asks me what they mean! Abba Eban, one of the most erudite people ever to grace the earth, and certainly one of the most erudite diplomatists of his era, was asking me, staff weenie, what do some of those symbolize? It was quite amusing. Then the VIPs resumed their normal course to the exits, and allowing Jerry Bremer and me to resume our Tail End Charlie roles. In sum, it was a funny episode, where suddenly we're in the midst of all these dignitaries and their personal conversations.

Q: That underlines what the Foreign Service is about: I was there – at whatever rank.

Kissinger becomes Secretary of State, replacing Rogers in August. From your perspective, did that impact on the building or the way things happened?

BUTCHER: Absolutely. Starting with the great line where at one of his press conferences at either the State Department or the White House, a journalist asked, "Dr. Kissinger, now that you are both Secretary of State and National Security Advisor, what should we call you?"

Kissinger said, "I'm not going to stand on ceremony. Just call me 'Excellency!'"

Apparently, that just broke up the place.

The point was that here you had Rogers, who apparently was a pleasant guy, but not much of a mover and shaker. There wasn't much power at the State Department compared to the White House under Kissinger. Here you have this guy who knows how to wield power, who has a really unique relationship with Nixon, coming to the State Department. Suddenly, the mandate of heaven is upon us. The State Department had Henry Kissinger who was a big player. His work habits affected the whole building.

He would tend to go out at night on the circuit, attending diplomatic functions and high-order social events. Then he would come back to the State Department and do reading and writing. He would call people in. I remember one time, we were doing briefing books for Nixon's final trip to the Middle East, as I recall. Kissinger came back on the eve of this trip. He looked at some of the papers for the first time and didn't like them.

Once again, I was the late duty staffer. Roy Atherton, or whoever it was I alerted to this, said, "Oh my goodness, we have to do redo all these papers."

We didn't have any secretaries available at that hour. Our secretaries had been worked to death anyway. I called Bob Dillon who was the Turkey Office Director who had a really crackerjack secretary, Candy (or Candi), I believe was her name. I called Candy and asked if she could come in. She was great, agreed to come in and basically worked overnight redoing the papers to reflect Kissinger's input, thereby depriving Bob Dillon the next day of his secretary. I think I took them both to lunch on my own dime to kind of pacify things. Years later, Bob Dillon was my DCM in Malaysia on my first assignment. Thankfully, we were still on speaking terms.

It was one of these things where you had just a different work style. One of Kissinger's personal aides, Peter Rodman, who later became an assistant secretary of defense, and recently died, had been in one of Kissinger's courses at Harvard. As I understand it, Peter had come to Kissinger's attention because he could take verbatim legible notes, which Kissinger valued immensely. I don't know if you remember this, but when he would have note takers, Kissinger would insist on verbatim notes.

I would go up to Peter's office on the Seventh floor just outside Kissinger's office after one of his meetings with a top official from an NEA country for a read-out of what transpired. Kissinger would often meet with people with no note takers from State Department bureaus present. But he would actually have his one personal aide, Peter Rodman, in these often quite private meetings. I would go up. Peter would have three by five inch note cards with this tiny, tiny but very legible penmanship. He would show the card or cards to me. You would practically need a magnifier, but it was perfectly legible. I would take notes from his notes – and on occasion he would let me make a photocopy - and brief the assistant secretary on what had transpired when Kissinger met with dignitary so-and-so from such and such NEA country. I really appreciated Peter providing such read-outs, which were invaluable to my bosses in NEA.

Kissinger had a huge impact. In terms of department morale, we felt we were players, although sometimes people felt kind of put upon by his work habits.

Q: Did that impact any on the Sisco propensity for having his staffers listen in on his telephone?

BUTCHER: What happened was basically, people still listened in. This was not just Sisco. It was a widespread practice. It was done as a way of record-keeping, before there became such a neuralgia, in terms of privacy and letting people know that yes, if you

don't mind, I have my aide Joe Jones listening in on the conversation so he can take some notes for me, or something like that.

Q: Those notes that you took: would they have been filed and retired?

BUTCHER: I suspect these were passed on to the boss informally or orally, and maybe never recorded anywhere. They were just for his own record.

On the subject of records, one of the funny sidebars when I was working for Sisco was I would stow away the NODIS cables at the end of the day.

Q: Special storage.

BUTCHER: Yes, in the Mosler safes in our utility room. One day, I was stowing stuff away and lo and behold, there were the NODIS cables from the East Pakistan crisis. So, of course, I thumbed through some of these and saw that a number of the cables that were going out to us had been drafted and approved, no outside clearance, by Joe Sisco himself. I realized that there had been a rank disconnect, a huge power asymmetry. A number of reports and messages I was drafting as a junior officer in 1971 as the lowest of the low, I discovered at the Washington end I was having a dialogue with the assistant secretary, not desk officers. It was just another humorous sidebar. Now all cables show drafting, clearing and approving information.

Regarding the Dhaka dissent cable of April 6,1971. One of the things with the Foreign Service is that you have a choice. First, you can just try to influence policy from wherever your perch is. You can dissent within the system. If you feel that things are really off, not being heard, not being transmitted up the chain, you have the possibility of sending a dissent message. There was not a dissent channel, per se. To the best of my knowledge a formal dissent mechanism had not yet been established, although there was talk of such in the context of declarations of new openness in the State Department. Perhaps this cable that I drafted on behalf of a number of us in Dhaka prompted or accelerated creation of the dissent channel. The other alternative is to resign and then continue your protests, your criticism or whatever outside the system. People over the years have chosen among these options.

I felt the best way was to be a dedicated public servant and tried to fight within the system for what I thought was properly right, correct, and so forth. That's the way I felt throughout. I never came to the point where I felt I would have more influence by taking my policy views outside of the system. I always felt there was an ability to influence – sometimes only marginally, sometimes with more impact – within the system. It was still kind of amusing to find in the NODIS cable files that we had this asymmetry in the dialogue.

Q: It's also an interesting illustration of how small the Foreign Service is. There may be a bureaucracy out there, but the Foreign Service is actually fairly small. You could be the

junior officer in some post and the most knowledgeable guy, and then be the guy that the whole system is taking inputs from.

BUTCHER: I think from my own experience in subsequent jobs in dealing with people – and from outside the State Department since I've been retired and doing some client work contacting desk officers and finding how extraordinarily knowledgeable many of them are. Some of them may be new to assignment; they've come from a different area and still learning the ropes. Usually, desk officers are pretty good at what they're chosen to do. Clearly, there is variation, but a lot of the desk officers are real fonts of knowledge, as well as some of the more senior ones.

Q: Along those lines – perhaps not as staff assistant, but as the desk officer, were you called upon to brief some of the other embassies in town?

BUTCHER: Yes. The advantage of being a U.S. Foreign Service Officer is that you are working on behalf of now what is the sole super power. Back in the old days during the Cold War, the U.S. was the major player on behalf of the West. Where we had a stake in some crisis, others would often seek our counsel and coordinate. In many cases, it was just countries that had lots of citizens at risk in a certain country, and we were going to be collaborating on evacuations and other matters.

Again, the small world aspect: one of the people that I dealt with was a Swedish diplomat. He and I had a lot of dealings on the East Pakistan crisis when I was the Pakistan desk officer. Later, we encountered one another when the Japanese Red Army (JRA) terrorists on August 4, 1975 took over part of the U.S. Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, took our Consul and 50 others hostage, including the Swedish Chargé and his secretary. Lo and behold, I get a call and talk to this guy who is concerned about their people. I'm then at the U.S. Embassy and it's the same guy that I dealt with on East Pakistan who was previously stationed in Washington at the Swedish Embassy.

Not only is the U.S. diplomatic establishment relatively small, but also the international diplomatic establishments can be rather incestuous. That was a highly coincidental situation, nonetheless.

Q: This assignment actually lasted one year. Was it supposed to last one year, the staff assistant job?

BUTCHER: Middle East shuttle diplomacy and all the negotiations were going on. Roy Atherton was an extraordinary guy. There were some really high priority "peace in our time" type of issues. Kissinger saw that particular episode, the Yom Kippur War, as a way to establish a more durable peace in the Middle East. The war put some tectonic plates in motion. Kissinger seized on this. He felt that because the Egyptians had shown some ability to stand up against the Israelis – before, in previous battles, the Israelis had just really clobbered the Arabs, the Arabs had lost their pride and self-respect, and so on – Kissinger had a sense that since they had relatively improved their status, especially the Egyptians, and after the cease-fire he was able to set in motion a process which ended

some years later with the Camp David Accords with Carter, Sadat and Begin formalizing a settlement.

Following the active hostilities in the fall of 1973, the U.S. used its good offices to monitor the separation of forces zones in Sinai and the Golan, using U.S. surveillance flights, starting out with SR-71s, but those became too impractical. I recall being involved in the operational maps and so on for the SR-71 missions, which were just extraordinary. As I recall, they flew out of Edwards Air Base in California, halfway around the world with multiple refuellings, slewing around the air space in the Middle East. The SR-71 making a hard right or a hard left goes over three or four countries in the process. Then we substituted the U-2 flights. This aerial monitoring of the force separation zones continues to this day, under the designation of OLIVE HARVEST surveillance flights, using U-2s to monitor both the Sinai and Golan Heights to assure that forces and equipment such as tanks and heavy artillery do not exceed set levels.

Q: What would have been a two-year assignment was seen as only survivable when you were…

BUTCHER: What happened was I came home late one night – maybe it was during the day -- I forget when it was. My then two-year old daughter burst into tears. That apparently is a time in a child's life when they are very suspicious of strangers. The next day I walked into Roy Atherton's office and said, "Roy, I think I need to change jobs."

He said, "Okay Scott. You will have to find a replacement though."

It was out of cycle. But he was very understanding. It was extraordinarily intense. So I went though files and found Tain Tompkins, then in the Secretariat Staff (S/S-S) as I recall. He expressed interest, was interviewed and selected for the position.

Malay Language Training

I had always wanted to go to Malaysia. We had gone to Malaysia on our R&R from Dhaka. We went to Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. This was a place I was always interested inbeing assigned to. It was hard to get to because many FSOs wanted to go there. They actually had a language training slot opening up before the position was advertised, so I opted for Malay language training, thinking that might be a good back door into the post. That's what happened.

In the summer of 1974, I left NEA and had some short-term training. Then I went into Malay language training.

Q: Short-term skills training?

BUTCHER: Yes, several short-term courses. They had area studies, but I think we also had international relations. I forget the full list, but there was a series of courses.

Q: Perhaps at this time or later, when you had a language-designated job at the post, the language went with it.

BUTCHER: Correct.

Q: So it opened up a year later or two years later.

BUTCHER: So when they advertised the position, there was a Malay language requirement for that position. It was the internal Malay reporting officer, the deputy in the political section.

Q: So you were able to move into the Malay language, knowing that was the job that you were going to.

BUTCHER: Right.

Q: You've gone through a war. You've gone through the front office of NEA. Language training must have been a little decompressive.

BUTCHER: Yes it was. It was wonderful. I got to know my two-year old and my five-year old.

Q: I've forgotten. Is this the first language?

BUTCHER: I had Burmese before I went to Burma.

Q: You had Burmese.

BUTCHER: I got off language probation in Burmese.

Q: So you knew the way that FSI did this. How would you rate the Malay language?

BUTCHER: I was with one or two other students. Compared to the process of learning a hard language, Malay was much easier – it is phonetic with a Roman script, although there is an Arab script. I progressed quite well in Malay and actually was learning the Arabic script, Jawi, as it's called, termed by the Malays as "Javanese writing" – although actually Arabic. The Malays thought it all looked Greek to them, so they call it tulisan Jawa, Javanese writing.

Indonesian and Malay, among the non-romance languages, are generally viewed as among the easier of the Asian languages, unlike Burmese or Thai. It's non-tonal. It's a very logical language. Also, Malay has lots of borrowings from English and some borrowings from Arabic. It was not difficult.

Q: While you were in language training in the spring of 1975, Saigon fell.

BUTCHER: Being in language training with a lot of other people in area studies and Southeast Asia hands, it was something we followed very closely. When we were in Rangoon and Dhaka, access to media of any type, especially electronic media, was very iffy. So having the full-blown, full-color real-time live coverage on the fall of Indochina was gripping, absolutely gripping.

Q: At this time, is FSI still at the Rosslyn campus?

BUTCHER: Yes. In a Rosslyn high-rise building.

Q: Wonderful building.

BUTCHER: For some of us who had been following Vietnam for many years – I did papers on it in college in the late 1960s – so 15years later, seeing that. Having dinner at a local Chinese restaurant with Bernard Fall when I was in graduate school at SAIS and reading his various books on Indochina was something else. I was steeped in Indochinese history and lore. Had many friends who served in Vietnam, some who died there, including a SAIS classmate and a Foreign Service A-100 classmate, as well as some college buddies. So yes, I followed developments closely.

Malaysia – Back to the Tropics, to Another Former British Colony – and a Surprise Welcome by The Japanese Red Army

With my family, now four of us, in the summer of 1975 we head back out to Southeast Asia, where I began my overseas career. I had a day of consultations in Hawaii. We wended our way westward and arrived in Kuala Lumpur (KL) on August 4th, 1975.

Q: Before we get there, you had consultations at CINCPAC (Commander in Chief, Pacific Command), PACOM (Pacific Command)?

BUTCHER: I think it was called CINCPAC at the time. As I recall, I had consultations on the way out to KL.

Q: You would have flown out on Pan American?

BUTCHER: Yes, probably – we had to fly American carriers and at that time Pan Am still served the most Asian routes, although competitors such as United and Northwest were increasing their services.

So we arrived in KL on August 4th. Meanwhile, and there are people we've met in Washington who already are at post. Al La Porta was a friend who I was replacing as political officer. When I was in Burmese language training, one of my A-100 classmates, Tom Spooner, was going to Indonesia and was in the same Indonesian course. There were a number of us who knew each other. We had met some others who were also heading out to post that summer. We had gone out with their kids and ours to museums, etc., just as people often do when they're in training and preparing to head out to post.

So we got there and we expected we were going to have a fairly sizable greeting party. As we were going through immigration, I showed the Malaysian immigration agent my passport. He looks at me. He looks at the passport and says, "Oh sir, there's bang, bang, bang at your office."

I said something really intelligent like, "Huh?"

We could see Linda Heaney, the wife of one of the economic/commercial officers, who we had met in Washington. She was waving her hands. We thought we might see Al or Ann La Porta. Since I was replacing Al and very often your replacement would be on hand to greet you at a small post like Kuala Lumpur, I had expected I might see him.

When we got though immigration and reached Linda, she was breathless. She said, "Japanese Red Army (JRA) terrorists have taken over part of the embassy. They've captured Bob Stebbins, the Consul." Bob was someone else I had met in Washington, and we had lunch together in Rosslyn before he headed off to KL.

So much for our arrival in "quiet KL!"

We were all jet-lagged. Linda helped us go to the hotel where we spent the night to rest up a bit. I called DCM Bob Dillon, who I had known from my NEA days, to ask if I could come on in to help out. Bob had been the Turkey office director, then relocated to the European Bureau, whose secretary I had stolen? Borrowed? during the all-night project for Kissinger's last trip to the Middle East with Nixon. Bob was serving as chargé, because ambassador Francis "Frank" Underhill was away on vacation.

He said, "I'm busy not negotiating with terrorists. Well, you might as well come in. But before you come in, stop by the Ambassador's Residence and bring in a case of C-rations. There are some C-rations stowed in the attic there."

I had an embassy car take me over to the Ambassador's residence, which was set up as the public affairs center. Our press officer and our public affairs Officer (PAO) were there. One of the houseboys went up into the attic and got the case of C-rations. Then I recall they said that none of our vehicles could get into the area. The whole area by the embassy was closed off. I don't know if one of our security people was there. But anyway, to make a long story short, a Malaysian policeman offered to give me a lift to our embassy. I heaved the C-ration box onto the seat and we headed off.

We went the long way down one street. There was no traffic. The car stopped and the guy said, "I can't go any closer."

So I got out. It was a beautiful day, bright and sunny. It was probably about 10:00 or 11:00 in the morning. There were all these Chinese shop houses with the store below and the residential area on top. In the shadows under the shophouse verandahs which covered the sidewalks were all these Malaysian paramilitary police, including women police, with

their Sten guns, were crouched under these overhangs. I was in the middle of the street. I turned around and the police car has backed up, turned around and headed away from the danger zone.

I had looked at the post report and recalled a picture of the AIA building (American International Assurance, an AIG company), which had a distinctive metal façade on it. I recognized the building as walked along, hauling a case of C-rations and heedless of the fact I was in the middle of the street in broad daylight and the JRA terrorists, who had already wounded a policeman on the ground, could have taken a potshot at me. On the ground floor was Citibank. Someone said from the shadows, "Psst, are you American?"

I said, "Yes."

They said, "Well, they're in there," pointing to the Citibank lobby

I went in and there was the RSO (Regional Security Officer), Wayne Algire. He was kind of a portly guy and he had a chrome-plated magnum revolver stuck in his belt. I said who I was, and he said, "Okay, we're using the freight elevator to get up to the 9th, 10th and 11th floors."

Some of the floors were controlled by the JRA. We actually still occupied floors above them. I ended up going up this elevator with a Marine Guard escort and went into the political section. There I was finally greeted by was my predecessor, Al La Porta.

Al filled me in on what was going on.

Q: What were Al and Dillon doing at the time?

BUTCHER: I was replacing Al. Al was the acting head of the political Section, because Frank Bennett, the political counselor, was on home leave. Hence Al was the senior political officer. There were a couple of other political and economic officers. At that point, Chargé Bob Dillon was out somewhere with Malaysian government officials, trying to figure out what the next steps were going to be.

The next couple of days were pretty much a blur. We were kind of holed up there.

In a nutshell, the JRA terrorists arrived at a time when the embassy was in the midst of a project to reconstruct part of the consular section to improve security, but the new security improvements hadn't been put in place. It was kind of a construction mess. Several athletic looking young Japanese in tracksuits came in with handbags and athletic bags. They came into the consular section, saying they needed some visas. No sooner had they got in, than they pulled weapons out of their bags. They started firing down the hallway to clear the floors.

They ended up shooting a couple of people. One Sikh building guard lost his eye when he peered out. The Admin Counselor peered out. They shot at him. Someone said sadly, they

missed. I guess he wasn't a popular admin officer. They also plugged a policeman – I think in the leg - who was in the parking lot below.

They ended up with about 50 hostages. They took over part of the Japanese Embassy, but didn't capture any Japanese. The Swedish chargé and his secretary locked themselves in their embassy's vault. I guess the JRA operatives threatened to blow the place up or something, and the two came out and were taken hostage

They joined Consul Bob Stebbins, a number of our FSNs (Foreign Service National employees), a number of people who were there for consular services, and a number of people who worked in offices on that floor, as JRA hostages.

Q: So, we're talking about a high-rise building, various floors of which…

BUTCHER: We are talking about a 12-story building. As I recall we occupied the top floors. The Japanese Embassy was on maybe the 7th and 8th floors. We were on the 9th, 10th , 11th and probably 12th, floors. Our consular section was on the lowest of these levels to facilitate public access. We had our more secure operations on the higher floors.

It was one of these classic situations of being more accessible for consular, as opposed to other activities.

Q: So that's why they didn't start with the Ambassador's office?

BUTCHER: Correct. So they went into the publicly accessible place. It ended up they had about 50 hostages. They were using construction buckets for toilet facilities and things like that. Apparently, it was pretty grim. This went on for several days.

Because I had jet lag – my body clock was essentially still on Washington time – I did the night shift so I could keep up with Washington. Al did the day shift. We were sleeping on floors. The Canadian high commissioner was co-located with us, and we were working together. The only countries that had their diplomats captured were the U.S., with our consul Bob Stebbins held hostage, and Sweden, with its chargé and his secretary held.

The first thing that happened was the JRA released women and children because they had the problem of handling so many hostages. They kept the foreign diplomats, the Swedish secretary and her boss, Bob Stebbins and our other employees, and the male hostages.

The Malaysian government offered to have some of their officials, as guarantors, swapped for the hostages. What the JRA wanted was release of their colleagues who were imprisoned in Japan. Apparently, at least one of them said no, he didn't want to be released. He was enjoying prison. He didn't want to risk his life on the outside.

The Japanese government gave in because there were other nationalities involved, and they felt there was a certain loss of face since it was Japanese who carried out this

terrorist act. People said had it just been Japanese nationals, without foreigners involved, the Japanese government might not have given in to the JRA demands.

What happened was that the Japanese government gave in to the JRA demands in principle, but then drew out the negotiations for hours, if not days, driving everyone to distraction because they wanted to regain some face. The Malaysian government offered a dozen or so of their officials to stand in for the hostages. So they worked out an agreement to do a swap at the airport.

Meanwhile, for those of us in the AIA building, we heard this loud banging from the area held by the JRA terrorists. We assessed that they were placing explosive charges in the support columns. It turned out they were just trashing the Swedish Embassy. Apparently, they had some grudge against the Swedes – I forget what it was. So they were just basically vandalizing the Swedish embassy. That's what these bangs were. They were probably using some of the sledgehammers that were being used in the construction site for our consular section to smash up the interior of the Swedish Embassy.

We evacuated the building. At just about the same time, the hostages boarded buses, with curtains drawn, along with the JRA captors, for the trip to the KL airport.

Having evacuated the building, we re-established phone contact with Washington. I remember Al and I were at this curio store down the street. We had established a connection with Washington and we were giving them a blow-by-blow of what was happening. Then nothing really was happening. Someone at the other end of the phone said, "This is costing us an arm and a leg to maintain this long distance line. So we're going to close it down."

This was from the Operations Center. I remember saying to the person, "Okay, it's your nickel. If you want to close it down, there's nothing happening right now. By the way, what's your name?"

He said, "Habib. Phil Habib."

Whoops. Phil Habib, a legendary figure, was at the time assistant secretary for the East Asia Bureau. We thought we had been talking with a relatively junior officer in the Operations Center. Not quite, it turned out. Showed Habib's hands-on approach to foreign policy in operation. Another humorous episode of life in the Foreign Service.

Al and I figured out we could go safely back to our offices. We went back. When we got word that all the hostages had been released at the airport with the exchange of the guarantors, Al and I popped a beer can or a Coke can over the phone to Washington, to celebrate the hostages' release – the pop heard round the world

So much for my arrival in quiet Kuala Lumpur, what I had seen as a respite for my family and myself after involvement in years of crises in Pakistan and the Middle East.

Q: Actually, this all took place from August 4th to August 7th.

BUTCHER: Is that what it was? It seemed longer.

Q: It was a very intensive introduction to your new post.

BUTCHER: Yes. I often say I was one of the casualties of the JRA incident. I tell people of the explosive "C-ration incident." While stuck in the Embassy, and drawing on the C-rations I had brought in from the Ambassadors Residence, I went to open a can labeled 'Applesauce.' It was probably left over from World War Two. As soon as I went with a can opener to open it, it blew up in my face. I was covered with rancid applesauce. And we had no water to clean it off. It was all over my glasses. We all didn't smell too good by then anyway.

Q: What we're doing is looking at the Department of State newsletter for October 1975. It has an article on these events.

There's the Swedish Chargé.

What fun that was!

There's Bob Dillon.

Do you want to stop now and pick up Malaysia the next session?

BUTCHER: I'm thinking what we might do is stop now. It looks like the snow is building up.

Q: Yes, there's a nice snowstorm for the second day in Washington.

Good morning. It's April 7th, 2011. We are returning to our conversation with Scott Butcher.

Scott, we covered the Japanese Army's introduction to your tour in Kuala Lumpur. Let's back up a little bit. Can you kind of describe the embassy, how it was staffed, and what your specific duties were?

BUTCHER: The embassy itself, at that time, was renting space in a high-rise office building in downtown Kuala Lumpur, the AIA (American International Assurance) building. As noted, Citibank was on the ground floor. The building housed lots of offices, including four diplomatic missions – we, the Canadians, the Japanese and the Swedes. It was in an older, fairly congested downtown area.

The embassy itself was housed on four floors. The ambassador for the first two years of my tour was Francis "Frank" Underhill. His deputy was Bob Dillon. Frank was an old Asia hand. Most of Bob's experience had been in the Middle East. He was a Turkey

specialist. The chief of the political section was Frank Bennett. Frank was currently away on leave when I arrived, as was the ambassador, so as noted previously Bob Dillon was serving as Chargé (Acting Ambassador). And, as mentioned, Al La Porta, who I was succeeding, was serving acting head of the political section while political counselor, the section head, was away. It was a fairly typically organized embassy with various sections: political, economic/commercial, consular, and administration. There was a Marine Security Guard detachment operating under the supervision of the RSO (Regional Security Officer). We had a defense attaché office (DAO), with an army and an air attaché – the air attaché was a former SR-71 pilot.

There were also other U.S. agencies represented, such as USIS (The United States Information Service, the overseas component of the United States Information Agency, USIA, now melded into the State Department). There was a resident DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) office at the embassy, working with Malaysian authorities on counter-narcotics efforts. There was an agriculture attaché representing FAS (the Foreign Agricultural Service). There was a large Peace Corps presence. At the time, Malaysia hosted largest Peace Corps operation in the world. The Malaysians were making very good use of the Peace Corps. They were throughout the country, both in peninsular Malaysia and the Malaysian states on the island of Borneo – Sabah and Sarawak.

There was not, however, any USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) program, as Malaysia was a relatively high-income developing country. The closest thing we had to AID was the Peace Corps. PCVs (Peace Corps Volunteers) were scattered throughout the country, doing everything from teaching English to more technical specialties.

There was also a U.S. army medical research unit (USAMRU) that was doing work on scrub typhus, which is a parasitic disease carried by chiggers in the jungle and jungle fringe. In World War Two, it was very debilitating to our troops. At the time I arrived, they had been doing a lot of field research on this issue. Even with the Vietnam War having just ended, tropical diseases still remained an area of great interest to the U.S. army.

That was the basic structure of the embassy.

Q: In the political section, did you divide yourself up into internal and external portfolios?

BUTCHER: It was a pretty small section. As you are probably aware, in the ethnic makeup of the country, the Malays are the majority, but the Chinese are a very sizable minority. As deputy in the section, I had the Malay portfolio. On the international front, I tended to look after issues like Malaysia's role in Islamic organizations and its Mideast policy. The other person in the section followed Chinese affairs and was a Chinese language officer. The first person there was Stanley Ifshin. Stan followed the internal Chinese politics as part of both the governing coalition and the opposition. Stan was there for my first year, when he was replaced by Joe Snyder, also a Chinese language officer.

We divided up both internally and externally, more or less along ethnic lines.

Q: Malaysia's participation in Islamic conferences – were they very active? How did they see their role? What were you reporting?

BUTCHER: They were very active. The ruling party's ethnic Malay base was very interested in the plight of the Palestinians and they tended to be very pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel. The government represented that fact. It was interesting to call on foreign ministry officials who might be ethnic Chinese or ethnic Indians, and hear them take a very strong line on Arab-Israeli issues, being pro-Arab, anti-Israeli.

Q: Did those issues ever become a point of friction between Malaysia and the United States?

BUTCHER: Constantly. It was a point of friction, but it was a fairly regularized point of friction. They knew what our policies were. We knew what their policies were. We would each beat our heads against a wall trying to persuade the other to do one's bidding. In fact, at one point in time we got some kind of appeal going into the foreign ministry on some Arab-Israeli issue. I knew this was a non-starter, so I telephoned my counterpart, a Malaysian Chinese woman who was very sharp. I made my pitch. I went through my talking points. There was a pause and then she burst into hysterical laughter. When she regained her composure, she said, well Scott, you know we can't do that. And she laughed uproariously that I would even be raising the issue with them. It caused me to scratch my head, wondering how I was going to report that conversation back to Washington: our interlocutor at the foreign ministry burst into hysterical laughter on our position as either untenable or unbearable or both. I ended up with something fairly straightforward that so-and-so indicated that her government was aware of our position, but would not be in a position to support it. It was pretty comical.

There were issues… Again, the context was fascinating both in terms of Malaysia's internal dynamics as well as external, recalling that I arrived there in August 1975. The anti-communist efforts in Indo-China had collapsed. The Chinese and their proxies were seen as triumphant. The Thai were bending with the wind. The Malaysians were hunkering down. They felt very weak. We were seen as the shield and the bulwark, supporting the anti-communist governments in the region, and we had failed in Indo-China. In that context, they didn't want to be seen in any way as siding with the U.S., the defeated outside power. It made our lot very difficult in terms of trying to press our positions on various non-aligned issues that would come up.

I recall going into the Malaysian Foreign Ministry on some issues that had come up criticizing the way that they and others were rolling over where the North Koreans were pressing certain issues in the UN and other international fora. I recall one time a foreign ministry officer looked me in the eye, after I complained about the Malaysians deferring to North Korean bombast, and said, "Scott, the problem is that we moderates don't shout."

I said, “And you constantly keep getting rolled.”

It was interesting because Malaysia, while active, also felt fairly weak. They didn’t have much of an armed force for external defense. The still had this nagging internal insurgency. They were concerned, among other things, about all the captured weapons from Indo-China coming in for the use of their insurgents. In fact, one of the first trips I took, Bob Dillon asked me to go as part of my orientation and move my trip up earlier, to the northern state of Kelantan to see what the situation was. This is where the Japanese made their initial landings in World War Two. The Embassy had picked up a report that M-16 rifles were starting to show up there.

Indeed, I was able to sniff around a bit, and found that yes, they were showing up. They were probably going into a black market for use by not only communist insurgents, but also the irredentist movement, the Malay insurgency in southern Thailand – by PULO, the Pattani Liberation Organization - was getting access to some of these. It seemed to be more of a black market rather than any kind of a concerted effort to send contraband weapons in to support these insurgencies.

Vietnamese Refugee Issue – Influx of “Boat People”

Q: One of the issues that comes out of the fall of Saigon for the Malaysians is that Vietnamese refugees are starting to come in. How did they handle that issue? How were they responding to that?

BUTCHER: Initially, as a result of the communist victory, some Malaysian authorities were concerned that this might be a wave of fifth columnists coming in, using the refugee influx for cover. Right after the fall of Saigon in April 1975, the initial wave came ashore. In fact, at the time of my arrival, and the JRA attack at the AIA building, one of the embassy’s – and especially the consular section’s - preoccupations was processing some of the refugees who qualified for onward travel to the U.S. The refugee flow came in several waves.

The initial wave involved the dramatic, panic departure of thousands of persons fleeing the communist onslaught. Some arrived aboard Vietnamese Navy LSTs (Landing Ship, Tank) with crashed helicopters on the fantail that were still tied up at some of the ports on the east coast. Others came on a hodgepodge of craft. Later on, other refugees started dribbling out again as different ways evolved for people to escape Vietnam.

Another concern of the Malay-dominated government was concern about upsetting Malaysia’s delicate ethnic equilibrium, as the Vietnamese were seen as Sinicized people ethnically similar to the local Chinese. This was in addition to worries there might be communist infiltrators among the refugees. The refugee issue loomed large for my entire four-year tour in Malaysia, and became increasingly contentious, as the flow grew into a flood, especially in late 1978 and 1979 when the communist Vietnamese authorities were forcing the Chinese out of Cholon and other largely Chinese centers in Vietnam.

Q: Malaysia decided it didn't need more Chinese?

BUTCHER: They felt they had enough of an issue in terms of managing their existing racial tensions.

Q: You were saying some regular Vietnamese equipment like LSTs came over to Malaysia. What would have been the legal disposition of that equipment? Did the Malaysians keep it? Did they send it back?

BUTCHER: That's a good question. I don't recall. I think it's quite possible the U.S. took possession, because some of it had been U.S. equipment that was delivered to the Vietnamese, under MAP (Military Assistance) programs, and things like that. We had ultimate custody and control if it was U.S. origin equipment. But again, I don't know. I had other preoccupations at the time.

The Vietnamese refugee issue was one of the most pressing issues during my entire tour. Before we ramped up our refugee office to meet the burgeoning flow, many of us we thrust into the role of interviewing refugees, as well as démarching the Malaysian government to continue to accord "first asylum" to these desperate people reaching the Malaysian coast and islands off the east coast after experience hardship and privation on their journeys. On one trip I went by myself to interview a group being held in a police station in Kuantan – several of them had worked in U.S. government facilities in Vietnam and soon had my pencils, pads, etc. all lined up for me to help me get started with the process. On another trip I traveled by car with a U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service officer, starting at a location just south of the Thai border, and working our way down the coast, interviewing literally hundreds of refugees to determine which of them had worked with the U.S. or otherwise qualified for consideration for admission to the U.S. Tiring but rewarding work.

Q: At this time, were the Golden Triangle narcotics issues of any import?

BUTCHER: Yes. I should have mentioned it. There was a DEA office at the Embassy that was quite active and worked closely with the Malaysian government on counter-narcotics cooperation. Malaysia was both a transit point and a destination for narcotics – it had its own growing internal addict population. It viewed illicit drug use as a serious problem.

Q: Did that tend to be an area of cooperation?

BUTCHER: It tended to be a very good area of cooperation. The issue was often working with the Malaysians to assure that they gave us more cooperation than may have been the case for transit, because it was becoming more of an internal issue too. Their concern was that the U.S. also work on the demand reduction side, so that there wouldn't be this flow through them. Malaysia had very draconian anti-narcotics penalties. You've probably heard of them. With fairly small amounts of heroin or marijuana, you could get a

mandatory death sentence. Over a certain amount of possessed drugs, you were considered a trafficker, and therefore subject to a mandatory death penalty.

We were both encouraging them to take action against traffickers, but we also had occasions where their penalties caused some issues from some nutty Americans who were basically potheads and either ignorant of, or made light of the tough drug laws. One of these individuals actually thought he could get away with mailing drugs to himself in Malaysia from Thailand! In any case, it was an issue that wasn't without its complications.

Q: On the external relations side, you had Thailand in its period of expansion, taking over processes that were Malaysian. On the other side of the peninsula, there is Singapore. I would suspect that the Malaysian Foreign Ministry was very interested in its relations with Thailand and its relations with Singapore. How were those reported on?

BUTCHER: The Singapore aspect is always fascinating because there are both personalities and race involved. I used to use the analogy that Malaysia was too small for both Lee Kuan Yew, a shrewd Chinese politician, and Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, a courtly Malay prince. The two of them just didn't see eye-to-eye. There was concern that with Singapore as part of the federation, it brought Malaysia closer to a 50-50 racial balance. You had a Type A personality in Lee Kuan Yew. It was kind of like an upstate New York versus New York City situation. I'm not a New Yorker, but one hears these stories on the tensions between Albany and New York City. There was kind of a similar thing between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. Eventually what happened was Malaysia expelled Singapore from the federation, so you always had this dynamic that the Malaysians weren't trying to keep with the Joneses; they were trying to keep up with the Lees, as Singapore under Lee Kuan Yew's inspired, brilliant but autocratic leadership became a regional economic dynamo.

Of course, Singapore is a small city-state, albeit a thriving one. It didn't have to worry about agriculture policy, balancing regional concerns, and all the other things that Malaysia had to deal with. They could just get on with the business of doing business. Over the years, it became very successful. Unsurprisingly, the Malaysians were somewhat resentful of this. On the other hand, the two countries really needed each other because Singapore provided a major entrepôt and gateway for international trade for Malaysia. Malaysia, for Singaporeans, not only was its main drinking water source, but also provided a hinterland, both for doing business and for stretching your legs. If a Singaporean wanted to chew gum, he could chew gum across the causeway, litter, and do things not permitted or acceptable in Singapore. You had a certain dynamic symbiosis between Singapore and Malaysia that came from common history, proximity, and economic benefits.

With Thailand, it was complicated because four of the Malaysian states had at times been part of Thailand, as recently as during the Japanese occupation in World War Two. Part of southern Thailand was also racially and culturally Malay. Cross-border ethnic spillover. So you had on both sides of the border, certain tensions as to where the border

should be or had been. More importantly, you had the issue of the communist insurgents using the Betong Salient area of Thailand that jutted down into Malaysia in a rain forested and hilly setting, was a great staging area and training ground for the communist insurgents for decades. When threatened, they would skedaddle across the border. When the Brits first put heat on them, they would go to their sanctuaries in southern Thailand. This was true after independence, after Malaya's independence in 1957.

Q: Looking at those relationships, did the U.S. ever get caught in between? Did the parties try to draw the U.S. into taking a side?

BUTCHER: Surprisingly little that I am aware of. Each would explain their positions. The other side was that there was low-level terrorism, Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO), which was trying to set up a separate Malay state or country. It wasn't clear what their ultimate objectives were – whether they wanted independence or more autonomy from Bangkok or to join with Malaysia. It was never quite clear. There was a little bit of a quid pro quo there: the Malaysians tried to get the Thai to crack down on the communist insurgents, largely ethnic Chinese, on their side of the border. The Thai wanted the Malaysians to crack down on any support from Kelantan or Kedah, the Malay border states, to their brethren on the other side of the border. There was a lot of to-ing and fro-ing on that. Ultimately, Malaysia and Thailand have done a pretty good job on cooperating on both counts.

Q: Malaysia is a fairly manageable size. Did you get a chance to visit each of the states?

BUTCHER: Yes, I got to all 13 of the states. There are 11 in Peninsular Malaysia, and the two states of Sabah and Sarawak, on the island of Borneo, north of the Indonesian portion of Borneo known as Kalimantan. Sabah before being incorporated into Malaysia, along with Malaya, Singapore and Sarawak in 1963, was formerly known as British North Borneo. Until the Japanese invasion in 1942, Sarawak was known as the Land of the White Rajahs. A British adventurer, James Brooke had helped the Sultan of Brunei put down some pirates. As a reward, the Sultan granted Brooke a certain area of territory, which turned out being many times larger than Brunei. I guess the Sultan of Brunei didn't have a very good concept of geography or that this was very valuable land. The Brooke family dynasty ruled Sarawak from 1841 until 1942 when the Japanese took over.

Malaysia is a relatively small country that seemingly has done its utmost to complicate itself. You have a discontiguous part of the country, two states on the island of Borneo, separated by the South China Sea from the 11 states on mainland peninsular Malaysia – kind of like the U.S. with Alaska and Hawaii. There is a modern parliamentary system of government. Yet, nine of the 13 states are headed by constitutional hereditary rulers, akin to Persian Gulf sheikdoms. There is sort of a traditional modern system and a customary, almost feudal, system of royal lineage and patronage with certain roles and responsibilities. For instance, the rulers are in charge of Islam in their states.

Four of the states have governors: Malacca, Penang, Sabah and Sarawak. The others are ruled by these constitutional monarchs. To make things even more interesting, the nine

hereditary monarchs, as the Council of Rulers, elect one of their number as the King of Malaysia, who is actually called the *Pertuan Agong* (Paramount Ruler). They all have Arabic names. Every five years, they elect one of their number as Paramount Ruler. And they elect a deputy king– *Timbalan Agong* - who usually succeeds the incumbent ruler after the latter's five year tern ends, and in turn becomes the Paramount Ruler, unless he somehow blots his copybook along the way, as I believe a couple of them have. There have been some scandals that just couldn't be overlooked, so those individuals were passed over.

It's a fascinating place. It's multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious. While it is relatively small, it's a surprisingly complex place. It's fun for a political officer.

Q: What would be the kinds of things that you would be reporting on then? Were there any great cables of note during the four years you were there?

BUTCHER: There were a number of issues. The racial politics was always there as a potential flashpoint. In May 1969, there were really nasty racial riots, pushed by some Malay chauvinist elements who were upset that the Chinese not only had economic power, but also seemed to be gaining some political power by winning some elections in key localities.

Some of these Malay hothead politicians whipped up their supporters. They went after the Chinese. The Chinese retaliated. There were really nasty racial riots. It's unclear exactly how many people were killed. It was a major racial conflagration. The government fell. The father of Malaysia, Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, lost his job. The Malaysian leadership established an emergency government was established to address the crisis, and its underlying causes.

They set in motion what was called the New Economic Policy, the NEP, the stated objective of which to end the identification of race with occupation. They wanted to set certain quotas of business and enterprise ownership, to be directed to Malays. They set up certain percentages. While they were directing more economic activity to the Malays, there was concern that they not kill the goose laying the golden egg – in other words, Chinese entrepreneurship, which was a huge factor in Malaysia's economic success.

They realized they had to have a pro-growth policy. As they created larger amounts of activity for the Malays, they had expansionist policies so they weren't doing so at the expense of the Chinese in absolute terms. Relatively, more business was going to the Malays, but the Chinese were also getting their share. They wanted to grow the pie, giving larger slices to the Malays, but while not de-incentivizing the Chinese.

Where things were really tight was in terms of educational opportunity. They ruled that Malay had to be taught as the official language. For the Chinese, this was very hard. They wanted to maintain their cultural ties. For many of the Chinese, they spoke a local dialect at home, but they wanted to teach their children Mandarin in School. The kids not only

had to have their Malay lessons, but they were also spending their time on Saturday on outside classes in Chinese.

A lot of the reporting on domestic politics revolved around the racial issues. There was a local Malay politician who tried to force a showdown with the government over its more benevolent policies. There was a period in the middle of my tour there where there were curfews and there were some racial riots, thankfully limited in scope. However, the government authorities ended up arresting this fairly prominent Malay chauvinist leader, Datuk Harun Idris. Things were pretty dicey. That was something that was quite a concern. If you had a real breakdown in racial relations, you could scare off investment. This would curtail growth. That would cause a really bad downward spiral and cause a fragile governing ethnic coalition – the *Barisan Nasional* – the National Front coalition that had ruled since Malaya gained independence in 1957, to unwind.

Plus they had this ongoing nasty insurgency, the so-called "Emergency" initiated by the Communist Party of Malaya in 1948, and prompting a lengthy counterinsurgency campaign by the British against the "Communist Terrorists" or "CTs" as they were termed. Although technically over in 1958, a year after Malayan independence, the insurgency continued into the 1960s and '70s, and didn't actually end formally until the 1980s, when CPM leader Chin Peng called it quits.

The insurgency when I arrived wasn't threatening the survival of the government, but it gave an option for the alienated Chinese youths to go off and get involved in terrorist or insurgent activities.

Q: In your travels around the country, did you have to change your travel or schedule because of terrorist incidents?

BUTCHER: Yes, there were some areas that you would go to only during the day. During the first two years I was in Malaysia, I was the deputy political section head. After an inspection, they felt they didn't need to have such a large section. At one point, they thought of combining the political and economic sections, but they realized there was too much activity in both areas to justify amalgamation. So they removed an officer and a secretary position. They removed what was then an FSO-3 (now FSO-1 level) political chief position. As an FSO-4 at the time (now an 02), I became the head of the section. I couldn't be called political counselor because of the rank issue, but in effect functionally served as political counselor for my last two years in KL.

At that same time, there was a change of post leadership. Ambassador Frank Underhill left, Robert "Bob" Miller and James "Jim" Rosenthal replaced Underhill and Bob Dillon, as ambassador and DCM respectively. When Bob Miller came, I escorted him and his wife on an orientation visit to the northeastern state of Kelantan, on the border with Thailand, a state I was familiar with. We went along the area where they were building a new East-West Highway. This would be a more direct route between Penang and the east coast. There would be economic benefits because currently travelers from the northeast or northwest of Malaysia would have to go some distance south, then across the mid-

section of the country, and then back up north. The path of the new highway being cut through the jungles was just south of the Thai border. It was also seen as having a strategic role, because the Malaysian armed forces could patrol it and sever some of the insurgent infiltration routes.

The insurgents didn't like that. They sabotaged some of the equipment. They actually attacked some of the people doing the road construction. When we up to be shown the progress of the road construction, we had U.S.-origin Cadillac-Gage V-150 armored cars in front of us and behind us. We went 20 miles up this road. Parts of it weren't yet surfaced. Two weeks later, a similar convoy was attacked by some communist insurgents. They blew up some vehicles and killed some troops.

It was there as a security threat, but not too much in the city. There were a couple of terrorist incidents. A year earlier, the national police chief was assassinated in the summer of 1974. After we arrived the national monument near the parliament complex was blown up by communist sappers in the fall of 1975. It was designed by Felix De Weldon, the famous sculptor, who reportedly used some of the same molds as he used for his Iwo Jima Memorial. It showed the triumph over the communist insurgency. So they blew that up as a symbol, although it later was repaired. A couple of weeks later, some communist terrorists threw some hand grenades into a paramilitary police morning line-up in Kuala Lumpur, killing several personnel. So there were some security issues.

One of my focal points was following the communist insurgency. I met periodically with C.C. Too, a legendary figure in Malaysia's psychological warfare efforts against the CTs (communist terrorists). I often took visitors in to see him – warning them against his often-colorful language. Political officers from the British, Australian and New Zealand high commissions – representing the three non-Asian members of the so-called Five Power Defense Agreement (FPDA - the Asian members were Malaysia and Singapore) who had worked together to help fight the CTs in previous years – met periodically to review and compare notes on developments and trends in the insurgency. I was flattered to be invited to join these meetings, these information exchanges, which I used in my reporting.

I wrote one such report and I got a really thoughtful and surprisingly well-informed response back from the Department. Later, the author of the insightful reaction to my report, Dr. Stanley "Stan" Bedlington, then with INR (State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research) came out on a visit and told me he had in the British Special Branch and served in the Betong Salient in southern Thailand during the "Emergency" period, operating against the CTs. Before that, he had been a British colonial policeman in Palestine. When Malaya received independence in 1957, Stan moved over to British North Borneo, until it joined Malaysia, renamed as the state of Sabah, in 1963. Later, Stan came to the U.S. to study at the University of California at Berkeley. Imagine that. A former British colonial police intelligence guy studying at Berkeley in the 1960s, at the height of the anti-Vietnam War protests. Stan later wrote a basic primer on Malaysia, and had a long career as an analyst at State and the CIA. Amazing background, and engaging personality. In my conversations with Stan I noted he must have qualified for a number of

British campaign medals, including for his service in Malaya – I collect British campaign medals as a hobby, as I had served in several former British colonies – and know something about them. Stan said he had some, but not for Malaya. I suggested he check with the defense attaché office at the British embassy in Washington. He said he thought that was a good idea. I don't know if he ever did. Stan died on August 22, 2012.

Q: As you said, in January 1977, a new administration came in – the Carter Administration. Was there any perception that policies would change toward Malaysia?

BUTCHER: I'm not sure there was a sense that policies would change. There was a softer, gentler tone overall in terms of foreign policy. Again, we were dealing with the post-Vietnam era. The numbers of refugees picked up. There was a humanitarian side of things. There was also interest in Malaysia's treatment of its citizens. A more visible human rights approach was reflected. I think probably there was the increased emphasis on human rights and concern about The Internal Security Act, tough security legislation left over from the British era dealing with radicals, insurgents, terrorists, and so on. This allowed among other things for detention of suspects without trial. There was concern that these emergency laws removed certain safeguards such as the right of habeas corpus, for instance. There were a lot of people being sentenced to two years' detention without trial based on orders of special tribunals or orders of special judges. It was considered alien to our human rights standards, and those of other western nations.

Q: At this time in the Carter Administration, the Americans starting writing human rights reports on everyone. You must have done the first human rights reports on Malaysia. Was there a process of negotiating with Washington about what they wanted? Was it clear how these things were to be written?

BUTCHER: We basically had guidance, followed the guidance, and worked on the reports. Again, this is a difficult issue. I think the subject of human rights has been something that has been part and parcel of our policies for years. Doing report cards on countries that would be in the public domain, as opposed to part of private dialogues, I think was a new and not necessarily happy wrinkle on things. We worked hard on them. We put a lot of effort into these and tried to make them as accurate and as honest as we could.

Q: This would be a fairly consuming project for a small political section.

BUTCHER: What was noteworthy is that we were reduced in size, even as our workload increased. As I said, one officer and one secretary were removed. When my deputy and I departed at the end of our tours in 1979, they restored the two positions that had been eliminated in 1977. So the section was back to the size it was when we arrived in 1975. This obviously reflected the surging workload and requirements the section had to meet, as well as the U.S. perspective that despite the communist success in Indochina, Southeast Asia, and Malaysia specifically, remained important, given the refugee flow, joint counter-narcotics efforts, an important economic relationship, and Malaysia's strategic location along key straits and sea lanes. Meanwhile, as a result of the heavy

workload we handled with a smaller staff, we nominated our outstanding secretary for the Department's Foreign Service Secretary of the Year Award. She won! Mary Raba was her name. After her KL assignment she married and moved to New Zealand.

Back in the early 1970s, we had started off-shoring a number of high tech facilities, especially in Penang, in view of Malaysia's highly trainable and lower-cost work force, a large percentage of whom were women. National Semiconductor, Texas Instruments, Motorola, and a number of other companies had world-class high tech operations starting in Malaysia. Malaysia had a major role as an exporter of basic commodities over the years – tin, rubber, palm oil, cocoa, and, more recently, crude oil, but it was evolving into a high tech industrial center too. An American chamber of commerce was set up, the American Business Council, was established in the mid-1970s. The economic aspect of the relationship became increasingly important.

We also started restoring and building a very quiet but effective military relationship. Michael Armacost, later undersecretary of state for political affairs, and subsequently ambassador to Japan, was at the time a deputy assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, handling Asia, and came out on a visit. He was given a very good reception by the Malaysians, reflecting a thaw in contacts with the U.S. defense establishment following the post-Vietnam chill. They took him up to the site of their new naval base at Lumut, across from Pangkor Island in Perak State north of Kuala Lumpur. They helicoptered him around to several facilities. He had a very good, although not highly publicized visit, for which I enjoyed accompanying him on his travels and to meetings.

Earlier in my tour, while Frank Underhill was ambassador, Vice President Rockefeller had come for an official visit, which went well. However, the first high-level military visitor after I arrived, Admiral Noel Gayler, CINCPAC (Commander in Chief Pacific) – who I later learned had been a Navy ace in WWII and recipient of three Navy Crosses – felt he was not getting appropriate attention from a military protocol standpoint. In fact, as I recall he was so miffed at the level of reception accorded him that he curtailed his visit and did not spend the full amount of time he had initially planned to stay there.

Later in the tour, I think the Malaysians reassured that Thailand didn't fold. I think there was concern that the Thai would bend inordinately to the wind after the communist victories in Indo-China. The next thing Malaysia might know is that they would have a country on their border that had gone wobbly on communism, and that there might be supply lines opening to the Malaysian communist insurgents via Thailand. There were all kinds of paranoid fears that came up. My own personal assessment is that after a couple of years went by, the dominoes didn't fall. The U.S. showed that it was still remaining interested in the region. We weren't pulling out. We were maintaining our base facilities in the Philippines. We remained engaged in the neighborhood. I think this changed Malaysians' perceptions and they became more willing to engage with us on the military side.

On one occasion my wife and I had the opportunity to represent the ambassador during a port call in Penang of the cruiser U.S.S. OKLAHOMA CITY, the flagship of our Seventh Fleet Commander, a three-star admiral. Ambassador Bob Miller couldn't go as he was attending to an important issue related to the Vietnamese refugee crisis, so I went in his stead. After initial concern the vessel would be kept out of sight at an outer anchorage, it was allowed to tie up pier side in the Georgetown harbor. Another sign of the thaw. The admiral hosted a festive dinner on his flagship for the governor of Penang and other dignitaries. Carol and I experienced a memorable evening, being piped aboard, walking along the teak deck with Marines at attention in their dress uniforms, and enjoying the setting, the fine cuisine, the live music, and the good conversations.

Q: One of the things that would have come up at that time was in December 1978 when Vietnam invaded Cambodia, after a period of back and forth between the two. How was that perceived in Kuala Lumpur?

BUTCHER: It was seen as a pretty dramatic development. I don't recall exactly, but I think it raised lots of uncertainties. I think what was even more interesting for the Malaysians was when the Vietnamese and the Chinese went at it.

Q: In January 1979.

BUTCHER: Yes. A number of things happened in fairly close sequence.

When I arrived, I recall going to a symposium at the University of Malaya on ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). A Malaysian student asked the senior foreign ministry official who handled ASEAN affairs, a very senior individual, an ambassador, what he could cite as the accomplishments of ASEAN. He really had to fumble for words. He really couldn't come up with anything that was very specific.

After the failure of the anti-communist efforts in Indo-China, you suddenly had a new impetus for the members of ASEAN to cooperate among each other. Before, they had taken pains to show this was only a socio-economic organization. It had no overtly stated security aspects whatsoever – although it have a key role in dampening problems such as border disputes between its members. The so-called "ASEAN spirit." Given what happened in Indo-China, the uncertainties with Vietnam now on Thailand's borders, and the China-Vietnam dynamics, suddenly the ASEAN countries were doing a lot more close consultation and work, in a collaborative sense, to at least talk about in their private channels how best to improve their own cooperation. A lot of it had to do with improving their own economies, looking down the line at reducing trade barriers among themselves, and so on. It's important to recall that the original five ASEAN members at the time of its founding in 1967 all were anti-communist, and free market-oriented – Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

Suddenly ASEAN became much more important to its members as a group. They didn't want it to be seen publicly as an anti-communist coalition. They didn't want to create a self-fulfilling prophecy of the communist groupings versus the non-communist ones,

communist versus non-communist blocs. The reality was that they saw they needed to really work closer, to collaborate on everything from economic to intelligence matters and militarily, maybe even to talk about some standardization of equipment.

Q: One of the events that is going on in the background during this period is Kissinger went to China in 1971. In December 1978, the Americans announce that they are going to recognize China. How was that played in Malaysia? How did they see this Sino-American…

BUTCHER: I think they saw that as a positive thing. They are little guys. They are afraid of getting caught in the crossfire. They are anti-communist. They had their own communist insurgency. The Malaysians really didn't want to stick their necks out, but if there is something that adds to regional stability, and the fact that the Chinese and the Americans are engaging, that was seen as a positive thing.

What was more important for Malaysia was when China and Malaysia mutually recognized each other and the two nations established diplomatic relations. That, in effect, marked the real end of the communist "Emergency" period. That really took the wind out of the communist insurgents' sails. Before, the Chinese would say while we are not in a position to support you materially, we are with you one hundred percent philosophically. Once the Chinese made the determination themselves that it was more important to foster good state-to-state relations rather than party-to-party, that had a huge impact on the local insurgencies throughout Southeast Asia. It had an impact on others such as leftist groups in places like Indonesia who had held out hopes that they could always look for big brother communist China to come to their rescue at some point. It really did change the dynamic.

I remember the first time when some Chinese representatives were at the American Embassy, at the ambassador's Fourth of July reception, in the late 1970s before I left KL.

Q: You had multiple occasions to go over to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and chat up their people. How talented would you judge them?

BUTCHER: Uneven. Because of the mandated Malay language training requirements, teaching of English suffered. Early in the years right after independence in 1957, in view of the legacy of British colonial rule many Malaysian officials and diplomats were more comfortable speaking English than Malay. Some senior Malaysian politicians and foreign ministry people spoke fluent and unaccented British English, but their Malay wasn't very good. Then you had younger recruits coming into the foreign ministry whose English was not very good, but could speak very fluent Malay because they had been brought up in a Malay curriculum. I had concerns about some of the quality of the people. A number of them, once they got overseas, experienced a lot of on the job training, and they picked up English. I remember some bright young Malay diplomats I worried would be constrained professionally due to modest fluency in English. Later, these diamonds in the rough grew into highly capable, polished diplomats.

All still had to go through a fairly rigorous testing process, even though it was in Malay as opposed to English, they were clearly trainable and teachable. They had a trade-off. I think at this point, several generations in, they are restoring and re-emphasizing English because it is so essential, the international language of commerce. So they've come far.

Q: Remind me, when you went out, was this a four-year tour?

BUTCHER: It was actually a three-year tour. Midway, at some point I had the option of extending to make it a two and two, with a home leave in between. So in the summer of 1977, we took a home leave.

Q: Where did you go?

BUTCHER: Our home leave address was in Detroit, Michigan.

Q: You went straight there? Or did you stop in Europe?

BUTCHER: We probably transited Hong Kong. After a relatively short stay in the U.S. I returned to KL, but the family stayed in the U.S. longer. I had to get back and help with the transition with the new ambassador and his deputy.

Q: What were the embassy dynamics, working under Underhill versus Miller?

BUTCHER: They were very different people. These both were very capable men, very good to work with. Frank Underhill, who died October 19, 1999, had much more of an academic bent in his orientation, whereas Bob Miller had been a deputy executive secretary in the department and was more operationally-inclined. He had worked on Vietnam. He had both diplomatic and managerial assignments. In fact, I remember my first meetings with Bob Miller. I was a staffer in NEA working late hours. He was a deputy executive secretary also working late. We shared a taxi from the Department. He lived somewhere in the northwest suburbs of Washington and I was further out in Bethesda. I remember dropping him off along the way, in Spring Valley neighborhood near American University. The two ambassadors were very different in their personalities and operating styles.

My relationship was different with Underhill, because I was the deputy, not the section chief, whereas I was section chief for Miller. This meant I was in all the country team meetings and so forth, as opposed to just being an alternate for country team meetings. By the time that Bob Miller came in, and since I had language capability, plus two years experience at post, I was taken as the expert on a lot of things in the political realm, which is always a good position to be in when you have a new boss. In effect, it was like having two different tours, as my role changed, as did the leadership personalities above me.

Q: At some time in your tour, you had to begin to think about the next tour. I think this is the period where there were open bids. How did you perceive where you wanted to go next?

BUTCHER: We had been overseas for four years. I liked the notion of being overseas a bit and then back in Washington a bit, essentially alternating just to keep in touch with Washington. I think it's always important to know whom you are working for and why. Bob Miller had served in the Executive Secretariat (the symbol for which was S/S). He was really big on the Operations Center, also part of the Executive Secretariat, and he encouraged me to bid on a senior watch officer (SWO) job. This is what I did, and the position to which I was assigned.

Q: You took that in the summer rotation of 1979?

BUTCHER: That's right.

Looking back on our Malaysia tour, it was very full and rewarding, professionally and for family living. The International School of Kuala Lumpur was excellent. Kuala Lumpur was easy to travel in, unlike now when it has grown exponentially. We took day trips to scenic pools and streams for swimming and family picnics, visits to the zoo, museum, gondola rides on the jungled hill above the AIA building housing the embassy, etc. For longer trips we drove to Fraser's Hill and its quaint British era bungalows, to beaches on the east coast where we snorkeled, swam (and I scuba dived) – on one occasion on spring break in 1979 we awoke at our hotel in Kuala Terengganu to the beach full of refugees, whose boat was bobbing in the surf several hundred feet away. We also made number trips by air to Penang with its beaches and multi-cultural setting. Both my wife's parents and mine took the occasion of our being in a non-hardship post to visit us – Carol's while Ambassador Underhill was at post, and mine after Ambassador Miller's arrival.

Before heading off to Washington, I traveled to the Malaysian states on Borneo – Sarawak and Sabah, and to Brunei, then still a British protectorate. The visit to Sarawak, former land of the "White Rajahs," was especially notable, as Malaysian Special Branch helped facilitate a trip "upriver" up the Rajang River to Kapit in the interior, where I visited longhouses of former headhunters (smoke-blacked skulls visible in baskets hung below ceilings!). Another great Foreign Service experience!

The Operations Center, 1979-81 – and the Iran Hostage Crisis

Q: You became senior watch officer in the Operations Center. How would you describe the Operations Center for somebody that never read Tom Clancy?

BUTCHER: Interestingly, they used to just have a State Department duty officer. After the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, they said my goodness, we really need to have something more formal to maintain a round-the-clock, seven day a week duty watch at the State Department. It would be the equivalent of some of the duty watches around town. The Department of Defense has the National Military Command Center (NMCC). The White

House has its Situation Room. So they set up this operation on the seventh floor of the State Department, the Operations Center (Ops Center – symbol S/S-O), to provide coverage with watch standers 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They institutionalized it. Marie Connolly, now deceased, herself was an institution, present at the creation, and was still supporting the Ops Center in a management role when I was there.

Those organizing the Ops Center set up a range of SOPs (Standing Operational Procedures). The Ops Center is, as I mentioned, part of the Executive Secretariat, which supports the Secretary of State and the State Department principals (i.e., top official of the State Department – the undersecretaries, deputy secretary, and the Secretary. There also is the so-called 'line," the Secretariat Staff (S/S-S). The Secretariat Staff handled the paper flow to and from the Seventh Floor. The Ops Center did the alerting functions, mostly by phone, and by direct oral briefs to special assistants and other aides to senior officials as well as occasionally to top officials directly, and to some extent by fax when other agencies or the NSC was involved; this was pre-email. So you essentially had the Secretariat Staff handling the slower information flow, paper based, and generally not on a 24/7 basis, and the Ops Center handling the hotter, more time-sensitive alerts and information flow 24/7; the oral versus the paper. The Ops Center did produce brief updates of key developments, assembled and written up by watch officers who were serving in the editor capacity, and reviewed by the senior watch officer (SWO) on duty, before printing them in final and distributing them in the various mail boxes for pickup by aides for the principals and by bureau staff assistants.

Its main focus was to funnel information to and from the Secretary of State and his/her deputies. That included placing and monitoring outgoing phone calls, as well as connecting incoming calls. Once, as I was getting off the line from connecting the Secretary or some senior officer – Warren Christopher was Deputy Secretary of State during this assignment – I overheard the caller saying, "Your operator was very helpful."

Someone said we were just glorified telephone operators. However, if you muff a phone call, that's not very good. Very often, we would organize conference calls between senior people. Occasionally, we would stay on the line as note takers, with their consent and acknowledgement. These conversations often were illuminating and insightful about breaking developments and policies. Helped add to our "situational awareness."

When I was about to bid on the job, Ambassador Bob Miller had said I would be spending a lot of time briefing the Secretary and other senior officials. I had an idea of going to their office with a map with a pointer and things like that. That's not the way it was at all. The briefings were all oral. My period in the Ops Center coincided with an extraordinarily busy period. It covered the entire Iran hostage situation, which we were all immersed in. It covered the Russian invasion of Afghanistan.

Some days, I was actually on duty when crises broke and had to do the alerts. Other times, it was following up things. For instance, on November 4th, 1979, I was due for a day shift. It was my youngest daughter's fourth birthday. She had been born in Malaysia

in 1975. I swapped shifts as senior watch officer with one of my colleagues, so I would come on the swing shift in the late afternoon.

The morning shift received the phone call from Ann Swift in Teheran saying, "They're coming over the wall." (Ann had been one of my A-100 classmates in 1966) The Iran hostage situation started on November 4th, 1979. It ended on January 20th, 1981. In that time, when I was on duty I frequently placed phone calls with a special AT&T (Atlantic Telephone and Telegraph) operator in New York by which we were able to talk to our three colleagues in the foreign ministry in Teheran: Chargé Bruce Laingen, who had been my boss in the early 1970s on the Pakistan/Bangladesh Desk; Victor "Vic" Tomseth; and the Regional Security Officer (RSO). Vic's wife is Thai. He would tell her lots of stuff in Thai on the assumption that it wasn't being monitored since probably not too many Iranians understand Thai. And I believe his wife was provided with lists of questions to ask him when they talked. We got a lot of information that way. We all worked very closely with the Iran Hostage Task Force located in the Ops Center area, helping support its activities.

During the negotiations regarding the crisis, a former boss of mine, Peter Constable, PDAS (principal deputy assistant secretary) in NEA, used to fly out on a Concorde supersonic airliner to and from Paris. Some of the negotiations were very complicated because we had frozen Iranian assets. When things were nearing a dénouement in the negotiations, we had a lot of activity shifted to Algiers. On January 17, 1980, a Saturday, I was winding up my duty after a midnight shift at about 6:30 a.m. We got a call saying it was Camp David on the line; the President wants a briefing. By that time, they had pretty well closed down the task force because all the activity had gone elsewhere. There was no one in the task force, not even one of its by then skeleton staff So I ended up talking to President Carter at Camp David. He said, "Do you have any word on the breakthrough?"

I said we've got reporting from Algiers. It's about X, Y and Z. It's all related to financial matters, not the big political breakthrough we are looking for. Then the president goes on for about five minutes, perhaps longer, talking on about how he was planning to get the leaders of Europe behind these financial arrangements. Everyone is totally quiet. They could see me nodding. The president is briefing me. I guess it was a Jimmy Carter type of thing, where he was way into the details of issues. He was obviously feeling very lonely. He was on his way out. The hostage situation that was his albatross during the last two years of his presidency is coming to an end, but hasn't ended. He sounded like a very lonely guy who wanted to talk to someone who would listen to him with no particular axes to grind; a friendly voice. (As a sidebar, later that morning my eldest daughter fell off a horse at a riding center and broke her shoulder. Thus it wasn't until later in the day after she was taken care of that I informed my wife about the president's call.)

Q: One of the things that comes out of the hostage crisis what the rescue attempt, Desert One. Secretary Vance responded to that by resigning. How did you see those events?

BUTCHER: The news of the aborted mission came when I was on duty one night. It all kind of broke, without any of our foreknowledge. Of course, it was quite a big deal. We

heard the reasoning behind Vance's resignation. He had argued against such a dangerous mission. My own personal view, and I think that of some of the others, was that because the U.S> was willing to do something as dramatic as that and even though it failed, it raised uncertainty in the Iranians' eyes as to what will these crazy Americans do next? It may have actually got things off a dime and shifted the Iranians calculus moving forward. I haven't read any scholarly works on this. In a sense, I was too close to the situation. It was certainly dramatic.

When you're involved in this these matters, you are dealing with essentially with process, not policy, day-to-day tactical matters, although we had considerable situational awareness of policy, especially we SWOs who handled lots of sensitive materials. It's kind of hard to sit back and philosophize when you're following fast-breaking developments, alerting senior officials, fielding inquiries, and carrying out taskings.

Q: Does the Operations Center turn out any reports?

BUTCHER: As I touched on earlier, the Ops Center was putting out daily briefs. The watch teams were made up of a watch officer and an editor. In fact, the junior people were called watch officer/editors. There were two of them per team. Plus you had some other assistants. You had a reporting cycle. These were bright junior officers, probably between their second and third tours. There were some very sharp young officers. As a SWO I had outstanding young officers working under my supervision, some of whom such as Chris Hill and Eric Edelman reached top positions during their careers. We would put out periodic reports as developments warranted.

One of the things that was very important was we all maintained a log, which was the record of events. It was very carefully maintained because it was both a historical and a legal record. There were certain actions with the Coast Guard that the Ops Center coordinated that were an important ongoing designated responsibility. This involved coordinating diplomatic clearances for Coast Guard boardings and possible seizures of foreign vessels suspected of fisheries or narcotics illegalities. It was very important to keep accurate records as legal proceedings might flow from these boardings.

The other thing that the SWOs did was after hours was to process and route NODIS – NO DISTRIBUTION - messages, both incoming and outgoing. When parents and other relatives asked, "What do you do at the State Department?" I would reply, "I distribute No Distribution messages!" They already thought some of the things government folks do in Washington were strange. My telling them this probably confirmed their suspicions.

To kind of refresh myself, I was going through some papers and found that one night, I hit a record of processing 37 NODIS messages.

Q: The notes that you would take of these telephone conversations: were those filed? In a way that would be accessible through the Freedom of Information (FOIA) process?

BUTCHER: I don't remember. A lot of the activities we were involved with would be recorded as annotated log entries. That was before widespread use of e-mail. I am trying to think of how we distributed these. They may have been informal or rough notes typed on IBM Selectric typewriters and then passed on to someone in the Executive Secretariat. These were pretty informal in most instances. I don't know how they were retained, or if they are 'FOIAable.'

Q: The Operations Center is S/S-O, which means it's in the Office of the Secretary of State. Could you give us a sense of who was directly responsible for the Operations Center, and some of those personalities?

BUTCHER: You had roughly five teams that worked in shifts, and you have people who were off on regular scheduled breaks. There was an office director for the Ops Center, and a deputy director. They would report to one of the deputy executive secretaries. We would all fall under the executive secretary, who was the chief person who funnels information to the Secretary of State. We would often get directives, either directly from the executive secretary – I think it was Peter Tarnoff when I was SWO. This was an operation that ran under a whole range of SOPs (standard operating procedures) and directives. We would have a read-in process where we would get our latest guidance.

There was a lot of activity from various special assistants. Special assistants to the Secretary would stop by. A lot of people would stop in at the State Department for updates. We would have oral briefings. Jerry Bremer and Arnie Raphel would stop by. They were both in senior assistant roles with the Secretary of State. Marc Grossman, who was staff assistant in NEA, actually married one of the watch officers who was in our group. Marc had a distinguished career, reaching the top career position in the State Department, under secretary for political affairs – the U.S. equivalent of permanent secretary in foreign ministries abroad. I met Wendy Chamberlin, who later succeeded me in one of my overseas postings and held important positions, including ambassador to Pakistan and USAID assistant administrator for Asia and the Near East, while she was a special assistant to Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher. My old friend Gene Martin who had replaced me in Rangoon was also a special assistant to Mr. Christopher. So we had a lot of interaction with the aides to the principals, and as a number of them would stop by the Ops Center regularly to get updates or pick up documents held for their bosses. Ambassador David Newsome, the under secretary for political affairs at that time, would come by periodically. At one time, there was a flap on Afghanistan. We had called and alerted him. I don't know if he lived in Georgetown, but he was fairly close by. In fact, when I was promoted to FS-01 (the old 03), I got a nice little note from him. He said, "Congratulations Scott, even though you wake me up too much." It was a nice gesture, and made me chuckle when I read it.

It was a demanding job. It was, however, one where I probably worked the fewest hours in my Foreign Service career because it was a set duty period, and you didn't take the work home with you. In a sense, I had more family life in that job, despite the odd hours and the intense activity. This was a grueling job, lots of adrenalin flowed, but very

rewarding, in many ways. Lots of insights as history-making developments occurred, literally, on my watch.

Q: Rewarding too in the sense, I presume, that you really get to see the department from the top down. You would have a different view than when you were in…

BUTCHER: It was an extraordinarily interesting view.

Q: And the individuals that you get to meet. So, it was highly sought.

BUTCHER: It was a very interesting job. We sometimes learned more than we wanted to know: you call one senior official in the middle of the night, and another senior official – of the other sex - might answer the phone. On other occasions, an official might call and say, "I'll be on my beeper all night." We were thinking of maybe syndicating this for soap opera purposes. We would call it, "As the Watch Turns."

You do learn about people's nocturnal behavior. We also learned when the bars were closing across the country. We would get crank phone calls. We had a squawk box, a speaker attached to phones, so that everyone on duty could follow important calls. We would get this guy every Saturday night without fail at a certain time. You could tell the guy had been kicked out of the bar. He would go to the phone and he would call the State Department. He would start mouthing off about something or other. We thought he was harmless, but after the fifth or sixth Saturday, he started cursing. At that point, we politely conferenced him into the District of Columbia library storytelling phone number, forcing him to listen to Mary had a Little Lamb or something like that. He rambled on, as we listened to him over the squawk box. Finally, he caught on to what we had done. There was a flurry of expletives and he hung up. We all laughed, loud and long. We never heard from him again.

Q: Ken Bleakly was the deputy director around the time you left.

BUTCHER: Yes. He replaced Thomas "Tom" Reynders. Tom was an excellent mentor, and even after our respective retirements he helped me refine my résumé. Tom died unexpectedly on February 1, 2009, while visiting Kabul to check on a USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) – funded project.

Q: Reynders was there as director of the Operations Center?

BUTCHER: Yes. And William "Bill: Rope, a China hand, was the director the first half of my tour. Tom was his deputy. As I recall, when Bill Rope moved on, Tom became head of the Ops Center, and Ken was his deputy.

Q: What was it like working for Rope?

BUTCHER: Bill was good. He was kind of fussy, a stickler for detail, but he was good. Do you know Bill?

Q: Yes.

About the time that you finish that tour, we changed to a new administration. From the Operations Center, would the change in administration be seen in the way things were happening?

BUTCHER: It was one of the most dramatic days of my life, listening to the changeover. We had the Carter Administration people calling in, saying we are signing off. You had the Reagan folks signing on. And you had the release of the hostages right in the middle of all that. It was so clear that the hostages were not going to be released on President Jimmy Carter's watch. It was the ultimate dig from the Iranians. Also, I think they were worried about Reagan. He was seen as a conservative hardliner and more willing to use military force. Poor Jimmy Carter. I'm not sure what else you can say.

Shortly after noon on January 20th, 1981, we got word that the hostages had cleared Iranian airspace. It was one of the most dramatic days. You had all the visible signs of a government transition, a handover, because people were checking out and people were checking in to the Ops Center.

Q: Alexander Haig became Secretary of State. He was a former military officer. Did that create a different dynamic or atmosphere for the Operations Center?

BUTCHER: For starters, after Secretary Cyrus Vance resigned over the failed "Desert One" hostage rescue mission, former Senator Edmund "Ed" Muskie took over. He came by and met with all the Ops Center folks. He was an easygoing guy; that was our impression. He was a politician, kind of a glad hander. Then you had General Haig of no small ego, coming in with his aide Sherman "Woody" Goldberg, also a former military officer, a former army colonel, I believe, who was a principal contact for the Ops Center. Woody, who was very affable and approachable, was with him for many years. He later went with Haig when Haig began private sector consulting after leaving government.

There was a different tenor under Secretary Haig. Again, I was on duty during the assassination attempt against Reagan. We were watching the breaking news on TV, including the whole Haig "I'm in charge here" episode. We were watching acting spokesman Larry Speakes, whose boss had been critically wounded. Speakes couldn't speak. He was babbling, inarticulate. The next thing you know, Haig came up, out of breath because he's come up or down stairs at the White House. He took the microphone from Speakes, who was not reassuring the nation, to try to add more sense of authority to the scene, in my estimation. My view of Haig's action at the time is probably a little more benign than that a lot of people, who criticized Haig for getting his lines of succession all screwed up. I thought they needed to have someone speak forcefully, with competence, and not appear undone by what happened. Larry Speakes, poor guy, was incoherent. We in the Ops Center were watching this all unfold, live, on our TV monitors.

Q: From the point of view of this pinnacle in the State Department, how was the assassination attempt impacting on the general atmospherics? Were there embassies calling in?

BUTCHER: I think the initial thing was that there had been an incident, the President had been injured, and he was hospitalized. There was no indication initially of how serious this was. In fact, it's only relatively recently that all the details have come out. Obviously, it was a very critical time. I don't recall all that happened after the initial reports; whether foreign embassies were contacting the Ops Center, etcetera.

Q: The Operations Center is a two-year assignment. How did you organize your next assignment?

BUTCHER: Actually, many SWOs did not stay on for a full two-year tour, although I did. One day, late in my tour, Tom Reynders entered the Ops Center – I believe he may have been escorting some visitors on a tour at the time. He said, "Congratulations, you've taken a pay cut." The visitors looked puzzled, as I recall.

I said something bright like, huh?

He said yes, you've been promoted to FS0-1.

What that meant was that at the 01 level, I didn't get an extra five percent, or whatever it was, some extra duty pay for being Ops Center. At a lower rank, you got some extra night differential, or some differential. I was happy to have the promotion.

At that time I was looking around for other positions; the promotion did open some opportunities. I learned that the political counselor job in Jakarta was open. It would be a "stretch" assignment; i.e., above my new personal rank, but because I had Malay language background that gave me kind of a leg up, as Malay and Indonesian are quite similar. I got the job.

The down side of the assignment was that it precluded my other choice - to go to one of the war colleges as a new FS0-1, which I really would have enjoyed. On the other hand, the possibility of going to Jakarta as political counselor at a major class one post in a stretch assignment was too much of an opportunity to pass up. This was at the time the new Foreign Service Act came into effect. The so-called Six-year Window up or out option had just been implemented, and I thought the Jakarta political counselor slot would be career-enhancing.

Ken Bleakley, as a leader in the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) was heavily involved in negotiations leading to passage of the new Foreign Service Act, so as my immediate supervisor he offered lots of guidance about implications of the new act.

Assignment to Jakarta

Q: That was a language-designated position. Did you go off to Indonesian language first?

BUTCHER: I had a conversion course. Indonesian and Malay are very close. In fact, when Indonesia was formed, its founding fathers made the wise decision not to adopt Javanese, even though Javanese was the major language, spoken by the majority of the population on the island of Java. Rather, they adopted the trading language that was widely spoken in Sumatra and very close to the Malay spoken in Malaysia. It was therefore able to be more of a unifying factor, as opposed to something like in India, where you hear stories of how some of the Indian linguistic groups have resisted Hindi for years because it was associated with one particular region of India.

So the thought was that they would take a language that, in a sense had no status, was not closely associated with anyone or one area in Indonesia. It made it simpler for me, so I had a five-week conversion course, which showed me the differences between the two languages. It made me feel much less secure than had I just gone in cold. There is a significant vocabulary difference. The language structure is identical, but there are a lot of words that sometimes have very different meanings in Indonesian than Malay.

Q: Is a lot of it still borrowed Hindi?

BUTCHER: Both languages have some Indian linguistic origin, some Sanskrit basis, I believe. As I understand it, whereas Malay has more influence from English and Arabic, Indonesian has more influence from Javanese and some Dutch usages. They are mutually comprehensible. From my own experience, I believe it's easier to move phonetically, in a sense, from Malay to Indonesian than vice-versa. If you go into Malaysia, speaking Indonesian, they think oh goodness, you're coming here speaking our big neighbor's language. Between Indonesia and Malaysia it's a Big Brother-Little Brother type relationship. Indonesia has a much stronger culture, Indonesians generally a much greater sense of who they are in many regards, especially if they come from Java; they have a very rich history and cultural traditions.

Malaysia is a much smaller, less expansive, less populated nation than Indonesia, whereas Indonesia has a long history of various Hindu and Buddhist dynasties and kingdoms. Malaysia in many respects is a new nation, although when the European colonists arrived they found a number of sultanates in the Malay Peninsula, some of which traced their roots to the Indonesian archipelago, to what is now Indonesia. There are all these dynamics between Malaysia and Indonesia one needs to be aware of. Having experienced time in both countries, Malaysians seemed to me to be less secure in their identity than were the Indonesians, although they share many traits, including being majority Muslim countries, with economically significant Chinese non-Muslim minorities.

But overall, it was a fairly easy transition, going from Malay to Indonesian, aside from some vocabulary and usage quirks.

Q: How does one go out to Indonesia then in the summer of 1981?

BUTCHER: We stopped in Hawaii for briefings at CINCPAC (Commander-in-Chief U.S. Forces, Pacific) and its subordinate commands. I went out and met with folks at CINCPAC, now PACOM (U.S. Pacific Command). I had briefings at CINCPACFLT and CINCPACAF. I got a good sense of what their interests were in Indonesia. Then we headed on out, with stopovers in Japan and Hong Kong en route.

Q: How big a political section was it? Who was working for you?

BUTCHER: It was fairly large. When I arrived, the deputy section head was Francis "Frank" Tatu. I don't know if you ever encountered Frank. He was kind of a character, very old school. Frank had carved himself a real role with the counter-drug cooperation. He had lots of connections with the Indonesian police and the drug enforcement side. I was there for three years. Don Jameson was in the political section. He was an Indonesian language officer. He handled a lot of the internal affairs items. Dick Holmes had a China background, and he tracked China issues regarding the Chinese minority, as well as on the international side. Gene Christy came, replacing Don Jameson on the internal reporting side, when Don moved to Surabaya as principal officer. Later in Gene's career he served as ambassador to Brunei and, as foreign policy advisor to PACOM, and diplomat-in-residence at the Naval War College. He's now an inspector. He was at the Naval War College for a while too as a diplomat in residence. Gene later was political counselor in KL when I was there as DCM in the early 1990s. Also a young officer named Charles "Chip" Cohen, who as I recall handled several portfolios, including multilateral affairs.

We had a five-officer political section, plus two very competent Foreign Service secretaries. We had junior officers who rotated through too. We almost always invariably had a junior officer on our staff, one of which was Jim Keith, who had a distinguished career, including senior jobs in the EAP Bureau and the NSC staff, as well as ambassador to Malaysia and "assistant ambassador" in Afghanistan.

Q: The political section was part of the embassy. How big was the embassy in Jakarta?

BUTCHER: It was a large embassy; Jakarta was what was considered a "Class 1 Post," and important post for ambassadors especially. There was a very large USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) program and a large USIS (U.S. Information Service) program. It had a good-sized defense attaché office. We had an office of the military attaché for defense programs. That was our security assistance element. The defense attaché/army attaché was senior full colonel, a much-decorated Vietnam veteran. As I remember he was called out of retirement to take the job. The security assistance office head was also a senior army colonel. There also was an air attaché, and a navy attaché. There was a DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) office. A U.S. Navy Medical Research Unit (USNAMRU) was there, similar to its U.S. Army counterpart in Malaysia, USAMRU. If I'm not mistaken, NAMRU has since been compelled to leave and has relocated to Singapore.

The embassy occupied a large, sprawling embassy in a compound on the main square in downtown Jakarta. We were one of the first countries to recognize Indonesia following its independence in 1949, and got a prime real estate location as a result.

Q: Who was the ambassador at the time you were there?

BUTCHER: It was Edward E. "Ed" Masters for just a few months after we arrived. Before Jakarta, Ed was ambassador to Bangladesh, and earlier had served as DCM in Bangkok. Notably, Ed, who died March 21, 2014, had served earlier in his career as political counselor in Jakarta. Before Ed departed post, John Monjo, then DCM in Seoul, who also had served previously in Jakarta as political counselor and was fluent in Indonesian, came in directly from Seoul. John replaced Paul Gardner, who had departed post before our arrival, as DCM. (Paul, who always wanted to be political counselor in Jakarta, was a senior officer with higher personal rank than the position required; but he wanted the job so badly he had taken a "down stretch" to be political counselor. Later he moved up to be DCM, replaced by Harriet Isom, a senior officer whose personal rank was that of the position. Then I took an "up stretch" when I replaced her. Lots of stretching for that position by folks who wanted it!). An interesting sidebar was that I occupied the political counselor's residence, #4 Jalan Diponegoro (Diponegoro Road), an older single-storey dwelling a short walk from the ambassador's, DCM's, and economic counselor's residences in the Menteng residential area, and one of the household staff had worked previously for both the Masters and the Monjos. Then of course, as political counselor I had two former occupants of that position looking over my shoulder to assess my performance!

John Monjo ended up serving as chargé for some time while we awaited Ed Master's replacement – Ambassador Morton "Mort" Abramowitz, a career diplomat who had served earlier as ambassador to Thailand, was the person for whom we were seeking agrément from the Indonesian government. Although was serving as chargé, John was still technically assigned as DCM in Seoul. However, eventually he was assigned formally to Jakarta as DCM/chargé, because the Indonesians ultimately did not give agrément for Mort.

Q: What was the problem?

BUTCHER: It was never clear. We were negotiating through all kinds of intermediaries. We weren't getting a clear story, but someone had put a bee in Suharto's bonnet about Mort, something derogatory, critical of him. Some claimed that Army General Richard Stillwell, who had dealt with Mort when Mort was ambassador in Thailand, had indicated something negative about Mort, perhaps intimating he had difficulty dealing with the military. Others said there was an anti-Semitic aspect to it, but that seems unlikely as Paul Wolfowitz later served as ambassador in Jakarta, with no problems getting approval. Others thought it was because Mort's hard-charging personality might not be a good fit with the Indonesians. For reasons that weren't clear, the Indonesians never granted agreement for him. I don't know why, and have heard no definitive answers.

Finally, after many months, we were told finally that it wasn't going to happen. John Holdridge, who had been Assistant Secretary for EAP (East Asia and Pacific Affairs), was named and accepted as ambassador. So he came out for the last year of my tour.

Q: It's pretty unusual not to obtain agrément.

BUTCHER: It was a major concern and distraction. You served in Thailand, right? It's this thing you see throughout Southeast Asia, where people avoid conflict. They don't want to give offense. They often won't tell you the straight story. They will beat around the bush. The Indonesians are not emotional, and are often hard to pin down. Of all the Southeast Asians, they are the least direct people. The will nod. They will smile. They will not let you know where they stand on an issue, which makes it extraordinarily difficult if you are going in with your demarches and your talking points, and you are trying to get them to react and articulate a position. Very often, they just don't. So you learn to read body language.

Sometimes you would see something in the newspaper that a visiting delegation was promoting something or other. The Indonesian hosts would be quoted as saying "That was a very interesting proposal. We will give it careful consideration." You know by reading between the lines that they are saying in so many words that this is the dumbest idea we've ever heard. They are so polite about it. We would have visitors come in. The Indonesians would nod back and forth. The visitors would leave, saying gee, they seemed to agree with everything. We would say no, that means they hear you. It doesn't mean they agree with you at all.

It was often very hard. We would go in and we could say was we delivered our points. Washington might come back and say what was their reaction? We would say that there was no reaction.

We would hear stories about these very prominent Indonesian businessmen going off on delegations and meeting with high-level American bankers and so on. Sometimes they would come back empty-handed because they wouldn't say what they needed. They were unfailingly polite, but so non-demonstrative, almost to a fault, that they sometimes would not get their points across with audiences that didn't understand Southeast Asian subtleties.

It made it an interesting challenge to work the issues, as it were. It was very labor intensive.

Q: Yes, it would be. I suspect it was a little bit different working with their foreign ministry than the Malaysian foreign ministry, to that same extent.

BUTCHER: That's true, but a lot of it depended also on the personalities and the issues. One of the things that was so fascinating, since this was the era of "Dui Fungsi" (literally: dual functions) whereby the Indonesian military were imbedded throughout the civilian

government bureaucracy, with many Indonesian military officers holding down civilian jobs in addition to their military status. I know critics would say this is the militarizing of Indonesian society. However, in many regards, it was more the civilianizing of the military, as these roles drew them away from their professional core military training and competencies. Occasionally, I would be dealing with someone who I wouldn't know was military until suddenly that person appeared one day in a military uniform. I would say, my goodness, you're a colonel. The person would say yes, we have such-and-such ceremony today, so I had to wear my uniform.

A number of these officials were extraordinarily competent. Some of them being military, tended to be more frank and direct than their totally civilian counterparts would be, who had come out of a different training culture or environment.

Q: Indonesia has consulates. As political counselor, did you get a change to get around the country much?

BUTCHER: One of the down sides of being political counselor, compared to my job in Malaysia for instance, was I spent a lot more time at home base dealing with visiting dignitaries, supporting the ambassador, being control officer, and other things. My staff did a lot of the really fun travels. I had some very interesting trips. I did get up to Medan, on the island of Sumatra, where we had a consulate at the time. My friend Al La Porta, who I succeeded in the political section in Kuala Lumpur in 1975, had been principal officer in Medan, but had departed before we arrive in Jakarta. While in Medan he was involved in an incident in which a deranged Indonesian officer – possibly claiming to be seeking asylum at the consul's residence – I forget the details – whacked Al on the head with a statuette; his reporting cable of the incident arrived while I was on duty in the Ops Center at the State Department. It was literally a "blow by blow" recounting of the incident!

I also made a couple of trips to Surabaya, in the province of East Java, and some travel from Surabaya back into the hinterlands of central Java.

I also made it to East Timor, which was an interesting trip. It was a "Potemkin Village" – type trip sponsored by the Indonesian Government. They arranged for four diplomats to travel out to the area: the Australian ambassador (Rawdon Dalrymple – who after Jakarta was posted as ambassador to Washington for four years), the Canadian DCM (John Scott), myself and a Filipino first secretary, a political officer. We were helicoptered all around East Timor by the Indonesian military. I think it was in early 1982. The villagers were all lined up to greet us. They kept us away from the very troublesome areas. On occasion we were able to get away from our handlers. The Canadian DCM, John Scott, and I wandered around on our own and were able to talk with some people. We saw some of the fresh graves in the cemetery. There was a lot of fighting still going on in the countryside there. It was a very sad situation. I don't know if you know much about the history of East Timor…

Q: No, I don't.

BUTCHER: It goes back to 1975 with the colonels' rebellion in Portugal, in which some leftist colonels deposed the then right-wing government. In the process of decolonization they turned over a lot of authority to leftist elements in places like Mozambique and East Timor. There were different political groups in East Timor: a pro-independence leftist group, a pro-Portugal group, one group wanted amalgamation with Indonesia. The leftist colonels turned over the armory to the left-wing separatist group, *Fretilin*, kind of an analog to the leftist *Frelimo* in Mozambique. It was a leftist branded group.

To make a long story short: in the post-Vietnam era, the last thing the Indonesian government under Suharto wanted was an unstable leftist entity in the middle of the Indonesian archipelago. The Indonesians intervened, supposedly requested by a pro-Indonesian group. The Indonesians put down the initial phase of a rebellion by force. Apparently, it was a huge muck-up. The Indonesians used paratroopers. It was a real mess, with lots of civilian casualties, and almost a scorched earth policy by the Indonesians to roust out these pro-independence leftist elements. Many of the people just wanted either to be left alone. The elites spoke Portuguese and the locals spoke local dialects like *Tetum*.

It was a real mess and went on for decades. It became kind of a colony for the Indonesian military, which got certain economic benefits, such as a monopoly of some of the trade in sandalwood and other commodities from East Timor. There were major human rights concerns about the situation. Representative Stephen "Steve" Solarz, Chairman of the Asia-Pacific Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, was particularly interested in the subject. My first contact with Solarz aide Stanley Roth was in that context. Do you know Stan Roth (who later became senior director for Asia on the NSC staff, and subsequently assistant secretary of state for East Asia and the Pacific)? When Stan came back from a trip to East Timor – I believe it was in early 1982 – he telephoned in a briefing for me from the airport. East Timor was a complicating element in our relationship for many years, with lots of atrocities attributed to the Indonesian military and pro-Indonesian militias.

There was a lot of heavy-handed Indonesian action there. The original reason for their intervention was understandable in power politics terms, but really mishandled, and led to lots of misery and suffering for East Timorese. Hundreds of thousands of East Timorese probably died, in large part as a result of disease and starvation, because of these actions.

Q: With the leadership of the mission – I don't want to say in doubt – did you have more freedom to pursue portfolios that you were interested in? Or less? How was the mission run?

BUTCHER: Do you know John Monjo at all?

Q: No.

BUTCHER: John is a consummate professional. He had served in Indonesia previously. He knew the territory and was very good to work with. We had good rapport. It was very professional, very rewarding. I was able to do things I wanted in terms of my own personal interests. I had a good team in the political section. I was able to give them options in terms of their own professional growth. I enjoyed mentoring young officers. It was a fascinating country. There was a lot of scope for action. There were things going on.

Even though Indonesia had an authoritarian government, it had a more or less open economy. We were seen as friends of Indonesia, which then gave us a certain entrée. Years later when I became office director for Indonesia, it was very clear that because we were seen by Suharto and his government as being "friends" on a strategic level with Indonesia, we were able to do things that were very intrusive in terms of human rights activities, developing ties with and promoting civil society entities.

When Suharto left, we felt we had actually gotten a good start in terms of helping nurture NGOs and other civil society entities, a hothouse effect. It was noticeable when I was out there in the 1980s that the Indonesians were very self-assured, and nationalist. They were very proud of their independent foreign policy. They didn't use the term non-aligned; they used the term independent. They were very active and had a long history in the non-alignment movement. They were in many different organizations. It was a big, sprawling, difficult to administer in the best of times, archipelago. It was a complex, often baffling, but ultimately fascinating place.

Despite his very serious flaws, Suharto had done a lot of things that were good. He restored an economy that was apparently in shambles at the time he took over in the 1960s. There was hyperinflation. Suharto recruited the so-called "Berkley Mafia" of U.S. –educated and well-regarded economists to revive the economy and get development on track. Indonesia built a lot of infrastructure, including farm to market roads. Standards of living were raised, in rural as well as urban areas. They had probably the best non-coercive family planning program in the world. There were a number of things positive. There had been a very radical foreign policy before he came to power.

After he came to power, he was one of the founders of ASEAN. Some unidentified ASEAN diplomat said that what made ASEAN work was that while Indonesia was the dominant power, it was not a domineering power within ASEAN. So it had good relations with its neighbors. There might be territorial disputes and so on, but it didn't come to clashes. The Indonesians played a responsible regional role, despite the bad things on the human rights side, both internally and with regard to East Timor and also Irian Jaya, the former Dutch New Guinea. Javanese colonization was going on there via transmigration efforts to relocate people from over-populated to less populated regions in the archipelago.

Q: In February 1983, Holdridge comes in as the ambassador. How was his style of management?

BUTCHER: He comes from a China background, East Asia focus. He had been ambassador in Singapore, so he did have some Southeast Asia background, but he didn't have deep Indonesian cultural knowledge and things like that. Professionally, he relied on his expert staff. He was a good guy to work for, but having been assistant secretary, and of a fairly formal bearing, he was not as approachable as John Monjo, whose office you could enter and chat with John on a first-name basis. It was a "Mr. Ambassador," as opposed to "John" relationship. He was a decent guy to work for, however.

Q: When he came in, he brought Rich Howland.

BUTCHER: Yes, Dick Howland.

Q: ... as DCM.

BUTCHER: Yes, Dick was an old Indonesia hand, so he knew Indonesia. Dick and I got along well. Dick was very different than John Holdridge and John Monjo in terms of his demeanor. When I arrived, you had Ed Masters, John Monjo, and me, in a chain: ambassador, DCM, and political counselor. Ed Masters had been political counselor in Jakarta. John Monjo had been political counselor. Here I am, the newbie, so I had two guys looking over my shoulder who had both held my job and lived in the same house.

One of the ironies is that I think Dick Howland had always wanted to be political counselor. There were times when we would divvy things up and he would seem to be more interested in doing the political counselor stuff, deferring some senior management activities to me in, such as senior control officer functions.

Before I left in July 1984, I was control officer for two visiting American VIPS. The first, was the visit of then Vice President George H.W. Bush, followed by the of Secretary of State George Shultz to attend the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference in Jakarta. They were both very meaty visits.

Much of the last year of my tour was planning for a state visit by President Reagan. It was a big deal. Reagan was going to come out. Advance teams arrived to prepare for the visit. When the visit was first laid on, Reagan was going to one place: Indonesia. Then pressure mounted that if he was coming out, he really should also stop in Korea and Japan. It was a typical thing. If you are going out to Asia, you might as well make a couple of stops along the way. Then, of course, not to be outdone, Marcos as leader of one of our Southeast Asia treaty allies wanted a visit to Manila. So they added that to the president's itinerary. The bases were always big issues, especially post-Vietnam, having that type of a physical foothold. The U.S. had closed down the facilities in Thailand by then, so in Southeast Asia, our access to bases in the Philippines loomed large in our regional security equation.

What happened was there was a tragedy on the tarmac at Manila International Airport: opposition figure Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino was assassinated. There were huge pressures and they cancelled the Southeast Asian portion. They kept the Northeast Asian portion.

So Reagan went ahead with his visit to Korea and Japan. Suharto was upset in a very quiet Javanese way. Reagan aide Michael Deaver was the one who came out and conveyed the news that the visit was off. Apparently, there were stories conjuring up images of Indonesian officials jumping out windows, out the back door, and so on, to avoid being the recipient of the formal bad news of the cancellation that they would have to convey to the big boss, Suharto. They all knew what Deaver was coming for. Word had already gotten out, but he was making it official, making an apology about Reagan not coming. To make a long story short, it was a very unhappy visit by Michael Deaver. Army General Benny Murdani, a powerful figure, ended up bravely manning up to meet with Deaver and receive the diplomatic equivalent of "the black queen."

Retired General Vernon Walters, with a history of diplomatic trouble-shooting came on a visit. Then Vice President George Bush came out to try and offset this damage to the relationship by the cancellation of Reagan's visit. Suharto felt Reagan was coming out for the sole purpose of visiting him. These other things were add-ons. He was going to the Philippines. The Philippines screwed it up and deep-sixed the visit. Suharto was upset with the Philippines and even more upset with us that we wouldn't go ahead with the visit. Suharto felt it wasn't he who shot Aquino, and why should his portion of the visit be cancelled.

The Bush visit was great because George Bush is a really charming person. He went out of his way to be nice. It was a good gesture. We built up lots of goodwill. I took lots of pictures of various officials. At this time, they had these little pocketsize cameras.

Q: With the film in it, you mean?

BUTCHER: Yes, as opposed to a big single lens reflex, this was a nice little portable compact thing that I could stick in my suit jacket. When we were out waiting for Bush, all these VIPs, half the government was lined up. I took pictures. I got them developed and sent then off. They just loved having pictures. I got some nice pictures of the Chief of Protocol, which was a good thing, because when George Shultz arrived, we were planeside. The phalanx of DS (Security) agents came through and knocked the Acting Chief of Protocol down the stairs. Fortunately, he didn't break anything. He wasn't injured, but talk about a nasty mishap. You work so hard to develop relationships, and then the security guys mess it up. Fortunately, I had taken pictures of some of these folks and they were very grateful, so I had good personal relations with them. I'm the one who had the role committing ritual diplomatic suicide, apologizing profusely, bowing, scraping, groveling, and so on. The Shultz visit went off well too, but still….

Q: How long were these visits? What would they have seen?

BUTCHER: They were brief. A couple or a few days and nights. The Bush visit was largely ceremonial. George Bush handled himself extraordinarily well. Very personable, friendly, sincere. It was very good. The Indonesians are very high on style and symbolism. If you do that right, then you have a much more open door for your

substantive approaches. This was a visit that was very high on symbolism, not necessarily on substance. It went a long way to making things receptive.

George Shultz stayed longer, as there were rounds of group meetings, plus bilateral meetings, involved. This was for the annual ASEAN Post- Ministerial Conference (PMC), held in Jakarta in July 1984. At that time, there were five or six countries that were members of ASEAN. Membership has now expanded. For the PMC, a number of other countries were invited to meet with ASEAN representatives - Japan, Korea, the U.S., and others, including, I believe, Australia, for meetings with ASEAN counterparts. George Shultz came and the visit was both bilateral and multilateral. He had a good visit. The Shultz visit went well.

Q: As head of the political section, I suppose you were helping direct the reporting out of the consulates? What did the consulates contribute to the mission's reporting program?

BUTCHER: They were major contributors, because traveling was not that easy. It was a sprawling area. They would cover certain issues such as Acehnese irredentism. The consulate in Surabaya would do reporting on East and Central Java, but also on East Timor. Since they were out in the provinces, they could do a lot of field reporting. They had limited staff themselves. They had secure communications facilities, so they were active contributors to the post reporting plan. Again, these were fairly small posts with only a handful of officers and support personnel

Q: While you were handling visitors, would Jogjakarta be a prime stop?

BUTCHER: Yes, for tourism.

Here's an interesting story. When Paul Wolfowitz came on an official visit as East Asia (EAP) Assistant Secretary, as part of his orientation, we took him into Central Java to Jogjakarta. While some of us went to Borobudur temple complex, he went off on his own and met with a family that his wife had stayed with. His then wife, Clare, had been on a student abroad program and stayed with a Javanese family. That was one of the things that initially interested him in Indonesia, what his wife said about having been there.

We flew down in one of the embassy's two C-12s (military utility version of a Beechcraft King Air). Another interesting trip, in a fascinating land.

Q: With that large a country, if the internal airline isn't that sophisticated, having the military C-12 available is very attractive. It frees the ambassador up.

What kind of congressional visits were you getting during this period?

BUTCHER: There was a fairly high rate of visits. Congressman Steve Solarz would pop in. Almost every holiday, we could expect to have Steve and his crew come through. He was very serious. He would come at Easter and Christmas. We would kind of groan, but he was good, a very serious guy. He usually had a good crew with him, good staffers.

Q: Indonesia wouldn't be the place you would do for your shopping congressional delegation.

BUTCHER: There was shopping. I don't remember too many of them going to Bali, but I'm sure some of them must have.

Q: What would you consider some of the main topics that the political section reported on during this time? You were there from…

BUTCHER: I was there from the summer of 1981 to the summer of 1984.

Q: Three years.

BUTCHER: We reported on a lot of internal matters, as well as foreign policy-related issues. There was a heavy dose of human rights reporting, because of a number of circumstances on the issue of an authoritarian military government and East Timor. During the last year in my tour, there were the so-called 'mysterious killings.' The local police were not very effective. Many were corrupt, sometimes suborned by some criminal elements. You had cases of petty thugs who were running rampant in various areas or jurisdictions. At a certain point, these petty thugs starting getting bumped off. Bodies would start appearing. You would hear stories about a female shopkeeper who was beaten up. The next thing you know, the person who beat her up would be found with a bullet hole in his head. This was happening over a fairly large area, especially in Java. There were indications that these were army special forces in civilian clothes going around with a list, extra-judicially killing criminals that the police were not able to deal with.

We made a number of demarches to the government on that issue with, I think, some success in terms of not being the way to deal with these things. We would often try to assist them with various types of criminal law programs and things like that. The problem that Indonesia faces, and in a number of former colonies, is that they basically inherit colonial criminal and security laws, which the rulers used against the locals, against the ruled. It didn't allow much scope for legal safeguards such as habeas corpus and due process.

Because of Indonesia's active role in international affairs, we spent a lot of time approaching them on various UN issues, the Organization of Islamic Conference, and lots of other things. We had an active line to the foreign ministry. We usually had someone going over there daily on some issue or another.

Q: Did you also work closely with some of the other embassies in town on certain reporting issues? If so, whom did you work with?

BUTCHER: We worked very closely with the Australians and the Swiss on matters like East Timor. Back at the time when the Indonesians invaded then Portuguese Timor in

1975, several Australian journalists were killed. The circumstances were unclear, but there was some feeling that they had seen too much and had been executed by the Indonesian military. Timor has a special role in Australian eyes, because the Timorese were very helpful in World War Two. If you look at the geography, apparently there were Timorese who helped downed Australian pilots, and things like that. So there's always been a special concern in Australia for well-being of the people of East Timor. The Aussies were very interested in observance of human rights there.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was playing a significant role in trying to deal with human rights abuses, and had decent standing with the Indonesian government. Their findings were confidential, and shared with the Indonesian government and not made public. The ICRC also focused on status of political detainees and a number of other issues.

We would have meetings with the Swiss and certain Indonesian NGOs that were closely connected to the Indonesian government who could work informal channels. With the Indonesians, the official government entities may not be really cut into the action, and you would work through certain… One of the interesting things was that Suharto in many cases would use people who were not threats to him to do his work. He might have a key ministry held by an outer islander, with the assumption being it would only be a Javanese Muslim who would succeed him.

Another key officer was Benny Murdani, the long-time armed forces head and later defense minister, who was a Javanese Christian. I think he was a Jesuit-educated Catholic. His full name was Leonardus Benjamin Murdani. I believe he had led the special operations forces going into Timor; in any case he and some of his key aides had central roles in ongoing East Timor operations. He was a really tough guy. One on occasion he led a raid where apparently some terrorists took over an Indonesian airliner and high jacked it to Bangkok. Murdani reportedly personally led the Indonesian special operation that freed the hostages. When it was over, there were no live terrorists. They were seen being led away by Murdani and his group alive, but they ended up not alive. In sum, Murdani was a pretty tough customer.

We had some lines through some close to him, including in think tanks with ties to the government, to encourage him to improve circumstances in East Timor. We tried to work what angles and levers we could. A lot of it was working through the Red Cross (ICRC), so we had very frequent meetings. I was involved in a number of these, trying to move the ball forward in improving conditions in East Timor. That was one major area of collaboration.

The Brits and others would occasionally get involved. The core group consisted of the Swiss, the Australians, and us.

Q: I would suspect that illustrates the point that the embassy is there to gain the information it needs from all sources, not just from the foreign ministry.

BUTCHER: Yes, we would work with many different groups.

There were various human rights advocates, worker rights advocates, and we maintained very close ties with them and various other elements not associated with the government, Muslim representatives, etc. Abdurrahman Wahid, a well-known moderate Islamic leader – head of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Islamic organization - was one of my contacts, attended functions at my residence, and later became president of Indonesia. He was a very wonderful Muslim. Unfortunately, he was ineffectual as president, but a wonderful person. He represented the very best of tolerant Islam, but someone who was seen as a devout Muslim. There were some really interesting people and it was a very interesting country. In all the countries I served in, it is the one I felt when I left I had just scratched the surface of, and had only the smallest understanding of how the place really worked.

Q: When one has the national day celebrations, you work up a guest list that goes to everybody you ever knew. Were there any other devices that the embassy used to keep its tentacles out and keep in touch with people?

BUTCHER: One of the matters that led to some creative tension our USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) colleagues related to our efforts to get our political officers out into the boonies to visit various areas, to make sure we weren't being city-bound and receiving circular information from the usual suspects. There were certain areas that were not easy to get to. You had to get a certain type of government-issued *surat jalan* – literally travel letter, a laissez-passer kind of thing, a permission to go into a certain area. There were some travel controls for embassies. Political sections are often looked on askance as CIA operatives or what have you. We were trying to gather information and get a sense of what the dynamics were in the country. It was best done by fieldwork.

Often, we would get someone out to a remote area. They would call on local officials and say they were so happy to be able to represent the embassy. People would say, well you've got aid people here all the time.

What we found out was there were often AID people working on projects with access all over the country. Many of them were well trained program officers with political science and economic type educational background, but they wouldn't in any way sully or taint themselves by suggesting they talked to the political section about their findings. Occasionally, during national elections, I would brief the AID director, Bill Fuller, who later became the head of the Asia Foundation. We got along personally very well. It was just that they marched to their own drummers. Getting them integrated into embassy reporting was always an uphill battle.

We would brief USAID officers on the elections and some of the things we were looking for, and exhort them to support our efforts as fellow team players. These were often highly controlled events, but they still had their own dynamics that were interesting to follow. It was like an injection of gamma globulin or something: it would have maximum impact at the time it was delivered, and it would wear off after a number of months.

People would say we were out in such-and-such area and here is what we observed. Then it would die out. Then we would have to re-inoculate the patient, hoping to get more reporting.

Speaking of travels, and getting outside Jakarta to visit the outer islands as they were called, to places such as East Timor, one of my most memorable experiences was traveling late in my tour with our consul, Patricia "Pat" Wazer, to Indonesia's easternmost province, Irian Jaya, former Dutch New Guinea, in January 1984. Because if its remoteness, and concerns about all the red tape involved, American missionary groups there decided it would be more practical for them to pay the way for Pat to visit them on-site, rather than go to the embassy in Jakarta, for renewal of passports and other citizen services. So these groups paid for her travel by mission aircraft within the province. I went along to be able to observe and report on developments there. It was an extensive trip, from almost one end of the province to another, starting out and returning to the provincial capital of Jayapura (formerly Hollandia during Dutch times). We flew on small Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) aircraft into the interior, landing on small dirt strips, some quite hazardous. Our first encounters with the indigenous people in the highlands, the Danis, was striking; the women and young girls wearing only grass (actually strips of bark) skirts, and the men and young mean wearing gourds, *kotekas*. To keep warm in the cool upland climate they slathered themselves with pig fat. We came away impressed with the dedication of the missionaries, providing teaching and medical services in extraordinarily remote outposts, reachable only by these small aircraft, and often socked-in by fog and bad weather. The MAF office at the airport in Jayapura had wall covered with plaques for pilots who died servicing these mission stations. We also had the opportunity to visit the American company, Freeport-McMoRan's impressive Grasberg copper mine at Tembagapura, near Timika in a remote part of the interior, an engineering marvel.

Throughout our travels in Irian Jaya we came across remnants of WW II – rusting Sherman tank hulks on a beach near Jayapura, concrete slabs and parts of equipment and furnishings from General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters near Jayapura, transiting the airport at Biak, a small island site of major fighting, and hearing about three U.S.P-38 "Lightening" fighters that had crash-landed, presumably after running out of fuel, sometimes visible in shallow water off the north coast. When we flew by helicopter up the mountains above the Freeport mine we could see the remains strewn down the mountainside of a Royal Australian Air Force C-47 transport that had hit the mountain due to faulty elevation charts; the RAAF markings were still clearly visible. Our helicopter pilot, an Air America veteran of the Vietnam War, described his experiences flying over the rain forests, up the mountains with their cascading waterfalls and glacier above, as "magic." Sadly, we learned he was killed in a crash in bad weather while trying to rescue some stranded Freeport geologists.

Q: What was Jakarta like as a Foreign Service family posting?

BUTCHER: We had a very nice house, centrally located. As noted earlier, it was embassy-owned, and designated as the political counselor's residence. It was great for

our access to diplomatic functions. Jakarta is a big sprawling city with lots of traffic problems. Our children were at school some distance away. The elementary school was closer, but once our kids went to middle or high school, it was really some distance away for those of us who were housed in central Jakarta. We missed evening school functions on a number of occasions, because there would be a slight shower, which would cause some flooding, and traffic would be so backed up we would arrive an hour and a half after the even started. The kids would have to go long distances in pretty foul air in non-air-conditioned buses. It was harder on the kids in some regards than it was on us.

We did have opportunities to get around and travel. We had some memorable family vacations. For spring break and Easter vacation of 1982, we went with some friends, a graduate school classmate of mine from SAIS, Jay Parsons and his family. Jay was a fluent Indonesian speaker who had been there for a couple of years, involved in family planning programs supporting government efforts. We drove out to Bandung, toured the Bandung area, including a dormant volcano (*Tangkuban Perahu*) with its sulphur odor and bubbling mud hot springs, and then we went to various cultural sites. We met up with a friend of his who was a USAID contractor. Again, he knew the locale well. We went to visit a Sundanese puppet maker. We saw puppet shows and local dancing, really fascinating stuff. The ethnic and linguistic group in West Java is Sundanese. The Javanese are in Central Java.

At the end of a long day of cultural activities and sightseeing, we checked into a local motel, which unbeknownst to us, was at the foot of an active volcano, Mount Galunggung, which erupted on us. We ended up joining tens of thousands of refugees fleeing this volcanic eruption. We had just put the kids to bed. The aid contractor was telling a story about some magic beads. We were all gathered around, sitting in chairs. My wife told me she could swear her chair shook, but she didn't want to say anything, because people would think she was really getting into this magic beads story!

When we got back to the motel where we were staying, a fairly modern motel with corrugated steel roofing. We heard something going clink, clink, clink on the metal roof. We heard what sounded like thunder. I guess I was sitting with one of my kids. She said what's that Dad? I said it sounds like hail. Plus the sound of thunder – I reminded her that even in the tropics occasionally you can get hail in a severe thunderstorm. However, as it turned out, it was volcanic pumice coming down from the eruption. Suddenly, all the lights went off. There was a banging on the door. Someone said they are evacuating the motel. The volcano is erupting. We came out. The air smelled of sulphur. It was a mixture of rain and volcanic ash coming down, almost like it was raining mud, with small pebbles mixed in.

What happened is that updraft from the eruption, plus the humid tropical air, created a thunderstorm above the volcano. Then there was hail and all this other crud came down. So my wife who sees better at night, drove our Toyota station wagon, with our three daughters in the back seat. I was leaning out of the car, wiping this muddy slop that's coming down onto the windshield and obscuring visibility. The first thing that happened was we hit this huge traffic jam. Everyone is lined up at a petrol station. As one of the

people said where we were staying said, oh yes, they only keep a thimble full of gas in their tank at any time. So they all had to go and fill up so they could go more than a few miles.

We joined this cortege of thousands of people, many with all their belongings on their heads, fleeing the town. Extremely impressive was how orderly everything was, with Indonesian boy scouts called "*Pramuka*" helping direct traffic. There were some fatalities from the eruption, but apparently none from panic – the rural folk were impressive in their calm in the face of nature's wrath. We ended up going 20 miles away, a safe distance from the volcano, where we spent the night at a USAID guesthouse. Later the next day we were able to retrieve our bags, intact, from the motel, where they had been left in the care of the motel staff. Another Foreign Service experience for the kids.

It was a huge eruption. It the ash cloud from the eruptions subsequently caused two jumbo jets flying at 37,000 feet or so to make emergency landings. The jets got some of the stuff in their engines, and were forced to land.

Continuing our travels, we spent some time at an idyllic site where the jungle intersected with a secluded, pristine beach on the southeast coast of West Java. It was a wildlife sanctuary, and protected area.

One of my daughters had a phobia about volcanoes before we went to Indonesia. In fact, I remember driving outside of Jakarta one day shortly after our arrival in Jakarta. There was a typical conical shaped mountain, characteristic of a volcano. She said Daddy, that's not a volcano, is it? I said reassuringly, oh no, it's just a volcano-shaped hill!

We also enjoyed family outings to stay at the ambassador's place at the Puncak (literally, the "summit") in the cool highlands south of Jakarta, as well as stays at Carita Beach, on the west coast on the Sunda Straits where we could see smoke rising from "Anak Krakatoa" ("child of Krakatoa") - another volcano! Interestingly, the beaches often were covered with rounded pieces of soft volcanic pumice. An interesting sidebar is that in early 1982, survivors of the USS HOUSTON, an American cruiser sunk early in World War II, visited Indonesia on the 40th anniversary of the Battle of the Sunda Straits. At a reception at the ambassador's residence in their honor one of them told me several survivors had gone into the local jail where they were held by the Japanese after their capture.

Overall, despite significant downsides, the family enjoyed Indonesia. It was a fascinating place. We used to take the kids to the tropical fish market, with its colorful tropical and saltwater aquariums. When I was in Malaysia, I took up scuba diving. We had a lot of outings on converted fishing boats for scuba diving and snorkeling at *Pulau Seribuan* – Thousand Islands – a location 20 or so miles north of Jakarta sprinkled with small islands, mostly uninhabited, but with beautiful beaches and coral reefs. The kids would snorkel. I, with some of the other adults, would scuba dive. Great outings. We would bring along picnic food and beer, collect shells, and when I bought a battery-powered small air pump I was able to help populate our saltwater fish tank with fish, plus little sea

creatures like blue starfish, sea snails, etc. Lots of fun for adults and kids. Overall, we enjoyed the place. Jakarta was difficult at times, but it was enjoyable too, as were the many scenic and cultural sites throughout Indonesia. We particularly enjoyed our several visits to Bali, with its unique Hindu culture and spectacular scenery. A magical place.

Q: No monkeys in the yard?

BUTCHER: No, but other forms of wildlife. One evening I got peed on by a civet cat through the attic. My wife and I were getting ready for an evening function, and while standing in our bedroom suddenly a stream of water came through the ceiling and drenched me. When I smelled the pungent odor I realized it wasn't water. Later we observed a family of civet cats clambering up a frangipani tree onto our roof. We had the general services office at the embassy clear them out. We also had a rat living on the premises the size of a raccoon. The kids would be riding their bikes in our driveway and would have to wait for the rat to cross.

Q: Was the Vietnamese refugee situation still sputtering along?

BUTCHER: There was a Vietnamese refugee camp on Galang Island not far from Singapore. Do you know Dan Sullivan and his wife Margaret? They have both been very active in Asian affairs and Asia Society, and so on. Dan ran the refugee program for both Indonesia and Singapore. He was based in Singapore. He ran it out of Singapore because the access to Galang Island was easier to get to by fast launch from Singapore. As political counselor, he actually reported to me. It was kind of an odd thing. We had active involvement in refugee affairs. A lot of the refugees, so-called "boat people," would rescued at sea by ship, including by U.S. navy vessels, and be offloaded in Singapore for temporary housing. We and others in the international community gave the Singapore Government guarantees they would be moved out in a set period of time. They then would be relocated to Galang, designated as a regional refugee transit facility, pending permanent resettlement elsewhere, mostly in the U.S., Europe and Australia. Others who came ashore elsewhere in Indonesia would be brought to Galang, where they would be processed for international resettlement. That was indeed still a major issue and continued for a number of years as boat people continued to leave Vietnam

Q: So the refugee coordinator worked for the political section or was in the political section?

BUTCHER: The refugee coordinator was not in the political section, per se, but I was his rater. It was an odd thing. The dynamics were that the facility was in Indonesia and it was appropriate to assess his job. He would make frequent visits to Jakarta. I would host functions for refugee personalities in the government and other countries. The section was involved in this as a political issue, but the operational side was handled largely by Dan Sullivan and his team. Interestingly, some of the same people we worked with in the government – at the MFA, with the military, and with think tanks, and the ICRC, were the same individuals we worked with on East Timor matters.

Q: You mentioned hosting various activities for set groups. How were the representational funds for the political section?

BUTCHER: They were adequate. We were a busy section and we parceled out the funds. I think they were adequate. It wasn't just for the political counselor. We all entertained. We had decent attendance by the Indonesians, as well as by third country personnel, diplomats, NGO representatives, etcetera.

Q: At these events, you had good Indonesian government representation attendance?

BUTCHER: Again, the officials were busy, with more invitations than they could handle. A lot of this depended on your personal relations as to who showed up. The other thing that I and a number of my colleagues, especially those who spoke Indonesian, would really have to work hard at the ambassador's parties. When John Monjo was there, as chargé, and later when he reverted to his role as DCM, because he was an old Indonesia hand and he recognized a lot of people, so that worked out pretty well. When John Holdridge was there, because he wasn't an old Indonesia hand, we had to make sure we intercepted VIPs as they were walking up the driveway or up the walkway so we could introduce them to the ambassador and other guests. They would have a habit of not introducing themselves. Again, it's the non-demonstrative nature of Indonesians. You might find someone coming up, dressed just like every other Indonesian, who is a senior minister. There would be no retinue. He would just amble up along in the midst of other guests, perhaps with a human rights advocate, a military officer or others. You had to make sure they got appropriate attention. Even though they are not demonstrative, Indonesians are also very sensitive to slights. The onus is on you to make sure that you treat them appropriately, but it starts with recognition of whom they are.

Q: Who was one of the guys who was the most fun to work with on the Indonesian side?

BUTCHER: There were a number of Indonesians who were really interesting people to work with. I'm not sure the words fun to work with would apply, because you're talking about a non-demonstrative people. There were a number of Indonesians who I have kept up with. One of the other things too is that unlike Malaysia, where Chinese have their Chinese name, in Indonesia they almost all have Indonesian names.

When I was in Malaysia, I had lunch one time with a group of politicians and a visiting Chinese think tank official, Liem Bian Kie. Later, people were talking about Jusuf Wanandi. I didn't realize until I got to Indonesia that Jusuf Wanandi and Liem Bian Kie were one of the same; many Indonesian Chinese have Indonesian as well as Chinese names. I see him periodically. I last saw him a couple of years ago in Washington. I've seen him in Malaysia at conferences. I met him in the 1970s in Malaysia with some mutual acquaintances, Malaysian Chinese political figures, so I've known him for well over 40 years. He's a very interesting guy. He is Christian Chinese, extraordinarily bright, learned, and well plugged into Indonesian developments. Years later I would attend annual Asia-Pacific security conferences in Malaysia. After hours, they would little bull sessions headed by different people with different specialties. Jusuf Wanandi

would have something on a topic like Indonesia and the South China Sea. I would always make a point of going to it, because I always learned something. He is a very sharp guy. He has an absolutely wonderful Indonesian art collection, some of which was damaged when they had an explosion at ammunition dump some years ago. Projectiles were flying through his bedroom.

There are people like that. I bumped into them from year to year, plus the people you meet. For example, there were other third country diplomats. My Australian counterpart in Jakarta, the Australian political counselor, was Dennis Richardson. Later, Dennis was the Australian ambassador here. Dennis is now the senior career official in the foreign ministry in Canberra (subsequent to the interview Dennis moved to Defense, where as of 2015 he holds the similar top job there). Earlier, Dennis served as a top aide to the prime minister, and also headed their equivalent of what I understand would be the rough equivalent of a combined FBI/CIA, the Australian special intelligence office. You meet people like this in your career; outstanding, motivated individuals who rise to top levels of their foreign ministries and government.

Similarly, in the Foreign Service you meet some excellent journalists over the years. A number of them have become good friends, such as my friend Hari Subramaniam – known as Maniam, who headed the Associated Press in Kuala Lumpur on both my assignments to Malaysia. Another I've encountered over the years is Susumu Awanahara, who I met in Jakarta when he was a correspondent with the Far East Economic Review. He is now in the U.S. Others included the late Barry Wain, who wrote for the Asian Wall Street Journal and publicized the plight of the Vietnamese refugees in both his articles and in a book, The Refused. He also wrote an acclaimed book on Prime Minister Mahathir, which I need to read sometime.

There are lots of interesting people that you collaborate with. In some cases, you mentor; in some cases, they mentor you. Sometimes the people you find who are very interesting are the ones you are working with in the State Department.

Your colleagues are as interesting, if not more interesting sometimes, than the people in the host country.

Q: Your next assignment was in Washington. How did you organize that? Was that in the summer cycle of 1984 that you went to PolMil?

BUTCHER: Yes. Why don't we draw this session to a close now? I'll think more about that next time around.

Q: Excellent.

BUTCHER: Both of us have been talking for about three hours.

On to the Politico-Military Bureau

Q: Good morning. It's May 13th, 2011, and we are returning to our conversation with Scott Butcher.

Scott, we last finished up your tour in Indonesia. After Indonesia, you've come back to the Department of State in a job that we don't often get a chance to talk about. That's a job in a functional bureau, as opposed to regional bureaus or being out in the field.

In the summer of 1984, you were the Deputy Director of the Office of Regional Affairs in the Political-Military Bureau. How did you get that job? What intrigued you about it?

BUTCHER: I had been interested in political-military affairs through some of the other work that I had done, both as political section head in Malaysia and then as political counselor. Of the jobs that were coming open, it sounded very interesting. What made it more interesting in a sense, although I was coming back to work for Robert Gallucci, a highly regarded political-military expert. Coincidentally, Air Force Lieutenant General John "Jack" Chain, who had just been named to head the PM Bureau, was included on Secretary Shultz's delegation to the July ASEAN Post-ministerial conference in Jakarta, so I was able to meet my new boss. Although I was unsuccessful in getting General Chain included in the dinner Suharto hosted for delegation heads at the presidential palace, he never seemed to hold that against me and we always had a friendly relationship, as evidenced when I attended his staff meetings whenever I was acting office director.

My family and I traveled back to the U.S. shortly after Secretary Shultz's visit. We arrived in Seattle, did some sightseeing in the area, and then drove our rental car on a tour of national parks, starting with Glacier, and wending our way down through Wyoming via Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons/Jackson Hole to Rocky Mountain National Park, and then to Denver to drop off the rental car and fly on to home leave with relatives in the Midwest. Once again our family enjoyed the side benefits of traveling to and from our postings.

When I arrived back in Washington, the Politico-Military Bureau decided to rearrange the furniture, as it were. You can do this in a functional bureau. It's easier than you can in a geographic bureau that is wedded to countries. They moved things around and created what they called an Office of International Security Policy, PM/ISP. Basically, they halved off the part of the office responsible for the Middle East, reflecting the high pace of activities in that crisis-prone region. Bob Gallucci became responsible for Middle Eastern Affairs, and his deputy Pat Theros followed the NEA (Near East/South Asia) region. The other office, PM/ISP, was left with Asia-Pacific, Africa, Latin America, and some European accounts.

We worked very closely with the security assistance people in tracking and formulation of policy on a number of regional areas. We had a regional security function and worked very closely with the various bureaus and country desks, depending on the issues.

Among the principal issues we dealt with on the day I arrived was the New Zealand port access flap, of all things, over access by U.S. nuclear-powered or nuclear weapons-capable ships. It was hard to explain to my wife that I was coming home late because of the New Zealand crisis. It was almost an oxymoron. The issue was that the Kiwis came down with a bad case of nuclear neuralgia. They felt that they did not want to be threatened by nuclear issues, and they could cut themselves loose from some of the ANZUS alliance responsibilities. The U.S. approach was that in the Cold War, big countries and little countries bound together, and thereby forged quite a strong deterrent coalition against communist expansionism. The Kiwis didn't seem to catch on to that. So we spent a lot of time trying to persuade them of the importance of their role and their responsibilities as part of a coalition of free nations. In a sense, they wanted to stop the world and get off.

Q: How did the Kiwis express this? Actually, they just had an election. So was this an announcement, or did it become law right away? What was the process?

BUTCHER: It was part of the new government headed by Prime Minister David Lange and his anti-nuclear platform, which sought to keep either nuclear-armed or nuclear-powered vessels out of New Zealand's ports and waters. This ran against our NCND policy; i.e., of neither confirming nor denying whether or not we had nuclear weapons aboard our nuclear capable ships, a key element of our deterrence policy. This dispute went on for years. It lasted after I left my three-year tour in PM/ISP. We spent a lot of time trying to work with them, trying to persuade them, trying to find some kind of a *modus vivendi* that would allow us to have continued access, without really causing them major heartburn. As it turned out, it wasn't to come to pass because they were too wedded to a non-nuclear ideology.

Q: This would have meant working in close contact with the Asia-Pacific Bureau, and probably the NSC (National Security Council).

BUTCHER: We had many inter-agency meetings. We worked closely with the Joint Staff, OSD (Office of the Secretary of Defense), EAP (Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs) as the responsible regional bureau, and with the NSC staff – this was a major preoccupation for all of us. It did keep me awake late at night, working with the senior leadership. I remember one time catching undersecretary for political affairs Mike Armacost when it was probably going on midnight. He was putting in some late hours and I caught him at his Seventh Floor executive elevator just as he was leaving. He was able to sign off on a cable to the British. We were working very closely with them. The British had their own very close ties with New Zealand. We all hoped they could use some of their influence to turn the New Zealanders around. Unfortunately, it was for naught.

Q: It must have been frustrating after a while. Here is one of one's best allies since World War Two, and you don't seem to be able to convince them that at some point somebody in the bureaucracy probably got upset with them.

BUTCHER: In reality, the New Zealand military was aghast about all of this. They kept trying to work through their system to educate the politicians, in terms of what this all meant. We had all kinds of direct and indirect approaches from a variety of sources. Ultimately, they have a military that is like ours that is subordinate to civilian control. Their military did not succeed in turning their politicians around.

Q: The British were an actor, and I would assume the Australians were also an actor.

BUTCHER. Yes. In fact, during my time as deputy office director, we had the annual ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty) meetings. We had the first one without New Zealand present at the Presidio in San Francisco, where we met with the Australians, but not the Kiwis. That was the first time that the New Zealanders were not involved. We had the Australian ministers of foreign affairs and defense, and our counterparts, Secretary Shultz and Defense Secretary Weinberger. It was more in sorrow that in anger that we had to proceed with the alliance with one of its keystones missing. The New Zealanders never really realized how important we considered them. They just kept saying, we are a small country off in our own little corner of the South Pacific, and we don't want to be embroiled in some of these nasty issues. Just count us out.

They were surprised how much we missed them in a sense.

Q: They were penalized. We withdrew certain areas of cooperation. Was that an inter-agency decision?

BUTCHER: Yes, it was very carefully modulated. Again, you can't have an alliance if there are not reciprocal responsibilities. Our view was that they were not carrying out their reciprocal responsibilities. There were a number of areas where in terms of military collaboration and cooperation that we basically stopped that kind of robust interaction. There were still some contacts, but they were at a much lower level. Invitations were not extended to high military leadership, and so on. Again, it was unfortunate, because the military were the ones who were the most upset with their government. But that's the way things often operate.

Q: Let's back up a moment. Can you put your office in perspective in terms of the whole bureau? Who is the head of the office? How big is it? How does the bureau run?

BUTCHER: Kind of starting from the top and working down – as mentioned before, the bureau was headed by Lieutenant General John "Jack" Chain, an Air Force General who later received a fourth star and headed the Strategic Air Command (SAC) He was supported by Arnold "Arnie" Kantor, who was the PDAS (principal deputy assistant secretary). Thomas "Ted" McNamara was the deputy assistant secretary who we worked most closely with. I personally worked with him on the New Zealand issue. Richard A. "Dick" Clark, a civil service officer, who also sat in the front office, in many regards served functionally as a deputy assistant secretary, but without the formal title – as I recall PM already had the maximum number of deputies it could have. We worked with

The PM/ISP office director when I arrive was Rand "Randy" Beers, a former Foreign Service Officer who converted to the Civil Service. He was subsequently in a number of security related positions through his career. His senior deputy was Charles "Charlie" Duelfer. There were two deputies: Charlie Duelfer and myself. Charlie had Africa and Latin America; I had the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean portfolios, including Diego Garcia, as well as the nuclear and port access type issues, plus aviation issues such as diplomatic clearances for foreign state aircraft overflying or landing in the U.S.

The office comprised two teams, each headed by one of the deputy office directors. I had a four-person team working for me. I had two serving military officers: a full Air Force Colonel, Weston T. "Ted" Smith, who was a decorated combat veteran of Vietnam. I realized in rereading his biography recently that he was a winner of the Air Force Cross, which is for the Air Force is second only to the Medal of Honor. He also had the Distinguished Flying Cross, and so on as a forward air observer, flying little light planes as a spotter for U.S. air and artillery strikes on enemy positions. The second military officer was a Navy Commander. His name was William F. "Bill" Hickman. Bill later went off and was commander of a FFG-7, a small guided missile frigate – non-nuclear capable, I might add. I also had two Foreign Service Officers working for me. Charles "Chuck" Kartman, who was responsible for Northeast Asia: China, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea issues (and later in his career was an ambassador, responsible for aspects of our North Korea policy). Nancy Boshoven handled Southeast Asia. Chuck Kartman moved on at one point, and he was replaced by Richard "Rick" De Villafranca who handled that same portfolio. I was fortunate to have such an outstanding team of dedicated officers to work with, both military and civilian.

Frankly, we worked hard, but had a lot of fun. The PM front office seemed appreciative of our efforts. We were not by far overstaffed. Interestingly, a number of the functions that we handled are now handled by several offices in the current PM bureau. We had active portfolios, lots of responsibilities, long hours, but high morale. It was very interesting work.

In addition to the New Zealand issue, we had the evolving Philippine crisis, including the last months of the Marcos regime, and his downfall. Cory Aquino, Benigno Aquino's widow won the election, but pro-Marcos elements tried to pull the plug on it. But she won by too much of a margin, and with two many local and foreign observers on hand, for the Marcos regime to enforce a fraudulent outcome. When they tried, the people took to the streets in what later became known as the EDSA Movement (for a major thoroughfare where protesters thronged). The subsequent turmoil led Marcos downfall, as his military failed to follow his orders to quell the protests. It was a hectic but fascinating period, working very closely with our EAP (East Asia and Pacific Affairs) colleagues.

In fact, during the crisis itself, one of the interesting moments was being in the Ops Center with the Philippines Task Force and watching the split screen television. That was during the early days of CNN's live coverage. Here on one screen we had Marcos saying, we are going to hang in there. I've given orders to the (Filipino) marines and they are going to crack down on this illegal activity.

At the same time, on the other screen, you saw the marines with flowers being stuck in the barrels of their tank guns. Then Phil Habib, who had a booming voice that I'm sure they heard in Manila, saying, "He's lost it!" It was a very dramatic moment in time. Phil Habib at the time was Under-Secretary for Political Affairs in the building. It was a very interesting period.

Q: Were you part of the Philippine Task Force?

BUTCHER: Yes.

Q: So did your office have to staff if?

BUTCHER: The Task Force was headed by EAP. I was occasionally the acting director. The formal director was Paul Wolfowitz. John Maisto was the Philippines' office director, and Thomas "Tom" Hubbard was his deputy. Robert "Bob" Rich, a senior officer who had served in the Philippines, assisted, as I recall. We worked very closely with Paul Wolfowitz. He had chaired a number of inter-agency meetings on the Philippines that I attended representing PM. These regular meetings involved a major review of Philippine policy. Attendees included representatives from Defense, Joint Staff, the NSC staff, and others. (As a humorous sidebar, Joint Staff was represented by Rear Admiral Anthony "Tony" Less, or his deputy, Colonel Al Moore, a marine. One day, when the others had gathered in the EAP conference room for one of these sessions, someone asked who would be coming from Joint Staff – Moore or Less. It was a straightforward question and the place broke up with spontaneous laughter. Funny juxtaposition of last names. Reminiscent of Bill Wright and Kam Wong having adjacent offices at the Embassy in Rangoon or Blood, Kilgore and Butcher serving together in Dhaka). The review had been going on almost indefinitely, with no end in sight. What happened was it allowed for thorough inter-agency discussion of the issues and airing of multiple options. So when the you-know-what hit the fan, everyone had been working closely together, knew the issues, and knew each other. In retrospect it was an excellent example of a policy review process working. I think Wolfowitz did an outstanding job. I have been an admirer ever since have Paul and his human rights perspectives. Although he is very conservative in some of his worldview, he is very pro-human rights, which has been a key element of his thinking over a number of years. He was able to convince a very conservative Reagan Administration, which felt we should not turn our back on Marcos as a long-term U.S. ally, to change U.S. policy. I think Wolfowitz did an excellent job of pointing out that this was something that had to be done. It was in our interests. It was in the Filipinos interests, certainly. It was very well handled, from the standpoint of the U.S. Government role.

We did help extricate Marcos and avoided further bloodshed, although it led to some interesting times in terms of the Marcos party and their access to the commissary in Hawaii when they were there. There were all kinds of funny tales about that.

Q: Did she [Imelda Marcos] want some more shoes?

BUTCHER: I'm sure she did. There were some questions as to who gave certain authorizations. Nancy Boshoven had been doing a lot of liaising with the NSC on the issue. I told her that the next time a person at the NSC gives authorization, in this case it happened to be Richard "Dick" Childress, a lieutenant colonel holding a portfolio for East Asia and the Pacific that was equivalent to that held by at the NSC by marine Lieutenant Colonel Oliver "Ollie" North of Iran/Contra infamy – I think you may know Dick – make sure you get that individual's credit card number! There were some questions as to who was picking up the tab for the commissary bills the Marcos party was running up in Hawaii. It was another element in the ongoing Marcos saga.

Q: How was that organized? Did the U.S. plane come into Manila?

BUTCHER: We had Brigadier General Teddy Allen, who was the head of our JUSMAG (Joint US Military Advisory Group). He was our senior security assistance officer in Manila, a cigar-smoking one-star army general.

They came in with some big helicopters, probably CH-53s, and took the Marcos party out of Malacañang Palace, the presidential residence. I think they initially flew them out to one of base facilities – I'm not sure if it was Clark or Subic. From there, they went by fixed-wing aircraft to Guam and on to Hawaii.

Q: Staying with the Philippines for a little bit, the U.S. had quite a few political-military issues with them. As you said, the big bases, Subic and Clark Air Force Base. Even before this started, those must have been high profile issues that your office dealt with and coordinated with the Pentagon on.

BUTCHER: Yes. Because the Philippines is one of our two Southeast Asian treaty allies, the other being Thailand, through the former SEATO Pact (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), we had lots of interest. Also, it's a former colony and there are very close family and other ties with the Philippines. They fought with us in World War Two; unlike other colonial powers at the time of the Japanese invasion the U.S. already had promised the Filipinos their independence. Hence Filipino troops fought with valor alongside our troops. The Philippine Scouts were legendary, and those and others who escaped capture, along with some regular U.S. military personnel, conducted guerilla warfare against the Japanese during the occupation.

Interestingly, a trip to the Philippines came relatively early in this assignment. I had not been in the Philippines in quite a few years. I had been to a Consular conference in Manila in January 1968, when I was stationed in Rangoon, but had not been there since. In January 1985, actually early inaugural day morning for the second Reagan administration, an exceptionally frigid day that I learned later had led to inaugural functions being held indoors, I joined Chuck Kartman on a navy mission to China headed by an assistant secretary of the navy. Chuck, who was going along as a State Department/PM Bureau representative to the ultimate destination of China, was able to get me aboard on a space-available basis.

We flew on a Navy C-9, a DC-9 equivalent, out of the naval air station at Andrews, which I hadn't realized was there. We puddle-hopped to Texas, then to Almeida, California, remaining overnight at the naval air station there. We were then off to Hawaii, where we had some consultations, overnighting at the submarine base at Pearl Harbor.

We flew off, puddle-hopping again, across the Pacific. We flew to Wake Island, where we stretched our legs and walked around, looking at the markers commemorating action there in WWII. We then flew on to Guam where we spent a couple of days, and I scuba-dived with some the Navy officers. (A funny sidebar from that outing was the navy guys had left their military IDs behind, so I got them into the local PX by using my State Department ID!) While on Guam we observed B-52s flying out of Anderson Air Base nearby. Loud, and not exactly stealthy, but impressive. We then flew on to the naval air station at Subic Bay, called Cubi Point, in the Philippines, where we spent a few days for briefings.

The rest of the party flew on to China with Assistant Secretary of the Navy Melvin Paisley, a highly decorated World War Two navy fighter ace, who was leading this delegation for military to military talks with the Chinese. Later, Paisley was convicted for some wrongdoing while in office, and ended his career in a federal prison, a sad outcome for a war hero.

As I said, I hitched a ride. When the delegation departed, I stayed on and went on to Manila for consultations. I took the opportunity of that visit to go down to Davao del Sur city on the island of Mindanao, where the New People's Army, a communist insurgent movement, was very active. There were Philippine military there. I saw shot up trucks on one base from some clashes they had with NPA elements. Davao was a very depressed and depressing place. The communists were making inroads. There were human rights atrocities on both sides. Communist graffiti was on the walls. Business had ground to a halt. It was really a very sad place. There were all kinds of human rights violations. I met with human rights NGOs. They were very upset at what was happening on both sides – with the insurgents' atrocities and the government repression against the insurgents and their alleged supporters. It was a pretty sad situation.

There was also the overhang of the by then very unpopular authoritarian Marcos regime, which had been in power clearly too long. There was a lot of crony capitalism. Marcos had given monopoly status to business owned by his cronies and relatives. It was a corrupt and a pretty sad situation for the Filipino people.

A couple of years later, I went back out there following a security assistance conference in Manila, after Marcos and his cronies lost their hold on power, political and economic (Congressman Solarz had famously described the Marcos regime as a "kleptocracy." The new government had broken up the coconut monopoly, among others. I went back to Davao City and the difference was palpable. The place was cleaned up. The markets were thriving. Human rights violations were still happening, but at a much reduced level. Because of the breakup of the coconut monopoly, the smallholders were getting much

better prices for their products, with almost immediate impact on the local economy. It was amazing. Buildings were freshly painted. Communist graffiti had disappeared. The difference in two years was like night and day. It was a memorable experience.

Bases remained an issue. Security assistance was an issue. We were dealing with a government that was democratic but weak, and facing what was still a very nasty Communist insurgency, despite the change of government. It was easier for us to get congressional support for aid to a democratic regime than it was for assistance to the former authoritarian regime, however.

Q: Did your office get into the security assistance issues?

BUTCHER: Yes. The office was somewhat of a misnomer. It was called the Office of International Security Policy, PM/ISP, but we also had a lot of operational responsibilities. The reality was that it was right next to the bureau's security assistance office physically, so we could walk back and forth through a back corridor and work very closely with our counterparts in the Office of Security Assistance and Sales (PM/SAS). PM/SAS focused on matters such as FMS (Foreign Military Sales), commercial sales of dual-use items covered under the Munitions Control Act, and so on, we were working very closely with our colleagues who were much more expert on those matters.

Colonel Steve Delp in PM/SAS handled Asia, and he and I flew together to Manila to attend a security assistance conference after the new government took charge there. After the conference we went our separate ways, as I traveled elsewhere in the country and he followed up on some of his specialized responsibilities. This included personally making an inventory inspection – I assume in conjunction with our JUSMAG – of some Filipino navy vessels that had been donated earlier under our MAP (Military Assistance Program). Steve recounted that he had a really eye-opening experience during his visit to the Cavite naval base on Manila Bay. There he found rusting vessels, stacked three deep, pier side; the vessels above water were being held up only by those below them! He later learned that these ships had not been decommissioned – although clearly no longer serviceable, and money for their phantom crews was being siphoned off for other purposes – it wasn't clear whether for someone's personal gain – likely – or for other programs – less likely, he believed.

Q: What would you be bringing to these discussions or meetings? What was your office's input?

BUTCHER: We had more of the regional area expertise, as opposed to the Security Assistance folks who knew the books and regulations, the various security assistance nitty gritty, as it were. We were able to work very well together. In fact, I went with Army Colonel Steve Delp, who handled Asia for PM/SAS, to attend a security assistance conference in Manila together. It was very happy teamwork

Q: Were Australia and New Zealand also covered? Australia was covered by your office too. If I recall, the AUSMIN (Australia-U.S. Ministerial) meetings started about in this mid-1980s time.

BUTCHER: The AUSMIN became the successor to the ANZUS meetings. That's correct.

Q: Right.

BUTCHER: So that was its evolution.

Q: The first one was organized in 1985. Did you get to go to that?

BUTCHER: Let me just see. I'll check my folder. Here it is. Actually, the one I went to was in August 1986. That was the first one with just the U.S. and Australia.

Q: Okay. Those were held one year in Canberra, one year in Washington. So the 1986 was in…

BUTCHER: It was actually in San Francisco. It was held at the Presidio in San Francisco.

Q: What are the types of things that are covered in those kinds of meetings? These are high level. This is ministerial.

BUTCHER: Right.

Q: Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State.

BUTCHER: Yes. It was Shultz and Weinberger from the U.S. Australia was represented by Foreign Minister William "Bill" Hayden and Defense Minister Kim Beazley.

Q: What kind of topics are handled at that level?

BUTCHER: They would just run through the whole agenda of local and regional pol-mil issues. It was quite an agenda. Of course, we and the Australians have outstanding security connections. We've had close ties that go back decades. So we've had very easy conversations. I found in my overseas work in Southeast Asia, the Australians were always well staffed and well informed. In fact, I may have mentioned that the last meeting that the Australian political counselor in Jakarta, Dennis Richardson, later headed their FBI equivalent and was ambassador to the U.S. So already I knew from my personal experience the Aussies had some really outstanding personnel. It was a very good meeting.

Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard "Rich" Armitage was representing the Asia-Pacific side of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). He was the assistant secretary for ISA (International Security Affairs) at Defense. He and Paul Wolfowitz,

assistant secretary of state for East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), were counterparts. The two of them got along very well. So State and Defense were very effective in working together, at least at the bureau level. We had a fairly unified approach in our dealings with the Australians.

Q: During the time that you were there, the Iran Contra issue came up. I suspect since you were on the East Asia side that it didn't really impact.

BUTCHER: No. Some of my colleagues who handled Latin America and the Middle East were aware of it. I had heard the term, mainly through the news media. I was dealing with Dick Childress who handled Asia and the Pacific at the NSC and my other PM colleagues were dealing with this guy called Oliver North, Ollie North, at the NSC.

Q: Actually, there were some changes in the front office at the time you were there. I think General Chain leaves and Holmes…

BUTCHER: Allan Holmes was the PM assistant secretary who succeeded General Chain, and represented the PM Bureau at the 1986 U.S.-Australia meeting.

Q: Did the working atmospherics in the bureau change any with the change of personnel?

BUTCHER: They did, but at my level, I didn't notice it that much. Allan Holmes was not an Asia person. Both Chain and his deputies and Holmes and his deputies, were not Asia specialists. FSO Vlad Lehovich came in to replace Thomas "Ted" McNamara as the deputy assistant secretary in our chain of command. Vlad was more focused on European affairs by background. My team and I had good access, because we provided the Asian expertise. There were a number of Asian issues on the platter, so we felt needed and appreciated, which is always good.

Allan Holmes was very good to deal with.

One of the issues that preoccupied a number of us because a number of our colleagues were disappearing, was the famous Foreign Service six-year window. A number of our area experts were leaving the service prematurely. Some of us, with the support of Allan Homes, Mike Armacost and others, Mort Abramowitz, several of my colleagues and I actually met with the Secretary of State on the six-year window issue. Apparently, it got him to do some reconsideration. Unfortunately, too much blood had flowed already to really turn things around. The Secretary seemed to be struck by our presentation. His initial view was well, in academia – which was his background – people often don't get tenure. They move on to another institution. We replied that FSO didn't have that degree of career mobility. Assuming they had that option, for an American FSO that would be considered treasonous, we noted. He took the point.

Q: Could you give a little background on that? A new Foreign Service Act, legislation was passed in 1980 and put in place in 1981. One of the new parts was at a certain level, if you didn't get promoted in six years, you were out. It was copying the military system.

BUTCHER: Right. We've had essentially an up-or-out system, but it was not quite as stringent as this. What they tried to do was – I don't recall the exact words of the act – to have a predictable upward flow of talent into the senior levels of the Foreign Service. Once you opened your window, the clock began ticking. There were several things that happened, assumptions that didn't exactly pan out.

One was that a larger number than expected opened their windows at the first opportunity. As someone said later, obviously the Foreign Service is full of ambitious people who think they have qualities to move ahead. So you had a large number of people opting in to put themselves at risk for the idea of getting the reward of moving into the senior Foreign Service.

The second thing that happened was that the economy was not in good shape. People were not voluntarily leaving. People who were at retirement age were choosing not to retire. Some were staying on. So there were fewer openings.

Also, about the same time the mandatory retirement age for FSOs was extended from 62 to 65, with the effect that

There were also "Limited Career Extensions" – LCEs available for seniors, allowing some of the seniors who were also at risk to stay on too, as under the new act they too faced limits on the time they could spend at each senior grade.

What happened was that a number of them who might have been threatened by early retirement received LCEs, granted on a very liberal basis. But there was no comparable safety net for the FSO-01s who are aspiring to enter the Senior Foreign Service, who had opted to "opened their six-year window," whose clocks were ticking, as time expired for their time in class. They had no LCEs to protect them when they suddenly hit this wall, as they were compelled to leave the service, ending fine, sometimes exceptional, careers prematurely. Regrettably, much fine wheat went out with the chaff.

Thus you had a large number of officers leaving the service, including lots of highly qualified area and functional experts, whose talents, expertise and experience the service could have sorely used. Years later, when things turned bad in several areas, especially after 9/11 and the advent of large-scale "expeditionary diplomacy," we really needed that type of language and area expertise. These folks had left and were off heading world affairs councils, teaching, consulting, and embarked on new careers occupations beyond the reach of the Foreign Service.

Q: Another assumption that didn't pan out was that the Reagan Administration put in more political appointees.

BUTCHER: Yes, and that was a trend that has accelerated in subsequent administrations, as non-career appointees as well as increased numbers of civil service officers have filled positions deeper and deeper into the Department, thereby affecting the numbers of slots available for FSOs. That all had the effects of fewer openings for the critical upward flow. We had some paperwork done when we went in to see the Secretary. I was given access to some personnel data. It was not personal information, but it was privileged information. The information, in terms of the survivorship of the seniors was very public. The seniors had more influence apparently than the then Director General of the Foreign Service, George Vest. He had put an article out, basically aimed at fellow senior officers that gave all the statistics on their survival rate. Most of them at risk had survived because of these LCEs, which I believe were at three years at a time. It was a few years that allowed them extra time. No one wanted these top officials to be forced out prematurely.

There were also a few who were known by the people who were influential. A lot of the FSO-01 level officers were deputy directors, political officers, and deputies in political sections. They were not quite as visible as some of the more senior people.

Once people started leaving, I remember calling on then ambassador to Indonesia, Paul Wolfowitz, when I took one of my trips doing a circuit ride in Asia while I was in PM. He was extremely upset because his Science and Technology officer was being forced out. He said, "This guy is outstanding. I need him!"

Suddenly, it came home. The talent was hemorrhaging from the Foreign Service because of this coagulation at the top. Everyone was hitting this barrier in large numbers and top-notch people were forced out.

Q: You had an opportunity to present this to the Secretary of State.

BUTCHER: Yes.

Q: Who started this group up, that made this presentation?

BUTCHER: There were three or four of us who actually went in to the meeting. I don't recall the names of all the others. I know that our friend Al La Porta had been involved earlier on in some of these issues. I don't know if he was in the meeting or if someone from H, Congressional Relations was there. There were three or four of us. The Secretary was very good. He gave us twenty minutes to half an hour. I think he was rather struck when we gave him some of the statistics.

At the outset of the meeting Secretary Shultz said he come out of academia, where it was natural for many professors not to get tenure, and they moved on. It was quite natural.

We explained that the Foreign Service is different. Yes, we understand that people in academia often don't get tenure; but their skillets are more transferable within their job field. If you are a diplomat, there are limits. What do you do? Go off and say to the

Libyan Foreign Service that we have a couple of FSOs under warranty. Would you like them?

We explained that we understand and appreciate the "up or out system" that has been practiced by the Foreign Service. With the advent of the new 1980 act, the idea was – as understood widely by all those ambitious FSO's who opened their six-year windows at the earliest opportunity – was that if there was going to be pain in the system, it was going to be shared equitably throughout. Whereas two percent of the eligible FSO-01 officers weren't promoted. So the survival rate for at risk FSO-01s was two percent. The survival rate for the seniors was almost the reverse. Those who came up against their time in class got LCEs or were promoted. Their survival rate was roughly 98 percent, whereas the exit rate for the at-risk FSO-01s was 98 percent. This was not evenly shared pain, but was borne in extreme measure by the FSO-01, not the seniors. It was pretty striking. Secretary Shultz said something to the effect "why didn't someone tell me this before? "I think he was quite concerned that some of the senior managers in the department had not put the matter in those terms.

It was a profound meeting. I have a lot of respect for people like Allan Holmes, Mike Armacost, and Mort Abramowitz, who really did press on this issue. They encouraged a number of us in support of this effort to revisit the issue. They mentored us to a certain extent. And we all respected the fact that the Secretary, having been alerted to the matter by these distinguished top officers, agreed to sit down with us to discuss it.

We seem to have made an impact, as Secretary Shultz tasked the Bureau of Personnel at the time, Director General, George Vest's people, to take a fresh look, and re-evaluate this issue. Undersecretary for Management Ronald "Ron" Spiers, himself an FSO, was the senior Department officer overseeing this program. By that time, there had already been one or two cohorts that had already exited. It was really too late.

Q: You were saying a moment ago that you did a tour of Southeast Asia while in this office and that you saw Wolfowitz in Indonesia. How many orientation tours did you get?

BUTCHER: I think it was after that Security Assistance conference. I may be mistaken. I think it was after that conference in Manila that I went off and visited other places. I may also have done it during the time I went out to the Philippines, the first occasion. I just don't remember which occasion it was. Actually, having checked my notes, it appears I had just one "circuit" ride to cover some of the Southeast Asian posts after my initial trip to the Philippines. After the security assistance conference in Manila in early September 1986, I then traveled to Jakarta, spent several days there (where I met with Ambassador Paul Wolfowitz), and then went on to Kuala Lumpur, my old stomping grounds.

On those visits to the Philippines and two of the of the other ASEAN countries, several issues were under discussion. One was the Southeast Asia's Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality ("ZOPFAN"), an ASEAN objective, which we were concerned might affect our interests – this was still during the Cold War. They also had the idea of a "SEANFZ" – pronounced "Shawn-Fizz" - a Southeast Asia Nuclear Free Zone. I did spend some time

discussing these issues with Southeast Asian officials and I think I had some impact – one of the few times where I think my spiel may have been effective in putting a little bit of a brake on this. I met with officials in Malaysia and in Jakarta, if not also Singapore. These were all places that I visited while in PM.

In Malaysia, I recall speaking with a foreign policy expert who had also been a colonel in the Malaysian army, a very sharp guy who was later affiliated with various think tanks. I said that if you are dealing with the Cold War, you are dealing with threats and you are dealing with deterrence. The U.S. is a large air and naval power. We have freedom of access to bases and to international waters. That's very important to us, and to our allies and others in the free world. If you draw your range and radius arcs for nuclear missiles, the Soviets with its huge land base, could cover much of Asia. The U.S. is more of a naval power, with have our mobile deterrence systems in addition to those based in the U.S. If we're not able to move through Southeast Asian waters, how are we going to provide a credible deterrence?

When you sit with a map and start drawing arcs, range and radius arcs, they suddenly start to say "gee, we are within their nuclear missile range. Maybe we should be a little more accommodating to our American friends who are providing the stabilizing role in the region". I got feedback from this one person that they thought it was really very effective in their own policy deliberations. That was one of the issues we dealt with

A lot of times, you make various appeals and protestations. And there is no way you are having any influence whatsoever. They have their worldview and their alignments. And that's that. This was one they started thinking about these things – unlike the Kiwis who kind of cut themselves loose from trials and tribulations of the Cold War world.

Q: You must have gotten strange looks in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia as to what the Kiwis were doing. Were other people on the block wondering what that was all about?

BUTCHER: I think they were all following it with a great deal of interest. Everyone looks for reciprocity. They assess costs and benefits. And if someone's getting a better deal that they're getting. Everyone has their sensitivities. It's just like when you have basing arrangements or Status of Forces agreements, everyone wants to get the best deal they can attain. So everyone is looking. If the Kiwis can satisfy their domestic audience or whatever their proclivities are and still wind up with the benefits of an alliance, that's not a bad deal. That's what gave the impetus for our downgrading the mil-to-mil relationship and so on, so it wouldn't be New Zealand's anti-nuclear policy wouldn't bee seen as totally cost free.

On the way back from that trip, I flew back via Honolulu for a couple of days of consultations and round-table discussions at Headquarters, USCINCPAC (Commander in Chief U.S. Forces, Pacific) and the subordinate Navy and Army commands.

The Office of Philippine Affairs

Q: After this time in PM, you returned to Mother Asia-Pacific, on the Philippines desk.

BUTCHER: Right.

Q: There must have been very little transition in terms of issues there.

BUTCHER: I just moved on to Philippine issues. As deputy director for Philippine affairs, I replaced John Finney. You may know John. He has had quite a pol-mil background. A long-time Southeast Asia hand.

I replaced John as the deputy in PM/ISP. And then in my next assignment I replaced John as deputy on the Philippine desk, EAP/PHL. The Philippines office deputy director slot had extensive pol-mil duties. The Philippine bases review came up every few years, to review our basing arrangements. We would say base-related assistance. The Philippines wanted to call it rent. We said allies don't charge each other rent. We would get down into some fairly detailed negotiations. The whole issue of the bases was very much a live one. Marcos had kind of held us hostage to him and his "after me, the deluge" attitude toward the U.S., that he and his strongman rule were a bulwark against communism.

Those who came into office after President Aquino was inaugurated essentially comprised a left of center "rainbow coalition." The new Foreign Secretary, Raul Manglapus, strongly nationalist, reportedly said that for the Philippines to really get their freedom, they had to "slay the father figure;" i.e., the U.S. Not very happy terminology. The bases were seen as a colonial appendage, a colonial leftover, an anachronism from the Philippine perspective, and hence getting the U.S. out of the bases was a way of cutting the old colonial link, thereby slaying the father figure, so to speak.

At this time, the Philippines desk is a single desk in the Asia Pacific Bureau. It had been with others. Had that separation occurred before you came on?

BUTCHER: It had been a stand-alone desk for quite a few years, as far as I am aware, and was so until merged with some other Southeast Asian countries in 1993. More on that later.

Q: Okay.

BUTCHER: The Office of Philippine Affairs was headed by Charles "Charlie" Salmon, a fine officer with a collegial leadership style. Very personable, and a great sense of humor. I really enjoyed working with Charlie. Soon after I arrived, he went off on summer vacation, to Spain, as I recall. Right after Aquino came to power, there were a number of groups in the Philippines, a variety of types – there was one guy by the name of Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan – I don't know if he was a major or a Lt. Colonel or what grade he was, but he was very high powered, a dashing individual with a lot of charisma. He had special warfare training. He led several abortive coup attempts against the Aquino Administration, one of which happened while I was in charge of the office, and Charlie

Salmon was away at some remote village in Spain. Before Charlie left me in charge, he said, "Things should be quiet!" Wrong. So the first – or one of the first – coup attempts led by Honasan and his followers took place shortly after Charlie left town.

During this dustup I remember dealing with some of our colleagues, like Gene Martin, at the embassy. Do you know Gene Martin?

Gene was the pol-mil officer at the time in Manila at the time one of the coup attempts took place. They were holed up in the JUSMAG Compound, at a separate location some distance from the embassy and near some Filipino military facilities, while shooting was going on around them. It was pretty lively talking to Gene on the phone. He would say, I've got to go. I've got to duck lower. Or something like that. You would hear gunfire in the background. It was pretty exciting.

The funny thing was that Charlie was transiting London some time later, perhaps two weeks or so, and read a newspaper for the first time in a while, and read something about after-effects of the coup attempt. I got this phone call saying to the effect, "My goodness, what's happened?" So much for his "things should be quiet" comment!

I was only on the Philippine desk for just one year, as I was promoted into to the Senior Foreign Service. This opened some other possibilities.

Q: While you were on the Philippine desk, who was above you? What Deputy Assistant Secretary were you reporting to? Who was in charge of the bureau?

BUTCHER: Dave Lambertson was the Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) looking after that Southeast Asia. The assistant secretary was Gaston Sigur. When I first met Gaston, I thought I recognized him, and that perhaps we had met before. Then I realized why. Because he had such dimples, his face always reminded me of the Cabbage Patch dolls my daughters had played with. Gaston, who died some years ago, I believe in the 1990s, was quite likeable, and as I recall came from an academic background, involving Asia expertise. Dave Lambertson was great to work with, and was reviewing officer on my EERs. It was a very good team. Jim Zumwalt was one of the desk officers. He's become an old Asia hand now, and attained high office. He was one of those young whippersnappers who moved on. He is now ambassador in Senegal

Q: Refresh my memory if you will. When did you start on the Philippine desk?

BUTCHER: I started in the summer of 1987 and left in the summer of 1988.

Q: In addition to the ongoing coup attempts and so on, what were some of the Philippine issues?

BUTCHER: The really dominant issue was the bases issue. This was against the backdrop of government instability, the communist threat, dealing with a much stronger nationalist and left of center government and trying to have a basing agreement and an

aid package that met everyone's requirements. It was interesting, challenging. We had lots of gaming simulations on different options and outcomes related to the basing arrangements, and bases-related assistance. We worked up a package that we were able to sell to the Congress. It was very labor intensive, but satisfying.

Q: As a policy process, this sounds like there was a great deal of inter-agency activity, then congressional at the end of the process. Then you've got to sell it to the Government of the Philippines.

BUTCHER: It was very active on all fronts. Fortunately, we had a number of folks who were very interested in the Philippines. On Capitol Hill, Representative Steve Solarz, head of the Asia-Pacific Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, was very active and very supportive. While being a challenging personality, ultimately he was very good to work with. He had a very good staff. Stanley Roth, later EAP assistant secretary during Clinton's presidency, was one, among others.

Q: Is there anything else on the Philippines that you want to cover?

BUTCHER: I recall a colleague, Ralph "Skip" Boyce, working on budget and assistance issues for the Deputy Secretary, and how he and I late at night came up with a bases-related assistance number that we thought would meet all parties' basic requirements. That number stuck, and I believe had the intended results.

As I recall the details of the story, I remember sitting with Skip late one night, trying to figure out together what would be the right amount – after playing with some numbers, he said, "Gee, such and such million dollars, that sounds like a good working number for the aid package."

We cobbled stuff together to make it look good. With a little of slight of hand, smoke and mirrors, it ended up at a sizeable, but rational, figure. We thought that was a good figure for the Filipinos and a sellable one for Congress, and it was.

Q: Oh, that's how it's done.

BUTCHER: That's how it's done.

At the time you were on the Philippine desk, Secretary Shultz goes out to visit the Philippines, in June 1987 and again in July 1988. Did you get involved in any of the preparations for that travel?

BUTCHER: Just the customary briefing papers and so on. I think that the first trip in 1987, which was just about the time I came on the desk, I believe Charlie Salmon went out with him. I was in charge of the office as acting office director. We were involved in a lot of paperwork. There was a large flow of action on the Philippines.

Nick Platt was going to go out to replace Steve Bosworth who had been the ambassador. Platt had some history with Senator Jessie Helms. Helms was holding the nomination and was asking lots of tough questions after the hearings. On very short order, we had to prepare lots of responses to Senator Helms. That was one of the things that hit me head on right after I arrived.

There was high-level interest and activity on the Philippines. It was a very busy portfolio.

I did have another opportunity to visit the Philippines ten days in late September – early October 1987, my third such visit since 1982. Because of my sole Philippine focus, this was more in-depth, including visits to the facilities at both Clark and Subic, the Vietnamese refugee facility at Bataan, travel in some of the hinterland of Luzon, and have a repeat visits to Cebu and Davao del Sur in Mindanao, where in the latter I witnessed great improvements in the security and economic situation there from my early visit in 1982. I also had a good time spending a weekend with our good friends Gene and Joyce Martin (Gene replaced me in Rangoon on my first assignment) at Anilao in southern Luzon, near Batangas, and got in some Scuba diving and helped acclimate them to snorkeling. On my way back from the Philippines I stopped in Honolulu – as was my custom while traveling to Asia or on my return – for consultations at CINCPAC and other military elements.

Q: Then you got the promotion to the Senior Foreign Service. It allowed you a wider range of opportunities. So, within a year, did you break off from the Philippines? How did that work out?

BUTCHER: The senior economic officer on the desk, Geraldine "Gerry" Chester, was very highly thought of. She was already in the office, and familiar with issues and processes. They thought wisely that they could very easily move her up. I think she was an FS-01 at that point or a senior FS-02. In any case, she was qualified to succeed me as deputy office director. We made sure to let the Filipinos I dealt with know the reason for my early departure – with my promotion I qualified for the job as Office Director for India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, which was then in the NEA Bureau, and my previous service in South Asia and on South Asian issues was another factor in my getting that job. So in the summer of 1988, I moved over to NEA to head that office.

Back to the Near East and South Asia Bureau – as Office Director for India, Nepal, Sri Lanka – plus Bhutan and The Maldives as an added bonus!

Q: Let's put that office in perspective. How big is the desk and who was in the front office for you?

BUTCHER: The assistant secretary when I first came on was Richard "Dick" Murphy, who I had known slightly when I was a staff assistant in NEA in the early 1970s. He handled all of NEA. It was Near East and South Asia Bureau at the time. They had regional deputies.

The deputy assistant secretary handling South Asia was Ambassador Howard B. "Howie" Schaffer. I had known Howie over the years. He had been the personnel officer who had assigned me to Dhaka years before. He was a very well-known expert on South Asia, having served in both India and Pakistan, and most recently as Ambassador to Bangladesh. He really knew the territory. He basically had just two office directors reporting to him, but they represented a total of 8 countries, with a population of well over a billion people; Robert "Bob" Flaten, the Office Director for Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, and myself.

I had known Bob when he had been Afghan desk officer and I was on the Pakistan desk in the early 1970s, and on a couple of occasions had served as acting Afghan Desk Office when Bob was away. Bob and I worked well together, despite the angst between our two principal countries.

You asked how many people were in the actual office itself. There was a director, a deputy, a senior India country officer and a junior India country officer, a Nepal officer, and a Sri Lanka officer. So there were six of us in the office, and two secretaries. Plus, we would have the occasional interns.

My initial deputy had been an Economic Officer in Jakarta, Lou Warren. Lou was there for my first year as office director, and then he went overseas, I believe to India as economic counselor. He was replaced by Jim Magnor, who was an A-100 classmate of mine. He had been in the Philippines earlier on, and I had visited with him and his wife while attending a Consular conference in Manila in 1968 while I was posted to Rangoon.

The senior India desk officer at one point was Tom Krajeski. The junior India desk officer was Peter Schmeelk, an army veteran and a West Point graduate, who followed human rights issues in El Salvador, and until recently had worked with us in PMAT (the Political-Military Action Team, PM/ISO-PMAT).

Q: What were the kinds of issues in the late 1988s that were key to the India desk?

BUTCHER: We had a range of issues. Again, it was still in the height of the Cold War. India and the Soviet Union were very close, because Pakistan was allied with China. There was a lot of big power rivalry going on. We were trying to get the Russians out of Afghanistan. The Indians were in Afghanistan, pro-Soviet in a sense, very much in the context of the Indo-Pak rivalry, and India's long-standing close ties with the Soviets. Paks were aligned with the U.S. and China; India with the Soviet Union. It was a very complicated equation.

The Indian military was also expanding its naval presence in the Indian Ocean. We were trying to engage in a dialogue on that. The economic ties were increasing. Rajiv Gandhi was trying to open the economy. We had lots of issues with the Indian government. There were a lot of economic issues in terms of intellectual property rights. There were lots of other problems with market access in India. A considerable amount of our time invested was on tough negotiations with the Indians on these economic issues; Special and Super

301 cases in terms of sanctions against Indian products, based on some of their limited market access for our products, intellectual property rights, etc. It became a really big issue.

On top of that, I had these other countries too. Believe it or not, the first crisis on my watch was an abortive coup attempt in the Maldives, of all things. The Maldives had its issues. We had a civil war in Sri Lanka. The civil war cut in several directions.

There was a leftist insurgency, as well as the Tamil separatist insurgency. You had several things going on. You had the Indians involved. At one point, the Indians intervened militarily because, those Tamils, who they had initially encouraged, were getting out of hand. It was really an amazingly complex situation.

Unfortunately, when I went out there on a couple of trips, some of the people I met with on all sides – both government officials, as well as some of the local politicians – were assassinated. I had to keep crossing contacts off my list because they were getting whacked, the home affairs minister, and others, including a very nice couple, moderate Tamils who were going off on an International Visitor Program to the U.S. and then on to Canada. In between the U.S. and Canadian missions in the process of obtaining their visas, they were attacked in their car by gunmen. The husband was killed outright and the wife died of her wounds several days later. Very sad,

It was not a happy situation. It's a beautiful country that was torn apart by all kinds of dissention.

Then Nepal had a revolution against the monarchy, which ended up transforming the monarchy from absolute rulers into a constitutional monarchy.

Of course, we had the historic tensions with India and Pakistan. One of them was conducting maneuvers near the border, a readiness exercise, which escalated and came very close to setting off another war between the two of them. We spent a good deal of time with preventive diplomacy, trying to encourage them to de-escalate.

This turned out to be another fascinating assignment. I made several trips to the region, which would typically start off in Islamabad for consultations. I would then go on to India and make a circuit ride through India, then on to Nepal and Sri Lanka.

That's where I had my last meeting with Arnie Raphel. It was August 1988 during my initial orientation trip, to learn the territory. I started out in Islamabad. I had a nice time meeting with my old friend and A-100 classmate Arnie. Two weeks later, he was killed in a plane crash with President Zia. Very mysterious crash, with foul play widely suspected. Zia had enemies, inside and outside Pakistan. It was very sad that Arnie and one of our senior Embassy military officers were collateral damage, if indeed this was an assassination attempt on Zia.

It was a great job. All my countries were interesting. I had good people to work with. There was good leadership. Interestingly, Howie Schaffer was replaced after just one year on the job, after George H.W. Bush came into office during my tenure, and we had a change at the front office. Dick Murphy left and John Kelly became the Assistant Secretary.

Initially, John Kelly said he was going to be keeping all his deputies intact, and then apparently changed his mind. Bob Flaten and I were attending one of our weekly scheduled staff meetings with Howie when he said, "You know, this is kind of upsetting. I've never been fired before."

We said it was just a change of administration. He said, "Well, I'm without a job. It's very awkward."

The next week, we had another staff meeting. Howie, Bob and myself. Howie said, "This is even more awkward. I'm being replaced by my wife!"

Tezi Schaffer was Director of Egyptian Affairs at the time. We started asking Howie to explain how we would inform the local embassies of the countries we covered. We all laughed – Howie rather ruefully - and we all agreed that this was kind of a South Asian dynastic succession: Gandhi to Gandhi; Bhutto to Bhutto; and Schaffer to Schaffer. Howie had a very wry sense of humor. He was concerned, but he was very funny in his comments.

Tezi became the new DAS (Deputy Assistant Secretary) Schaffer for South Asia.

Q: Can we focus on Sri Lanka at the moment? How were you understanding what was the political dynamic that was going on and the Indian involvement?

BUTCHER: Joe Barnes, our Sri Lanka desk officer, was excellent, and had served previously in Colombo. One of the things that is really good about having area expertise – we had some excellent reporting officers in both New Delhi – who reported on India's involvement with Sri Lanka – and in Colombo, some very good, thoughtful people. Our ambassador in Colombo during my first year on the desk was James Spain, who was very well versed in South Asian affairs. He wrote a book, The Way of The Pathans, which is a classic about the people of the Northwest Frontier of Pakistan. He was a very thoughtful guy, a true South Asia hand. He died on January 2, 2008. Jim was succeeded by Marion Creekmore, again a very good officer. So we had some pretty strong, all-channel reporting on these very complex situations that we tried to deal with as best we could. Much of this was human rights-driven, because of the terrible atrocities taking place.

The first of the conflicts, an inter-ethnic began some years before I arrived on the desk, involved he Jaffna Tamils, primarily Hindu and largely populating in the northern part of Sri Lanka, who wanted either to be part of India or to have their own homeland. The insurgent fighters were called the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, LTTE, aka Tamil Tigers for short. As you know, they fought for decades. Only recently, when their

rebellion was very brutally crushed, did they finally call it quits. There was also a violent leftist movement, in addition to the Tamil separatists. What happened in Sri Lanka was that you had a very highly literate society. There were young people who were very well educated and had no economic opportunities. The economy could not absorb all these educated kids. They probably could have done better in vocational, as opposed to higher, education training. So you had a group of Sinhalese young people who were easily exploitable by leftist ideology. They were led into a violent, anti-government by a Marxist-Leninist group known as the JVP, which peaked during the time I was in NEA/INS and was brought to an end when government forces killed its top leaders.

The government successfully dealt with the communist rebellion through extraordinarily harsh methods. Again, there were lots of atrocities on both sides. It was very tough.

Q: Writing the annual human rights report must have been interesting.

BUTCHER: In a sense, because the folks in the field called it as they saw it. There was nothing to kind of temper it. I think our human rights reports were pretty stark, no punches pulled. Our folks on the ground trying to deal with this. The Red Cross and others were trying to use their good offices. It was a pretty desperate situation.

What was so striking was that you would go out and visit the place, and physically, it was like a paradise. It's a beautiful country with temples, elephants, beautiful jungles, streams, blue skies, and pristine beaches, but with people busily killing each other.

Q: In one sense, this is an interesting contrast to New Zealand on the question of what's the U.S. interest here in Sri Lanka? New Zealand was very strong.

BUTCHER: For a whole variety of reasons here, the alliance and historic connections that we've had with New Zealand. With Sri Lanka, it was not in our area of historic influence. It was a very tragic situation.

Q: The Tamils are associated with India.

BUTCHER: The Tamils are a large ethnic group, from the area around what was formerly Madras now Chennai – that whole area in southern and southeastern Indian is largely Tamil, the state of Tamil Nadu, is largely Tamil. Because India is a democracy, you had clamor by Tamil political elements to help their brethren in Sri Lanka. You had the historic interest, domestic politics in India too, to look after the welfare of your ethnic brethren in a neighboring country. The Indians had been involved surreptitiously in assisting the Tamil elements. In fact, some say it's ironic that the Indians started out by assisting the Tamil rebels, then in helping the Sri Lankan government at one point put down, or at least tried to contain this Tamil rebellion, and ultimately ended up reaping the whirlwind when Rajiv Gandhi was blown up by a Tamil female suicide bomber. It was presumably an end result of bomb-making tradecraft shared by the Indians early on with the rebel Sri Lankan Tamils, the LTTE.

You never can tell what will happen when you train people in such techniques – it may come back to bite you.

Q: Yes.

At the time, did you have any major presidential visits or did the Secretary of State go out to South Asia?

BUTCHER: I'm trying to think if there was a presidential or secretarial visit in that period.

I know George Bush and Rajiv Gandhi got along very well. I'm trying to think if Gandhi made an official visit during that time. I just don't recall off-hand. They did exchange numerous phone calls.

We had lots of delegations going in both directions. You have these little vignettes from your career. There is a fascinating vignette, an anecdote that I have from that period.

We would deal with these mixed delegations: the Indians would bring a group of both their bureaucrats and some Indian businessmen on these missions. I recall after one of these negotiating sessions we had – I think it may have even been a businessman, not a government official, say, "You know, Mr. Butcher, we are never going to compromise."

I said, "You're never going to compromise? Why are we even negotiating then? We're talking about having some compromise in each other's positions so we can reach agreement."

He said, "Well, we may make some adjustments, but we are never going to compromise."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "Compromise is not something that we Indians like to do."

It turns out that their use of compromise is akin to that of a power relationship, in which a woman in put in a compromising position. The party that compromises is the party that is the weaker power. He is basically saying we will make adjustments in our position, but we won't compromise.

I thought that was fascinating. All of this had been conducted in English. Again, you have to sometimes realize that people have different weighting of the language. Indian English as opposed to American English usages. For the Indians, the term compromise is a distasteful word. It has a lot of negative connotation. I thought it was an illuminating episode.

Q: Something out of their colonial history.

BUTCHER: "No, Mr. Butcher. We Indians will never compromise." So I thought well, we're wasting a lot of time here, spinning our wheels. I learned something from that exchange. It was instructive.

Q: The Indian economy and the Indian attitude were still London School of Economics, central planning, or centrally government-run. It wasn't...

BUTCHER: It was very autarchic, a socialist bastion. My trips to India were eye-opening in many regards. One of the things was that people were very concerned that India, with its close relationship with the Soviets, was going to get suborned. The Soviets were going to have great influence. The Indians had their various communist parties. There was kind of a pro-Chinese communist party and a pro-Soviet communist party. What was really interesting from my experience, personally watching some Russians – there were a lot of Russian technicians in country, for projects and tending to Russian equipment etc. – was that perhaps India did the suborning of the Soviets.

I remember seeing a group of Russians in the Calcutta airport the duty free shop. They were going just absolutely bananas, buying things in India not available back home. Apparently, the quality of shoes, leather goods, were so much better than they had in the Soviet Union. I am waiting for a flight to Nepal or something and watching these Russians, chuckling to myself with this feeding frenzy in the duty free shop. At a certain point, they move on. The gate is locked. They locked it with a padlock. This Russian couple came running out; they were missing their flight because they got so carried away with their shopping. They were rattling the chains saying, "Can't we get out?"

Terminal personnel said no. So these two were going to have to explain themselves to their handlers as to why they missed the flight. Another amusing episode, entertaining for the observer, but clearly not for them!

The Russians used this as a window to the world of better goods, higher quality goods than they could get in the Soviet Union. And which was the so-called underdeveloped country?

Q: The Berlin Wall falls in late 1989. Do those kinds of events begin to impact on Indian perceptions of their world and their place?

BUTCHER: I am sure they did. It took a while. Again, when I was traveling in India, you would not see familiar brands. There were no foreign cars. They were driving these old Ambassadors, which I think is the name of these cars. You could have a World War Two movie set around some of these government buildings, old British Secretariat buildings in Delhi. They were big sandstone, magnificent monumental buildings, with the guards in their old style uniforms and these Ambassador cars putting around. They looked like something from 1946 or 1947 in the U.S. It was like time stood still.

One time I was dying of thirst in the airport in Delhi. I went looking for a Coca Cola or something. There was no recognizable brand. There were local varieties - Bopsi Cola – so

to speak, and this, that and the other thing. You get the idea why it's important to have brands, so you have recognizable quality standards when you're traveling around the world. They had no foreign brands. They had no foreign vehicles. This was in the late 1980s. It was striking. This has all changed now. They were starting to open the economy, but it had not really taken off. That really occurred a couple of years later.

Q: Had the Bhopal incident happened yet?

BUTCHER: Bhopal happened before, in the earlier 1980s, before I came on. It was a major issue at that time against Union Carbide.

Q: India has always presented a bit of a problem as U.S. policy. Was there any particular interest on Capitol Hill for India, for or against? What were the Hill attitudes?

BUTCHER: Again it was Rep. Steve Solarz, with his abiding interest, who always seemed to lead the charge on the Hill on the importance of India. I've cited Steve Solarz before – the very activist Chairman of the Asia-Pacific Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee He was a very hard working, bright guy. And he also understood ethnic politics. He also learned that be it Filipino-Americans, or Indian-Americans, you have people who have a certain capability. Many Indian-Americans were doctors and I am sure they were very helpful contributors to his campaigns. Having said that, he was very good in terms of giving India a fair hearing. A lot of people were really down on India because of its closeness to the Soviet Union. Indians were seen as very obstreperous, very nationalistic. Some saw them as preachy, argumentative, and arrogant. Hmmmm. Who does that sound like?

For those of us who have served in Asia where people are very polite, avoid conflict, don't raise their voices, sometimes are very soft and almost passive in their approach, the Indians are very direct. They are right in your face. The Indians are just not quiet people. This would strike some American congressmen pretty badly. American congressmen are themselves not being known to be particularly quiet. The opportunities for clashes were fairly large.

Ironically, the thing that I've always found noteworthy, at least as I perceive it, is that while Indian government officials often tended to be fairly irascible, nationalistic and in your face, the people-to-people ties and personal relationships tended to be pretty good, whereas it seemed somewhat the reverse in Pakistan.

In Pakistan, on a strategic government-to-government level, often the relationship was very good, while if you scraped beneath the surface there was a lot of anti-Americanism, especially among the Islamic fundamentalist groups. This goes back decades.

So you had this strange thing where at the official level, the Indians and we were often at loggerheads, whereas we had better relations with the Pakistanis. But the façade of the Pakistan-American relationship was just that, in many regards. Once things opened up with India, they have moved at a fairly exponential rate up to the present. We were

having difficult discussions with the Indians, but we were having discussions. There were things being exchanged. It was not like with some countries where there is always palpable tension. There was a certain amount of tension, but it was one where we could argue our way through these points without too much animus.

Q: The other countries that you covered, Nepal and Bhutan, the Indians have taken a fatherly attitude toward. What was the Indian attitude toward our interests in Nepal and Bhutan?

BUTCHER: I noted a distinct contrast between Southeast Asia's regional grouping, ASEAN, and SAARC (South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation). SAARC is supposed the forum for regional cooperation, collaboration, dialogue, and so on. It is the occasion for meetings, but often times the meetings end up blowing up because contentious Indian-Pakistan issues intrude. Or, in many cases, the Indians got upset because they think that all the others are ganging up on them. All the others thought that India was too domineering.

I think it was Malaysian diplomat talking about what made ASEAN work as an organization who said – I believe this was reported in the Far Eastern Economic Review – what has made ASEAN work is that Indonesia, although the dominant member, is not a domineering member. Whereas the same can't be said for India in SAARC. Not only was it the dominant member, but it also tended to be domineering .

Then the Indians get all upset because they think that all the other members, the little guys, gang up on them because they are the big guy. The do tend to throw their weight around. Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and others recoil under that type of influence.

Bhutan is kind of a separate situation. It's an Indian protectorate. They have their own modus vivendi with the Indians, handling their external defense.

Q: Actually, India is ethnically quite diverse. In recent years, there has been growing Hindu nationalism. How does that manifest itself in their politics?

BUTCHER: I'm not so sure that it's growing. That's my perception.

Q: What is your perception?

BUTCHER: I think it's been there for a long period from even before the bloodshed at the time of partition. You had these pogroms on both sides, mass killings. You have the *Babri Masjid* (Babri Mosque) issue, which is a mosque that was built on what was viewed as a Hindu holy site. It has been a fulcrum for bitter feuding between the Hindus and the Muslim minority in India for many years. One of the governments in which a Hindu party dominated more or less turned a blind eye when Hindu zealots razed the *Babri Masjid*, tore it down, so it could its bricks could be used to build a temple to whichever Hindu deity was that was supposedly on that site eons ago.

You've had Hindu fundamentalism that waxes and wanes. Sometimes it's a result of extremism from one side breeds more extremism on the other side, in terms of sectarian strife.

India is a very chaotic place. Fortunately, even with its imperfect democracy, it has allowed some effervescence to enable venting of communal pressures so they do not build up to explosive levels. It's an imperfect democracy. As someone said, if all people with criminal background or activities were prevented from holding office, there would be no office holders in the State of Bihar, or X number of members of parliament. would lose their seats.

Corruption remained a huge issue. Getting people to rise above some of the old caste consciousness. There are elements in the society that didn't have full access to politics or to political influence. Sometimes they have set-asides, quotas for various groups, and they these may have the unintended opposite effect in terms of actually strengthening – or at least keeping alive, some of the divisions. Indian unions impeded modernization of the industrial sector, and the political power was a deterrence to foreign investment.

Q: As director of such an office at the State Department, part of your job was to shape and implement American foreign policy. Where did you want to go? What kind of guidance were being given about South Asia?

BUTCHER: In the Near East and South Asia Bureau the pervasive problem was how much time and attention could the front office, given the Middle East conflicts and the constant crises there, give to South Asia. Today, we see lots of task forces on Middle East turmoil. The NEA Bureau has experience dealing with that for decades. How much time and attention they could give to South Asia, where some of our interests were not as acute as they were where the Soviet Union and U.S. interests really were intersecting in the Arab-Israeli issues. The Mideast always seems to suck decision-makers into its maw.

Nevertheless, the Bush Administration seemed to be very interested in South Asia. We had the ongoing involvement with Afghanistan. There were issues and concern about Pakistan going nuclear. The Indians had developed a nuclear "device" – that was the term used, not a weapon – back in the 1970s. Obviously, Pakistan was trying to play catch-up. I think it was just about the time I left the job when we had the Pressler Amendment in 1990 (sponsored by Senator Larry Pressler) that cut off military aid to Pakistan because of its nuclear activities. Due to this legislation, F-16s destined for Pakistan sat in mothballs for many years.

The senior director who handled the NEA region at NSC at the time was Richard Haass. Richard had been in a long-time civil service position at the State Department. He was in the European Bureau, handling pol-mil matters, for a while. He was a very sharp guy. He later headed Policy Planning at State. He currently heads the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations in New York.

Q: Did you get an opportunity to work with the Special Envoy to Afghanistan, Peter Thompson?

BUTCHER: Yes.

Q: What was that assignment?

BUTCHER: I was acquainted with Peter mainly to the extent of knowing him and being in meetings with him, such as at NEA staff meetings. Again, on Afghanistan, the Indians were seen as obstructionist and not helpful. We felt they were at least acquiescing in, if not actively supporting, the Soviets' involvement in Afghanistan. We felt that was unhelpful. Of course, they didn't like us helping the Pakistanis either. We tried for years. The Indians would always say that they didn't like formulations such as Indo-Pak and what have you. We would say well, that's fine. We'll deal with each relationship, but each of you has to let us do that because each side takes it as a zero-sum game.

Q: If you're doing something with him…

BUTCHER: Yes, it goes both ways. We were trying to improve our relationship with the Indians, and the Pakistanis would get nervous. A dispute went back to my earlier days when India intervened in East Pakistan in 1971. During the 1971 Indo-Pak War we sent the USS ENTERPRISE into the Bay of Bengal, which the Indians resented. They saw us as very much siding with Pakistan and, even to an extent, China, against Indian interests.

So there's a lot of Cold War history that colored the relationships with us and India, as well as with Pakistan.

Q: Let me ask a broader question. You had started out in Bangladesh years earlier. Now you are the office director. What would you say you gained out of this assignment as office director?

BUTCHER: Like many Foreign Service assignments, it was in many regards too short. You would like to be able to stay longer at a job. In fact, one of the things that I liked about my job in the PM Bureau was that it was a three-year tour. I extended a year. That final year was all kind of payout. I found a lot of the learning process, just getting involved with the flow of policy issues, I was able to see things through, or at least carried through to more of a sense of completion after the third year. Very satisfying. This was in contrast with a two-year tour in which you kind of pull up stakes right in the middle. There's lot still going on. You can't see how the story ends, as it were.

I saw things in terms of progress in relationships. In terms of the U.S. and India relationship, there were lots of friction areas, but it was generally moving in a positive direction.

Nepal had some bloody anti-monarchy riots that led to a constitutional monarchy arrangement, which seemed to be a very positive outcome. It is a country that is

overpopulated for its resource base. There are lots of problems in Nepal. It's a pretty isolated and impoverished place. It's not exactly a recipe for political stability, but things went well.

Sri Lanka, when I left after my two years was still festering, so there was not much satisfaction with things happening in a positive sense there.

By and large, the most important relationship, the U.S.-Indian relationship, seemed to be moving well. George Bush and Rajiv Gandhi had numerous phone conversations. There was a lot of communication that way. They both seemed to enjoy talking with one another, which was good. George Bush Senior is a very personable individual and is very good at working on personal ties. He and Rajiv Gandhi just seemed to hit it off well. That was a good thing. That was before Gandhi got blown up, ironically by a Tamil terrorist, a few years later.

Q: One of the interesting things about being in charge of an office in the department is your connection with the local embassy. Did you get a chance to go to a lot of national days and the cocktail circuit? What was that like?

BUTCHER: Yes, it was extraordinarily busy. The three major embassies had lots of functions. The Indians of course were very active. They had numerous functions for visiting dignitaries. I spent a lot of time at the Indian Ambassador's residence for official dinners and receptions, as well as some more official things at the embassy itself. The Nepalese were also active, as were the Sri Lankans. They all had very capable ambassadors.

The other side was the desks' care and feeding of our embassies overseas. We had occasional major personnel issues that had to be addressed, some of which were fairly sensitive, involving high-level officials. I had some very good and dedicated desk officers. They really were top notch. It was fun to work with them. I tried to give them as much responsibility and recognition for their work as possible. They were good people. Two of them went on to be ambassadors. Marcia Bernicat, who was the Nepal desk officer, was ambassador to Senegal and later to Bangladesh. Tom Krajeski was ambassador in Yemen and subsequently Bahrain. Tom came out of a consular, not a political or economic background. Being a senior desk officer for India is not easy. He had to learn the territory, as well as functions that he was not that familiar with. He did a top-notch job. And there was Peter Schmeelk, who also did well as junior desk officer for India. Peter was a retired Army officer, a West Point graduate, and the Foreign Service was his second career. Before the India job Peter served in El Salvador, and dealt with human rights concerns.

Q: I was asking because recently, during 2011, the Indians had a major exhibit at the Kennedy Center. I don't recall them sponsoring that kind of stuff in earlier years.

BUTCHER: They would have a lot of things that were more localized. The embassy would hold cultural programs and things like that. What you have is several generations

of Indian-Americans who have done very well. This is now looking back 20 years later, since I left that job.

The Internet has opened the entrepreneurial instincts of the Indians. It has allowed Indians who would otherwise be limited by caste, origin, and a lot of other barriers to getting ahead in what had been a very socialist system. The government was the main employer, both for civil service functionaries and in government-owned industries. They still had to break away. A lot of the government-backed unions had so much influence, that it was very hard for any employer to fire anyone, for whatever reason. This is difficult if you have to downsize, move, or do other things.

The Internet now has allowed a lot of very sharp educated Indians basically to sell their wares and provide their services globally. It has caused a huge revolution. It hasn't reached the rural areas of India. Still, the last time I was there in 2001, I was in a kind of slum area north of Delhi. They have some kind of dirty industrial towns. As we were driving through, I w as looking through these hovels. There was a sign that said, "Computer Learning Center."

Back in the period I headed the desk they had not yet broken loose from their socialist background. They were still kind of locked in what was frankly an outmoded economic model. They were starting to loosen up. They were looking around. They had a vision of joining the rest of the world, because they were one of the few really practicing socialist countries when I left in 1990. They've made huge progress since then.

Assignment Kuala Lumpur (Again!)

Q: You left the office director job in the summer rotation cycle of 1990. You got an assignment as Deputy Chief of Mission in Kuala Lumpur.

BUTCHER: Right.

Q: How did that job come to you? Did you get the DCM course before you went off?

BUTCHER: You know, when you're on a two-year assignment, you start looking ahead. There were several jobs I was looking at. The deputy job in Jakarta was coming up. It aligned with my rotation cycle, as was Malaysia. The DCM in Jakarta, Mike Connor, decided to resign from the Foreign Service and take another job outside the Foreign Service. He got an offer he couldn't refuse – as representative for the MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) in Singapore So that position came up a year early, and a friend of mine took it – Rich Wilson who I had served with in Dhaka, and later when he was economic counselor in Jakarta when I was there as political counselor. So Rich went out as DCM to Jakarta. So that job no longer was available. I had a good shot at DCM in Malaysia, because of my background – language and so on. It was a great job and I was happy to get it. I knew the ambassador, Paul Cleveland, but not well. Fortunately I passed Paul's muster.

And I did have the DCM course in advance of that.

Q: Could you describe the DCM course a little bit? How long was it? What is it training you to do?

BUTCHER: It's for deputy chiefs of mission and principal officers at consulates general. The course I attended had both groups participating in the training. At FSI, they had some traditional lecture type courses in terms of what to expect. And then they had kind of a team building and leadership field exercises at a place called The Woods Resort in West Virginia. It was the better part of a week – maybe five days or so – where they had you doing a whole range of field activities in terms of leadership, organization, confidence building, team building, leadership, etc. It was very interesting fieldwork, as it were.

Q: FSI comes to this training because the Office Director or DCM level in one in which you are moving less out of writing and reporting and more into managing people.

BUTCHER: Right.

Q: This is very explicit training in doing that. Probably how to be DCM and what your Budget and Management guy is supposed to be doing for you.

BUTCHER: The DCM job is an interesting one, because you have a lot of responsibility. There are a lot of issues on managing financial and personnel resources, as well as working with an ambassador. It can be a very challenging job if that is a non-career person. The DCM, the number two, the executive officer, has to then provide additional support to a non-career ambassador, because that person needs a lot more help. It's easier if you are working with a career person who has had a distinguished career and lots of background, ideally with area expertise.

Then you are basically the COO (chief operating officer), while the ambassador is the CEO (chief executive officer). Apparently, there is concern that a number of people who were otherwise excellent officers have had trouble being a DCM, for a whole variety of reasons. You are in a managerial, as opposed to a substantive, role. It's less writing and analysis, and more supervising the overall product of the embassy, as well as its operations and performance.

As I would say to some people, if I do my job well, the ambassador can just spend all his time outside hobnobbing with the high and mighty, while I'm minding the store for him. In large part, that's the way it is. The ambassador can do the high order things. Obviously, when the ambassador is away and you are chargé, you have to do the same thing. It's not quite the same though, because you don't have the authority and a fully-accredited ambassador does. You fly the flag, but it's not quite the same, but it gives you a sense of what it's like to be on the stage all the time, the 24/7 thing. If you've got to go to X number of national days in one day, you often aren't in a position of saying I'd rather not. You simply have to attend. You have to show the flag. It can get kind of wearing after a while.

Q: As you say, the DCM is the COO. One interview I've had here claimed that almost 50 percent of DCMs never finish their tour because they run afoul of the ambassador. The Ambassador-DCM interaction is equally an important part of the job.

How did they talk to those issues?

BUTCHER: Do you mean in the course?

Q: Yes, in the course.

BUTCHER: They just basically talk to them. They talked about lessons learned. There are a lot of ways to open your eyes to potential trouble and concern. I knew the person I was going out to serve as deputy to, Paul Cleveland, an old EAP hand. I didn't know him well, but I knew him well enough to be on a first-name basis. He had been head of regional affairs in EAP. That's where I had first met him some years before and liked him. He had a good reputation. That made it a little bit easier. I could listen and learn from the experiences of others. Do's and don'ts, and what have you. I was not too fearful of what was facing me.

Q: Good Morning. This is November 17th, 2011, and we are returning to our conversation with Scott Butcher. When we left off last session you were Director of the Office of India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bhutan Desk (NEA/INS), we were starting to talk about your next assignment in the summer of 1990 as Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) in Kuala Lumpur. But first let me start out by asking you how did you get that job?

BUTCHER: Well, as we had talked about earlier, I was assigned to Malaysia in the mid-1970s, 1975-79, had Malay language training, and quite frankly was quite interesting in returning to that part of the world. The two jobs I was most attracted to were the DCMships in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur. Because of some personnel changes the Jakarta DCMship was taken a year before I would be available after completing my two-year assignment as director of NEA/INS. So I had a chance to bid on the job in Kuala Lumpur and jumped at it. I had known Ambassador Paul Cleveland, not too well, but we knew each other on a first name basis. I contacted Paul and he was interested in my coming; and I made it through the DCM committee and was assigned to KL.

Q: You replaced Tom Hubbard.

BUTCHER: I replaced Tom, who went off to be DCM to Ambassador Nicholas "Nick" Platt in Manila.

Q: Now, before you went out to post did you go through any preparatory briefing with the Desk? Who's backing you up in Washington?

BUTCHER: Well, the nice thing is, periodically they have symposia sponsored by various groups on various countries and bilateral relations and it just so happened the Asia Foundation was doing one of their periodic colloquia on Malaysia at the Airlie House conference facility in northern Virginia and they had a number of very prominent Malaysians coming into town; some ministers and other senior officials such as former deputy prime minister Musa Hitam, and think-tank types, including officials from U.S. agencies – State, Defense and others including Ambassador Cleveland. Army Colonel Mike McDermott, a decorated combat veteran from Vietnam who was going out to be the new defense attaché, and I were invited to join the proceedings. So we joked it was very nice for them to lay this on for us, to brief us up on Malaysia. As I recall it was a two-day program, very well done, very informative for us. And yes, I did spend some time at the Desk and met with other agencies.

As noted earlier, I also went to the DCM course, roughly around June of 1990 and went off to the Woods Resort and doing our field training. We had people going out as consuls general and DCMs, including a couple of my former classmates as well.

Q: Now when you arrived at post, could you give us a brief description of how the embassy was organized? How big was it?

BUTCHER: It was, I'd call it, an active medium sized embassy. It was not a class one embassy, but it had a pretty wide-ranging operation. It comprised the customary sections: executive, with the ambassador and DCM; economic; consular; admin. Plus other agencies. The commercial section, headed by a commercial counselor, was quite busy promoting trade and investment, working closely with the economic section, which also now followed specialized matters such as science, environment and technology, things like that. Malaysia was a net energy exporter, so obviously there were considerable American commercial interests in the oil, natural gas and petrochemical sectors. And at that time Malaysia was part of a pretty large regional economic boom. So, we were encouraging American business to participate in that dynamism. The embassy also had a regional security officer, and a Marine Security Guard detachment under his supervision. I loved the Marines, and one of my favorite pastimes was playing volleyball at the Marine House. I also was honored to be able to participate in the annual Marine Ball cake cuttings on at least one occasion. Marine Guards were at three of my four overseas posts, and I appreciated them in many ways for contributions not only to security but to the life of the official community.

The embassy did not have an AID program. At one point Malaysia hosted the largest Peace Corps contingent in the world in the mid-1970s when we were there on our first assignment, with hundreds of volunteers. Malaysia more-or-less graduated to the higher ranks the developing world and sometime in the early 1980s it was decided that counties like Malaysia, which were clearly taking off economically, no longer needed that type of support, which was really intended for poorer nations.

By the time I arrived back in Kuala Lumpur in1990 the U.S. and Malaysia had developed a fairly robust – but below the radar - program of defense collaboration, defense

cooperation. During the height of the Cold War the Malaysians were among the neutral, non-aligned countries while quietly affording us use of various facilities and cooperating with us on training and intelligence sharing. In fact, some of our P-3s tracking Soviet subs and other vessels staged out of their facilities and very quietly we shared information with them as fellow anti-communists. The Malaysians had experienced their own domestic communist insurgency threat until the mid-1980s. And they appreciated our contributions to regional security, as well as our bilateral defense assistance and cooperation. So, we had an on-going military program. We had the traditional embassy representation of defense attaché – as noted Colonel Mike McDermott was army attaché/defense attaché. Plus a separate security assistance office.

USIS (U.S. Information Service), which at the time was a separate entity, had a robust operation. We had an Agricultural Attaché. DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) maintained an active presence at the embassy, responsible for our joint bilateral cooperation on narcotics interdiction. We provided assistance and technical support to the Malaysians and we cooperated in a number of ways there.

Q: At one time Malaysia was part of the Vietnamese refugee issue. Had that issue ameliorated when you were there?

BUTCHER: Yes, I should have mentioned that the refugees, along with counter-narcotics, had been an ongoing enterprise since the 1970s. Our refugee coordinator ran a very busy operation, with a separate office in a Malaysian high-rise office building.

Malaysia remained a country of first asylum. Large numbers of refugees) had come the initial wave after the fall of South Vietnam in the mid-1970s, 1975. Then there was a second wave that came out; and then a third wave as the Chinese-Vietnamese were pushed out of Cholon. So Malaysia had given temporary refuge to well over a quarter of a million refugees by the time I arrived back in 1990. However, the welcome mat had been withdrawn. They just got to the point where they were concerned that some of the ones coming out were more economic than political refugees and they were concerned they would get stuck with the residue. So, they started what was known as a "humane deterrence" program where they would basically refit some of the refugee boats, give them maps to the closest Indonesia islands, re-provision them, and push them on their way. This may have been a humane deterrence from their standpoint; but from our standpoint it put people at risk again. There was a large and influential pro-Indochinese refugee activist community in the U.S. that was very concerned about that. And stimulated congressional interest.

Q: There had been an island off Malaysia where most refugees…

BUTCHER: That was Pulau Bidong (Bidong Island). That was the main center where the refugees were brought. And then they moved them off to a place called Sungei Besi, another resettlement camp, a transit center on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur Malaysia and resettlement countries used as a staging area. There the refugees would receive cultural training for the various countries that they were going to before they were sent on

their way. By the time I arrived a major effort was underway to close down Pulau Bidong, because they did not want to have an island as a magnet because a lot of people would leave from Vietnam and set their compass direct to Pulau Bidong. The island also was difficult to keep supplied with water, food and other amenities, especially during the monsoon season, and facilities there were hard to keep in adequate state of repair.

Q: Now let's go back to the embassy. Ambassador Cleveland is a career foreign service officer and he has been there before your arrival. What was his management style and how did you two divide up the work.

BUTCHER: Well, Paul is a very impressive guy. He is very bright, very experienced. He had been in Asia much of his career, so by the time he made it to Malaysia he had been DCM in Seoul and had been ambassador in New Zealand. He had also served in Indonesia earlier in his career; so he knew the area, but a lot of his expertise had been more on the northeast Asia side in recent years. But he had been director of regional affairs in the East Asia Bureau. Very bright, accomplished guy. Very articulate. Impressive, looked like he was out of central casting for the role of ambassador. You know, tall, imposing guy, white hair. Anyway, a very good guy to work with, but someone who sort of wore his emotions on his sleeve. I would joke with people that my job was managing the boss and helping the boss manage Mahathir (the then prime minister of Malaysia).

Q: How did you divide up the responsibilities between the two of you. You're the manager…

BUTCHER: Yes, I am in effect the chief operating officer while he is the CEO (chief executive officer). A good DCM basically handles a lot of the basic housekeeping so the boss can go out and do a lot of the high level diplomacy. We did share things. I tended to be heavily involved in a lot of the things having to do with kind of the day to day matters: military, the pol-mil issues, the DEA related things, and so on. One of the political officers was assigned to work with the DEA representative and I spent a good deal of time out in various events involving various DEA-sponsored training, seminars, etc. And sometimes I would go help kick these off or close them. I would go to various counter-narcotics or drug rehabilitation-related events; a number of times sweltering in tents as a participants in a rehabilitation program were receiving their certificates.

All kinds of interesting things. I'll never forget one time there was a function that Malaysian royalty was at and at one point the guy next to me who was a senior Malaysian counter-drug official nudged me and said, "Scott, your toe is pointing at so-in-so, the royal representative." I said, "Oh my goodness, I know I should not show the bottom of my foot. I did not realize that pointing my toe was also bad." He said, "Yes." We had a tea break; he came up to me. He said, "I'm sorry. I didn't want to embarrass you." But he said, "I'm from Penang. I don't know about these things either. The guy to my right nudged me because my toe was pointing at him too." The little cultural and protocol nuances one picks up.

In sum, Ambassador Paul Cleveland and I worked well together. I think we had a good division of responsibilities. We were very open with one another. Paul would share things with me. I would keep him involved whenever I felt it was necessary to bring something to his attention.

For a DCM usually the worse moment is when the admin counselor walks into your office and closes the door behind him. There is usually some serious event about to happen or has happened that may have to do with personnel, finances, or what have you. But it is usually not good news, when the admin counselor closes the door behind him. If it wasn't something we could handle between the two of us, at some point we would bring in the ambassador. And a lot of times, sometimes it was the consular officer who paid me a closed-door visit; this often involved the ambassador getting hit up by a fellow ambassador for some visa favor or something like that. Then would have to determine whether or not this was something within the pale or something where no favoritism could be shown. Some of these were matters we could expedite, but could not bend the rules. But Paul and I worked very well. It is just that he has a very Irish personality and a number of times he would fulminate – again often to me behind closed doors – I would scrape him off the ceiling. And we would talk things over as to how best to handle certain things. You know, in circumstances where it's best to step back a bit and gather oneself rather than to react to some provocation.

Returning to Malaysia after a hiatus of a dozen years or so was quite interesting. It was actually less, from 1979 to 1990, so it was eleven years. But a lot had happened in these intervening years and Malaysia has really come of age. It had gotten out of a very insecure position when they had been facing an ongoing insurgency, still nasty, not threatening the overthrow of the government, not an existential insurgency, but one that was troubling and complicating race relations and so forth. That had pretty well gone away when communist leader Chin Peng's insurgency finally unraveled, thanks largely to the PRC no longer giving it support after diplomatic relations were established in the late 1970s. So these folks finally came out of the jungle and gave up in the 1980s.

As for the Malays who had been beneficiaries of the special preferential treatment, I frankly was a little skeptical as to whether they would be able to catch up with their Chinese compatriots. And when I came back not only had a lot of them caught up, but also many were really impressive. I had seen some young diplomats whose English was halting who had come up through the Malay language stream and was really concerned about how well they were going to cope. But a number of them had become very polished, very sophisticated, and very sharp operators. And this was also true in the business world, where they had benefited from special preferential set-asides for ethnic Malays – affirmative action for the majority, but seen as economically disadvantaged, community. But a lot of them had done well by this; a lot of them had taken up the educational opportunities. Malaysians in large numbers were sent to the U.S. for schooling on the government dime. They used this benefit quite well. They attained success in many specialties; technical fields, as well as more general ones. It was a much different Malaysia when I came back.

Not the least of which was the leadership of Prime Minister Mahathir, who was dynamic, domineering and difficult. He pushed people hard. And he kind of ran over institutions outside of the executive branch. I pointed out to people that when I first went to Malaysia in the 1970s, the coinage at that time had images on one side of the Malaysian parliament. When I came back the second time there was no image of the parliament; rather they was all images of Malay symbols and regalia. I thought that was an interesting little thing. Look at a country's coinage and it tells you something.

But it was a much more self-confident country. It was economically much better off. The politics were more stable, although you had the original ruling coalition having more competition over the years, but it was still dominating the scene. It was a multi-racial coalition where, though a complex patronage system, all elements were pretty well looked after. There was a Chinese, somewhat left of center opposition party called the Democratic Action Party, DAP. There was an Islamist right-wing party, the Parti Islam Se-Malaysia, the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party, PAS. But then again these had their areas of strength. The DAP was strong in the heavily Chinese populated areas. It really appealed to the Chinese working class. The Islamic Party appealed well in the more religiously conservative rural Malay constituencies in northern and eastern Malaysia.

Q: Let's follow this a little further, in terms of, let's say bilateral relations with Malaysia and Mahathir's influence. How did that unfold during your time there?

BUTCHER: Well, it's very interesting because Mahathir had his "Look East" policy where he said to the Malaysians, "Let's emulate those strong economies and work ethics of northeast Asia." That was more politic than saying, "emulate your hard working Chinese neighbors." I have a clipping somewhere, which says, "Mahathir tells people to work more, sleep less." One long-time expatriate resident of Malaysia, actually who has Malaysian citizenship and has headed a think tank in the past told me that one of Mahathir's parents was Malay, the other was Indian Muslim, in essence a Pakistani, thus explaining why a lot of his behavior was seen as un-Malay, because Malays tend to be very soft spoken, very courteous, emphasize conflict avoidance, etc. And here is this guy out there kicking people in the butt, so to speak, to motivate them. Sometimes he would be rather irascible, and this person told me the dependent variable was which side of the bed Mahathir woke up on: his Pakistani side or his Malay side! Pakistanis, South Asians, are seen as rather argumentative as opposed with the softer and more courteous Malay personality, typical also of other Southeast Asians.

Q: Sounds like it was the Pakistani side which got the Ambassador's attention from time to time.

BUTCHER: It got everyone's attention from time to time. Mahathir never shied away from controversy. I used to joke with people that Mahathir is a man who never said "no" to a microphone thrust in front of him. And he would never say "no comment." He would always give his opinion on something even when it was best not to say anything. He was pretty strident in his perspectives, was strongly nationalistic, and even if he might agree with you, he's never going to say it in public. So, you would have this public persona that

was pretty edgy. On a number of occasions, at various holiday open houses and social functions, I would encounter the Prime Minister. One time, I remember sitting at a table with him in an informal conversational setting. It was a small group of people and he was pleasant, low-key, and just as personable as you can possibly imagine anyone can be. Although he had this firebrand image in front of the microphone, one-on-one he was very dispassionate, very interesting, and empathetic. Just the opposite of his public persona.

Q: What was the key to his rise to the Prime Ministership then?

BUTCHER: This is a man who had a great deal of drive. He himself is very bright, has a real work ethic, has strategic vision, and fought his way up through Malay politics. He knew how to operate in a Malay environment in terms of their sense of grievances, their sensitivities. Mahathir's own grievances stemmed, we were told, as having in effect been forced in the British period to ride in the back of the bus. Reportedly, his resentments from the colonial period included having his desire to go to the UK for higher education thwarted, ending up getting his medical education in Singapore. Thus he had a lot of baggage left over from what he considered the unfair treatment during the colonial era, which colored his views. He saw himself as a champion of the underdogs and the Malays who had been left behind while the British used the Chinese, and to some extent the Indians, for business savvy, skills and manpower to run the modern, colonial economy.

So, "Dr. M" was able to galvanize this Malay nationalism and Malay chauvinism toward non-Malays, into making a name for himself, although not without major controversy. Interestingly he also was critical of the Malays, most strikingly in his controversial book The Malay Dilemma, which for decades was banned in Malaysia, but available in Singapore and elsewhere (The online Wikipedia entry on the book is at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Malay_Dilemma, and notes the book was published in 1970 just after he lost his parliamentary seat and had been expelled from the ruling party UMNO – the United Malays National Organization, to which he was re-admitted in 1972). But he was smart and practical enough. As he rose through the system he realized it was very important at least to have racial peace, if not harmony, and he would use the instruments at his disposal, including the Internal Security Act and other draconian emergency laws inherited from the British, to assure this. And he was willing to use them against any Malays who got out of hand, as well as any members of the other races, whose activities were seen as fomenting racial unrest.

Use of these laws was a source of great controversy. He was also involved, as I said, in giving more power to the executive at the expense of both the parliament and the judiciary. There were a number of controversies in the late 1980s where he was seen as making his own effort to pack the judiciary with compliant judges.

Q: Over time, did his attitude toward the United States evolve?

BUTCHER: Dealing with Malaysians over the years there have been constant themes. They realize they are not a big power. They realize at best they are a middle power. They are concerned about not making powerful enemies. They have been very active in

groupings such as the Organization of Islamic Conference – OIC - and Non-aligned Movement – NAM - even if the rationale for the latter organization was debatable after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. The question was non-aligned against whom or what? Closer to home, the Malaysians have been especially solid players and given considerable attention to ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) as a lynchpin of their regional diplomacy over the years.

One of the things that marks Mahathir's worldview is that he wanted as much freedom of maneuver as possible. I think getting a larger representation in a smaller grouping, he felt, would give him a stronger voice. So in later years, after I left Kuala Lumpur in 1993, and when Malaysia was to become the chair of ASEAN, I believe it was in 1998, the Malaysians pressed very hard to broaden ASEAN membership and include the Indo-Chinese countries and Burma. There were some voices who said, goodness you're going to make it a more unwieldy organization if you bring in these other members. The others, the three Indochinese countries plus Burma don't have the same core views of being basically free market economies and anti-communist. You are really diluting the core values that provided ASEAN its cohesion. The Malaysians were much more interested in having ASEAN having regionally comprehensive membership, universality, that is, to represent all Southeast Asian nations. I suspect that by now a number of Malaysians realize that having the three Indo-Chinese was one thing, but bringing Burma with its military dictatorship and woeful human rights record into the fold really posed lots of difficulties, and impediments to ASEAN's operating style – in the years since Burma's admission there has been an inordinate focus on how to deal with it, the pariah state within ASEAN. The various countries that get involved in the (ASEAN) post-ministerial conferences and other areas of cooperation, collaboration within ASEAN, have to say, that guy, the Burmese representative, will have leave the room before we can talk about such and such.

Mahathir evolved somewhat over the years. But he still maintained this outspokenness, which his diplomatic advisers sometimes thought was harmful to Malaysia's longer-term interests. I don't know if you remember this, but he and George Soros got into a real spitting match at the time of the financial collapse in East Asia in the 1997-1998 period. There was a big fight between Mahathir and his then deputy, Anwar Ibrahim, over how to respond to the economic crisis. Mahathir has his version and Anwar, being a little more of an internationalist, had his. I think Anwar also wanted to leverage as much of his outside support as possible in this dispute, because abroad he was widely seen as a modernist Islamic figure. He had come up through the Malaysian Islamic youth movement, and was a bright, articulate and charismatic figure, both in private and in public. But he had a complex personality in his own right. The two of them had had real differences, but part of it was that Mahathir did not want this younger guy, whom he actually brought into the UMNO party.

Anwar did not come up through traditional Malay UMNO politics, which you start out as a youngster – youngster sometimes is up to your 40s – in what is known as the UMNO Youth organization. Often times young UMNO politicians start out as very chauvinistic, then when they get up to a certain level they can become leaders, working with non-

Malay members of the governing *Barisan Nasional* (National Front) coalition. Anwar came up through the Islamic youth movement – ABIM (*Ankatan Belia Islamia Malaysia*) track in the 1970s and in the early 1980s, Mahathir wanted to co-opt some of this Islamism, because it was getting a boost from what was happening in Iran. There was a so-called *Dakwa*, or "Awakening" movement among Sunni Muslims. Again there is probably Saudi money somewhere in this mix – at that time Saudi and other Gulf Arab petrodollars were being used to promote Islamic activities abroad, including in Southeast Asia. But in that context it seems likely some in UMNO, including Mahathir, felt UMNO needed a more Islamic veneer in order to compete with its Islamist political opponent, PAS (Partai Islam Se-Malaysia, the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party). Bringing in Anwar was all part of this picture. When the protégé suddenly turned on his mentor in mid-1998, things got a little dicey; at a party meeting and Anwar tried to take over the party and therefore the ruling coalition. Because whoever rules the UMNO party ends up heading the government as prime minister. But Mahathir got advance word of Anwar's plans, thus thwarting them, and Anwar was imprisoned for several years on what were widely believed to be trumped-up charges.

Q: During the time you were in KL from 1990 to 1993, what were some of the major bilateral issues that the embassy was focused on?

BUTCHER: Some of the bilateral issues came out of international issues and we can talk about that later. The issue of refugees was certainly a major issue. What happened was the so-called humane deterrence from Malaysia based, they said, on unwillingness to accept any more refugees, even on a temporary basis, struck a raw nerve with some key members of congress. Senator Mark Hatfield (Ed: R-Oregon) added what came to be known as the Hatfield Amendment to some bill, which basically barred any military assistance to Malaysia. Well the only military assistance controlled by our funding was the IMET program, International Military Education and Training, which is a major element of our dealings with foreign militaries. Frankly, it is a very useful program, because it brings them, especially many of their officers to the U.S. for training and exposes them to U.S. human rights standards, professional military conduct, and so on and so forth. In a sense some people saw this as shooting ourselves in the foot. The military basically had nothing to do with the government policy on refugees. They were the one enforcing the policy by their navy intercepting some of these refugee vessels. But in many cases, the rickety vessels the refugees came out on were swapped out for very nice fishing trawlers that the Malaysian has seized from Thai fishermen pouching in Malaysian waters. They would outfit these boats, give them provisions, water, food, and as I said, point them to the nearest Indonesian islands, which were not that far away. But there were some instances where people did die, when the boats were not allowed to stay ashore. This was an issue. But our reaction was probably imprudent to the extent that we were injuring something that was a benefit to the U.S. In other words this quiet U.S.-Malaysian bilateral military collaboration was useful for all parties.

We got some jungle warfare training at their school. Their jungle warfare school, PULADA, which is in Johor State in southern Malaysia, is considered one of the best training facilities of its type in the world. And certainly in light of our exit from the

Philippine bases, it was helpful for Malaysia and other regional countries provide access to their ports and facilities. What Admiral Larson, the then CINCPAC (Commander-in-Chief, Pacific) called our "places, not bases strategy" for dealing with the post-Philippine bases world.

So, the refugee issue indeed remained a big one. And we continued to work with the Malaysians. I might add that current Prime Minister Najib bin Tun Razak was an old acquaintance of mine from my days in KL in the 1970s, when he was a new member of parliament (his father, Malaysia's second prime minister, had died in early 1976, shortly before I met Najib. Now he was defense minister and he managed this dispute very well. Mahathir was just incensed by this (U.S.) reaction to Malaysia's changed refugee policy by in cutting off our IMET funding; he felt we were ungrateful for all the refugee assistance they had provided over the years. Malaysia had cooperated with us as much as if not more than most of the other Southeast Asian countries that were first asylum countries. As I said a quarter of a million people had transited through Malaysia and there were still tens of thousands in Malaysian refugee facilities awaiting onward movement. The Malaysian government did not want to be a magnet any more and they felt that they had to deter what they saw as the "boat people" being more economic migrants than refugees fleeing persecution. What Defense Minister Najib did was to postpone an annual session of BITAC – the Bilateral Training and Consultative Committee, which was our vehicle for bilateral military cooperation. He postponed it as it turned out by just a matter of months. So he could go back to the Prime Minister and say, "Okay Sir, I've taken action against those dastardly Americans." We thought Najib managed that quite well, to the mutual benefit of both countries.

Q: That illustrates how things can pop up in domestic American politics and complicate the life of the embassy.

BUTCHER: Right. Over the years Mahathir has gotten into trouble by anti-Semitic remarks, apparently in efforts to please his pro-Palestine, anti-Israel, Muslim constituency. On one occasion while I was in KL the prime minister started railing against Jews, for some reason or another. Whatever the matter was, he said it was a Jewish conspiracy. Once again Mahathir's ill-considered and intemperate remarks caused some Jewish members of the American congress to get up in arms, so we were having kind of a nasty slamming match back and forth. But there were other prominent American Jews who knew more about Malaysia's relationship with the U.S. and knew that by and large Malaysians and their leader were not anti-Semitic; they were pro-Palestine, as a lot of Muslim countries are. But this was once again Mahathir not being reticent in expressing his views, as half-baked as they might be. He probably doesn't know if someone is Jewish or not, but he just got up without any cautionary thoughts… this is the man who has never had, as far as I am aware of, a public affairs adviser. He's his own public affairs adviser, which complicates our overall ties, given his penchant for outspokenness in front of a microphone. Like a kid in a candy store, when Mahathir sees a microphone in front of him, he just can't resist!

Q: Sort of like being your own lawyer?

BUTCHER: Yes, I've talked with some of his aides who have traveled with him and they have told me – totally off the record – "we told him that he shouldn't say this or that" and his retort was, "well that's why I pay you diplomats to fix things after I say something people don't like."

Q: What other bilateral issues came up during this period?

BUTCHER: Well, there again there were lots of things, because we had to deal with this prickly leader who wanted to make sure his country wasn't getting dissed and who felt that sometimes the best defense is a good offence. And it was sometimes very hard and especially dealing with the foreign ministry, which as you know, foreign ministries don't have their own constituencies, so his prickliness would translate into prickliness. So they could show they were carrying out the wills and whims and wherefores of their boss. The need to always please the boss. The big boss. So that made things rather dicey.

Probably a key issue for the first year I was there was cooperating/collaborating with the Malaysians on a response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. This happened shortly after I arrived; I arrived on July 21, 1990 and in August, actually during a visit by then EAP (State Department Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs) deputy assistant secretary responsible for Southeast Asia, Ken Quinn, we got the word of the invasion, which caught everyone off guard. And we worked with the Malaysians; we told them what kind of sanctions we were enforcing. When this came to the UN, Malaysia was serving a term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

This was a lively period, with some memorable developments. Congressman Steve Solarz, who headed the Asia Pacific Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, came out to visit to Malaysia to try to persuade Malaysians to support our position on possible use of force to get Iraq out of Kuwait. And one of the people he called on was one of the most prominent Islamic politicians in government, who I believe was education minister at the time, Anwar Ibrahim. So here you have this New York Jewish politician coming in to see this Islamic political figure in the dominant party, the former Islamic youth leader and now the individual most identified with Islam in the UMNO party.

I had met Anwar once in the late 1970s. Earlier he had been in custody under the Internal Security Act for some form of activism that annoyed the authorities. I saw him shortly after his release and just before I left KL in 1979. When I met with him it was in his office outside the campus of the University of Malaya. He was wearing very Islamic appearing garb. He had white pajamas on like Pakistanis would wear. I don't recall whether he had a skullcap or not. He was probably in his 20s at the time. A lot of the girls around him in this co-ed office were fairly heavily covered. He really looked Islamic as well as acted Islamic.

So next time I saw him with Solarz, he's a minister in the government and he's wearing the finest Italian tailored clothing you have ever seen. The full Armani look. He had a

grey, apparently silk suit. Very stylish. Very expensive looking. Grey suit, grey tie, grey shirt, grey socks and grey shoes. It actually looked pretty sharp. Especially in contrast to the last time. So here is this Islamic personality meeting with this New Yorker and they hit it off beautifully! It was one of the most interesting meetings I had ever attended… I was present because Ambassador Paul Cleveland's car had a flat tire just as they were leaving the foreign ministry to head to the meeting with Anwar. Paul had something else scheduled immediately afterwards, and he knew he would not be able to make both meetings. So I ended up taking Solarz in my car and covering the call on Anwar, as escort and note-taker. It was absolutely fascinating. Solarz got his points across but Anwar was diplomatically non-committal; the personal chemistry was fantastic. And I had to really chuckle, because these two guys, if you had to sum them up, were two political animals hitting it off. Something I would never have bet on. In the end, however, we understand Anwar was one of the few, if not only, members of the Malaysian cabinet to oppose Malaysia supporting the Security Council supporting the final vote authorizing use of force if necessary to evict the Iraqis from Kuwait.

Anyway, what happened was the U.S. ultimately persuaded the Malaysian foreign minister, who was out traveling somewhere, to meet "halfway" with Secretary Baker, I think they met at the Los Angeles airport, where Baker could address the issue in person and try to get a commitment to support our position, already supported by a number of others in the Security Council. When the vote came, I believe it was in November 1990, Malaysia was the only Muslim country to vote in favor of the motion. Yemen abstained. The clincher in the deal apparently was when Baker's with the foreign minister, Baker assuring the foreign minister that after this was over, the U.S. would re-invigorate our diplomacy on the Middle East, on the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

Indeed, the Malaysians voted in favor and one of the things that Baker did shortly thereafter, after Operation Desert Storm and Iraq was defeated and out of Kuwait, we did get back to our Middle East diplomacy and were very active. So when Baker was to attend the ASEAN post-ministerial that Summer, July 23-25, 1991, he was delayed in his arrival. In fact State Department Counselor Robert Zoellick headed our delegation for a while. Baker came from shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East, kind thus showing that yes, we were carrying out our part of the deal. While the Malaysians were not very happy about the way we had nudged and cajoled them into their vote, we tried on our side to respect our part of the arrangement. So when Baker met with some of the senior Malaysian leadership in Kuala Lumpur, I think they were appreciative of his follow-through.

Q: When you have a Secretarial visit like that for a major event like the ASEAN post-ministerial, the embassy is deeply involved in the planning and execution. How does the embassy staff carry out such events?

BUTCHER: Well, we had political counselor Gene Christy, who later became ambassador to Brunei, as the control officer and he and his team did a bang-up job. I kept a watchful, but not too interventionist eye, on how things developed. It was all-consuming. Some of us sent our families home for the summer so that we could clear the

decks to handle all this. We had advance teams come out. In fact, one of the advance teams had along the former Sri Lanka desk officer, Joe Barnes, from the time when I was officer director in NEA/INS. We had a good time together. I took him down to the Chinatown area and we watched people selling all the fake Gucci watches and things like that. He got a big kick out of that – one vendor went so far as to declare his were "authentic fakes." Definitely, such a visit is an all-consuming thing. This is the second one I had been involved with – the first was Secretary George Shultz's visit to Jakarta in July 1984 when I as political counselor was control officer.

So, I had an idea of how these things were to be run and that they have to be extraordinarily well-organized. Malaysia is an organized place and it went well. The only untoward thing was when they had the evening with the big soirée for the ASEAN ministers and their staffs and the post-ministerial visitors, the Chinese, the Japanese, Australians, ourselves and so on. Each group has to get up and perform or sing. You've probably heard about this; its been done often. You may recall that on one of such occasions years later Secretary Colin Powell and some of his staff performed as the Village People (an American singing group). In this case, Secretary Baker had a ringer. His wife has a good voice, so he got her up to sing some Texas melodies. One of the funnier things was that the Papua New Guinea foreign minister and his Australian counterpart were at the same table and they both hid under the table so they would missed, but someone handled them the microphone underneath the table, compelling them to perform. The event was supposed to end at a certain time because there were meetings scheduled for the next day. Apparently it dragged on and on and it finally turned out the reason was that the Malaysian Foreign Minister's wife was a noted songstress and the whole objective was to have her conclude the evening with her vocals. Yet, it went on to all hours and our staff was pretty P.O.ed that the Secretary had to spend an extra hour or so. I suspect that his body clock was all out of whack anyway since he had been traveling around the world.

The amount of effort that goes these enterprises is indeed extraordinary. There were also a lot of bilaterals that had to be set up in the process too. So, it was a huge undertaking all around. We had the U.S. ambassadors from other Asian posts on hand for various bilateral meetings. It just underscores that it is a huge effort.

Q: Let me take this opportunity to focus on something different for DCMs. The embassy infrastructure; how old is the embassy? Did everyone have enough housing? What were those kinds of infrastructure issues that came to your attention?

BUTCHER: When I was first in Malaysia in the mid to late 1970s, we occupied the top floors of a relatively new but somewhat aging office high-rise office building in downtown KL, the AIA building. The Japanese Red Army terrorist incident, highlighted the need for a building that was hardened, and with more setback for security. We required our own building that we owned, had sole use of, and hence could control access. So, later, in the early 1980s, a new chancery was built, an attractive structure designed by prominent American architects in a much more accessible area of town, not quite as congested. At the time it was considered a fortress; by today's comparison, it is

nothing like that. The structure was very nicely done, fitting in with local Malaysian architecture, with tile roofing, etc.

There was also embassy housing. The ambassador had a residence that was a pre-World War Two structure, supposedly occupied by Japanese officials during the WWII occupation. In fact, the irony was that the Malaysian ambassador in Washington, Albert "Bertie" Talalla, had grown up in this house that his family owned before World War Two. So when he would come on a visit, Paul Cleveland would entertain him and there were still pictures of Bertie's family in that house. Some of them were in their British military uniforms as they were about to head off to World War Two in Europe, obviously before the Japanese invasion. There were also some embassy residences, some embassy staff housing. Other embassy personnel were in rental housing, which had been fairly long term. Housing was not a real problem. We first lived in a rental house occupied by my predecessor, Al La Porta, and later moved into one of two adjacent embassy-owned old British Tudor-style two-storey buildings, sharing a driveway, and with spacious grounds, on a quiet street called "Gerbang Ampang Hilir." The house we occupied was probably our favorite of all our residences overseas, and great for our three young daughters. There were beautiful large flame trees, lots of orchids, ferns and wildlife – colorful birds and butterflies, and the occasional oddity, like a flying lizard we found one day and picked up and sailed, to the children's delight. The open lawn was great for outdoor entertaining, as well as for the impromptu volleyball set up – I went into the jungle and cut down giant bamboo trunks to use as poles. Our diplomatic volleyball league often would play in our front yard – one of those playing was the Singapore deputy high commissioner, Kishore Mahbubani, who later held top positions in the Singapore foreign ministry and government. The residence behind ours was that of the home minister, and occasionally his guards would extend long bamboo poles over our back wall to try to snag fruit off one of the trees in our compound.

Q: You were in a new embassy by the early 1990s?

BUTCHER: The embassy, by the time I got there was about eight years old or so and a very nice facility. It is the building we are using today. One of the interesting developments that happened after I left Malaysia in 1993 was the Malaysians moving their executive capital, not their legislative capital, capital to a new planned site, Putrajaya, probably 40 or so miles from Kuala Lumpur. The objective, as I understand it, was to centralize the ministries in one location, and by moving to a location outside the Klang River valley, to avoid and lessen some of the traffic congestion and air pollution that plagued KL. The Malaysian government had talked at some point about the embassies moving there too, but I understand most if not all of the embassies balked at that because a lot of them had put money into new construction. So right now to attend meetings at government ministries it is necessary for embassy personnel to travel down to Putrajaya, a considerable inconvenience.

Q: Back to admin issues, there were plenty of air conditioners to go around?

BUTCHER: Yes, when I was there, although tight budgets caused problems with keeping our embassy owned and rented properties adequately furnished, and some had rather threadbare window treatments etc. I visited Malaysia at one point probably right after I left the Foreign Service, but they were having more severe budget cuts. The staff had to have a meeting outside, because the air conditioning was off and they were sweating away in the tropical heat and humidity because they could not afford to keep the air conditioning running on a Saturday. So, they were having a meeting on one of the patios. There were always budget pressures. As DCM, I had to get involved in a lot of these things – how we could cut corners to gain cost savings, and how best to make our case for housekeeping funding.

Q: Shifting back to Malaysian internal politics, what did the bulk of embassy reporting cover? Who were the main actors?

BUTCHER: Because of the nature of this dominant multi-racial coalition, called the *Barisan Nasional*, the National Front, which in effect been in control from the time of Malayan independence in 1957, there were questions about its monopoly of the local news media, etc. The opposition was alleging a lot of crony capitalism, which there was, through the patronage network. Some of the opponents were saying that there was a great income disparity between the rich Malays who had benefited from the corporate welfare, as it was, directed to Malays by government policy. And that there was not enough trickle down to benefit the general Malay community. There were allegations that some of the elements of the Indian and Chinese communities were not that well off, or not getting their fair share of the pie. But by and large, the country was being well managed. Infrastructure was much improved when I came back this second time. And clearly it was a prospering country and a lot of people were benefiting. The rising tide was lifting many, if not all, of the boats. Probably the most neglected group was the rural Indians, who had worked in the plantations, the rubber plantations and so on, who lacked the type of educational and medical access the people in the urban areas would have.

Q: How about your own contact work and reporting as DCM? Who would be a major interlocutor for you?

BUTCHER: This was one of the things that was more fun when I was a more junior officer and when I was political chief, because I got out, traveled more, and did a lot more of the contact work with the politicians, students, etc. Now, what happened this time around was that some of the younger politicians I knew had grown up, and moved up. Illustratively, one example was that of a junior politician who had just joined parliament who I met in the 1970s, a son of the second prime minister [Ed: September 1970-January 1976], Tun Abdul Razak, had achieved political heights. When I went back, Najib Tun Razak was no longer a junior politician; he was defense minister and was very prominent in UMNO party affairs and was seen as a likely prospect for future prime minister, which he is now. So, I was able to re-establish contact with some of my old friends. Similarly some of my old buddies in the foreign ministry, whom I had known before, were up in higher levels. So that was good.

And I would participate in functions organized by members of the political section or other sections. But there was a lot less of that kind of hobnobbing that I had done while at a more junior level with emerging leadership. Now I was dealing with people who settled, who had moved into senior positions in government, politics and business. You know, when the ambassador was away, there were occasions when I was chargé and then I would have to literally have to fly the flag and represent the U.S. at various functions. And we would divide up our social schedule. If the ambassador could not cover some of the national days, I would fill in for him.

There was a lot more representation, reporting on high level matters, but not less on political subjects. We did have a very well-staffed political section and economic section. And we had a commercial counselor who was very well plugged in. Paul Walters, who was an ex-Peace Corps volunteer, had served as an economic/commercial officer at the time I was in KL in the 1970s and subsequently transferred to the new Foreign Commercial Service of the Department of Commerce. Paul spoke Malay, and married a Malay, and moved easily in Malaysian circles. So this was Paul's third time in Malaysia, and he was an excellent contributor to embassy activities. Overall, I think we had a very strong country team, which obviously makes things go well too. A lot of energy; a lot of experience. Gene Christy was an outstanding political counselor, with previous Indonesian experience and Indonesian language fluency. He was there for the first two years I was there. Then he went off to a calling in one of the "stans." Turkmenistan; he had Turkish language background. We had some very fine people who did some outstanding work. I would play my role, but I was sometimes more of a prop than the independent reporting and field operative I had so enjoyed being earlier in my career. Now I had my share of the higher-level representational activities, the "kissing babies" routine, when the ambassador wasn't kissing them.

Q: But it is interesting that when Foreign Service people have the opportunity to cycle through a country repeated times, they have readymade contacts and friends, who over the intervening years have also risen in their professions or local stature and it smoothes the embassy's work.

BUTCHER: This is true. In fact, years later when I was involved in something at the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council, I told them that Minister Najib was a friend of mine and the contact said, "Sure, sure." We went to some big reception and he was at the other side of the room and he yells out, "Hi Scott!" That did an awful lot for my ego. That was very fulfilling; and the language background and having a sense of the "human terrain," a term that seems in vogue now. Then again, I was not doing as much the outreach type things I had done in the previous assignment. I had been to all of the thirteen states. And I probably only went to eight or nine in my DCM role this time.

Q: Moving on to another topic, how would you describe our public affairs programming in Malaysia?

BUTCHER: Very active. Again we had the typical layout of public affairs; we had the press side, the cultural affairs side, and both were very active. With the end of the Cold

War, globalization underway, and numerous Asian economies booming, one of the key issues was what kind of economic architecture would evolve in Asia. The U.S. is government sees the U.S. as Pacific power, with important interests security and economic interests in the Asia-Pacific region. Thus the U.S. government did not want to have something happen, such as emergence of closed trading blocs that would cut us out. However, Prime Minister Mahathir wanted to basically link himself with Japan and South Korea, again to the extent he would not be dependent on Western economic powers so much the better. I don't think he just wanted to be linked in with one country, like Japan, but having a number of countries like Japan, China, Korea – an East Asian grouping – EAG as he called it; which would exclude the U.S., was one of his pets.

We were very concerned because that was the nascent time of APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), which we saw as a broader trans-Pacific collaborative forum that would keep us involved and give us an opportunity to maintain a focused economic dialogue with trade and investment partners across the Pacific. A more inclusive as opposed to an exclusive organization. Well, Mahathir had a love affair with Japan. He had spent a lot of time in Japan. He kind of cozied up to some of the more nationalistic Japanese. I think there was a mayor of Tokyo who was very nationalistic at the time. The Japanese were doing a lot of investing and they weren't hassling him on worker rights or human rights. These were other bilateral issues where we had a lot of concern.

As someone put it, the U.S. had a lot of investment in Malaysia, but it was "lumpy." It was largely in the energy sector, in other word the petro-chemicals – oil and gas, chemicals – and the electronics sector. There was some manufacturing. Carrier had an operation. There were some other American companies that produced things there. But electronics was big. The U.S. had been in industrial zones, in Penang and KL – Motorola, Intel, Western Digital, Seagate, and others for decades. But these were non-unionized operations. The Malaysians in their labor regulations excluded the electronics industry from having industrial unions. You could have single plant unions, but not industry-wide. There was a lot of pressure from U.S. labor organizations for the Malaysians to open up their labor regulations to allow national labor unions in these sectors. And the Malaysians strongly resisted. So this was always an area of tension.

In addition to our concerns about worker rights, as mentioned earlier, we also had human rights issues on our agenda for ongoing dialogues, especially the controversial Internal Security Act and other laws under which people could be arrested not only for overt acts of violence or plotting such, but also for what were termed seditious remarks, which we thought sometimes were applied so broadly as to encompass we would consider was freedom of speech. The press was tightly controlled, largely via a licensing process whereby if they stepped out of line they face the threat of losing their licenses and being shut down. So they were a number of issues in this area.

You asked abut the public affairs posture. On the bilateral front we had to reflect U.S. government policy, balancing U.S. perspectives which reflected advocacy groups and congressional interest on these areas, but also taking into account the fact the Malaysians

had their perspectives too; we were trying to bridge these in ways that wouldn't harm mutual interests.

Q: Did you find the use of the International Visitor's Program helpful in exposing the Malaysians to our thinking?

BUTCHER: In my mind, IMET on the military side and the International Visitor Program (IVP) on the broader civilian side are among the most cost-effective programs the U.S. has. We also had the Fulbright program, where we had two way educational exchanges. So, these are very, very useful programs. And a number of times, we would seek out people who were oppositionists or leaders in certain areas of civil society to be IVP participants. In some cases, these were human rights activists who we felt would benefit from seeing how the U.S. organizes to deal with such issues. Sometimes these were people who tended towards more radical perspectives, but whom we felt would benefit from having a broader view of how to organize in a more democratic fashion to address problems. I think by and large these were outstanding programs. We only heard positive things from returnees and the reception these folks got in exposing Americans to Malaysians. It is very much a two-way street.

We also brought a number of groups over to Malaysia, under these various cultural programs. We would have representatives of American singers, dancers; you know the usual cultural exchange type things. One of my great pleasures was filling in shortly after our arrival, when Paul Cleveland was away to serve on a promotion panel or something. So I used the residence and to the Charlie Byrd Trio. Charlie Byrd was one of my favorites! Great guitarist. A real thrill for me personally.

And we had other people come out under USIS sponsorship. For example we had astronaut James Buckley, a shuttle astronaut. USIS had a program for him to meet with a range of people from the scientific and technical side; students, etc. At the an end of one day he was scheduled for a courtesy call on the prime minister, at which he was to present a Malaysian pewter coin that had gone up in the shuttle, with the image of a shuttle. Because the prime minister had just gotten back from an extensive overseas trip and likely to be jet-lagged, we were cautioned that this was really to be a pro forma affair – a quick in and out. I tagged along, as the senior Embassy representative, as I recall with the Embassy's Science and Technology officer. The two of them, the prime minister and Buckley just hit it off. The prime minister is actually a very educated person, a trained and formerly practicing physician, so he really has a scientific background. He and Buckley talked scientific matters for well over an hour. Some of Mahathir's aides present clearly were unable to follow all the technical ins and outs, and some were nodding off, dozing. But not Mahathir. He was in his element, talking science and technology that left the others behind. They were having this lively conversation. The whole thing was really neat, because the two scientific minds hit it off so well.

But again, this was the type where you gain a window, insights into to a very complex personality, of a sometimes difficult leader. He appreciated what the U.S. had to offer, what we were doing. He appreciated our trade, our investment. We would point out that a

lot of was Malaysia was selling to Japan comprised raw materials. The rain forests were being devastated and the logs were going off to Japan because the Japanese didn't want to process the logs overseas. They wanted all the value added in Japan. And we pointed out that a huge percentage of exports to the United States were manufactures. High value-added items. Some of this was electronics, which would go back and forth between the U.S. and Malaysia through several processing stages and so on. The value added in Malaysia was amazing.

So, we had a very vibrant trade and investment relationship. We had an on-going military relationship where Malaysia appreciated our maintaining a stabilizing presence in Southeast Asia, because even though at the political level they were nice to China for want of a better term, there were those influential Malaysians who were concerned about being dominated by this huge neighbor to the north. Not to mention that issues of competing South China Sea claims in the Spratlys (Spratly Islands) that could put China at loggerheads with Malaysia and other claimants. The military training and education and the port visits, all were useful for the Malaysians, including economic benefits from the port visits, which provided business for local merchants and service providers. A number of times I might be shopping in some out-of-the-way place familiar mainly to locals, and there would be some service members from a Navy vessel berthed in Port Klang who also were shopping for bargains.

On the political level, things were very scratchy. But on the people-to-people level, or the military side, a lot of interaction was out of sight, and just booming along. And I know at one point a very senior American Jewish businessman, I won't mentioned his name on the record, contacted Mahathir after Mahathir said something very intemperate about Jews, that led to reaction by at least one Jewish member of congress. He said basically, you need to calm down and watch what you say and on my behalf I will talk to some of the American Jewish politicians who are raising a stink, which he did. So you had a lot of these back channels going on to keep the relationship on an even keel, despite Mahathir' rhetoric and sometimes skewed worldview. He had a lot of baggage, anti-colonial, anti-West stuff. Having said that, I believe he appreciated an awful lot of what the U.S. brought to the table, continued to bring to the table, and wasn't happy to proclaim publicly the benefits of the relationship. He was kicking his own people to move them forward because they were transforming what had been a fairly easy going, Malay peasant society into a modern, world-class economy. So he is kicking his own people, but every so often makes a verbal kick at some foreigner, as if to say, okay I'm kicking you, but I am also kicking the big guys outside too. But this made it difficult for us on the ground to try and manage the relationship, to keep everyone on an even keel.

Q: Going around the clock, could you give brief descriptions of Malaysia-Thai, Malaysia-Singapore, and Malaysia-Indonesia issues?

BUTCHER: Okay. The Malaysia-Thailand relationship generally was fairly good. There were problems in the southern part of Thailand, because of ethnic spillover and a large Malay population on the Thai side of the border. You had Malay irredentist movements in south Thailand, but they had kind of worked out a modus vivendi on that. Whereas in

the past, the Thai kind of let the bad guys from Malaysia, i.e., Chin Peng and the Communist Terrorist insurgents he led, operate out of a no-man's land in the border area. It was kind of their leverage on the Malaysians not to let the Malay separatists get out of hand. That all went away when Chin Peng and his group laid down their arms in the 1980s. There was still talk about Malaysians helping Thailand develop some of the more economically depressed areas in the south. By and large, the relationship was fairly solid when I was there. There was competition for investment and trade and things like that, but my impression was that the two countries were working together pretty well.

With Singapore, you talk about historical and personal baggage. Going back in history, Singapore was part when Malaysia was created after the British pulled out of their colonies of North Borneo and Sarawak on the island of Borneo. Singapore became part of greater Malaysia along with the two Borneo states of Sarawak and North Borneo, the latter renamed Sabah, in 1963. That union lasted only two years because the combination brought together he competing personalities and political parties headed by Tunku Abdul Raman, a Malay prince, and Lee Kwan Yew, a hard-charging, very energetic and extraordinarily competent Chinese politician. It was too small of a ship in a sense for the two to co-exist. So, Singapore was unceremoniously booted out of the union. Now the other thing was that Singapore brought a lot of energetic, Chinese, with their distinct customs and language, into the demographic mix, giving the Chinese more economic and political clout in a unified Malaysia. And so it was kind of like up-state New York kicking out New York City. For years it has been said the Malaysians are not trying to keep up with the Jones; they're trying to keep up with the Lees. And it is very grudging.

But each side needs the other. There is a lot of inter-action that goes on. Singapore has afforded opportunities for Malaysia, and vice versa. Malaysia provides a hinterland for Singapore investment – and tourism - but there is always a certain tension there. The Singaporeans are always crowing about how better organized, and clean, and operationally effective their country is. And the Malaysians say, "Yes, but you don't have to worry about these issues, like contending with competing states and regions, groups, or balancing urban versus rural policies, agricultural issues. Does your national airline have to subsidize routes to rural areas that need to be subsidized on political grounds, etcetera?"

With Indonesia, the two countries generally get along, but have had their issues, including border disputes. The Indonesians have much more self-confident in their culture. It is kind of a big brother-little brother relationship. You talk to Indonesians who sometimes poke fun at Malays or Malaysians. If you know the language and you are conversing with Malaysians and Indonesians, both cast barbs at each other in different ways. By and large, there is a lot of mutuality and friendship, but they have had some nasty border disputes over the years.

There was the case of two islands, Sipadan and Ligitan, popular tourist destinations off the Malaysian state of Sabah, near the boundary with Indonesia's Kalimantan province. A couple of times in the 1990s, each side's gunboats were at each other. It could have been kind of nasty, but the World Court came down with a decision ruling in favor of

Malaysia's claims. Interestingly, the sultan of Sulu had made claim to those islands. At one point, after the Spanish-American War in 1898, the American flag flew over them. The last place I went scuba diving ever was at Sipadan Island, a glorious dive site. As I told some of my Malaysian friends, "Hey, we'll settle it. You can just give it back to us. We'll take it! That will resolve your dispute with Indonesia."

Q: One of the great spring rituals for the Foreign Service is drafting or commenting on the annual personnel evaluation. As DCM, you would have organized that effort and keep everyone on deadline. Does that take a lot of time?

BUTCHER: Yes, you know the amount of time in management as a DCM is pretty extraordinary. It's managing, directing, and resolving disputes. You are the XO (Executive Officer) for the ambassador. And you have to make sure a lot of this stuff gets done so he is not bothered with it. Again, you are Mr. Inside to his Mr. Outside in many regards. I would joke with Paul Cleveland, later John Wolf, Paul's successor in 1992, that I was the altar to their fairly sizable egos. I also would joke to my Asian friends who believe in reincarnation that that at some point I would like to come back as a higher life form than a DCM, for instance, a toad! It is sometimes fairly thankless, a hard job which has to be done well and you have to be both tough-minded at points and yet be empathetic of others. Overall, though, the job was very satisfying.

During the three years I was there, we had a number of internal issues that were very difficult in terms of dealing with alleged malfeasance of various types: moral, ethical, financial, what have you. Dealing with issues in the greater American community. We had some cases of, you know, reported child abuse by parents of American kids at the International School of Kuala Lumpur – ISKL. One child in particular had to be spirited out of the country because one of the parents was a religious fanatic and was basically starving the child. There were some pretty awful things, but you just have to address them. You are on call 24/7.

There were a lot of things having to do with security during the lead-up to the Gulf War. Security of the embassy and its personnel and the American community became a major issue. The Iraqis sent out some terrorist teams to a number of the Southeast Asian countries. Fortunately they were discovered because one of them blew himself up outside the Jefferson Center, the USIS cultural center in Manila. They found that he and his colleague had sequentially numbered diplomatic passports. They were able to check and found that in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, as well as in the Philippines, several teams had been sent out and were being given refuge in the Iraqi embassies in Southeast Asia. They were armed and dangerous, and that concerned us. But we were able to keep an eye on them.

There were anti-American security incidents, presumably from local Islamic radicals. An explosive was defused outside the American Airlines office. It was blown up by the Malaysian police, who said it was a potentially lethal device. A member of the embassy's local guard force was shot by some kind of homemade spring-loaded device and could

have been killed. The projectile they removed from deep in his shoulder had Arabic script on it. He was hospitalized for a number of days. And there were several other incidents.

Even after the international military coalition operation started in early 1991 oust Iraq from Kuwait, Operation Desert Storm, there were a number of protest marches by Islamic groups in front of the embassy. So there were a lot of security concerns. We had a lot of drills. We had warden meetings. We had town hall meetings with the American community. We were in close touch with the schools. There were a lot of things that were done with the embassy being a hub for dealing with security issues. Again as DCM, I played a major role. We would have the embassy's Emergency Action Committee – EAC - meet, and often times I would chair it. So a lot of detail, a lot of management went on and of course the efficiency report time is something that occupies all embassies. I think we did a pretty good job. A number of our people were commended for their reports, as was I for ones I wrote on subordinates.

Q: You had the opportunity during this tour to support a second ambassador. John Wolf presented his credentials on October 7, 1992. Did you know him before he arrived and how did a new ambassador affect things?

BUTCHER: I knew him only slightly. He had been on the seventh floor. I think he was executive assistant to the under secretary for political Affairs when I was office director for India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. And he had previously been director of the office of regional affairs in NEA (the bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs) before moving up to the Seventh Floor. Someone said, somewhat enviously, that John when he moved on had taken the Afghanistan portfolio with him upstairs. In sum, John was regarded as a skilled bureaucratic operator.

Anyway, John was quite a contrast with Paul Cleveland. A lot younger, very energetic. In fact I was telling some people that fall, and it was a real shock to me, it was the first time I had both an ambassador and a president (Bill Clinton) younger than I was!

John had had some Asian experience, but he had had come out to Malaysia he had been principal deputy assistant secretary (PDAS) for assistant secretary John Bolton in IO (the Bureau of International Organizations) at the time. So he had been through the whole business the Gulf War and all that. John Wolf was sharp, extraordinarily competent, and well plugged into the Washington operating environment. So, when he came out, there was a period before he was able to present his credentials during which I remained chargé and I had to escort senior visitors such as Governor Voinovich of Ohio. It was somewhat awkward, as he was in charge as chief of mission internally, but I had to be the external guy for protocol purposes, hosting the governor, etc.

The Voinovich-led Ohio trade mission was interesting in its own right. We went to an industrial site not far from Kuala Lumpur because although most of the delegation members were traders, exporters trying to sell their products overseas, they did have one investor. This businessman had a specialty air conditioning company called Bry-Air, which operated out of Columbus, Ohio. That was where their headquarters was, their

main plant. Overseas, they had a plant in India, a plant in the Netherlands, and they were just setting up a tri-lateral joint venture with an Indian partner and a Malaysian company in this industrial park to make this specialized air conditioning providing humidity control for the electronics industry, very high order equipment.

During his remarks at the inauguration of the joint venture at the industrial park, the Bry-Air executive was pointing out how the fact that his company had overseas exposure had positive impact on jobs in the U.S. Rather than exporting jobs, because they were able to diversify when the economy was tanking in the U.S. and U.S. sales were down, his company by being able to keep in the black overall because of their overseas operations and sales. Thus Bry-Air was able to maintain their work force in the U.S. until the business cycle came around again. He basically showed that his overseas investment saved American jobs. That was an "oh my, we didn't know that moment" for a lot of the others on the trade mission. It was a very interesting point. In addition, there is also to what is called trade-related investment. You may be investing overseas, but a lot of your input and components may come from the U.S.. You end up having a more vital company. The point being, that if you don't have the overseas investment, someone else will and the health of the company may suffer. So I thought that was a very interesting point, when you talk about globalization and how you account for winners and losers. In this case, Bry-Air and its chief executive was able to make sure that everyone was a winner. It was quite interesting. It was an "oh my" moment for a number of us involved in the visit.

Q: Earlier you said that Ambassador Wolf had been at post for sometime before he presented his credentials. Was that delay typical?

BUTCHER: It was scheduling. It's like in the U.S., where we have a procedure whereby the appointed ambassador will call on the secretary of state and is allowed to perform certain functions until he gets scheduled to present his credentials to the president. We have more of a problem than most countries because there are so many countries represented here in Washington D.C. But there were also quite a few diplomatic missions in Malaysia, and the Malaysians would schedule several envoys separately but sequentially on the same day. The presentation of credentials to the King (Paramount Ruler) was at the Royal Palace in KL.

John chose three of us to accompany him: the defense attaché, the commercial counselor, and myself. The defense attaché was there to highlight the defense relationship, the commercial attaché the commercial side of the relationship; I think he brought me along in recognition of my extensive experience in Malaysia.

Anyway, the other thing I should mention – you were talking about dividing roles between the ambassador and the DCM – one of the things I tended to do a lot of was entertaining of the senior visiting military delegations, including those headed by three and four star admirals. So, I entertained commanders of the U.S. Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT), Admiral Charles R. "Chuck" Larson and then his successor, Admiral Robert J. Kelly. Also Admiral David E. Jeremiah, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of

Staff, and a number of other three stars – including the Seventh Fleet admirals who would come through and I would entertain them, Vice Admiral Stanley R. "Stan" Arthur (a graduate of my alma mater, Miami University, who later was promoted to full admiral and served as VCNO –vice chief of naval operations) and his successor, Vice Admiral Timothy W. "Tim" Wright. And a number of other senior military visits. That was a major element in my role on the pol-mil (political- military) side of things, which I really enjoyed.

Q: Did Ambassador Wolf make any particular changes in emphasis?

BUTCHER: Yes, first thing he did when he came in in his introductory calls and in just reading in, he said, "My goodness, everyone has focused on the problems with Malaysia, and not the opportunities. You know, he came in kind of fresh; he had had a global view; he had not been focused on Southeast Asia and had a much broader focus. He came in and said, "My goodness there are huge unfulfilled opportunities for American businessmen in this country." Both Paul Cleveland and John Wolf were former economic officers, and Paul also was bullish on the prospects for improved trade and investment ties between the U.S. and Malaysia. Paul was concerned, however, that Prime Minister Mahathir's harsh rhetoric might deter some business interests from entering Malaysia.

John, as the new man on the scene, could see a lot of interest in Malaysia from other countries' businessmen, and he thought we were under-represented, so he really made the promotion of commercial ties, trade and investment a top priority. As he pointed out, economic security is also important for the U.S. and this is an area where we really should be looking at expansion to address the many trade and investment opportunities he noted. In fact, he was able to get interest by some well-to-do Malaysian investors in coming to the U.S.

Again there were a lot of things that as DCM I would do on the commercial side, plant openings, or anniversaries of Motorola facilities, things like that. I would attend these. Again a lot of times things would happen; there would be conflicts. I would go to one and the ambassador would go to another. Very often, of course, only the commercial counselor, the economic counselor, or the agriculture attaché or designated members of their staffs would attend, but sometimes it was worthwhile to bulk it up a bit and the ambassador or I would be brought along. As I said, we would be used as props, with our remarks prepared for us; kiss the babies, or sign the counter-narcotics agreement, or what have you, with details handled by the relevant offices in preparing for the meetings or events.

But John personally was very active and hands-on regarding the economic and commercial side of the relationship. As he said, there are people stumbling over opportunities while they are fixated on the problems in the bilateral relationship. There were huge opportunities, so he spent a lot of his effort trying to promote American business interests in Malaysia, and promote interest in Malaysia among American businessmen. The focus on promoting American business abroad had already been underway for some time. I think we owe its genesis to Deputy Secretary, later Secretary

of State Larry Eagleburger who gave a speech sometime around1990 or so, about the importance of the commercial function. To put more emphasis in the commercial side of our diplomacy. I guess, in so many words, our basic line should have been, even if it wasn't overtly stated, was that the U.S. helped win the Cold War, we paid for it, and we made a lot of the world safe for business. Now it is the time for us to get back into the game and focus more on the economic and commercial side. That was our mantra, implied if not explicit.

Paul Cleveland had gotten very much involved in this. In fact I think he was one of the early nominees of the (Charles E.) Cobb award, if I am not mistaken, for the promotion of U.S. business overseas. So he had already started this process of promoting U.S. business. Also, there was the program for the U.S. ASEAN ambassadors to go back and touring the U.S. raising awareness of business opportunities in the region. As I recall this was a collaborative venture involving the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service and Robert "Bob" Driscoll and the Washington D.C.-based U.S.-ASEAN Business Council he headed. The objective was to sell ASEAN region as a prospering area a worthy prospect for U.S. trade and investment. A lot of people, as it was pointed out, when they thought of Southeast Asia, they thought of Vietnam, quagmire, political risk and all that. To the contrary, in the ASEAN countries you had stable governments and growing and booming economies; the whole issue of new emerging markets of Asia. So that was a huge focus of John's actions as ambassador.

One interesting sidebar not long before I left Malaysia was attending a luncheon between a number of American Indians/Native Americans from New England who were interested in the casino business, and some local Malaysian Chinese businessmen who had excelled at the casino business. The luncheon group included the leader of this particular band, the Pequot's. Here were all these Native Americans, some of them looked really Native American, others not so much. And they were talking to a number of Malaysians who had been running very effective gaming operations at Genting Highlands. They were world-renowned and they were providing their expertise, and I think some seed money for these American Indian projects. This was not the type business activity I was accustomed to, but I was there as an embassy representative to observe this interaction. In effective, witnessing prospective Malaysian foreign aid to Americans!

Q: The embassy is tied to the Department in Washington via the Malaysian desk. Was the desk helpful in backing you up, supplying you with information? What was the relationship between the embassy and the Malaysian Desk?

BUTCHER: I would put it more as between the embassy and Washington. Because initially with Paul Cleveland, there was a lot of contact with Richard "Dick" Teare as the office director and Jon Aloisi as the Malaysia desk officer. They both were quite competent and helpful. I think that sometimes Paul Cleveland may have been hard on Dick because of the frustration over the U.S. government on a number of issues such as managing the East Asia grouping – EAG - that Prime Minister Mahathir was pressing as his pet project. Hiroshi Fukuda, the Japanese ambassador, a very sharp guy, basically, knew that Japan had a special relationship in Mahathir's eyes. The Japanese ambassador

was favorably disposed to the U.S., and he and Paul Cleveland had a good rapport, perhaps knowing each other from a previous diplomatic posting together. I remember Fukuda saying that his advice to us was not to encourage Mahathir by pushing back at him. In other words, he said, "If you let this go, ignore it, it will die an honorable death." None of us liked the notion of an exclusivist organization that would cut us out because we have major interests in the Asia-Pacific region. But we also found that some of Fukuda's arguments seemed to be pretty persuasive.

But that is just not the way Washington acts, you know – ignoring something that might go away on its own. An action by a foreign country or leader – even if it's just rhetorical - usually prompts a reaction, is the general pattern. So you had this ping-ponging back and forth, each time raising the decibel level. I think sometimes poor Dick Teare may have wished he wasn't hearing from Paul Cleveland, because Paul would vent at Dick. John Wolf came from previous assignment in IO (the Bureau of International Organization Affairs) and its more globalist perspective, and was a recent veteran of the Washington bureaucratic wars. Hence would get on the phone and start annoying people back in Washington at all hours of the day and night. So he didn't just work the State Department. I think John would call Treasury. He would call Commerce. He was adept at bugging people and he knew whom to bug. Again, that is the advantage of coming out of a Washington assignment too. You know the lay of the land, which is why it is always good to have a combination of assignments, field and Washington.

Q: And of course the telephone was being used more and more; calls became cheaper and this was all pre-email. This was also the time of the cable Official-Informal, wasn't it?

BUTCHER: Yes, but you had the cable Official-Informal, and they just starting to use the email Official-Informal. It had very little status. It was just for backfilling on things.

Q: I recall a cable Official-Informal could cover a number of subjects from a heads up on the next major visitor coming out to admin and personnel issues.

BUTCHER: True, they were used a lot. What was just starting to happen about the time I left was starting to use emails in that regard, which was quicker in terms of their turn around. Again, we had the problem of the time difference; about 12 hours time difference between KL and Washington. So that was sometimes useful and sometime awkward.

Q: This is a good segue to your next assignment back in Washington. Is there anything you think we haven't covered about your DCM experiences in Kula Lumpur?

BUTCHER: Well, there were a number of things where there were successes. We were preoccupied with a major extradition of a big Thai drug king that got caught up for a while in the Malaysian judicial process, but we were finally able to extradite him. It took a lot of energy, and hard and sometime clever work to get through both the U.S. and Malaysian legal systems so that we could work something out that met the objectives of both countries. It was a major extradition to the U.S. to face charges as a major drug

kingpin. So we were able after some period of time – he was a Thai-Chinese who had moved back and forth across the border and we were finally able to get hold of him. He was detained by the Malaysians, I think on immigration chargers for not having proper documents, or something. It worked its way… It took a lot of energy, but was a major event.

These are the kind of things that would bubble along and ever so often something would come along and you would chalk it up as a nice success. But by and large the assignment was very satisfying. I enjoyed working with Paul Cleveland and John Wolf. Again, I benefited from some really good staff, despite the environmental problems of monkeys besieging our house and things like that. It was good to see a country progress. It was also gratifying to see the emergence of a middle class increasingly interested with environmental, wildlife preservation, and other concerns. As for Prime Minister Mahathir, he was the indispensable man – in the publics eyes – as well as his own! You could see that there were political issues coming up in terms of young people not being satisfied with the status quo, with a leader who had been in office an awfully long time, and pressures for him to move on. But he being such a dynamic person people could hardly imagine what life would be after Mahathir.

Back to Washington, to a New Officer Directorate in the EAP Bureau

Q: Your next assignment was as Director of the Office of Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore Affairs, EAP/PIMBS in August 1993. How did that job come available to you?

BUTCHER: Initially I was interested is going back to a senior assignment in Washington. By that time all three of my kids were back home in various stages of schooling and my wife thought it was time to come back and get settled. So I was initially assigned, I don't know if it was an official assignment or something in the works, to be the director of the office of regional affairs for the EAP Bureau. What was happening was that in the post-bases era bureau leadership felt it was no longer necessary to have a stand-alone office for the Philippines. For organizational reasons it would be better to combine it with an office already handling several of its neighbors. They were however concerned about the Filipino reaction if they didn't have their own separate office. I assume someone recalled by past not too distant experience as, deputy director of Philippine Affairs and that I also covered the Philippines in the PM Bureau. So they decided to move the incumbent, David G. "Dave" Brown from heading what was then IMBS, the Office of Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore Affairs, to become director of the regional affairs office, and to assign me to the newly amalgamated office, EAP/PIMBS (Office of Philippine Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore Affairs).

So the day I arrived, I think it was August 23, 1993, that was the day the office took shape. I remember seeing people moving safes and furniture around and someone asking, "Where do I sit?" And I said, "I don't know even where I sit!" We figured it out, eventually.

So there was a huge amount of confusion because we were merging people who had been in two separate offices. There were some new people, but a number came over from the Philippine office. Some jobs had been eliminated in the amalgamation, but it was the summer transfer season. My deputy was the former deputy on the Philippines desk, Al O'Neil. Then we had several people who followed the Philippines, we had a couple who followed Indonesia and then Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore and so on. The Brunei-Singapore desk officer was one person. Anyway, over the next two years it was interesting to see the inexorable flow as one person after another erstwhile responsible for some aspect of the Philippines were swallowed up by the need to cover Indonesia, even though they titles might have been Philippine this or that. Indonesia began to dominate the work of the office.

Q: Can we assume that part of this shifting of offices was the result of a new Administration coming in January 1993, the Clinton Administration? Winston Lord was the new Assistant Secretary. Who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary to whom you were reporting?

BUTCHER: The PDAS (principal deputy assistant secretary) as was Peter Tomsen, who I knew when he was dealing with Afghanistan in the NEA bureau in the late 1980s. I was working with Tom Hubbard, who was a wonderful DAS. I had replaced Tom as DCM in Malaysia. Tom had been the deputy on the Philippine desk and I had worked with him when I was in PM involved with Philippine pol-mil matters. Then Tom was succeeded by John Finney on the Philippine desk and I subsequently replaced John Finney in that office! So we have these linkages that develop in the Foreign Service. Tom was really good to work for because he knew Malaysia. He knew the Philippines very well. He knew Indonesia less so, and I had served there as political counselor and had language background in Indonesia. So we complemented each other's skills sets and background. Tom was a great boss to work for. We knew each other well enough. He gave me enough leash. He appreciated my areas of expertise and I could draw on his when I had Philippine issues come up. So I think we had a great relationship. I enjoyed working with Assistant Secretary Winston Lord too.

It was a very good and active assignment. I enjoyed it immensely. In fact, my last three jobs in the Foreign Service – as office director for India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, then as DCM in Malaysia, and as head of the PIMBS office – were frankly dream assignments. I enjoyed them all three immensely, although they were quite different in subject matter, personnel and so on. But very interesting, stimulating jobs.

Q: As this new administration came in, did you detect any different policy emphasis in the countries you covered?

BUTCHER: By the time I arrived on the job…I had been in a change of administration between Republican administrations, where there was a difference in approaches. That was between Reagan and Bush, when I was India office director, and somewhat surprised there would be that much of a change, but there was. I did not detect all that much as I had already gotten introduced to the areas of emphasis of the new Clinton administration

when I was in Malaysia as DCM, and the new president has assumed office. So there were no particular surprises there. In fact, one of the things that caused a lot of people to be enthusiastic about Clinton's administration was its emphasis on Asia and on business promotion. Also appealing were Clinton's focus on trade arrangements such as NAFTA, and continuing with the process of building a post-Cold War Asia-Pacific architecture via APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation). As is now well documented, Clinton had his own background with Indonesia and as governor of Arkansas had traveled to that part of the world and was quite interested in the region. So that was something for us following Southeast Asia that was helpful. There was a lot of emphasis in the other departments – Commerce, Treasury and so on in terms of the whole APEC exercise. A lot of political will was going into that and APEC was a huge factor.

Q: We are returning to our conversation with Scott Butcher. Scott, we had just started talking about EAP/PIMBS, which integrated the Philippines with other Southeast Asian countries. What were the major Washington interests with each of these countries during your period as office director?

BUTCHER: There was a lot of interest when I arrived in APEC as a major East Asia Pacific initiative of the new Clinton administration, even though the process had started under the previous George H.W. Bush administration. It was seized on by the new administration as a major focal point for expanding U.S. commercial, economic trade interests in the region and thereby in the process helping stabilize some of our relations with the major regional players. One of the initial preoccupations when I arrived in EAP in the summer of 1993 were preparations for the November 1993 APEC Ministerial and Leaders meeting in Seattle. Since we were hosting, a major initiative was for the U.S. host to invite the leaders of the countries being represented at the meetings in Seattle. The meetings were scheduled to progress sequentially from senior officials to ministerial level meetings with trade and foreign ministers in the lead up to the Leaders' Meeting. So, a major focus of my work at the time, since I had five of the APEC members under my aegis, was preparations for those meetings. Also, early on in my incumbency the UNGA (United Nations General Assembly) meetings took place in September in New York. I accompanied Winston Lord to New York where Secretary Christopher met with a number of his ASEAN counterparts. Again, I had responsibility for five of those countries represented, so I attended a number of bilateral meetings as note taker. And it was a good introduction to many of the issues I would be following throughout the assignment.

Again the context was coming out of the Cold War, there was a lot of interest about moving into a whole new world, with more effort, more focus, more resources on economic expansion. The "PIMBS" countries were all booming. There was the whole concept, a major push by Treasury and Commerce, as well as State, regarding the "New Emerging Markets" and working to promote U.S. connectivity and entry into those markets. Employment, jobs, and exports were big priorities of this administration. The Gulf War was successfully concluded. The Cold War was over; the free world had won. And now things were moving to supposedly a "new world order," that was buzz word of the day. And in that new world order economics was to play a huge role.

Q: In following these priorities it sounds as though you would be doing a lot of coordination and contact with the departments of Treasury and Commerce?

BUTCHER: Lots of interagency preparatory meetings. Lot of activity in this area, how to organize, how to show that APEC was a vibrant organization. The backdrop was the whole Mahathir in Malaysia-led notion of an East Asian grouping. And they were moving to have this as kind of an ASEAN plus a limited group of other countries. It had morphed from an East Asian Group (EAG) to an East Asian Caucus (EAC), so it wouldn't appear to be such an exclusive and controversial economic grouping.

Q: Let's talk about the work it took to prepare the principals for that APEC meeting in Seattle. There would be briefing books, papers. Was it all done in State?

BUTCHER: There were many interagency meetings for lots of issues that had to be worked out. We did have a special APEC unit actually based in Seattle that helped with a lot of the on the ground arrangements with the Seattle host committee and groups like that. It moved along fairly methodically, but with a lot of effort. As I said, it was a huge preoccupation of the initial months I was on the job.

Q: Who would you say was the major Washington actor in this event, State? Commerce? USTR?

BUTCHER: USTR played a major role. We had a lot of meetings with USTR. We worked closely with the economic deputy in the bureau, the DAS handling economic affairs, Sandra O'Leary. There was a lot of integration, a lot of focus, and there was a huge political will from the White House to make this first Leaders' Meeting that we were hosting work.

And then at the actual meetings in Seattle a large number of us from the EAP bureau, and number from my office, were on hand to support the operation. Because this was being held in the U.S. we made a special effort to assure all ran smoothly. The leaders from all five of the countries, plus their foreign ministers and other top officials, attended, so my desk officers and I spent time at the airport greeting arriving VIPs (and later seeing them off) as well as serving as note-takers in various meetings and supporting the overall operation in myriad ways. Tom Hubbard and I helped organize on short notice a breakfast hosted by White House Chief of Staff Thomas F "Mack" McLarty for his APEC counterparts. Some of us also attended a dinner for Indonesian President Suharto, and other functions. As an early arrival, I ended up serving as note-taker for Secretary Warren Christopher's bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart. All-in all, another memorable experience.

Q: And in fact in November 1994 you were on the senior officers' meeting at the APEC in Jakarta.

BUTCHER: Actually I was there for the whole set of meetings, working in the office facilities the Executive Secretariat had set up in the Jakarta Hilton Hotel. The APEC meetings are kind of staggered. They would have inter-sessional meetings with various APEC planning groups, working groups and so on and then when they would actually have the formal APEC meeting itself, with the Ministerial followed by the Leaders' Meeting. It would start off with the senior officials' level, then ministerial, then leaders.

The APEC ministerial and Leaders' meeting in Indonesia in 1994 loomed very large in our whole office's work. At one point, someone on the domestic side at the White House discovered very late on in the planning process, and with the meeting only a couple of weeks off, that, "oh my goodness, this is going to be in Indonesia, with the President attending. They have human rights problems there." Actually we had been working for many months to formulate a human rights policy for Indonesia that made sense. There had been bloody crackdowns on protests of Indonesian control in East Timor resulting in deaths of some foreigners, in addition to ongoing harsh measures against an insurgent movements there, and this had become a major issue in terms of how we influence Indonesian behavior of in the human rights area, especially in critical areas such as East Timor and as well as in other areas. But East Timor was the most festering problem. So we spent countless hours working with the human rights bureau, consulting occasionally with interested NGOs such as Human Rights Watch, as well as with congressmen and their staffs on how we could effectively have a coherent human rights policy that promoted human rights while protecting U.S. interests, strategic interests because Indonesia is an absolutely huge country, rich in human and natural resources, astride critical sea lanes and waterways.

If you overlay the western-most tip of Indonesia on the island of Sabang to the eastern most portion – Merauke in what was then called Irian Jaya, if you laid one tip on Seattle the other tip would extend out beyond Bermuda. That is how broad the archipelago is. Another way of look at it is, if you go straight north from the opposite ends of Indonesia one end would be at Rangoon and the other past Tokyo. So, it is a very sprawling country, large in both geography and population.

It is the largest predominately Muslim country in the world. Huge population; a very dynamic resource-based economy and a country that has been considered the dominant, if not a domineering country within ASEAN. So, it is extremely important in terms of strategic positioning. A lot of the world's shipping in that part of the world goes through some portion or another of the archipelago, be it the Straits of Malacca or Lombok straits, or other sea lanes. So this is strategically an important place. Certainly during the Cold War, we had good relations with Indonesia and were considered by the Indonesian leadership to be friends. As a result of that friendship we have been able to have influence that is probably inordinate in terms of helping to promote human rights on the ground.

We have used that very effectively. Now the question is how can we make sure that we limit our military assistance to areas that were not used in repressing legitimate dissent. That is obviously a hard thing to do, but we crafted a policy we thought would be very

effective. We basically walled off anything that might be used for killing and putting down legitimate dissent, while allowing kind of strategic systems to go forward such as F-16s or air-to-air missiles for F-16s. We would not sell assault helicopters. We would not sell weapons that could be used against crowds and things like that. We felt it was a fairly effective policy, which was basically implemented before the ministerial meetings in Jakarta or the Leaders' Meeting in Bogor, a short distance south of Jakarta, in November1994.

Q: Did the human rights organizations in the U.S. find comfort in these nuances?

BUTCHER: Not really. Nor were the Indonesians appreciative either. It is like the human rights reports, you know you have gotten it right if both sides are complaining, both the host government and human rights groups. The problem was, when Congress did get involved, like with the cut off of IMET to Malaysia over refugees, the cut off of IMET to Indonesia was also a problem because it prevented us from being able to train various elements of the Indonesian military, not only in areas of military professionalism, but also exposing them to civilian control and human rights and other things that we felt would be useful. In fact, there is a record of the Indonesian military, those trained in the U.S., being brought in to clean up and improve practices after excesses and human rights abuses had occurred. So we felt that those who had undergone U.S. training not only tended to be well-disposed toward the U.S., but had inculcated in them military professionalism, important values and appropriate treatment of civilians which they would not have gotten if they were left to their own devices and sought training from other countries that were less concerned about human rights.

Q: You have described Malaysia and Indonesia, what sort of policies issues arose with the Philippines that came up during this period?

BUTCHER: Well, the Philippines was also improving economically. There was a lot of interest in economic issues. They had what we considered very solid leadership under Fidel Ramos, a former general, and head of the Philippine military, who succeeded Corazon "Cory" Aquino as president. He was interested in promoting business ties. A number of American companies were interested in opportunities there. Probably the Philippines, because of its instability, has not had as much attention as it could or should have. The Filipinos are very well-disposed toward Americans. They speak almost American slang English. American products and brands are very well known and have very positive reputations in the Philippines, but a lot of American companies were staying away from investing because of just concern about political stability. And so, Ramos led trade missions to the U.S. We in turn encouraged American businessmen to look into opportunities in the Philippines, not only to help them, but it is a virtuous cycle. If you have more business and investment, it raises the standards of living and reduces the prospects for instability. So there was a lot of very positive economic interaction at that point.

Later on, the Philippines was interested in U.S. political and security backing when the Chinese occupied and constructed structures the aptly named "Mischief Reef," which the

Philippines also claimed. In fact, I was the person that the Philippine Ambassador came to see at the State Department to raise his government's official concerns to the U.S. about this. They felt the Chinese were bullying them and the Filipinos, especially since they no longer had the U.S. presence and the bases, were feeling a little isolated. They were pleased later on when ASEAN came to their rhetorical aid at least and protested the Chinese action.

Q: Is that a usual contact for a Washington office director? You have five other embassies that your office covered, did you have frequent contact with them?

BUTCHER: Yes. On really significant issues and if they could have an opportunity, they would call on the deputy assistant secretary, or the assistant secretary or even higher, depending on the issue. In this case, the Philippine ambassador was someone I had known when I was deputy director of Philippine affairs and he was the DCM, Raul Rabe. So we had a personal rapport. I think he felt he would have a good hearing to get his views across, if he saw me, which he did. You know, normally lots of embassies, and some of the most effective ones, are ones who don't worry if there is a little bit of rank asymmetry, not standing on protocol in terms of their ambassador maybe picking up the phone and talking to a desk officer. The desk officer can make things happen, if they want to get information across and share information, sometimes going through, not even the office director, but the desk officer, because desk officers customarily are the ones often most knowledgeable and most informed on their country, and can initiate the necessary paperwork or action.

Singapore was a very interesting situation because one of my worst crises in a sense was the famous Michael Fay canning case. This was bubbling along. On one occasion when I was going to some meetings at the UN, I was walking down a street near the UN and I hear out of a boom box some morning DJ (disk jockey) saying something like, "And how is your butt this morning Michael Fay?" You know you are in trouble when your country is being mentioned over a boom box in downtown New York. It became quite an issue.

The Singaporeans, with whom we had a very good relationship over many years, valued both our economic and our military support and presence and I think they were increasingly concerned with their own restive youth. They had a vandalism case. Someone spray painted a judge's personal car. They round up the usual suspects. They got a number of kids at the international school and frankly, there was no real evidence from the information we had that these were the kids who were involved, who were the perpetrators in this specific instance. They were people who had rap sheets in a sense from other activities at school or elsewhere. There were real concerns about this. Caning is not just giving kids a spanking. When you talk about caning, this is something the British had as an option in the old days. You can have the cat-of-nine-tails or the rattan, the caning. It involves a strip of rattan dipped in water that flays the flesh. Strokes crisscross, and at a certain point chunks of flesh can fly. It is pretty nasty stuff. It is very strong corporal punishment.

The Singaporeans seemed absolutely askance that we even cared about this issue. We cared because a) it was an American citizen and b) this was a minor in our standards – the damage – spray painting of a private vehicle - was not permanent. He was a school student and we were not sure that he had had a fair hearing. There was some evidence to the contrary. There were also issues about he and some of his colleagues being mistreated while incarcerated. One kid reportedly had a broken eardrum and another reportedly was beaten; so there some concerns. There were people in Congress and so on who were very upset with Singapore's behavior. And Singapore just could not understand it. They just thought it was only their domestic concern and they were going to take action against people who were flouting the law.

We pointed out that under this particular anti-vandalism ordinance no non-Singaporean had been convicted for such a crime against private property, as opposed to public property. The ordinance was written up to deal with graffiti, communist graffiti in public housing projects. We were concerned they were even stretching their own laws and regulations to make a point. We did not feel this was right. Anyway, this kid ended up getting his strokes of the rattan and it became an issue that soured the relationship for some time.

Q: Looking at your five embassies, which one seemed the best prepared to do business in Washington?

BUTCHER: (pause). Again, it probably was the Singaporeans. They had a small but very elite foreign service. They were well staffed in Washington and that is another reason why they were so thrown for a loop when the Michael Fay case became such a cause célèbré. They thought it was a little blip in the strategic relationship that overall was very good, very solid. We were concerned because they first politicized it on their end when their deputy prime minister, former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's son, spoke out, we politicized it on our side, and it became an issue of some import. Some of the people on our side who felt they had been dissed took this pretty seriously.

Q: Wasn't this event a fair illustration that foreign policy problems emerge from domestic concerns and that the Foreign Service, positioned between the foreign audience and the domestic American audience, tries to explain each to the other?

BUTCHER: That's right. That's the whole issue of cross-cultural communications, making sure you can transmit and translate faithfully what each side is saying and what are the issues and the perceptions. We often are the ones with the tin ear on things and not understand how the other side operates. This is one instance in which, very surprisingly and I think that's what threw a lot of people, the Singaporeans had the tin ear and that this was something we were really concerned about. The treatment of Americans abroad is a very critical concern of the U.S. government in general, and as a responsibility for the U.S. Foreign Service in particular, and we have shown this in many, many instances that we will go out of our way to protect American citizens, and assure that host governments abroad treat our citizens in accord with acceptable standards. We

will warn American citizens against going into harm's way or where we will not be able to look after their interests, but certainly Singapore has not been one of them.

Q: While not in your bailiwick, but you were in EAP when Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui went to Cornell University in the summer of 1995. Was the EAP bureau seized with this coming event in your eyes as you went to staff meetings?

BUTCHER: Yes, and I might also add that the concern about the various Chinese dissidents always scared me to death because since I had five of the APEC countries, I was often one of the first from the bureau to arrive for the APEC meetings and we would not have all the staffing there and twice I ended up being the notetaker at Secretary Christopher meetings with his Chinese counterparts. I kept saying to myself, please, please don't start mentioning all the names of these dissidents. I'll never get them straight. So, yes, there were always concerns about the Chinese and human rights and prominent dissidents and how they would be treated and so on. And some of it quite frankly, I tuned out.

Q: In this case Lee Teng-hui was the President of the Republic of China.

BUTCHER: Yes, they talked about it, but I did not get involved in it at all. Unless there was some issue that really involved my countries, and often it was things like the South China Seas issues, then I would. Otherwise, it is a big bureau with a lot of disparate issues, some intertwined, some not. My head was enough of a jumble with Indonesian dissidents and others, than to get involved in China-Taiwan and Chinese internal issues.

Q: I think some wag has said the East Asia Pacific Bureau is one with more languages and more countries than the other regional bureaus in the State Department. It sounds as though your office is quite focused on ASEAN issues and is without heart-stopping crises.

BUTCHER: Everything is relative. The amount of effort and energy on Indonesia was extraordinary. Literally there were points where… I remember one issue, there was something coming up in Congress. We needed to get a statement on the floor to deal with a certain issue, I don't recall the details, but I literally woke up my assistant secretary, Winston Lord, who I think was at a chief of mission meeting or something in Hawaii, got his approval on the language, worked it through the system, got the letter, signed by the Secretary, to congressional relations, they got it up to the hill so a friendly senator on the floor could head off this resolution that would have damaged our interests with Indonesia. I remember then at 10:30 at night getting a call from DAS Tom Hubbard saying such and such happened, the Secretary signed off on it and the statement by the Secretary was read on the floor of the Senate. Tom watched the action on C-Span. That's what made me get cable TV so that I could watch the proceedings on the Hill. It wasn't covered by the regular TV channels.

Q: All of which points out that Congress has and does play a major role in foreign policy.

BUTCHER: Absolutely, and we have been criticized, compared to some other Washington departments and agencies for not having paid over the years enough attention to that function. You know, the care and handling of the congressional overseers, those who legislate and fund the implementation of our foreign policy, is extremely important.

Q: I asked earlier about your five embassies in Washington, but you also have five American embassies in the field. Were any of them better run, or more helpful, or how would you compare them? How were the desk's relations with those embassies?

BUTCHER: We had very solid career officers in all of the posts. John Wolf in KL. Ralph "Skip" Boyce was DCM in Singapore and I think he was Chargé for a considerable length of time while the Michael Fay case was underway. We were in very close contact and Skip Boyce was an effective and dedicated professional, and later ambassador to Indonesia and then Thailand.

John Negroponte was ambassador in Manila. Robert "Bob" Barry in Jakarta, although a European specialist by background, was a solid professional and had an Indonesia expert, Barbara Harvey, as his DCM. Theresa "Teri" Tull in Bandar Seri Begawan (Brunei). We had very solid people at the top, and on their teams.

Q: And those embassies would frequently come to their respective desks seeking assistance or direction?

BUTCHER: Oh yes, five embassies and five country desks and I had very good people working with me. It was an active, energetic group.

Q: You have been describing a very active Indonesia portfolio. Did you reassign your desk officers to handle such growing issues?

BUTCHER: Yes, we basically ended up moving people over from doing economics on the Philippines to doing economics on Indonesia, for instance. By the time we left, we had essentially had one Philippine desk officer. The others had morphed into Indonesia functions. My deputy was an economic officer. I had one year with Al O'Neil who was a Philippine hand and after Al moved on, I had Janice Fleck, who I don't think had much Asia experience, but who was a very solid economic officer, and later served as economic counselor in Malaysia. Sadly, Janice died of cancer several years later (on 10/1/1999). So again, while we were busy on things like human rights, security assistance, there was also a lot taking place on the economic side, too. These were all very busy country desks in a busy overall office. Even Brunei was getting attention!

Q: Going back to pol-mil issues for a moment, you have this relationship with the Philippines that has evolved, bases have been closed. Were there any loose ends in that process? What was the pol-mil relationship that had evolved?

BUTCHER: The concern was that the pendulum not swing too much. I know there were a number of people in the U.S. who were concerned and annoyed that we had not been able to stay on in the Philippines. People who had followed the process longer understood what had happened and how it had happened. And frankly the end of the Cold War and the devastation from Mt. Pinatubo had diminished the role of the bases per se. That didn't mean that the Philippines didn't remain strategically important or that we didn't have a special relationship. After all, it is our only former foreign colony, and Filipinos and Americans fought side-by-side against the Japanese in World War II. So there is a special tie of shared history. You have heard it said about the Philippines, that sometimes they are hard to understand. Some say the Filipinos lived for 400 years in a convent and 50 years in Hollywood. (Laughter)

Q: In the interagency process of handling pol-mil issues, would you or your officers have had frequent meetings with your counterparts at ISA (Office of International Security Affairs) at the Pentagon?

BUTCHER: Again, probably less frequent than we had had than when the Philippine bases were the issue. Back in the 1980s when we had periodic bases reviews and things like that, there was a lot of activity between the PM Bureau, EAP, and DoD/OSD/ISA (Defense Department office of the assistant secretary for international security affairs) over the bases. Again different time, different setting; the Cold War was the shaping element for a lot of this. So after the Cold War, we are moving to a different era and the discussion shifted to what's going to be the new structure, what's the new architecture: security, economic and so on? And again, there was a huge impetus, I think, to get the U.S. more involved economically. Also this was a way of reflecting a reality that a lot of the posture for the Cold War was over. Now concerns remained about China, and of course, concern about the developments in North Korea that have been going on for decades, the nuclear dimension being the latest of a number of concerns about their behavior. Security remains a concern, but the backdrop has changed and evolved, if you look at the 1993-1995 period. Plus the big focus on APEC as a new organization for bridging the Pacific.

Q: CINCPAC Admiral Larson (Commander-in-Chief, Pacific) came up with the phrase, places not bases, was that during this time frame?

BUTCHER: This was actually before that. It was in the early 1990s, while I was DCM in Kuala Lumpur, right after the exit from the bases. What he wanted was to strengthen our military interaction with friends and allies in the region to offset loss of access to bases in the Philippines. In fact, he sent teams to examine various facilities, their capabilities for servicing our naval vessels. We ramped up our logistics facility in Singapore, COMLOGWESTPAC (Commander, Logistics Western Pacific), for servicing and refitting some of our vessels there; and basically offsetting some of the losses of the operational assets we had at Subic Bay, mainly. Clark Air Base was very good in terms of aerial travel legs and so on, but in my view did not have the overall strategic advantages of Subic. With the latter you had a deep-water port as well as exercise facilities where the Marines could conduct amphibious training exercises. Cubi Point Air Station with an

extensive runway was co-located with Subic Bay's port facilities, so among other things carrier aircraft could continue to conduct flight ops and training while their carrier was docked. So in a sense, it was even more important than Clark, but both were hit hard by the Pinatubo eruption. But again, as Admiral Larson put it, there were ways to make up for this. Not totally; after all geography is geography, but he made a point engaging in more interactions, trying to have more of a partnership role with Asian countries.

The countries, with few if any exception, including even Malaysia, were interested in keeping the U.S. in the neighborhood. We pointed out – again this is back during my Malaysia assignment -- we pointed out in the case of Malaysia, they bought C-130s, they learned how to repair them and they set up a facility where the U.S. was sending PACAF (Pacific Air Force) C-130s to have overhauled at a Malaysian facility - AIROD. On the navy side, the Malaysians had bought all kinds of odds and sods. They had Swiss and Swedish and all kinds of other armaments systems. We said, well when the Swiss Navy sails here perhaps you could get some business from them! We tried to make the point that if they bought American, they might get some American business. Give business, get business. Just as they had with the C-130s.

But back to your question about handling of the pol-mil issues. We would have interagency meetings; we would have meetings along with our PM bureau colleagues with ISA and Joint Staff representatives on various matters such as synchronizing U.S. – Indonesia bilateral security with our human rights objectives. But it was not of the intensity that we had when we always seemed on the cusp of some crisis with the Philippine bases.

Q: Looking back on the three years of this assignment, what did you enjoy the most?

BUTCHER: It was actually a two-year assignment – 1993-95. It was very satisfying, very fulfilling. I thoroughly enjoyed working with a very supportive DAS in Tom Hubbard. I also felt that my regional skills were being fully utilized, so felt that professionally I was at the top of my game and was able to be utilized for my expertise and apply my own energies in ways that had payoff. I knew a number of the countries. I had either visited them frequently, or served in them. So the whole assignment was playing to my strengths, I thought. There was a lot of satisfaction. We had successful APEC meetings. Got through some tough issues. The Indonesia human rights policy we had labored long and hard on worked, I believe. During the President's visit to Jakarta we had meetings with senior American officials and human rights NGOs (non-government organization) as well as government officials following these issues. We were able to promote our issues, I thought, very successfully.

There were some bumps; the Michael Fay case was one of them. It was a "Whodah thunk" type thing that this would be such an issue. It not only was a major distraction, but it blunted Singapore's access to Congress for some months, if not for a year or so. Then things got kind of back to normal, but it was a jarring episode.

Q: In the world that you were in working with Congress, working with NGOs were there circumstances in which you just weren't being listened to?

BUTCHER: The thing that was most disconcerting in Washington was the inordinate power of narrow, laser-focused interest groups, where a small but highly organized entity could deluge a congressman or senator or their staffs, advocating their particular interests. Also, this sometimes was played to the hilt by certain congressmen and staffers for their own political self-interest, in effect pandering to constituencies (they would say they are only being "responsive"). I remember going toe-to-toe with one prominent Hill staffer and looked him in the eyes. We are practically toe-to-toe, and I said, "So and so, do you want to see human rights improved in Indonesia or not? Our goal is to improve the situation."

I just watched his Adam's apple go up and down, because he had trouble giving me a straight answer. To me his evasiveness proved a point: it was better for some congressmen and their staffs to keep an issue alive and keep currying favor with the interest groups that were pressing them to do stuff than to do something that would solve the problem, or at least improve the situation. That to me was very disappointing. We know a lot of times we can't solve a problem. We can manage it. We may be able to improve it. So when you find there are some people who are exploiting issues for their political advantage. It is like you hear about some of the issues in the mid-East which some contend will never be resolved due to obstinacy and intransigence of certain leaders who fear they will lose their power and standing if an issue is settled, they will no longer be able to curry favor and gain influence with their constituencies if demands are actually met, so they keep the issue alive, seemingly never to be resolved. They would have lost through success. Now that was something that bothered me about matters like human rights and worker rights. We can see how we can help manage and improve things, because that is what we do as FSOs as professional diplomats. We are problem identifiers and aspire to be problem solvers. We can't always do it but we can have a diagnostic process where we can see what the path is to improve things. When there are some that oppose that, opposed practical solutions, then that is disconcerting. I learned early on in my career the importance of governments' observing human rights, treating their citizens well, and in the process adding to a government's legitimacy.

Q: There was another incident in Indonesia involving mining that drew a lot of attention in the states, an ambush on a rural road in which Americans were killed. Was that during your time?

BUTCHER: That was Freeport-McMoRan's mining, Grasberg Mine in Irian Jaya, former Dutch New Guinea. That happened in August 2002, long after I retired. That area has missionaries… Irian Jaya is a fascinating story. How the last part of Indonesia that was relinquished by the Dutch. There was a lot of fighting between the Dutch and the Indonesians. I think, if I am not mistaken, that it was settled in 1962 or so and I think Bobby Kennedy played a role in mediating this dispute. In any case, this is a very undeveloped area, lots of different tribes, rough terrain, hundreds of local dialects, mutually unintelligible to each other until the Indonesians came in with *Bahasa Indonesia*

– the Indonesian language. Suddenly there was a lingua franca. Thus the separatist *Operasi Papua Merdeka* (OPM), literally "Free Papua Operation," takes its title in Indonesian. Widespread introduction of Indonesia's national language had the unintended consequence of serving as a vehicle for heretofore disconnected people to share their grievances about the Indonesian administration, about being ruled by outsiders as they see it. The Indonesians have tried to offset this through development projects, and trying to woo the locals in this manner.

It is just a very interesting circumstance, and what has happened with Freeport is it's one of these companies that started out developing copper mining from rich ore deposits in a very remote mountainous region of eastern Indonesia. I have actually been to the facility when I traveled there with our consul, Pat Wazer, early in 1984, as we flew on small Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF) aircraft around the province for Pat to provide consular services at various mission stations. The Freeport operation was very impressive. It is thousands of feet up in the hinterlands. It is an engineering marvel. They dig deep into the mountain. They are extracting copper ore. They grind it up, add water to make the ore into liquefied slurry, and send it down the sluice pipes to a facility on a river where it is dried out. It then is funneled aboard lighters which take the ore downriver to the ocean and where it is loaded on ships for onward journey to copper smelters elsewhere. It is an amazing thing. So some years ago, they were looking for more copper sources and they found gold. So it is now Freeport Copper and Gold, poor guys. Look for copper, find gold! But mining is extractive and there are also issues of the tailings causing problems. What had been a mountain is now a hole in the ground. For the locals, many of animist traditions, the impact on the land, loss of their ancient landmarks, and what was a mountain is now a hole in the ground, must have been jarring in the extreme. So, it has the problems of any extractive industry and it is a question of how much the locals are benefiting from the mine, although I understand Freeport-McMoRan has supported development and health facilities in nearby communities. When I went to the mine, most of the miners were Filipinos, not locals. There has been a low-level insurgency that has gone on for decades in that area, and clashes between the military which views the mine as a strategic facility, and local activists and protestors.

Q: In 1995, September, you retired from the Foreign Service?

BUTCHER: Yes, actually that was the formal date. September 29. My last day in the job in EAP was sometime in late June. Assistant Secretary Winston Lord very graciously spent a good chunk of the day at various gatherings with me or in my honor. He had a very nice words for me at my final EAP staff meeting, attended a lunch in my honor and a small farewell gathering in the EAP conference room. And then at the end of the day EAP DAS for economic affairs Sandra O'Leary conned me into ostensibly briefing her for a meeting on the Seventh floor and led me, unsuspecting, to a more formal surprise retirement ceremony in the Treaty Room at which Winston presented me an award for career achievement. A very nice touch to a bittersweet day. So I left the Foreign Service following the last of my three dream assignments. The time to leave had come, and I couldn't have asked for a better sendoff among friends and colleagues – and with some of my family on hand. It was a great run. (As another sad postscript, like my former deputy,

Janice Fleck, several years later Sandra also died of cancer at age 50 in 1999 – on 6/16/1999 – Janice died a few months later, that October).

Post-retirement

Q: Did the State Department have the Transition Center in operation at this time?

BUTCHER: Yes, so I spent the next several weeks on the transition course, the retirement course, whatever you want to call it. I thought it very well run, very useful. I went through it and decided I should go into international business consulting. So, I set up my own Maryland-registered company, Asia-Pacific Opportunities, later that year. My first client was the Scowcroft Group.

Q: So, what have you been doing in retirement?

BUTCHER: For the first seven years or so, I was an active one-man band consultant working as a subject matter expert for larger consulting companies. I helped set up two joint ventures in Malaysia with Fortune 500 companies. I found a lot of the things I was doing was just what I was doing in the Foreign Service, in terms of just helping people maneuver in a foreign culture, in these instances, helping foreign business executives wend their way through potential cultural minefields and overcome possible political obstacles to success. There approaches might have worked well in Japan, or China or Korea and they wanted to move to another part of the world and I helped them get it right in Malaysia, or the Philippines or help some companies with India, places where I had personal experience. I found it fascinating. It stretched me from my Foreign Service experience, because the clients were very different. From something in the defense industry which I might have some knowledge about to industrial gases, which I now know more about than I did then.

After the terrorist attacks of 9/11 I contacted the EAP bureau's executive director, who arranged to put me back on State Department rolls as a re-employable retiree, to help out whenever as need arose. Early in 2003 I ended up working in the PM (Political-Military Affairs) Bureau, where I continue working part-time a couple of days a week for part of the year as a member of the Bureau's Political Military Action Team (PMAT), a 24/7 (24 hours a day/seven days a week) operation.

Q: Would you give us a more in-depth description of this PMAT job?

BUTCHER: It was set up after 9-11 (September 11, 2001). The State Department had a task force to deal with the international aspects of the tragedy in New York at the Twin Towers that involved a lot of foreign nationals. What happened though was that the task force was disbanded, but the political-military element of it remained, since the U.S. military was also working 24/7 and we had a Secretary of State and a deputy who were ex-military and a boss, Assistant Secretary Lincoln Bloomfield, who was also quite a pol-mil expert. The three of them worked well together and they decided State needed to have its own entity to deal 24/7 with the military community, the defense community, as we

went into the global war on terrorism. To serve as a contact point, and clearing house for inquiries and information requests, etc. Its initial name was "Coalition Working Group" but that was changed when its responsibilities extended beyond assisting with the coalition-building function. The decision was made to call the operation the "Political-Military Action Team – PMAT for short – and PMAT has been functioning ever since, with its role broadening into other responsibilities, such as being the PM Bureau's designated hitters on crisis task forces, backstopping after hours on other key functions such as clearances for entry into U.S. airspace or territorial waters of foreign state aircraft or vessels, and serving as PM's after-hours duty office.

Q: Where were its offices first located?

BUTCHER: They were first located I understand, this was before I arrived, in the older part of the building on the eighth floor and then subsequently moved to new digs on the second floor attached to the Office of International Security Operations of the Political-Military Bureau (PM/ISO).

Q: What has been your responsibility on PMAT?

BUTCHER: Well, I started out assigned as a coordinator which is the basic, key officer on the shift who supervises the team and helps prepare a twice-daily, Monday through Friday, situation report, an update of distilled summaries from all-source reporting on key pol-mil relevant developments around the globe. The shift coordinators and duty directors are retired FSOs with eclectic experience and area expertise. Then when an opening came up I was recruited to be a duty director. The duty director provides overall continuity between shifts Monday through Friday and helps edit the PMAT situation reports.

Q: What do these situation reports cover?

BUTCHER: The morning one is a three-page maximum compendium of key developments of global political-military significance; during the eras of major U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq these morning editions also included updates on casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan, but that ended with conclusion of major U.S. combat operations in those operational theaters. The afternoon edition is limited to two pages. These daily Sitreps are basically summations of reporting from multiple sources on significant developments: State Department reporting cables from overseas, DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency) reports, INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research) assessments, CIA, DoD, U.S. Combatant Commands (COCOMS), and other USG entities; basically all non-captioned sources up to Secret/No Foreign classification.

Q: The staffing of PMAT, are they like you, WAE (When Actually Employed) retired Foreign Service officers?

BUTCHER: There are two elements in PMAT; there are WAEs and military veterans on contract with the State Department. What has helped make this a very successful endeavor is that it combines the background and overseas experience and area expertise

of some retired Foreign Service personnel as well as some former military personnel contribute hard-core military background and skills, as well as their familiarity with specialized military vocabulary, usages and military procedures. So the team is made up of the WAEs – retired State Department FSOs – and the ex-military under contract. These former military are on a 24/7 schedule and each works basically five days a week. Most of us WAEs, because of the constraints posed by salary/hourly caps on "rehired Foreign Service annuitants," are limited to working only a couple of shifts per week. And then when we hit our hourly or salary caps, we are put on the bench for the rest of the year until we can renew our appointments for the next payroll year. An awkward arrangement that limits flexibility and continuity in staffing.

Q: Let me get this straight, Secretary Powell set up this office because he saw a need. Retired Foreign Service officers to be half of the team's components, but they cannot work continuously because of these limitations on either their hours or what they can earn above their pension?

BUTCHER: That's correct. One of the key things is, which seems to me to be a no-brainer, is the military has its reserves it can call upon. The closest thing we have to reserves is the retired FSOs, the WAEs, but their talents and expertise can only be utilized up to a certain extent due to the overhang of the cap limits. Many WAEs don't want to work full-time; but others may, both for their own reasons as well as needs of the service, because these folks can fill temporary staffing gaps, backfill when officers are forward-deployed abroad on TDY or on "expeditionary diplomacy" assignments, or, like in our case with PMAT, fill a special national security-related requirement. It is a back office operation that probably no one else would be interested in because of its onerous hours and industrial setting and the fact that it operates in the background. Clearly these would be "hard to fill" positions for active-duty personnel. You are not out glad-handing and doing your traditional diplomacy. You are using your experiential skills and it is very rewarding in that sense and you can take satisfaction from performing meaningful work.

We also serve as the PM Bureau's after hour duty officers and staff the PM slot on crisis task forces, providing a standard of expertise and familiarity with task force operations and easing what otherwise would be burdensome of the regular PM staff. But the caps cause problems. We lose continuity because for those people who would want to work longer and whom we have trained and would like to have be scheduled more regularly, they come up against these arbitrary caps, which frankly don't make any sense. The military got rid of them years ago, allowing veterans to be re-employed in government positions without having take a choice of limited hours or giving up their annuities. The government has already amortized the training and benefits it has provided, and thus veteran Foreign Service personnel, the WAEs, who work on a "clean" hourly basis when actually employed – just pay, no health, pension, or other benefit costs – thus provide a cost-effective answer to filling staffing gaps or hard-to-fill operations like PMAT.

Q: These caps are not restrictions placed by the State Department. They originated with Congress, right?

BUTCHER: They are placed as part of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended by various funding bills, but also there is a waiver provision for the Secretary, at least for the salary cap issue. That waiver is used only in limited circumstances – for national security and other exigencies - and probably should be broadened. Ideally the caps would be removed by legislation, as done by the military, to take advantage of a national resource – a stable of able, ready and willing retired FSOs who are honored to continue to serve America, and to apply their skills sets and experience in support of our foreign and security policies on an as-needed basis.

Q: Appreciate your contribution to our oral history program. This has been very fascinating.

BUTCHER: My pleasure.

End of Interview