

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

FRANCIS J. TATU

Interviewed by: Susan Klingaman
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the October 24th, 2000. This is an interview with Francis J. Tatu, a retired Foreign Service Officer. This interview is being conducted on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I am Susan Klingaman. Frank, would you tell me something about when and where you were born and something about your parents?

TATU: I was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1928. My father was an engineer, my mother a housewife, both of French origin although my father had some Irish in him. Our paternal progenitors came to this country from France in 1833.

There were three siblings, all girls, two older than I, one younger. I grew up in Buffalo to the age of 10. The family moved to California when World War II came along because my father wanted to practice his specialty as an aeronautical engineer. He went to work for Lockheed, and our move to Burbank, California, gave me a Pacific orientation. I completed high school at Santa Barbara.

Q: What were some of your interests in high school?

TATU: I was mainly interested in writing. I aspired to be a journalist, or novelist, this was my preoccupation, working with the school papers and yearbooks.

Q: Were you interested in current events at the time?

TATU: Current events, yes. A favorite brother-in-law was in the Army in the Pacific, so I followed the progress of the war closely. I had not much free time as I had to work to help sustain the family, my Father having died when I was 14 years old.

Q: What kind of jobs did you have?

TATU: Mostly restaurants. Santa Barbara was the location for what the army called "repo-depos," that is replacement areas for the military. Troops being shifted from the European Theater to the Pacific Theater were given brief eave to stay in luxury hotels

which had been taken over by the military. My sister was a personnel officer with Operations, so I was always to be able to get a job in some capacity in the hotels, mostly in the restaurants.

Q: So you did experience World War Two as it was on the home front on the West Coast?

TATU: Yes. I, heard a lot of stories from those guys and began to feel familiar with the military. The day I got out of high school, I joined the Navy “to see the world,” as they used to say.” I believe, and I made one major mistake. I have to cast modesty aside here. When I took my GCTs, “general classification tests,” the recruiters said they’d never had anybody score as high and they asked if I would I like officers’ training.

Q: How old were you at this point?

TATU: I was 17, and I had been advised that enlisted men had more fun than officers, so I declined thinking that I would pick up more material to write about as an enlisted man.

Q: For writing as an enlisted man, I see.

TATU: Well, I hadn’t even finished basic training, “boot camp” when I was hauled out on a “emergency draft,” and sent to the Mojave Desert. Would you believe it? They just put me on a bus in San Diego and told me that they desperately needed typists in the desert. I no more wanted to be a typist than a sailor on the desert. But when I got there and checked in to personnel, the senior yeoman (a sort of glorified clerk) gave the transfer orders I carried a cursory glance and asked “why the hell are you here?” I just played dumb. The yeoman sent me to work in the beer hall, and I never did become a typist.

Q: The Mojave Desert, what was the navy doing there?

TATU: There was a naval ordnance testing station, which actually still exists. It’s called “NOTS Inyokern,” or “China Lake.” I had learned at that point that when one encounters reversals in life, the only course of action is to adjust. So I adjusted and became a desert rat. My specialty in the Navy became photography. I got a little break from the desert and had six months at a Navy photography school in Pensacola, Florida, where I qualified as an aerial photographer. I got out of the Navy after three years not having seen very much of the world at all.

Q: But you did receive some training.

TATU: Oh, yes. I don’t really knock it. I learned a lot in my three years in the navy. That was a very formative period of my life. So I started to college, at a junior college in Ventura, California. On January 24, 1950, I was in Naval Air Reserves. Some crews were coming in from a night flight and somebody said, “Hey, guess what North Korea invaded South Korea. last night” You’ve got to believe somebody asked, “Where’s Korea?”

Q: Sure, of course.

TATU: So within very short order my squadron was called-up. We crawled up in our bomber patrol planes, and off we went. The experience was to give me an abiding interest in the Far East, because one of my functions as a photographer was to work with the public information and education officer, and I was supposed to be telling the troops why we were there. Nobody had any idea why we were there.

Q: In Korea?

TATU: We were stationed in Japan at a place called Atsugi, which still exists, just out of Yokohama, U.S. Naval air station. We knew we were there since our aircraft were too big for anything in Korea at that time. We were flying what the Navy called the "Privateer," what the army had called "Liberator." Ours was the same aircraft with some modifications a four-engined patrol bomber with enormous fire power.

Q: But you were in Japan during this time?

TATU: Yes, we flew out of Japan. We had two basic flights. One was up the Yellow Sea and down to Shanghai and back, and we'd go up to Dalien and down. The other one was the Sea of Japan and we'd go up to Vladivostok and back.

Q: So you were doing aerial photography in connection with the Korean War?

TATU: One of our missions was to track the shipping that was going into Vladivostok, and this really was shocking, to a 20-year-old kid, as I was at the time. We'd fly in about 50 feet off the deck, and get a very good view of these ships and the crews as well. all waving at us, if you can imagine. They were American ships flying Panamanian flags with American crews taking goods in for the enemy - really something bizarre. The words are still in my memory of one of our young gunners calling over the intercom "Hey, skipper, let me give 'em a few rounds." No chance, of course. Our "rules of engagement" were that we could only fire when fired upon.

I was later told that most of these ships belonged to a certain Mr. Casey, who later became Director of Central Intelligence for President Reagan.

Q: The CIA?

TATU: ...the CIA, yes.

Q: Bill Casey.

TATU: Yes, Bill Casey. I haven't coordinated and checked that out anywhere, the source however is a reliable source. So we were the first ones to have determined that these were American ships. But our command prohibited us from saying anything about it became "classified" information. Nonetheless, one of our guys put a correspondent on to it who

wrote for *Time* magazine. He wrote it up, Congress got hold of it, and it became a matter of a \$10,000 fine for any American captain or seaman who sailed one of these ships. That's just about the sum of the government insurance dependents got for the guys who were killed.

Q: What were they actually doing?

TATU: They were bringing war goods in to the enemy off-loading at Vladivostok and a few other ports in the Soviet Far East.

Q: Into North Korea?

TATU Off-loaded and moved to North Korea, yes. I've got material on it; I've got the clips from the original *Time* magazine story on it. So there I learned that the only thing that's international is the internationality of the U.S. dollar. So you get a little cynical.

Q: So at an early age you became cynical about things aren't always what they seem.

TATU: I didn't know about Casey then. At any rate, the significance of that was that it did give me the interest in the Far East, and I was constantly going for educational materials so that I could brief my "shipmates." So after two years of that the squadron was decommissioned and I was discharged. That constituted five years active service. You may recall that "universal military training." The draft was in effect at that time, so I was fortunate to have had the service of my choice.

Q: That was when?

TATU: 1950 to 1953. We weren't in Japan all the time. We had six-month rotational deployments. We were stationed between Atsugi, Japan; a facility called Barber's Point in Hawaii; and Naval Air Station Sand Point in Seattle, Washington. Incidentally, the squadron recently had our 50-year reunion and - boy, talk about weird experiences - walk into a room and here are all these guys that you had pictured in your mind as kids and they're now in their 70s.

Q: Yes. Did you recognize any?

TATU: Oh, yes, quite a number, but also there were some, as I said, strange experiences. One guy I used to be a really good buddy with was very stand-offish. Then finally, at the end of virtually a day in the same company, I got a name tag, and he said, "My God, you're Frank Tatu!"

Q: So then you went back to California?

TATU: Went back to California. We were, as I think I said earlier, a reserve squadron, so we were all from the same relative area. We had been training at a place called Los Alamedos, which is just outside of Los Angeles. So most of the men had some

connection with one another, that sort of cohesion developed a strong esprit de corps. Between and between we only lost one plane. We were operating with nine aircraft most of the time, so we lost one and nine guys, including my best friend.

Q: So that introduced you to the Far East?

TATU: Right. I went back and I started at the University of California at Berkeley.

Q: That was 1950...?

TATU: 1953. They didn't have a major in journalism then, so I went to political science on the advice that that would be more appurtenant anyway. Then I started law school, and the policy of the dean at that time, known to all lawyer, was William Prosser. His policy was to bore everybody to death, because he determined that there were just too many lawyers, which is probably true. We started out with a class of over 300 and ended up with 85.

Q: This was the University of California Law School?

TATU: Yes, it's called Bolt, Bolt Hall. Anyway, I was one of the ones that he bored to death at that time. My GI Bill was running out, I wanted to get married, and I had no money. So I passed the Foreign Service exam and came to Washington.

Q: Which was what year?

TATU: That would have been '56.

Q: Did you join the Foreign Service right away?

TATU: No. Actually I made another one great mistake. I had passed also an exam for the Department of Labor, a program called "management intern. It didn't pay for transportation or shipment. We got married in '56, and we paid for our own transportation and all of our goods, which, of course, the Service would have done. I came here not mentioning this to the Department of Labor and waited around for the Foreign Service to clear me.

Q: So you were a management intern at Labor for a short time?

TATU: Nearly six months.

Q: And then you joined the Foreign Service?

TATU: For my pains I was assigned with three other FSOs to the Passport Office under Frances Knight.

Q: Oh, yes. She was a famous or infamous individual for many, many years.

TATU: Oh, yes. She had a relationship with an individual named Scott McCloud, who became ambassador to Ireland, but that's another story. Anyway, there were four FSOs. One of whom became sufficiently discouraged as to resign in our first month. We were not there that long, maybe a year or so.

Q: What were you doing in the Passport Office?

TATU: We were called "adjudicators."

Q: Which means what?

TATU: We looked at passport applications and determined if people were eligible. Our supervisors told us, "If you get an application from a black" - he didn't use the term 'black' - he said, "watch it very carefully, because these people never have enough money to sustain themselves overseas. So anything you can get them on: if they don't have a certificate of support or a definable income, you have to reject them."

Q: That was contained in the law?

TATU: Oral instructions.

Q: I see. Interesting.

TATU: They were effective. We were rebellious about this, and we worked around it. We didn't do ourselves any good in the Passport Office. There was little career development experience to be gained.

Q: I find that very interesting. Was that one of Frances Knight's trademarks?

TATU: I don't know that it ever came to her attention. This was our immediate supervisor, who was a career civil servant.

Q: Did they have other restrictive type of instructions? You mentioned blacks. Were there others?

TATU: This is the only one I can remember, in a general way.

Q: Of course, the citizenship rules were a lot stricter then than they are now. So that was how many months?

TATU: In the nature of a year.

Q: That's manageable. You and how many other Foreign Service Officers were there at that time?

TATU: Three or four, there were four others.

Q: But most of the Passport Office was civil servants?

TATU: Yes. I don't know what the rationale was for bringing us in there. I think it was just a matter that they were short of help, and it didn't cost them anything to bring in FSOs and pretend they were doing substantive work. But actually I should be a little more positive. We got a new boss by the name of Malcolm Killduff, and he later achieved some fame. But he was a very forward-looking, very liberal kind of guy, and we brought these egregious contingents to his attention, and he had them discontinued. Then he went on to become the deputy to the spokesman in the Department, who was then the late Carl Rowan, a well-known columnist.

Q: Oh, Carl Rowan.

TATU: Carl Rowan. He then went on to become the deputy to Carl Rowan, and he, Malcolm, was with the Kennedy party in Dallas in 1963 when the President was shot. He was the one who announced to the world the death of the president.

Q: Let's go back a little bit to Frances Knight. Did you have any direct contact with her? She was a very well known person. What was it about her?

TATU: Well, I think she was so dictatorial, but we didn't have direct contact with her. But the reason I chuckle is that she set up a thing for her own, I think, self-aggrandizement for a television special on the Passport Office. She came trooping in with all these TV characters with their cameras and said, "This is our main office. I run the Passport Office just like a kitchen." We didn't have feminists in those days. I think, if we had, she would have been run out just by the feminists.

Q: Probably so. I never had any direct contact with her myself. I just had the impression that she was indeed very dictatorial and ran the place like it was her own fiefdom.

TATU: Yes, exactly, well, her kitchen. She was very outspoken.

Q: Yes, and she was there for many, many years after that.

TATU: Oh, yes, definitely. In fact, they had a hard time getting her out of there.

Q: Well, she must have had some political patronage. She had some connections.

TATU: I just can't remember what this relationship was with Scott McCloud, but it was aired in the rumor mills She was married to the director of the McKnight News Service - does that sound right, McKnight? It was a big-time news service, although I'd never heard of it, before or after.

Q: Okay, so after the Passport Office, where did you find yourself?

TATU: We finally got to bid on assignments and I opted for Asia. I think, probably because of that Passport Office assignment, I was thought of as a consular type, so I was sent to Hong Kong as a visa officer.

Q: This was in...?

TATU: My family and I arrived there in December of 1957. There had been a great expansion of the consular section at the Consulate General under Consul General Everett Drumright. He was one of the “old China hands.” He managed to protect himself whereas many of the others were run out of the Service by Senator Joseph McCarthy and his cohorts.

Q: You mean he was a survivor, more or less?

TATU: He was a survivor, and this was in the wake of the McCarthy era.

Q: He survived the purge?

TATU: Yes, he survived the purge. I may have misjudged him, but that’s the way he came through to me. He had a young officer there who had a doctorate, and he had t this fellow write a report on the Chinese immigration fraud problem. Then Drumright promised the Congress that if he had certain many millions of dollars added to the budget of the Consulate General, he would clear up the problem. Well, what happened was that the China lobby got hold of the report and decreed that it was a racist attack and made all sorts of noise about it. Consequently this young fellow was sent off to Latin America. Drumright did get his additional staffing. We had a number of superstars there who had come: as a result of the enhanced staffing. Harry Thayer, Bill Brown, who retired as ambassador to Israel after a fantastic career Dick Williams, a former radio quiz kid, who the Chinese called *da da tou*, which means ‘big head.’ The Chinese had slang names for everybody. I was a pipe smoker in those days, so obviously I was known as ‘the pipe’ among the Chinese.

Q: You mean the report on the...?

TATU: Chinese immigration fraud, yes, that was the big problem in Hong Kong, still is, as far as I’m aware. At that time immigration laws were such that a very limited number of Chinese; or other Asians were permitted to come to the States for permanent residence. This was called the “Asia Pacific Triangle,” a very complicated set of considerations. I ran the visa waiting list, and I had over 30,000 applicants on the list.

Q: 30,000 people on the visa waiting list?

TATU: Yes, with no chance unless the law were to be changed. The poor people would come in to determine how they were doing, and I’d have to tell them, “It’s impossible; you’re not going at all,” because the people who got in were those who manipulated the

law through fraud. So we figured, consulting among ourselves, some of the junior officers, that any 10 people who walked into the consulate, in the scheme of things the frauds would be the ones that got the visas. Well, there were all kinds of angles to this, but some of us chose to fight it and we were derisively known as the “fraud fighters.” We would devise our own ways to expose the fraud. The other guys, the ones who derided us, took the position that “Look, they’re going to get their visas anyway. Just sign anything that comes across your desk. Work an eight-hour day. What the hell.” And they did, whereas some of us stayed awake nights trying to figure out how to break the fraud, because it was the law, and the non-fraud applicants deserved a chance. It wasn’t that we were anti-Chinese.

Q: How many officers were in the visa section in Hong Kong?

TATU: I would give it a shot and say about 10.

Q: Any how many staff wherein the consulate general as a whole?

TATU: Gee, I don’t know that figure, but I would say 200, counting all agencies and local staff.

Q: A large staff, right?

TATU: Yes, about 200, counting locals?

Q: Well, either way you want.

TATU: I would say there were probably about 100 Americans and probably a matching 100 Chinese.

Q: And what were the rest of the Americans doing?

TATU: Political, economic; it was a watching post, and there were other agencies.

Q: A China-watch post.

TATU: Yes, right. There was no other facility but Hong Kong, and some of our guys went bad, too, you know. There were all kind of bribes being offered to us all the time.

Q: Were there a number of cases where American officers were caught?

TATU: Well, I said, “some of our guys,” but I can only think of one main case, who then opened up an antique shop on Connecticut Avenue with antiques that had been given to him in Hong Kong.

Q: For his services.

TATU: For his services, yes.

Q: So you were working in the visa section your entire period in Hong Kong?

TATU: Yes.

Q: Which was until?

TATU: I got out of there in 1960.

Q: Did you know any Chinese at the time?

TATU: Know any Chinese people?

Q: No, Chinese language

TATU: Oh. I should insert this. This is where I developed an interest in China and I began studying Chinese part time there. We had good language tutors, one of whom became Mrs. Dick Williams. Anyway, I got along with it pretty well and put in for the language school, Tai Chung in Taiwan. There was supposed to be an early phase in Washington where the beginning language students would demonstrate that they could maintain the tonal quality of Chinese. A lot of people flunked out on tones; they just didn't have the ear. But I bypassed that and I was all ready to go to Tai Chung, we were actually packed - we thought we were going to have home leave and go to Tai Chung - and suddenly we got orders to go direct to Laos.

Q: So you were short circuited in a sense?

TATU: In a sense, nobody consulted with me.

Q: More or less it was decided this would be a good break for you?

TATU: Yes, to get out of the consular "cone" - we didn't use the term "cone" in those days. But it was interesting. Apparently nobody in the consulate general, even the big shots, knew anything about Indochina. Laos: among other things they were pronouncing 'La-os. (so, much later, was President Kennedy - on TV!)' I had to go up to Hong Kong university to get background information.

Q: You mean nobody in the consulate general in Hong Kong knew anything about their next door neighbors?

TATU: Not quite "next door," but very little. That was kind of shocking.

Q: So you went there directly with no home leave?

TATU: Yes. Throughout my career, I may insert, I missed so much home leave it's

staggering, and annual leave also, years on the books when I retired. So there I was in the middle of this upheaval in Laos.

Q: What was going on in Laos? This was 1960.

TATUI: As one of her artifacts from Laos, my wife Marian has a hand-written note from the supervisor of the Embassy motor pool, dated August 9, 1960: "we're sorry we can't send you a car this morning; the government has just been overthrown." There had been a coup in December 1959. There were a continuation of coups. You had to really be deep into it to be able to figure out what the line-up was, who was with whom, of what persuasion. You didn't know the players without a scorecard. We had a three-man political section. The chief was Julian Fromer, the deputy the late Dan Newberry and then myself. There was a large CIA contingent.

Q: How large was the embassy?

TATUI: I've got to guess. When I got there, incidentally, the ambassador was Horace Smith, another old China hand survivor. He was shortly replaced by Winthrop Brown. But I would guess in the embassy properly so-called, State had only about 15 people. Francois Qienou, she was aide to the ambassador, but she functioned more like a political officer. So I guess in the embassy properly so-called there weren't more than 15.

Q: What was your particular area of responsibility?

TATUI: We sort of split the pie up as it fell; we were not that specialized. We'd just go off, and whatever happened, happened, but it was fascinating stuff.

Q: Such as...?

TATUI: How about this? This is probably one of these little sensitive things. At that time Laos had dual capitals, the administrative capital at Vientiane and Luang Prabang, the royal capital. When Winthrop Brown came as Ambassador, he had me accompany him on many of his official visits. He decided to go up to Luang Prabang, the royal capital, to make a call on the king. So the air attaché flew us up there, and we were met by the CIA guy and the USIS representative. The ambassador then decided, on the advice of the local boys, he would see the king alone, so he left me there with these fellows. No sooner had the ambassador walked out the door than they literally jumped me physically and pinned me up against the wall. They had been arranging for their own coup, you see, and they felt that the embassy had put them down. "Goddamn you guys. What did you think you were doing? I'm just a junior officer here." I really felt threatened. They weren't kidding. That was reflective of the tensions in that little country.

Q: Well, I can imagine. Did you ever mention that to the ambassador?

TATUI: Yes, I did.

Q: What was his reaction?

TATU: You know, Win Brown, a taciturn New-Englander of the old school, really played his cards very close. He didn't say very much. I was there also for the "Kong Le" coup, and I remember very vividly the coup occurred at three o'clock in the morning. So I got up ready to go to work, not knowing. We were driving along and there were roadblocks, something new. When they saw the diplomatic plates, they passed us through, and I said, "Gee, they're playing war games again." We had a staff meeting, and it was revealed that there had been a coup on the part of a captain of the Second Paratroop Battalion (Kong Le). At this point a fellow poked his head in and whispered to the station chief, and the chief said, "Our man from the Second Paratroop Battalion is here." Win Brown, who was always very dignified said, loudly, "Where the hell has he been?" Everyone looked shocked.

So we lived under the siege for some time, and Washington decided we should evacuate dependents. By that time we had two little kids. My wife went off to Bangkok with them. Then it was decided they'd better evacuate all people who were unstable.

Q: Unstable?

TATU: Unstable, who makes that decision? So they sent off a bunch of people from certain agencies. One of the funny things was the only way you could get across the Mekong River into Thailand then was by commercial barge at a location about 10 miles from the city. The barge could only take four cars at a time. Well, we had such an enormous AID mission there that, I was told, there were over 600 cars piled up waiting to get across on the barge. Finally the ambassador decreed, "They've just got to leave their damn cars here and take off." So I, in fact, had a car, which I had brought from Hong Kong. It was not much of a car, an old British staff car. I sold it at a very nominal fee to one of the local employees who was a good guy and deserved something. The next thing I knew he was in a knife fight with another local employee who thought he should have gotten the car. Well, anyway, Laos was interesting for all of these reasons.

Q: But what were we supposedly trying to do in Laos at that time?

TATU: Well, we were supposedly trying to make peace and to shore-up the non-communist resistance. One of the curious things was that the leader of the right-wing group, if you will, was one Phoumi Nosavan, General Phoumi, and he was the Agency's man. Then on the other side we had the neutralists who were being led by Kong Le, and the Prime Minister, Souvanna Phouma. So curiously we were in a position where we were offering support to Souvanna Phouma with arms and what have you, in effect, we, the USG in a larger sense, was offering support to both competitive sides.

While all of this was going on, along came Skip Pernell, a visitor from the EA Bureau in Washington. Have you ever heard of Skip? He was a famous FSO. His dictum was that I'd better get out of there and go to the Chinese language school, which I had applied for, or I would miss out because they were going to close the language school down. (The

rumor had been going on since time immemorial, that the Chinese language school would be closed down.) So he said that with my concurrence he would arrange to find somebody to replace me and get me out of there to go to Tai Chung. This was a major, I think, career mistake.

Q: To go to language training?

TATU: No that I agreed to this. That meant I was in Laos less than a year. I think that when promotion panels look at somebody's record and they see that he's experienced a truncated tour, that raises a flag, and it's happened to me on a number of occasions, all in the interests of the Service, their very good grace. So that's what I did.

Q: So you did leave Laos?

TATU: Yes, and I was replaced by George Roberts, creator of *Cookie Push*.

Q: Explain.

TATU: George is another one of these Foreign Service characters. He had invented a board game called "Cookie Push," the whole thing was how the life of diplomacy runs. If you ingratiate your ambassador's wife, for example, then you advance two spaces, and so forth.

Q: No, I never came across that.

TATU: It got international publicity. It was written up by the *New York Times*.

Q: I wasn't in the Foreign Service yet, so I probably...

TATU: That pretty much made his career. He ended up as ambassador to some place in Africa.

Q: Is there actually a board game called Cookie Push that's in existence today?

TATU: I don't know if it is. I doubt it. George would have a copy, invite him for lunch.

Q: Were there detailed places to go on the board?

TATU: Oh, yes, just like Monopoly.

Q: Can you give me some examples? I think that sounds great.

TATU: The only one I can think of is this ingratiating the ambassador's wife.

Q: But there must be other.

TATU: Serious things: “One of your reports is noted by Washington.” In those days we used to get comeback evaluations. You’d turn in what we called, an airgram at that time, and the Desk or INR would evaluate it.

Q: So that was a short but sounds like very interesting assignment. There was lots going on in Laos.

TATU: I think I developed some fairly good political techniques.

Q: Such as what?

TATU: Such as living in a community. I always have lived in a community. We used to make fun of people living in the “wagon trains,” you know, in the compounds where they’d draw all around them. In fact, I was on some kind of a committee in Laos dealing with a new swimming pool - it would have been the only swimming pool in the country - and in the meeting determining the rules, one of the AID guys got up and said, “No Lao. We can’t permit any Lao in the pool,” at which point I revolted against that. That didn’t help me.

Q: Did you live on the economy in Laos?

TATU: Yes, pretty much.

Q: And did you develop good contacts by doing so?

TATU: Yes, I think so. Our next door neighbor was one of the leading politicians, and I was on a familiar basis with him. As I speak, I am remembering once I came home and there were all these people in my yard. What were they doing there? Well, they were chasing a cobra. They had it back up against the wall and, of course, they wanted it to eat.

Q: Did they succeed?

TATU: Yes, they did. The point here is that since I knew most of these people, if only on a nodding basis, they had no fear about coming in my yard; and, in fact they offered me some of the snake.

Q: I would think that would be a good way to establish some rapport with those people.

TATU: Definitely. We had very impecunious people living around us also. The dwelling across the street from our house was just a shack.

Q: So you feel that gave you some insights?

TATU: I felt like I got to know the psychology. After one of the coups - I guess it was the Kong Le coup - the youth became very politicized, and they used to charge around town on motorcycles and whatever vehicles they could get hold of, and their symbol was a blue

band they would wear on their heads or on their arms, the blue signifying the UN. They felt that the UN could implement neutrality. So one fine day I was driving along in an open Jeep - this was after I had given my car away - I was alone. A whole mob of kids suddenly were coming my way blocking the street completely. I said to myself, "I can't turn around. I've got to live with this, got to face it." So I got out of the Jeep, and as they came, I made the "praying" ["wai"] gesture very deeply, and they were looking hostile, so I said, "Apres tout, nous sommes tout Buddhist;" after all, we're all Buddhists," and they said, "come, come." They had me marching with them, and here I was marching down past the embassy, and people in the embassy were looking out.

Q: "What's Tatu doing out there with all those..."

TATU: But I got to know some of these kids and had exchanges with them. That's what I always found so very fascinating about the Service, the opportunity, the capability to relate with the local people.

Q: Which is not only fun but also useful

TATU: Productive, sometimes, yes.

Q: Very useful, I found that also.

TATU: We'll come to that, I guess.

Q: So after Laos you then went to Taiwan for Chinese language training. This again was a direct transfer?

TATU: No, I think we got a home leave before proceeding there.

Q: So to Chinese language training in Taiwan. Tell me about that.

TATU: This was a wonderful situation from my point of view. We lived in this relatively little town, Taij Chung. We lived in Chinese-style houses. Actually there were a little more Japanese style because the Japanese administrators had lived in them: *Shoji* screens and *tatami*, you know. Everybody took off their shoes on entering because the floors were covered with *tatami* and we sat on popillows on the floors. They had little contained gardens. It was very nice, a nice situation. Our school, which was an old rundown mess of a building, had a lot of character. We had as our director - "ShauoChang" was the title - a scholar named Howard Levy, who is famed in Far Eastern ranks.

He was a very dedicated scholar, and he had a number of books out, one on "Yang Gway Fay, court favorites of an illustrious celestial" the most famous courtesan in Chinese history, and he was also somewhat of a libertine. He had a book out on Chinese ribald jokes and a book on Taoist sex practices, which is very pertinent stuff. We had, therefore, the school itself, a tradition of very heavy drinking and partying. As a senior you would frown on that, but at the time it was a good way to get to know the people. For example,

we had field trips once a month. Soon after I arrived there was a field trip, and we went first to a Chinese cigarette factory. There was great hilarity as everybody feigned trying to find the Chinese *Carmen*. To amuse us and they were making yard-long cigarettes. Howard had the ability. He was wonderful at the language, and really good with people. Then we went to a Chinese wine factory for lunch. That was total disaster because in the Chinese tradition, you know, you are required to toast each other and then each dish in the repast. And the drinking is very heavy. My gosh by the time we were out of there everybody seemed to be roaring drunk. Then we went for a briefing by the MAAG, by the U.S. military, and the briefing officer said, "Just your breathing in here, as a result of you guys, is enough to knock me out."

That's an example, but I'm thinking of this demonstration and parade in town also. Once Howard instructed us and we all had to line up on a certain street corner in Tai Chung on a Saturday morning. It turned out we were going to march in a Buddhist parade. There were a lot of American missionaries in the area, and here we were marching along with our Buddhist flags, and suddenly there's a whole group of missionaries and they looked very startled at this.

Q: Did they realize that you were American diplomats?

TATU: Oh, yes, they knew who we were. The school was very well-known.

Q: How many students were there in the school?

TATU: I think at that time we had about 15, from all different agencies. We also had a compulsory sports program, "A sound Mind in a sound body;" we had to play baseball. Howard's favorite Chinese saint was called Madzu, who is famous in the Chinese litany. On one occasion we were playing an Air Force team and they seemed to be badly beating us. Howard had given each of us Madzu medals. He took his medal out on the pitcher's mound, got down on his knees, and began praying to Madzu. Whereupon suddenly a heavy rain broke out and the game was called.

Q: That's what he was praying for.

TATU: One of the Air Force guys said, "We thought we were playing diplomats, not a bunch of witch doctors." The next time that we played them, in the make-up game, we beat them anyway. There was always something going on. Howard also wrote a book on footbinding (reviewed by *Time* magazine, thank you). Once we all broke out of class and he had people bringing in little old ladies with the bound feet, putting them up on the table in our recreation room to inspect their feet. On another occasion he had one of our guys all pinned down with acupuncture. That's the kind of emersion that's really, really good.

Q: You got right into the culture, steeped in it, literally steeped in the alcohol of it. How did you do in learning Chinese?

TATU: Oh, very well. I graduated with 3-4. That was over 30 years ago, but I can still initiate and maintain a conversation in Chinese.

Q: From just one year? Well, you had started in Hong Kong.

TATU: Two years. Actually, they held me over because they wanted me to learn what is called “*grass*”- that’s scriptive Chinese. In the meantime I had the opportunity to go to Saigon and I was enthusiastic about that prospect, but Howard wouldn’t let me go. By the time this was resolved we had a new director, actually a missionary by the name of Jerry Cox. He decreed that there would be no more drinking in the school and restricted all these practices. He wanted everybody to calm down. (When Howard left Tai Chung we hired a funeral band to see him off.) In the meantime Howard had gone off to Korea to open a language school there. The message came back; “I think it would be cheaper, rather than teaching the Americans Korean, to teach all the Koreans English.” Anyway, the short of this matter was the *grass* training didn’t work out, but because of being held over, I missed a number of fairly attractive assignments, and that’s when I went to the Philippines.

Q: So then you did go to the Philippines, and what year was that?

TATU: I think it was ‘61.

Q: Well, that would only give you one year in Taijun.

TATU: No, I was there longer than that.

Q: Well, approximately. So you had this Chinese language training but really no place to really use it?

TATU: Well, that’s right. There was no place to go. I was offered Hong Kong, but you never repeat a post, in my mind anyway. I was offered General Services Officer at Taipei, but no self-respecting FSO would be General Services, given the choice, although that would have been terrific for language utilization. So the Philippines came up. There was thinking in the Department that we should have Chinese affairs officers in our posts all around the region anyway, so I went there for that purpose as “Chinese affairs officer.” In the political section.

Q: Explain a little bit why the Department felt at that time that we should have Chinese affairs officers around...

TATU: I think it’s obvious to anyone familiar with China that the Overseas Chinese, the so-called *huachow*. Controlled a very good percentage of the economies in most of the countries of Southeast Asia. So the closer we could get to them as individuals and learning their organizational mechanisms and so forth, the better off we would be.

Q: And was there a perception that they also had links to mainland China?

TATU: That was not so much of a problem, although these things would pop up, you know. During the Korean War, for example, in Thailand a contingent of 3,000 Sino-Thai youth volunteered and went off to fight with the Chinese in the Korean War. We were just flabbergasted. So we didn't know enough obviously, and I doubt that we do now, "the inscrutable Chinese." I think any reputable Sinologist would concede this.

Q: What did you do in the Philippines?

TATU: When I first arrived, the embassy itself didn't have this Chinese concept, and so I was assigned as aide to then Ambassador William Stevenson. He was a very nice fellow, a former president of Oberlin College, very courtly, stately. That was a boring job.

Q: How was he as an ambassador?

TATU: I don't think he was imaginative enough. It wasn't that he was particularly standoffish; he just didn't really get into them. Let's say he was not a success. But it was not because he didn't try. So I began lobbying to get out of the aide position. I was also protocol officer. Do you remember Katie Sternberg?

Q: Yes.

TATU: She really did the job. I wore the hat and she did the job.

Q: She was an American and had lived in the Philippines for a long time. What was her story? I don't remember.

TATU: That's right. Well, she married an American businessman years before - his name, of course, was Sternberg - and she was interned in Santo Tomas by the Japanese along with virtually the whole American community. Her brother-in-law, David Sternberg - did you ever come across him? - was confined to a wheelchair, and in Santo Tomas. The story is that he had a radio secretly concealed in his wheelchair, so that's how the American prisoners got the war news. I'll tell you a little anecdote, speaking of Santo Tomas. You know, Santo Tomas is arguably the oldest institution of Western learning in Asia. It was put up in something like the 14th Century, something bizarre like that. This was where I began doing public speaking, in the Philippines. I'd go out and tell them why they should be in Vietnam.

Q: Oh, yes, I did that a few years later; it went on for many years.

TATU: So I pulled up in front of Santo Tomas and I looked around and there's nobody there to greet me. I was there to give a lecture. So I found my way to the administrative office. This man over the counter greets me as "Doctor" and said, "There'll be someone here, Doctor." So about the third time I said, "Look, I don't deserve the accolade. I don't have the necessary degree." "You don't have a doctorate?" I said, "No." He said, "Would you like one?" Being naive I said, "Well, I don't have the time to do the coursework."

What it came down to was for 50 bucks I could have got a doctorate from Santo Tomas. Being young and idealistic I was outraged, but now I think, my God, the certificate he displayed to me looked so good. It would be as valuable as some that you see around these days.

Q: Well, you missed that opportunity.

TATU: Following my practices, I as the first one in the embassy to make contact with Jose Maria Sison. He was the first one to ever lead a demonstration on the embassy, which I was able to report. Through him I met most of the other activist youth. He later became a serious revolutionary, and went into self-imposed exile.

But anyway I finagled my way out of that protocol position into the political section. I was doing external, as I understand you did, with John Gorman. But this lightning bolt struck. Following my practice of living in the community, I was way out in San Juan Rizal. One of our next door neighbors - who incidentally was the then Secretary of Treasury, a Pampangeno named Rod Perez - then made it a point to introduce me to another near neighbor named Ferdinand Marcos.

Q: Oh, really? So this was '62, '63?

TATU: '62.

Q: So Marcos at that time was doing what?

TATU: Well, he was going what he always did, being a politician, a senator and leader of the opposition. Our kids were about the same age, so our children became playmates with his. One fine day we were all sitting in an embassy political section staff meeting - the boss was then Max Krebs. He said, "We've got to get on to the various contenders. We don't know anything about this guy Marcos. Who the hell is he?" I was really hesitant. But I said, "Well, I know him socially" Max said, "Get onto that." The colleague who was doing "internal" was really sort of peeved about this suggestion. Well, you know, I couldn't help it.

Q: If you have the contact, you have the contact.

TATU: By the damndest chance, not a week later Mrs Marcos's (Imelda) brother Kokoy walked into my office. (How did he even get in the building let alone up on the top floors?) I then knew him casually from my activities at the Manila Overseas Press Club. He said, "Listen, we were having a meeting and we decided we don't have any contacts in the embassy, and you're it." I said, "Look, I do external..."

Q: "This is not my portfolio."

TATU: Yes. He said, "We'll see about that." So I said, "Well, okay, I've got to clear it with practically everybody in this building" - well, almost everybody was enthusiastic.

Q: So this was Kokoy, Imelda Marcos' brother, Kokoy Romualdez?

TATU: KOKOY, Benjamin Kokoy. Romualdez.

Q: So he walked into the embassy and said, "You're my man."

TATU: "You're our man." Anyway, it came to be. There was a whirlwind of activity from that time on. I'll tell you, these guys would call me up at three o'clock in the morning and say, "There's somebody we want you to meet." "Where?" "Quezon City - we'll send a car for you." So here we go out there and there's Blas Opla. "We want you to know that Blas is not a Communist, he denounces a communism." I really got into it, and I had to be very careful that I was not being partisan. For example, they had a convention in the Manila hotel, and they said, "We want you to come." "I cannot come, because it's partisan." They said, "That's okay. We'll have a little room for you. You can be off in this room with a two-way glass." I said, "Have you ever heard of the smoke-filled room?" So one thing I did, though: I suggested a couple of - maybe this was improper - a couple of songs that they could appropriate. Do you know the song "Downtown"? Da-da-da-da-da-da. Marcos. Then there was one other one, "Hello Dolly" [Marcos] and we had this gal lined up who sang this. So I used to participate.

Q: So you gave them some of their theme songs?

TATU: To some extent, yes.

Q: Let's go back a little bit. Who was the Filipino in power at that time?

TATU: The president's name was Macapagal. "Diodado" ("the gift of God") Macapagal. His daughter is now president.

Q: So Marcos and who else were contending for the...?

TATU: The CIA candidate was Raoul Manglapus, practically overtly.

Q: Yes, he seemed to have...

TATU: Well, he had a lot going for him, but, you know, I had an interesting experience. I was of an evening with about six sophisticated young Philippine intellectuals. They were agonizing over the coming presidential election. Obviously their man was Raoul. You know, Raoul was the "Filipino Stevenson." So the consensus came down to: "A vote for Raoul is a lost vote, because he'll just never make it. He just doesn't relate to the Tao (the common man). "So we'll vote for Marcos." And so they did. But, anyway, Marcos at one point took me aside and in effect said, "I'm a little too old for you to be a good *compadre*, so you'd better hook up with Kokoy. He's your guy, and anything you need get through to me you go through him" So we've had a relationship ever since, sustaining.

Q: Do you still see Kokoy?

TATU: Yes, when we're in the same country at the same time.

Q: And what's he doing these days?

TATU: Well, he was here about two months ago. He had been living in semi-clandestine, in self-exile in Hawaii. He said he came here to say farewell to everybody, that he and his wife are going back to the Philippines. I said, "Aren't you sort of in jeopardy there? There are some people who are not fond of you..." He said he didn't care, he was going back and come what may. Some weeks later he called me from Manila and said, "Okay, we're in Forbes Park. We have the house that used to be the Japanese ambassador's with 14 bedrooms, so come anytime."

Q: Very interesting.

TATU: I'll tell you why we maintain this relationship. After Marcos was elected - and here's another bad career move - Kokoy came here to arrange for the American representative to the Marcos inauguration, who was to be Hubert Humphrey. Kokoy wanted me to come to the inauguration, but I declined as I didn't think it would look good.

Then he returned to Washington as the ambassador designate. So he came around to see me. I was then in unusual circumstances. I was studying Thai, and I was house-sitting for one of the few millionaires I know, a house on Massachusetts Avenue, 2214, which is just down the street from the Philippine residence. He used to come and visit me, with no prior arrangement, very casually. Early on he said, "You know, we know that you brought the Americans behind us for the elections, because we could never have won without the help." I said, "This is all BS. I didn't do any such thing." He said, "What we want to do is we'll ask President Johnson to have you seconded to us and you come back to the Philippines and you can do anything you want to do. We'll have you assigned to Padre Fora, (the Department of Foreign Affairs)."

Q: I see, to the Philippine Foreign Affairs Office.

TATU: Yes, and I said, "Well, let me think about it."

Q: How was that supposed to work?

TATU: Well, I would be seconded as an advisor. I said all of the media there thought that we were too close anyway. We used to all hang out at the Manila Overseas Press Club. That was the best place for making political contacts. I said, "How would it look? This would confirm that there was collusion if I were to come back. This was over a period of time we were discussing this. He was waiting to present his credentials." He suggested "We will ask President Johnson. We will confer on you a medal." I said, "You're still on

the same track here. I didn't do anything. That any other American FSO wouldn't have done in my place, I don't deserve anything."

Q: Interesting that they thought that you were so instrumental.

TATU: As we discussed earlier, they thought I was CIA.

Q: But this all really came about because Marcos was your neighbor?

TATU: Yes, essentially. So he, Kokoy, is hanging around waiting to present his credentials. He had gone with the Humphrey party and came back. He comes over one night – as I said he used to just drop in casually; it was a short walk - and he said, "I'm sick of this. I'm going back to Manila." I said, "You can't go back. You're the ambassador. Johnson waits till he's got five ambassadors lined up and then he takes their credentials at the same time." He had a lot of derogatory things to say about Johnson and Americans. And he did, he packed up and left. He said, "You're right. Washington is a terrible place. I don't want to be here." So then, to complicate matters, his uncle with the same name was appointed ambassador.

Q: Imelda's brother.

TATU: No, Kokoy was Imelda's brother. The other Benjamin Romualdez is the uncle. So that confused everybody. But anyway, from then on at every post we've ever had, Kokoy has turned up to see us, to track us down, even here. Once I got a call - I was working in the Department when one of these thugs they used to have as bodyguards, 'goons' they called them – telephoned me, an unmistakable goon voice said, "The governor is here to see you down at the C Street entrance." (his own people preferred to refer to Kokoy as "the governor" since he had once been governor of Legaspi). I hadn't seen him in a couple of years. So I went down, and he's in one of those big chauffeured sedans, and he grabs me and hauls me in, and the car took off. I said, "Where are we going? I'm at work."

Q: Just like in the movies.

TATU: Yes. We were headed for Georgetown Prep to see his sons who were studying there. Then, he asked for suggestions for lunch, suggesting himself "Sans Souci," a very trendy up scale restaurant then near the White House. I thought observing his casual attire (and the fact that he had no socks on) that they probably wouldn't let us in. Au contraire, we were met at the door by Paul, the renowned maitre d', and greeted not only by members of the staff, but some very prominent patrons (including the humor columnist Art Buchwald).

Q: So you've had continuing contact with him? When did you actually leave the Philippines?

TATU: When did we leave?

Q: '64? But this was before Marcos was...?

TATU: No, it was shortly after the election. It was within a week or so of the election. The Department, decided in it's wisdom, that after I had developed such substantive relations with the president elect, I should leave. The Ambassador, DCM, and Political Counselor tried to have that decision rescinded, to no avail. I concede that I had requested Thai language training, but I would have given that up to remain and ride the whirlwind. Marcos was elected, we're off to the airport for transfer. Kokoy's wife, Juliette, came to the airport. She said, "Ferdinand wanted to come to see you off, but he was afraid he might be assassinated." So she gave me this pendant, which I still have, and she said "This will open any door in the Philippines when you come back." That was Jim Rafferty. Do you remember him?

Q: Jim Rafferty, yes, I do remember him. He was there the entire time that I was there.

TATU: My impression was he was a little too heavy handed.

Q: Well, he was pretty obvious.

TATU: The one that I heard about was where he wanted to get a shipment of M16s to arm the private army of the governor of Cavite. Jim, too, was one of those characters, I guess. He passed away, you know.

Q: No, I didn't know that.

TATU: Just fairly recently, within the last couple of years.

Q: So that was the Philippines and really a great story about how living on the economy can be so very productive. I don't know why more people don't do it. I found it to be fun. I did it most everywhere I was.

TATU I recently hear a senior officer suggest that being assigned to an embassy was an awful "bore." There aren't many things to do to keep one busy he said, one just has an awful lot of free time. I just don't understand that kind of attitude. There you are in an alien culture with all sorts of challenges to learn about it, the language, the history. One of my functions was liaison with the Peace Corps. At that time the Philippines had the largest program, with over 900 volunteers. That gave me the excuse to travel all over the provinces. I'd just put on very casual clothes, as the volunteers did, travel by any available means of transportation ("trains, mules, and pirogues," I used to say). I got to meet a lot of young people, not just volunteers, I even played the role of the foreign villain in a university theatrical production.

Well, I think some people are concerned about their personal security, certainly now justifiably. The worst I ever saw, though, was in Jakarta with a - what the heck did we call that complex there?

Q: I don't know because I was in Medan. I had government housing in Medan, but in the Philippines I lived in an apartment building downtown. It's fun. Okay, so after Manila, you mentioned you became a Thai language student in Washington. So this is the second hard language.

Now, that was at FSI here, so you must have been assessed with having a good language aptitude. Did you take that language aptitude test? How many people were in your Thai language training?

TATU: I did take the aptitude test, but that was way back before I started Chinese and I don't recall how I scored. In the Thai class, not many. I think there were five others.

Q: Was this your choice, Thai, or the Department's choice?

TATU: No, I put in for it. At that time there was concern that Thailand was going the way of Vietnam, so the Department had plans to have postings all about and have language officers in these postings. The idea was to build up a corps. I can't think of any of my colleagues in that course who became superstars.

Q: How was the training? My experience with language training was that every language had its own method of instruction.

TATU: Yes. I think the methodology there was good, based on the personality of the tutor. We really had good tutors, and they were fun. The Thai had a wonderful group sense of humor.

Q: So the Thai language tutors taught you a lot about the culture and some of the tricks of the language and so on.

TATU: Absolutely, and they had been there a long time, so they knew Americans, which was another favorable thing.

Q: And that was how many months, or years? That's a hard language.

TATU: It is a hard language, but it wasn't a year, I think six or eight months, thereabouts.

Q: Was there a good book, or was it mostly...?

TATU: Yes, we had very good material, some of which I still retain in the unlikely event it should come in handy.

Q: So that was at a time when the U.S. government was concerned about Thailand going the way of Vietnam?

TATU: Yes.

Q: The domino theory and all that?

TATU: Absolutely, yes. I think there were three additional consulates opened up. See, traditionally we had, in addition to the embassy, a consul in Chiang Mai - spelled 'Chiang Mai,' two words; and it appears differently in different places - but also we opened one up in Udon Thani, and another one which place name has escaped me - perhaps Songkhla there was enormous expansion, really.

Q: In Thailand, yes.

TATU: Well, we had over 50,000 Americans there at any one time in the military services and also our civilian presence, and it was just a terrible mess.

Q: And what were they all doing?

TATU: They were all cashing in, I think, on the American concern. We had ARPA. Are you familiar with ARPA, the Advanced Research Project?

Q: ARPA?

TATU: Here are all these academics studying every conceivable aspect of Thai culture, environment, and history and so forth.

Q: Who was paying for all of this, the U.S. government?

TATU: Yes. As a wonderful example, I have a picture book in my treasure room in there on the types of fishing vessels in the Gulf of Siam. It cost the U.S. government at that time \$40,000 to put out this study.

Q: Well, it sounds like all these researchers were able to just do their own thing and persuade somebody that it was important for U.S. funding.

TATU: This happens in academic ranks, I think. They all look out for each other. It was not just academics, but so many different projects. This is a very minor anecdote. Being a language student you might appreciate it. The articulation of the Thai term for 'province' is *jangwat*. The way it's spelled in English. When I lecture I say, "There is no Asian language where the spelling in English comes out as the pronunciation seems to be." So one of these academics came around to receive this in writing. They were going to reclassify the provinces, and she wanted some instruction related, and she begins talking about the "*changwas*." She's supposed to be a linguist, she's supposed to be a specialist, and she's got an advanced degree in Thai studies, and she's pronouncing I, her major item, incorrectly the way any layman would.

Anyway, I was assigned to the political section there and one of my jobs was to monitor the work and the highly-respected daily translations by three local employees of the Thai

and Chinese press. Our ambassador at the time was Graham Martin, and he decreed that nothing should be in these translations that was derogatory to the U.S. presence. There was one hell of a lot of derogatory reporting and commentary

Q: So, in other words, the press summaries were totally pro-U.S., so they weren't really accurate summaries of the press.

TATU: That's what they amounted to. I jump way ahead in the story, but after Martin left and Leonard Unger came in as ambassador we could do it. The commanders of various U.S. military installations were just flabbergasted: "What is all of this?"

Q: That they had never seen before.

TATU: Yes. You don't make a move that you're not observed by some Thai.

Q: That's quite amazing.

TATU: Well, it's one of those things that happens.

Q: Hopefully not too often.

Some of those stories are very interesting, I'll just allude to them. Anyway, you were doing the daily press summaries to the extent that you could in a way that was pleasing to Ambassador Martin. What else did you do in the embassy?

TATU: I did the international relations with regard to Southeast Asia. This got me a lot of TDYs over to Vietnam, and I had a lot of interesting experiences there.

Q: Doing what?

TATU: Basically I was concerned about the Cambodians, and that was one of my prime functions actually, that I was the "Cambodian watcher." There was nobody else watching, so in a way it was my own show. I had wonderful assets because we had an FBIS (Foreign Broadcast Information Service) station in Bangkok. When the FBIS guys picked up broadcasts from Cambodia that were pertinent, they would call me immediately and I would have information sooner than the people who were stationed in Phnom Penh. Now, the Australians in Phnom Penh were taking care of our interests, with a formal "interests section." I was taking care of their interests informally in Bangkok of the guys who were there. Were on a more formal basis, but all of this helped me in my Cambodian hat.

Q: Do you want to give me an example?

TATU: There was an Army group pulling a barge up the Mekong. You know, some of these details I've forgotten: what they had on the barge, why they had the barge, and all that. They were captured by the Cambodians. They took a wrong turn in the river or

something, and the Cambodians incarcerated them. When the U.S. media got hold of this, it immediately became they were pulling a barge full of beer. I don't think they were hauling beer. They were there, in a makeshift prison about three months, and the Australians were taking care of them to be sure they weren't badly treated. So when Cambodian National Day came, the prince, Sihanouk, deigned that the boys should be entertained for National Day. They were all taken out and fitted for new white suits. In those days white linen suits were formal attire in Southeast Asia.

Q: The tropical attire.

TATU: And they were taken around to these various celebrations, and then they were taken to the leading restaurant in town. Everybody cleared out; it was their restaurant.

Q: Quite a story.

TATU: They were not the only group. There were others that came through also.

Q: So you were the Cambodian watcher?

TATU: I got a piece of paper from then assistant secretary Marshall Green that says I was probably the preeminent American authority on Cambodia, that no other American knew as much about Cambodia, which really, really did me great good for promotion purposes.

Q: Because those on the promotion panel probably had never heard of Cambodia.

TATU: I won't wax sullen about this.

Q: But it must have been really interesting.

TATU: It was fascinating. People would come and see me from all sorts of places with Cambodian information and stories.

Q: Now, in Bangkok did you have good contacts with the Thai community there too? Did you live on the economy there?

TATU: Yes, we did that - actually not so much with common people as with foreign affairs officers. It was more difficult to get into the local communities there. There's an expatriate American there who was just fabulous. He's been there about 40 years.

Q: Who's that?

TATU: He's very modest and wouldn't want his name used in a publication like this. My wife made a good contact with him. He's basically an academic but he's very integrated into the Thai community. He doesn't have any American connections. He was a good entree anywhere we wanted to go. We became very good friends as did our children, and we remain close friends to this day.

Q: So he was very helpful.

TATU: Yes, I probably scores of Thai trough him.

Q: There were some of those in Indonesia too, people who'd been there for years and were almost like the locals, more like them than Americans actually. Who were the ambassadors, Graham Martin

TATU: No, no, first Graham Martin and then Leonard Unger. Marshall Green, when he wrote that, was the Assistant Secretary, then exiled to Australia.

Let me mention that my wife was briefly tutor to one of royal princesses. It gave us great prestige when the Rolls with royal license plates came to transport her to the palace.

Q: Leonard Unger became ambassador and very different from Graham Martin, I would imagine. Were we accomplishing what we wanted to accomplish in Thailand? We knew what it was we were trying to do.

TATU: We were trying to preserve them, and I think that that worked okay. But I think, all things considered, that we let them take advantage of us, and this enhanced t heir corruption, to the detriment of the "little people."

Q: After Embassy Bangkok where did you go?

TATU: Then to the Department as Cambodian desk officer. I had been 16 years abroad without a Departmental assignment. This was right at the height of our involvement in Cambodia, and suddenly - Cambodia was relatively unknown - everybody was expert.

Q: Everybody was expert?

TATU: Everybody you met in the hall. There was this guy in AID who used to have a big plaque on his desk that said, "Officer in Charge Cambodia." When I would come around to see him, he would take this sign down before I got there. I would leave and he'd put it back up. Cambodia had a lot of sex appeal at that time. I've got two great stories out of Cambodia. I've got to get in the Cambodia mode here to be accurate. At any rate, you remember that at one point General Lon Nol had taken over, in early 1970. He'd staged a coup and overthrown Prince Sihanouk, who happened to be out of the country. Then we had prevailed upon Lon Nol to institute some democratic processes in the country. So he went through an election, and an Overseas Chinese named Cheng Heng, who was elected as president. So he'd gone along with this gag.

Then Lon Nol decided that this was too awkward, he was going to overthrow Cheng Heng, he was going to stage a coup. I began getting a urgent messages from our Phnom Penh embassy. Nobody at the Department was paying a lot of attention because they were all preoccupied with President Nixon's "secret" visit to China.

Q: To Cambodia?

TATU: No, China. So I got a "*FLASH*" cable which reported, "Personnel carriers are in the streets. Lon Nol is about to do it, to overthrow Cheng Heng." So at that time we had real typewriters, you know, in the Department, There were no secretaries around, so I went in first to my boss, who was then Tommy Corcoran and showed him the cable. Tommy handed it right it back to me and said, "It's your country. Take care of things." I sat down at a typewriter and wrote, "You should seek out Lon Nol and you should inform him" - this is almost verbatim - "that, to the extent that we do not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, you should be very much aware that whatever support Cambodia enjoys in the Congress of the United States would seriously be eroded if you were to undertake this measure." So I come around to Tommy, and he says, "Okay. Take care of it."

I had his signature, It was February 14, 1972 - President Nixon and the whole party were on their way to Beijing, and in charge in the Bureau was Bill Sullivan. It just happened I ran out in the hall and there's Bill coming down the hall, fast, and he says, "What have you got there? Brief me." He was going up to see the Acting Secretary, who was a political person named Oscar Meyer. So Bill looks at the cable and he says, "Okay, let's go," and he goes in to the Secretary's office and comes out in about two minutes and he's got the Acting Secretary signed off, I ran it to the code room. I'll bet that was the fastest that a cable ever got responded to by the Department of State, but it was, of course, sent without the legions of clearances such messages usually require.

Q: I would imagine so.

TATU: So the whole presidential party were on their way to China. Who's in charge? Al Haig was is in charge. My counterpart over there, at NSC, was John Negroponte.

Later in the day I'm walking by Bill Sullivan's office and he's obviously in an argument on the phone shouting, and it' was Al Haig. Haig was really ticked off that we had sent the cable without clearing through him. I told Bill Sullivan, "I've been in touch with Negroponte, and right along he's been in accord with our position. And here, we had to move fast, as Phnom Penh said 'the personnel carriers are in the streets.'" Well, no matter. General Haig called the Presidential party, who were then overnighting in Hawaii, and he got the authority of the President to rescind our instruction. But in the meantime our ambassador at Phnom Penh, Embry Swank, had already carried out his instructions and the coup was put down. The next day after the dust had settled a bit, I called Negroponte and asked, "What's the problem? You and I were in complete accord. I didn't clear with you because I knew you would agree that we had to get that cable out of here as rapidly as possible. He said, "Well, the whole thing was Al, he thought he was in charge acting president, and he was just put down that you didn't clear with him." "You mean this whole thing was based on vanity and ego?" He said, "Well, I don't like to put it that way, but yes."

Q: He felt he had been bypassed.

TATU: He had been bypassed. So that was one thing. Now this other story may be the kind that we don't want to- (end of tape)

Q: I think we need to clarify this was when you accompanied General Haig, at that time the head of the NSC, on a trip to Cambodia.

TATU: Well, to Vietnam and Cambodia. We traveled, incidentally, on a presidential plane, a VC-110, which is the only way to travel. The other thing that happened was we spent a few days in Saigon and I went around to see my Cambodian contacts while the other guys of the small group were all circulating for their own interests and purposes. As we were returning to Washington, Haig, for the first time really took notice of me, because he knew I was with State, called me over to talk about Cambodia. He heard my entire brief about Cambodia, and he said, "One thing I want to ask of you, when we get back, don't mention to anybody in the Bureau that we are going to invade Laos." Dead silence. "I didn't know that, General." He just assumed that like the other guys I was in the picture that I knew. So when I got back - now, this is to my detriment; we got back on a Friday, and I thought it over and I thought I'd better keep my mouth shut because at that time I didn't know Marshall Green well enough to feel that I could trust him to protect the source. So when I saw him on Monday, he gave me hell why I didn't have the trip report all written up over the weekend. I said, "I knew you were playing golf." But I never gave that away.

Q: Oh, well, it's one of those things. What do you do? What was your impression of Haig?

TATU: He's a very commanding individual. He's a very good-looking man. I decided the theory is correct that good-looking guys get promoted fast in the military, because they make good posters and good photo ops and all. You've never seen a general who was not good looking - think about it. Legions of women swooned over Air Force general Leroy Manor, as an example.

Q: That's an interesting point. But he did have highly responsible jobs.

TATU: Oh, yes, absolutely. He is a very vital guy, a true hard-charger. Actually, despite everything, I liked him.

Q: Smart man. So you were Cambodia desk officer for a couple of years.

TATU: It was a terribly exacting job. I was putting in about 70 hours a week no exaggeration, and it was terrible. I loved the job, I loved the substance of it, but I just couldn't quite grapple with the physical requirement. And there's very little respect for the time or requirements of the lowly desk officer. The Ops Center would call in the

middle of the night for example. They got a classified cable from Phnom Penh, and they can't read it to you because of the classification. So you have to get up, drive all the way from Virginia to the Department, to learn that rockets had been fired on the Pochentong airport. And so what? I mean, nothing to be done about it that couldn't wait till dawn.

Q: Were you it? You were the Cambodia desk? You were the only one?

TATU: Yes, that's right. I suppose of course the other agencies had people in similar capacities, and I used to have a lot of trouble with the Pentagon. They have very little idea of what we do. I recall once I was preparing for a visit by the acting Cambodian prime minister Sirik Matak. Now you can imagine what that entailed, on top of my usual 70 hours. And I got a call from a lady at Commerce who I had never met. She asked, very sweetly, and condescendingly, as though she was giving me a great secret, "Did you know the Cambodian prime minister is coming here?"

Q: What office were you in?

TATU: EA Bureau; we were "Directorate for Cambodia, Laos and Thailand," although it kept changing around. That's why I hesitated. We had BLT at one time: Burma, Laos and Thailand, not to be confused with bacon, lettuce, and tomato.

Q: So the office was in the Asian Bureau, but it sounds like you must have had pretty good direct entree to the top if you were the only person on Cambodia who really knew anything about it.

TATU: Well, sometimes I was and sometimes I wasn't. I'd have to brief these interlopers and then sit back as they took the credit. But that's the way of bureaucracies, and you've just got to live with it.

I'll tell you an interesting thing that happened in the Cambodian situation, although this is out of chronological order. Having occurred in 1979. I had gone up to New York as the IO representative for the UN General Assembly. You know, when they have the General Assembly, each bureau has a representative go up. I had in the meantime been transferred from EA to IO (another story). So I was up there in New York, and in the meantime Prince Sihanouk was on his way, supposedly as a representation of the Khmer Rouge for the General Assembly (he soon "defected," however. This could be a very long story.)

Q: Go ahead.

TATU: No, it's too long. But I walked in to our mission one fine morning - that also was a great job in terms of access - and the Chinese ambassador, who later became the foreign minister, was coming over to see me with his gang, some undisclosed subject. We had an ambassador named Dick Petrie, who was our professional FSO, and then the lead ambassador (we always had five at the UN) was Andrew Young. Anyway, I get a call to come up to the ambassador's and I said, "The Chinese ambassador's on his way." They said, "No matter. Come on up here."

Petrie and another ambassador, Don McHenry, awaited me. Petire said, "Listen, we're going to tell you something that if you tell anybody we mentioned this to you, we'll say you're lying." How about that? It's an old State Department shibboleth, I'd heard it many times." Okay, what's the big lie?"

They said, "We want you to go over and see Prince Sihanouk. He's at the Lenox Hill Hospital (this was not public, I had not been aware). And we want you to tell him..." I said, "Wait a minute. Why me?" "Because we don't want it to be anybody else." "Okay." "You tell him that he is not a prisoner there. We have Secret Service guards all around him to protect him. He can do anything he wants to do, go anywhere he wants to go. He can communicate with anybody he wants to. Just assure him of all that, and then we'll do anything he wants to do for his comfort, We are not going to release any press on this or disclose to any one, other than in our own ranks, on a 'need to know' basis that he is there."

So I go charging out of the building, I didn't even take my overcoat, and it was in the middle of winter. I was so worked up about this. I had been dealing with Cambodia for years, and I had never, met the principal actor. As I'm going out, sure enough, here comes the Chinese delegation. "Where are you going?" "I've got to go Lenox Hill." (I mistakenly said, blurted out, more like it) "Oh, you're going to see Sihanouk." Here it was supposed to be so bloody secret, and they knew about it. They said, "Tell him our best regards." So as I was checking into the hospital they wanted to know, "What is his (Sihanouk's) health plan?" I said, "He doesn't have a health plan." They said, "Everybody's got a health plan." I said, "Well, this one doesn't. Somehow I talked my way through that." I get up on his floor and the Secret Service had taken over most of the floor. They hadn't been advised I was coming they didn't want to let me in. My State Department pass was like a Mickey Mouse card to them. But I got by them somehow and I walked into his room, and there's the Prince, barefoot and in pajamas; our first meeting. He greeted me, "Excellence." I said, "*Ce n'est pas necessaire pour moi.*" (it is not necessary for me) Monique, principal his wife, was standing by, and she indicated through eye contact that she was getting the picture. So I gave them all this the messages I had been instructed to convey, and he said, "Fine, okay, Fidel." He had come around to a good mood, and he just decided, he explained, to call me "Fidel," for "faithful," which he did whenever I saw him thereafter, even years after.

When I returned shortly thereafter, the Chinese had already visited him. The Secret Service were comfortable with me now and they said, "Look, the Chinese were here, and they told him they would take care of him, and they said if he needed any funds, any help or anything at all to call this number," and they give me the number. So I tucked it away. "Any amount of money." So finally, after about 10 days in New York I returned to the department after a very interesting stay. When I got off at National airport, there was a message for me to report to the Department immediately.

I proceeded to the office of IO (International Organizations) DAS (Deputy Assistant Secretary of State) Jerry Hellman, as instructed, having rehearsed in my head all of the

substantive exchanges I had at the UN. The only question put to me was “Who is going to pay Sihanouk’s hospital bill?” Subsequently there were meetings on this question involving many people whose salaries for the time wasted would have paid the \$20,000 hospital bill many times over (Sihanouk had committed himself to the hospital for “fatigue,” and stayed about 10 days) These were not interesting meetings. During one such meeting I noted a scrap of paper in my shirt pocket, the ink blurred because it had recently been laundered. It was like a bombshell when I introduced the phone number of the Chinese ambassador with the dictum that “any amount” would be taken care of.

Q: The Deputy Assistant Secretary’s office. Send the bill to the Chinese.

TATU: “Do you think they’ll pay it.” “I’m sure they’ll pay it. I know they will pay it.” Well, so then, of course, we had to have meeting after meeting after meeting to decide what we were going to do with this bill, how we were going to handle it. Were we really going to let the Chinese to pay it? We eventually ended up paying it 21,000. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance had called on Sihanouk, and he told him, conversationally “you are our guest.” So that took care of the question.

Q: Oh, I’m sure. So how long was Sihanouk there?

TATU: As I remember, it was only a matter of about 10 days.

Q: Well, that’s interesting, another notable figure that you were contact man for. Now, Cambodia, we’re talking what, between ‘70 and ‘72 you were doing all this?

TATU: Yes, Well, that last sequence is in 1979, I got out of chron in my enthusiasm. ‘70 to ‘73. I was doing it out of Bangkok, but when I was doing it in the Department. I was in EA, on the Desk. But then in the late ‘70s I was in IO, looking at all Asia, including, of course, Cambodia.

Q: Let’s see. You have down here 1970 you were Cambodian desk officer in the Department.

TATU: Oh, that’s right, you’re right.

Q: Now, this was when we bombed Cambodia, right?

TATU: Yes, that was one of the functions I had when I went over to Vietnam on TDY, to determine the extent of the bombing, because the military was covering up, even to us.

Q: We bombed Cambodia in 1970, I think.

TATU: Yes, we bombed them for a long time, before 1970 and after. Our military thought that “COSVIN” spells out “Central Office South Vietnam,” or the main command for the Communist Vietnamese was on the border with Cambodia. It is ironic that after I left the Service, and the war was concluded, I visited the area where COSVIN

was supposed to have been, crawled down in a tunnel, and came to a large room underground, that our guide said was COSVIN.

Q: So you went to Vietnam to get a better reading?

TATU: Yes, on the border, and I remember one memorable experience (we're talking about 1972 here). I had a colonel on each side of me poking reach the ribs saying, "No, we didn't have any planes in the air that day" when in fact they did. They had a regular routine of bombing the border, justified for the most part, I may add.

Q: During this time a couple of people mentioned to me - and actually I was in the Department during that period - this was the time when there was a number of officers, Foreign Service Officers, who wrote a protest letter to the Secretary? There was a big to-do about Foreign Service Officers dissenting - I don't know if that's the right word since they had not been directly involved in the decision making - disagreeing with the bombing of Cambodia.

TATU: Well, they were disagreeing with all aspects of our presence in Vietnam, and Laos and Cambodia, the whole thing.

Q: Did you get involved or brought into that at all?

TATU: I didn't. Now that you mention it, it's curious that I, and my colleagues ion the Vietnam and Laos desks did not get involved.

Q: It was something that was going on. The Secretary of State was...?

TATU: I think it was Edmund Muskie.

Q: It was Rogers, yes. But there was quite a flurry over that.

TATU: I think it was like 140 FSOs.

Q: I don't know, but it was, I think, basically the first time - well, of course, with China and Japan in - but I mean the first time there was really an official, overt, publicized protest by Foreign Service Officers about a policy. But that didn't affect you?

TATU: No. I remember the demonstration in front of the Department, looking out the window.

Q: I remember that.

TATU: Occupied the same area in the Department.

Q: In the Asia Bureau.

TATU: Anyway, I was going to say it was so exacting, that job, that one fine day Personnel called me up. You get the impression that Personnel is not in coordination with anybody. They said, "How would you like to go to Nepal?" I said, "I don't know where it is, but I'll take it..."

Q: Anything to get out.

TATU: "...to get out of here." As I say, despite my commitment to the country and the whole cause, I was just wearing thin, and it happened that a logical replacement was there on home leave from Phnom Penh. I was that type of "street" FSO who preferred to be abroad, mixing with the people rather than in Washington buried under paper and mixing with bureaucrats.

Q: For Cambodia desk.

TATU: Andy Antippas, he was always very unhappy with me because he wanted to go back to Phnom Penh, because they were getting - what do we call it? not danger pay...

Q: Hardship.

TATU: It was beyond hardship.

Q: Oh, well, maybe it was something like 'danger pay.'

TATU: Yes, something like that.

Q: But instead he got to replace you on the Cambodia desk. But just before we go on to the next, you were saying it was a 70-hour work week or so. What all were you doing?

TATU: Well, whatever you do: it's always hard to define. Earlier you had questioned that I was just one person on the Desk. So consider that I was doing also the work of the two other guys who should have been there.

Q: Liaison with the Cambodian embassy?

TATU: Oh, boy, I should say, because none of them at their embassy had any real experience, from the ambassador, down to the press attaché, and the consular officer. They all looked to me for guidance. And I didn't mind it. I recall a very poignant moment. During the period when Cambodia had suspended relations with us, their embassy, on 16th Street in the District had simply been locked up. One day, after there had been publicity about the restoration of relations, the keys, plainly labeled, turned up in my in box with no indication as to where they had come from. I called their press attaché and we drove down there and opened it up. Her wanted me to be the first to open the door and go in. It was quite a mess, but what a moment.

In 1972 we had what amounted to a state visit by Sirik Matak, the acting prime minister

came here... I like this little anecdote. My basic library is downstairs, but there is a book on Cambodia which has as its frontispiece a photograph of Richard Nixon watching the Royal Ballet in Phnom Penh, at which time he was Vice President. I provided that photograph for the guy who wrote the book, *A Decent Interval*. The way I got it was actually from another academic, Roger Smith. I had it displayed in my office in Bangkok when I was doing Cambodian affairs there, and everybody who came in who knew anything about Cambodia I would ask to help me identify the people. There were almost 100 people in the photograph. So gradually I was getting to recognize them all, and my boss thought this was very silly stuff, a waste of time. I call this abstract research.

But, by God, when Sirik Matak was coming, I had the picture enlarged and a clear plastic overlay made with the names of the various people. I also got from the archives a copy of the reporting on the Nixon visit to Cambodia, in 1953. Sirik Matak went in to see Nixon and no one else was present except for the interpreters. One of them, whom I had prepped earlier, told me that the photograph was on Nixon's desk and the president began pointing out various prominent people (Having obviously studied the overlay.) Sirik Matak was very moved, he said, "You Americans are so sentimental," and Nixon said, "Yes, I remember this trip so very well, it was you who came to welcome me at Siam Reap."

Q: That must have made a good impression.

TATU: "Tears flooded his eyes," said the interpreter.

Q: And little did they know that you had planted...

TATU: A million smiles. I think when I write my autobiography I'll title it *Spear Carrier to History*.

Q: That sounds like a great title.

TATU: Well, you know, very often nobody even reads colleagues memoirs. That's the problem.

Q: One never knows.

TATU: Well, I can't think of any.

Q: Well, anyway, that's the advantage of this, because when you read some of the brochures about the oral history program - they're indexing this - this will be researchable. These tapes are transcribed on a CD-ROM that people can use on the Internet with a search engine. So if someone wants to go in and find out about you as Cambodian relations from whenever, '68 to '72, they can zero in on this. And you can mention that you'll be writing a book. Why don't we finish up this tape and then stop for today? This will take us to your going to Kathmandu, wherever that may be, which is in Nepal. What did you do there? This was in 1972.

TATU: Kathmandu. Yes, I arrived on July Fourth, 1972, as chief of the political section, a one-man political section, with two local employees and a whole group of agency people buried under my cover.

Q: Oh, I see. One Foreign Service Officer from the State Department and the rest allegedly Foreign Service but actually CIA.

TATU: Four.

Q: And who was the ambassador?

TATU: Carol Laise.

Q: How big an embassy was it? I understand you had an economic section there.

TATU: Oh, sure, we had an economic section, one guy, and a one-man consular section and one admin. We had a military attaché, and then the locals.

Q: What did we see as our interests in Nepal?

TATU: Again, it was preserving their independence. They were threatened by all sorts of sources. There was a definite threat from India. They perceived - we didn't acknowledge it, but it was true - that our presence inhibited the Indians. There was a threat from China, then China played off against India. So the Nepalese, the Nepali, did quite well in getting assistance from both sides.

Q: And what did we do for them?

TATU: We had a lot of AID projects, public health and others. I didn't pay that much attention, although now I realize I should have.

Q: What was your job?

TATU: Oh, my job, as any political officer, was to learn and report the political intricacies of the country.

Q: Did you live on the economy there?

TATU: Well, you could say that, yes. There was a house that the embassy had leased, was in the economy. It's a very small town, a little town, so I was within easy walking distance of the embassy. We had an embassy that was crumbling down literally, but it had a lot of character. I remember once there was great consternation because a mendicant cow had taken to sleeping at the embassy front door. Well, Hinduism is the major religion there, and you can't fool with cows. The advantage of an embassy like this was we were right on the edge of the bazaar, so people would walk in. We'd get walk-in

informants, we'd get walk-in whatever, whereas when they built the new embassy it was two miles away, finished just as I was leaving. I doubt if anybody ever walked out there. I used to get an awful lot of weird visitors. There was definitely an opposition to the royalty, and these dissidents would come in and tell me their stories. This was one of the two places where I was invited to help overthrow the government.

Q: With the Nepalese opposition?

TATU: Actually this wasn't so much the opposition; this was a general, former chief of army, who was a kind of a dreamer. He thought that he could get enough of his old colleagues together to do this.

Q: How did you deal with him?

TATU: Well, I just had to sort of softly put him down. Those days are gone forever. I don't know if you know about the history of Nepal, but, very briefly, there was this family group, the Ranas, who controlled the country for actually a couple of centuries, and then somehow the royalty overthrew them. The royalty was going to execute all the Ranas, and then they realized that they had been inter-married with them all those years.

Q: Which one? Oh, this one. He thought you could...

TATU: General S.J.B. Sarda Rana, formerly the commander-in-chief.

Q: Did he want you to enlist U.S. government support?

TATU: Yes.

Q: And how did he think you were going to do that?

TATU: Well, you know, he thought, "I had so much power." All Ranas have the name Shumser Jung Bahaur and then their individual names, so they're known as "SJB."

Q: What was your impression of Carol Lane as ambassador?

TATU: Well, she was very professional, very dedicated, no nonsense whatsoever. A perfect FSO. She used to do things like, when we would have functions such as the Fourth of July, she would lease tents from the military and have them outside in a big garden area. We actually had rehearsals for functions She would cordon off blocks

within the area and assign embassy people to these blocks. "If anybody in one of those blocks, any of the guests, is not being engaged, that's your responsibility." Everybody had to be greeted, engaged, and entertained. I thought that was terrific.

Q: Very systematic.

TATU: It killed me at functions elsewhere to see all the Americans grouped and the guests not being talked up by anybody. That was just one thing. She really got out and about, and she knew everybody in the bloody country and beyond. You know, her background was India. When Madam Gandhi come on a state visit, Ambassador Laise walked right up to her, and they embraced. I thought that was great...

Q: She had a good understanding of the culture and the people.

TATU: One of my jobs was to know the conditions in the villages, so I get cranked up for a trek. You know, there are very few roads in Nepal; at that time there were very few roads, and the only way to get anywhere was to trek. So, okay, I set up my first trek. I had like eight *sherpas* and the *sherdar*, which was the lead bearer, and myself. When I put in for orders, Ambassador Laise. questioned that....

Q: She thought you were just going trekking for fun.

TATU: Yes. I said, "How can I..."

Q: "How else can I get there?"

TATU: So, by golly, she conceded and off we went. We walked for about 10 days. A day, hard hiking.

Q: Tell me about some of those villages. How were you received and so on? You didn't have that language.

TATU: No, I didn't have that language, and that is a country where there are multiple languages. A wonderful example of this: I had an assistant whose name was Kaiseh Lall, who was really a good little guy, quite a prominent citizen in his own right. He wrote, and he was a known author. Anyway, he was a Nepali. Within the valley, the Kathmandu Valley, there's a concentration of these people who are multiple religionists. For example, he came in one day with a spot on his forehead, which is Hindu, you know. I said, "I thought you were Buddhist." "I am." "What are you doing with a "tika spot?" "It's the day for it." But they also had other languages. So I went on a trek with him and we were on our way to Everest, and at one point I left behind my down jacket, and it gets t really, really gets cold up there. So we got to a point called Namchi Bazaar and I said, "We've got to rent a jacket here for me." So he goes off and he comes back proudly with a pair of trousers. He couldn't communicate; the guys there were Sherpas. We had many language problems, but all in good graces.

Q: What did you find out about their quality of life?

TATU: Well, just their subsistence economies; that they had no knowledge of what was going on in the rest of the country; very, very isolated; poor communications. Very touching experience. Because of the switch-back nature of the trail, people can see you coming from miles away. On two occasions mothers had brought their children up to the

trail, hoping we were doctors. We gave away all our medicine in the first two days.

Q: And what other countries besides, China and India were actively involved in Nepal?

TATU: Well, the Soviets were very interested. They did a lot of recruiting. I remember once there was some kind of youth thing going off in Eastern Europe, and the Department asked how many Nepali would be amenable to attending this, and I went back and said, "Probably the whole country if the Sovs would pay for the transportation and expenses."

Q: So the Soviets were active?

TATU: Yes, we had a relatively benign association with the Sovs. Also, since Nepal was once a British protectorate they had a sentimental interest, but they channeled their assistance through the UN. Then there were the Gurkhas, the legendary fighting men. The Brits had a quota of Gurkhas they could recruit each year, a highly-prized position. I've forgotten how many, something in the neighborhood of 800. And when these fellows completed their service, the Brits helped them get settled, and taught them how to farm, or help them join other services, such as for Bruni.

Q: I assume we had a large AID mission.

TATU: Yes.

Q: Was it an interesting assignment for you?

TATU: Oh, yes, it was. I enjoyed the people, those that I knew, mostly among the elite. It was very exotic, and my kids had a good tour there.

Q: What about schooling for kids in a place like Nepal?

TATU: For the younger ones there was an international school. For the high school age, we had separate tutoring set up.

Q: Any other comments about Nepal?

TATU: Without going into these personal anecdotes, we got to know a lot of the Ranas. There was a group of Jesuit priests there. At the time that the royalty decided it was time to overthrow the Ranas, The king, King Tribuhan, had an association with a Russian expatriate who ran a brothel in Calcutta. The Jesuit priest, an American named M.D. Moran, who was the education minister for India's Behar state, which adjoins Nepal. The King, would go off allegedly on a trip to Calcutta for health purposes, but he would actually go there to study and become educated and become a modern man. He would take chests with him that he would fill with books and take back. So they set up - these three meeting in this brothel in Calcutta - a bloody revolution. When it was over, the Russian - his name was Boris Lokanovich - for his efforts in this regard, Boris was given a palace. This is his ballroom in the palace. I didn't prepare these pictures for you; it just

happened. I was digging out some pictures the other day. The priest got a palace which was somewhat removed, where he set up this school. We used to refer to him as the hippie priest. We'd hear his motorcycle coming in in the morning and we'd say, "Oh, my God, Father Moran's here for breakfast." He was a very interesting guy. He had ten other colleagues with him, and they made no effort at conversion. He said that for one thing it was illegal, technically illegal, but he said, "As long as we are able to teach values." This incidentally was on a trek...

Q: Just like the movies, wonderful.

TATU: So that was kind of an interesting association with the Ranas and the Jesuits. There is a book by Hansu Yin. Are you familiar with it?

Q: Honsu Yen, yes.

TATU: "It's called *The Mountain is Young*," and everybody in it is identifiable. The central character of it is an American woman who comes to Nepal just after being married to an Italian count - it's true - and they're just visiting and then they go on to Hong Kong, but in the meantime one of the Ranas has fallen in love with her. They're all generals. The general goes after her in Hong Kong and brings her back, and to hell with the count. And she's still there. Her uncle was the U.S. consul in Calcutta. So the book is so great; it really is, particularly when you know all these people. A movie company came to Nepal and they're going to make a movie of this book, and Father Moran sabotages them, because the principal male love interest was a catholic and you couldn't have panky going on with Catholics.

Q: So you did have to know some of the intricacies of the social scene to survive?

TATU: Definitely.

Q: It sounds like a very interesting assignment.

TATU: Well, it was.

Q: I've known other people who've been in Nepal, and everyone seems to have liked it very much.

TATU: I can't think of anybody who dissented except maybe... Some of the technicians, you know, they found it difficult to get around.

Q: But professionally and was it interesting and a good place for families?

TATU: Yes.

Q: Okay. You're one of the few people I know who managed to stay in the same part of the world your entire career. By design?

TATU: Oh, absolutely by design. I had little interest elsewhere.

Q: I think Southeast Asia is one area where, once you're into it, it has an attraction and a mystique, and it's sufficiently complicated so that we're better off.

TATU: Plus I was able to get the language training, which really helped.

Q: That's important. So the next assignment was principal officer in Chiang Mai, which would have been, once again, using your Thai language training. Why don't we stop here for today and begin next time with principal officer in Chiang Mai and start off there. If anything comes to your mind, or if I have any questions that I want to go back on, we can go back over some of this before we start next time.

Today is Friday, November 10th. After your assignment in Kathmandu, you went as principal officer to the consulate in Chiang Mai. I believe that was in 1974.

TATU: Yes, correct. I went to Chiang Mai in July of 1974, precisely July 4th, leaving Kathmandu and proceeding direct, giving up home leave again for maybe the second or third time in my checkered career. I wanted to tell you one Vietnam anecdote here, a meaningful anecdote, I think, before it's lost. I think this is something that should be recorded in history. I mentioned earlier that when I had been posted in Bangkok one of my responsibilities was following developments in Southeast Asia, and in that capacity I used frequently to go over to Saigon primarily to keep track of the Khmer Krom, who were a Cambodian group, under the direction of CIA actually, conducting cross-border operations. On this particular occasion I proceeded with Ambassador Unger, who had other business, and I went about my own business on the border. That evening dinner was set up for me by a political officer in the Saigon embassy by the name of Andy Antippas had set up a virtual trap for me. It seemed that the Thai troops who were participating as part of the program of bringing in the so-called "Third Flags" were behaving there egregiously. I was quite aware of this from our side that the Thai troops proceeded to Vietnam carrying large amounts of narcotics, illicit narcotics, and in fact on one occasion, cooperation with BNDD, the precursor to DEA, we had sought to stop a shipment of APO mail, Army Post Office. The Thai had access to APO, and we had word that they were shipping heroine in this particular APO.

Q: Why did they have access to the American postal system?

TATU: They had access to everything. This was a payoff for the Thai participating in the Vietnam War. In fact, the word was that any Thai soldier who went was a corporate entity. They had to pay, in terms of about \$5,000, to be able to go and "fight" in Vietnam and, once there, they had not only access to APO, they had access to the PX. The word was that when a shipment of large gear would come into the PX, such as refrigerators, stoves and so forth, the first ones there were the Thai, who arrived with six-by-six trucks.

That evening for this dinner there were also present a number of military people up to ranking bird colonels. Their complaint was that the Thai were oppressing the Vietnamese to such an extent. They would come into a village, and our military would come across them coming out with severed heads on the antennae of their personnel carriers. The atrocities on the part of the Thai, according to these guys, were just incredible. There were maybe three or four of these people, and Antippas also was substantiating what they had to say. So I said, "Okay, gentlemen, we've heard all the other stuff, the PX and narcotics and so forth, but this is a new one, and you can be assured that I will report this in full detail." So going back on the plane - we had our own little jet - I began briefing Ambassador Unger on this, and he expressed astonishment and chagrin. The follow-up on this was to find out who was at that dinner. In other words, the military wanted to get these guys who had reported to me. This is all back I feed to me from Antippas. No action was taken against the Thai, but action was taken against the informants, whistle-blowers, so to speak.

Q: Very interesting.

TATU: I think history should be aware of that.

Q: So this was the temper of the times, I guess - win at all costs.

TATU: That's absolutely right.

Q: How large a post was the consulate at Chiang Mai?

TATU: Chiang Mai had a deputy, Linda Irick, who actually hadn't arrived yet when I got there. It had an administrative deputy who was an ex-Marine captain by the name of Bruce something-or-other and a CIA guy buried in as a vice consul. The consulate was very curious little outbuilding attached to the residence. Incredibly I walk in there and I find the toilet that's accessible to visitors is approached by a short hallway in which there is a refrigerator filled with morphine. You will recall that Chiang Mai is the "capital" of the Golden Triangle.

Q: For what?

TATU: For what - and needles, injection needles, piled up on shelves nearby. So I questioned, "What the hell is this?"

Q: This was the restroom in the consulate?

TATU: Yes. "What the hell is this?" There was no residual memory really. The Marine, Bruce, thought that this stuff was stocked because there was a concern that there was a rabies threat, and this was the way we treat rabies.

Q: Morphine?

TATU: Yes. So I checked this out through channels and found that this morphine, while it could produce some ill effects, had exceeded its shelf life. I then went about destroying it and had a couple of people witness me doing it. There was a DEA station there also, located separately, newly established, with a chief agent in charge and three subordinates. I had the SAIC come over, Special Agent In Charge, and witness me destroying this morphine. He said that, despite the fact that the shelf life had been exceeded, it would be worth about 40,000 bucks on the street. So that says something about something. It says something about the management of the post.

Q: Let me ask you: Who was your predecessor?

TATU: Jim Montgomery. I had known him in Bangkok, in my early Bangkok tour, and considered him to be a friend. At any rate, this later was held against me, the fact that I destroyed this stuff. It was considered to be an irrational act. I think the crunch came when I ran into a windmill here that terminated my tenure at the post, when the SAIC, again the DEA Special Agent In Charge, and wife were out on a motorcycle run, inexplicably on a road that was not open yet to the public, when two assailants stepped out of the bushes and fired a shot at them. She was hit, the wife was hit. The name of this SAIC, by the way, was Bud Shoaf - I don't remember his formal first name. The wife was hospitalized, and from that point on the whole thing became a circus. Everybody was covering up facts, but I was trying to investigate. The question was whether this was narcotics related, whether it was related to the insurgents. In other words, there was a threat to the American community, and that was my responsibility. The administrative counselor then, after I had been at this for several days, sent me a cable in which he ordered me to desist my investigation. Of course, he had no authority over me; I was in my own consular district. So this came down to a conflict, if you will, between me and the counselor with really no backing there in a good part of the embassy.

Q: Now, who was the DCM?

TATU: The DCM was Ed Masters, Edward Masters, who during this period was on home leave.

Q: So you really had no one to turn to, except the ambassador?

TATU: Well, even the ambassador was incommunicative, he was a political appointee. The first time I went to meet him in his office one morning he pulled out a bottle and offered me a drink. What I did - this was surely a mistake and something I may want to write out later - I appealed to the ambassador in Laos.

Q: Who was that?

TATU: Charles Whitehouse, do you know him?

Q: I don't.

TATU: Charlie Whitehouse, former CIA. Bangkok and Vientiane always worked very closely together. I, as you recall, had been stationed in Vientiane and there was some resentment there that Bangkok considered us, Vientiane, as being a kind of younger brother or something that they could order around. But there was close communication, so chance would have it Mrs. Whitehouse was leading a group of ladies down to visit Chiang Mai just as all of this blew up. I thought I could send Charlie a letter with his wife and see if he could be of any help. What he did with my letter was he sent it to Bangkok, so that made me seem insubordinate. As a consequence, I was removed from the post.

Q: I see. Well, it sounds like everything was all tangled up together, insurgency and narcotics and so on, very much like what seems to be going on in some of our posts in Latin America right now. So when actually did you leave your post in Chiang Mai - later in '74, I suppose?

TATU: If you can recall the date on which Nixon left office and Ford took over, it was right about then.

Q: In August of '74.

TATU: There you are.

Q: I remember, because I was on home leave myself.

TATU: And one of my actions, also an eccentric action, was to seek to get photographs of Gerald R. Ford to replace those of Nixon that were in the consulate.

Q: Well, his photograph did in fact go to all consulates when he became President. So that was a very short and difficult post?

TATU: Exactly, but considering my experiences and preferences, Chiang Mai was my dream post, and it broke my heart to have to leave it.

Q: After Chiang Mai where did you go?

TATU: After Chiang Mai I was assigned then to the Department as Thai desk officer.

Q: Thai desk officer was in an office, as I recall, at that time that included what other countries? What was it called - EA...?

TATU: Now wait a minute. It certainly was in EA, that was the Bureau. You're creating mental blocks here.

Q: I'm sorry.

TATU: It was TIMS at one time but not in my time. Thailand, Laos and Burma, TLB.

Q: Oh, Thailand, Laos and Burma. Then there was an INBS at one point - Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma and Singapore.

TATU: We also had bacon, lettuce and tomato.

Q: Were you the Thai desk?

TATU: I was it, yes.

Q: And who was the country director?

TATU: George Roberts - do you know him? The author of "Cookie Push," that we discussed previously in connection with Laos.

Q: Was he - I'm just digressing here - was he in Manila, or am I thinking of somebody else?

TATU: No. You may be thinking of House of Usher.

Q: No, no, I'm thinking of the Internal Affairs division chief.

TATU: Walker, Givins?

Q: The person who came before Bill Owen as internal, Tom something. Anyway the Thai desk in the Department, what was involved in that?

TATU: What was involved there, the main thing, was that we were pulling out of Thailand, much as we had pulled out of Vietnam. So there was something called Ammunition In Thailand, AIT. We had these enormous stores of ammunition in Thailand, and what are we going to do with them? Were we going to pull them back, which would cost an enormous amount of money? Were we going to give the supplies to the Thai, which would seem to be a poor precedent, or were we going to sell them to the Thai? So there was a lot of activity there, and I think we ended up just giving most of to the Thai.

Q: Now, wouldn't this have been something the Defense Department was primarily responsible for?

TATU: We were in it because of the considerations of offending the Thai. The military was not quite as subtle as we would like them to be. So that was a big item.

Q: What did the military want to do with it?

TATU: They didn't have any set policy. Anyway, it was an item, but it was an item that impacted then upon our relationships. One of the things was that Henry Kissinger didn't care very much about Thailand. I recall - this is anecdotal but it says something - the

prime minister at that time was a character named Chatchi. Chatchi was a politician and he was seeking, as all politicians, to be in the public eye and to demonstrate that he was an important world character, so he was constantly hounding us to get him an appointment with Henry Kissinger. So we set that up finally. God, you know how much time and paper that takes. I got a call from Henry's staff: "Okay, we got it set up. Here's the date for a luncheon." "Fine, a luncheon. When are the substantive talks?" "There are no substantive talks. It's a luncheon. Take it or leave it." "Okay, we'll take it."

Q: How do you spell Chatchi? That sounds like a spice.

TATU: I think it's C H A T C H I.

Q: All right, we'll go with that.

TATU: He was an unguided missile, incidentally. Here he comes with about six staff people. This huge luncheon is set up on the eighth floor. Of course, I didn't attend; George Roberts attended. He comes back and he confirms, "Yes, there was no substantive discussion. They just told each other jokes." My God! How much did it cost for this guy to come here, all this way with that group just for lunch?

Q: Well, he got maybe what he needed for his political purposes.

TATU: Well, wait. He gets back to Thailand and he gets off the plane, and he says, "Well, we discussed, and we discussed, and we discussed" this whole menu of things of which there was no discussion whatsoever.

Q: But it probably served his political purposes, or at least he may have thought so.

TATU: That's right, it did. It was good for him.

Q: I think a lot of people wanted to be seen with Kissinger.

TATU: Oh, yes. Well, he had the flair of showmanship himself. So anyway, there I was on the Thai desk.

Q: For how long, two years or so?

TATU: I think it was about two or two and a half years. There were some options for posts that came and went, such as Kinshasa, wherever that is.

Q: Kinshasa, Congo?

TATU: Yes, yes, on some horrible lake that's filled with flesh-eating insects or something.

Q: What was it like dealing with the Thai embassy here? I assume you had to do that.

TATU: I had very good relations with the Thai. I don't know the extent to which I touched on this when we were discussing Bangkok, but again I had good language capability. That goes over with them. They're very warm people. No problems. I'm trying to think of any particular incidents.

Q: Did you have much in the way of interagency issues? Were you involved with other departments?

TATU: Yes, with defense, the AIT thing, and with CIA with various things that would come up. Here's a good CIA story that relates to Chiang Mai. You know, my predecessor had sent a "Thai" named "Putaporn" to the U.S. on a small businessman's grant." -The reason I put it in quotes was that actually he was a Kiren, one of the minority groups there, and the Kiren were very much involved in narcotics trafficking. So this guy comes here to the U.S. and carries with him a huge film can of the type in which you would have movies, and he has it labeled 'unexposed film'. However, the dogs could smell through it, and he ended up in the slammer outside of Chicago. Former senator Charles Percy got involved in this. You remember Charles Percy, formerly of Bell and Howell?

Q: Sure.

TATU: He was raising hell, and they were really preparing to throw the book at this guy when CIA turns up and pleads the "national security" question. So he's sprung and he goes back to Thailand, where he goes to the station chief in Chiang Mai and threatens, in effect blackmails, them and says, "Either you pay up or I'll expose your whole operation here," which was actually cross-border operations into China. Unbelievably, the chief paid up. I couldn't believe it. So where I get into it - they come to me again, the people who are at Langley, and say, "Our chief in Chiang Mai paid this guy, and the guy's back for more now. What do we do?" "What do you do? The policy is you never pay blackmail." That was just one of the little things that come up. The Agency actually leaned on me for a lot of advice, cultural advice and so forth. But what I'm leading into now is that my buddy Charlie Whitehouse, who really had me skewered, if you will, in Chiang Mail - I'm thinking of appropriate wordage here - is appointed ambassador to Thailand. So guess who is responsible for his briefing? So he comes around, and he doesn't say word one about our prior association or Chiang Mai or whatever, and I conducted his briefing as best and as professionally as I could. Time comes for us to go over to CIA. As I said, he was former CIA, and Bill Colby was then DCI, Director of Central Intelligence, and we get there and - surprise - we're invited to lunch in Colby's office. Colby then had about - actually this relates more to Vietnam - six guys there. For the life of me, I can't reconstruct who they were; I knew them all. They were his Southeast Asia, his Vietnam, experts. I don't know who did the seating, because I was on Colby's right. Inevitably the question of Vietnam came up, what's happening. This was in April of '74 - I got my years off here; we were kicked out in '74, right?

Q: Well, I think you said you were in Chiang Mai until August of '74, so maybe it was '75.

TATU: When we really got kicked out was '75. Anyway, the question is: How long is the South going to hold out?

Q: In Vietnam, yes.

TATU: Now, here we are. We're in effect colleagues. We're not Congressmen that you've got to give a snow job to. We're not journalists whom you've got to give a song and dance to. We're fellow professionals. And these guys are staying, and here's Director of Central Intelligence - December, yes, December. Two weeks later the choppers are on the embassy roof and they're being evacuated. I'll never get over that. It's just amazing. If they were really being sincere, then it meant that their intelligence was zilch.

Q: Well, that could be.

TATU: That could be, because Graham Martin, you know, was...

Q: The evacuation did occur very swiftly. I don't know how many people knew ahead of time. I certainly had no idea.

TATU: Well, the record is, the historical record if you want to read it, that Graham Martin, who was the ambassador then - and I had served with him in Thailand so I knew his idiosyncracies - would have none of it. He wouldn't let anybody record that they were going downhill and should evacuate...

Q: Very interesting.

TATU: Anyway, later as we were driving back, Charlie for some reason then related to Chiang Mai and said, "You know the reason I did that, sent that letter down to Bangkok, was the ambassadors at that time support one another." Anyway, it was an active desk; there was no question about that.

Q: I'm sure it was at that time.

TATU: But then I thought that Medan was in the offing, you see.

Q: This was Medan, Indonesia. So you had actually received an assignment?

TATU: No, it was in the offing, so I was sent to Indonesian language training.

Q: Oh, you were? When, '76 or so?

TATU: Yes. Let me look at my chart here.

Q: Here's the one that you sent to me. No, it's not on here.

TATU: No, it isn't.

Q: We'll just pause for a minute here.

[break]

Q: We're looking at the chart here. It looks like you were on the Thai desk until sometime in '76 and then went to the United Nations section of IO, the Bureau of International Organization Affairs. Is that correct?

TATU: Yes. UNP is United National Political.

Q: Okay, in '76, and you were Asian Affairs Officer, which meant what? You had to cover all of the Asian countries?

TATU: Yes, that was a big job.

Q: Yes, IOUNP was a very interesting office in those days. I always wanted to serve in that office but never did. It seemed like it was a very active, very interesting office.

TATU: We would get temporary assignments up to the UN, and exciting things would happen.

Q: Such as?

TATU: I think somehow that I told you this one before; stop me if I've told you. I was up there. You know, when the General Assembly comes in, each bureau will send an officer up there to backstop the people as you mentioned.

Q: This was when you were in IO?

TATU: Yes, when I was in IO, I was sent up for the purpose. I'd never been in the UN before.

Q: In '76 - I'm just trying to think - I was assigned by the European Bureau to go to the General Assembly in - I'm not exactly sure when it was, '76 or '77.

TATU: I've really got the timing off here. We can do it in the transcript, but let me say very briefly: I did go to Indonesian language training before I went to IO. Then Medan was busted by MED and then I had to look for a job and I got this job in IO. Then it was later in IO that Ed Masters came around and found me and said, "Come to Jakarta." So then I went back for some brush-up in Indonesian language training.

Q: We can figure that out later.

TATU: Anyway, the funny one that happened at the UN was I was in the General

Assembly, never having been there before, and they were giving their GA speeches, which is a big deal. I was being escorted around by a CIA guy who was very sensitive to Asia. He says, "Jesus, there's nobody in our seat, and there comes the Thai to give his General Assembly address. Quick!" He plunks me down in our, the U.S., seat.

Q: Oh, so there you were, the U.S. delegate?

TATU: The U.S. delegate, and this guy was next to me and he says, "Okay, when he finishes, you've got to rush up and congratulate him." So I did. It turned out this was a Thai ambassador that I knew, so he saw nothing amiss, a Thai that I'd known in Bangkok. He looked startled for a moment, but then he accepted my heartiest congratulations. He was about to say, "When did you become ambassador?" but didn't have the opportunity. But the other interesting thing that happened - and I have some sense that I told you this before - while I was there Sihanouk appeared...

Q: Yes.

TATU: I told you all this?

Q: You mentioned it, but maybe you have a few more comments about it.

TATU: Okay, well, the comment on it is that the most concentrated concern in the Department of State was not was Sihanouk was doing or not what he had to say but it was who was going to pay for his hospital.

Q: So Sihanouk defected? Is that what was going on?

TATU: We didn't use the term 'defect;' we fudged a lot of terms. He did in effect defect, yes. He had come to New York escorted by two Khmer Rouge who were in fact guards. They were staying, if memory serves, at the Waldorf Astoria. In an elevator Sihanouk passed a note to person who just happened to be FBI. In the note he said he would like to distance himself from these "escorts," and the scheme to go to the hospital was cooked up. When Sihanouk got to the Security Council, to denounce Hanoi for having invaded Cambodia, he made his disaffiliation from the Khmer Rouge clear. In fact, we didn't want him to defect. Policy was to persuade him to become a free agent so he could rally the independent Cambodians to oppose the Khmer Rouge.

Q: You did mention that in an earlier interview. I think you mentioned it in connection with when you were a Cambodian desk officer.

TATU: That must have been it, yes.

Q: Yes, but that's fine. So in IOUNP I assume you went to the General Assembly a number of times, a couple of years at least.

TATU: Actually yes, two years.

Q: And when the General Assembly was not in session, what did your position entail?

TATU: Well, you know, there were always these considerations coming up. At that time one of the big items was what about Japanese representation. The Japanese, you know, they're still trying to get a permanent seat on the Security Council, so we dealt with that. There was the Korean question, two Koreas, and all of that was very much in the abstract. I think - again, you say any of the international questions that involve Asia - ASEAN was, oh, and East Timor.

Q: Oh, yes, we've heard about that recently.

TATU: That gave slight heartache, because this would happen every single year. Indonesia would be condemned because of its position on East Timor, and they'd just take a walk, they wouldn't move. And this put me in conflict professionally with my own bureau, so to speak, that is, considering EA my home bureau. I remember once Ed Masters, as ambassador in Jakarta then, wanted to go to East Timor, and they didn't want him to go and I was the Roman messenger, so to speak. I had to go and tell him that they frowned upon any visible American official visiting "TimTim," as the Indonesians called it.

Q: Well, you can tell me later. Dick Holbrook at that time was the A Assistant Secretary. East Timor was a perennial issue from the time the Indonesians went in there...

TATU: Absolutely, yes.

Q: ...right up until today. Okay, that's one example of the relationship with a regional bureau. Were there other issues in which IO was not on the same wave length as the regional bureau, in this case the Asian Bureau, and with other countries. Was that an issue at all?

TATU: None really come to me, so there might not have been. But I remember this litany. The Assistant Secretary IO was Chuck Maynes - known as "Bill" - Bill Maynes and he and the Assistant Secretary for Africa...

Q: Was that Moose at that time? No, he was later.

TATU: No, Moose was upstairs as Under Secretary for Management. Anyway, they were supposed to have been buddies, you know. They resigned from the Department together with a couple of others, one of whom, I think, was Sandy Berger, and went off into the wilderness. They then came back with the Carter administration. But then they became enemies once they had gotten back into the Department. And IO was at loggerheads with other bureaus because of this personal relationship on the part of the Assistant Secretary.

Q: I see. Well, people do know. Did you get involved in relationships with other embassies when you were in IO?

TATU: Not so much. Other embassies didn't want to know what IO was. I found many embassies here are not very professional.

Q: Well, in most of them it seemed to go to the regional bureau, the desk, or higher if possible, and don't seem to have too much information about the functional bureaus like the Economic Bureau, the IO, and at that time there weren't as many. Now there are even more functional bureaus. How did you like that job at IO?

TATU: Oh, I liked it okay. It was interesting.

Q: Any comments about the U.S. delegation to the General Assembly? They're usually quite political.

TATU: Well, as I said before, we had Andy Young. He was tremendous, really, really good. He had a great outreach, and very informal also. You might remember this: There was a ladder that came down - they called it a ladder, a circular staircase - came down from his office right into the Political Section. So he would pop down there from time to time.

Q: Oh, how nice.

TATU: It was very informal. Dick Petri was there. Dick was just tremendous.

Q: Dick Petri was the Deputy?

TATU: I always found myself overwhelmed with work, you know. There was enough to...

Q: A lot of issues.

TATU: ...enough going on. I was over there with him once, over at the UN side, and we were doing some EA thing, and as we started coming down on the elevator, he said, "I've got to stop in here a minute. There's this thing going on in the Middle East. You handle that?" He says, "I handle everything." The poor guy, you know, he used to sleep on his couch. In this particular instance he introduced me and I got to shake hands with Kurt Waldheim before it was known...

Q: Before he was cast under a cloud.

TATU: Another thing I learned there - again, I hope I'm not repeating myself...

Q: No harm if you are.

TATU: It is said that people take you at your own assessment of yourself. That's conventional wisdom. I was called to go over to the Security Council, and from the time I

got there, TDY to the U.S. mission, I had no credentials. Nobody could take the time. "Oh, that's nonsense," you know, because, of course, they are known with people of the permanent staff. They don't have to worry about it. So I'm called over to the Security Council and I've got no credentials. I know there are guards you've got to go through, and I'm sort of shuffling along and here at the door stands an enormous African with - there's a term for this - the intentional scars on his face. As I walk up, he makes a bow and says, "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur." And I walk right in, unchallenged. From that point on, every time I had to go to the Security Council, the guards would acknowledge me, and I never had one piece of paper. Somebody in Security, though, ought to be aware of this.

Q: Well, that may be different now. Certainly it's different at the Department. I don't know about the UN. So what was that little statement that you had? People take you at your...

TATU: ...own assessment of yourself. So my assessment of me from then on was...

Q: Ambassadorial.

TATU: Absolutely, and in fact I sat in the seat. One time a security guy challenged me on the floor, and, another deputy Don McHenry, leaped up to identify me.

Q: So the UN is another world. I was just their very briefly as the EUR representative for one General Assembly, and it's a very active, busy world but very different. We're about to run out of time here. In fact, I think I'll just stop it.

TATU: Don McHenry. I'm sure he was a political appointee, but a pretty good guy. He was very confident. This was one of his special areas, the Pacific islands.

Q: The Micronesia?

TATU: Yes.

Q: So after IO where did you go?

TATU: After IO I had some brush-up on Indonesian language. I have to recite the IO shibboleth: "everything I know, I owe IO." That's not true, of course, but they like to say it.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your Indonesian language training. I guess you had some before IO and then...

TATU: Yes, I had about six months before IO.

Q: Then you had, I guess, been assigned to Medan but that didn't work out, and you went to IO. So then after IO you went back for a brush-up on Indonesian language training.

Who were the teachers there?

TATU: Did you...?

Q: Yes, I did.

TATU: Jijis was there, Antje, and Andung. Those three were the core.

Q: Let me just spell them. It was J I J I S, as I recall, and then A N T J E and A N D U N. They were the same three that I had.

TATU: They've been there forever.

Q: I had them in 1980, I guess. How was the training?

TATU: Quite good. They're very nice people. It's easy to establish rapport with them. They have good sense of humor, good imagination. I really couldn't ask for better language training.

Q: I had a very good experience with the language training with them too. They were very interested in us, and they loved their country. I didn't mention this in mine, so I might as well mention it here. I thought Jijis in particular was very good at explaining Indonesian culture to us. By the time I took it she had several reading selections for us that were very helpful to me later. Okay, after your Indonesian language training you went to Jakarta.

TATU: To Jakarta, and I was Deputy in the Political Section.

Q: The Political Counselor was...?

TATU: At that time it was Harriet Isom, later became Scott Butcher.

Q: And the ambassador at that time was...?

TATU: At that time was Ed Masters.

Q: Ed Masters, who had been the DCM but not at post when you were in Chiang Mai.

TATU: That's correct.

Q: He was DCM in Bangkok.

TATU: And he had specifically asked for me to come to Jakarta. So my responsibilities were variegated, as is always the case with political officers. One of my prime responsibilities was human rights, which gave me access to many, many individuals that were not on the normal circuit.

Q: This was 1979.

TATU: Correct.

Q: So this was Carter administration.

TATU: Yes.

Q: So human rights was the big thing for the State Department.

TATU: Pat Darien was...

Q: D A R I E N, I think. They had established a new bureau/office for human rights.

TATU: That's right, the Human Rights Bureau.

Q: Who did you deal with in Indonesia on human rights issues, human rights reporting?

TATU: In terms of the Indonesians?

Q: Yes.

TATU: There was one particular Chinese attorney, who has since passed on, who was one of the heads in the efforts for the World Council of Churches. His name is not coming to me. I knew him as John Nasution...

Q: N A S U T I O N.

TATU: There were organizations, human rights organizations, of various types that we supported, and also in the provinces.

Q: There was - I'm trying to think - a legal assistance...

TATU: Legal assistance, yes, that's right. It's articulated "el-bay-hah," I've forgotten how it spells out...

Q: A legal assistance, whatever, organization - I would have known that that was...

The Indonesian Legal Aid Society, which was very involved in human rights, and it was in various provinces. There certainly was one in northern Sumatra. They're considered to be basically opposition to the government.

TATU: Correct. So I dealt with those people and I also dealt with the military who were responsible for the prisoners. When I got there, there were about 85,000 political prisoners still incarcerated. My argument was always that, "Look, you're seeking

international accessibility, you're seeking a good reputation internationally, and the way you're going to get it is through compassion and letting these people out of the Buru Island, then very heavily - do you remember Buru? - very heavily populated, among them the famous novelist Pramoja Ananta Toeur. So my experience there was that I would go these various release ceremonies, I would be the embassy witness, and when Pramoj ("Pram") was released, there I was.

Q: How many were actually released during this period?

TATU: During this period, I don't have the exact figure but I think it came down from 80,000 to in terms of 40 or so. But they, the Indonesians, fuzzed over these figures all the time. You can't get a figure on anything properly. Anyway, there was movement. I did go to release f ceremonies. There's an interesting anecdote with the Pram thing. His agent focused on me and we had exchange and I got to shake hands with the great man and so forth. Then the guy came around to me later in Jakarta and asked if I would do the English translation of Pram's latest book. I thought that would be on politics and I declined, Some guy from the Australian embassy took it on. He got fired.

Q: Well, that was very hot potatoes.

TATU: It is, sure. But anyway I managed that contact.

Q: Very interesting.

TATU: You know, my Indonesian - I've got to brag a little bit - was the best language I ever had, so I could open a lot of doors with that. The amazing thing here is that Indonesian, Bahasa, lends itself to humor and punning like no other language, but the Indonesians themselves don't do it, apparently don't know it. But when somebody else does, they react overwhelmingly, I mean spontaneously. If you get somebody to fall off their chair, you know this is sincere reaction. My best experience with this: I had a thing with sort of a rhyming joke, but very original, and very obscure. After a few years, after retirement, I came back to visit the embassy. I was walking down a hall and one of the locals (whom I hadn't really known) pops his head of his office and says "saluk baluk taluk penu, penyu" (*the details of the bay full of turtles*). That was one of my premier lines, and boy, talk about validation. So the language is really, really good, a good opener. Indonesian humorists themselves had no sense of the language as a tool for humor. There was an Indonesian a comedian named Benyamin E. (sic.) who was their prime comedian, sort of the Indonesian Bob Hope. I went to an evening performance of his once. All he did was, with his female assistant joked with each other about what kind of underwear they wore. (President Clinton, take note.)

But mysterious language then came into play. I was acting political counselor in June of '82, when Israel invaded Lebanon. This is a long story but I'll skip over a l of. First of all, a group of ancient men from the PPP came I to the embassy. Do you remember the PPP?

Q: That was the Muslim party, PPP, whatever it stood for.

TATU: They came to the embassy to protest. John Monjo was then chargé. John said he didn't want to see them, that I should. And these fellows are, you know, shakers and movers in a very subtle way, although largely ignored by the government. They were all dressed in their best suits. I brought them into my office and listened to them. Of course, they had a petition for President Reagan. So I was very proper but I was still very receptive and assured them that Reagan would see the petition. So they went away, and their visit generated just a little media coverage. That was enough to provoke the hotheaded youth to come see me. We already had some of our friends and some unfriendly, but they were there mainly for their own publicity. They got it spread all over the press that they had come to the embassy.

We were actually having a function at the embassy, delayed Fourth of July. I was standing just the other side of the receiving line, and saw the very same "demonstrators of the PPP coming through. The ranking fellow, can't recall his name, saw me and broke out of the line. He came over and embraced me, replete with apology. He said he hoped he and his colleagues hadn't embarrassed me, or the embassy, but he was sure I would understand that for political purpose they had to do it.

Q: The Indonesians love to publicize things and take pictures.

TATU: So the next episode is the young "fire brands" who, of course, had read about the PPP in the press. About eight of them smartly dressed, much more articulate, very confident. They of course have a petition for President Reagan. I declined their suggestion that I have my photo taken with them. They went away happy, and they generated considerably more press...

The security officer is on a phone next day - Steve says - "You've got to get down here right away. We're being invaded." I rushed down. The way the compound is laid out, USIS is at the terminal of a long heavily gassed hallway that abuts on a parking lot. This entire hall was filled with screaming youth with all sorts of banners. They were unruly, but not yet out of control. It struck me that if that were to occur, there could be considerable danger because of the glass.

Q: How did they get in? Someone let them in?

TATU: Well, that comes later. I can't get in the hall possibly, because it's filled with screaming people. So I go around to the back door, and here the Americans won't let me in; they're saying "No." They think I'm a rubberneck or something, so I fight my way through the Americans and get up to the forward part of USIS. Here's Steve having a hard time with the interlopers, who are pushing to get in further.

Q: Steve was the security officer.

TATU: I didn't see any people who I knew, but I identified the leader. I struggled my way to him and shouted, in Bahasa, "Listen, I would like to talk with you but I can't hear

you with all these people screaming. Would you please get them to go outside.” After a little palaver he agrees, but he would like to have a delegation of five, himself and five. I said, “That’s fine.” Steve says, “No, no.” “But, Steve, I’ve just traded 200 for five. Won’t you please back me.” So we go into a little conference room, and it’s essentially the same routine. This leader, from a group I never heard of, but obviously down-scale, poorer kids had a petition, and I’m very courteous and assured him it would be delivered to President Reagan. So he says, “Would you come outside and talk to my people?” and I said, “Sure.” “No, you can’t, no We’ve got to get rid of them” says the security officer who had been standing by in the conference room, but who does not speak Bahasa “I’ll get rid of them.” I said, “You will note that they’re all gone from the USIS hallway and I have traded 200 for five.” I went out with the leader. In the parking lot in front of USIS every conceivable surface, the cars, were festooned with placards, banners. They’re burning Uncle Sam. They have sound equipment. They’re really organized. In the back of my mind I was pleased to see youth of such obviously humble origins becoming politicized, but of course I couldn’t say it. The leader handed me the mike. In my best voice – I intoned, “wassalam mu alika khum” (peace be with you, a frequent Islamic greeting, in Arabic).”

This was greeted with complete silence. Young activists who had been shouting, throwing things around, endangering the cars, burning the Uncle Sam effigy, froze in their tracks to hear a white foreigner not only speaking their own language but mouthing Islamic sentiment. After a few minutes expressions of dissent began to whiffle up from the crowd. I turned to the leader, handing the mike towards him and said, “I believe a courteous response is owing.”

He nodded, took the mike, and said, “Mu alikum salam (and with thy spirit).”

Whereupon after a few anodyne words I suggested that since we had all expressed our peaceful sentiments to one another, we should all go home. And they did.

Q: Because they would not expect that.

TATU I would say that. Steve went up to see the charge, who apparently had been totally unaware that anything was happening. This is a great line: John Monjo, the charge, said to Steve, angrily, “When I come in the embassy with my flag flying on an official car, I’m stopped by the guards, “How did these people get in here?” Steve replied, “Well, you see, sir, they came disguised as people.”

Q: They came disguised as people.

TATU: Yes. I know what he meant. They came as though they were going to the library.

Q: They looked like they were coming to do ordinary business.

TATU: We’ve got to concede. But I refused to report it, unless I could use that line, which I did. Someday I’ll get that from the Freedom of Information. And Benny

Murdani, if you remember...

Q: Oh, yes.

TATU: General Benny Murdani later called the embassy and apologized profusely for letting this group get through his security network. He said there was real potential for violence if it hadn't been handled the way was. All around the Middle East embassies and facilities were being attacked; in Pakistan two Marine guards were killed. I got good feed-back. *Tempo* the respected Indonesian news weekly wrote me up in two pages. I heard from other embassies...but nothing from our own. At that point in history I was about to be "selected out" for "time in grade." It might have done me some good to have that incident come to the attention of promotion panels.

Q: Say a few words about Benny Murdani.

TATU: General Leonardas Benny Murdani was the general who was then responsible for internal security in the city of Jakarta. He later became Minister of Defense. Of course now he is very far on the outs but at that time he was a very, very senior, very influential general. He called to say that the march on the embassy had been handled just right. That there was potential for violence, and that if we had noticed there on the periphery of this mob were men with bulges in their coats. Those were his men who were armed and ready.

Q: In case there had been a real problem.

TATU: As I say, the good old embassy didn't write me up, but *Tempo* magazine did. Do you remember *Tempo*?

Q: Yes, sure, sort of an equivalent of Time or Newsweek.

TATU: They referred to me as "Mr. Cool."

Q: Mr. Cool? That's quite a compliment from Indonesians, I would say.

TATU: Yes, I've always felt very proud of that, but at the same time...

Q: At the same time didn't really get the support that you would have hoped for.

TATU: Well, I think, you know, somebody in a supervisory position could look for legitimate opportunities to give commendation...

Q: Give support to people.

TATU: ...not only support but commendation. Let me wrap that matter of the demos up with a more human touch. A few days after the PPP visit, we were having a delayed reception for the 4th of July. I was standing aside from the receiving line. And here

coming through was one of the old PPP leaders (we had not been petty enough to disinvite him, and those old fellows were always so pleased to be recognized.) When he saw me he broke off from the line, came over and heartily embraced me. He was replete with apology. He and his colleagues had to do it, political necessity required that they launch some sort of protest, and since Israel didn't have an embassy in Jakarta, the Americans were the next most logical. I assured him there were no hard feelings.

Wrapping Murdani up, he professed to be a Catholic, you know. And perhaps because of that he was in charge in East Timor after his Jakarta assignment. He made some wonderful investments. There is nothing wrong, of course, for an Indonesian general to become rich. But the Catholics weren't too pleased with him. Consequently, he got no help from the church when things turned sour for him.

Q: Well, some people are more interested in playing safe. There is that restraint of some officers of just taking the smoothest way. Anyway, it was an interesting period in Indonesia. Every period in Indonesia is interesting. Of course, this was prime time for Suharto and his government at that time. It all looked very solid. There was no significant organized opposition.

TATU: That's right, there wasn't any significant organization, but there was opposition. There were human rights violations, continuing human rights violations, and a lot of external critics, if you will, so they kept us busy. I also had again the narcotics function, liaison with DEA, and wouldn't you know that the guy from Chiang Mai was the special agent in charge.

Q: What was that?

TATU: Bud Shoaf.

Q: The one you had mentioned before?

TATU: Yes. But I related with the Indonesians who were responsible.

Q: Was there a big narcotics problem?

TATU: There wasn't a big problem, but I think that the knee jerk in Washington was we've got to give them assistance, you know, so I spent a lot of time with the police and with the psychiatrists. I found that they have regional psychiatrists everywhere and they're a great source of information. The first thing I'd do when I'd hit some outlandish place was go see the regional psychiatrist.

Q: Their purpose is to tend to Americans...

TATU: I'm talking about Indonesian psychiatrists. I had the principal liaison with the police and the Ministry of Health regarding narcotics abuse; I can't recall what DEA did. I administered a small assistance program.

Q: Oh, Indonesian psychiatrists?

TATU: Yes, they were part of it. They presented to me a nice plaque, in Bahasa, when I left on transfer.

Q: I never met any Indonesian psychiatrists, that I'm aware of anyway.

TATU: Well, you're out of luck then, because they had a lot of interesting guys. There were government psychiatrists in each province, many of whom were very knowledgeable concerning local conditions. My responsibility for narcotics suppression was two sided: one, with the police, to whom I would deliver these really costly cameras that would then get lost; and then the psychiatrists who were responsible for treatment. I would bring them literature and so forth. I got a great line out of a psychiatrist in Menado. There is quite a population of Filipinos there, you know, mostly illegal immigrants. When I asked what his principal problems were this young psychiatrist shot back immediately: The Christians. Particularly on weekends they all get drunk and this causes fights, sometimes killings, and vandalism. We don't have such problems with the Indonesian residents because, of course, Muslims don't drink.

Q: What was your experience in dealing with the Indonesian police? What was your impression of them in Jakarta?

TATU: Well, I don't know, I would say "mixed bag." On a personal side they're very convivial, great entertainers. If you go to any kind of a dinner, you've got to sing. Did you have that experience?

Q: Actually, no.

TATU: Yes, they like to sing. It was a precursor to karaoke. I'm not much of a singer, but I used to do "Deep in the Heart of Texas" all the time, because it's audience participation.

Q: So they wanted you to get up and lead the singing?

TATU: Yes.

Q: Oh, I never was called upon to do that fortunately, no, not in Medan, not ever. But you were involved with the national police. The police in Medan were very, very local and really not of the caliber of the military, very, very sloppy, to say the least.

TATU: My national police contacts were sophisticated.

Q: Some of them were very good, yes. I had some dealings with them when we had a missing-person case. That's interesting. But there wasn't a lot of narcotics trafficking?

TATU: No, I never was aware of it, which is very interesting because - I did a lot of

research on this - before World War II Indonesia was one of the prime sources of cocaine.

Q: Really?

TATU: Yes, this was legal cocaine for medicinal usages. But after the war the industry never picked up again. Strange

Q: Where was it produced?

TATU: I don't quite remember where it was. But I got around as much as I possibly could.

Q: Did you do much traveling outside of Jakarta?

TATU: Yes, as much as I could, but I refused to pay for it myself and there was rather limited travel funds. I've got to revise on that narcotics question. There was a lot of narcotics trafficking going on down in Bali.

Q: Australia?

TATU: That's right. Bali is sort of the coming-of-age location for young Australians. And then there was a lot of exploitation among people down there. So I did once make a trip down there. I was hosted by the police, and they took me all around.

Q: Yes, Bali was quite a popular destination for young Australian hippie types.

TATU: Still is.

Q: I suppose so.

TATU: Kuta Beach, if you remember.

Q: Do you have any comments about dealing with Indonesians? Did you find them pretty forthcoming?

TATU: It depended, I think, on personal relationships. I hate to cite stereotypes, but it's very difficult dealing with the Foreign Ministry because they just don't put in any time there. You'd call up and say you've got this, this and this. "Oh, he's off studying Pancha Sila."

Q: Oh, I see. Well, I had no experience really dealing with the Foreign Ministry.

TATU: So you got to know the guy, and it would take a while to get to him. You know, you were under instructions to make this point, that you should go and make these recommendations, and that's going to take a lot of time.

Q: So you have to find him on the golf course somewhere?

TATU: Yes, or whatever. I remember one time I didn't mean to explode but I said, "How much of it [Pancha Sila] can you study?" Wonderful structured response: "You people are always studying the Bible. Now, how much of the Bible can you study? It's the same thing." It depended upon what their function was. I think the people in the government were difficult; people on the private side, those who stand to make a profit from their time, for example, are much more dedicated to what they were doing.

Q: Did you have much contact with Indonesian journalists?

TATU: Yes, my wife Marian actually did a lot of writing while we were there and she had a lot published in the local press, so it was through her I probably got to know more journalists than I normally would have.

Q: What kind of writing did you wife do?

TATU: Feature stuff. It was interesting the way this came about. They had a fair. Remember, the fairgrounds were right across the street from the embassy, and we went to this fair, and she was so taken with some of the exhibits that she wrote up a foreigner's impression of the Jakarta fair, and whatever the leading paper was in the English language, whatever it was picked it right up and asked her for more. So she just kept writing. Then the hotels asked her to do things for them. Actually, we got to the point where she was probably making more money than I was.

Q: Oh, that's great. So she was able to get a paying job in a sense.

TATU: Actually, we had this thought - and this applies to what do you think of Indonesia. She was doing work with a woman who was the daughter of a previous Minister of Commerce, so there was no question that the family was very well-fixed. The daughter, whose name was Maria actually had a firm. She had a lot of employees so she asked - my wife - she asked Marian if she would like to come in with her as partners, and we sort of considered it. But there was this hold-back. From time to time the employees would come to my Marian and say, "Would you please tell Maria that she forgot our payday, and everybody needs to have their pay." Well, okay, there was this pattern of irresponsibility, because the people there who are rich are so filthy rich that they couldn't understand other people who were concerned about money.

Q: They don't think of it.

TATU: What's the point, you see. It's just not important to them, so how could it be important to anybody else. I think that is characteristic of the mined classes there.

Q: I'm just curious. Did you wife have to get any permission from the embassy to have a paying job?

TATU: No.

Q: That wasn't a problem?

TATU: Well, it never came up.

Q: Well, it shouldn't be, but, you know, some wives have had problems, I guess depending on what they were planning to do. Interesting. But she was able to do a lot of writing? That's great.

TATU: And the newspapers for the hotels and for public relations.

Q: Did you live on the economy, so to speak?

TATU: So to speak. We had a house that was leased by the embassy, but we were still on the economy. We were contemptuous of what we called the "wagon train," the American Employees' Club, if you remember that. Do you?

Q: Not really. I didn't know Jakarta that well.

TATU: Well, there was this group of houses that were literally built in a circle, and the idea was if they were attacked they could go into the middle of the circle, where there was a swimming pool and a restaurant and a movie.

Q: Circle the wagons.

TATU: Exactly. They could go to work in an air-conditioned embassy car, work in an air-conditioned office, come home in the same car to an air-conditioned house, and never have to interface with any Indonesians, except for embassy locals.

Q: I see. So you didn't live there.

TATU: So we had our detached house, detached from any other Americans.

Q: Did that facilitate contacts?

TATU: Yes, it really did.

Q: And did your wife learn Indonesian also?

TATU: Not enough. I chuckle: we had this experience where - knowing the language we would have got a tremendous contact. My wife called me up and she said: "There's a woman sitting in our garage [which was sort of a recreation area for many of the neighborhood locals] and she's very well dressed. She looks very aristocratic. I can't figure out why she's here." I said, "Okay. Put one of the servants on." It turned out she

was our next door neighbor and she was just coming to greet my wife. I got my wife back on the phone and said, "For God's sake, invite her in and give her tea and find out who she is." She was the mother of the Sultan of Yogya - I mean, she was the mother of the son, who happened to be our next door neighbor. Holy cow!

Q: How nice of her to come to call.

TATU: Anyway, it never really worked out, because the young guy, sultan to be - and he is now - was very much involved in business and he was away all the time, and the ladies didn't have anything to really relate to, and then the language barrier. You wouldn't think that the sultan's son would be living in relatively modest circumstances.

Q: Sounds like a good time.

TATU: Yes, it really was. I think that was our favorite post. My kids learned the language very well. My older daughter used to travel around a lot, and to the horror of her friends, she would always go on a third-class train because, she said, you get more conversation. People would always ask her, "Where are you going? What are you doing here?" and so forth. But I used to wander the streets. I could get away with being *Depok*.

Q: And at that time Indonesian seemed very prosperous, I would say.

TATU: Well, coming along, anyway, from the...

Q: Relative to what they had been after the fall of Sukarno, yes. Do you have anything else you'd like to add about your time in Jakarta?

TATU: I can't think of anything offhand other than to say it was our favorite country because it seemed to us that the people had this kind of *joie de vivre* despite all their depredations. God almighty, when they run amuck, they really run amuck.

Q: They do, as we saw from afar.

TATU: Where you were there were mostly Batak?

Q: Well, I was in Medan, which is the part of the country where the Batak clans are, but Medan itself is very, very cosmopolitan, cosmopolitan in the Indonesian sense. There were a lot of Javanese, a lot of people from central Sumatra, west Sumatra, so it was really a microcosm of almost all of Indonesia, which is what made it so very interesting. But, yes, the country around Medan was Batak hill country, about as far removed from the culture of Java as you could possibly get, except perhaps for West Irian or something like that, but very different and very interesting. I liked Indonesia, too. I think it was one of my favorite countries because of the variety of ethnic groups - very, very different but all having a common language as a second language, which made it quite easy to travel around and get to know people. In the Medan area there were many, many who had no English at all. I loved it. Okay, so from there, from Jakarta, it looks like you had another

direct transfer, or did you have home leave?

TATU: Direct.

Q: Direct transfer to the embassy in Kuala Lumpur, and it says here as Deputy Chief of the Political Section, concurrently counsel to Brunei. That sounds very intriguing

TATU: Well, I never got a trip to Brunei. much.

Q: The embassy in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, I would think, must have been quite large.

TATU: Yes, at the time I got there, though, physically it was a disaster.

Q: What was the problem?

TATU: It was located in an old office building on the top floor with a nonfunctional elevator, or a sometimes functional elevator, just totally crummy. But a new embassy was built, and the time I left it was opened up.

Q: How large was our mission in KL?

TATU: It was not as large, by any means, as Jakarta, but I can't really cite it in terms of figures.

Q: I assume it was the traditional political, economic, admin counselor sections plus what other agencies were there?

TATU: There were a lot of refugees there, because refugee boat people were coming over.

Q: From Vietnam?

TATU: Yes.

Q: Was there a special office there for refugees?

TATU: Yes, detached from the embassy.

Q: Who actually ran that? Was that State Department or INS or a combination?

TATU: I believe it was State.

Q: There was an Office of Refugee Affairs in State at that time.

TATU: That's right.

Q: You were Deputy Chief of the Political Section. The political counselor was who?

TATU: Murray Zinoman. Ronald Palmer. He lives very close here, too. I just realized we're in a cluster.

Q: This is the Southeast Asia enclave in Washington. And the DCM was...?

TATU: Lyle Brecken. Lyle is not too far either.

Q: Lyle Brecken was political/military officer in EUR when I was there. So what was your primary responsibility.

TATU: It was fairly unstructured, the political scene, you know. When I say all this, I wonder what Murray was doing, but to look at the Chinese community particularly, what were the Chinese up to, also the narcotics thing there, human rights, the whole spectrum. I was also consul to Brunei.

Q: I wanted to ask you this. Did you use your Chinese? I know you had Chinese language training.

TATU: Not adequately. Chinese, like the other languages, is a door opener. They are flabbergasted. I'll say this again, modesty aside. I have very good accent and very good presentation, because our tutors were all Beijing language-speakers. I started to say were all from Peking. So we had that at least attempt to get us to emulate that. When you get out in Southeast Asia, the local Chinese pronunciations are horrible. They can understand you and you acquire great "face" for being so clear, and having the Beijing accent.

Q: You had the high quality...

TATU: So I used it for those purposes, but I couldn't get up and give a speech. But when I graduated from language school, I could.

Q: I would assume that many of the Chinese spoke English, didn't they, particularly in Malaysia? They certainly did in Indonesia.

TATU: But every now and then you'd come into a situation where Chinese was not only handy but necessary.

Q: Were they mainly involved in business?

TATU: Yes, in nefarious business, they were into narcotics, anywhere where you can make a buck. Back on this language thing, though, another anecdote: We had this tremendous house. It was just breathtaking. It had been the CIA station chief's house traditionally, so, of course, there I am again - everybody thinks I'm the station chief. It's on a great promontory, and it had a hill behind it and a gardener who had worked there forever. He was a Tamil, a real little guy with huge arms; we used to call him Popeye. He

would go up there on the hill with a power mower and lower it down on a rope to mow the hill, and then pull it back up. So the mower breaks down and we've promised to have somebody come to take it away and repair it. The purpose of this anecdote is to illustrate language difficulties. At about the same time, my wife is doing an article on Salangor Pewter, and the head of Salangor Pewter says, "I will send my car for you." So as Marian approached the car, a new Mercedes with a liveried chauffeur, she sees the gardener is opening up the trunk attempting to put the lawnmower in it. He thinks the Mercedes has come for the lawnmower. The driver thinks some funny deal that has been worked. The two of them couldn't communicate with one another at all. You run into that in Malaysia much more so than in Indonesia, because Prime Minister Mahathir had some confused policies. It is said that when he came into office Malaysia had the best English-speaking population in Southeast Asia, but he discouraged the use and the study of English. Now he's back on track, having perceived that English is the language of Business.

Q: Well, it sounds like the way English went down in the Philippines for reasons of nationalism, which one can understand to a certain point, but it's too bad they can't elevate their national language while maintaining English as their second international language. So you did have some dealings with the Chinese community. How about Malaysian politicians?

TATU: Yes, the various known politicians. I had a particular in with I guess you'd call him the staff aide to Mahathir and saw him very frequently. I got a lot of information and good leads from him. On the subject of contacts, I might mention that a retired Malaysian diplomat I had known in Manila, Ivor Kraal, was very helpful. Through him we got to know many middle-class Malaysians.

My prime contact, however was the late Tunku (Prince) Abdul Rahman, who you might call the equivalent of George Washington. Tunku (as is always the reference when speaking of him) was an avid reader. He was having some trouble with his eyesight, and he had read of laser treatment in the U.S. for cataracts. One of his aides contracted the embassy and asked if someone could brief the Tunku's doctor on this procedure. As so often happens when something comes up that doesn't fit in any category, it is referred to the political section. I got some material from the Department, and read up on the laser procedure, and was instructed to visit the Tunku's doctor, a Dr. Singh, and deliver to him what I had developed. To my surprise, the Tunku himself was there. Subsequently the Tunku proceeded to Seattle Washington for the operation, which was a success. But the Tunku seemed to have attributed it to me. Every time we were in the same location at the same time, such as Penang, or Kuching, he would send for me and instruct his staff to see to my needs.

Malaysia didn't look at first like a good assignment but I went there anyway. It was one of those funny assignments, you know, that look bad to promotion panels. My predecessor left prematurely, so I went over to replace him, and it was not a full assignment. because the intended incumbent was already in language training.

In the Bureau they were looking for something significant for me to do. So I go back to

Brunei - now I finally get to Brunei.

Q: Well, let's see. Oh, you went back to Brunei...

TATU: I went there for their independence...

Q: This was in '84?

TATU: Yes.

Q: As sort of the U.S. representative?

TATU: Not really, no - to prepare the way. The representative was Deputy Secretary Kenneth Dam. They also "entitled five Americans" to be "special ambassadors" for the events. It was in fact independence. So that was interesting.

Q: What was it like, the independence of Brunei? Was it a big celebration with lots of foreign dignitaries?

TATU: Oh, yes, absolutely. They had a tremendous turnout of people and representatives. They had built a stadium there that was large enough to take the entire population of the country. Princess Diana and Prince Charles came.

Q: Charles?

TATU: Yes, Charles. They had a state dinner for 4,000. They were just finishing up construction of the royal palace. It was supposed to be the largest personal residence in the world.

Q: Well, they have a lot of money there, right?

TATU: Oh, yes. At one time the Sultan was supposed to be the richest man in the world. He may still be, the sultan.

Q: But that was just a temporary...?

TATU: That was just a TDY, but there were still a lot of experiences there. Then, when I got back to Washington, it just happened that the political counselor in Canberra unexpectedly resigned, so I went down there to take over for a period of about three months, I guess.

Q: Who had been political counselor in Canberra?

TATU: Dick Baker. Do you know him? He had an opportunity with the East-West Center/

Q: I went there on TDY but later. No, I don't remember who it was. So, three months in Canberra - what was that like? It's a pleasant place.

TATU: Oh, very definitely, and it was very good because I had these close associations with Australians. When I was in Bangkok, they were taking care of our affairs in Cambodia. So I knew a lot of the guys. For example, I needed an Australian driver's license - one call and they sent one over - and diplomatic ID, again one call, and so forth.

Q: How did you find working with Australians, not only in Canberra but also in...?

TATU: I think they're super.

Q: Well, they certainly know a lot about Southeast Asia. I remember them in the Philippines. As I recall, I knew quite a few Australians there.

TATU: It's funny: in the Philippines I didn't know any Australians.

Q: We used to have lunch with Australians.

TATU: Yes, I still have correspondence going on with Australians.

Q: I always found them to be very well informed.

TATU: I just wrote up the history of my Naval squadron because we had a reunion. We used to fly out of an Australian base in Japan, and - I use this line - I said one of the more favorable things about utilizing an Australian base is the presence of Australians, because they are always helpful, forever supportive. And they were. We never had any trouble with them - the odd fight every once in a while, but that's youthful exuberance. So, anyway, then I came back to the Australian desk.

Q: Back into the Department as Australian desk officer?

TATU: Yes, and I became very closely associated with the new American ambassador to Australia, one John Lane. He was the publisher of *Sunset* magazine. I used to say he's a captain of industry, to which cynics would say he's the son of the captain. He was a very good guy, though, and exceedingly generous. He kept bringing me down there. I remember one meeting we had with all the consuls there and the chiefs, the section chiefs of the embassy. He said, "Look, I understand that there's a dearth of representation money in the budget here and it's affecting your morale, so I want to do this. Don't let word of this pass out of this room. I'm giving each of you \$10,000 for representation. This was out of his own pocket, you understand.

Q: Really?

TATU: Oh, yes. He was that wealthy, you know.

Q: Well, there have been wealthy ambassadors before, but this is the first one I ever heard of who actually gave... Not publicized, I'm sure. Interesting.

TATU: When we were cranking up representation for the Australian bicentennial, he put 100,000 bucks into the pot to "prime the pimp," since congress was being very stingy. By that time I retired, but I hung on for the Australian-American Bicentennial Commission, and I was doing a lot of work for them - as a volunteer, but still it got me down there.

Q: So you went to Australia a number of times then?

TATU: Yes.

Q: It's quite a trip.

TATU: It is.

Q: Well, what kind of issues were going on between the United States and Australia at that time?

TATU: Well, there was this nuclear thing - because of *On The Beach*, the famous novel. We were constantly battling with the opposition about that.

Q: Our embassy there had military representation?

TATU: We had the normal attaché. I take that back...

Q: That's right, you were on the desk.

TATU: I take that back. For example, you know, we have these listening stations - the term is not coming to me - up there by Ayer's Rock. We had these international listening stations, and the opposition didn't like that. In Melbourne we had a Naval facility manufacturing aircraft. We never had an overwhelming or even a noticeable presence in Australia, except for WWII.

Q: So the issues at the desk in Washington you had to deal with were what? There must have been some trade issues and things of that sort.

TATU: There were those trade issues. Bob Hawk was the prime minister during most of my time. Again, I feel that I'm repeating myself. He and President Reagan had a great personal relationship. This was totally incongruous because Bob Hawk came from a labor background. But, anyway, they did, and Hawke would come to Washington informally, just pop in, and he would always be received.

Q: So it must have been a good personal relationship rather than on the issues, so to speak.

TATU: So when the bicentennial came along, they were going to have a race of tall ships from Hobart, Tasmania, up to Sydney. Bob said - I don't know where I got this, but it was a good memcon - he said to Ron, "I'd like to have the Eagle participate in the race." Ron says, "What's the Eagle?" And George Bush was there and he said, "It's our tall ship." Ron says, "What are we doing with a tall ship? That must be very costly. What do we need that for?" George says, "The Coast Guard needs it to train their cadets in sailing." Anyway, we got it from the Germans for war reparations. It used to be called the "Horste Vessel," and it was Hitler's favorite ship. So Ron says, "Okay, sure, it will participate." So then I have to tell the Coast Guard, and the commander of the Coast Guard is giving all this argument saying, "We don't have the funds. It would ruin the sails. It would be hard on the ship." I said, "There is no argument. This is an order from the President of the United States." So the admiral says, "I'm taking early retirement."

Q: You're kidding! "I'm taking early retirement. I'm not going to deal with this." So what was the outcome of that?

TATU: The outcome was that the Eagle sailed. I was supposed to go with them.

Q: That would have been fun.

TATU: Well, I'm not sure. I was going to lecture the cadets, you know, all the way along. I got my lesson plans all done and so forth - this was over the period of a year - and I'm all ready to go, and the skipper, a guy named Ernie Cummings, didn't even have the grace to tell me himself; he had a junior officer advise me that he had to cut me because he had determined that in each of these ports he would take on VIPs, you see, and sail on to the next port and build up some constituency that way. Then the ambassador invited me to come down for the festivities of the bicentennial. When I got down there - he had heard this story - he said, "You're sailing on the Eagle. We're going across the Tasman Sea."

Q: Wonderful. So you did?

TATU: Yes, and that's when I realized, God, two months of this would have been a little too much.

Q: Probably so.

TATU: But, I'll tell you, the glorious experience was... The Eagle didn't do well in the race; in fact, they were sailing backward because they were not fitted out for the winds as they are in Tasmania. The Australian press got a huge bang out of that. They kept reporting on its backward progress and that they might arrive in October for the July festivities.

Q: That's probably why the admiral took early retirement.

TATU: Well, maybe. But then they had to come up to Sydney under power. So then they

were going to have a parade in Sydney harbor of the tall ships, so we got in line. I was aboard then. We're coming under the "Coathanger" Bridge, and on our port side there was this little island that had been specially built to prevent against American invasion. This actually happened in 1840 - that's another story. Anyway, as we were passing that, and then there's the opera house, with Prince Charles and Di allegedly on the porch, and they sent up 10,000 red, white and blue balloons from the little island. Our band strike up "Stars and Strips Forever," and there are 10,000 craft in the harbor. Boy, talk about emotional! That was just splendid.

Q: It sounds like quite a spectacle.

TATU: It was. The kid at the wheel looked over and says, "Skipper, those women down there are topless." Cummings says, "Keep your eyes on the wheel."

Q: It sounds like the grand finale for your Foreign Service time.

TATU: Pretty much, yes.

Q: That's a good way to end it.

TATU: At that time, see, I was a consultant for this Bicentennial Commission. Among other things, I was running around trying to get money for our gift to Australia. Did I tell you about that?

Q: No.

TATU: What Bob Hawke asked for: Bob asked Ron for us to finance a wing to the Australian National Maritime Museum that would be celebratory of U.S.-Australian maritime relations. He put a tag on that of 5,000,000 bucks. So I was supposed to dig up the 5,000,000 bucks. This came before I retired. So I'm scrounging around, and this new ambassador, as rich as he was, wasn't about to pick that up. So we did all kinds of things. There was a Senator named Paul Laxalt - does that ring a bell? He was a Basque from Nevada. We went to see him because he had a committee responsibility, and he was telling us in effect to go to hell. My ambassador got up, and they came at each other. The kid who was his staff aide tensed, and I tensed. We were looking at each other, tensely ready. Well, we didn't do any good on the Hill. So finally it came down to we had to take it out of the State Department budget.

Q: 5,000,000 dollars?

TATU: 5,000,000 bucks. So the guy who was the comptroller calls me up and, "Blah, blah, blah." I said, "Look, I'm under instructions." He said, "You're going to retire soon, aren't you?" I said, "Yes." He said, "How would you like to lose your pension?" I said, "You can't do that." He said, "Haven't you ever heard of somebody bumping into a computer with their elbow. It can take years to correct the errors that are generated." Anyway, we got the 5,000,000 bucks, and I did get to go down and visit this museum.

I've got to say somebody did very well with that 5,000,000 bucks. It's a great museum. I had worked up what they call in museum talk a "scenario," and I got the cooperation of Smithsonian, who loaned me a maritime historian, and we put together a really good package that was feasible under the terms of our dough. The last time I saw it, which was maybe in '94 or something, it didn't measure up too well.

Q: So in 1986 you retired after a very long career. You started out in '56 - 30 years.

TATU: 32, and then they count my military service, on there, so it says 37 on my building pass.

Q: Any parting comments that you want to make? As I said, you can go back and add and subtract and revise.

TATU: I can't think of anything great, anything profound, but I think, you know, on balance, despite the slings and arrows and all that jazz, that I had a very interesting and very rewarding career. It was rewarding to me and to the family. My children are oriented that way. If I haven't mentioned this, my...

Q: No, you haven't. How many children do you have?

TATU: Three children: girl, girl, boy. My eldest daughter would like to be a writer but she has two kids. Recently she and her husband have broken up, so there's an uncertain future.

Q: But all of your children essentially grew up in Southeast Asia?

TATU: Yes. This daughter, the eldest daughter, was born here in Washington and always resented the fact that she had such an uninteresting birthplace. The middle daughter was born in Hong Kong, and she is our scholar. She recently got her MA. She got her BA from Brown and then she began teaching school. She taught school for 14 years at National Cathedral School and decided that she wanted to go back, so she got an MA from the University of Hawaii. She is now working on a doctorate, She got a grant to study in Bali, and she's been there for six month; she has another six months to go. She's translating Sanskrit text that has been relatively untouched. Then our son is an attorney with the government of Texas. He would rather, you know...

Q: So it was a good life for the family as well as very good for you professionally. I just have one last question, I guess, and that is when you started out, you said that you had gone to college with an interest in journalism and there was no major in journalism and so on, but wouldn't you say that some aspects of your career were very similar to that of a journalist?

TATU: Oh, yes, I think so, and actually I've done a lot of freelance writing.

Q: But also in the Foreign Service as well as writing and making contacts...?

TATU: Oh, most definitely, yes. I think we are writers.

Q: With basically sort of journalist type work overseas. I felt that in my case it was very often similar to being a journalist except that we weren't publishing a newspaper, we were reporting to the government. Well, good. I think this was very interesting, and we'll end it there.

End of interview