Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project
Information Series

LOUISE TAYLOR

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: January 19, 2001

TABLE OF CONTENTS

USAID
Government
Foreign Aid
Environment
Economy
Soviets
Marxists
US Policy
Daoud
Great Sauer Revolution ("military coup")
Soviet involvement in coup
Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan
Ambassador Spike Dubs assassinated
Embassy temporarily overrun
Cultural Center functions
Chinese
Soviet invasion
Afghan refugees
Embassy personnel reduction
Hafizullah Amin
Departure from Afghanistan

USIA; Afghan, Pakistan Desk Officer — 1980
Iran Hostage Task Force
Foreign Service Nationals (FSN) problems
US Cultural Center, Rawalpindi sacked

State Department; Executive Assistant, Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs — 1980-1984
USIA-State Department relations
USIA objectives in Middle East
Islamic textbooks
Islamic philosophy
Charlie Wick
International Visitors Program
Journalist "Black List"
US Propaganda movies
US foreign lecturers

Voice of America (VOA); Chief, Dari/Farsi/Pashto Services — 1983
Comparison with BBC
VOA "Independence" issue

Tel Aviv, Israel; Cultural Affairs Officer — 1984-1988
Political/Living environments

Israeli Settlement expansion
Arab-Israeli programs
American Jewish influence
Israel-Egypt relations
Israeli police
Hebron
Security
Relations with Jerusalem Consulate General
US speakers
Kibbutzim

USIA; South Asia Desk Officer 1988-1990
Restructuring NEA
Pakistan-India relations
India outreach policy
Indian students in US
Benazir Bhutto
"Target Audiences"
Bangladesh
Sri Lanka
Kashmir conflict

The National War College 1990-1991
Course content
General comments

State Department, FSI; Arabic language study 1991-1992

Rabat, Morocco; Cultural Affairs Officer 1992-1995
US Ambassadors
Visitor Programs
Morocco and Israel
Environment
French influence
Students in US
American language centers
Internet Conference
Tourism

Executive Secretary of USIA 1995-1996
Vice President Gore's trip to South Africa

USIA; Policy Officer, Eastern Europe and Newly Independent States 1996-1998
Southeast European Economic Development Act
Freedom Support Act

Non Government Organizations (NGO's)
Balkans
Public Diplomacy
George Soros
Training programs
Civic Education and Civil Society
Baltics
Russia
Strobe Talbot
Coordination with State Department
Fundamentalist Islam
Stans (Newly Independent Central Asian States)

Senior Seminar 1998-1999
Comments on Course

State Department; European Affairs; Public Diplomacy/Public Affairs 1999
Press guidance on the Balkans

State Department; Office of South Asia Public Diplomacy 1999-2000

State Department; Promotion Panel 1999-2000

Retirement 2000
Author, USIA Public Diplomacy Manual
Comments on amalgamation of State and USIA

INTERVIEW

(Note: This interview was not edited by Mrs. Taylor)

Q: Today is January 19, 2001. This is an interview with Louise Taylor. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Let's start at the beginning. Could you tell me when and where you were born and something about your family?

TAYLOR: Yes. I was born in Chicago, Illinois, December 29, 1946, just after the war. My father had returned from the U.S. Army Air Forces, where he had spent at least two and a half years in Western Europe. That had stimulated his interest in travel, Europe, art, and music. He and my mother, who had married in the early '40s and had gone to the University of Chicago as students together, decided to settle back in the neighborhood of the university in Hyde Park. So, I grew up in a very lively, urban environment at the university. My father was working for a newspaper at the time, the Sun Times of

Chicago. He was also working for AP as a stringer. I spent most of my early years in Chicago, although my father's family also lived in a small town in Illinois called Freeport, in the northwest corner of the state. About the time I was in the later years of grade school, my family moved to Freeport because my father took over the old family business. I graduated from Freeport High.

Q: What was your father's name?

TAYLOR: My father's name was William Pfender. My mother was Better Pfender.

Q: Tell me again about your father's family background.

TAYLOR: My father's family, his grandparents had come to the Midwest like many German/Northern European immigrants in the late 1860s and had made their way across the United States and settled in that very Germanic farming area of northern Illinois, southern Wisconsin. There, they set up a hay, grain, and feed business which turned out to be quite profitable for them because the little town of Freeport was right on the Illinois Central Line. The train system on the way to the stockyards in Chicago came right through Freeport. Thus the rationale for setting up this kind of business. That business lasted well into the 20th century. Like most families in those days, it was a large family. There were five or six siblings of my father's grandparent's generation. So, there were a lot of people to work in this business. My father grew up as a young man in a family of older people. His mother had died when he was three in the great tuberculosis epidemic of the early '20s. He had a mentor in the person of an aunt who lived in Chicago and who was for a woman of that time extremely well educated and extremely well traveled. She had a doctorate. She took my father around as a young boy. His father was very supportive of this. His mother was dead. Everybody else in the family was older. So, my father grew up with kind of a world view even though he was an only child in this large family of mostly older people. They all read books at night and they all listened to music. It sounds like a very idyllic sort of place for him to grow up. All of this about my father may be significant because he did eventually end up in the Foreign Service. I, however, did not grow up as a Foreign Service "brat." He joined the Foreign Service much later in life. We can get to that later.

Q: What was your mother's background?

TAYLOR: My grandmother was of French heritage. Her family had settled in the middle West, although it was in the Indiana-Ohio area. My grandfather, my mother's father, did not come to this country until he was 30. He was British. He was working for the British canard lines. Having spent 15 years – he joined the sea services very early in life – going back and forth between the United Kingdom and the United States, he decided he wanted to be an American and he somehow made that possible. I'm not sure of the details. He ended up settling in Cleveland. He had the sea in his blood. He had to be near the water. He was also very musical. He became the choir director of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in downtown Cleveland. Being a Brit, he was a proper Episcopalian. My grandmother,

whom he met at the church, happened to be the organist for the Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. Neither one of them was particularly religious or even particularly Episcopalian, but they both loved music. That was how they met.

My grandmother, who I said was of a French background, was about 4'10", a tiny little birdlike creature. My grandfather, although he was very slim, was at least 6'2". So, these people had really very little in common except their music. They married. My mother was their only child. They lived just outside of Cleveland on Lake Erie. My grandfather had to be close to the water. My grandparents were older when my mother was born and she always told me how protective they were of her. When she decided to go away to college at the University of Chicago, it was a great blow to her parents, my grandparents, and I guess there was a big struggle for a while until she finally was given the permission to go off to Chicago. One other thing about my grandparents was, my grandmother, in addition to being a wonderful musician, was a beautiful seamstress. She did not do this for the money, but she made me the most gorgeous Easter dresses. Nobody wears dresses like that anymore. Of course, I was a little girl and there were lots of frills and bows and ruffles and sashes. I can remember every one of those dresses. Each year, I would get a different one. We lived in Chicago at the time, but we would travel to Cleveland to go to Easter services where my grandmother occasionally played the organ. My grandfather was no longer the director of the choir. That was not his profession. His profession was with the Ohio Electrical Company. He wasn't a technical person. I imagine he was an administrative person.

Q: On your mother's side, what was their family name?

TAYLOR: Watson, very proper British. I'm very much a product and the more I think about my past and my outlook on life, the more I read, the more I see, I really am very much a Midwesterner. I went to college in Boston. I've lived my whole life overseas. But just reading American writers, I am really a product of the Midwest. Every time I go back to Chicago, I say, "This is really the kind of city that says to me that this is the middle of America. This is where people open their hearts. They don't really care much about where you come from." Chicago is a very energetic city. It's a very dynamic city. It's also very youthful.

Q: What did your mother and father major in at the university?

TAYLOR: My mother was a French literature major and my father was a political science major.

Q: Did the war pick him up shortly after you left the university?

TAYLOR: Yes. He actually left to join the Service before he graduated. I think he would have graduated in '41. He finished his degree in '45 or '46 when he returned from Europe. My mother was two years older than my father. She graduated in '39 or '40. She taught school all during the war. It's kind of an interesting story. The last year of the war,

’45, she had been teaching school during the year, but she worked in the summers on Mackinaw Island, in between the upper north peninsula of Michigan. We now have a summer house there. But she was working at the Grand Hotel, this wonderful hotel on Mackinaw Island, during the summer that the war ended. She described this wonderful scene where all the ships and boats and tugboats and every craft imaginable went out into the harbor, into the Straits of Mackinaw, and blew their stacks and blew their horns and water was spraying everywhere to celebrate.

Q: Oh, how wonderful.

For how long did you yourself live in Chicago?

TAYLOR: I think I was in fourth or fifth grade at the time we moved to Freeport. But we came back to Chicago almost every other weekend. My parents had very strong ties there. They were very much a part of the cultural scene. They wanted to make sure that I grew up knowing about theater and music. I had already started to study ballet, which was one of the major interests of my life. So, I was taken to ballet and to the symphony. My father had been an ice hockey player in college, so we always went to the Chicago hockey games, the Blackhawks. He played for the University of Chicago, which was not a big sports school… He wasn’t really a great skater. He played goalie. He wasn’t a very fast skater. The Blackhawks used to ask him to do practice goalie sessions with them because their goalie didn’t like being shot at all the time. So, my father really also had this hockey thing as well as being a person who was interested in politics and the arts.

Q: What about family life? Did you get much in the way of sitting around the table and talking and listening?

TAYLOR: We sat around the dining room table every night through my senior year in high school. I think that’s translated itself into my own life where despite Jim’s and my very hectic diplomatic tandem careers, we sit down every night at the table. We discuss everything. I grew up in a household where I was really one of my parents’ friends almost, more than being a child. They were extremely interested in my activities. They chaperoned everything that I did at high school. They went on all the trips with me. Our house was always filled with my friends. I was very active in high school. I had a great time in high school. I loved it. I was in all of the clubs and did all of the really rah-rah stuff that everybody does in high school and my parents were extremely involved. They knew all the teachers. They knew all the kids. I realize that that gave me a tremendous sense of confidence. Looking back on it now, I see that that kind of a homelife really gave me a sense of support, knowing that they were always interested in what I did. They really encouraged my study of ballet but didn’t push me. They sent me to New York one summer when I was 15 to study ballet at the Robert Joffrey School. My mother had gotten a scholarship that summer to study French at Princeton. She was by then teaching in the high school in Freeport. She got one of the National Defense Education Act scholarships, the first year to go to Princeton for the summer. That was the summer I studied ballet in New York. My father had to stay home and make the money to launch this operation.

Then the second year, she got another, which I guess was between my junior and senior years in high school, another NDEA scholarship to study in Tours, France. That really was probably one of the major catalysts along with my father's years in Italy during the war that stimulated my parents' interest in travel and my interest in travel. My mother brought some wonderful pictures back. She had lived in a pension with a family in Tours.

Q: While you were in elementary school, you were both in Chicago and in Freeport.

TAYLOR: Yes.

Q: How did you find them different?

TAYLOR: Actually, I suppose there should be differences because of the difference in the urban environment and the small town environment. But I think at that age, it doesn't make as much of an impact. The one difference, not so much because of school, was how we lived. In Chicago, we lived in an apartment. In Freeport, I had a big yard and played outside all the time. I roller-skated to school. I walked through huge snowdrifts in the winter. I wore these heavy leggings. I don't remember that in Chicago. I think in Chicago I had to be driven everywhere and didn't do as much walking, didn't have as many friends in my neighborhood. In this small town, of course, the elementary schools were made up of kids from the neighborhoods. So, I played basketball out in the streets every night, badminton in the yard. I walked to school four or five blocks every day, walked home for lunch. I don't remember coming home for lunch when I was in school in Chicago. When I came home for lunch, my mother was there. That must have been hard for her to be there every day for lunch interrupting her day. Then I walked back to school after lunch. So, I guess the difference would be really more physical rather than intellectual.

Q: In elementary school, how about reading?

TAYLOR: My father especially had been reading to me ever since I was three or four. We have photographs of the two of us sitting on the couch. I think this was probably my mother's free time at night. After he came home from work and my mother could do her reading or whatever she wanted to do, he would read to me. There would be these photographs of this very tired little girl fighting going to sleep. My father read to me things like Treasure Island and all of the Wizard of Oz stories when I was very young. We also played a lot of games. We played baby games like Candyland and Chutes and Ladders. I learned to play chess when I was older. All the board games. Parcheesi was one of my favorite ones. I played that with my grandfather, too, my father's father, George. He loved to play Parcheesi. I called him "George," not "Grandfather." They lived in Freeport, so we saw more of them than I did of my mother's grandparents. Books were very important. My father by this time was running the family business which was a small department store which included a large book section. He would buy children's books for me. So I was read to every night until I finally read on my own. My parents were constantly reading. They read fiction as well as history.

Q: By the time you were in Freeport, were you becoming aware of the world around you, news reports, radio, that sort of thing? Were you beginning to pick up any of the developments in the world?

TAYLOR: Of course, one of the events that galvanized everybody of my generation was the assassination of John Kennedy in 1963. I was then a senior in high school. Before that, because of my mother's interest in French and her travels as well as the fact that we spent so much time in Chicago and the summer that I spent in New York, I think that I was very aware for a child and a teenager of that time. But I think that growing up in a small town in Illinois without a big newspaper was probably a disadvantage. There is nothing like having a great newspaper.

Q: There were really only three or four good papers in the country.

TAYLOR: My high school studies in such things as civics and world history were very weak. I realize now that I'd like to take a really good world history course at one of the universities around here. I did take some history when I was in college, but I think that is in the area where my background is weak. My husband is very strong in history. But I could say that that was a weakness in my high school and maybe even in the way I approached it. But compared to my peer group, I think I was much more involved in politics. My father was a Democrat who ran for a county supervisor position in a very heavily Republican area in northwest Illinois and got solidly trounced. But he always remained politically active. He always worked at the polls. He always tried to help those who for some reason or other couldn't get to the polls to get to the polls. In that sense, politics was very much a part of our household interest. I know that my parents and their friends, their bridge groups, the people from whom my parents bought the cottage, who were, in fact, the owners of the Freeport Journal Standard, the local newspaper, discusses politics and current events. We never had a television in my house until I was in junior high school. I was the last kid on the block to get a television. It was when I went to school one day and everybody was talking about Elvis Presley and the Beatles appearing on Ed Sullivan and I hadn't seen that. Then I think my parents realized that they really had to get a television. So, we got a black and white television. My father enjoyed watching football on television, so that made it okay. But I'd say that I was fairly aware, but not compared to the way kids are today.

Q: What about the Cold War? Kids were going through these nuclear attack drills. Was this something that hovered over you?

TAYLOR: I remember a few times, we hid under our desks. But I didn't think about or fear the Soviet Union or the whole communist threat so much. I do remember my freshman year in college when Khrushchev was removed from office in '64. I went to Wellesley, a women's college, and I was the only student in my college corridor, which was mostly freshmen, who even thought that this was a momentous thing. I remember rushing into my class and saying, "Have you heard what happened?" I am not saying that

my girlfriends weren't serious students or intellectually involved. They were very serious students. I was a year ahead of Hillary [Clinton], by the way, at Wellesley. It was a serious place. But nobody was very interested in international relations. I remember thinking that this is a momentous thing, this is a potentially dangerous thing, Khrushchev was someone that we were beginning to be able to work with. I thought this was tremendous, was very destabilizing and frightening. I remember having very serious discussion with my parents during the Cuban Missile Crisis. I remember afterwards my father saying that we don't know how close we came during this whole serious of events leading up to the Cuban Missile Crisis. I know that my parents and I discussed that. But it wasn't something that I thought about every day. I didn't live in fear. When we built a house in Freeport, we built a very modernistic house. An architect from Chicago named William Fred Keck and his brother, George Keck, came out to live with us for several days to see how we lived as a family and then they designed this house for us. They did a lot of work in Winnetka, by the way. There was only one room in the house that was underground. That had the furnace and the usual things that go underground. We built the house in 1960. My mother provisioned it as a bomb shelter. There were things like Hershey bars. There were a couple of bottles of gin and some vermouth for martinis. There were a couple of other things. We could have survived for maybe a day or two. But I remember when she did that, my father and I both laughed at her. She was a little put out because she thought she was seriously trying to take care of the family. But other than those things, I don't remember a huge amount of thinking about the Soviet Union. I know that the boys in my high school weren't terribly concerned about the draft. Not all of them went on to college. Some of them volunteered for the military services when we graduated from high school. Most of my closer friends did go on to college and the draft became a part of their thinking four years later in the late '60s. I was never an exchange student, but some of my friends were exchange students in high school and I was always very interested in what they did. One went to Greece. One went to the Netherlands. They went to Western Europe, not to any place more exotic than that. But there were never discussions when they came back about what is the position of the United States in the world. We all felt that the United States even then was so much more powerful than any other country.

Q: Going back to the cultural side, taking ballet, I assume you saw many times the movie "The Red Shoes?"

TAYLOR: Oh, yes.

Q: This put a lot of young ladies on the road to ballet for a while.

How about music?

TAYLOR: Music was very much a part of our lives. One of the reasons my parents loved the University of Chicago so much – and I was reminded of this by watching the PBS series on jazz and how much Chicago is featured in the whole story of jazz – in the '30s, Chicago was just sort of a wide open place. My parents as students and all of their student

friends and the faculty went to all these black nightclubs. The whole thing was integrated. White kids, black kids, and older people were dancing and listening to music and having a wonderful time. Until the day my parents died, that's the way they thought of Chicago and that's the way they thought of their environment there. They would actually take me to some jazz clubs, the ones that would let me in, when I was a little girl dressed up in my Easter fancy dresses, as well as to the Chicago Symphony. Classical music was very much a part of their lives. Every Sunday morning, my father made breakfast and he usually chose the music, too. Every night, there was music in our house. Mother had a large LP record collection. They also went to opera. They would go into Chicago for a weekend just by themselves, leaving me with their family. Since I didn't really enjoy opera as a little girl, they would do that by themselves, although I did enjoy the symphony. So, there was everything from jazz to opera to symphony in our house. They learned to love my rock and roll records. I had a collection of 45s. They just thought that was great fun. They thought the Beatles were great. I remember when the movie "A Hard Day's Night" came out. My parents went to the movie and sat on one side of the theater and my boyfriend and I went and sat on the other side of the theater. But music was very much a part of my life. One of my father's favorite things was to drop the needle down in the middle of an opera or a symphony. I started by loving ballet music and my parents very wisely nurtured that. Ballet music is very listenable. Then they would move on to other things. My father would drop the needle down and it was a guessing game to see who could recognize which piece of music was playing. Music was instilled very much.

Q: Art. You had the Chicago Institute of Art, which is big, big, big.

TAYLOR: Yes. We had nothing in Freeport like that.

Q: Did you go to the Institute of Art and that sort of thing?

TAYLOR: We tried to go twice a month. Especially when I was in high school, that diminished to more like once a month because I was so active doing my own things. We would stay in a small hotel on Pearson Street on the Near North Side. It was called Pearson, in fact. It's not there anymore. I looked for it the last time I was there. It was just a block off Michigan Avenue toward the lake on the east side of Michigan Avenue. My parents also wanted me to enjoy eating well. In Freeport, there were really no restaurants of any note. My mother was a wonderful cook. So, we would stay at the Pearson Hotel. This was not one of the fancy deluxe hotels. It was just a small, very nice place with a small lobby, very intimate. We would spend the weekend going to a ballet if there was one in town. We would go to the Art Institute. We would go shopping at Brentano's bookstore. I would get to go shopping at Bonwit Teller, one of my favorite all-time stores. There is no department store in the world like the old Bonwit Teller. I didn't get to go shopping every time we went to Chicago, but on a special occasion. We would go to the Civic Opera House. My father would go to the shows at the Merchandise Mart to do buying for the store and take me with him. Going to Marshall Field's for that special chocolate chip pie was great. We went to the Art Institute, the Museum of Science and Industry, the Planetarium, the zoo.

Q: What about books? Can you recall any books that were for you seminal?

TAYLOR: Yes. There is one book that I will never forget. I was a sophomore in high school when I read Look Homeward, Angel by Thomas Wolfe. I understand there is a new version of it. In that book, I learned about the value of time. I remember being late to class. I was reading it in school. I was a very good student and got all As all through high school, but this book really diverted me from my studies. What I learned most from it was the tremendous value of every moment, that every moment matters and you can't ever get it back. My husband says I'm compulsive about it. I said, "Well, you've never read this book."

Then I read You Can't Go Home Again after I read Look Homeward, Angel. It didn't have as great an impact on me, but I was a fan. I also read, as everybody did, all the Hemingway stuff. I read all the Fitzgerald stuff.

Q: Ann Rand?

TAYLOR: No, I never read Ann Rand.

Q: You're probably fortunate.

TAYLOR: Some friends of mine were reading Ann Rand in college. I read 50 pages and said, "This is not for me."

Another book which I read younger was Lorna Doon.

Q: That is a great book. I read it as a male adult and had a wonderful time with it. Good solid adventure.

TAYLOR: Yes. As I said, my father had read all of the Stephenson books, Treasure Island, Jules Verne… I think he picked up stuff he wanted to read. Booth Tarkington, all of Penrod. He bought me these beautiful luxury editions with the lovely drawings in them. And the Oz books. I still have them. They're falling apart now. The old collection of Oz books with the Denslow drawings. I still have all of those. But when I got to college and was a literature major myself, I read so many wonderful things I couldn't begin to pick one out.

Q: Let's take high school and grammar school. Were there any teachers that stood out, that really put you on a right course?

TAYLOR: Yes. I would say every single one of my grade school teachers who, with the exception of sixth grade, were exclusively women in their 50s and 60s. My sixth grade teacher was a younger man. He pales in comparison to the dynamism and the energy and the discipline that these women had. I did my homework every day. I mostly enjoyed

doing my homework. There were some things that I didn't enjoy. My ballet teacher, Marguerite Neumeister, lived in Rockford. I drove an hour each way to go to ballet classes. She was a woman of formidable discipline, not a scary person, but someone you really wanted to please. She affected me as much as my grade school teachers.

In high school, I don't think I had such outstanding teachers. Some of them were fun to be with. None of them was imaginative and creative the way I understand now you could be if you are a good teacher. Some of them were terrible. I did very well in chemistry and I even liked it, but I think the chemistry teacher was the basketball coach. The civics teacher was the football coach and he was a disaster. Some of them had really just been there a little too long and should have retired. Of course, we had no drugs. The worst thing that ever happened in my high school was that some of the boys got caught smoking in the bathroom and one girl had to get married by the end of our senior year. But out of a graduating class of 500, that was hardly very much… But still, I think today, despite what everybody says about them, I think they're much more challenging places than where I went to high school. They're much more creative than where I went to high school. But that said, I was a good student; I had lots of friends; I did all the after-school activities; I had my ballet; I had this warm and wonderful relationship in my household. Given everything that I've done since then, which involved a lot of risk taking, not always being in a community that was friendly and open, my years at Freeport High gave me such tremendous grounding, even though my academic high school background probably wasn't as strong as it could have been.

Q: So much of education really is yourself anyway and particularly with your parents, they put you on the right course.

TAYLOR: That's right. For example, when I got to Wellesley, I was not prepared to write the way the kids from private schools were. They just aced those freshman year courses and I struggled. I had gone from being an A+ student with a 4.0 average and very good SAT scores. I was the best student in my high school. All of a sudden, there I was… Wellesley was a great comeuppance and was probably very good for me. I no longer was the best at anything. That's hard. Of course, going back to reunions and things, these things finally come out. We all realize that we're no longer the best at anything because everybody is talented.

Q: I was talking to somebody who had gone to Harvard who was saying that the prep school boys basically did very well up through maybe the sophomore year. They were outstanding. But by the end, you found that many of the high school students with that background tended to be more among the academic leaders.

TAYLOR: I don't know that I could say that, but I could say that by the end of our sophomore year, I had pretty much caught up. I had figured out the system for one thing. I had learned how to write. If my high school failed in any way, it was in the challenge of really making us write and think analytically. I could throw together a report or some kind of a paper in a day or two and ace it by high school standards. You couldn't do that at

Wellesley or at any university. That was one area where I really had to scramble to catch up. It made me very unhappy my first year in college.

Q: It probably also made you better, not only just the technique, but the fact that you realized your problem and were working on it when you were more mature rather than having sort of grown up with fluent writing and all this. We'll stop at this point and pick this up the next time in 1964 when you were off to Wellesley.

***

Today is January 25, 2001. Louise, comment about the high school before we move on.

TAYLOR: After we talked last week, it gave me a chance to go back and think about some things I might have liked to have said. One thing that I'd like to say is that thinking about my high school years and everything I've done since then and everywhere I've lived since then, I realize that going to this high school, which was probably anywhere from a pretty good to a fairly good or maybe even a very good high school, but by no means was it outstanding, gave me such a sense of nurturing and confidence. I felt comfortable there. Everybody knew everybody even though it was a school of about 1,600 students, including four grades. What I realize now, having gone to a college like Wellesley, which was a small, fairly elite school for women, is that at Freeport High School, I knew a variety of people, a broad spectrum of people. There were rich kids. There were poor kids. There were middle class kids. There were white kids, black kids, not very many Hispanic kids, but some, a few Asian kids. There were all religions represented. It was really a microcosm of the polyglot that the United States is without the severe kinds of really extreme levels of poverty or extreme levels of wealth that you see in the United States. Had I gone to a private school, which we touched on briefly last time, I would have missed that kind of well rounding aspect of my really critical teenage years.

One other thing I want to say about Freeport High is, in my class, the class of 1964, is that we have several extremely illustrious graduates from my class. One of them, like me, turned out to be a Foreign Service officer in the Division of Security Services in the State Department. He and I had not seen each other literally since graduation day in 1964. We ran into each other on top of Masada Hill in Israel during the Christmas holidays of 1987. So, it was almost 20 years. His name is Danny Williams. He recognized me across this huge expanse of desert-like mountaintop in Israel. He and his family were at that time serving in Egypt. We were in Israel. They made a trip to Israel for the Christmas holidays. We were there with some family relatives. There we met, up on top of Masada. I just saw a picture of it the other day, which is what reminded me. Then there was also one of the three people commuting to work in Cairo shortly after we met who was shot at. Three people. John Ford was one. Danny Williams. I don't know the third.

Q: This was the Arab Brotherhood or something like that.

TAYLOR: Right. Danny later told me that they were driving to work in somebody's station wagon and went under an underpass on a major highway and somebody shot at them from above the underpass. So, that is my one illustrious friend.

My second illustrious friend, also the class of Freeport High '64, is Dan Balz, whose name you may know from the front page of the Washington Post. He is one of the senior political writers at the Post, widely believed to be the successor to David Broder. Dan was a great, wonderful friend of mine as we grew up and I admire him to this day.

The third, and probably the most famous of us all, is someone who is on the front page of the paper almost every day, and that's Robert Johnson of Black Entertainment Television. He graduated from Freeport High School in my class. He was president or vice president of the student government and also a very good friend of mine. I was just thinking that when we talked about Freeport High last week, I think I left the impression that it was sort of an inconsequential place. In the end, it wasn't. People from there have done some interesting things. In the class immediately ahead of me, the famous football player Preston Pearson was a member of that class. He was in my French class. Even though it was a small town in middle west America, it sent its children out into the world pretty well prepared.

Q: This is one of the messages that come through here. We are dealing with an elite group, people who have been involved in American diplomacy. There is a selection process and all. And yet the backgrounds are extremely diverse. Many of the parents never went to college. Mine never went to college. They came from all sorts of places very unlikely. The society is such that that is not an inhibitor.

TAYLOR: What you say is very true. Skipping way ahead, one of my latest assignments was in the Senior Seminar. In the first few days of the Seminar, the group of 28-30 students plus the faculty go on an off-site. The year that I was there, we went to a wonderful place in West Virginia called The Woods. It was perfectly set up for this kind of thing. Our first exercise was called "Who Am I?" We did this very informally just sitting around tables with Cokes. It was not a written assignment. Each one of us over the course of three days got up in front of the rest of the group… We didn't know each other at all. A few of us had known each other in previous assignments, but basically we didn't know each other as a group. Everybody in a stream of consciousness fashion, other than those who were very well organized and wrote their whole statement out, talked about who they were and where they came from and how they managed to end up in the kind of life that we were all in. What was most amazing about that group, of the 30 people, there were six women, five African-Americans, six members of the Jewish faith. Of that group, you'd be astonished at the numbers who came from what you would call from an economic perspective only lower middle class backgrounds. Many came from broken homes. Many came from homes where psychological problems and alcoholism were a major factor. Many came from homes where there was clearly division in the family. Difficult backgrounds. As we got to know each other better over the course of the year, we frequently remarked upon this. By contrast, I probably came from a privileged

background, although I think I came from basically the middle class. But in contrast to many of my colleagues in the Senior Seminar, I had a very easy time of it growing up. Many people in the Senior Seminar also ended up with a very strong religious feeling. This came out not only during our "Who Am I" segment, but also during the course of the year. It was very interesting to see that happen. What you said reminded me of that.

Q: Wellesley, 1964. What was it like? Here you are, from Freeport and all of a sudden you're in the groves of academia, in the Harvard orbit?

TAYLOR: Growing up in Illinois and spending a lot of time in Chicago with my parents, I had it in my head by the age of 17 that I either wanted to go all the way to the west coast or all the way to the east coast. I didn't want to be in the Midwest. I wasn't unhappy, but I wanted a change. I especially wanted a geographical change. During the course of my high school years, I spent one summer between my sophomore and junior years in New York City studying ballet. Between my junior and senior years, I spent a summer at the University of California at Santa Barbara in a program that was open to high school seniors, but it was at the college level. So, I'd seen both coasts and I knew that that was for me, one or the other. So, I applied to Berkeley and Stanford on the west coast and Wellesley and Barnard on the east coast. Then as a safety backup, I applied to the University of Chicago, where my parents had gone, and to Northwestern. But those were my bottom choices because I knew I wanted to be on one or the other of the coasts. That was mostly a geographical thing. I wanted a different landscape.

Q: Did Wellesley have any particular aura about it? You went there because you wanted to absorb such and so?

TAYLOR: There was something I was looking for. I was under a very mistaken impression when I went to Wellesley that I wanted to major in art history. This was a wild thing at that stage. I had no talent whatsoever in the practical arts. I did a lot of dancing and loved music, but confronted with a piece of paper, I could do nothing. Nevertheless, I was interested in the concept of art history and I liked the world of art history. So, I thought that I wanted to go rather intensively into that field. Plus, I knew by that time that I was going to be a liberal arts major and Wellesley has an extremely strong liberal arts program whether it was the social sciences and languages and history and things like that. It was because of that academic program plus the fact that it was immediately outside Boston within an easy commute, but not in the city itself the way Barnard or the University of Chicago were. I had this romantic notion about the beauty of the campus. It was truly an extraordinarily beautiful place. Academia and combining that altogether and the big city just right there. To a large degree, that's exactly the way it was. I very quickly realized I was not going to major in art history-

Q: Why?

TAYLOR: I took art history throughout my entire four years, but I didn't specialize in it. The major reason was because once I began to study it and saw what was required and

saw the limited things you could do with art history, which was mainly write art criticism. I also realized that art history had a language and a concept that was phony to me. The phonier I wrote my papers and the more stuff I just made up but really didn't think was true, the better I seemed to do. I loved all my art history professors. I truly think Wellesley has a wonderful art history faculty. In fact, many Wellesley graduates are curators in the Smithsonian Institution at very high levels right now. But I really didn't see what they saw in all of these paintings. Although I heard what they said and I wrote it all down and regurgitated it back to them, I didn't see that. I thought it was really much too esoteric for me.

Q: Also, this was a time when they were coming up with the beginning of the dribblers and modern art.

TAYLOR: I liked all that. That was okay. It wasn't what I was looking at that I didn't like. It was the fact that any career in that field would be very academic. In some way, I had begun to understand that I would have to be a much more active person rather than someone who observes and writes. That is why I probably never could have been a political officer. In that way, I began to think I was really interested in international affairs. By this time, I had been to Europe in the summer of my sophomore year. My father also at this point between my freshman and sophomore years joined the Foreign Service. All the older people in my family were no longer living. My father and mother decided they wanted to get out this small town in Freeport. My father went to a counseling service, a headhunter service, and he took a whole battery of psychological and other tests. They said, "Well, you should be a Foreign Service officer. You should have been a Foreign Service officer your whole life." So, my father took the deep plunge and entered into what was in those days called a mid-level entry program. Six months after Kwame Nkrumah was deposed in Ghana, my parents found themselves in Accra in the summer or fall of 1966. So, all of this change had taken place in my background. I began to think, "I really love art history, but I'm much more interested in an active career. I'm interested in international relations. I think I'd like to work overseas." So, I started to major in French and French literature. I took a heavy minor in international relations. I never left the art history behind, but I just took very selective things that I was interested in.

Q: This was '64-'68?

TAYLOR: Yes.

Q: This period got increasingly active politically. Talk about the ambience of Wellesley for a young lady from Freeport, Illinois.

TAYLOR: Wellesley was remarkable during these years. Not only was there the anti-Vietnam ferment, but there was also the whole academic revolution that was taking place from coast to coast. During that time, at Columbia, the students barricaded the dean of students in his office. The SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) was active. There

was a lot of property destroyed and a lot of language shouted all over the place. At Berkeley, classes were closed down for weeks and weeks on end. At Wellesley, we accomplished both a social and an academic revolution - things were very different in 1968 when I left compared to ’64 when I entered – without missing one class, without anybody throwing a tomato at anybody, and without anybody really getting too terribly angry at anybody else. The way this happened was, there was a very active committee formed of students, faculty, and administration, sort of a triangular grouping. This formed about 1966. At that same time, Wellesley and MIT came together to make a coalition of one of the leading liberal arts institutions and one of the leading scientific institutions. So, there was a great deal of cross-fertilization there. Wellesley students could go to MIT and access the Cyclotron and all the other things that we didn’t have and get pre-med qualification. Likewise, MIT guys could study on the Wellesley campus and get real input from the liberal arts and inquisitive thinking that they didn’t get at MIT. So, this all was happening at Wellesley.

Hillary Clinton came to town in 1965. She was the class of ’69.

Q: Her name was Hillary Rodham.

TAYLOR: Yes. She, interestingly enough, came to Wellesley, lived in the same dormitory that I lived in for three years. It only had 100 girls, so everybody knew everybody very well. We were both from Illinois. But she came to Wellesley as a Goldwater Girl. This is very well known about her. She was a major supporter, as was her father, of Goldwater in ’64. These high school girls who were for Goldwater were known as the Goldwater Girls. She came to Wellesley as that. Everybody thought that that was maybe just a little bit extreme. She was famous before she even got there. So, we were all interested in this. Gradually, as I think is well known in the public record, her outlook and her orientation began to change quite dramatically. By the time 1966 or ’67 rolled around, which would have been her sophomore and junior years, she had become one of the student leaders of this very quiet sort of velvet revolution where everybody worked together to change the social regulations, which were truly archaic at Wellesley.

Q: 10:00 at night.

TAYLOR: And only a certain number of nights per semester could you stay out. These were called providal hours. It was in parentis loco or something. You had to decide, “Is this guy worth a 1:00 AM or is he just an 11:30 PM?” My parents were much more liberal about my hours when I was in high school than when I got to this virtual prison at Wellesley. By the time I left Wellesley, unfortunately, all of that changed, although by the time you were an upperclassman, you could pretty much do what you wanted without too many restrictions.

Also, the academic requirements changed. Much the way the pendulum swings from one end to the other. When I went to Wellesley, we had a structured group of requirements from which you had to select certain things to fulfill a four year requirement. I did not

find that particularly onerous. I felt that I could fulfill the Wellesley requirements, which were in the physical sciences, the social sciences, and the liberal arts, and still do everything else I wanted to do. But there were a lot of people who took great umbrage at this. There was a requirement that you had to take a year of what was then called "Bible." It should really have been called "Comparative Religion." It was a wonderful course, but I think that although the administration and the faculty really dug in their heels on that one, eventually, that requirement went away, as well as several other requirements. We had to take "fundamentals of body movement," for example. We all had our photographs taken showing whether our spines were properly aligned for correct young ladies. These photographs, I remember reading when I was in Morocco in the '90s, from many of the Seven Sisters colleges and particularly Wellesley, somehow got into the public domain, including Hillary Rodham Clinton's photograph. It was at a Smithsonian exhibit or something like this. I don't know if mine was.

Q: These were nude photographs, weren't they?

TAYLOR: Oh, yes, they were.

Q: My wife went to Smith. I think she was in one of these.

TAYLOR: They were hardly salacious in any way, but they were nude photographs. So, that was all part of being a freshman at Wellesley. I think the faculty and the administration were on the cusp of wondering, "Are we going to be a modern institution or are we going to be rooted in the Seven Sisters tradition?" It was such a difficult time of transition for everyone. Margaret Clap, who had been the super CAO [cultural affairs officer] when we had super CAOs, sort of a god of cultural affairs, was then the president of Wellesley College. She came out of a more traditional mold, certainly compared to the current president of Wellesley College, Diana Chapman Walsh, who is one of the most dynamic women I have ever met in my life and who is the class of '66 of Wellesley just two years ahead of me. She went on to get a Ph.D. from Harvard and went into public health. That was her professional background until she became president of the College. So, Wellesley, like many places, was clearly in transition. There was a tug of war within all of us. Did we want to be proper young ladies and get good grades and never deviate from one side of the line or the other or did we want to experience it all? It was a very hard time in a sense if you were trying to decide what kind of person did you want to be exactly. But at the same time, it was a very exciting time. I never felt any pressure on myself to be one thing or another. But I know that looking back on it now, I am probably not sure whether I was the Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm from Freeport, Illinois, or whether I was going to turn into a radical. I just didn't know all those years.

Q: It's certainly an absolute unresolved thing. Thank God it doesn't pertain to me, but it does to my kids. There is the debate of a young woman coming out – a career or children? Or having both? But can you do both? Did you see limitations?

TAYLOR: If we want to confine that answer to the Wellesley period, I felt we could do it

all. I felt that if I wanted to do all three of those things (I don't happen to have children, by the way), there was no question that I would have a career. I knew that I would. I'm not so sure Wellesley knew that, but I knew that I would. Wellesley was set up to encourage you and to do everything possible to get you into graduate school. I think they thought all young women at that time probably should go to graduate school or law school. But they were not set up to help you get a job. My senior year, I recall maybe two or three recruiters coming to the college. One of them was from the telephone company. One of my friends actually went to work for the telephone company. I couldn't believe it. She was a history major. I did not have one interview with anybody my senior year in college. By this time, I was pretty sure I wanted a career in public service. Despite the fact that my father was in the Foreign Service and had gone from Ghana to Nigeria by the time I graduated and I had been to both those places and loved both experiences that I had in West Africa, I wasn't yet prepared to commit myself to a Foreign Service career. I did not take the Foreign Service Exam. But I did take various other exams that would get you a Civil Service rating and things like that. Also, due to the Kennedy era, I knew I wanted to come to Washington when I graduated from college. My parents were not in Washington. Nobody that I knew was in Washington. None of my friends were moving to Washington. They were mostly staying in Boston. But I knew by then, if anything happened to me over the four years, that I wanted to be in a public service, non-profit position. I knew I wanted to at least experience Washington, although I always had it in the back of my mind that I would return to Boston and New England, which I loved so much. I knew that I would have a career. I assumed at some point I would be married. I had several serious boyfriends in college. By the way, my favorite boyfriend was from Williams. We never really turned into anything serious, but thinking back over all the fellows that I went out with, I had the most fun with him. I met him in Paris. We spent the summer in Paris between our sophomore and junior years. His name was Jim Blane. He was washing dishes in a restaurant in Paris to make money just to learn to speak French. I was studying French at one of those Sorbonne schools. At least I was pretending to. Basically, I was just living there. At the end of the summer, I went to Ghana to spend most of August with my parents before I went back to Wellesley. Jim and I just had the best time during most of that summer. Then he went back to Williams. Of course, it was pretty hard to keep up. It was too far. But your question really is how do people handle three elements of being a career person, being a mother, being a spouse, and having enough time for yourself. I don't know the answer to that.

Q: Was it a matter of debate beforehand among the students?

TAYLOR: Oh, yes. We really were more focused on what we were going to do professionally, realizing that those of us in the liberal arts sector of Wellesley in particular were equipped to do nothing. Eight of us lived together on one corridor throughout the four years. Two of the eight of us went on to medical school. So, it was quite clear what their career pattern would be. Both of them, by the way, married doctors. Both of them had three children. Both of the women were Chinese, by the way, of Chinese origin. One of them married a Chinese-American. One of them married a regular American. The rest of us talked more about how we would make our way in the professional world when we

realized that a Wellesley undergraduate liberal arts degree really did not equip you to do much of anything. We rarely talked about children and family. I don't know anybody among my close friends, with the exception of the two women who went on to medical school, who married a college sweetheart. We all went on to other relationships and other venues before we settled on a life partner. Sorry, there was one other person in my group of eight who married her college sweetheart. She was a twin. Her twin was at Vassar. She was at Wellesley. She stole her twin's boyfriend. They live in Washington. The fellow that she married was Dick Packard, who is the head of the American Hockey Association. He was a big hockey player himself at Dartmouth. So, she was one who married a college person. We didn't spend very much time talking about how you would manage a family. It was really more what would you do professionally. We didn't even know what was out there to do professionally. In that sense, Wellesley did a very poor job. They kept us pretty much isolated in an academic environment despite the fact that we had the proximity to Boston. They really didn't want us to think about a profession.

Q: I took a look at Boston. When I graduated from Williams, a little matter of the Korean War came along. Four years later, after four years as an enlisted man, I got my master's at Boston University. I thought, "This is great." Then I realized when I started looking for a job in Boston that you are knee deep in Harvard, Yales, Wellesleys, people who wanted nothing more than to live in the Boston area. It didn't seem like the real world. It seemed like too many people wanted to keep that college tie. It seemed like a trap.

TAYLOR: They also say that if you didn't have at least four generations who settled on Beacon Hill before you got to Boston, you would never get anywhere.

There is one thing I should say at this point about how I felt about Wellesley and the whole atmosphere there and my own internal struggle as to what kind of person I was to become. Each year I was at Wellesley, I applied to transfer to another school. I think this says a lot about how I viewed the school at various stages. Although I loved it and I was happy there, I always felt that there was something missing. My first year, I applied to transfer to Stanford. They accepted me. I thought long and hard about it and decided that if I did that, it would be like really starting all over again and making new relationships. So, I hung on another year at Wellesley. Then I got restless again and applied to transfer to the University of Chicago, although I know I would have been miserable there. My parents, even though they had gone there, thought, "What is she thinking," but they supported me. The University of Chicago accepted me. Then I realized, no, that was not the social environment that I wanted. It had become a pretty weird place by that time. But then the last effort to transfer was the only time in my life when my parents said, "No, we will not support you in this." I applied to transfer to the New School for Social Research, which now is a very fine, broadbased institution. In the late '60s, it was a hotbed of radicalism. It was not accredited as a four year university undergraduate institution.

Q: This was in New York?

TAYLOR: At that time, it was in Greenwich Village. I thought that at Wellesley, I was in

much too structured an environment. I read about what was going on in the so-called "real world" and that was not at Wellesley by any means, even though we were accomplishing this very quiet academic and social revolution. My parents, who still were in West Africa, when they heard that, they just threw up their hands in horror. They said, "You have one more year at Wellesley to get your degree. Do that. Then if you think you want this experience at the New School for Social Research, we'll see if we can help bankroll you to go there and find out what that's all about." They were so wise. But I was serious. I really thought, "This is what I need to round out myself as a person."

Q: We're talking about a time of great political ferment. Did you get involved in the anti-Vietnam movement? Also, civil rights things were still going on.

TAYLOR: I was active in some of the civil rights marches in Boston. Everything took place away from our campus and nobody – the newspeople and the major marchers and people of that sort were not going to come to a place like Wellesley. So, if you wanted to participate in any kind of a political statement, you had to go in to Boston to do that. I never was in an anti-Vietnam War march. I was very confused about how I felt about Vietnam. I was not 100% opposed to Vietnam at that stage. I later became so when I went to Washington. But in college, the social focus was really more on the civil rights movement. When Martin Luther King was killed in April of '68, it galvanized a lot of us and I participated in a lot of the demonstrations in downtown Boston. Some of my friends went to Washington, but I stayed in Boston. That was a major focus on our campus, as was Vietnam. But again, the activity didn't take place on the campus. There were small study groups and there were groups of people who would get together after dinner for coffee who would talk about it. We invited our political science professors from the faculty to talk about East Asia and the whole situation there. That did happen. I was active in that and was very interested. But there were never any huge demonstrations on the Wellesley campus. It was a small, quiet place and people at Wellesley who wanted to participate had to go elsewhere.

Q: In '68, you graduated. Whither?

TAYLOR: My parents were still overseas. The three of us met in Europe. It was my graduation present. My father was only there for a couple of weeks and then he had to return to Nigeria, but my mother and I continued on for maybe four or five weeks. I had already made up my mind I was going to Washington. Later in the summer, my parents came through Washington briefly en route to another posting. So, we all met up again. It was kind of how my life and all of our lives have been since then, helter-skelter. Your things are here and you have no place to live. Your animals are there. I forget how we managed, but we did. I eventually got myself set up in a little efficiency apartment just off Dupont Circle. That's where everybody lived in the late '60s. My first job, which I found myself just by answering ads in the paper, was at the National Education Association Research Division two blocks from where I lived on 16th Street. I was able to pay my own way. I could afford my rent. I did not have a car, but I didn't need one. I was 21 years old. It was my first year away from Wellesley and away from my parents. I was working at the

NEA. My starting salary was $5,200 a year. I remember thinking if I could ever make $6,000 a year, I'd really be rich. My rent was $102. I'll never forget that.

Q: Did you find Washington packed with young people like yourself? Did the political temperature rise?

TAYLOR: It was a wonderful place to be a young, single person of either sex. You could read these stories about how the odds were against you if you were a single woman in Washington, but I certainly didn't find that to be the case. Everybody was having a wonderful time. The '68 elections came along. I wasn't registered to vote in Washington. There were some controversial Nixon would-be appointments to the Supreme Court. There was a total fervor and ferment in Washington at that time. I got to know people working at AID, where I eventually came to work in the Civil Service. I got to know people at the OEO [Office for Economic Opportunity] and a lot of people who worked in those liberal social environments. I left the National Education Association after a year. Here is an interesting reason for your history. I left because after a year, I had done pretty well. I don't think I was outstanding there, but I had done okay. I applied for a job and had I gotten that job, my whole life probably would have been different. I would have stayed at the NEA. It was to direct a small Job Corps program. At that time, some of the Job Corps administration came under the NEA or they had a contract. There was an opening for a manager of this very small program. It would have been a raise and a promotion for me. But it wasn't a huge job. I can't really say that I was qualified for it with a French literature degree plus one year of working at the NEA, but they considered me to be competitive. The other candidate, when it boiled down to two of us, was a man about my age. He had about the same qualifications I did. When they told me that they were taking him and not me, the reason that they told me they were taking him was because 1) he was married and that he was likely to be much more stable than I was and 2) he had a child and therefore he needed the money and I didn't. That was 1969. When they said that to me, that just sounded perfectly normal. I didn't react. You couldn't possibly say anything like that now.

Q: No. But this, of course, is a calculation that hung over certainly from the Depression time – really since women started really coming into the workforce. It was about the end of the era.

TAYLOR: Well, it didn't occur to me to jump up and down and picket the NEA and write angry letters to The Post or anything, but it did galvanize my thinking about what I wanted to do next. That's when I activated or reactivated… I had to go through my Civil Service rating. I began to look at the foreign affairs agencies. By this time, my thinking was getting a little bit more concrete. I still didn't want to take the Foreign Service exam. I began to look at the foreign affairs agencies for openings and found one as a "writer/editor" in the Office of Public Affairs at AID.

Q: What was this aversion to taking the Foreign Service Exam?

TAYLOR: It was not an aversion. Like many people, it just doesn't come into your consciousness. I don't even remember it being given at Wellesley. The only reason I was even aware of it was because my parents were in the Foreign Service.

Q: I would have thought they would have been…

TAYLOR: No, they didn't say, "This is what you ought to do." I want to correct a misimpression. If I said I was averse to taking the Foreign Service Exam, that's not correct. It's just that it never really occurred to me. One year, maybe the year I was at the NEA, I saw a notice that it's given once a year and you have to apply by the second Wednesday in October to take it the third Saturday in November and I missed that. Had I been more organized, I would have taken it.

Q: What sort of work was your father in?

TAYLOR: He went into the USIA. He was a public affairs officer. His background was a journalist working for The Sun Times and the AP. Then he had an academic background in political science. When he went through these psychological tests and the interview with USIA, everything in his background tended toward that. The only other thing he would have really been qualified for probably would have been political reporting.

Q: You came to work in '69/'70 for AID in Public Affairs. What were you doing?

TAYLOR: I was the assistant to the editor of the AID in-house publication called Frontlines. I think it still exists in some form or other. The same office also published War on Hunger magazine. It did all of AID's public affairs events within the United States, getting people out around the United States to lobby for AID programs and to make the Agency known. It was a very good public affairs office run by some real professionals. There was a staff of 15-20 professional level people and then a very good support staff. My first introduction to working in a bureaucracy was extremely positive by virtue of that year that I spent in the Civil Service at AID. In AID and at NEA as well, I realized in order to go further, I really needed a graduate degree in something. But I was not prepared to go back to graduate school full-time. I loved my freedom. I loved being able to spend my time as I wished. I just wasn't ready to commit. Immediately after that intense Wellesley experience, I just didn't want to be in a library anymore. So, I was taking courses at night at GW [George Washington University] in two areas, public administration and in African affairs. I had fallen in love with African politics. This was still the late '60s. All of the social and political turmoil in Africa was very interesting to me. I don't know how I ever would have combined them. I was realizing during the second year out from Wellesley, which was my first year at AID, that I had to somehow get these together. If I were going to get a graduate degree, it was going to have to be in either international relations with a concentration on African politics or in public administration. What I saw when I was at AID was that people were coming in through the Management Intern Program. This was not Foreign Service, but it was the Civil Service program that brought people in around my age, maybe a few years older, with a

bit more experience, at the GS-9-11 level, and they were getting placed in some pretty interesting offices. They were much further along in interesting careers than I was at the GS-7 level as a writer. So, I saw that I had to do something. There was no such thing as a career counselor for people in the Civil Service track. My elders in the Office of Public Affairs saw that I had some talent to do something and they were encouraging me to seek other jobs within the AID Civil Service structure. I didn't stay there long enough to really learn how to crack that bureaucracy and figure it out. I'm sure there would have been a way, but the great accident that happened was that one night I was on a shuttle bus going from AID to Dupont Circle and my husband-to-be, who I did not know at that time, was on the same shuttle bus. I happened to be sitting with a friend of his on the bus. He called up his friend the next day and said, "Who was that masked woman you were sitting with?" That sort of started that whole thing going. We were both seeing other people. We began to date each other. But he had a string of friends and I had a string of friends. He eventually got assigned to Munich as a consular officer. He had been in Tehran for his junior officer tour. Then he had come back from Tehran and spent two years in Washington and really wanted to get back out. So, he went off to Munich. We sort of waved good-bye. It was not a very serious relationship at the time. So, at the end of my second year out of Wellesley, which was again the end of my first year at AID, I told my supervisors at AID that I was going to leave. I was going to go back to GW and finish my graduate degree for once and for all full-time. I thought I could get it done in a year or a year and a half. It was going to be in international relations. But before that, I went to Europe to meet my mother. She was really ready to get out of Zambia. At that point, they were in Zambia. They liked Ghana and Nigeria. They really did not care much for Zambia, which was a pretty hostile place at that point. So, she and I agreed to meet in the summer of 1970 just before I went to graduate school. We did. We did a lot of Northern Europe, where neither one of us had ever been. It started raining in Denmark. So, we got on the train and just kept on going south through Germany. It rained and rained and rained. So, when we got to Munich, it stopped raining. We got off the train. Munich is a beautiful city and we began to look around. My mother said, "Don't you have a friend here in Munich?" I said, "Oh, yes, but there is nothing there. I don't care if I ever see him again." My mother said, "Let's just invite him out to dinner. We've been traveling together, just the two of us, for a long time." I think she was tired of my company.

We had been there three days. I want you to know that I did not call him the first or second day I was there. We were having a wonderful time in Munich because there was so much to see. We called Jim up. It was a Sunday night. He later told me that he had just come in from a trip to the Bavarian Alps, which were less than an hour away, with a Brunhilda type of a lady. I later met her and she was quite statuesque and quite something. He accepted our invitation to go out. He came up with a wonderful restaurant called the Startsfelder, the Black Horse Restaurant. The three of us had a wonderful time there. Then the next day, he somehow managed to get through to us before we went sightseeing. He said, "Why don't we meet tonight at another place? I have another place to recommend to you." We went out to a Russian restaurant that night and that was lots of fun. The third night, somehow, he or my mother managed to suggest that maybe she wouldn't go out with us that night. Mother and I were staying in a tiny hotel down by the

railroad station which was very convenient, very cheap, very plain, nothing fancy. I'm not sure what she did that night, but she was used to being on her own. So, Jim and I went out and had a great time. We went dancing that night. My mother and I were scheduled to leave the next day for Salzburg. He suggested to me that once we did Salzburg and my mother eventually went back to Africa, he said, "Why don't you consider coming back to Munich and we'll just see how this works out?" I said, "Oh, no, I'm going to graduate school. Besides that, I'm meeting a friend in Italy and she and I are going to Greece for a couple of weeks. Then I'm going back to Washington." By the end of the summer, my friend with whom I was supposed to go to Greece had an illness in her family. Her father became quite ill and she had to go back to the States. I was in Florence. It was 110 degrees. The only room I could find was with eight other girls and it was an awful place to stay. It was really a zoo. So, I got on the train and went back to Munich and called up Jim from the train station. I said, "I'm here." So, he found a place to stash me away where I could stay for a while. Little by little… I had my round-trip ticket. It was a charter airline and I had to get back to university to get registered and get going. We were converging on this deadline of September something. All the while, of course, my parents thought I was going back to graduate school. They were coming back to Washington. They were looking forward to having me around for a while since it had been over six years that we had even lived in the same state. Well, eventually, we went to Oktoberfest, a very fateful day. I don't drink beer, by the way. I drink wine, but I wouldn't drink beer. When we came back from Oktoberfest, that was when we decided that we would become official. We then flew to London to meet my parents, who were on their way out of Africa on their way back to Washington, to tell them this happy news, that while they were living in Washington, we would be living in Germany. That was the first time that Jim had ever met my father. We had a wonderful time in London for two or three days. Then Jim went back to Munich. I went back to Washington with my parents. After two months of living with my parents who weren't fully settled into a house near American University, we had this very small wedding in our house. I realize now what I inflicted on my mother. We got married on November 27th, which that year was the day after Thanksgiving. So, on Thanksgiving, my mother cooked a Thanksgiving dinner for umpteen numbers of houseguests and wedding guests. Then the next day, she had a wedding reception in the house. She remained very good natured about the whole thing. That was how without really making the decision to take the Foreign Service Exam myself, I not only was the daughter of a Foreign Service officer at one point, but then I was married to a Foreign Service officer living in a Foreign Service environment. After the wedding, Jim returned to Munich and I followed a month or so later. I began to think that if I were to have a career, it would either have to be teaching in the international school system or in the Foreign Service itself. So, I set about taking the master's in teaching certificate or degree that the University of Maryland offers at the military campuses throughout Germany.

Q: Yes. They have this extension program.

TAYLOR: Boston University, by the way, had one also. In fact, I was studying at Boston. I didn't take the Maryland program. I took the Boston program. They were both at the

same campus. So, I was taking graduate courses in education. I took law boards and I took the Foreign Service Exam, all of that in my first year of marriage without knowing how to cook or anything else. I had a wonderful time in Munich as a young bride with no responsibilities, no job, very little money. We lived literally a two minute walk from the consulate, so Jim was home for lunch every day, whether that's a good thing or a bad thing. He, being a very junior person at that time, didn't have a lot of responsibility and was pretty free. There were a lot of catholic holidays in Bavaria, so it seemed every other week we had a three day weekend. We went everywhere. We saw all of Europe. We used that time really well. We had wonderful friends within the consulate, both the older, more senior people, as well as in the building where we lived which we referred to as "the dormitory." The Marine guards lived there. The young single people lived there. The young couples lived there. So, it was kind of like a dormitory. We had a lot of fun. I studied German at the University of Munich in Spalding. The people who know Munich know that's sort of the bohemian quarter, if there is such a thing in Munich. It's a pretty straight-laced Bohemian quarter. Then I also resumed my study of ballet. I had passed the Foreign Service Exam, flew back to Washington to take the orals, and I was on that two year waiting list. All of this was during BALPA [balance of payments]. So, USIA was taking eight junior officers a year. That was not very many even for our agency. The first year, I was not in that top group of eight. So, this period of my lady of leisuredom extended itself through the three years that we were in Munich. During that time, I was still studying German, I was still studying ballet, we were traveling all over the place, and we decided we wanted to go to Moscow. That just seemed to be the most important place in the world. We hired a tutor, a wonderful elderly gentleman called Professor Von Meyer. His father had been one of the white guards who guarded the Czar at the turn of the century. His father had been a very senior person in the Czar's entourage. They had left in the 1917 period and gone to northern Germany. Eventually, Professor Von Meyer found his way to Munich. He was a very elegant, wonderful, gentlemanly person truly living in what you would call gentile poverty. He normally came to our place because it was so much nicer than his place. I would try and serve him some good food because I didn't think he was eating very well. We therefore hired him as our tutor to get some grounding in Russian and present ourselves to the State Department assignments process and say, "Here we are. We're ready to go to Moscow."

Q: Do you recall any of the questions on the written exam?

TAYLOR: I remember that I felt pretty confident after I finished taking it. There were a lot of questions on cultural matters that I didn't think I would find there. There were a lot of really excellent reasoning questions having to do with international policy. They would give you a pretty hefty paragraph and set out a theoretical example that was based on reality. A lot of them had to do with China. This was 1971 or '72. So, the China policy was in flux and it was changing. There were initiatives between the United States and China. You didn't really know what the answers to these questions were. You didn't know what you were supposed to say about what the United States might do in this eventuality. They gave you a lot of case studies and said, "What would be the best policy response in this group of situations?" I found those very interesting. I wasn't sure how

well I did on them because in my mind, there weren't any correct answers to some of them. There were several answers that might have been correct. I thought I had done well in the English. I didn't have enough time in the writing sample, so I think I was in the middle of a sentence when the writing sample ended. That was not a good thing. But the section on what I would call "history/current affairs" was very interesting and fun to take. It was a fun exam. This was the days before the in-box test.

Q: When you got to the oral exam, were there any questions about, "How can you make a life? Have you thought about you and your husband going in different ways" and that sort of thing?

TAYLOR: Not really. The reason I took the exam was because one day Jim brought home a State magazine which had an article on the fact that the Department had changed its centuries old policy of not allowing two spouses to work. That is what encouraged me to take the exam that year. When I read that article, that year, I filled out my application for the exam. My oral was one of the old fashioned style ones, just three people on a panel interviewing me. Two of them were from USIA. One of them was from State. One of them was a woman. I don't think that they could ask questions like that at that time.

Q: Probably couldn't.

TAYLOR: They started off by saying, "You've been in Germany for four years. Tell us all about Ostpolitik." I was really ready for that. I didn't expect them to ask me that, but it was just in my head. So, we launched into it that way. Then we went on to cultural things. Then they asked me what I thought of American opera. I said, "Is there really such a thing?" It was like a conversation. It was a wonderful interview. It was four hours long. They told me later that they were really trying to fail as many people as they could because they had so few openings and that was why these interviews went so long. The worst question that they threw at me and the one I did the worst on was, "With the exception of the 13 colonies, put the American map together chronologically and tell us all about…" I sort of stumbled through that and said, "I think I'm embarrassing myself here." They told me I should take an American history course afterwards. But I don't remember that we got into anything about how would we would manage that.

Q: You came into the Foreign Service when?

TAYLOR: 1974. I passed the written exam. Six months later, I flew back to Washington to take the oral exam. Then they did manage to lose my fingerprints three times. I had them done at some military establishment in Germany. They lost them. I never went on the list for almost a year, I found out later. All the time, I thought I had been competing for a place. Then there was something wrong with my medical clearance, although there wasn't really anything wrong with me. There was something wrong with the papers. That took some time. By the time I actually was sworn in, it was 1974. It was the end of our year in Garmisch. I don't know if I mentioned that Jim was lucky enough to get posted to the Russian language position at Garmisch, the one State position there.

Q: By virtue of being self-taught?

TAYLOR: By virtue of the fact that he applied for and got a political job in Moscow and I think he got that by virtue of having shown the initiative to take Russian on our own time at our own expense. So, they agreed to assign him – of course, it was also much cheaper to send him to Garmisch than to bring him back to State – to Garmisch. It probably for linguistic purposes was not the best place for us. The Garmisch program is for people who have already been through a year of intensive Russian. He had hardly been through an intensive year-long program. So, when we got to Garmisch (and I was allowed to study there), we were behind, but we weren't the most behind. There were some people who had had the year's intensive course and they were much worse prepared than we were. Nevertheless, we were in the section for slow learners. The really bright guys were in the upper two sections. But we caught up. It took us half the year to catch up. We were never among the best. Some of these guys were just fantastic linguists. They were among the military officers who were going to go to listening posts in Berlin and along the Czech border, places like that. We had a wonderful time in Garmisch.

Q: Did you have a junior officer course?

TAYLOR: Yes, I did.

Q: What was that like?

TAYLOR: There were only eight of us in my junior officer course. We immediately bonded. The training took place at 1776 Pennsylvania Avenue, where USIA used to be. We had such a wide ranging group of characters in our little group of eight. It just made every day fun and interesting. The training, in retrospect, was very weak. USIA was extremely reluctant to assign me to Moscow as a junior officer because – and they were right – in Moscow during the '70s, we did not do programs the way USIA operated everywhere else. They said, "We're giving you this training to run a library and to have programs and all these other things and you're not going to be able to do any of that."

Nevertheless, when I got to Moscow, USIS Moscow was so glad to have me or anybody because although they had a staff then of eight or 10 officers, not counting Leningrad, everybody was so overworked. There was so much to do. Even though we didn't run a normal cultural center, we were trying to get out into institutions. So, just having another body, even though I didn't know how to do anything, was good for them. The training that I got in Washington was fun. I never learned how to write a cable. I didn't even know what EMBOFF [Embassy Officer] was. I started reading these cables in Moscow and finally said to Jim, "Who is this EMBOFF person? He goes everywhere! EMBOFF goes here and EMBOFF goes there. I've got to meet him." That's how naïve I was. It is just a generic term used in cablese language. I really think that a better kind of training would have better equipped me. On the other hand, I came with no preconceived notions. I got thrown into a situation where one of the more senior officers was quite ill for five or six

months and almost literally was not able to come to work. So, I immediately had to do her job. This turned out to be the best thing for me. Many junior officers in the days when we had lots of staff had nothing to do. USIA in some places was overstaffed, so it was make-work for junior officers. I had a real job with real responsibilities, although when we went to our next post, which was Kabul, Afghanistan, it's true; the Agency was right. I had to learn everything all over again. There, I was the director of a cultural center and had an English teaching program of 1,000 students and a seminar room and a theater and a big library. I had not done that before.

Q: Go back to Moscow. You were there from when to when?

TAYLOR: '74-'76.

Q: What was the situation with America versus the Soviet Union at that point? What was life like there?

TAYLOR: America versus the Soviet Union in the '70s was probably the best time to be in Moscow. It was the height of détente. It was the Kissinger years. Kissinger was out there at least once a month, sometimes even more. There was a full blown bilateral cultural agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union which allowed us to do a lot of things. Although you could not travel as an individual throughout the country, because of the fact that we had this umbrella agreement, particularly in USIA, we were able to travel a great deal. I accompanied the Robert Joffrey Ballet, my old stomping ground. They came under the cultural agreement. I accompanied the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra to Baku, Yerevan, and Tbilisi. I don't think I could have gotten there easily because our travel was so limited and restricted. I accompanied the New York Jazz Repertory Company to Rostoff on the Don. And a number of other places by virtue of the fact that we had a vehicle that allowed us officially to be our cover, to travel. If you just wanted to apply as a couple or as a group of friends to go visit someplace, the Soviet authorities would most normally turn you down. So, that two year period, which by the late '70s was completely marred and turned around by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, really was a flourishing period of relationships between us.

Also, I found, of all the posts I've been in, that was the best post for third country interaction. My husband was the Middle East watcher in the Political Section. We had wonderful relationships with representatives of Arab countries there that we would not have had in other countries. Everybody turned to everyone else because there was no information coming out of the Soviets, so you had to use your contacts. We had Egyptian, Syrian, Indian, and a lot of Western European friends. We just all bonded together. This created a wonderful third country international community that for us also existed in Afghanistan but less so in the other countries we've been in. The environment was difficult because it was hard to get appointments with Soviets. But at the same time, everybody was in it together and you had a lot to learn from your colleagues in other embassies. I don't remember talking as much in my entire life as I did for the two years we were in Moscow. There was just so much to be learned. Every day was a new

experience. Every day, they'd throw something different at you.

Q: What were you yourself trying to do?

TAYLOR: The best way I could describe it is to divide it into the Information Section and the Cultural Section where we were. We worked with institutions varying from the press, to universities, to the think tanks that were around town. There was the Institute of History and the Institute of Social and Economic Studies. These were major institutions. Of course, the Institute of USA and Canada Studies, the famous one you hear about all the time. Our efforts were to try to bring American experts in a variety of fields into contact with the leadership or the faculty members or the editors of these institutions to set up a dialogue, if that's possible. We used the performing arts in the same way. Let me give you one example that might be illustrative of what I tried to do for two years.

A history professor from Temple University, Marshall Fishwick, a wonderful guy who traveled for USIA quite a lot, came to talk to a number of institutions, the ones that I could get agreement from, on the subject of freedom of the press and the subject of the press in the western environment. We tried not to make this too heavy-handed. But that was basically what the subject was. He was a man of tremendous energy and great humor and liveliness. He just galvanized the audiences that he talked to. But I remember at the Institute of History, where I did have a number of what I would call "friends" in Soviet society, he had a small display of journals, everything from Seventeen Magazine to The Journal of Foreign Policy and everything in between, some with lots of pictures, some very scholarly. Altogether, it was probably representative of maybe one percent or less of what is available in publications in the United States. I'll never forget that at the end of that lecture, people were crowded around Marshall and asking him, "How do you teach journalism?" They were asking informal questions based on what he had been talking about. One woman whom I knew came up to me next to this exhibit of the journals and magazines and said to me, "You know, I am so glad I'm not an American because I wouldn't know what to read. Here in the Soviet Union, people tell us what to read. You have so much choice that I just couldn't make up my mind what to read." I have never forgotten that. That to me said, "That is why we are here."

Q: Were you having problems with the KGB?

TAYLOR: Everybody understood that your phone was tapped both at the office and at home, that the maid that you hired would go through your personal papers. If you didn't hire a maid, there would be a certain amount of ransacking done at your apartment. The people who lived in our apartment before us were a military couple and they did not hire a maid. Not only was their place ransacked and things left upside down many times, things were also stolen. We had a maid from the central hiring authority, UPDK, which served the embassies – still do, I think – and I liked her. She was a delightful young woman. I knew that she had certain requirements. As long as you knew it and you understood it and you lived within those limits, I had nothing to hide. If she wanted to look in my checkbook, she could look in my checkbook. The one funny thing that

happened once was that we had gone on a trip and Jim had taken some pictures of me at the beach in a bikini. These were hardly centerfold-type pictures. We had put them up on one of those folder displays where you put slides up and it's lighted from behind. We were going to sort them into trays. This photograph of me in a bikini disappeared for about a week from the house. So, we would say very loudly in the living room (We had quite a nice apartment actually), in the dining room, in every room, "You know, I know that slide was there yesterday. I saw it. It was right there on the third row in between these other two pictures." We just kept saying it. Pretty soon, it came back. The same was true of our address book. We were very careful never ever to mention the name of Russian contacts or to write their names or addresses down. I had nothing like that lying around. Everything else I thought, "Well, if they're interested in this, they're really wasting their time." So, that did not bother me so much. I assume there were times that we were followed in cars. The only time that I was concerned about it was when we went to visit dissident friends. If you recall, the dissident art movement was one of the big things then. Most of the USIA people had pretty good contacts within the dissident art movement. One time, I had Jamie Wyeth, the artist, in town as a speaker. I took him around to some of the dissident places and I know we were followed. But there was no way to do it otherwise. There was no way I could have gotten to these places. It was almost impossible to drive in Moscow. That meant that frequently you had to go with a driver. Simply by virtue of being with a driver, the KGB would know where you were going. The blatant following really occurred more out of town. Jim and a friend were followed in a very comical way in Minsk once. He and another guy had gone to buy books in Minsk. The Political Section had a big book buying budget. They bought up every book there was in Minsk. Since there were no cars in Minsk at that time, it was quite easy to tail Jim and his colleague. They knew they were being tailed by sort of a Mutt and Jeff team. It was pretty comical. One night, they went to a nightclub in the hotel they were staying in. These two thugs were sitting over there. They'd wave and they'd wave back. The funniest time when I was along was when we were in Leningrad buying books. We had been driving around all day buying books. I was with Jim at this point. You had to travel with somebody, either your spouse or someone else. So, I went on that trip to Leningrad. We went around and ordered all of the books. All of the bookstore people were familiar with this embassy program. They said, "Okay, it will take us three hours to bundle these all up. Come back in three hours." So, Jim and I went around and looked at things in Leningrad. At the end of the day, we went back and picked up parcels everywhere. It was the last stop of the day. It was snowing. It was winter. It was getting very dark, about 4:00 PM. Our tail was behind us. They had been pretty bumbling throughout the day and kind of comical. We were driving around in one of these little Zhiguli, which is those Soviet Fiats that belonged to the consulate in Leningrad. We pulled up in front of the bookstore and we went in. There were just stacks of books. I didn't know how they were all going to fit in the little car. We came staggering out with them and our tail came in the bookstore. They picked up the parcels, brought them out to the car, helped us put them in the car. We all shook hands. We spoke pretty good Russian at that point. We said, "Well, that's it for the day." That was one time when it was very obvious. We did nothing. Other than buying the books, we went to do some sightseeing. We went to lunch. Occasionally, when you were in another city, somebody very odd who spoke perfect English would show up

sitting at your dinner table. There are some funny stories about happenings in Moscow.

The best story of all time that we still talk about now actually happened to Jim, but we were all involved in it. That was when he was traveling with the then Secretary of the Treasury, Simon. They were all on the same plane. A press guy, a radio guy who spoke perfect English, Boris, who worked for Radio Moscow, sat down next to Jim and they were chatting on their way to someplace on the Black Sea. Jim was reading a book by Laurens Van Der Post called The View of All the Russias in paperback. It is a wonderful book. Boris and Jim chatted all the way. At the end of the trip, Boris said, "I'd really love to read that book. Would you mind lending it to me?" Jim said, "Sure." Anytime you can get a western publication in somebody's hands. So, he gave him the book. Then a series of invitations came from Boris and his wife, who was a Swedish language broadcaster for Radio Moscow who spoke no English. This was a bit unusual. So, we told our various bosses that we were going to accept these. They said, "Fine." One night, we reciprocated by having Boris and his wife and a couple of other official Russian couples, no dissidents, at our apartment for dinner. The big thing in Moscow was to show movies. It was a great way to entertain. The Russians loved it. We were showing Blazing Saddles or something like that. One of our guests was to this day a very good friend to the then CIA station chief. He lived in the apartment directly below us. We had a bunch of other people. As Jim was taking the movie screen down (We had our own screen), Boris ducked behind the screen and pushed this little piece of paper in Jim's hand. Jim just quietly pocketed it and continued on. The evening continued on. I think Jim actually took Boris and his wife home that night, if I'm not mistaken. At the end of the evening, Jim opens the little note. It's an agent's message. So, we took it into the embassy the next day. Our friend Bob was there and other people were there. He said, "Yes, this is a legitimate message, but I have no idea why he's giving it to you." The station chief then asked my supervisor, the PAO, Ray Benson, a wonderful guy, who always likes a bit of mischief, and Jim's boss, Marshall Brement. Both of them authorized our continuing to see Boris just until the Agency could figure out what was going on here. So, this message went back to headquarters. It turned out that Boris was, according to what he said in the message, a legitimate double or maybe triple agent, but the Agency, the CIA, had dropped him over the years. They had used him years back, but then they dropped him. His information was of moderate interest only. So, life continued on. We would see them occasionally. Each time that we saw them, Boris would give Jim a message. Finally, we were getting ready to leave Moscow. I think it was the end of our second year. Boris and his wife invited us to the opera. They were going on a trip to the Black Sea and they had really wanted me to go with them. Every day, they'd call me up and say, "Oh, Louise, you've got to come with us. We love you so much!" I just wasn't able to go. So, I got together a little pile of paperback books for Boris to take and then I got some fashion magazines and house magazines for his wife. Because she could not read English, she liked to look at the pictures. One of the books that I got for Boris was Tinker, Tailor, Sailor, Spy by John le Carre. I thought he would think that is a good read. And a couple of other things. I put them in this bag and off we went to the opera. Jim had decided and he told the station chief that that night he was going to tell Boris that he really had the wrong man, that we were leaving and that if Boris really wanted the relationship with the embassy, he had to

do it with the correct outfit. So, he decided to do this at the intermission. I went off with the wife. Jim went off with Boris. We got back to our seats and the lights went down and Jim whispered to me, "I can't tell you anything more, but just ditch the books. Don't give him the books. Give him the magazines." This was to have taken place later in the car. So, I thought something had happened. We got through the rest of the opera. As we went home in the car together, I gave her her bag of magazines and I put the books under the seat. What turned out to have been happening over a seven or eight month period… Boris was quite irate at Jim when Jim told him that Jim was not a real agent and that he was dealing with the wrong person. Boris said, "Well, why didn't you tell me this from the very beginning? On top of that, where is my money? I haven't been paid!" Jim said, "Well, I just don't know anything about this. I don't even know why you turned up in my life." Boris said, "Well, you activated me." Jim said, "I have no idea what you're talking about." Boris said, "Well, what about the word 'Cossack?'" It turns out that when Jim had handed the book A View of All the Russias to Boris, he had turned down the corner of the page where he had finished reading and it pointed to a chapter called "Cossacks." This was Boris' codename from the '60s. Boris had thought that the embassy was asking him to come back to work for them. All of the time, he had been passing these messages of moderate degree of interest to the CIA and they were not paying him for this and they were not giving him all the stuff he was used to. As we say to our friend Bob, and we still see him – we go out to dinner a lot – "Here he was, he missed one of the biggest stories that was right under his nose, right in our apartment, and he had no idea what was going on. He had no idea why Boris had resurfaced." So, when we got back to the apartment that night after the opera, Jim went straight to the bookcase. Boris had returned the book some months earlier and Jim had just put it back on the shelf. He took it off of the shelf and opened it up and there was Boris' first message saying, "I'm here. I'm back. These are my terms. This is what I expect." That had never been passed to the CIA because Jim didn't have a clue. I think that's really one of the best coincidental stories that I've ever heard and one of the best ones that happened to us.

Q: I think this is a good time to stop. We'll pick this up when you left Moscow in 1976 and you're off to Afghanistan.

TAYLOR: By way of Dari language training.

Q: Today is February 1, 2001. You wanted to add a few more things about Moscow.

TAYLOR: Yes. You had asked me a little bit about living conditions there. I wanted to make one more comment about living conditions and also working conditions. That was really what defined our existence in Moscow, what we were able to do, how much we were able to accomplish. First of all, working conditions. In my line of work in the USIS operation there, despite the fact that it was the height of détente with lots and lots of exchange going on between the United State and the Soviet Union at all levels, there were still thousands of prickly thorns in the side of the bilateral relationship. Many of these thorns would come to haunt us even though it might not be directly involved with what the USIS project of the day or month happened to be but simply because something had

gone wrong in the bilateral relationship. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would be instructed to make sure something didn't go right. As a junior officer, this was my first tour in the USIA overseas. I found that I would set up a speaking program on any subject of mutual interest. I talked about journalism last time. Maybe arts administration or the American university system. I would have a speaker lined up from the United States. I would have all of the visas and everything that you had to do to get it all done including having have the appointments made. The speaker would typically get to Helsinki. I would get a call typically at three or four in the morning saying that the speaker had been denied either entrance into the Soviet Union or the Finnish authorities had been informed by the Soviet authorities that they would not allow this person to enter the Soviet Union after all. So, you had a very irate professor from the United States or speaker or expert or even government officials on some occasions expecting to come to the Soviet Union for a two week professional tour. We had knocked ourselves out for weeks and weeks and weeks trying to make this happen. For some unknown reason, again, totally unrelated to the specific project but something at some other level in the U.S.-Soviet relationship had gone wrong and then the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would be instructed to make sure that further obstacles were thrown in our path. So, very often, the project did go ahead, but frequently there would be some little things that would happen along the way. Instead of being able to go to Vladivostok with the speaker, Vladivostok would mysteriously disappear from the itinerary and Habarovsk would be substituted and things like that. But when the speaker was denied permission to travel altogether, that really was a disappointment. We always worked so hard to make these things go right. So, that's just one comment on-

Q: Could you retaliate?

TAYLOR: It wasn't in our interests to retaliate. We didn't want to block the Soviets from carrying out their activities in the United States. On one level, it was in our interests to make sure that most Russians saw as much of our country as they could. Now, there were retaliations for use of the dacha. I think everybody knows the famous American embassy dacha that's 25 kilometers outside of Moscow. That was as far as we were permitted to drive. So, we had this fiction that Soviet employees of the embassies here and the consulate in New York could drive only 25 kilometers in a radius of New York or Washington. But of course, within 25 kilometers of New York or Washington, you have all the riches and splendors of the world, whereas in 25 kilometers of a radius of Moscow, you have virtually nothing other than this dilapidated old dacha which looked like Heaven to us when we got there. There were times when you'd get personally angry about these things. I remember once seeing a Soviet diplomat shopping at the Georgetown Safeway. I'd see these Soviet diplomats there just going up and down the aisles and putting all of these things in their cart and remembering my days in the Soviet Union when the scramble for food was really difficult – not just for the two of us, both of us working full-time, which made it even more difficult, but for families with children, getting nourishing food could be a full-time occupation.

I'm sure that people engaged in this program will have heard of the dollar stores. It was

where you could find for hard currency the staple items as well as a few fresh food items – and by that I mean a very few items - for dollars. You could occasionally find a kilo of carrots, but of the kilo of carrots, at least half that would just be dirt. They would dig the carrots up and clumps of dirt and all would go in the bag. But they were fresh. You could occasionally find fresh apples. We quickly learned that there was one cut of meat and only one cut of meat that was edible. So, everybody ate filet in the Soviet Union for two years. It wasn't too bad, but it wasn't fabulous either. Occasionally, you could find a chicken. The U.S. embassy had a small, extremely inadequate commissary. It was vastly, shockingly overpriced. It cost so much to bring goods such distance and on the train and through all the diplomatic hoops that they had to leap through. The commissary was probably maybe twice the size of this room, which is a rather small space, and had one or two freezer compartments, which meant that such things as a little three ounce can of frozen orange juice was rationed. Each family, no matter how large, could purchase two of these small cans of orange juice per week. That barely gets two people through a week and you treasure your orange juice in the morning. Similarly, you could purchase one to two packages of Bird's Eye lima beans or frozen peas or whatever a week. This was rationed because there was no freezer space available. People who ran the commissary and the administrative counselor looked around for freezer space on the Soviet economy to rent so that we could have more foodstuffs. They found that it would really not be safe nor keep the food protected by renting from the Soviets because their freezer conditions and their capability was deemed to be not only unsafe but unsanitary. Whatever the temperature was supposed to be, it was at least five degrees higher than U.S. safety requirements called for. Anyway, it turned out to be unfeasible to get extra freezer space. So, if you wanted to have a dinner party, for example, for 15 people, and you wanted everyone to have frozen lima beans, you had to ration yourself and store up and horde for about 10 weeks before you could get enough of the right kind of food to serve a group of people. Now, we all lived this way and it became a joke. When my parents came to visit, for example, they brought in their luggage a rib roast that they had wrapped very carefully. We all ate it and treasured every bit. Still, I would say that, particularly for families with children, the issue of food was always a difficult one. If you spoke no Russian at all, it was almost impossible to get around. Much as in our country, there were very few signs in any language other than Russian. Including in the wonderful metro, if you didn't speak Russian, you couldn't maneuver in the system. I would say that life was extraordinarily difficult.

The only easy part of getting around Moscow was that since very few Russians had personal cars, there was hardly any traffic. The huge, wide boulevards were empty of traffic. So, we never once sat in a traffic jam.

Q: You all are replete with stories of male officers, married and unmarried, who find all of a sudden a pretty young lady presenting herself, obviously sent by the KGB. How about you as a married professional woman? Did nice looking young men come up and be available? Did you ever have any feeling that they were targeting you in this way?

TAYLOR: I mentioned in the story last time about the mistaken identity of Boris, the

KGB spy. Boris and his wife, both of whom were considerably older than Jim and I were at the time, were actively trying to get me to accompany them on a trip they were making to Sochi in the south on the Black Sea. Certainly, had I agreed to go on that, there would have been some kind of entrapment involved, I'm sure - not with either one of them, but somebody else. The direct answer to your question is, no, I don't feel that they ever sent any attractive man in my way for any particular purpose. I do remember being approached a few times when Jim and I would be together, for example, walking around in Red Square. We had had a conversation in our apartment one night just speculating, "What would you do if you had a million dollars?" "Well, if I had a million dollars, I would…" We talked about travel, building a house someplace… Somebody in the group said, "I would never work again if I had a million dollars." So, the next night, Jim and I were wandering around Red Square just because it was a pleasant thing to do every once in a while. A very well dressed young Russian approached us and he had some cassette tapes that he wanted to sell. He supposedly also wanted to purchase our clothing. Then he had some little fake icons that he wanted to sell. The line that he used was, "Now, if you buy these icons and you sell them on the western market, you'll never have to work again." He said this in perfect English. So, whether this was just an unbelievable coincidence or they had taped us, they had thought, "Oh, here is a vulnerability. These people are talking about never having to work again," not realizing it was just fantasy and for fun, and they tracked us down to Red Square and set this thing up… It's almost too much to believe that they could have done it. But in terms of somebody being targeted on me, to my knowledge, I don't think that happened.

Q: When I was in Belgrade, I used to take the pouch to Sarajevo or to Zagreb from time to time. We had a compartment. I vowed that if one of these beautiful young ladies was sicced on me, I'd keep at least one knee on the pouch at all times. Nothing ever happened.

TAYLOR: I began to think at a certain point, after close to two years in Moscow when nobody was asking to buy my clothes anymore, "I'm getting pretty dowdy here." People would come up and start asking me instructions in Russian: "How do you get there? Do you know where this is?" I thought, "I've got to get out of here and go refurbish myself because I'm beginning to look like a Soviet citizen."

When we traveled with the pouch… You usually got a trip a year if you could get away from your office. That means we got to Helsinki twice in the two years we were there. But we had to have someone else with us. On the two occasions, one time, Jim was not able to travel, so I went with another woman. The second time, we were able to travel together. But it was not allowed to go on the Red Arrow train, that wonderful train that left Moscow at midnight and got into Helsinki the next morning around 9:00 or 10:00. It was a very leisurely, wonderful trip.

Q: 1976. Did you leave before the Bicentennial celebration?

TAYLOR: We left Moscow on July 1st or 2nd and spent several days in Copenhagen and were hoping to get to New York for the tall ships while on our way to California to see

Jim's family. We were out of the Soviet Union. We had finished the two year tour and felt liberated. We had a wonderful three or four days in Copenhagen. Then just as we were flying off to spend the Fourth of July in New York, there was a bomb scare on PanAm, so we spent the Fourth of July in Copenhagen. We did have a wonderful Fourth of July the year before, however, and it's worth mentioning particularly because the Ken Burns Jazz Series is playing on television right now. One of the last things I did in the Soviet Union on a major scale was to escort the New York Jazz Repertory Company all around the Soviet Union. The theme of their trip was Louis Armstrong. Louis Armstrong's jazz was one of the few forms of contemporary popular music that was not considered to be threatening by the Soviet Union. The fact that he was an African-American man made it even a little more palatable. Louis Armstrong was born in 1900, so 1975 was the 75th anniversary of his birth. He was dead by this time, but there was a fabulous orchestra of about 20-plus musicians from New York headed by Dick Heiman, the pianist, who were doing a commemorative year of Armstrong's music. The Soviets are big on anniversaries. All these factors went together. This was factored into the bilateral cultural relationship. I traveled with this group. It was one of the best experiences of my life. In a place like Rostoff-on-the-Don, for example, you would find Soviet jazz bands who remembered Benny Goodman from his tour some 15 years earlier in the Soviet Union. They would come by train 3,000 miles away to hear this group in Rostoff, clamoring to get tickets. I'm raising this because it was the Fourth of July and the New York Jazz Repertory was in the Soviet Union for a two week period around the Fourth. Ambassador and Mrs. Stoessel were wonderful party givers. Mrs. Stoessel in particular loved to dance and she would import U.S. military bands from West Germany to play at different times of the year and we'd have a wonderful dance in the beautiful ballroom of Spaso House. This particular July Fourth, I had the New York Jazz Repertory with me. Of course, they were all invited to the Fourth of July celebration at Spaso. Not all of them, but about 10 of them brought their instruments. We had the wildest jam session in Spaso House. Everybody was dancing. The Russians were just swinging out. It was absolutely fabulous. You'd never know you were in a Cold War environment on that particular day. That's probably one of the most memorable July Fourths I've ever had. We were not in Moscow for the big '76. We were in Copenhagen.

Q: You came back to Washington and took Dari. What is the difference between Dari and Farsi?

TAYLOR: Dari and Farsi are very close. They're virtually the same language. To my ear, there is a different inflection in the pronunciation of the vowels. Speaking from sort of a parochial standpoint, I think that Dari has a much more beautiful sound to it than Iranian Farsi, which has a flatter sound. Just to boil the difference down to one vowel sound, the word for the pronoun "I" in Dari is "Ma." In Farsi, it's more of a "Mac" sound. But the languages are interchangeable. There is a difference of vocabulary words, but the languages are interchangeable. There is a difference of vocabulary words, but the peoples of both countries can understand each other. When I went to Iran after studying Dari for seven months, I had difficulty the first three or four days I was there. Had I stayed there, had I been assigned to Iran, I would have been able to make the adjustment quite easily.

The script is the same. The word "Dari" comes from Darius, the great Persian king. Afghans will tell you that their language, Dari, was the language of the court of Darius, whereas "Those Iranians just speak this peasant-type Farsi." By the way, FSI in Rosslyn at the time, our Dari teacher, who is still at FSI, Hafiz Latify, was probably the best teacher of any subject I have ever had anywhere. Other students of Hafiz's will tell you the same thing. He is a natural teacher. There is just something unique about his approach. Dari is an easy languages. It's an Indo-European language. After just seven months or so, I got a 3/2+, which was a fairly high grade, but it was because Hafiz made it so easy for me. My reading ability never got much better than that, but my speaking ability in Afghanistan was quite developed after the end of the tour. I credit him for that.

Q: You and Jim went to Afghanistan and were there from when to when?

TAYLOR: We arrived in the spring of '77. We left after the Soviet invasion of 1980. We were there almost three years – March of '77 to February of '80. He left a few months before I left.

Q: Talking about 1977, what were you getting from the desk and people before you went out to Afghanistan and when you arrived there? What was the situation in Afghanistan in '77?

TAYLOR: In '77, Afghanistan was a thriving developing country. AID was probably 100 strong. The Germans, the French, the Chinese, the UN, any number of smaller countries, even the Iranians, I believe, had assistance programs there which were helping the Afghans. The Afghans had four major high schools, each of which fed into the two university systems. In one high school, the students were bilingual in English and Dari. In another German; in another French; and in another, Russian. Kabul university was originally founded by AID, had an agricultural basis to it but grew up to be a major university specializing in all fields, a lot of American faculty, and the medium of instruction was by and large English. The Polytechnic was a Soviet- designed university. The staff was largely Russian. The medium of instruction was Russian. Afghanistan at that time was, as it has always been, part of the so-called "Great Game," only the Great Game was now between the United States and Russia. But Iran played a major role. So did Pakistan and India. The atmosphere in Kabul was wide open. Afghans, third country nationals, just about everybody, participated in everything. The American Cultural Center, of which I was the director, had 1,500 students in its English teaching program along with another 100-200 in the professional level program whereby AID would funnel its scholarship students through our English teaching program. So, we had very level range of students from ministries, from universities, about to go off on an AID grant to the United States. We had a 15,000 volume library, an open stacks library. It was mobbed with Afghan university students every day. Members of the Afghan press were there. Members of the third country communities were there. Social life in Afghanistan was the best social life in terms of getting to know everybody from Peace Corps to Afghans of all walks of life to diplomats from all the countries, including the Soviet embassy. It was just a wonderful environment. I'll never forget it. It was the happiest I think I was in my

Foreign Service career.

The government at that time was a so-called "republic," although it wasn't really a republic. The president of the government, a man named Daoud, who was overthrown and killed in the '78 Marxist coup, had overthrown his own brother-in-law and cousin, King Zahir Shah, in 1973 in what was essentially a bloodless coup. I think one soldier was killed in that '73 takeover. Zahir Shah, the king who was overthrown, lives today still in Rome. He is quite elderly. But he plays a role in the attempts at a peace process. So, Daoud had been in power with a lot of enemies since '73 when we arrived in '77. But it was a very calm environment. There were concerns the Soviets had been training thousands of military officers on an annual basis. Our military officer training program was limited to fewer than 20 on an annual basis. That was a matter of concern. No one, however, in any agency, in any office here in Washington or in Afghanistan, predicted what happened April 27, 1978, which was the great Sauer Revolution.

Q: Prior to that, what about the countryside? One always thinks of Kabul being an international city, but you have all these fundamentalist tribal groups sitting out camped around the hills.

TAYLOR: That's the impression one has now. It is true that Kabul was very much an international city. It's located at an elevation of 6,000-plus feet, so it has a delightful climate. There is extreme poverty in the poor parts of the city, but nothing like the poverty you see in the countryside. But we were able to travel and did in that year and a half before it became impossible and very unsafe to travel. Jim and I as well as others usually traveled in groups of maybe 10 or more in small caravans. That was the safest way to travel. The countryside is magnificent. The villagers are the model of hospitality that you've always read about in that part of the world. One time, we were blocked from our destination of Bamiyan, the Buddhist pilgrimage point from the Silk Route days. We were a group of four. We ran into a huge landslide where a 600 foot cliff had fallen down into the road. We couldn't get back to Kabul; we were too far away. We had to camp out at about 10,000 feet. It was late October and was very cold. We were in our four wheel drive car, but we were not prepared to camp out. And the villagers nearby came and said, "No, you can't sleep on the ground. You can't sleep in the car. It's too cold. Come and sleep here in our little huts with us." Fundamentalism is something that has come to Afghanistan in the last 10 years. In the '70s and prior to that, the way I would describe Afghanistan and the villagers, the people outside the major cities, is, these are people who are devout Muslims, committed to their religion, but they really couldn't care less what their neighbor did or what you did. Certainly they would pray five times a day. They would give the zakat. But there was nothing about Afghans – and it really hurts so much to see them depicted this way in the press now and to see this actually has happened – that the fundamentalist movement largely coming from groups in Pakistan has now become the outward identify of the Afghan people. If there is ever a group of Muslim peoples, and I have lived in many Muslim countries and traveled and worked in other Islamic countries, that was what I would call "moderate" in terms of its approach to religion, it was the Afghanistan of the 1970s. Again, this is not to say they were not devout Muslims.

Indeed, they were. But they didn't have a crusading motivation. Many of them in the countryside lived in extremely narrow, isolated valleys. The concept of Islam being their everyday motivating factor was about as far from reality as anything. Their motivating factor was simply to survive and to eek out a living on these rocky plateaus where they lived. Sometimes we traveled through valleys which were so steeply graded that sunshine never got in there for more than a couple of hours a day. So, these were not people who were crusading around to cause everyone to conform to a certain behavior standard. They loved music. They loved their cassettes of their favorite singers. Tabla players were on in every little café – by "café," I mean just a little hut with a couple of straw chairs to sit on. Everybody had a radio or a cassette player. Very rudimentary cassette players were available and maybe one person in the village would have a cassette player. Somebody would come from Jalalabad and bring the latest cassettes. So, they loved music. They loved film. Film was very popular. All of these things are forbidden now. Women in Kabul, both professional women and not professional women, didn't necessarily go about covered up. Many women in Kabul wore western dress, knee length skirts, jackets, nothing on the head. This was also true in the countryside. You would see women working in the fields where it's very cumbersome to wear a chador or a burqa or anything like that. So, they didn't. The nomads, called Kuchis, from the Dari word "kuchkadan," meaning "to move," the women never wore anything on their heads. Very striking women, by the way, with wonderfully colorful dresses with coins and things sewn into them. This has all come about in the last 10 years. To me, it represents a dramatic change not in the basic Afghan character because I don't think the basic Afghan character has changed. But this is something that has been imposed on them and out of fear now you see people in the villages as well as women in the urban areas covered from head to toe. I'm not saying that there were not women who were covered when we were there. There were. But it was a matter of choice. No one looked disparagingly on someone else for choosing one way or the other. That's the major difference in Afghan society today and it's all imposed by fear.

Q: How did the mix of the students of the technical university trained by the Russians and you were training the ones in liberal arts…

TAYLOR: Also the sciences.

Q: And also the sciences. Was there much mixture? Was there rivalry?

TAYLOR: That's a good question. I don't know the answer to it in detail except that Kabul University graduates up until the time of the first Marxist coup were the ones who got the good jobs in the ministries. They were the ones who got good jobs in the private businesses which existed. I don't know that there was a rivalry in the sense that there is between two big college football schools or such. I think there was not much interchange between the two schools. On the other hand, you have the vast family networks in Kabul at that time. Again, this is prior to the politicization that occurred once the Marxist coup of '78 took place. That is a very interesting question. I'd like to know more about that, whether or not there was actual rivalry between these two groups. Again, I don't think

they mixed very much. There were polytechnic students who came to the American Cultural Center all the time. They were learning English. They knew that they didn't have much of a future, at least not until the coup of '78, if they didn't learn to speak English. The irony was that our cultural center was in what you might call the pretty central downtown part, whereas both of these universities were located on the other side of town divided by a spectacular series of mountain passes and out near the AID compound in a more rural-looking part of Kabul. It was still the city but it was more residential. It was a four afghani or a two afghani bus ride. That was considerable pocket change. There were 40 Afghanis to the dollar in those days. So, it was a two to four afghani bus ride from the university to the cultural center.

The Soviets built this enormous marble cultural palace about a quarter of a kilometer from both of the two universities right on the bus route from the polytechnic and the Kabul University in the town. That place was empty. They built it in '77 or so. I remember the Soviet cultural counselor at that time invited me out for tea because he saw that our little bungalow was just stuffed with students and ministry people and newspaper people and all the people we really wanted in our so-called "target audience." They came and saw the programs. They were watching what we were doing. They came to our movies. The whole Chinese embassy one night came to see "The Old Man in the Sea." It was one of the best things I ever did. That was closer to '79, of course. Anyway, they were all keeping an eye on what we were doing and the Soviet cultural counselor when he had this enormous palace with every bell and whistle you can imagine, totally empty, invited me out and said, "How do you do it? What are some of your programming ideas?" I gave him everything. I gave him copies of old programs. I gave him a lot of printed material. I showed him how we set up our English teaching process. I showed him the library. I showed him the seminar room where we did exhibits and held seminars. I gave him my speaker ideas. Still, nobody stopped at the Soviet cultural palace. They all came downtown either to the Alliance Française or mostly to our place. The Goethe Institute had a smaller operation. But again, these high schools would feed into the different cultural programs. So, the poor Soviets were out there with their multimillion dollar cultural palace totally unused, very cleverly situated a quarter of a mile from the universities, yet the students paid the money, took the long bus ride, including the girl students… Getting on a bus for an Afghan woman, despite the fact that they were fairly modernized and free, riding on a bus with a bunch of rowdy male students was not an easy thing to do, so the young Afghani female students would take a taxi to come to our English language center, to come to the library, and they would come with two or three girlfriends and they would mix freely with the young men students there. It was almost like being on an American campus.

Q: Was there much flow from there to graduate schools in the U.S.?

TAYLOR: There was a Fulbright program with Afghanistan which was quite small. I think we offered six scholarships a year. That was commensurate with our interest level in the country and with the budget. It was a matter of finance. There would have been more students had it not been so costly to come to the United States. Yes, there was a

flow in a small way. Ironically, one of the students who did somehow make his way without a Fulbright scholarship to the United States was the infamous Hafizullah Amin, who played a role in the first Marxist coup. He was a member of one of the two communist parties in Afghanistan. But years earlier, he had been a student at Columbia University. He was a very bad pick for a scholarship. I'm not sure what kind of scholarship he got. It was not a Fulbright. I don't think it was an AID grant. Somehow, he got there. He was not prepared for Columbia University. He did very poorly there. He did not have any friends. I don't know that he encountered prejudice, but his English was so limited at the time that he probably just wasn't able to make his way very well. He came away from that experience with a great deal of anti-Americanism. It festered over the years and eventually obviously showed up. He played a role in the abduction and assassination of Ambassador Dubs in February of '79. Hafizullah Amin himself was killed in the second Marxist coup in the fall of '79 shortly after that. Sometimes these programs backfire and Hafizullah is a good example of that.

Q: Kwame Nkrumah went to Lincoln University and it didn't take very well.

When you were at the embassy, did you get any feeling of what we wanted there? What were our interests in Afghanistan?

TAYLOR: Our interests were in keeping Afghanistan as neutral as possible. We had humanitarian interests. I believe the United States' foreign policy in countries like that has always been conducted from a humanitarian standpoint partially. We did have an interest in helping the country develop. We certainly didn't want undue influence from any sector – either the Iranian… Until '79, we still had a stable relationship with Iran. But all you had to do was look below the surface and you could see that that was deteriorating. Of course, the assassination of Ambassador Dubs and the first Iranian takeover of our embassy occurred on the very same day. There was some thought before we sorted it all out on that terrible day that these things might have been related. They weren't, but it was very unclear what the forces were at work. The overarching policy goal we had in Afghanistan prior to the '78 coup was to keep Afghanistan from becoming a Soviet platform, to keep it from becoming entirely dominated by Iran. Both countries were interested in natural gas resources which were said to exist in the northern part of Afghanistan. We had our own alliance and relationship with Pakistan. It's a geostrategic location despite the difficulties of traversing the country and the Himalaya range coming through the middle of it.

Q: I've never served in that area, but I have the feel that we kind of liked the way things were. The Soviets were doing their thing and we were doing our thing. I'm told the roads would sometimes connect.

TAYLOR: That's true. There was only really one road in Afghanistan. It was circular. If you look at the shape of the country, it went around the interior perimeter. Part of it was built by us and part of it was built by the Soviets. One of the seven wonders of the world certainly has to be the Salang Pass Tunnel that the Soviets built through the Himalayas at

about 12-14,000 feet. Ten months of the year, this particular terrain looks like the highest peaks of the Alps. It is covered with 20 feet of snow or more. It's spectacular scenery. But what the Soviets did there in the '50s-'60s was to construct what at the time and what to this day must be one of the truly remarkable engineering projects of our time, a nine mile passageway from one side of the Himalayas from the northern side through to the southern side. For a country with very few resources and one of the six poorest countries in the world in the 1960s, what did the Soviets have in mind. There is the warm weather port theory, that this was the way to the ports along the Pakistani coasts and so forth. In any case, they built this. We went through it twice. It's a remarkable experience. The actual tunnel itself through the mountains is probably two to three miles inside the mountain. There are two or three miles on either end of what I would call a gallery. The road skirts the edge of the mountainside. Again, you're way up in the clouds. The mountain comes across the top and forms the roof of the gallery, but then it's carved out of the edge of the mountain so that you actually are able to see through the cement posts out into the top of the world. It's an extraordinary feat of engineering. During the worst of the Afghan-Russian war in the '80s, the Afghans were said to have at least once and possibly more times succeeded in blowing up huge convoys of Russians as they came through the tunnel. Obviously, you're pretty vulnerable once you get a convoy in the tunnel. If you can blow up either end, you've got them. Yes, I guess you could say that up until '78, we were very satisfied with the balance of power, if you can call it that, that existed there.

Q: How would one describe the Daoud government? Was it communist? Was it socialist?

TAYLOR: There are differences of opinion. There were some in our embassy who felt that Daoud was dangerously to the left. There were others who felt that he was dangerously colluding with the Iranians. I felt – and again, I wasn't in the Political Section – that he was really just trying to keep the balance, to keep from becoming a puppet in any way, to keep the Russians happy, to keep the Iranians happy. I think Daoud had a view of the Americans as being fairly naïve about that part of the world. I don't think any ambassador of ours was ever on what you would call friendly close terms with Daoud. Ted Elliott was our ambassador before Spike Dubs. I liked Daoud because he used to drive around town in a little grey European Opal or something like that, a very modest car. I thought he was trying to establish a relative degree of stability which would then allow more resources to go for development. I don't think he was stealing the country blind. When he was murdered, killed, in the coup, the Communist Party opened up Daoud's residence the day after the coup finished. We went through it. They opened it up to the public. It was really quite modest. Of course, it was modest to us as westerners. But they opened it up to show the people how Daoud had stolen the country blind. I'm sure that a lot of people were stealing a lot from the treasury of Afghanistan over the years on all sides, but what you saw in the so-called "palace," and it was a very modest palace – it was only three blocks from our house – was some furniture that someone of moderate wealth might have and a few dishes here and there, but nothing lavish and nothing elaborate. And the funny little car was parked in the courtyard. I guess that history will look at Daoud as someone who failed to maintain control and to know what

was going on in all sectors. But I think there is even some evidence to say that even the Soviets did not fully understand that on April 27, 1978, these Soviet-trained military officers were preparing for a coup. So, I'm not sure therefore that it's fair to say that Daoud had totally lost control. Had he not overthrown the King, would the Sauer Revolution have happened? I think it would have. Sauer is one of the Dari months of the year. The propagandists who came along with the Communist Party always referred to it as the Great Sour Revolution. It became sort of a joke.

Q: When did Spike Dubs come on board?

TAYLOR: Ted Elliott was there for the Great Sauer Revolution. That was in April of '78. He must have left in the summer of '78. Spike, who had been our DCM in Moscow, came in the summer of '78. He was killed less than a year later in February of '79. The transition between Ted Elliott and Spike was in the summer of '78.

Q: What were your experiences during the revolution?

TAYLOR: I will not call it a "revolution." They called it the Great Sauer Revolution. I called it the "military coup." On April 27, 1978… The weekend in Afghanistan was Thursday-Friday, which put us out of touch with Washington for four straight days. It was kind of nice. We all liked that. I happened to be the duty officer that day. My mother was arriving from Frankfurt on that day having had eye surgery in Frankfurt when Father was assigned to Peshawar, coincidentally enough, during this period. We had seen a good deal of my parents. It was very nice being so close by, although those assignments were not done in tandem. So, my mother was arriving at the airport at noon. I was duty officer at the embassy which was a mile and a half from our house, maybe two at the most. I forget what Jim was doing. We had this wonderful compound, a typical old-fashioned bungalow just sprawling everywhere. It made no architectural sense, but it was a wonderful place to live. It was a peaceful Thursday morning. Friday, of course, was the holy day. Wednesday night, which was like our Friday night, we had had the Russian embassy over to the American cultural center for a big Soviet-American friendship gabfest. They had invited us at one point and we were reciprocating. We did it at the American cultural center. There were 200 Soviets with their spouses there, one of the few times you saw the Russian spouses being allowed to go out. We had a wonderful dinner in the library. We had speeches by Ted Elliott and my husband did the translating into Russian for that. (end of tape)

So, it's an interesting confluence of events to think that within a day or two of this major military coup, if the Soviets were behind it, there had been a major American-Soviet friendship night. It was something we had planned for months and months. I was the hostess for it since it took place in the cultural center. We all worked on it.

The Wednesday night before the Thursday, there had been a big springtime dance at the Intercontinental Hotel, the only hotel in town, a beautiful place. The whole international community was there. We had a wonderful time, a good band. Everybody partied a lot in

Afghanistan. It was a party post. So, Thursday morning, I'm at the embassy as the duty officer. It's fairly quiet until all of a sudden ... I managed to get to the airport, pick my mother up. Nothing unusual at the airport. I brought her back to our house. I said, "I'll be back from the embassy in a couple of hours." By about noon or 1:00 pm, an enormous tank file of 60-70 tanks rumbled down the street in front of the embassy which led from the military barracks past the airport and down in front of the embassy to the palace. Radio Afghanistan was right next door to the embassy. At the same time, within an hour, there were MIGs in the air bombing the city. This was fairly frightening. I had never been in a place with tanks 100 feet in front of the embassy nor had I been in a place where bombs were falling. The bombs were falling close by. One of them barely missed the United Nations headquarters and the Chinese embassy. Those two buildings were right next to each other. One huge 800 pound bomb fell in the intersection directly in front of those buildings. That was half a block from the American cultural center. Everything was happening very close together. We were stuck in the embassy. Ted was there. The ambassador was there. I was there. A few communicators were there because we were trying to get the Thursday traffic out. We were winding up the duty. My husband and Larry Thompson, the number two in the Economic Section, who was a good friend of ours, heard gunfire in town. They then began to hear the tank fire. They ended up in our tiny Toyota. That's what Daoud also drove. Jim and Larry were driving all around town following the tanks which were firing every place they went. They fired on the ministry of interior, which was right next door to the American ambassador's residence. They fired on the palace. They fired on Radio Afghanistan. So, Larry and Jim were kind of dodging through these tanks. It was a cops and robbers type of thing. But eventually it became clear that this was extremely serious. The ambassador ordered most of us to remain in the embassy. We could not leave. There was no going out on the streets. Jim and Larry, having followed the tanks all around town, ended up at the ambassador's residence. Mrs. Elliott was there along with Ambassador Heck and Ernie Heck, who just happened to be visiting from Nepal. Ambassador Heck was in Nepal at the time. They were houseguests of the Elliott's. They certainly didn't expect to come for a coup.

The other thing that happened that day that was of concern was that there was an international debate or drama contest among the international schools. The American International School in Kabul was host to 200-300 American kids and kids of other nationalities from the international schools in neighboring countries. So, there were all of these kids running loose in the souq and in the bazaar because it was Thursday, the day to go to the bazaar. There were high school teachers with them, but basically they were on their own. They were stuck in the bazaar when all of this started happening.

So, communication was difficult around town. We didn't know where everybody was. Some of us had the portable walkie talkies at the time. My mother didn't know how to work ours. She could hear me trying to reach her at our house. From the embassy, I could see where the planes were bombing. I didn't know whether a bomb had fallen on our house or not. The telephone system went out right away. My mother was all alone with the two dogs and our gardener, Yaya, who spent the whole time under the dining room table praying. My mother mixed up a batch of martinis and sat with the dogs and enjoyed

the whole thing. She had come back from her surgery having been told that everything was going to be alright – it was a tricky eye operation and she should be under no stress whatsoever. Well, my father as the day went along eventually heard that there were big things going on in Kabul and he got a little bit frantic because he knew that she had just arrived. His greatest fear was that she was stuck at the airport. He was able to reach me at the embassy by about midnight the first night. I was able to tell him that at least she was at home. I couldn't tell him anything beyond that. So, my mother was at our house, I was in the embassy, Jim was in the ambassador's residence. They were all hiding in a bathroom. Five of them, the Hecks, Larry, Jim, and Mrs. Elliott were all in this one interior bathroom that had no windows. In the embassy, we were fairly well protected. What was not known was whether or not the American embassy would become a target of this operation. That was always a matter of concern. So, we were in the embassy for two full days and two full nights until the fighting stopped. A line was maintained to Washington throughout most of this time from the embassy, but I'm not even sure whether that's true. Finally, the warden system got underway by means of the walkie talkies. My boss, Roger Lydan, the public affairs officer, was able to walk over from his house to my house and check on my mother and found out that she was fine. Then he was able to call me on the walkie talkie at the embassy to say that my mother was fine. So, when we all finally got home two or two and a half days after the coup started, the city was then quiet, although the first day and a half had been extremely violent and the noise was deafening, just unbelievable because it's a small city. There were 80-90 tanks firing away and at least four MIGs bombing the city… There were civilians in our neighborhood killed, but those were people, Afghans, upper class Afghans, who lived in these beautiful houses in our part of town and they had all gone outside in their backyard to watch the bombing. They were killed by shrapnel, not by direct shots. That could have happened to anybody. There was an American woman, part of the embassy community, who freaked out during this episode and was actually running around out of control in her backyard. A neighbor saw this and was able to get her back in the house. A number of other American spouses had severe psychological problems after that because it was so noisy and so frightening. It was much more frightening than the later incidents, particularly because of the bombs falling. You didn't know who was flying around up there. In the end, most people think there were Soviet pilots, but of course, this is a matter of history to tell us. The accuracy of the bombing, with the exception of the bomb that dropped in front of the American cultural center and hit a water main and one that dropped near the Chinese embassy and the UN headquarters. Those were obviously mistargets. But the rest of the bombing on the police headquarters, on the palace, and elsewhere was pretty accurate. So, I don't know that the final story has been written as to who was flying those planes. But if we had known that they were Soviet pilots, we might have felt a little more comfortable about the accuracy of the bombing.

Q: As this was going on, were you trying to figure out what the hell it was all about?

TAYLOR: It was clear within a few hours that the army was overthrowing the Daoud government. Our Afghan FSNs had their ear to the ground. The FSN who worked for my husband in the Political Section was able to connect up with Ambassador Elliott at some

point during the day and his stories from the bazaar said that it was the Hulky wing, the People's Party wing, of the Communist Party that had organized the military officers under Communist Party authority to overthrow Daoud. That became fairly clear within a day. Yes, everybody was trying to figure it out. The station chief was frantically running around trying to get his contacts lined up. Then, of course, the coup leaders themselves took over the radio. They got on the radio. By the end of the first day, by 10:00 pm, they were on the radio saying who they were. Many Afghans knew who they were. One of the persons was the pilot who became the hero of the Great Sauer Revolution and played a role in the government. He was one of the people supposedly flying around bombing the city. It was a small society. Everybody knew who these people were. They recognized their voices. At least within the first two or three days, it became clear that Hafizullah Amin, the disaffected Columbia University student, had become the head of government. He was one of the two heads of PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan), the other one being the unfortunate Nur Muhammad Taraki, who later got blasted away by Amin in a palace shoot 'em up over a year later. So, yes, I think that within a day or so, it was clear who those people were. What was not clear was the role of the Soviet embassy or the Soviet government. Certainly once the coup took place, even if the Soviets weren't behind it from the very beginning once it occurred, they leaped right in to take advantage of something that had fallen into their laps. I think the fact that that this hasn't been examined more closely is probably due to what happened afterwards, the 10 or more year running war between the Russians and the Afghan partisans or the Afghan mujahideen. People were much more focused on that rather than finding out who really was behind the 1978 first military coup d'etat.

Q: A assume calm returned in a day or two to the country.

TAYLOR: Tremendously so.

Q: You had a bomb outside your… What were you doing? Did you keep the cultural affairs center open?

TAYLOR: During those first three or four days, no. First of all, it was the weekend. But I think we reopened within about a week. The PDPA people were organized. They set about setting up their government. They were a bunch of thugs. I went to call on the Minister of Education within the first month or so. The new Minister of Education was a very uneducated man. He was drunk when I went to call on him. He had a huge revolver in his belt that fell off onto the ground while I was sitting in his office. I could see this was not going to be a useful discussion. There was one member of a prominent family, the Taraki family, who remained on at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He may still be there. No one could quite figure out why he remained, why he was allowed to remain on in a deputy function. He became the liaison with the embassy. It was pretty much established that westerners interests would be preserved, that we would be held safe, that there would be no attacks on Americans or westerners. Our programs, including our AID program, began to be restricted within months despite these assurances. So, business was pretty much operating as usual. Within the first month, the students were all back. For

one thing, it was the one place they could get any information. I had access to the ABC News at that time on videotape, nothing like what we have now with the Internet. But I would get ABC News videotapes about two to three weeks late. Nevertheless, this was big news in Afghanistan. I would run those on a video monitor. Sometimes I used them as a seminar format to have a discussion group. But the little coverage that Afghanistan was getting at that time was available only at the American Cultural Center. Plus, we had the "Herald Tribune" every day. It was two or three days late, so that wasn't too late. The students for the most part were not afraid to come back. I think the English language classes were fully up within a month. It took them a couple of weeks to look around and say, "Is it safe to go to the American Cultural Center?" Some students never came back. Some were too concerned… There were always people worrying, "Is he a spy? Is he informing on me? Is he telling my faculty advisor that I'm going to the American Cultural Center?" That sort of climate grew and only got worse as time went on.

Q: Was there the feeling that this was essentially a group taking over that was hostile to the West or was it just sort of hostile to everyone?

TAYLOR: No, it was a sense that the group was hostile to the West, that it was going to become more difficult to do our work. Since it took, as it does in any situation like that, a while for it to shake down to see just how much authority and power these people were going to have and what direction they would move in, I don't think that we felt at first that we couldn't do business with them. I felt that some of the people they placed in the university and some of the people they put in the newspapers were pretty hostile, as well as completely uneducated and unqualified to be in their positions. That distressed me more than anything. The embassy was determined to keep the relationship stable as much as possible. AID made it clear that it was willing to continue with its projects and its participant training. But the moves to restrict the relationship came from the Afghan side as time went on, not really from our side. Up until the Ambassador's assassination. So, the Sauer Revolution was in April of '78. The ambassador was assassinated 10 months later. That really changed everything.

Q: What were you doing when Spike was killed?

TAYLOR: It was a workday and he was picked up from right in front of the American Cultural Center at about 9:00. I had gotten to my office at about 8:00. His limousine did go past in front of that intersection at the Center every morning at exactly the same time. He did not vary his route despite the fact that our RSO (Regional Security Officer), Chuck Bowles, had told him to many times. This was a very difficult time for Chuck. I was at the office. The Ambassador's limousine was stopped by four guys who were dressed in police officer uniforms. When these guys stepped out into the intersection and told the driver to stop, the Ambassador told his driver to stop. That's the kind of man Spike was. There was some suspicion later on that the embassy driver might have been involved in this. He was very quickly cleared. The four "bandits," as the government later described them, took over control of the car. Our security guards, who were very uneducated young men from the provinces, did see this happen. They were interviewed

by the embassy. They said that these four people dressed like policemen, stopped the car, got in the car with the Ambassador, and the limousine sped away. The driver was then told to take the Ambassador to the Kabul Hotel, which was a hotel downtown in the bazaar area, not a really great place, but it was alright. The four "bandits" by this time had their guns pulled. The driver knew that something was wrong. The "bandits" took the Ambassador from the limousine and dragged him into the hotel. The driver then sped away to the embassy to report what had happened. All of that took place within half an hour. He was picked up around 9:00. By 9:30, the driver had reported what had happened to the embassy. At the same time, the wife of the military attaché, Nancy Sandrock, was driving past the hotel on her way to do an errand. She saw this happen, but she didn't think anything of it. She thought, "Oh, the Ambassador must have a meeting at the Kabul Hotel and he's being escorted into the building by these police escorts." She couldn't tell that it was under duress. So, it was between that time and about 12:30 that day, just barely three hours later, that he was dead.

It was Jim who came over to the Cultural Center. He came over to start the investigation. He told us what had happened. Our PAO decided at the time, I think rightly, just to keep operations going as normal, not to alarm our Afghan students, not to close the library, not to do anything. But then by about 11:00 that morning when the Afghan police had arranged themselves by the hundreds across the street from the hotel and it was clear that they were going to start firing on the hotel where Spike was being held, that was when we in our establishment closed down and sent everybody home. We said there was a crisis in town. By this time, the rumors were beginning to start. The police had shown up in large numbers.

Jim was positioned at the Ministry of Interior. Because he spoke Russian, he was sent there to argue with the Minister of Interior, who was a Russian-speaking Afghan. Plus, the Soviet embassy security guard, whoever it was, that the Soviets had sent to the ministry to keep the ministry from giving the order to fire on the hotel. The chargé, Bruce Amstutz, remained in the embassy with an open line to Washington throughout the entire time. The instructions from Washington were, "Do anything to keep them from firing. Just keep the negotiations going. Keep them talking. Just don't let the Afghan police or the Afghan army open fire." The political counselor, Jim Space, the embassy doctor, and two or three other embassy officials were on the scene at the hotel.

Q: Bruce Flatin.

TAYLOR: Yes. And Buzz Van Arkes was the doctor. I'm not sure who the two other officials were there. Probably Chuck Bowles, the security officer. I think there was a fourth person. They were at one point actually in the Kabul Hotel but far away from the action. Then, things got out of control. There was a Soviet officer from the Soviet embassy on the scene. According to Bruce Flatin, this gentleman appeared to be in charge, not the Afghans. It was he who gave the order at 12:00 or 12:15 to start firing on the room where Spike was being held. The reason that he said that he gave that order was because the so-called "bandits" had given an ultimatum of a time – let's say 12:30 pm –

and if they didn't get what they wanted, which was never really quite clear, then they would kill the ambassador. So, the Soviet official on the scene said he had no other choice. Hafizullah Amin was later reported by one of our FSNs to have said in wherever his offices were, "Kill the Ambassador." I don't know if that is true, but an FSN who knew Hafizullah Amin's personal guard said this was said. Then it was all over very quickly. There is a longer story to it. I'm not sure this is the appropriate time to go into it, what happened after the…

Very briefly, without any further comment, what happened after the fusillade from across the street where hundreds of machine guns and whatever weapons they had were firing on the room where the Ambassador was being held… The firing stopped. There were Soviet embassy officials in the hotel. There were our four or five people in the hotel. The Soviet embassy officials, not Afghans, rushed down the corridor – I think it was the third floor that the ambassador was being held in. The door to the room was opened. Bruce Flatin and Buzz Van Arkes and Chuck and the other people there all say that they heard at least three pistol shots, possibly four. There is a difference of opinion as to how many shots there were but there were clearly at least three. There is evidence that shows that Spike may not have died from the fusillade from across the street but from close to the head pistol shots. This is all something that requires much more investigation than I'm able to elaborate on right here and it's never really been done. Two of the four so-called "bandits" were seen alive at the end of that episode, about 1:00. They were taken away by the authorities. By 5:00 that day, they were dead. The next day in the paper, there was a picture of all four "bandits" dead, lying on the ground with bullet wounds. The embassy was therefore never able to interview any of them. The other two "bandits" were killed in the room. So, I leave it to the reader to put all this together as to what really happened.

Q: The whole thing was so incredible. Why hole up in the hotel downtown? What was in it for anybody?

TAYLOR: And the confusion over what the so-called "bandits" really wanted. At one point, it was said that they were asking for the release from detention of some other "bandits" who had already been released from detention or who were dead or who were just no longer on the scene. Then it was said that, no, these people were just poor country bumpkins who were put up to this and had no idea what they were doing, that they were stooges of the Afghan government. I don't think anybody at all thinks the Soviets were behind this. That Hafizullah Amin or somebody hatched this plot… I'm sure there are lots of different opinions. I just can't believe the Soviets would have done something as stupid as this. If they wanted to get rid of Dubs, they could do it any number of ways. There was the feeling that Spike Dubs spoke fluent Russian, he was a smart guy… Some of my Afghan friends said, "Oh, the Russians wanted to get rid of him. He knew too much. He got around too much." I don't think the Russians were behind it.

Q: It sounds like the Soviets killed him.

TAYLOR: In the end, there is no question but that they gave the order to fire.

Q: And somebody went into the room.

TAYLOR: Somebody went into the room, gunshots were fired, the Ambassador appears to have been killed by close gunshot wounds, not by machine gun fire. I read someplace that one of the wounds that he suffered from the machine gun fire was a survivable wound. So, it remains to be written about.

Q: What did this do? How about your operations?

TAYLOR: We closed immediately. We had closed around 11:00 when we heard that there was a serious problem going on. We closed for security reasons. When the Ambassador was killed, we closed for a period of mourning as well as for security. We had coincidentally underway a production of Oklahoma that the Kabul Amateur Dramatic Society, in which Jim and I were very active, had proposed to do. We had a 27 piece live orchestra. This was how lively Kabul was in those days. We had 16 different nationalities. We had Marines singing and dancing. Spike Dubs was going to play the role of Ado Annie's father in the production. It was a role that Jim finally took over. So, we suspended every kind of activity out of respect for the Ambassador. Some people from Washington came out for the ceremonies that we had in Kabul. Mrs. Dubs, Mary Ann, came, of course. It was February. There was a lot of snow on the ground. It was quite cold. Everybody in the community, even people who didn't work in the embassy, even those who hadn't been there very long, was devastated, not just by the horror of what had happened, but they all loved Spike. He was just a person who touched everyone even in the short time that he was there. His wife was not there when this occurred. She had a job on the Hill at the time. But she had been there just a month or so earlier for a long time over the Christmas holidays. There was just tremendous grief, uncontrollable grief, in the embassy community. Jim's chapter in the book Embassies Under Siege deals with this particular period and what happened during the day that Spike was killed. What happened in the aftermath when the State Department officials came out, some of them from NEA, some of them from State Med, probably there were some Security people there, too. There was a very dignified memorial service held in the ambassador's residence. It was a very cold February day, but the place was mobbed. There must have been 300 people in the house and other 200 outside around who stood around the house during the long ceremony. There was no room for them inside.

Jim was asked to accompany Ambassador Dubs' body back to the States. He was asked by Mary Ann to represent the embassy. He came back to do that in the following week. The funeral at Arlington National Cemetery happened to take place on one of the biggest snowstorm days that Washington has ever had. The only thing moving in town was the funeral procession that did make it out to the Arlington Cemetery. Jim was staying with Mike and Carol Hornblow. Mike is now retired from the Foreign Service. They lived in Georgetown, so Jim was able to walk most everywhere. He also was able to get a tape from ABC of the funeral service and he brought it back to the community - I forget where we showed it, probably at the cultural center – for the community to see the funeral

service. It was a very, very beautiful funeral service. Everyone was very touched by the whole process.

Q: Things were really popping out there.

TAYLOR: Yes. The same day that Spike was killed, the embassy in Tehran was overtaken briefly by student radicals, but then everybody was released at the end of the day.

Q: This would be a good point to stop. We'll pick this up the next time.

Today is March 30, 2001. You have come back from Spike's funeral.

TAYLOR: His assassination was February 14th, valentine's Day, 1979.

Immediately thereafter, there was a tremendous shift in the posture of the embassy as well as in our programs and in our objectives in being there. The Ambassador was not replaced. To this day, there has not been another American ambassador in Kabul. In fact, today, there is no U.S. representation in Kabul. But we carried on after Spike's death with a chargé, Bruce Amstutz, who had been DCM for roughly a year by that point. He has published a book on Afghanistan. I don't know the name of it. He had been in Pakistan just before coming to Afghanistan.

So, we carried on and began a reduction in the embassy. The AID program was beginning to be phased out anyway because of the difficulty of the relationship with the first Marxist government which was still in power. Spike's death didn't precipitate the phasedown in AID activities, but it certainly hastened it. So, between February, when Spike was killed, and June, the AID mission was virtually dismantled, leaving very few people behind. A reduction in families with dependents was underway as well so that by June, just about every dependent was gone. I remained as the only spouse there because I was working and had my own job.

What happened in this interim period on a social level was that the international community drew together, as you can imagine, under circumstances like this, quite closely. We had always been a closely knit international community, but you had at the same time the buildup to the opening with the Chinese taking place in the late '70s. Even the Chinese embassy, which had quite a vast representation in Kabul, began to come out of its walls a little bit more and was seen around town. The Pakistanis and the Indians were quite supportive of American efforts to keep their mission going and to be protective of what had happened to us as an embassy. The international community really rallied around a tragedy that was American but which they all looked at as a tragedy that happened to them as well.

Q: What was the feeling towards the Soviets? In my interviews with Bruce Flatin and your husband, the finger points at least at one level to Soviet complicity in maybe not the

kidnapping but in the death of the Ambassador. What did that do?

TAYLOR: Yes. I agree with that statement that at least at one level the Soviets were responsible. I would even say they were responsible for Spike's death. I would also agree that it will probably never be known whether they were culpable in any way for the kidnapping and how the whole event started. But once it started, as others have said, and I probably said last time, they certainly became involved. Their distancing from the international community had actually begun a year earlier with the Great Sauer Revolution of 1978. Their total backing for this military coup d'etat, which turned out to be a major coup d'etat with certainly a lot of Soviet military advisors if not actually Soviet military planes flying around and backing up and bolstering the Afghan army. Their withdrawal from the international western scene really began more at that time. Spike was a Soviet expert. About 10 months after Spike was killed the relations between the American embassy and the Russian embassy and between the British and the Russians was pretty strained. I don't know if I or any of the other speakers have mentioned that the night before the Great Sauer Revolution of April 1978, we had had a Soviet-American friendship night which was staged at the American Cultural Center, which I directed. I was the mistress of ceremonies for this evening. The Soviet ambassador was there. Our then ambassador, Ted Elliott, was there. We had a huge and beautiful buffet dinner in the library of our cultural center. This had been a tradition for three or four years before. Once a year, the Soviet and American embassies got together in Kabul for a Soviet-American friendship night. That particular date happened to be on the Tuesday before the Thursday coup. Little did we suspect after many rounds of vodka and toasts expressing friendship forever and the lessening of friction between the two countries, all of a sudden comes the April coup and finally in December of '79 the Soviet invasion. So, the estrangement process had begun by April of '78. With Spike's death, it only served as an emblem of the fact that we really had very little contact. My husband and I were the only Russian speakers in the embassy with the exception of the station chief, who by that time had gone on to something else and had left the country. There may have been other Russian speakers, but if there were, I didn't know about it.

But an interesting thing did happen to me in my job. Shortly after we began recovering from Spike's death, our embassy went ahead with the production of Oklahoma. I did the direction and the choreography. One of the counselors at the school was my co-director in this. We had a wonderful group of 60-70 people working on this production. We took a hiatus in honor of Spike's death. We finally decided that he would have wanted us to go on with this and we resumed it. My husband took over Spike's role. By April or so, when we put the production on for a week, Kabul had more or less come back to its normal, fairly vibrant self, except the Russians were really not part of this.

But the interesting thing that I saw as the director of the cultural center was when all of these political issues began to develop, there was a burgeoning in the activities at my center. We had always been the most popular place in town. We had 1,500 English language students in our English language center. We had 15,000 volumes in the library. It was the only open stacks library in the whole country. The library was packed with

university students after class every day. The seminar room, the same thing. Whatever we had going on in the auditorium, reruns of silent movies even, could fill the house. Our center was located in what you would call the "new downtown" area of Kabul. The universities, the polytechnic, run by the Soviets, and the Kabul University, which was mainly backed by U.S. money, funded by AID when it was started and staffed by English speakers and even American staff to that date were on the other side of town where AID and the Russian embassy were located. Nevertheless, at the end of the academic day, the students and the faculty would pile on busses and come all the way across town, which was quite a journey, to the American Cultural Center. Even though there were more than the beginnings of real concerns of being identified with western institutions and even though the students were beginning to look more nervously over their shoulder, they were beginning to say things like, "Well, maybe I shouldn't come here every day," they still were. About this time, the Soviets built a huge marble palace out by the universities.

It was a building really more appropriate for a city in Western Europe or certainly a First World city. The new director of the Soviet Culture Palace paid a call on me. This was after Spike's death. He wanted programming ideas. He invited me out to his Palace of Culture, which was totally empty. It was just a marble mausoleum at the time. He sat me down. It was 10:00 am. He dragged out the brandy and the chocolates and it reminded me of being back in Moscow and going to meetings. My Russian was not as good as it had been in Moscow at the time, but I was still able to communicate in Russian. He spoke no English and, interestingly enough, he spoke no Dari, one of the two languages of Afghanistan. So, he couldn't communicate in Dari. With my rusty Russian and his very excellent Russian, we tried to talk about how you run a cultural center. He seemed to be a very honest, pleasant young man. I don't think that he was trying to get anything more out of me that day other than "What do I do and how do I do this?" I was open with him and told him how I built a program. I told him some ideas about how to gather an audience and how to build the audience and how to stay in touch with your audience and set up a Russian language teaching institution if they wanted to do something like that. I'm not really sure what my friend actually did with his programming. Every once in a while, the Soviets would have an ad in the paper that somebody or other clarinetist was going to come play at the Soviet Palace of Culture. Of course, the only ones who went to it were Russians. The satisfying thing for me and for us as Americans, but the unnerving thing at the same time, was that the students from the universities, both of them, even with this huge palace of culture right next door to their universities, still piled on the bus and they still came on a half hour trip across town to come to our little bungalow which was the cultural center. This said to me that the young intelligencia of the country really had no interest in what the Soviets had to offer at that time.

The Chinese were beginning to warm up. The great recognition of China was coming. This was '79. We had opened up but had not really established diplomatic relations at that time. So, we had had the Kissinger opening, but we really were not allowed to have diplomatic exchanges, except that this process was going on during the year 1979. As the Soviets faded from the scene, clearly, they were pouring huge amounts of money into the country, but they were fairly isolated from the diplomatic community. As the Soviets

faded, the Chinese were beginning to be our new best friends. They began to come out of their walls. One day, I got a call from them saying they would like to pay a call on the Cultural Center and would like to see our library and they would like to become library members and take books out. So, I conferred with the embassy and the embassy conferred with Washington and we decided this was a great thing. They came in groups of 10. They were all dressed in their Mao suits, all the same color. In the entire Chinese embassy, there was only one woman. She was the doctor. She was the spouse of one of the diplomats. Eventually, this became a more routinized procedure. They came to see movies in the early evening. They would ask me to schedule a special showing. One time, they all came to see "The Old Man in the Sea." It was not a particularly good movie, but they loved it. The English was simple for those who didn't understand English. They loved musicals, of course, of any kind. I got on the movie circuit as much for them at that time as even for the Afghans. So, this was happening. Then things became more formal and we were able to have more formal exchanges. My husband and I were invited to the Chinese embassy for the best Chinese food I've ever had in my life frequently as time went on. They became as concerned about the situation in Afghanistan with Soviet influence there as anyone else was. They, of course, were close friends of the Pakistanis and every time we went to the Chinese embassy for a function, Pakistanis would be there as well. So, there were these shifting alliances going on in Afghanistan. You could say that the great game that had been fought over Afghanistan for centuries was still continuing, just different alignments.

Q: We're talking about events that led up to December '79. Was there the senses that the shoe was going to drop or something was going to happen? How were things going?

TAYLOR: Every day, particularly among the Afghans, there was a sense that something was going to happen. It became a giant rumor mill as those kinds of places become when you have a secretive government, you have people disappearing by the thousands overnight, particularly the intelligencia, the educated people, anyone with western ties. The U.S.-educated doctor who was the husband of the USIS receptionist disappeared within the first months of the 1978 coup or "revolution." Among the Afghans in particular, there was wild speculation about any number of dire things that might happen, including further Soviet military involvement. The same was true among the western diplomats, the Indians, and the Pakistanis, who would get together. Our social life increased dramatically during this time. Gossip and speculation were the business of the day. Nobody, however, even in hindsight, either those of us in Kabul or people at the CIA, people on the Soviet desk back in Washington, people in our embassy in Moscow, no one anticipated that the Soviets would go as far as they did December 27, 28, and 29 of 1979 by such a massive airlift of roughly 100,000 troops and rolled in tanks from the northern borders within a week's period. No one anticipated that the Soviets could have been so off the wall to do something that is not in their interest.

Q: Today, it looks like a monumental blunder that was one of the causes that helped bring down the Soviet Union.

TAYLOR: I certainly think so. It's hard for some people who look at the Soviet Union from a different perspective to see it that way, but for those of us who were in Central Asia, particularly Afghanistan, but Central Asia as a whole, there was no question that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan marked a serious change in the relationship with the United States. I mentioned the opening to the Chinese because it was another undercurrent that sort of fractured the communist world at that time. The history of the '80s tells us what happened to them during that period. I agree with you. Not enough attention is paid to that.

Q: I think it's one of the turning points. Going back to this period, you were talking about this new government that came in with the coup of '78. People disappeared. What was happening to the people who disappeared?

TAYLOR: Many of the people who disappeared were murdered in prison. Probably many others simply died in prison because the conditions were just unbelievable. Some who one would think would have been on the top of the list to be murdered survived for many years. We would hear reports from Afghan friends that somebody had escaped from prison or somebody had gone to visit the prison or somebody's grandmother was allowed to take food into the prison. The older women were sometimes trusted. They would come out with reports that someone who had not been seen for over a year was indeed alive in the Pul-e-Charkhi Prison. Others in huge, huge, huge numbers just simply disappeared. I think that the disappearances and the deaths in the last 10 years probably far exceed those in those first early years when the Soviets had more control and had a say in managing the place.

A lot of people also disappeared into their homes, meaning that they were not even really under house arrest because the Afghans weren't that organized, but they just knew not to come out. They knew not to see people and they knew just to keep a very, very, very, very low profile. These would be people who, if they were not in jail, were members of what you would call the old intelligencia, the landed class, any connection to the former King or to the Daoud regime, or any of those who had western ties, the moderate middle class. There was a rising middle class. Those people were all in jeopardy. Some people who had land in the countryside felt they might be safer there. That was probably true for the first few years. But the communist regime which succeeded Taraki and Amin, the one that came in with the Soviets run by Babrak Jamal, became more brutal in the countryside. I think that the big name families who had taken refuge in the countryside in Afghanistan were no longer safe there. Those who had not left by '79 certainly made it a goal to leave in the early '80s. A huge number of western-oriented people left for Europe and the United States.

Q: While you were there, was there a conscious effort on the part of the embassy to help people go to the United States, key people?

TAYLOR: I think there were a few key people who were helped by the embassy and with assistance here in Washington provided by some former U.S. diplomats who had been in

Afghanistan. On a large scale, no. I think we all individually helped certain individuals. I did a lot of work legally trying to help my staff get out if they wanted to and to try to make arrangements for them in Pakistan and those who were qualified to come to the United States. A year after of my return to Washington in 1981, I'd say 70% of my staff was in the United States, including those who were not educated, those that I thought would never be able to make it in the United States. The motion picture specialist, for example, who spoke no English, an older man with physical problems who really had no skills other than being our motion picture projectionist and could fix old 16 mm projectors and probably other equipment dating from the 1950s that we still had lying around in the '70s. He came with his wife, who had a serious heart problem, and their four children. The four children set themselves up driving taxis, fixing little things. They are now living a very, very, very nice life in Arlington, own a lovely house. So, I'm very proud of how the Afghans have done since they got to the United States. I would say that rather than being a concerted effort to help them in Afghanistan, most of them managed on their own. There was an enormous network to help them here once they got here. The Afghanistan Relief Committee, which I was very active in, was set up while I was still in Kabul. People come together over the issue of Afghanistan. For years, there has been a wonderful support network for Afghans. Every year for 15 years, there was an annual reunion of people who had served in Afghanistan, one of the few countries of the Department where this reunion still goes on to this day. People come from Hawaii, California, where they've retired and they still come back because they're so committed to Afghanistan. So, you'd have to ask a consulate person more about how we assisted Afghans to get out. Those that we assisted officially in Afghanistan were small in number. Once they managed by one means or another to get to Pakistan, I think our embassy in Pakistan was much more actively involved. It was very dangerous for Afghans to get assistance from the U.S. embassy in Kabul, but the country being as porous as it was, it was not easy, but it was doable to get across the border. It was arduous. You could easily die or be killed. But that was really more the way it went. The American assistance to the Afghan refugee stream from Afghanistan took place more in the church communities, groups like the Afghanistan Relief Committee… The University of Nebraska has a big center of Afghans. Tom Gutiere was a Peace Corps volunteer there. He organized a big settlement center out in Nebraska. Just by word of mouth, this thing got organized in a way that's just extraordinary. We did big fairs with crafts and food and Afghan fashion shows and music to raise money to support people coming here. We had an Afghan refugee live with us for two years, a friend from Kabul. We had a four story brownstone house with an English basement apartment and he lived there. Another employee of mine and his family lived with us until they could get on their feet. He is now a GS-14 at the Voice of America. I think you would have to say the American community did quite well by the Afghans. Officially in Afghanistan, I don't know the whole story there.

Q: Before December '79, you've got events in '79 culminating in November of '79 in Iran. Was this something you were looking over your shoulder at or was this another country a long way away?

TAYLOR: Remember that the day that Spike was killed was the same day of the initial takeover of the embassy in Tehran, the one day takeover. Then they were released. It was rather quickly found that these two events were not connected. But we were aware all the time of what was going on in Iran and we thought about it. Yet once that initial takeover of the embassy in Iran ended, our focus turned back to ourselves. Little did we know what was going to happen to our colleagues in Iran at the time. The focus was really more on Afghanistan because of the Soviet angle there. That was the lens through which Afghanistan was seen. In the early fall of '79, there was another shoot 'em up in the OK Corral, as we call it, and Hafizullah Amin managed to gun down Taraki. So, they had their little shoot 'em up in Kabul in the palace. It was the PDPA, the same wing of the Communist Party. Hafizullah Amin and Taraki had come into power together in the Sauer Revolution of '78. But by September '79, they literally had a shoot 'em up. It was like a duel and Taraki lost. Amin emerged. That was September of '79, four months before the Soviets invaded, overthrew him, and installed Barak. In parenthesis, Hafizullah Amin was one of our classic failures as a Fulbright exchangee. He had gone to Columbia University and although we loved to tout our Fulbright program and I'm a cultural officer, he did not do very well there. He obviously had negative experiences and he came back with a fairly anti-American approach to life.

Back to September of '79, after Taraki was killed, Amin became increasingly ruthless, which brings us up to November of '79 and the takeover of the embassy in Tehran. You may also remember that almost the same day as the takeover of the embassy in Tehran number two was the attack on the embassy in Pakistan. Five or six people were killed and 80 were almost killed.

Q: There was a fire.

TAYLOR: It was the most terrifying thing. By this time, I was the only person left in USIS Kabul. We had gone from seven officers to two. I had an executive assistant. I was a junior officer once removed running this whole thing, learning a lot. My executive assistant had gone to Pakistan for the Thanksgiving holiday to see old friends there. She went into the embassy on Wednesday, the day before Thanksgiving, to get some local currency and was caught up in this whole thing and spent the entire time in the vault along with 80-some others who were almost all killed. It's an absolutely horrifying story. In the book, Embassies Under Siege, in which Jim wrote the chapter on Kabul, I think Herb Hagerty wrote a chapter on what happened in Pakistan that day.

So, we had three things going on. We had the increasing tension in Kabul but still no indication the Soviets were going to invade at any level. Then we had this horror going on in Tehran about which very little was known. There was very little known about who the student groups were, what their links were. It seemed as though there wasn't much connection with Afghanistan. Then there was this horrendous thing in Pakistan resulted from a false rumor coming out of Mecca. The rumor was that the Americans in Mecca had conspired to attack the Kaaba and violence that had occurred there. It was blamed on us and this rumor went wild in Pakistan. The Pakistani authorities did not stop the mobs

from attacking the embassy. So, that was the background by the time December rolled around.

The American embassy was paired down. There were no dependents there. I was trying to keep the cultural center open, although I was having misgivings about whether we were feeding into the propaganda of the government. I didn't think so at the time. That's where we were when finally the big days came.

Q: You have to use hindsight here, but was there any indication that the government in Kabul, which had taken over after the shootout was all that estranged from the Soviets?

TAYLOR: They certainly didn't think so. Hafizullah Amin was a serious braggart and he didn't listen to people. There was always a struggle between the Khalq Party and the Parcham Party, which was more of a Maoist party. Then there were other fringe communist parties. All of these were very small cells. The communist movement in Kabul was extremely small. There were rumors about who was emerging and whose flag was waving. That did go on every day. But I have to say that nobody ever looked at this on such a grand scale. I had to laugh when you asked if Hafizullah Amin had any idea that he was falling out of favor with the Soviets. It seems now and even at the time it was known that the Soviets were becoming very concerned about the fact that opposition to the regime was spreading throughout the countryside. In the villages, the Communist Party officials' throats would be slit overnight. It was clear that the countryside was extremely angry about the infidels, meaning the Soviets. They were not cooperating with them. There was trouble for the Soviets. There was trouble for the Hafizullah Amin government. He had to put more and more people into prison. I don't think the Soviets liked that. For them, trouble was brewing, but it was brewing slowly. Then Hafizullah Amin being the egocentric maniac that he was really didn't have his ear to the ground. On the night of the Soviet invasion when the first huge aircraft landed with tanks at the airport, these tanks came rolling down the main highway from the airport that goes right past the American embassy. No more than a mile or two away, right next door to the American embassy was Radio Afghanistan. There was no television at the time. So, the only means of communicating with the country was by radio. A few blocks further down was the palace. So, on the night of the invasion, it was clear that something had been happening for two nights preceding that. I believe it was Christmas Day and then the next day, the 26th. In the middle of the night, I said to my husband, "Why is that one airplane up there going around and around and around?" We went outside on our front terrace. There was three feet of snow on the ground. It was a beautiful, crisp, snowy, wintry evening. We looked up at the sky and you could see many planes. Even then, no one could have imagined what the Soviets were up to. So, when they finally did unload all this equipment and the tanks at the airport and they came rumbling down the main street, my husband was at the embassy… It was at night. We had had a dinner party at our house and there was clearly something was happening, so he left. He went to the embassy. He was up on the roof. He saw the tanks coming by. He and the Marines were there. He saw the tanks turn into Radio Afghanistan. The Afghan regime tanks which were guarding the Radio were all muzzled. They had their wraps on them. The Afghan soldiers were sort of

lounging around on top of the tanks playing cards and smoking. The assumption was that if Soviet tanks are coming, these are friendly tanks. We don't know why they're here, but gosh, there's 85 of them coming down the road. So the Afghans – and my husband saw this with his own eyes; so did the Marines; so did everybody else who was on top of the embassy at the time, a very small group – the Soviet tanks pulled in and just blasted the Afghan tanks to pieces. I think there were four Afghan tanks. They got destroyed in about two minutes. Then it was clear that Hafizullah Amin no longer had the support of the Soviet government. After they blasted away at Radio Afghanistan and took the Radio, the rest of the tanks continued on into the city, took the palace, took other key places, and the fight went on for a couple of days. The Afghans were totally outmatched. It was just a matter of time. It was not nearly as bloody or as noisy or as long or as scary as the first Marxist coup of '78, which was truly frightening.

Q: Did you open the center that day?

TAYLOR: No, nobody went out of their houses. I had 60 people in my house, including Afghans, for what was to be a holiday party. We started the party early. There was always a curfew of around 9:00 or 10:00 pm. So, we had this holiday party beginning around 4:00. I had expected everybody to go home by 7:00. I forget when it was that Jim slipped into his jeans and his sweatshirt and said, "I'll see you later." I remember saying to him, "We don't need heroes in the family, just wage earners." That's what I said when he went out the door.

I forget what day of the week that was, but we were all holed up where we were. These 60 people stayed at my house for about the next day and a half. We did everything we were told to do. We filled all the bathtubs with water. If the electricity went off, the well wouldn't work. We closed all the blinds but kept the lights on inside. I think those were the directions we were given. We stayed away from all the windows. I was a bit concerned about these big firefights that we knew were going on right outside… We lived three blocks from the palace and the whole city was rumbling. We didn't know what was happening until the Afghans in my house tuned in the radio and heard that Radio Afghanistan had been taken over by Soviet-backed forces. They were then telling everybody else in my house what was happening. Then we realized that it was a Soviet-backed coup. The Soviet embassy was even named in the broadcast, if I'm not mistaken, telling everybody to be calm, that they had everything under control. So, nobody went out of their house for the next two or three days. Bruce Amstutz never did get into the embassy on that night. It was too dangerous. The shooting was live fire in the streets right outside your house. They weren't shooting at Americans, but the possibility of getting caught up in it was rather high. I was afraid that any of these people in the firefight might take refuge in our garden or just come over the wall. They did, in fact, come over the wall by the embassy and streak across the lawn there with people shooting at them.

It was a good week or so before we reopened the cultural center. There was a lot of debate in Washington as to whether we should, whether it was safe. My position was that we should give it a try and see what happened. We did. The first day we reopened – let's say

it was a week later – there must have been 2,000 people who came to the cultural center. We were normally very popular but we never had that many. The reason they came was because they knew this was the only place they would find out what was really happening in their own country. We were a source of news. We had newspapers. I had these ABC Television tapes. I didn't have any tapes from that week saying what had happened in Afghanistan, but nevertheless, people were there seeking information. Western press came within a day or two. Once the airport was reopened, the western press descended on us. I became the de facto press officer. It was shocking to me that these big name press guys – and I won't name any of them because some of them are still around – had not done their homework at all. It was shocking to me. I was a fairly young officer. When I was briefing them before taking them in to see our chargé, Bruce Amstutz, one of them – you see him on television a lot – said, "Well, who is this Babrak guy? Is this Babrak the U.S. ambassador?" At that point, I realized, we were just talking past each other on two different levels. I ratcheted everything down a couple of steps as to their level of sophistication. So, when we reopened and we had these mobs of people just desperate for information… As much as they were trying to find out from us what was going on, they were trying to find each other. It was a gathering place. It soon became an embarrassment to the Soviets and it became in the eyes of our security people dangerous to have so much focus on the cultural center. I don't know whether an added element was that I was a very young woman running this thing and we were separate from the embassy. We were in the middle of town.

Q: Were you posting up ticker tape bullet wounds on the wall and things like that?

TAYLOR: No, we had all our information inside. We allowed everybody to come in. We did not do anything on the exterior, but we had clipboards inside. It would have been provocative to do things outside. We ran the library normally. Again, there was no live TV there. The Afghans were listening to Radio Tehran, BBC, VOA. VOA did not have a Dari-Pashto service at the time. The BBC did.

Q: How did it develop? Rather quickly, the Soviets were in control of Kabul, weren't they?

TAYLOR: They had their people at every ministry. They had their people at every ministry before this happened. They just had more people and had more visible security. The troops were everywhere. To give them credit, they very quickly pulled the tanks out. I think the Soviets and the new Afghan government, Babrak and Company - who had killed enough people in the process or rounded them up and thrown them into Pul-e-Charkhi – felt that they were under no threat from anybody. They knew that the U.S. was not going to react over Afghanistan. So, the city was fairly calm within a week. Institutions began to reopen. But unlike the '78 coup and then the Taraki-Hafizullah Amin shoot 'em up, after the Soviet invasion, the citizens were just wiped out, emotionally exhausted. They were normally a very talkative group of people and would talk about anything and ask questions. I think they were just so devastated by this that they were in shock.

After reopening the center, the next thing that happened in my life was that Jim was advised to leave very quickly. I don't know why this hadn't happened before because the Soviets knew this all along, but they decided that because he had been in Moscow just prior to coming to Kabul, he obviously was a CIA agent. It was just totally obvious to them. I guess our people came up with a list that they found. Jim's name was on this list. So, he was out of there in about 24 hours. We had two big Afghan mixed dogs, a parrot, a cockatoo, a huge houseful of stuff, and he left and I stayed. That was very early in January.

Within a few weeks, somebody – and I'm not sure who; I should probably find out – a group of people back in Washington decided that two things were happening at the cultural center. One, it was getting to be very visible because so many people were going there. It was becoming a target. Two, they felt that it was beginning to have some negative public relations impact. I didn't see that, but some people felt that by keeping it open that we were doing business as usual with the new government. I didn't feel that way at all because the people that we were remaining in touch with were not of the new government. The people the Soviets installed not just under Babrak but before him when Hafizullah Amin was in charge were just total thugs. They were uneducated people who really had no idea how to run a government or how to provide a service to the people. So, those people were not our natural audience. Somewhere around the middle of January, after Jim had left, the decision was made to close the cultural center to the public, which was really too bad because it was one of our few means of staying in touch with people. I guess the major reason was they felt it was just too dangerous.

Q: To put it in the context of the times, there was the Iran thing and everybody was very goosy about this. We were evacuating all over the place.

TAYLOR: That's right. We were evacuating all over yet we were keeping people in Kabul. I had sort of forgotten that angle.

Q: There is a bigger picture.

TAYLOR: That's right. And the place was indefensible. It was right in the middle of downtown.

Q: I'm sure nobody had the historical perspective to think of 1841.

TAYLOR: The British retreat. The worst one when everybody got killed was '41. I did remain on for another couple of months because I was trying to make sure that all of my employees got a fair retirement or annuity. We had so many people, unlike the State Department, on contract. We had 150 English teachers. We had janitors. We had little babas who would run around serving tea, who had spent 50 years with the American embassy in some way or another. I wanted to make sure these people got compensated in some way. The FSNs (Foreign Service Nationals) got an annuity. Many of them left anyway. But it was these other people I was worried about. The greatest thing I've ever

done in my career was to convince the hardheads at AID that the $150,000 or whatever they had in some bank account which was set up to pay for their participants to be trained in English at our English language center be used for humanitarian purposes. They were no longer sending anybody to America. They were going to just leave this money in this bank to be taken over by the Afghan government. I said, "That's nuts! Give it to me. With the help of the embassy administrative section, let me parcel it out among all these people who will have nothing for the rest of their lives. Their lives are destroyed. Little do they know how really their lives are destroyed." It took six weeks, which I now understand was a very short period of time, but it seemed like a very long period of time. There was nobody in AID left anymore. They were all gone. So, I had the support of my wonderful desk officer, Marilyn McAfee, who eventually became ambassador to Guatemala, fighting the battle with USAID at home. I was feeding her ideas with which she could fight the battle. Finally, they released the money to me. With the help of the embassy administrative section, I dispersed it. I was under personal pressure here because my father, who had been in the Foreign Service, was dying of cancer. He had been diagnosed with pancreatic in November of '79 just before all these things started happening. He died in March just four months later. So, I needed to get home at that point. They would call me up every day. They were in touch with my mother. They knew how ill my father was. Then the next thing they'd do is call me up and say, "Can't you stay one more day?" So, it was a personally devastating for me for many reasons.

Q: While you were in Afghanistan after this, was it apparent to those of you in the embassy of the enormity of what the Soviets had done as far as relations with the United States? Almost up to that point, Jimmy Carter was under the idea that we could do business with the Soviets if we're nice and all of a sudden there was this complete turnaround. Wheat embargo, don't go to the Olympics. It was very hardball. It wasn't so much concern about Afghanistan, but it was what the Soviets had done. Were you aware of how this was playing out in the States?

TAYLOR: I'm not sure. I don't think I was. Again, there was no "Herald Tribune." There was no television. There was no English language radio. Most of what I got was from embassy reporting, what was coming in from Washington. During my tour in Moscow I felt that we needed to do everything possible to move closer to the Soviets and we needed to use détente as much as we could and get as much out of it for both sides as we could. I was so mad at them by the time the invasion happened that I became very anti-Soviet for a couple of years afterwards. I know certainly how I felt, but I don't think that I knew how it was playing out in the States. We were so preoccupied with the events of the moment. Things were happening every minute. People were disappearing. We had no idea whether there would be more violence. We lived from day to day to see what new issue would break out the next day. By the time I got back to the States – and my next assignment was in Washington… My father was ill. I came back. I took over the Afghan/Iran desk. After all that, that's what they gave me. Certainly by the time I got back here three months later, I was very aware that things had changed for a long time between us and the Soviets and all the good work I had done in Moscow was out the window and we'd have to start all over again. By the way, when the American hockey team beat the Russians that year, you

could have blown the roof off our house. We were so happy. We had Afghans with us that night. We had a little dinner and watched it on television. Nobody thought that the Americans would win.

Q: What about the government, Babrak? Was there any intercourse between that regime and the embassy on your side?

TAYLOR: Not really. USIS, which had the most interaction earlier, ended our exchanges program quite some time before. AID, with whom we interacted a lot in relationship to the government, was gone. The embassy scaled back.

The scaling back was meant to send the Soviets a message in Kabul. I think they got it. Our administrative people… There was no more political section. There was no more economic section. Our administrative officer, Bernie Woerz, was really tied up with trying to get everybody – we had another drawdown after the Soviet invasion – and their stuff out of there. We finally got our two cars back – a year and a half later, but we got them back. Bernie did a heroic job. So, those kinds of embassy-ministry relationships at a midlevel continued. Bruce Amstutz remained on as chargé for a while. Eventually, another chargé came. We had three or four before we finally closed the whole thing down. As I understood it, the reason for having the embassy there up through ’86 or ’87 when we finally just said, “We’re out of here” was to do as much watching as we could but not in concert with the Babrak government and then after Babrak whatever other stooges were brought in. But mostly to confer with third country embassies and talk with the Brits and the Pakistanis. The Pakistanis and the Indians pretty much had the best ear to the ground.

Q: The Pakistanis and Indians in this case were kind of together?

TAYLOR: Actually, yes. I had a number of evenings at my house where I would invite some Pakistanis and some Indians. Yes. There was not the great disruption in their relationship that exists now. By the way, Lalit Mansingh, who was just named Indian ambassador to the United States, was the deputy in the Indian embassy in Kabul and is a good friend of ours and a wonderful man. As someone who just finished working on Indian and Pakistani affairs again, I’m very glad he’s here. He’s a wonderful man. I said a few paragraphs ago that we were all in it together. The international community drew together and although the Indians and the Pakistanis had their frictions at home, when they were in Kabul everybody had the same objective, which was to keep Afghanistan as neutral as possible and to keep as many influences out of Afghanistan as possible.

Q: Were you all looking for evidence of turning Afghanistan into a Soviet satellite?

TAYLOR: Oh, it was, but it didn’t need to be the Eastern European model. The population is a very different population. The geography is very different. But when I said it was a satellite, I meant that it was so easily dominated by the Soviets in terms of overpowering the existing government. We’ve all seen that of its “satellites,” Afghanistan

was the least easy to govern for the Russians. There were people there who knew a lot about Afghanistan, more than I did, who said at the time – and Louis DePree was one of them – that the Soviets would never be able to last there. To me, it looked like they were there forever. They had all this fighting power. But those who said the Afghans in their own wily way would make life Hell for the Soviets were right in a way. Of course, there was a lot of humorous resistance. Even before all this happened, the Soviets were never allowed to come out of their embassy. You never saw Soviet women anywhere, although we knew they were in town. Every once in a while, a big bus full of Russians would come from the Soviet embassy down to the street where we lived, which was in the bazaar called Chicken Bazaar. This was a wonderful place to shop and almost everything on the street was dirt cheap whether it was food or trinkets. It was a delightful, colorful shopping street. The Soviets would be very carefully controlled when they got off their bus and would be herded around from place to place. This was for the entire three years that we were in Afghanistan, in the good times and in the bad times. Of course, the shopkeepers would never sell them anything. They didn't want their money. This continued even after the Soviet invasion when people became more desperate. The Afghans knew the westerners were going. They knew the aid was stopping. They knew that our dollars were not going to flow into their handicraft stores anymore. They certainly knew the Russians weren't going to buy anything. But they wouldn't even sell them an orange. So, there was sort of a Gandhi-like resistance that developed that had developed toward the Russians for the two years that they existed there under the coups.

Q: You left there when?

TAYLOR: I left in late February of 1980. My father died in March.

Q: When you came back, you were assigned where?

TAYLOR: The Office of Near East and South Asian Affairs in USIA. I took over Marilyn McAfee's desk, which was all the basket cases of the world. I used to say that I had Afghanistan, where the Soviets had invaded, Iran with the hostages, Pakistan where they had just sacked our embassy, and the bright spot on my horizon every day was Bangladesh, the only place where we had a normal USIA program going.

Q: To get a feel for how Washington bureaucracy works, here you were, a relatively junior officer holding down a place under very difficult circumstances. Was there much interest in what you had been doing? Did anybody say, "Well done?"

TAYLOR: Yes, there was a lot of interest. Probably my career got put on the fast track because of that. We were invited to speak at the War College. I was invited a number of times to attend the director's meetings – this was not the State Department, mind you; I was never invited by the State Department to do anything – but through other means we were invited to the War College. My own agency directors and deputies would feature me at various places where they would trot out reasons why we needed more resources. Then after spending six months, maybe a little bit less, as the desk officer for these basket case

countries, I was recruited to replace Kenton Keith as the executive assistant to the deputy director of the Agency, who at the time was Charlie Bray. Charlie was then a State Department Foreign Service officer, the spokesman. He became Deputy Director of USIA when John Reinhardt was our Director. So, we had two career people running USIA at that time. Kenton was the executive assistant to Charlie. When Kenton left to go to another assignment, Charlie had seen me in these various fora speaking about what had happened in Afghanistan and how our resources were used and whether they were effective or not, so he asked me to become his executive assistant. To the extent that being in a place with the focus on it helps your career, there is no question but that it helped mine. People knew who I was. That means a lot.

Q: Going to the time you were the desk officer, here you are in Iran, where we had nothing going except… What were you doing about Iran?

TAYLOR: There was nothing from a programmatic point of view that we could do in Iran. But four of the hostages were from USIA. I spent a huge amount of time with those four hostages' families. I traveled to conferences on Iran and spoke about the public affairs perspective, meaning what we had been trying to do in Iran to present the United States perspectives to counter what the Iranians were saying about us at the time of the takeover. I did a lot more domestic work on Iran. There was no work to be done in Iran itself. I got to know a lot of people at the State Department working on Iran. I was part of the Iran Task Force.

Q: I've interviewed Sheldon Krys.

TAYLOR: He was the executive director for NEA. He was involved in all of the things that I worked for. I was a worker bee. But just to staff a task force like that… There were 50 something hostages and each family had to have a point of contact. I just spent an enormous amount of time with our four families.

Q: How did you find the families reacting to the situation?

TAYLOR: They were all different even among four. There were two families that really were private in their grief, in their concern. They liked to talk to me. They called me a lot and they talked to my boss, but they never came to Washington. They never spoke to the press. But two of our other hostages, John Graves and Barry Rosen… John was our PAO in Tehran and Barry Rosen was the information officer. Their spouses, Bonnie Graves and Barbara Rosen, became quite famous and became the spokespersons for the hostage families. Barbara and Bonnie traveled in France and appeared on French television and had a lot of things to say about the U.S. government that caused some heartache back here. These were the two USIA spouses who were out of line, it would seem. But they had a point of view. The U.S. government from their perspective was not doing everything it should to get these people back. So, when I said that I spent a lot of time on the hostage families, I didn't know you were going to ask me that kind of question, but one of the reasons that I spent a lot of time was because Bonnie and Barbara were

extremely upset and were very active and were very articulate and were in Washington constantly.

Q: There is this obvious frustration, but did they have a point of view on what we should have done or was it just that we weren't doing whatever should have been done?

TAYLOR: I hate to speak for them now after so many years have intervened, but I think one of their points if you went back to their public statements, which they made all the time – they were always interviewed by Dan Rather and Tom Brokaw – they were on the major networks once a week – was that we weren't doing enough internationally, we weren't working with our allies closely enough, that we hadn't pursued every lead, that perhaps we ought to negotiate a little bit more in depth with the Iranians, find out a little bit more about what the Iranians wanted, and somehow find a way to know the students better. I don't mean to say that they were totally estranged from the State Department process. I remember being in plenty of meetings of the Task Force when Bonnie and Barbara were both present. But then afterwards they would come to USIA when we were still on Pennsylvania Avenue and really unload there and let us know that they were going to go out and speak publicly. I remember that their trip to France was quite notable. They met at the very highest levels of the French government and that was all on international television. It was election year in the United States. I had spent my whole career overseas. I had been 10 years overseas. I had never known these things could happen the way they did. So, I learned a lot about the way Washington really folds up its tent and everybody looks inward when something like this happens. Before talking any more about what bonnie and Barbara were saying, I'd like to go back and look at what they did say, what their points were. I think part of it was that they felt, and this is an honest human reaction, that as time went on the Carter administration was tending to other business and the hostage thing became part of the woodwork, it became part of our everyday scenery, it was never going to change, and that we had somehow learned to live with this. I think that was basically what their message was.

Q: How about with Afghanistan? Was there much for you to do?

TAYLOR: Oh, constantly. It wasn't all USIA work, but it was in the sense that this was so new no one had ever dealt with something like this on quite such a scale. I spent a lot of time on visa issues working with the INS for our FSNs, trying to get them at that time to even answer the telephone. I went personally with FSNs to the INS offices. These were people who had legitimate entry papers to the United States. I was running a hotel at home. My husband, by the way, at this time was a senior watch officer. We were living in a temporary rented house because we didn't realize we were coming back from Afghanistan. Our own house, which was a wonderful brownstone on 22nd St. between K and L, where he could walk to the Department and I could walk to USIA, was lived in for a full year after we came back by our tenants, who would not leave. We were renting some unfurnished place. We had no furniture. We had 85 boxes which I refused to unpack because I knew I would have to pack them up and move them. My father had just died. Jim was working this swell job and was never at home. We shared a weekend once

every nine weeks and by then he was so exhausted he was unfit to live with. It was really a very, very difficult year.

What I did professionally for the Afghans in addition to trying to sort out our own FSN problems, which was legitimate USIA business, was my involvement in Freedom House's efforts to get the Afghan story out. They would call on me – this was also part of my job – for information in building their story. I went to a lot of conferences. I was asked to speak and did some papers. Mostly, I gave speeches. I didn't have time to write papers. I went to universities that had Afghan studies programs. But we were not running an Afghan program by any means.

Q: Going to Pakistan…

TAYLOR: In our heroic way, no. I think the whole embassy set up shop elsewhere. The American Cultural Center in Rawalpindi had been sacked but it was salvageable. As I recall, we just reconstituted the embassy and made a band-aid, patched together, working set of offices around town in Islamabad. In my view, we did not make any useful entreaties to the Pakistani government as to how they failed us in an hour of need. I think that's another story that has never really been told properly. They did nothing to deter the mobs from attacking the embassy and they did nothing to drive them away once they had.

Q: Was there the feeling that this was a policy or that this was just a failure?

TAYLOR: I don't know. The Pakistanis were very important to us because of what was going on in Afghanistan. There was the opening to China, so maybe it was a policy. But I don't think we would have upset the policy if we had made slightly more strenuous representations. But this was something that really went wrong. Where were the Pakistani authorities to keep this from happening or at least once it started happening? I mean, there were busloads of people. You don't organize busloads of people in Pakistan without somebody knowing about it. And they all headed toward the U.S. embassy. They had enough gasoline with them to burn down a brick and cement, concrete, building. I don't know how many police forces in the world can overlook something like that. And the only reason that everybody in that place did not die was because the Pakistani attackers thought everyone was dead. They couldn't believe that anybody would still be alive after the building had been burning for as long as it had. Either Herb Hagerty or Jim Thurber or one of the several people who emerged as heroes in that whole thing said they probably had about 12 minutes of air left in that vault. The heat had become unbearable. So, it was not that the Pakistani authorities came and drove the crowds away. The crowds drifted away because they thought it was all over inside. Only then did somebody from the vault pop through the hatch and see that all was clear and then they began getting people out. The roof was ready to collapse, which it did. The smoke inhalation was getting so bad.

I was on the desk only six months after I came back before I went to replace Kenton. I think that, being the troopers that we are as Americans, I think we just set up shop in temporary quarters until we could rebuild the thing. We had a USIS section pretty much

fully staffed out there within a year. We've always had a huge staff in Pakistan. We had six or seven people out there quickly.

Q: What about Bangladesh? Was there much going on there?

TAYLOR: By the time the end of the day came around, if we got a couple of Fulbrighters out there and a couple of exchangees, that was the most I could do for Bangladesh. Plus, it was an Islamic country and we were withdrawing from Islamic countries. In the six months that I was on that job, I don't think that I did much for the program in Bangladesh. I am very sorry about that now, but I don't think I had much left by the end of the day.

Q: This had been from when?

TAYLOR: I came back from Afghanistan in February of '80. By the summer, let's say July, I was asked to replace Kenton.

Q: You did that from '80 to when?

TAYLOR: Replacing Kenton?

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: Well, not very long. It was an election year. Charlie Bray and John Reinhardt were thrown out once the Reagan administration came in. So, I worked for Charlie from July of '80 until January of '81. I got thrown out of there, too. I was identified with them and no way was the new administration going to keep me in the front office. So, I was asked to be the executive assistant in the Educational and Cultural Affairs Bureau, the old CU, which had marched across town to be part of us. That two and a half year tour that I did there running a bureau of 550-600 people really gave me the administrative and management executive experience that I needed at that time. I had had such unusual assignments. Moscow was not a normal assignment for USIS. Kabul as it turned out was not a normal place for USIS. Working for the Deputy Director of the Agency was a very rarified thing. So, when I settled down into this huge bureau as the executive assistant to the two top people and saw an overview of all the programs and all the money that we had, that's where I really learned to be a manager.

Q: Today is October 30, 2001. What was your impression of how USIA fit into the foreign affairs establishment at that time?

TAYLOR: That's a good question. Of course, it plays a role even today. The government was very much in a crisis mode at that time. We had 54 or 56 hostages in Iran. We faced this trauma of our embassy being sacked in Pakistan with 12 people killed, I believe, a mixture of Pakistanis and Americans. The whole issue of the Cold War resurging to the forefront had come alive again with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. So, I was

fortunate in being at these higher levels of the Agency to see the interaction between our agency and the Department. I will be the first to acknowledge that we've always been the junior agency. But I thought that there was a fair amount of really good and collegial back and forth between the "country team" of NEA in the State Department and those of us at USIA who were intimately involved in the Middle East/South Asian issues at the time. That included me not only because of my overseas background but because of my new position in the front office. We were invited to high level meetings. We always had to fight our way into the decision-making meetings where, as Edward R. Murrow put it once, we needed to be in on the takeoff as well as the crash landing. It was always a struggle to remind the people at the State Department – and again I remind the tape recorder that I'm married to one of those – that the public affairs aspect of any new or continuing policy had to be considered and preferably should be considered as that policy was being devised. I wouldn't say this worked all the time harmoniously and well. There were times when we would get frantic phone calls saying a meeting was about to be assembled in two minutes and could we get there across town. We always dropped everything in order to do that. But I would say the partnership was not troubled in any way. It worked in fits and starts. It was probably bumpy. But I think it worked and I think that the USIA was very supportive of the Department's policy when we knew what that was and how we could best fit into it.

Q: You being familiar with the Middle East, as we are talking, American airplanes are bombing Afghanistan, something we could never have dreamed of when we had our last interview.

TAYLOR: That's right.

Q: The question of today – and I ask it of the time you were there right after the Iranian takeover of the embassy and that whole period shortly thereafter – is, what were we thinking about our message to the Islamic world?

TAYLOR: That's also a very good question. In summing up my own career, I'd have to say that although I did work in the Soviet Union and spent a lot of time on Eastern Europe and the Balkans and such, I've probably spent half my career worrying about the message to the Islamic world in some way or other. We spent hours, weeks, months, together with the Department around tables throwing out ideas as to how best to use the arsenal of tools that we had in USIA to get the message, whatever the message was, across. Primarily to get the message across that at all levels of Islamic society. We felt the United States could work in partnership, could be a friend, could be understanding, and could be respectful assuming that those conditions existed on the side of the Muslim world as well. To that extent, USIA had, as you well know, a series of programs that ran the gambit from our Fulbright exchanges program, which brings many scholars of different ages and different levels of academic achievement to the United States for periods of a year, sometimes two or longer, to our informational programs, our libraries, which welcomed scholars, journalists, and public opinion makers, and leaders of society into our libraries and cultural centers overseas. We would work with our colleagues in the

State Department to brainstorm on ways to make all of these programs, whether it was a local library program on the ground, our speakers programs where we brought specialists from the United States to speak on subjects of mutual interest, or the exchanges of peoples program, the written material, the magazines that we put out in Arabic, (Span Magazine, for example, that was published in India so successfully for so many years; Al Majal, which was published in Tunisia) to make those instruments as compatible with U.S. foreign policy as possible and also as open and accessible to our Muslim audiences as possible. This has been something that's been in the minds of USIA people – now public diplomacy people – ever since I can remember and probably long before I entered the Foreign Service in the 1970s. The prospect of creating if not a mutual admiration society, at least a platform of understanding where we had an ability to get to the publics of the Muslim world what our policies, what our society, and what our culture was. Whether it was admired by them or not – and this is not just true of the Muslim world but every part of the world, the former Soviet Union, for example – was something else. But we felt that at least if we could get the truth of what governs our society made available in a variety of ways at a variety of levels – and I mentioned some of the program tools that we used – we had a better chance of going forward, working in partnership with other countries of the world, particularly the Muslim world in this case. The Arab-Israeli issue was, of course, always there and that had to be factored into everything else that we did. That was front and center, of course, all the time. It plays a great role in the public image of the United States in the Muslim world.

Q: Did USIS people abroad at that time and before have the task of monitoring what was being taught, looking at the textbooks within the society?

TAYLOR: Oh, yes. I don't know that calling it a "task" is a good way to term it, but it certainly was something that we were very concerned about. We were as concerned about what was being taught in the Israeli textbooks as in the Arab textbooks. We were concerned about what was taught in the Soviet textbooks. You would find just egregious examples in Soviet era textbooks on the whole history of the post-Civil War world in the United States. Certainly there was a lot to be said about slavery, the Civil War, the aftermath of the Civil War, and the condition of African-Americans in the 20th century. But the extremely one sided nature in which this was put in Soviet textbooks was pretty shocking. We would work with Soviet educators as we worked with Arab and Israeli educators in the Middle East to write more in their textbooks about the openness of American society, and the great equalizing factor of free and open education. Those were things that we tried to do through our visitors projects, through sending an academic specialist to, say, Jordan for a year to work with the textbook and curriculum writing faculties of the public school administrations to try to just help them rewrite and shape their texts, particularly in the field of civil society, history, and social sciences, a little bit more objectively.

Q: There is an editorial in <u>The New York Times</u> today talking about Saudi Arabia, where according to the columnist, Thomas Friedman, the Saudis for some time now have in their textbooks at lower levels that anybody who is a non-Muslim, is an infidel, is an

enemy of religion. Were we looking at the religious side of things or were we just worried about the American story as opposed to the other side?

TAYLOR: You have to be very careful when you're looking at the religious statements in a textbook of an Islamic society. Certainly as far as our dealings with the Soviet Union were concerned, we were more concerned about the portrayal of the United States because it was just blatantly egregious. I remember once when one of the major American exhibits came to the Soviet Union in the glory days when we would send a huge exhibit around the Soviet Union for 18 months and the exhibit would spend two months in each of six cities or such and we would have with the exhibits 20-30 young college age Russian speaking guides and they would be a mix of college kids. Inevitably, the African-American college kids among the guides would be asked things like, "Well, are you allowed to drive cars in the United States?" There was just such basic disinformation that you can't even imagine it. So, these kids would write home to their parents and say, "Send me pictures of the house, the car, the family dog, and all of these things."

What we found in the Middle Eastern textbooks was somewhat similar but not quite as blatant. Where it pertained to what they were saying about their own religion and other religions, my experience in working on projects with textbook writers was that we didn't much approach that. Rather, we came at it from a different angle, which was to talk about how civil society, just the subject of civics itself, is discussed in an American classroom. How we do role playing in ninth grade, where somebody is the representative and somebody is the mayor and people vote and what it means to vote and what it means to have basic freedoms. Instead of focusing on a statement such as the one you pointed out about infidels, we would say, "Well, here is something else you might want to think about in your textbooks," such as how do you raise a group of young people to be responsible members of society, how do you develop the thinking in young people – high school students and college students – that public service, working for the government, is something that is of value to them? By the way, we need to do that in our own country, too. But we would never, at least in my experience with U.S. curriculum writers and experts whom we would bring to, say, Morocco or Jordan or Syria, or Middle Easterners whom we would bring to the United States to spend a semester with one of the state curriculum textbook writing committees, one always had to be very careful about not picking out the religion per se but rather approaching this issue from a broader perspective of society and politics. It's very hard to unravel those things.

Q: Did you feel that Islam was just per se in opposition to American and western values?

TAYLOR: No. Islam is such a large and widespread religion as well as philosophy as well as a way of life. Broadly speaking, you could say that Islam is a faith that is very cautious about other faiths, but I would never say that it is opposed to the American or the western way of life. As conservative societies, forget about whether they're Islamic or not, conservative societies are very wary of western societies and our "fast way of life" and our perceived lack of a moral basis and our perceived indifference to religion. Religion in the United States in the view of most Muslim societies does not play as major

a role as Islam plays in Muslim societies and that is a matter of concern for them. But I didn't see within the religion of Islam opposition to the United States or the western way of life. Certainly as we've seen there are factions and there are those groups of Muslims who have taken Islam as their banner and made it into something that most Muslims will tell you it is not. I think that I would agree that Islam is not what the extremists have made it to be, particularly in terms of extreme Islam's hatred of the West. When I was a student at the National War College in '90-'91, we read at Samuel Huntington's "The Clash of Cultures." Everybody in the class was outraged about this. "This can't be." He was positing in his article, which became a much longer piece, and I think at Harvard it became the central part of some courses he was teaching, that now that the Cold War was largely won – this was '90-'91 – the next phase that we faced in the West was the clash of cultures, primarily the clash of western culture and Islam. I remember, we all said, "Oh, this is nonsense. This will never happen." That was just 10 years go. And now those students are generals.

Q: In 1981, you moved to the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. What was your job and what did the bureau do?

TAYLOR: The bureau to this day is the largest bureau in the former USIA, now the State Department. It's now called the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs under the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. In the USIA of late, I was the special assistant to the Associate Director for the entire bureau. This was a bureau of 600-700 people. The Associate Director was typically a political appointee. In the Carter administration it was at the time Alice Ilchman, who left the Carter administration when the Reagan admin came in to become president of Sarah Lawrence University. So, I only worked for Alice very briefly before she left. Then the Reagan administration brought in a fellow from Hillsdale College named Ron Trowbridge, who remained in that position for eight years. I was on paper his special assistant. In reality, I worked for the Career deputy associate director, who was at the time Jay Gelber – unfortunately and tragically, he died last year of cancer. He was our senior most Foreign Service officer. He himself had just come back from four years in India. I had just come back from three years in Afghanistan and two years in the Soviet Union. He had also served in Israel. So, we came from a similar background.

front office at that time had roughly 10 people not counting support staff. I would have been probably the number three person in the way the office was organized. Then some more political appointees came and much of the work got quite diffused. It became rather interesting at this time because the famous Charlie Wick became the Agency director. Charlie Wick was Ronald Reagan's best friend. Mary Jane Wick was Mrs. Reagan's best friend. So, you had an agency which ironically was positioned to be very close to the White House because of this personal friendship between our Director and the President. So, for the only time in our history really, we were flooded with money and we had a great deal of prestige because Ronald Reagan cared what Charlie Wick thought. Charlie Wick came from Hollywood basically. He believed very much in the efficacy of propaganda. Among other accomplishments in his background, he was a movie producer

of some renown. I think his most famous movie was "Snow White and the Three Stooges," which cause us all a great chuckle at the time. But Charlie turned out to be a very savvy guy although he was extremely controversial and particularly among those of us who were Foreign Service. We felt that he was politicizing an element of the Agency which had for years struggled to become credible overseas with our overseas audiences… Here was an administration which was turning the clock back on all of that. For example, in the course of the years that I worked in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, there was the famous black list. It is not revealing any secret to say that the USIA under Charlie Wick's leadership actually compiled a list – it was written down or was in somebody's head or both – of speakers who were politically unacceptable to the administration to be sent abroad to speak on behalf of the U.S. government. Most often, these people tended to be journalists. Some of them were very famous journalists. When they found out that they had been black listed by the USIA, that the USIA would not authorize them to travel on behalf of the U.S. government, this became quite a public thing. So, it was a very heady time to be in this particular situation. On the one hand, you had the career Foreign Service united against the political appointees to a certain degree in USIA and in particular against Charlie Wick. There were some political appointees within the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at lower levels than had been made in the past. Career civil servants and career Foreign Service officers were pushed aside by political appointees who were taking up real operational positions for which they had no experience and no expertise. This truly also rankled. I think the career Foreign Service felt that the entire focus of the Agency under Charlie Wick and particularly as it affected the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, which runs our huge and enormous exchange of persons programs and which can only be effective if it is taken credibly by our foreign guests, had introduced a propaganda element into our programs exceeding what would keep us within that safe realm of the credible. This ran the gambit from these speaker programs which had black list to such things as focusing an International Visitor Program only on the administration's policy on any issue. The international Visitor Program brought 5-15 leaders from countries to look at a single theme in the Untied States – that could be a variety of themes. Prior to the Reagan administration and Charlie Wick's administration of our agency, the theme would be explored in a three or four week professional trip to the United States from a variety of perspectives. You'd get the U.S. government point of view - briefings from government officials – and then you'd get the other points of view. Then you'd get the point of view in the middle. These visitors from foreign countries would be exposed to all of that and it was up to them to sift it all, filter it all, and hopefully come away with some understanding as to why the U.S. government took the position it did on whatever the big issue was, whether it was the environment, social services, foreign policy, or how to run a newspaper. So, these things were a matter of friction. For me, going to work every day was enthralling. I had come from Moscow and Kabul. All these issues were on the front page of the paper. I was constantly in demand to brief on what I knew about these parts of the world. At the same time, you sort of felt that you were going to work in solidarity with your own Foreign Service cohort. I don't want to say that we had an enemy within, but we had a problem with the leadership of our agency. So, we tried to remain as close as we could as colleagues. I would say that Charlie Wick probably galvanized us in doing so.

Q: With the political appointees, were they activists or had their just paid off somebody and kind of sat there and you worked around them?

TAYLOR: Oh, no, these people were very activist. Charlie Wick saw the value of an agency – we had an 8,000 person agency, including our FSNs overseas at the time – he saw what you could do with propaganda. He had come from Hollywood, after all, and he saw what you could do with these resources from a propaganda aspect. I'm not saying that every single thing we did became politicized, but some of the major things did have a political taint to them. A lot of programs just went on as normal. One agency administrator with 25-30 political appointees scattered through an agency, as all administrations have come to understand, can't get their arms around everything. The bureaucrats burrow and will forever resist. The bureaucrats will keep things from happening that they don't want to happen. There was a fair amount of that going on, too. But I would say that all of the appointees that I knew under the Charlie Wick period were activists and some of them were pretty off the wall. Some of them were very smart and that made it scary and some of them were totally inept, but they were all active. There was one appointee in a critical position in the academic side of our house who was so inept that this person – and I won't make a reference to gender – was not really certain that there was a state called "Finland." I was at one point briefing on an upcoming trip that this appointee was to make and the trip included Finland. It was news to this person that there was an independent country up there in Scandinavia where it's pretty cold, that this country existed. That was a surprise. But for the most part, these were smart people who probably didn't have any reason to be in a foreign affairs agency, but on finding themselves there for whatever reason, they were going to use it to advance the line that the White House wanted advanced.

Q: What were some of the issues that you felt you and some of your colleagues were having to resist or were hurting the mission?

TAYLOR: The main thing at that time was, of course, the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets. The hostages were released from Iran upon the inauguration of Ronald Reagan, but there was still – and is to this day – bitterness between Iran and the United States. From a foreign affairs perspective, and I know our colleagues in the State Department felt the same way – Charlie Wick's zeal for beating the Soviets over the head 20 times a day on the issue of the Cold War and in fact establishing an even greater distance between the United States and the Soviet Union was a matter of concern. We felt that we were neglecting other areas of the world or turning our relationship with Africa, for example, into the Soviet-U.S. battleground. Those of my colleagues who worked in Latin America felt that the only way they could get the attention of USIA administrative leaders, the only way they could get a program or a special proposal funded was if somehow it had a Cold War spin to it. It was as though the entire agency was consumed by this. In some areas, perhaps it should have been because the Afghan thing was going on. The fact that this issue seemed to interfere and intrude on almost everything that was done no matter where geographically, meant that we were not getting our work done the way we should have. I

know there were career Foreign Service people in the Department who were apoplectic about this. You would come to the table at the State Department and people there knew us well enough to be polite about it, but at the same time there was this incredulous disbelief that any serious Foreign Service officer could work in an agency that was headed by a maverick like Charlie Wick. It was pretty much openly talked about at the Department. Senior level Department people would go to meetings at the White House or the National Security Council and they'd see Charlie Wick in action and they would find that a pretty incredible story as well.

Q: You mentioned that Charlie Wick knew the value of propaganda. How well do you think he understood the international world?

TAYLOR: I think his understanding of the international world was very superficial. What he did understand was how to serve the White House's view of itself in the international world. He made a very famous movie calling in a fellow who had actually worked for USIA before in the Nixon administration, Bruce Hershenson, whom you may know in the latter day as a conservative Republican who ran for office in Orange County, California, and was defeated. Bruce was an extremely talented writer, creative thinker. He had made in 1969 for USIA a movie called "Prague Spring," which USIA showed. It was very effective propaganda. It was as effective as "Years of Lightning, Days of Drama," a famous movie about John F. Kennedy. Bruce Hershenson made "Prague Spring," which had no words to it and very little music, but it had a lot of sound. It was black and white. It would show clips of Soviet tanks pouring into Prague. Then juxtaposed to that would be little Czech girls running around in the fields with daisies in their hair and then a quick flash… This was the 1960s technique of filmmaking. So, Bruce Hershenson made this movie and we showed it all over Africa and Latin America and got a lot of propaganda mileage out of it. But a lot of people realized you can't do this very often; you can do it once or twice, but you can't make a history of it.

So, Bruce was brought back to make this movie called "Let Poland Be Poland." It was probably '83. It was rather boring. It wasn't as good by any means as "Prague Spring." This is how Charlie Wick manipulated the Agency, and the whole premise of USIA was that we were never, never, never to be active in the United States and "propagandize" our own people. So, most USIA products – the famous "America Illustrated" magazine, "Al-Majal," the other things that we did – were never available in the United States. I support that. There is good reason for that. But this "Let Poland Be Poland," which was our reaction to the then-Polish government's crackdown on the Lech Walesa freedom movement was shown on national television in the United States because of the Reagan administration's power and authority. Other than "Years of Lighting, Days of Drama," which was shown in movie theaters nationwide on two different occasions – I think there were two dates only in which the American public could see this movie – that movie was never shown in the United States. Then 20 years later, "Let Poland Be Poland," which turned out to be really a bunch of talking heads and was fairly dull, not very much action in it, received the consuming attention of the leadership of our agency so that any other project that you wanted to bring to their attention was just put aside. It was an

administration where when the White House backed something, they were very successful at getting the entire government focused on it. They were more successful probably than any other administration that I've worked in in galvanizing all the people that they had positioned throughout the government agencies.

Q: Let's go back to the black list. You were right in the center of this. There are two things about a black list. One is the black list itself. The other one is the mental calculation of saying, "I'd ask So and So, but I'm sure they wouldn't want him or her." A black list has almost a repeater element to it.

TAYLOR: Indeed.

Q: You just think, "What's the point of asking somebody that won't be allowed," so you don't ask. How did you find dealing with this black list.

TAYLOR: What you said is absolutely correct. The phenomenon that occurred was that the USIA Foreign Service was and is a very small Foreign Service. We all knew each other. As I was working in Washington during these days, friends posted overseas would just call me up and say, "Hey, Louise, we're thinking of asking X or Y journalist to come talk about freedom of the press or editorial responsiveness or how you build a good newspaper. Is he or she on the black list?" I would say "Yes" or "No" because I knew. This happened throughout the Agency. I wasn't the only one whom people were calling. But that was basically how posts overseas avoided sending in a cable request, for example, for someone who was persona non grata. Charlie Wick also had a very famous temper and if it came to his attention that some poor PAO out in Quito or someplace had not heard about the fact that there was a blacklist and quite innocently said, oh, gee, he'd like to have some left of center journalist come talk to them or some representative of a think tank which did not in some way support the administration's policies, that PAO could get in trouble. Charlie would ream them out personally sometimes and sometimes it would be detrimental to their ongoing career. PAOs learned very quickly not to cross this line. This is something that happens in the Soviet Union. That was what a lot of us thought, that we were approaching them in doing this. That was pretty horrifying.

Q: Did you find that you were ending up with a second or even third rate string of lecturers?

TAYLOR: Under any administration, we've had some real flops. Whether they have anything to do with why they were chosen for their political background or not… In Israel, I had a speaker whose field was education. This was during the Reagan administration. He was not selected because of any political inclination. He was just recruited by our professional staff. He was a total bomb. So, I can't say that because of this policy the program was weakened in terms of quality. But it certainly got a slant to it and there were some issues that some PAOs would decide they were just not even going to touch because they knew what side of the coin they'd get. In those days, we used to have a country plan, which was like a mission performance plan. The country plan would

usually have some requirement that you address the issue of U.S.-Soviet relations. You could tell without even writing the cable to the Agency who was going to be offered to you as a speaker on this issue and you knew exactly what their point of view would be: absolutely Cold War, down to the line, anti-Sovietism. That didn't work in a lot of societies. A political science faculty in France, for example, didn't really want to have – and I don't want to mention these scholars right now, but there are a whole lot of them who specialized in this at that time – dialogue with these people. They knew that there was a closed mind. It was so ironic that we were the Americans trying to talk about the wide spectrum of ideas that exist in this world yet under this particular period of our agency's history, we were sending out in some fields, particularly social sciences, U.S.-Soviet relations, people of very extremely narrow vision who would lecture and not discuss.

Q: Were you getting honest feedback about the reactions? In France, Britain, Germany, or Japan, was there a critique from their chattering class saying, "Why did you send this person out?"

TAYLOR: All the time. Again, I was in Israel at the time. At one point, we got an offering. It was a big name but pretty typical. I could have written the text of what this fellow would have said. I went to one of my savviest, most sophisticated Israeli friends in Tel Aviv University. I knew him well enough. He was a good friend. They had been to our house many times. I said, "Look, I almost have to take this guy. Do you think you could put up with him for a lecture or two and I'll try to bicycle him around Israel and do the least amount of damage possible?" This person, who was quite prominent later on in Israeli politics, said, "Well, Louise, you and I are such good friends, I'll do it, but it's going to take a lot to move the faculty and the students to come." It was so obvious what would be said. In terms of the feedback, frequently, you'd get the feedback before the event ever took place. One could never put this on paper, of course. This was also another removal of freedom of speech within the USIA during this period. Posts overseas very quickly learned not to put any of this on paper. We were always required to do a critique of our program, critique the support we had gotten from the Agency, the actual events, the quality of the speaker, and so on. We learned very quickly that the better part of valor was to just say as little as possible, send in a positive report, and hope that no one would ever read it.

On the phone, however, that was where the truth was known. We didn't have e-mail in those days. There was either cable or there was phone. On the phone between professionals, it was quite clear what the reaction was of the audiences. One way you could get around this, if there were media reactions… You could pick up what the French press had said about this speaker whom the American embassy had just hosted or you could pick up what the Australian press or wherever… Brazil… And just send a compendium of press reports without any commentary. That usually never got to the highest levels of the Agency. They didn't normally read cables of that type. That was one way where you could report fairly honestly as to what was being said. As I'm saying this, I'm realizing that this was really a period of self-imposed reticence. We clamped down

upon ourselves.

Q: As you say this, I can see that rather than striving to get somebody to come, you said, "Do we really have to?" In other words, it was a diminution of the program.

TAYLOR: In terms of foreign policy and some social policy issues, yes, I would say that it was. At the same time – of course, I was in Israel, which is a pretty intellectually savvy country-

Q: When were you in Israel?

TAYLOR: '84-'88. Before that, I was four years in Washington. During those years in Washington, I was working with some countries overseas where the audiences were pretty sophisticated. You'd get these wonderful directors of think tanks or directors of the political science faculty at a high level university somewhere or you'd get your contacts in the ministries saying, "Look, Louise, we know this is a passing phase in U.S. politics and we love America" or "We disagree with you about this but we like that about you, so we can tolerate all of this." You would get that, too. It was sort of like a sympathy reaction.

Q: What about the reaction of these lecturers? Were their minds pretty closed and they went out and said their piece and thought they had a good reaction?

TAYLOR: Not only that, I witnessed several occasions where they were rude to the questioners in the audience when a questioner might raise a different perspective that did not support or agree with what the presenter had said. There were times when the presenters would dismiss these people as having no intellectual basis or no learning or no reason to even be in the room. These were a lot of egos that were going around. Largely, they were academics. But we were practicing self-censorship, there is no question about it.

Q: Was the American academic world sort of divided up into egos to the left and egos to the right?

TAYLOR: I think it is more so now. As I understand the academic world having been away from it longer, I think it's more pronounced now and not just to the right and to the left but different emphases on what should be taught and what should be discussed. That seems to have developed in academia, too. But at this time, we were pretty much limited to one side of the political spectrum.

I should say right now, having bashed Charlie Wick here for the last 20 minutes, that during the last four years before the consolidation of USIA into the State Department, which took place in '99, so let's say from '95 to '99 and even before that, but I came back from Morocco in '95, there were those of us among the career Foreign Service who looked at what was happening to our agency in the fight to consolidate USIA into the

State Department and said, "Where is Charlie Wick when we need him?" That man for all of his faults and everything I said about him would never have let the Agency disappear the way Joe Duffy let the Agency disappear. We were all going around ironically with tongue in cheek – or maybe not tongue in cheek - saying, "Where is Charlie Wick when we need him?"

Q: I've heard people talk about Joe Duffy. I don't recall a positive remark about him.

TAYLOR: I can't think of much positive to say about him. I think it was conscious. Some people think he's not even mentally alert enough to have it be a conscious effort, but I have been in many meetings with him where I have heard him say sort of looking up at the ceiling – this was five or six years after he had been our agency director, "Well, I'm still trying to figure out what this agency should do." That doesn't really help you in your battle with Jesse Helms and particularly when Brian Atwood, the then-Administrator for AID, which as everybody knows is the agency that Helms really wanted to get rid of. Brian Atwood went out there fighting every day the way Charlie Wick did. Brian Atwood was a very strong advocate for his agency. Joe Duffy… I wouldn't be surprised if he had some sort of an unwritten understanding probably with Gore that this would be his mission, the reduction of government. In that sense, Charlie Wick gets a lot of good marks from a lot of us.

Q: What about the exchange side, the students? We've talked about the lecturers. Was there much of a problem with the people coming over, the other side of the coin?

TAYLOR: Not in the Fulbright Program because it is an academic program. A lot of them are students and they're not at such a sophisticated level and thank heavens they got dispersed into the great academic side of our country and therefore saw, as in any academic environment, all sides of the spectrum and the good and healthy discussions that go on in academia. Even at the lecture or the more senior levels, I don't think that it was harmful to the program in that sense. What we always were concerned about was that on the International Visitor Program, which is a program of much shorter duration. Some extremely wise people who were selected for the prospect that they would go on to even more senior positions in their own country would see right through any kind of program that was set up just to show them one aspect of what our policy was. That was a concern for the International Visitor Program. I can't recall a specific case, but I do remember that program officers handling these cases or PAOs in the field when a group would return would say, "Well, in the debrief, it became clear that our visitors felt they were being shown just one side of the story here." That happened on occasion, but not enough to decimate the program. The Fulbright Program is large enough and the students are all dispersed throughout the great academic open world that… We were far more troubled about the potential than what actually happened.

Q: In '84, you left.

TAYLOR: I want to say a word about my short happy life at VOA. When my then-boss

Jay Gelbner, who was the senior USIA Foreign Service officer, was wooed away by Jim Buckley, who had been appointed chairman of all of RFE/RL [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Munich]… My boss, Jay, was wooed away to become the CEO. Buckley was the head of the whole thing. Jay weighed it very seriously. It was a great opportunity for him, but it meant that he had to retire from the Foreign Service at that point. I had worked for him for almost three years and it was very intense. It was almost as though he and I single-handedly were battling back this whole sea of impossible things going on. I felt I really couldn't make the transition to the next incoming Deputy Director, who was also Foreign Service and who was very talented. I had also just been working too hard for too long. So, I took a job that opened up simultaneously at the Voice of America. This is a land of great intrigue and eternal warfare. It's like a mini United Nations. They are all going to kill each other before it's said and done. But I went back to what was truly important to me at that time, the Afghan situation. I became the branch chief for the Dari/Pashto, and Farsi services at the Voice of America. That was supervising roughly about 100 people. The Farsi service, which broadcasts to Iran, was about 50. The Dari/Pashto services added up to something under 40. The Dari/Pashto services were newly formed. I had helped many of the people on the staff get their jobs because I had known them in Afghanistan. They had been formed in response to the Soviet invasion and they sort of got going about '81/'82. They weren't really up to speed even when I got there in '83. They still had a lot of problems. So, I took that position for about six months. For a lot of reasons, I realized that as a Foreign Service officer, I was pretty much in exile and that there wasn't a lot of support over there for the Foreign Service. There were these little mini wars going on all the time. There were 50 of them in the Farsi service, so there were 50 different points of view. The same thing was true in the Dari/Pashto service. Even now, you can read in the paper how pronounced the differences are between the Dariwalas and the Pashtowalas. There are some people within the Pashto service – it has to be said – who support Osama Bin Laden and the Taliban, really support them. There are some who are mere sympathizers. There are some who when the Taliban came to power in '95/'96 felt "Anything has to be better than what we experienced before" and therefore they were hopeful at the outset. Then there are some who are violently opposed. Then there is the whole thing in the Dari service with support for the Northern Alliance. This goes on in the Russian service. This goes on in the Chinese service. It is really out of control. I think everybody who has ever worked there feels it's totally out of control. It is impossible to monitor what is being said on those tapes 24 hours a day. The Farsi service doesn't broadcast 24 hours a day; it broadcasts eight to 10 hours a day. Nobody is supervising that. Even if you're totally fluent in the language, nobody can sit and listen to every single thing they're saying. This is a huge problem.

Q: Did you get any reflection of how the British and the BBC handled this?

TAYLOR: Whatever they do, they handle it much better. I can't believe they don't have some of the same problems. I've talked to a lot of my British colleagues overseas over the years about this. The BBC is a government radio, but it somehow acts as an independent radio more successfully than the Voice of America. The Voice of America is a government radio. Those people get their paychecks from the U.S. government. In my

very most recent job, we had the problem of a Pashto broadcaster entering Pakistan – this was about two years ago, long before the most recent violence – with the intention of traveling to Afghanistan on an official U.S. passport, but not a diplomatic passport, paid by the U.S. government. He was going to enter from a Pakistani border crossing. The then ambassador to Pakistan, Tom Symons, said, "No, it is not safe for any U.S. government official whether he comes from Afghanistan and knows the lay of the land or not to travel in this country and I won't have that happen on my watch." This was at the culmination of the warfare between the State Department, the Congress, and the Voice. The Voice says it wants to be an independent broadcast service. Nevertheless, it wants every single U.S. government amenity like the pouch, like traveling on official passports, like being met at the airport, like all kinds of U.S. embassy assistance. There is no solution to this problem. So, this guy actually did go into Afghanistan. The ambassador sent back 12 zinging cables to the State Department and said, "I will not allow this to happen." It happened anyway. That was before the Congress "reorganized" the foreign affairs agencies in 1998. Now, as we all know, and as you've read in the paper, we're political.

Q: I've heard complaints from people who have been PAOs that they can spend an inordinate amount of time bolstering the social position of their political ambassadors, who paid for the job, and they really are more interested in society side, particularly in some of those countries. Was this an issue?

TAYLOR: That was very much an issue. One of our PAOs actually left a very comfortable post in which everything was going well personally for him because he felt that he was being misused. The particular ambassador that he was working for had serious alcoholic problems to be begin with and was practically gone by 10:00 or 11:00 am. On top of that, when he was coherent, he was misusing the entire embassy, but in particular the public affairs tools, budget, and programs to really advance himself around the country. The PAO in this small country with no crises worked harder than anybody I know trying to get a platform for this ambassador, to move him around the country and make sure he got invited to all the right things. This was a man of tremendous personal wealth and influence with the White House. We finally acceded to the request of this PAO to be relocated. It was at great sacrifice to him, so I admire him for his integrity in doing this. Everything else in his life was perfect. His family was happy there and so forth. But, given the countries I've worked in, that was my only experience with appointee ambassadors who behaved in this fashion.

Q: I think it comes with the territory. If you pay to go to Austria or Sweden... These are not people who are looking for advancing the cause of the United States.

TAYLOR: I remember the ambassador in Austria, Helene von Damm - who didn't really cause USIA terribly many problems – had been Ronald Reagan's secretary.

She had Austrian roots and spoke good German and in some respects was a good appointee to Austria. I think the Austrians liked her quite a lot. But midway into her tour, there was a scandal of sorts where USIS had to pick up the pieces. She ran off with the

general manager of the Sacher Hotel. It was the poshest hotel in Vienna, so you could pretty much understand that. But you don't do that in Austria when you're the U.S. ambassador. So, there was a little bit that had to be tidied up after that happened.

But when appointee ambassadors were to a greater or lesser extent overly demanding on PAO resources in a way that was not appropriate, there really wasn't much that we could do in Washington to help them other than listen to their bleeps on the telephone. There were some PAOs who were on the phone to me every day saying, "Either you talk to me or I'm going to jump out the window." I became a psychiatrist during my period there.

Q: In a way, the PAO became almost a social secretary to a certain extent and a press agent, the equivalent to a public relations agent for the ambassador.

TAYLOR: Yes. Rather than for the issues that the United States was trying to address and trying to push forward in a given country, they became more of a personal representative of the ambassador. These ambassadors failed to understand that their own role was not a personal one; it was as a representative of the United States government and of the President, but not of themselves as personages.

Q: Having dealt with that, in a way, did you thirst to get into the more active world?

TAYLOR: Yes, so going to Israel, where, first of all, Sam Lewis and then the incomparable Tom Pickering were my two ambassadors. I had never had an appointee ambassador before. In Moscow, of course, Walter Stoessel I guess was an appointee but nobody considered him to be. In Afghanistan, Ted Elliott and after him Spike Dubs, who was assassinated while we were there, were all career people. So, getting back to Israel, where the issues were truly serious ones, getting back to the Middle East by assignment to Israel, was very welcome to me. I wasn't at all sorry to leave. My sister-in-law just can't understand it. "You've worked in all these difficult places and then you spend 10 months on Western Europe and you don't even go serve there. We wanted to come visit you."

Q: They don't understand the adrenaline rush.

TAYLOR: No, they don't.

Q: I was in Personnel and people looked at me… You could always get your next assignment. So, in 1969, I appeared in Saigon as consul general right in the middle of the war. But I had to see the reality.

TAYLOR: Right. I understand what you're talking about.

Q: It becomes so much a part of American politics. Having served in other places, did you have any feeling about the Arab-Israeli issue before you got there?

TAYLOR: Oh, yes. For one thing, I've always been a student of politics and current

events. For another thing, having lived in Afghanistan and served there and then worked on those issues when I came back to Washington since South Asia was part of the NEA family, I was part of the NEA family. You went to the NEA country team. Of course, the Arab-Israeli issue was pretty dominant there. Plus, my husband, who is a political officer, has always had as one of his most compelling interests the Arab-Israeli issue. So, yes, I didn't feel new to the issues when I got there. However, I'll never forget Sam Lewis saying… He was the ambassador when we first arrived. He was on his last year in Israel. That meant eight years for him as ambassador to Israel. I don't think anyone had ever served that long. Sam and Sally were known as the King and Queen of Israel at that point. I'll never for get Sam at one of his farewell parties saying that after the first year or so in Israel, he thought he pretty much understood what the issues were and how it was all going to work out and what was important and what he needed to think about. Then three or four years into it, he was beginning to have his doubts as to whether he understood what was going on and whether he really had it right or not. Then five or six or seven years into it, he really thought, "I don't have a clue as to what's going on here." As he left, he said, "I have no idea." But he and Sally, of course, are just devoted to Israel and still spend a lot of time there, although they still live here in McLean. They still go back to Israel a lot. Every time I see him, I remind him of that. I felt the same way. After four years there, I knew the country intimately. I had traveled everywhere. I had talked to everybody at all levels of society and dealt with so many different organizations and institutions. It became more and more complex and more and more wrapped up – like they say about the Soviet Union: a riddle inside an enigma inside a mystery. That's very much Israel. So, I certainly hit the ground there without a huge learning curve except that the learning curve goes on forever.

Q: For a long time, Israel was seen as "brave, plucky little Israel holding its own against these uncouth Arabs." But that was beginning to change, particularly after having invaded Lebanon. This was before you arrived. And Sabra and Shatila, the massacres there.

TAYLOR: And the election of Begin.

Q: And the election of Begin and with Sharon the bombardment of Beirut. The bloom was somewhat off the rose by that time. Had that affected you? Did you go there thinking you were melding in or bonding with the Israeli spirit?

TAYLOR: That had already happened in a way. When I went to Afghanistan after my two years in Moscow, the Agency recognized that I was still a junior officer with very little normal USIA experience because Moscow was so unique. So, they sent me to Iran and Israel for about a month TDY in both places. In the mid-'70s, those two posts were our model posts: Iran (This was before the fall of the Shah) and Israel. That was where the USIA was pouring in tons of money and we had first class programs, huge staffs. We were teaching English language to 20,000 students in Tehran in those days. The staff of American Foreign Service officers was 12-15. There were branch posts all over. So, the Agency said, "Well, give her a dose of these two places and then send her to Afghanistan

and she can set up the same kind of thing there" and I did. So, I spent a wonderful, interesting month in Tehran, where my husband had served before we met. He was there in the late '60s. Then I went to Israel. This was right after Sadat visited Israel. The electricity was in the air. It was palpable. You would ride in a bus or a taxi, walk on the streets, go in the stores, and people were enthusiastic and excited and talking and jabbering – of course, Israelis jabber all the time – and it was all energetic and positive. I came back from Israel to Kabul, where we had only just started our tour, and I said to Jim, "We have to go to Israel. I don't care when we go. We have to go there. It is the most exciting place with the most fermenting ideas I have ever seen. I have never seen anything like this place." So, that was '77. We got there in '84. As you just said, so many things had happened in the intervening seven years. The bloom was off the rose. The peace had not turned out for the Israelis or for the Arabs or the Palestinians the way anybody thought or hoped it would. Israelis were traveling to Egypt as tourists, but Egyptians weren't coming to Israel. The Israelis were, they thought, reaching out. The Egyptians were not responding. There had been skirmishes. What was going on in Lebanon was coloring and tainting all of this. Then there was the matter of the issue of Begin. Very much the bloom was off the rose by '84 when I got there. By 1988 when I left, I would characterize Israel as totally polarized as a society. It was 50/50: those who felt there should be all out warfare in the Middle East and "Let's finish the Arabs and the Palestinians once and for all" and those were on the "Peace now" side. There was nobody in the middle. I think it may very well be that way now, although I think the "peace now" side is eroding somewhat. But it was heartbreaking to see this. Although the Israeli energy was still there, it wasn't all positive energy anymore, whereas in 1977 when I first witnessed it, it was dynamic, positive energy. There is an energy among the Israelis which is phenomenal. I've never seen it anywhere else in the world. A little bit among the Russians the characteristic is similar, but not to the degree that the Israelis have it. But they were getting to the point – and not just the intellectual intelligencia, but almost every level of society that could afford it – they would leave Israel every three or four months. My Israeli friends would say to me, "Louise, how can you stand it? We have to get out of here." They'd go to Cyprus or Italy. They would take some trip for two or three or four weeks because the tension was just unbearable. The pressure of everyday life in Israel, some of it good, but not all of it good.

Q: You're not talking about terrorists or a military threat. You're talking about the internal…

TAYLOR: I'm talking about the way Israelis conduct their life and run their country and run their own personal lives. It's all mixed up together. The country is their life. The life is their country. Of course, there was a small amount of terrorism increasing. The Intifada started in '87 before we left. So, the specter of terrorism, the uncertainty of the future, those Israelis with children with obligatory military service for both boys and girls at the age of 18, all of that was weighing very heavily on their minds. So, it was all mixed up together. They live this extraordinarily energetic pace of life. They expend a lot of energy whether they're going to the grocery store to buy their vegetables or going to a political meeting. They recognize this in themselves. They will say to me, "We exhaust ourselves

in the process of worry, in the process of discussion, in the process of argument." An Israeli who buys a cucumber has to have at least a 20 minute discussion, debate, argument, and then make up before the cucumber is exchanged. This ultimately is exhausting. My Israeli friends are probably my best friends in the world, but they exhaust me. I told them that. They said, "Yes, we know. We exhaust ourselves." So, there was a bit of an edge there. The theater was becoming very political. Some of it was very "peace now" oriented and some of it was very much in the opposite extreme. It permeated everything. You couldn't get up in the morning… In five minutes, the whole situation, political and social, that surrounded you would seep into your mind.

Q: Did you find that you were being tested or rated on your support of Israel, particularly when you first got there, by Israelis?

TAYLOR: I've never asked myself that question, but I would say that Israelis very much wanted you to admire their country and to support them. But a fair sector of Israeli society that at that time was thinking much broader than that and understanding that an accommodation with the Palestinians was in their own interest. To the extent that they wanted you to admire and support them, they also tolerated and understood when you would raise issues of Israeli actions in the West Bank – for example, the settlements. You could have long, drawn out, open discussion about that. A huge number of Israelis, more than 50% at that time, were adamantly opposed to the settlements expansions. They wouldn't base their friendship with you on whether or not you were an ardent Zionist. No diplomat ever goes around criticizing the country in which they're posted, so that wouldn't happen either. But I think it was clear to my friends and associates and the people with whom I worked that I admired a great deal of Israeli society. So, that also meant that I could be critical and honestly critical.

Q: You were there as cultural affairs officer [CAO]. What does that mean when being assigned to Israel?

TAYLOR: I think the Israelis looked at that position as one of the most important positions in the embassy. I always had to laugh at the fact that there were people far more important than I was in the embassy, but there are a couple of countries in the world – Morocco, where I also served, is another one – where the cultural attaché takes on a huge meaning. It opens doors. I was a dinner partner of Shimon Peres on several occasions. I brought Saul Bellow to the country as a program paid for by USIA. Because of that, I traveled around the highest literary, social, and political circles in Israel. So, the invitations that I would get and the entrée that I had because of the fact that the Israelis regarded this position and the title as important… I would say that the importance that many European countries - and Israel considers itself to be a European country – place on the cultural attaché position is far greater than the importance that we in the United States place on the cultural attaché position. This has been a source of pain to me. I've spent my life largely as a cultural affairs officer. Dick Arndt is sort of the leading proponents of the value of a cultural diplomacy policy. You'll be with him for the next 10 years listening to what he thinks about the U.S. government's lack of a cultural policy. But I was in a very

good position in the embassy because of my role despite the fact that I was not a junior member of the embassy but I was not the most senior. I got around about as much as anybody did by virtue of the position that I occupied and the doors that it just naturally opened to me.

Q: I was thinking of the influence of Jews that came out of Europe during the '20s and '30s and even today on our culture here in the United States in movies, literature, music, painting, you name it. It's completely disproportionate to the numbers. I've been looking for Israeli movies and novels and so on and maybe they just don't get translated. Whatever there is, I haven't noticed much coming out of Israel that seems to translate itself.

TAYLOR: You have to look for five or six leading Israeli authors who are translated into English and translated very well. I read them mostly when I was there in Israel. But I've looked for their stuff here and it's not very prominently displayed. Some Israeli writers actually publish in the United States in English, but the better Israeli writers are writing in Hebrew and they make a point to write in Hebrew. Even though these particular people I'm thinking of are not nationalists – well, some of them are – it is a nationalist, almost patriotic thing to do even though they could write in English. I'm thinking of fiction. The translations that I've read have been excellent. But it's a small group. You're right. I'd like to think about that a little bit.

Q: I'm also thinking of movies. When I think of the dynamism that came out of the most deplorable conditions in Central Europe and these people came in and essentially created the American movie business. I can't think of how many novels I've read about being Jewish and growing up in New York and Brooklyn.

TAYLOR: Creativity and creation are certainly going on in Israel. Unfortunately, I didn't speak Hebrew well enough to go to the Hebrew-speaking theater. Of all the languages I've studied I found Hebrew a very difficult language. But my Israeli friends said there were some exiting things happening in the Hebrew-speaking theater politically. But what is certainly not absent from Israeli life is artistry. Whether they are creating in the sense of writing original music or movie scripts or fiction, I'd like to think about that and I'll comment another time. But in terms of developing as artists, there is no other country that on a per capita basis is as dynamic or as fertile as Israel. Music is, of course, the number one thing. They also have three or four major dance companies of major quality. My personal view is that they're lacking somewhat in the fine arts, painting and sculpture, but there is a lot of people working in it. As cultural affairs officer, I got so many invitations to exhibitions and opening nights that I could have done nothing but that. Of course, if I went to one, I had to go to them all because you had to show up and wave the flag. So, there is a lot of dynamic interaction there and a lot of creativity. I'm not sure they're the most successful in the fine arts realm as they are in other realms. Poetry. Again, I didn't speak good enough Hebrew to understand poetry, but there are a lot of people writing poetry. The arts are very much alive and well. Israeli movies? I don't think they have the resources to make them.

Q: Maybe not, but when you think about the Italians right after war and yet they turned out a whole set of works that is still resonating.

TAYLOR: Right. This is a question that's always intrigued me. Maybe some media are more suitable for some countries to deal in. The Germans are not really great painters, but they're wonderful musicians and writers.

Q: And they make lousy movies, particularly since the German Jews left. The German Jews, in my mind, their departure or their killing took the salt out of the German soul. It had been such a flourishing culture. Hitler's great contribution was to essentially destroy German culture. A lot of people would argue with that.

TAYLOR: A lot of people would argue with that, I think.

The two Israeli brothers who write with Ruth Kempala Jabar and do all the film scripts are working in the United States, not in Israel, to do these movies.

Q: What was your feeling as you were dealing with the cultural side of the religious community? I'm thinking of the solidly Orthodox.

TAYLOR: Well, I suppose, to be self-critical, I could have led my program more in the direction of trying to reach out to these people, but I don't think they would have been receptive in any way. Even had I been male rather than female, had I been Jewish rather than not, I really don't think there is an opening to that group. I think it's a very closed group. Most Israelis have the same view. They're a little nation unto themselves in a way. So, to the extent that it might be a criticism of the way I led my program, I didn't really develop any program to target that group. The embassy as a whole didn't really target that group much other than the political section, where we had one or two officers dealing with internal Israeli politics. My husband was not one of them. We had one Jewish officer, who is actually the ambassador to Israel right now, Dan Kurtzer. Dan spoke fluent Hebrew. I think he had pretty good contacts. He could go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and talk to the few representatives from that group who were there. I think he had some entrée into their circles. But largely, they would not accept invitations from us. Maybe we should have cultivated them more.

Q: One always looks at this, but there are groups that really do stand aside and that you can't get to. Particularly very orthodox religions, including Islam, the Greek Orthodox Church at a certain level…

TAYLOR: I worked with Joe Sullivan, who was ambassador to Angola and has gone on to Zimbabwe, who was also in the political section as an internal political officer, to put together an IV [International Visitor] group of four parliamentarians, members of the Knesset – one from the Labor Party, one from Likud, one Arab-Israeli (also a member of the Knesset) and one member of a conservative religious party but not the Lubavitchs

(This fellow was pretty conservative, but he wasn't totally radical). We thought this would be a good experiment. The Labor Party guy, Hayeem Ramon, whom you see in the paper all the time, and the Arab-Israeli were already good friends. They had known each other for years. The Likud person who became part of this delegation was a very moderate, easy to work with person. He was a member of the Likud, but he realized that the Likud and Labor had to work together or the whole thing would fall apart or become polarized. So, the three of them were pretty much able… They became very good friends on this 30 day trip. The idea was that the four would come back and this would have a ripple effect through the Knesset or through their parties saying, "Look, we went to the United States. We saw these wonderful things. We saw the way they work out partisan politics. But we also got to know each other in the process." That was the secondary rationale for putting this group together. But the person from the extreme right religious party – and I forget what party it was right now – stayed apart from the other three during the whole trip. He evoked certain Shabbat regulations in the view of the group unnecessarily in order to extract himself from other group activities. He created a disturbance in Boston when he went off on his own and got into serious trouble in the nighttime district of Boston – let me leave it at that. When the other three fellows went out and had dinner and maybe they went to a movie and went back to this hotel, this guy went off on his own… Because of his religious strictures, he had refused to accept travelers cheques the way most of our international visitors travel. He had insisted on having all of his per diem in cash. Because of this sort of rumble he got into in the shadier side of South Boston, he ended up without enough money. It was sort of a funny story that of the four guys who would get in trouble of this nature in the United States, the one who was the most openly religious and holier than thou was the one who did so. To the credit of the other three guys, that story never got back to Israel. This person would have been banished by his party had they known what his behavior was like while he was here. So, it was sort of an interesting story on human behavior.

Q: What were we trying to do? How did you see your job?

TAYLOR: Not vis a vis this particular…

Q: No.

TAYLOR: I was trying to consolidate the excellent relationships that the embassy already had with a variety of institutions around the country whether they were academic, press, think tank, or artistic institutions. I was trying to reach out to other institutions beyond that who did not know the United States. There is a surprising number of Israelis who don't. Particularly outside Haifa, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and the immediate suburban areas, there are other institutions. Secondary teacher training institutions, for example. I felt that there was a very narrow-minded perspective being developed in some of these teacher training institutions in towns with new immigrants, for example. It was hard for us to work with them. Again, I didn't speak fluent Hebrew. In some of these places, they spoke no English. That was a surprise to me. I was trying to develop relationships for the embassy through my programs with institutes on that level. These would be organizations

which weren't entirely sure they thought the Arab-Israeli peace process was a good thing. They would be organizations which probably would support the Likud at that point. I was trying to reach out to them. Third, to the extent that I could, and I was probably more successful at this, I developed a list of – and it had to be a representative list; it couldn't be all-inclusive – organizations which were made up largely of what Israelis called "Second Israel." These would be the people from North Africa, the Yemeni Jews, sort of the second, third, and fourth wave of immigration.

Q: How about the Falasha from Ethiopia?

TAYLOR: They were just beginning to come to Israel. They were really at the stage of being trained in Hebrew by the opons, the language teaching institutions. They were just really learning how to live in a society like that. Their numbers were quite small. I met them because at the opon that I went to to learn Hebrew, I met some of them and saw their dignity. But I also saw that they were a little bit outside what we were trying to do at the embassy at that time. I don't know how they've developed at this point.

The great Russian migration had not yet started. That would be very interesting to be part of. They brought all their musicians, chemists, scientists, psychiatrists… There weren't enough professional level positions for these people. Subsequently, they became gardeners and laborers. It's been a terrible problem for Israel, which practically doubled its population within 15-20 years.

So, that was the third thing I was trying to do.

Fourthly, I was the first CAO to have specially congressionally committed funds for Arab-Israeli scholarships and for a Gazan program. I was the CAO who started both of those programs, not entirely successfully at first because it was hard to find qualified people. You interview Israeli graduate students for the Fulbright program and they're all going to Harvard, Yale, Stanford, the University of Chicago, the University of Virginia, the big 10, some great school. You interview an Israeli Arab and their educational levels are so vastly different because of the resources available to them that it's very hard in good conscience to select an applicant. When I started the program – things may have changed by now – it was hard to find an Israeli Arab who had the appropriate educational level. The schools available to them were substandard and inferior to the schools for Israeli Jews so it was hard to find candidates who could have prospered and thrived in an American university environment. Nevertheless, through the Fulbright Commission, we worked very hard to identify at least there or four a year from the Israeli Arab community. Similarly, we had a program of special money separate from the Fulbright Commission dedicated to Gazans. I had never even been to Gaza in my first two and a half years in Israel. All of a sudden, this money came our way. There were only three of us who worked on this program – another American, who is now consul general in Bombay, an American woman married to a Palestinian, and then we had a Palestinian in Gaza itself to help us set this up. The last year I was in Israel was the first year of this program. We interviewed 10 or 12 would-be candidates. They were all in agricultural sciences. We had

money for more than we picked, but we felt we hadn't gotten the qualifications that we needed and we didn't want to send people off to fail. We felt that would be worse. So, we took some of the money and put them in intensive English language in Israel for a year or made it possible for them to get their English language skills up to a level where they could study in the United States at the undergraduate level. So, those were the four things I was trying to do.

Q: I think this is a good place to stop. We've covered living in Israel and the programs you were dealing with.

TAYLOR: One of the joys of living in Israel that should be at least touched on at least when we were there was to travel around the country and see what the history of this place really means to people, where some Americans take a look at it and say, "This is just a desolate rock. Why does anybody feel as passionate about this as three major religions in the world do?" Jim and I were both extraordinarily busy. When I left Israel, I was exhausted and I was only 37 or so years old. But we did make the time to travel around. We went to almost every major archeological site.

Q: Also, you might mention next time about any influence that the American Jewish community in the United States had that you saw on both the politics and your work and the embassy and how one dealt with this.

TAYLOR: I don't know that I'm the best one to comment on that.

Q: I've asked other people, too.

TAYLOR: It was huge.

Q: It was huge, so you don't want to let that go.

Today is November 5, 2001. Louise, you are cultural affairs officer in Tel Aviv from when to when?

TAYLOR: That was 1984-1988.

Q: While you weren't on the political side-

TAYLOR: In Israel, everything is political.

Q: What about the effect of American Jewish influence on what was being done as far as you saw it?

TAYLOR: Well, the embassy was a very integrated institution. We all worked together for the same goals. What is now called the mission performance plan at time for us in USIA was called the country plan. Everything that we planned out as a professional

activity in our master planning document, the country plan, was designed to reinforce and support what the embassy as a whole was doing in its mission performance plan. So, despite the fact that I wore a hat called the cultural affairs officer, much, if not everything, that we did in the state of Israel was political coming at it from different angles. I would say that one of the major political activities that I undertook as the cultural affairs officer – and I touched on this the last time we spoke – was trying to reach out to both Israeli Arabs as well as to Gazans in the academic exchange program under the Fulbright rubric. There was money authorized by the Congress as a result of the Intifada, which was just beginning to gain momentum while I was in Israel, to be made available to Arab citizens of Israel as well as to a beginning, fledgling, program on the West Bank. This particular program, although it represented a diversion of resources from the Jewish community to the Arab-Israeli community and then beyond into the West Bank, was widely supported by American Jewish groups who were aware of it. Just as Israeli society was becoming polarized during those years of the '80s, the American Jewish community was becoming polarized from what I understood from reading the American press and talking to American Jewish friends who traveled to Israel. There were those who felt that the peace now groups or the groups that were organizing to bring Arabs and Israelis closer together, was the most important thing on their political agenda. There was the other side of the Jewish American spectrum which felt that the fight between the Jews and the Arabs was a fight to the death, that settlements should be expanded, that a literal if not a figurative wall or the other way around, should be built between Israel proper and the Palestinian state or the Arab state. If your question was, was there interference or undue influence in what I did, I would say nothing of the sort happened in any of the programs that I was involved in. In the broader sense, the embassy, was reacting to American foreign and domestic policy and taking its lead from Washington in carrying out the administration's foreign policy toward the Middle East. That obviously reflected whatever domestic political influence American Jewish thought and opinion had on the White House, as happens in any American administration. We have a situation now where American and Jewish public opinion is probably being quite reserved and restrained. Just as we are asking the Israelis and the Palestinians to be reserved and restrained right now to the degree that they can in their ever escalating back and forth and retaliation for an event. From what I read and hear in the press, there has been very little said by American Jewish public opinion right now. As the Intifada was arising in the '80s, you had in Israel a coalition government which represented the phenomenon that Israeli opinion was eventually becoming polarized. I would say it was a 50/50 split by the time I left in 1988 between those who felt that an accommodation should be made with the Palestinians and the Arabs and those who felt literally that it was a fight to the death and that Israeli security depended on being as strong and as tough and as unrelenting with the Arab population as possible. Ambassador Pickering was our ambassador for three of the four years that I was there. For the first year that I was there, it was Sam Lewis. Both of them being consummate diplomats. They were extremely careful to represent the foreign policy that the White House handed to them, but at the same time in their normal everyday course of carrying out their duties, responsibilities, and contacts, they had a tremendous amount of contact and relationship with American Jewish leaders who came to Israel all the time. Every day, there was someone of importance from the American Jewish

community. The embassy always greeted and received these people cordially, wanting to hear their point of view. Attempts were frequently made to mix them up with members from all sides of the Israeli political spectrum so that American Jewish leaders themselves would hear what a wide variety of thought there was on Middle East politics from the players themselves. I would say that on the one hand, I know that people feel that American Jewish influence on U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East has been overly persuasive. I think that a lot went on during those years that the Intifada was growing that probably caused great anxiety among the American Jewish population, particularly our continuing outreach to various Arab populations. Yet I think they managed to say to themselves that, after all, this is a mature world. We must acknowledge that there are other demands and other sides to this story. I think the American Jewish public opinion was maturing during this whole process and continues to mature. There are the extremists on both ends and it's hard to really talk with them. But there is a huge body of opinion in the middle. Most who traveled to Israel with whom we had contact tend to be of what I would classify the more liberal persuasion, saying that we had to make accommodations. That not only the Israeli government and the American government but non-governmental movements and groups had to continue to expand contacts and bring people together. Much of the work that I did as cultural affairs officer was designed to bring Arabs and Israelis together whether it was through an International Visitors program, where the political section and the cultural section together would craft a group of Arab Israelis, Jewish Israelis, and if we could, put other Arabs from other parts of the world together in this group so that on neutral turf – the United States – they would meet, they would discuss, they would get to know each other. There were many programs. There are to this day programs of that type that are designed to bring Arabs and Israelis together. Some of them are funded by the U.S. government. Some of them are private spin-offs.

Q: Was there any attempt to do something to persuade Egyptians, for example, to come to Israel? Did we get involved with your counterpart in Cairo? It's been a cold peace.

TAYLOR: Yes, it has been, and Israelis were very resentful of that. After the burst of enthusiasm during the Sadat visit to Israel, Israelis did begin to flock to Egypt – at least relatively speaking. They went as tourists. They went as professionals, particularly archeologists and ethnographers and historians and social scientists would go for professional conferences and meetings. They had been barred from such meetings and conferences for years because they couldn't get visas to travel to the Arab world. So, I would say this initial enthusiastic outburst from the liberal spectrum of the Israeli Jewish population was met with what they felt, even the most liberal among them, was almost an insult since the Egyptians failed to respond. I recall being involved in several attempts with my counterparts in the embassy in Cairo to try to organize some professional conferences that would bring everybody together in one country or another. Those efforts eventually broke down at least during the years that I was there. You would have to talk to someone who was there after I left in 1988 to see whether or not there was eventually enough trust on both sides to hold these joint conferences under U.S. government auspices in one country or the other. We always found the best solution was to take people off campus. By "off campus," I mean put them in a group and take them to the

United States.

Q: Which wasn't really an overly aggressive problem.

TAYLOR: No, only on a very small scale. In a group project where you have Arabs and Israelis traveling together for a month, you would find people on both sides of the issue coming back enthusiastic about their new friendships and their new relationships and how they were going to keep these things going. On a very small, incrementally expanding basis, scholars did go back and forth, particularly in what I would call "non-threatening" fields. I had one year of leave without pay in Israel when we went there from '84-'85. My position had not yet opened and so I took the archeology course at Tel Aviv University, which was just one of the best courses I've ever taken anywhere. In those days, the Israeli archeologists were just feeling so oppressed that they couldn't get out into the Arab world where all these wonderful archeological sites were. They could go to Egypt, but in '84, that was about the only Arab country they could go to. Morocco, but that had less archeological interest for them. Where they really wanted to get their hands dirty was in Jordan and Syria. We, of course, could travel to those places. I took a trip to Jordan once. When I came back, my archeology professors wanted to see all my photographs and know what the Jordanian archeologists had to say. This kind of scholarship and curiosity kept Israelis going even though the Egyptians didn't return in large numbers and even though the Israelis were disappointed in the Egyptian ambassador to Israel, whose name was Basieri. They felt he wasn't doing enough when he went back to his government to say, "Look, we've got to have organized travel groups of Egyptians coming to Israel." But the Israelis kept the momentum going for a while. I don't know what's happened in recent times along those lines.

One of the best trips that we took was with the first joint business setup between Israelis and Egyptians. It was a small travel company in which Israeli Jews and Egyptians had invested. It was a small company that had about 10 small Mercedes buses that could go into the desert. They had huge wheels. They were wider than most buses and sort of squat and ugly looking. They could go anywhere. We went with a group of only 12 people – this was one of the beauties of this travel company – and we had an Egyptian guide and a Jewish guide. Both of them were representatives of the company and they both knew the archeological sites. We went to the Sinai. We went to Santa Catarina. We camped out at the foot of Santa Catarina. We climbed up Jabli Massage at Mount Moses and Mount Sinai at dawn the way everybody does. We had not only our Egyptian guide and our Jewish Israeli guide, but we had a Bedouin tracker with us. He was invaluable when the Mercedes bus got stuck in the sand any number of times. He knew exactly where to find materials to get us out. But this was one of the first examples of a joint project and business investment of any kind and it happened to be tourism. At dinner, these guys would cook these wonderful meals out in the middle of the desert. They had known each other for a long time, the Egyptian and the Israeli, and they would joke about the fact that, well, if another war comes along, they'll be shooting at each other the next time around. So, that was a wonderful experience. That was an example of what could happen if people were open-minded and good spirited in years to come.

Q: Were there problems of mistreatment of Palestinians, particularly in the West Bank and Gaza, by the Israeli authorities? Did we turn the other cheek to these things or not?

TAYLOR: I have no idea what went on inside an Israeli police station. Lots of others have commented on this. The Palestinians have certainly said that Israeli police used unnecessary force. Israelis would say in unending tit for tat that they were dealing with terrorists who had just blown up a bus of schoolchildren. It's hard for us as Americans to comment on that in any moral sense. One thing that went on that was probably inexcusable – and the Israelis didn't have to do it for security reasons, but they did – was sort of a passive oppression rather than actively mistreating and abusing people. They would close the borders between Gaza and Israel proper after one of these attacks or incidents. It would mean that tens of thousands of Gazans could not go to work for sometimes weeks. Usually, it was days, but sometimes it was weeks. This meant a loss of critical income for these people. Again, you would have to ask someone else in another agency what the Israeli tactics in the police stations were; if there were demonstrations in the Arab side of Jerusalem, did the Israelis use excessive force in breaking those up? I think sometimes yes, just as sometimes happens with our own police forces. I think that they are a civilized people and I think that they do have a rule of law that they try to observe. When things got out of hand, it usually was as a result of some horrendous terrorist attack having happened in the days or weeks previously. I think Israeli is a very well ordered society. People are extremely emotional. But they're also very well educated. They are an extremely well educated society. One of the things I loved about the Israeli military – and my husband dealt with them a lot because he was the political-military officer and I'd find myself seated at dinner next to a general who would be one of the most decorated war heroes of Israel, but he would also have a Ph.D. in philosophy and would be a concert level pianist and then raise chickens on a kibbutz on top of that. There was one particular person who combined all of those qualities. I used to enjoy talking with him immensely. So, the Israeli military mind is a multifaceted mind. They certainly know a lot about humanity and suffering. All that said, I have to suppose that press reports of Israelis overextending their police forces in some of the Arab villages that they controlled or in Gaza are probably correct.

Q: What about the Intifada? How did that affect you and how did you observe it?

TAYLOR: De jure, it affected the embassy community because the regional security officer [RSO] would feel compelled to issue travel advisories and such. If one had houseguests, you would have to advise your houseguests not to go to the old city of Jerusalem. Of course, nobody paid any attention to that and we went to the old city in Jerusalem, to the architectural centers, to the souqs and the bazaars. You paid attention to what was going on around you. You certainly wouldn't go there the day after some cataclysmic event had happened. You had to use your head. Hebron was one city that was so volatile, particularly the last year we were there as the Intifada gained momentum and rock throwing escalated into more overt mob violence. I spent less time in Hebron than I would have liked. It was a place I never got to know. There were some really dreadful

events back and forth between what I would have to call right-wing Israeli settlers who were just fanatical about their use of certain pieces of land within the city itself and extremely agitated Palestinians and Israeli Arabs on the other side. Hebron did become a very dangerous place.

I think that the whole level of violence there has escalated sharply since I left. My activities were never really curtailed in any way. There were kibbutzim in the north that I used to visit. They lived way in these wilderness places up on the Lebanese border. They did have rocket attacks from Lebanon from time to time. I was up there once when it was suspected that there would be an attack. So, we curtailed some of the business appointments that we had up there. But I always felt very safe in Israel. I felt much more unsafe on the roads. The driving is atrocious and you take your life in your hands on the Israeli highways. But as far as the actual violence was concerned, as long as you used your head and didn't deliberately go into a provocative area when you knew there was trouble. For example, Nazareth was wonderful to visit, but there were times when you knew it was just wiser to stay away. On the other hand, some of the security advisories just went way overboard, as they always do.

Q: They tend to because it's a matter of covering your ass.

TAYLOR: Yes.

Q: Did you find that having our embassy in Tel Aviv and the seat of government being up in Jerusalem was a bother to you? Did it make much difference in your business?

TAYLOR: Again, Israel is a very small country. In my business as a cultural affairs officer or a USIA person in general, our modus operandi is to get around. We traveled all the time. And there was the fact that the embassy was an extremely unpleasant place to work and is one of the worst embassy buildings in the world… It's just the pits. Everybody will tell you that.

Q: What's the problem?

TAYLOR: Physically, it's just the grungiest, grimiest, dankest place I have ever worked – and I worked in Moscow. In Moscow, there was a reason why that was a miserable, horrible place at the time. But there was no reason for this in Tel Aviv.

Q: Unless everybody was waiting for the shoe to drop.

TAYLOR: Everybody was supposedly waiting for the move to Jerusalem, so the Department never put any money into the embassy. To fix up one would be a big political statement. It would mean "We're staying here for a long time." So, the place just crumbled away. It really was just an awful, awful place to work. So, I didn't mind getting out. There were a few key ministries located in Tel Aviv. The Ministry of Defense, for example, where my husband spent a lot of time, was in Tel Aviv. So, he was not one of

those who trekked up the hill to Jerusalem all the time. I remember someone asking Ambassador Pickering about this strange scenario where all the ministries are in Jerusalem and the American embassy and all the embassies except for two (I think Costa Rica and Ecuador were in Jerusalem) were in Tel Aviv. What this meant for him and did he have to go to Jerusalem all the time? Ambassador Pickering said, "Well, I try not to go there more than three times a day if I can help it." When we were there, it was roughly an hour. The last 20 minutes of that hour were just spectacularly beautiful. The first 2/3 of the drive out from Tel Aviv toward Jerusalem is sort of flat and uninteresting. But then you start climbing up to Jerusalem and it is spectacular. Everybody knows that Ambassador Pickering likes to drive fast. He likes to drive faster than his drivers like to drive. So, he would get there in record time. The rest of the drivers would sort of poke along a little bit more because it was a dangerous highway. One of the interesting things you saw along the way on this highway was the bombed out remains of military vehicles from the war of independence in the late '40s. Those are still left by the sides of the roads. They are very small military vehicles. They look more like small pickup trucks and strangely shaped, elongated pickup trucks. They were left there deliberately as a memorial, knowing that people would be traveling this road frequently. I looked at them every time I went up and every time I went back down. But it was wonderful to travel to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is such a beautiful city. Tel Aviv is such an exciting city. It's very much on the go, but I wouldn't call it a beautiful city by any means, even though it is on the Mediterranean. I always loved going to Jerusalem.

Q: Did you find there was much division within the embassy about our policy?

TAYLOR: Like in any embassy that's really well staffed – and Tel Aviv was one of the best embassies I've ever served in or had anything to do with – there is always good, healthy debate and fights and shouting. Oh, yes. There was a wide diversity of opinion. The embassy spoke publicly with one voice. Internally, there was healthy debate. Ambassador Lewis encouraged this. Ambassador Pickering especially encouraged this. In the end, as in any embassy, there was a unified position. But the informal commentary and conversation that went on in all the sections and among all the sections was very wide ranging. In the political section there was an internal political unit which dealt with internal Israeli politics. In that group, there is the Arab watcher. The Arab watcher brings to the table all of the things that from the Arab perspective are going wrong because of U.S. policy and support for Israel. So, I would say there was a fairly healthy free for all. The same with our relations with Washington. Ambassador Pickering had a pretty healthy dialogue with his interlocutors back in Washington. Assistant Secretary Murphy, who knew the area very well and had been ambassador in Jordan, selected Pickering.

Q: On the cultural side, dealing with the conservative religious community, I can see that almost anything you did would be anathema to them.

TAYLOR: We did touch on this briefly last time. You almost had to forego their participation in many of our activities. With the help of the political section, we were able to expand our programs to include some conservative Jewish members but not the most

conservative because they would never come out of their community, they just would not have anything to do with anybody from the American embassy. But from those who were maybe 90% into that category and a couple of whom are represented in the Knesset, we selected members of those groups to be part of our International Visitor Programs. We mixed them up with some Labor Party people, mixed them up with some Likudniks, mixed them up with an Israeli Arab in one instance, and sent them off to the United States. In terms of our regular cultural programming, meaning outreach from the library, we put them on our mailing lists so that they would receive our material both in Hebrew and in English. This would be material on any subject of interest from environmental issues to political issues. So, they were getting it. I think that they were users of the library to a certain extent. Particularly they were call-in users and we would mail them information. I never saw too many people of an extreme religious nature in our library. The library was very heavily used by academics, by people in the social sciences, by journalists. But the people who lived in enclosed communities in Jerusalem who were strict, strict, strict observers of Jewish law, I would not expect to see them in our library or in our cultural center. Similarly, when we had public events such as a performing arts event, very few of them would have any interest. It's very hard to reach them.

Q: Did you ever get involved in cultural events or academic things of comparative religion and that sort of thing?

TAYLOR: We did some conferences on comparative religion. We brought American specialists in various aspects of comparative religion. It was usually a university sponsored conference. We would not take the lead on this, but if Hebrew University or Tel Aviv or Haifa University or Baralon, which had a more religious basis than the other three, if they were doing a conference on comparative religion and wanted to have an international aspect to the panel, we always cooperated. We brought speakers recruited by our specialists here in Washington who were sent out to do that. Those were always very lively debates. Israeli academic life is pretty wide open and very free. Some of the best arguments and shouting matches I've ever heard have taken place at Israeli universities where we didn't run the conference but we contributed to the conference. It's better to let them take the lead. This is true in any country. If they're going to do a conference on conflict resolution or anything like that, we will respond that it's probably better to be a participant but not to run the thing.

Q: You mentioned conflict resolution. Obviously, it's been going on for millennia.

TAYLOR: The conflict but not the resolution.

Q: Yes. But in one way or another, people have been working on this. But it really wasn't even a phrase until about the time you were there.

TAYLOR: We certainly used it all the time.

Q: Did you find you were dealing with people coming from good intent who were going

to solve the problems?

TAYLOR: No, I think everybody was pretty realistic that unless you solve the problem of Jerusalem and the settlements, unless you establish trust on both sides and somehow end this unending cycle of violence, you're not going to settle this ever. We had one or two speakers who were recruited by USIA who really didn't know the Middle East well enough and had no business being at these events, but mostly the people that USIA sent to contribute to these conferences, panel discussions, or seminars were really savvy. The core of American scholarship and journalists, the Thomas Friedmans of the world to the Norman Ornsteins, who spent their lives thinking about these things. They are really good and are so articulate. The Israelis are articulate. So, that makes for a good meeting of the minds and lots of disagreement, sometimes some pretty good practical advice on where to go next. But of course, all of it devolved back into the internal Israeli political situation, which I said was pretty much polarized and you can't move when you have a coalition government that's polarized.

Q: Did you run across any political turkeys? You were talking about some of the people who had not been sent out under the Wick administration of USIA. How about ones that were sent out that really were so ideologically fixed that they really weren't effective?

TAYLOR: I think I mentioned one last time – and I would prefer not to mention him by name because he still is a big name figure in the academic world – and his field was more Cold War/Soviet Union. This was still the 1980s. He really is somewhat superficial. Most of the Israelis knew it also. He was selected by our agency at the time because he, in the eyes of people like Charlie Wick, was a great one to fight the Cold War. His thinking really hadn't developed much over the years and he said the same thing all the time and just wasn't a terribly engaging, exciting person anyway. But I got stuck with him once, as did other posts in the world. It wasn't just to Israel that he was sent. I may have mentioned in our last session my friends at Tel Aviv University. Itamar Rabinowitz, who eventually became the Israeli ambassador to the United States, was at Tel Aviv University. He is a great Syrian expert and a wonderful intellect. Itamar knew this fellow. He said, "Look, Louise, I know you've got to do these things. We'll host him and have a nice lunch. I'll get 10-15 members of the faculty and some bright graduate students to come. We know that you wouldn't be doing this if you didn't have to." So, I took this guy to Tel Aviv University, where Itamar was running one of the major think tanks there. Then I also took him to some outlying places where we rarely did do programs. They were just so thankful to have anybody come talk to them about anything. So, that was the way I handled that sort of thing. It was ideologically inspired, but it wasn't so much ideologically inspired by the Arab-Israeli situation as it was the Cold War and fighting communists everywhere.

For the most part, my experience with the U.S.-run speakers program has been very good. We've usually gotten the people that we wanted. The worst speaker we got in Israel was not political at all. His field was education and he was just a total bomb. It had nothing to do with his politics or lack of politics. He just didn't know his own field. So, those things

happen in our business.

Q: Particularly during this period, there were a lot of Harvard Marxists in the academic world in the United States. Many of them had skipped the Vietnam War, so they had to take a Marxist approach. Was Marxism much of a factor in Jewish intellectual life?

TAYLOR: In Jewish intellectual thought historically, yes, but in the great materialistic commercial society of Israel today, Marxism is the farthest thing from their minds. That's true of the Arabs as well. They're not interested… There is an Israeli-Arab Communist Party. The call themselves that to distinguish themselves from falling in line with the Israeli Labor Party. Who is a communist really today? A few people in Bengal and maybe a few people in China. But they're aren't any pure communists anymore. Probably at some level in some universities in Israel, there were people who thought that the historical Marxist movement was an interesting thing to dissect. Of course, the whole kibbutz movement in essence was a pure form of communism but on a very small scale. It wasn't a national government. It was a very small and regional. It was as big as this house and the garden around. So, there is that experiment that the Israelis went through early in their national life, but it was not part of their society now, which is very much a market oriented economy. Many of the kibbutzim have to be subsidized.

Q: Did you get involved with the kibbutzes?

TAYLOR: Yes.

Q: You say they are subsidized? Is it nostalgia?

TAYLOR: They are kind of an anachronism. They're not doing well economically. It was a great experiment. It certainly galvanized the society in the '20s and earlier. You have to admire what they did. These people went out to, in some instances, pretty miserable plots of land and they constructed an egalitarian society where people with Ph.D.s and people with no education whatsoever worked in the laundry together or fed the chickens or did any kind of mundane labor together and nobody knew what the background of their neighbor was. The children were all raised communally. This was the most difficult problem for the kibbutzim, that during the war period in the 1920s, the idea of putting the children in a central… Usually, as the kibbutz was built around a square or a circle or some kind of a shape, the children's dormitories would be in the center. That protected them when the sniping that started in the '20s and grew into the '30s and finally became a war in the late '40s with the war of Israeli independence. The children were protected by being in a more internal area of the kibbutz space, within the perimeter of the kibbutz. When peace finally came in the '50s the kibbutzim continued to operate the way they always had with the parents, the mother and father, of the family unit living in a small one or two room place, the children living in their dormitories and then everybody taking a communal meal in a kitchen and dining room down the road a bit but still within the kibbutz proper. This was – and my friends who lived on the kibbutzim said this was the major problem – that parents wanted to have their children at home. The families wanted

to be a unit. It no longer made any sense for the children to have to go stay in the dormitory. The Arabs weren't firing on them every single night as happened in the '20s.

The other thing was, the economic viability of the place. Most people who live on kibbutzim now – 50% or more of the adults – are working outside the kibbutz. This was not the original philosophy of the kibbutz. Some of my friends who lived in the kibbutz in the south where the main industry was to make those plastic racks that you put bombs in. This is not a very high tech industry, but that's what the kibbutz did. They didn't make a whole lot of money from doing that. I had a friend who was a professor at Hebrew University but he lived in the kibbutz and would drive back and forth. When this began to happen, it created huge disturbances within the kibbutzim. There were some members who felt this should not be allowed. Everybody works here, lives here. Our livelihood is here. If you don't find intellectual satisfaction working in the laundry or ladling out soup for dinner, that's too bad; that's your job; you have to do it. Most people, like my friend the general, who lived on a kibbutz and raised chickens, but obviously he was a general and he was away in the army all the time, have come around to allowing people to work outside the kibbutz and still live there. There are some – and I haven't looked at this for over 10 years – who actually the community would sit down and vote to expel this family. If someone in the family was going to work in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem or someplace else, then they were no longer welcome. They were no longer full supporting members of the kibbutz. Then there are very liberal kibbutzim where people come and go all the time. One in the north where I did a lot of work was an English-speaking kibbutz. They also have little houses where everybody lived together. Instead of just having the one room or so, they had still small houses by our standards, but they would have three or four little rooms so the children could sleep at home. They would build a kitchen so they didn't have to go eat in the main dining room. Three meals a day in the same cafeteria style dining room. The food is notoriously horrible in these kibbutzim. Everybody says it. I'm not making a pejorative comment about Israel. The food is just dreadful in these places. So, the kibbutz movement I wouldn't say is alive and well. I think it's nostalgic and symbolic that the kibbutzim exist. I don't think the state supports the kibbutzim, but I'm not sure about that. But if one is failing, the state will put money into it and try to keep it going.

Q: Were you seeing ardent American Jews who were coming back to go to settlements? You see on TV, all of a sudden, somebody who was very obviously an American, probably from New York or Brooklyn…

TAYLOR: Oh, yes, you see them all the time. They're very determined people. I don't know how to deal with this problem. My opinion is that no administration since the 1980s when I first started really thinking about this has been tough enough on the Israelis about the settlements. Other major problems are the status of Jerusalem and the separation of Gaza and the West Bank with no real transportation between those areas. I think the settlements are such a horrible thorn not only in the side of the Arabs and the Palestinians, but also in the side of the Israelis because they cost so much to keep them going. They put them out in these places where there is no water and then they irrigate

them somehow. It's like "Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom." They're beautiful now, but they are a tremendous strain on water and security resources. Some of them are a total blot on the landscape. There is one in the middle of the country where you're winding through these Arab villages. It's just so pretty with little olive groves and dirt roads. All of a sudden, you come around the corner and there is this monstrous settlement that looks like something has landed from outer space. It doesn't fit the landscape. Apparently, it cut off some Arab crossroads. It was built in the middle of an Arab crossroad or something like that. It's those kinds of things which we've expressed our displeasure as a government on but we've never said to the Israelis, "You can't do this anymore."

Q: It may be the fatal flaw that may bring down Israel. I'm not very optimistic about it working.

TAYLOR: I don't know what you mean by "bringing down Israel."

Q: Well, in the very long run, rather than withdrawing to the '67 borders. The fact that they have taken what in my mind is a colonial policy and are fighting to protect it.

TAYLOR: It makes no sense. These areas add no economic viability to the country. They add no security to the country. In fact, they lessen the security of Israel. First of all, they've instigated many of the attacks on Israelis. But secondly, having to put Israeli soldiers out there to guard these places puts them in harm's way. The settlers themselves have to commute through Arab lands to get to any place to shop or work or whatever they do. There is nothing there for the most part. Of course, they've built rather elaborate housing out of concrete there. But there is nothing that says you can't blow up the concrete and start all over. You do have to think about the geography of Israel. At one point, it's only seven miles wide. That doesn't give you very much security. It also doesn't give you very much room to put people. When I went away from Israel, I said, "The next big war is not going to be over oil. It's going to be over water." Water is going to be a critical problem.

Q: I was talking to a man here at the Foreign Service Institute who is just retiring. He was a water expert and was pretty disillusioned. He was saying that five percent or so of the population in Gaza… The Jewish settlers are sitting on three of the best sources of water.

TAYLOR: I've heard that. You wonder why anybody would want to live in Gaza. It's the most wretched place on earth. It is just really the living end. There is no way to support that many people. It's so overgrown with settlements and Gazan settlements. The landscape has just been ruined. It just looks like a giant slum, all of it.

Q: In '88, you left.

TAYLOR: We did.

Q: Whither?

TAYLOR: We came back here. We were exhausted. Four years in Israel is just exhausting. It wipes you out. I had been on the go for four straight years without ever sitting down and catching my breath. So we came- (end of tape)

Q: You were saying you had moved into the…

TAYLOR: I took up India. I went back to South Asia after the Middle East. I think many people feel after four years in a place like Israel you have to get away from those issues. My agency wanted me to take a position that was more directly involved with Israel. I just felt I had to step away from this from a while. It was too intense. It was too all encompassing. It just dominates your life. My heart was left back in South Asia from my Afghan days. The India desk came open. In those days, it involved India and Sri Lanka. India was our largest country program in the entire world, perhaps exceeded by Germany by one or two officers. Otherwise, India was our most enormous program with the most resources. I wanted that challenge. I wanted to work on those issues again. The other little country that came with it was Sri Lanka. I had never been to Sri Lanka. I got to make a visit out there. There was conflict there even at that time. The Tamil Tigers was already geared up for a big fight – still is. I just had the most extraordinary trip to Sri Lanka. I had never realized, small though it is, what a remarkable vibrant society of well educated people with lots of different things to say and opinions on everything, very artistic, very dynamic, on the move. Your heart just goes out to them. Here are these people with all this talent and they don't have the desperate situation that the Arabs and the Israelis do yet they're fighting it out in the same way. I've never been to Ireland, but I assume that I would have a similar reaction there.

So, I spent two years working in Washington, '88-'90, when South Asia was still within the NEA family fold. Years later, when I came back to South Asia, South Asia had been spun off from NEA in the Department of State, which I think is a terrible mistake. I think that at the time in the late '80s and all through the '80s, NEA had been such a strong bureau and it benefited from people serving everywhere from Bangladesh to Morocco and the flow through of people and officers with this kind of experience just strengthened all of us. I was in a position as India country officer – I don't know how it fell to me, but I was the USIA NEA representative to the NEA weekly meetings over at State. This was when USIA was still an independent agency. We were by this time, thanks to Charlie Wick, down on Fourth Street, which is truly the end of the earth. Charlie had moved us out of this wonderful address that we had a block from the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue. Due to his machinations with his real estate buddies, he had gotten us into this slum.

Q: Why did he do that?

TAYLOR: My feeling is that he had this personal business relationship with the guys, the Antonelli brothers, the famous Antonelli brothers, who owned all the parking lots in

Washington at one time and had rather shady construction deals. They owned this building that we moved into. Charlie sold us and everybody else on the idea because of two things. He said, "Well, it will bring us closer to the Voice of America," which we still owned at that time. And it will consolidate all of the little USIA annexes which were around town. Our television studios were here. There were various other people around, just as the State annexes are all over town. Well, we were all supposed to be in this one building. Of course, that never happened. Up until consolidation with the State Department, we were still all over the place. Of course, the building turned out to be an immediate slum. It started falling apart. The towel racks in the ladies room fell off the wall within the first week that we moved in. It was just a horrible place. Plus, it was in the middle of nowhere. It turned out also that USIA had been on the GAO's list to move into some new building someplace within a five year period sometime in the '80s. At one point, that was to have been what is now called the Reagan Building. At another point, it was to have been some other nice new building in a better location. In any case, he sold us out on that. There are still people on Fourth Street. It's between C and D on Fourth Street.

Q: There is no restaurant nearby.

TAYLOR: There is a McDonald's [laughter]. It's the pits. You greet a foreign visitor in the USIA building – and we have many high level foreign visitors who come to visit us – and you tromp them through this lobby and then down these dismal hallways to offices. Of course, the place right now is half deserted because most people have moved to the State Department. It's sort of like a tomb. Then you walk in the lobby and there is literally a McDonald's right in the lobby of a foreign affairs building with the smell of cheeseburgers wafting out. It's no more than 30 feet away. If you have the occasional Arab visitor that thinks that the hegemonic power has its McDonald's everywhere, this certainly proves it to them.

Q: In the '88-'90 period, how were relations from your perspective with India?

TAYLOR: I have always felt that we have never paid enough attention to India. The Indians know this. They are a very talented, huge country with potentially great influence. All of my briefing papers used to say, "India has the largest emerging middle class of any country in the world. Some 250 million people qualify as the middle class," probably bigger now with the whole Internet explosion, which has benefited India greatly. They have one of the most talented, educated peoples in the world. We have the oldest democracy. They have the biggest democracy. We have kept this country on the margins forever. While I was India country officer, USIA had lots of money. We were always looking for more; but we had a lot of money. We had a lot of people in four different places in India. We had a lot of programs going on. There were quasigovernmental entities like the Indo-U.S. Subcommission on Education and Culture… The Smithsonian had a number of subgroups working on special projects in India. Everybody in town was doing something special related to India. It was really more than I could keep up with as the country officer for India. Because we did have money, you were only limited by your

time and by the staff that you had. I don't want to say we had everything, but we could do a lot. I had the feeling that I was almost as overwhelmed as I was in Israel. All of a sudden I inherited Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh, and Nepal. The officer who had those countries went off to language training for a full year. This was a sudden thing. There was no one to replace him for another year's cycle. So, I had all of these countries. Of course, Pakistan and India were the two big ones. But little Bangladesh was very active. Our people out in Bangladesh had a tremendously active program going on. Keeping up with all of this was a strain for me. Nevertheless, it was a very exciting job. It was terrific. I learned so much.

Q: Today is January 17, 2002. When did you have this job dealing with South Asia?

TAYLOR: I returned from Tel Aviv in the summer of 1988 and I took up the South Asia desk at that time and kept it for two years. So, I had two full years, '88-'90.

Q: Within the State Department and NEA, Israel dominated and South Asia was an aside. Was this mirrored in USIA?

TAYLOR: It was much more predominant an approach in the State Department than in USIA. One of the reasons for that may have been that in the USIA of those days, '88-'90, we still had money. We still had a cadre of people who had served in the subcontinent and who had risen to prominent positions within USIA, who really had a deep interest in the problems of the subcontinent and also maybe even a soft spot in their heart for the subcontinent. I think the fact that in USIA we could put perhaps disproportionately larger resources into the subcontinent as opposed to the State Department. What it did in terms of dealing with the whole subcontinental issues is reflective of the fact that USIA was quite a nimble, flexible organization and we could move money and people around. We could gin up programs to meet an immediate need. That was a great strength. That's one reason why in the USIA the subcontinent may have fared slightly better and had more attention paid to it from the USIA perspective then from the State Department perspective.

Q: In a way, it was a better battleground for USIA, to put it in those terms, than was the Israeli-Palestinian issue, which was dominated by the politics of the area. There weren't an awful lot of programs that you could plunk into Israel that… The Israelis knew the United States and so that wasn't a particular issue. On the subcontinent, there was sort of a battle to capture the minds.

TAYLOR: If you remember, I came to this job directly from four years in Tel Aviv. I agree partially with what you say and I understand the sentiment behind it. But if you go back over the four years that we talked about before, there were a lot of philosophical and political kinds of programming that the USIA troops out there did take up with Israel. I think I also mentioned that I worked in Gaza as well in the late '80s when the U.S. Congress voted some money to develop programming with Gaza. So, yes, I agree with you partially. I certainly agree that the subcontinent was a more fertile place for USIA to

try to struggle with the love-hate relationship that we had with the Indians and to struggle with the very peculiar dynamic of working with Pakistan. All of this was against the backdrop of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, where I had also been. India being such a large country – and that's an understatement – as well as a country of so many highly educated people, just richly educated with a rich culture and a rich background – despite their tendency to keep us at arms length, they truly were interested in us and always have been. If it expressed itself as U.S. bashing in the press and open hostility at functions when you would meet Indian officials, still it represented to me a relationship where there was plenty of work to be done. That was why I welcomed taking this job. I asked for this job. When I left Tel Aviv, I was advised against taking the job. The people in Personnel and other mentors I had had over the years said, "Oh, no, this will get you nowhere. You really need to go on to something that has larger management capability in it." I said, "No, I'm fascinated and taken by the whole intellectual ideas on the subcontinent and I want to work in that area for a while." So, with reluctance, the Agency let me take up the job. Not only did it provide me the opportunity to really come to understand with greater sophistication the issues on the subcontinent, it also provided me a wonderful opportunity working once again in Washington to understand the dynamics between USIA at that time and the Department of State. I attended the weekly NEA meetings. I saw the major players in action all the time. I saw the bureaucratic battles for funds, resources, personnel, and attention. All of that was very instructive for someone like me. At that point, I was still an 01 level officer, but fairly senior. I was able to sit at the knee of all of the giants who walked the corridors of the Department at that time. I think NEA in those days was by far the strongest bureau in the Department. It just had a wealth of people. Perhaps this is an appropriate time to say that while I understand the reasons for South Asia to have been spun off and become its own entity and its own bureau, therefore allotting it more of a possibility to have more attention paid to subcontinental issues compared to always being dominated by the Israeli-Palestinian issue, I nevertheless think that in terms of personnel, both sides – the new NEA and SA (South Asia) – have suffered as a result. You used to get a wonderful flow-through of people who worked from one end of the empire to the other and who came back with refreshed ideas. Officers might serve in Sri Lanka and then come back and serve in Algeria. That doesn't happen so much anymore. These issues are discussed in a vacuum. I see that as a weakening of both NEA and SA.

Q: I've heard others say that.

TAYLOR: This restructuring movement came about by the effort of congressmen and senators who were supporters of India and who felt that because of the structure of NEA, the subcontinent issues were being overlooked. That is true, but I don't think that the result of making two separate bureaus and separating the personnel has overcome that particular deficiency.

Q: Let's focus first on India, '88-'90. What were the issues that the Agency was dealing with, particularly with India.

TAYLOR: The major issues were always regional stability. It seems that everywhere I've worked, regional stability has been a major issue. So, we developed programs to engage the Indians together with Pakistanis on neutral turf usually in the United States, sometimes by using the vehicle of the Salzburg seminar, which was a wonderful instrument to bring parties who are at odds with each other together. We also were working on environmental issues, which worked very well because the Indians were quite rightly concerned about their environmental issues. We had things to offer them. Indians are fascinated by American literature, American history, American politics. So, we could do a lot in the cultural educational exchange area to keep the dialogue going on fairly neutral terms without the hostility that some of the political issues would involve. Another major economic issue at that time that spun out of the Reagan administration and was still rather heavily embraced in the Bush administration was privatization. So, when you tried to talk to Indian journalists, academics, and others who know something about economics and tell them that the U.S. capitalist road is the pathway for them to get to Heaven, you meet a huge amount of resistance. I can't say that the privatization issue was one of my favorite ones to work on with the Indians, it nevertheless was part of out mandate, it was part of the country team mandate, and USIA always supported country team goals, now called MPP [mission performance plan] goals. We did what we could and it was somewhat futile. But it was an interesting battle of the minds when you would bring someone representing the American free enterprise privatization capitalist economy point of view together with some very sophisticated Indian socialists and Marxists in Bengal. That was always good for fireworks. Each side went away better informed and better educated, but nobody convinced anybody of anything. I just found that whatever we were doing there at that time – and I don't know if the same could be said today – and whatever the subject area was, it was useful to try to bring two really great intellectual societies and two really great cultures together in some way. Whether we agreed or disagreed, it was primarily an effort to establish respect and to establish some kind of understanding. This huge nation of almost a billion people and an emerging middle class of around 300 million plus had been ignored by the United States and marginalized for so many years for so many historical reasons both recent and more ancient. This had to end. It hasn't ended yet, but I think we're slowly groping our way there. That's one reason why I chose that job. I felt very strongly that we as a country had just neglected India on many levels for too long.

Q: The United States' policy people can focus on only a few things at a time. Europe is always there. The Arab-Israeli thing is always there. Then when you're looking around elsewhere, you've got India and China. China for some time now has seemed more exciting. Did you have the have the feeling that "those damn Chinese" are absorbing the precious time of the American governmental focus?

TAYLOR: Yes, I think that's very true. Japan also was a factor at the time. We were obsessed with Japanese economic success at the time. We were being eclipsed by the Asian-Pacific economies and we were very worried about that. I think unnecessarily so. All these things are cyclical. We became truly obsessed by Japan and with China kind of emerging behind – this was 1988-'90… That is a very valid point. But I also think that it

has to do with the fact that many people in the State Department early in their careers became very antagonistic toward India having been snubbed by them-

Q: You can use Krishna Menon, a name that anybody of my generation remembers, with that sneer on his face.

TAYLOR: Right. A number of my colleagues in the State Department, particularly in years past, fictionalized the issue between the United States and India in a way that resulted in unfortunate policy. I've been in meetings where a certain degree of cynicism is always present when you hear State Department officials discussing India. Particularly when you hear them discussing or mentioning individual personalities by name – the minister of that or the foreign secretary of this. I don't want to go any further than that and say who they are. I always came away from those meetings fairly distressed. I've been in any number of State Department meetings where the approach of the day seems to be to dump on your counterparts in France or in Chad or wherever as a way to belittle the country that you're dealing with. That was not really the way we approached it in USIA. It was a real surprise to me – and particularly I'll leap ahead 10 years in my last year in the State Department where we really were in the State Department – to hear a great deal of what was meant to be humorous but was a negative, cynical, moderate trashing of their counterparts in India and Pakistan with whom they had worked. They knew them very well and perhaps they had every right to discuss them in this manner. But I felt that by injecting all of this into a policy discussion, you came out perhaps unnecessarily negatively disposed toward whatever ministry or political issue you were trying to work with. Over the years, this attitude toward India has been pretty pronounced. I also worked in Europe for a number of years in different capacities and have heard people trashing France. Include me in this. It's always fun to do that. I wonder whether it doesn't perhaps slightly skew whatever comes out of the discussion.

Q: Yes. The Soviet Union was going through a collapse - it was a slow collapse, but it was a collapse – during this period. The Soviet Union had been the principal supporter of India. I don't think it was a very comfortable relationship, but still, there it was. Did you see during this period that the Indians were beginning to feel that they ought to look somewhere else, too?

TAYLOR: That's a really good question. I'm not the best person to answer that. I would say that first of all, that Indians would not have wanted to have faced this issue directly at that time. Of course, it all happened so quickly that everybody in the world turned around one day and saw that this very rapid transformation had taken place. I didn't think that the Indians began to look differently toward us or anyone else because of that. They may, because of their own increasing prosperity and sense of themselves and sense of independence, have been moving away from both the Soviet Union and the West. They may have been seeking their own position of dominance in their region in the world. One area of concern that I didn't really work on but I certainly heard about all the time was the southern Pacific region, the Vietnam/South China Sea. There was concern about the Indian navy flexing its muscles and beginning to make more and more frequent

appearances in that area. So, it could be that these things were happening simultaneously. But I really don't know the answer to that question. Someone with greater political insight than I would have to examine it and look at what the Indians were doing, what kinds of treaties and what kinds of outreach they were making to other parts of the world. It didn't in any way soften their approach to the U.S.

Q: What was your impression of how we were dealing with the very important element of our approach to the universities? The Indian Institute of Higher Learning was spewing forth this highly educated group of people. You had the feeling that most of them were coming out with sort of a good solid Marxist or at least London School of Economics leftist orientation. Were we trying to do something? How did that work?

TAYLOR: One of the best things that has happened between India and the United States in the last 20 years is the huge numbers of Indian students who have ended up in the United States at many levels, mostly graduate students, Ph.D. students, and post-docs. Some of them are here on U.S. government dollars under the Fulbright Program. Some of them are here under the Indian government dollar. Others are here through their own institution paying for them. Indian businesses have understood for 15-20 years that a U.S. technical computer business or highly scientific degree is very prized and the best in the world. They would rather send their students to the United States than even to Europe. So, yes, it's true that the Indian universities certainly had a somewhat Marxist slant. I didn't take that all so seriously. These people are so sophisticated. They're so intelligent. They have such a grasp of the world. Although it might have come through a particular filter while there, once they traveled elsewhere, they absorbed everything. The publication Open Doors tells us that for the last 15 years, of the 350,000-plus foreign students in the United States, the largest percentage has come from India. Of course, we know from reading our own newspapers that they are the top achievers in our graduate schools whether it's business or the sciences. The same is true of the offspring of Indian-American parents here. I have some very close Jewish-American friends who have become quite alarmed that, whereas the Jewish kids used to be the smartest ones in the American high schools and getting all the best grades in the Graduate Records Exam, they have been replaced by Indians and behind them the Japanese and Vietnamese and so forth. So, I think that the Indian universities may tend leftist because there is a whole generation in those universities of professors and faculty and they all seem to live forever. They're going to have to pass from the scene before this infusion of American educated mid-level professors can rise to the top. Still, I think they're always going to have their own Indian perception of things and the fact that there is a lot to criticize in this country, and they're right about that. I think that the relationship between Indian academics and U.S. academics is a pretty good one. I just wish we had more money to do more because it's such a big country. USIA had always looked at India next to Germany as our largest country program. I am not sure whether that exists to this day. Other things may have crept in there, particularly with the breakup of the Soviet Union and resources being put there. But we always have put proportionately quite a bit of money into academic exchanges with India. If that could be quadrupled, we would make a greater impact there. I think that most serious thinkers pretty much look at Indian Marxism as fairly benign.

It's a lot of rhetoric and a lot of frothing at the mouth. But ultimately they're a fairly practical people. They are concerned about advancing their nation as well. It was fun to deal with this, this renegade view of the world. It was a challenge. But when you got into the universities and when I visited personally or when we sent an American academic to spend a year in a Fulbright capacity, they were just taken in by the faculty and pumped for their thoughts and their information for the entire year that they were there. So, the Indian universities despite the outward vestiges of Marxism are still looking for other things and they're still open minded. There is a perception that we have but below that perception there is a lot else going on. It's not all monolithic.

Q: Then you've got Pakistan, which is just basically a troubled nation. How did we view it at the time? Were we trying to be equal? It's a smaller population. It doesn't have a government that functions very well. It seems to be either a nation being kept together or maybe Islam is just about the only thing that holds it together.

TAYLOR: At the time, of course, the Soviet Union had not yet entirely collapsed. We still looked at Pakistan as a strategic ally which was very important to us in the opening to China. Balance of power – the India-Soviet axis and the Pakistani-Chinese axis with the U.S. sort of hovering around all of those – was still a very important element of our thinking. Therefore, we did not look at Pakistan socially or politically in our internal politics with such a critical eye. We were getting along as best we could, concerned about the political inheritance that future generations of Pakistanis would have after years of corruption and increasing radical Islam, which wasn't so radical then as it is now. Islam was not such a major concern. The concern in Pakistan today as then was keeping together this fragmented society, parts of which do not even consider themselves to be under the civil law of Pakistan, in the Northwest Frontier Province in particular. But I think that our relationship with Pakistan was governed by our perception of our need for military cooperation in the event of hostilities in the area. There is the fact that the Pakistanis and the Chinese had always managed to have a fairly reasonable relationship when the Chinese and the Indians were always very wary of each other. Our approach to Pakistan then was far less critical than it has become in the last four to six years. Of course, Benazir Bhutto was in power at the time and she had a lot of friends in the United States and had gone to school in the United States and was known as "Pinkie" by her friends at Harvard. I think that that very close feeling about the ties with her despite what was going on in her family also had something to do with keeping the positive relationship going with Pakistan. Every time I went to Pakistan, there was nothing but a positive reception for what we were trying to do there. But obviously given the scope of the problems in that country, the resources that we or anybody had, are and were very limited.

Q: Did you feel that there was like an iron curtain of Islam that precluded us from any real penetration or influence in certain parts of the society or the geography of the country?

TAYLOR: Not to the degree that we recognize now. There are just openly declared

madrassas and religious movements which set themselves apart certainly from any contact with the West but also set themselves apart from the central Pakistani government. They have been influenced not just by what's going on in Afghanistan but by what's gone on in the general world Islamic movement. This was not such a major thing from '88-'90, although I would say that there were regions of Pakistan that couldn't be reached simply because of the fact that they were isolated, the people were undereducated or poorly educated. We, at that time, had no resources to reach out to those people. There always has been that veneer of highly educated sophisticated westernized group of people in Pakistan with whom the U.S. has been able to feel comfortable and to work and to establish relationships. Perhaps a mistake that we made in those days was not going beyond that just as we didn't go much beyond that thin veneer of people in the old days in Iran. We hadn't been tracking what was going on in the bazaars with the mullahs in Iran and probably we hadn't been tracking that very much in Pakistan also. Certainly my programs didn't have much to do with that other than the fact that we would at least three or four times a year try to do a major program on something called comparative religions. We would put Pakistanis and Indians together and maybe throw in an Israeli or two, bring them all here to the United States and hope that there would be some sort of ripple effect when they went back. They had 30 days of exposure to a multicultural society which mostly deals with tolerance in its relationships with other religions and other cultures. That was what our effort was. But by no means did we reach down into the very poorest, most troublesome areas.

Q: These are essentially unreachable.

TAYLOR: Given the way our foreign affairs structure is set up, that is true. In the old days of AID, when AID was out there in the villages digging wells and building bridges and doing very simple rudimentary things, the village people got to know a real American. Same in the old days when USIA would literally bicycle around a 16 millimeter film and show the Marx Brothers with a sheet hung over a tree limb out in the village served as the screen. We did that not when I was in USIA but in the older days – those were very simple things to do. They were very low tech. They were not very costly. At a certain point in USIA's history we stopped doing those things as AID stopped doing village development. We moved under the Reagan era into the so-called privatization of major corporations and of particularly state-run corporations. Their resources and their personnel and their expertise shifted dramatically, as did USIA's to a degree. It was said that we couldn't afford to do both. I don't know if that's true or not. I always liked the idea of taking around a 16 millimeter film projector and getting out to a village here or there. People talk. If you live in a village in Pakistan or any country you have very little communication with anybody beyond the next village. But if someone comes around and shows "The Old Man in the Sea" and you haven't seen a movie in three years and the only one you've ever seen is an American one and maybe some nice American comes along and has some Fanta for everybody to drink after the movie, that makes an impression and people talk about it. I would say that in some of these poorer regions, that kind of programming would still be effective today. Television hasn't taken over the world and certainly nobody has Internet in those places. What they do hear on the radio or

what they do hear at the Friday sermon in the mosque is all very one sided. I think we've made a mistake. I think we've made a mistake in closing our libraries, as I've said.

I think it is one small element of where we find ourselves now in being very, very, very out of touch with groups of what we now called "radical Islamists." I don't by any means presume to think that we could have stopped this, but I think that had we remained engaged at the grassroots level both through AID and USIA programs more than we have, we might have had a better impact and a better understanding of them and they of us. The action that we did take over the last 20 years was basically to withdraw, to retrench into the larger cities, and to deal only with the elites. We called them our "target audience" in USIA. We used to have a secondary and a primary audience. The secondary audience would include village leaders.

Q: How about Bangladesh? Here is essentially a poor country, but Bengalis are a very sophisticated people in a way, at least the leadership.

TAYLOR: Very. When I came back from Kabul in 1980 and after the Soviets invaded and I worked on the Afghanistan-Pakistan-Bangladesh-Iran desk. There were hostages in Iran, the Soviets had invaded Afghanistan, a wild mob had just burned down our embassy in Islamabad and killed 12 people in the process. Bangladesh was the bright spot on my horizon every day. Here it was, the sixth, seventh, eighth poorest country in the world and it was the one place where we could still work, could still do things. It's a much bigger country than most people think it is. Its population is close to 100 million. There is a huge number of educated people. They're very active. They have a lot of energy. It's a country where consistently USIA-type programming has been able to take place with the exceptions of wars and civil uprisings. Mostly, it's been a stable enough place that we have just consistently run a number of our regular traditional programs. We have very good access in Bangladesh. We are well received, we being Americans in general as well as specifically USIA-style programming. So, I would say it's a place where a typical country team list of goals touching on everything from politics to economics is something that can be handled fairly satisfactorily. The Bangladesh government, although there are always personalities involved, as well as the population at large knows about the United States is fairly well disposed to it. Even though the problems of poverty are immense and not solvable by us, a tremendous amount of progress has been made and particularly in my last incarnation a year ago, a lot had been done on the microeconomic level. This was not so much the case from '88-'90. When I revisited Bangladesh in a figurative sense 10-12 years later, the international NGOs and I guess the World Bank and to a lesser extent AID had been able successfully to work with small village groups outside the major urban centers, particularly with women, and had set up microenterprises. By giving small loans, $800, to a woman with which she could buy a sewing machine and then train other women, all of a sudden you've got 15 women who are able to support their families. That then grows and they all buy sewing machines. This very small level microenterprise approach has been more successful in Bangladesh than any place. I think it's held up by the World Bank as a model. AID is quite proud of it, too. That just is illustrative of what could happen in a place like Bangladesh from '88-'90 when I encountered it for the

second time and then for the third time just a year ago.

Q: In Sri Lanka, you have a civil war. Did this stop things dead?

TAYLOR: To me Sri Lanka is inscrutable. They are the loveliest people. They have the loveliest country. They are so well educated, the Tamils and the Sinhalese. There is a lot of intermarriage there. There is a lot of intermingling. They aren't separated geographically necessarily or even historically. I don't understand what's going on in Ireland either. To me, the Sri Lankan issues are very similar to the Irish issues. These are people who if they would just stop the violence they have everything to look forward to. They have progress, health, literacy, democracy, and intelligence. They are highly respected in the world. I can understand the Indo-Pakistan thing. I can understand the Jihad. I can understand all that. But I can't understand the situation in Sri Lanka when they're just sort of shooting themselves in the foot and worse.

Q: Did we try to tackle that problem USIAwise?

TAYLOR: Oh, yes. Again, it's all under the theme of conflict resolution and regional stability. Sri Lanka wasn't so extreme in '88-'90 when I was working on those issues, it has clearly gotten out of hand subsequent to that. What I found when I visited Sri Lanka was, you would have a room full of every ethnic group under the sun and they all knew each other and they all had gone to school together and they all had gone to graduate school together; some had gone abroad together. They had intermarried. They are a very sophisticated people. Nobody could explain it. They all understood that they were impeding their own progress. The USIA programs that we built up were like in other places, designed to bring together opposing parties, the leadership of those parties, both political parties and movements. It was a drop in the bucket. If we could bring them all here, if we could send them all to Salzburg, it might help. But if they're determined to slaughter each other until the Tamils have their little tiny peninsula of independence – and what could they do with that? It's a small island as it is. I don't know whether a Tamil nation could ever be viable. But they're pretty brutal.

Q: This is an awful thing. During this time, what was the attitude you got from our people within the State Department and USIA toward the Kashmir thing? A plague on both your houses? Could you characterize the feeling?

TAYLOR: This may be unfair to say, but my impression 11 years later is that we ignored it. We just wished it would go away. It wasn't at full throttle at that time. The Indians hadn't moved as many troops up to the front lines and neither had the Pakistanis. There wasn't as much across the border. There was some. I felt very fortunate that when I was in Afghanistan we had made a visit to Kashmir just for a holiday and had stayed on a houseboat on Lake Dal and enjoyed Srinagar and just thought it was the most spectacular, beautiful place we'd ever been. We always intended to go back. Of course, we never did or could. But my impression is that the conversation you overheard in the Department about what to do about Kashmir is, "Well, let's just hope it goes away. It's just a

nattering, nagging nuisance. If they would just be more rational and reasonable, then none of us would have to think about this." I don't think that we were heavily involved in trying to bring the two sides together on this issue. It was one of those things we got very tired out on. We can focus on six or seven issues but not 20, and that was one of them. But people on the ground, our embassy people, in all the sections, in both New Delhi and Islamabad, I think they thought about it all the time and talked about it. I don't think they ever got Washington's attention on it.

Q: In 1990, whither?

TAYLOR: One of my best years. After having done these two jobs – this was two full-time jobs – I was elected to go to the National War College. It was something that I was inspired to do by my boss at the time, who was also in my car pool, Ed Penny, who is no longer living. He was a wonderful man, a mentor of mine, a real gentleman. He was the area director for the Near East and South Asia when I was in the India country officer. I had known him over the years anyway, but we came to know each other quite well during that period and particularly because we saw each other for an hour every day driving in and out of town. Ed became a faculty member at the War College in that '88-'90 period. So, we would have these wonderful conversations in the car pool. There were four of us. We'd just babble about everything in the car pool. Particularly, he would bring his curriculum to the car pool because he was prepping himself, using us as his surrogate students to see how he would face the day. Whatever the subject was in the seminar or in the lecture, what did the car pool think of this? So, we had these very lively discussions. As a result of that, he encouraged me to apply. He was not going to be on the faculty that year. He was coming back to USIA. He said, "You really ought to apply for this. By the way, after two years of carrying these two jobs, you deserve something like this." So, I applied. I was accepted. My faculty advisor, Terry Deibel, who is still there, looked at my resume and said, "Gosh, here is someone who went to Wellesley College, studied French literature, and has a major interest in ballet. How is someone like this going to succeed at the National War College?" Terry hadn't ever met me. He said, "I want this student to be one of my three advisees." Terry picked me out of this pile because he thought I was destined to failure. He said, "This person is going to need a lot of help here."

Well, I thrived. I was just in my element. I had the most wonderful intellectually challenging year. I took it seriously. I did all the reading. A lot of folks just blew it all off. Well, I didn't do all the reading. You couldn't possibly do all the reading. There were 300-400 pages a night. But I did what I could. I literally came home at night and my husband would put the dinner tray in front of me and I would have one Labrador retriever on either side of me and my book and I'd be there for four hours. But at the same time, I took real advantage of all the social opportunities, too, and got to know my military colleagues in all the services. I played softball – not very well – and I played volleyball. I went on all the field trips. I went out to Las Vegas to watch all the gadgets that the Air Force has. I went to Norfolk to look at the submarines and things. I just did everything and became one of the more prominent student leaders there. I finished as a distinguished graduate. I think there were 12 of us out of 160 students. Terry told me at the end of the

year that he never would have believed it. But it was my background, not being as heavily policy oriented as he thought somebody should have been. I still nevertheless was able to take advantage of it. I had a wonderful time. I still have wonderful friends to this day. I learned a lot about leadership. I learned something that I hadn't learned very successful in the Foreign Service. That was that you really need to delegate. That year, we worked in teams a lot to solve problems. That also ended up being the Persian Gulf War year, by the way. A lot of my colleagues felt very distraught, particularly my Army colleagues. This was their war. This was their generation. Here they were, at this stupid school, that was their attitude. I kept saying, "Gosh, I wouldn't want to be anywhere but here," but they all wanted to be out driving tanks and things. I felt that as we were put in groups to solve problems or to do war gaming. It can be absolutely hair raising and annoying. But having to get up every morning and to find and get your way with 10 other people in your group, was an invaluable experience for me. As Foreign Service officers, we very often tend, even though I had big FSN staffs most of the time, to do so much of it ourselves. We tend to think "I can do this faster and better than anybody else, so I'm going to take this all on." I know that the military doesn't think that way. They can't think that way. I learned a lot about being part of the group process during that year. I didn't even realize that I didn't know very much about that when I got there. But that was the real growth thing for me – that plus, just like when I was in the Senior Seminar 10-11 years later, the responsibility placed on the students to move the curriculum along. The faculty didn't do it all for you the way it was in college where you went to class every day and the lectures were all laid out and you were told what you had to read and were told what papers you had to write. We had to do a lot – not as much as in the Senior Seminar – in terms of setting up the curriculum, getting some speakers, introducing them, doing research on their background. There were demands made on us that were really good for me at that time in my career. It was just the perfect time for me to have done that.

Q: One of the things I've noticed as I've done these oral histories, hundreds of them, is that the people who are with the U.S. Information Service are much more "do it" types than people in the State Department political-economic, where you kind of write things and good drafting is an accolade, which is kind of minor in the world of getting things done. Did you find that your USIA experience carried over, that you did it and didn't mentally play with it?

TAYLOR: At the War College?

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: Yes and no. Although, yes, we were very much more doers at USIA, we also tended to be people who stopped and thought a little bit more than our military colleagues who in my experience always knew the answer. Of the 160 students, 13 of us were women. These guys were all selected to go there because they were on the career track to become generals and admirals, so they already had a very solid background and they knew that they were good and they knew that they had been singled out as successful career people. Therefore, they had a sense of confidence about them. Of course, it was

their school. It wasn't our school, the civilians there. It was their school. We had to conform to that. So, the fact that I had been in USIA and had done things and done programs and organized things and made things happen helped me, but I still was sometimes overwhelmed by the F-16 fighter pilot who would just burst through the doors in the morning and say, "This is what we're going to do." If you were someone who said, "Wait a minute. Have you thought about these consequences in this war-game," you could sometimes get mowed down by that. Yes, it certainly helped me to be someone who had done things and made things happen. My State Department political officer colleagues didn't suffer much because of the fact they hadn't done those things. They did very well because they had such good minds. If they were confronted with the same F-16 fighter pilot barreling through the room, they would have enough well thought out responses – Steve Mann and Ron Newman were two of the State guys who were in my group – and points to consider and they were so articulate that they did very well. They earned a lot of admiration from the military. At the end of the year – and we're told this always happens – the military officers say to their advisors, "You know, we learn more from the civilians than the civilians learn from us. I would credit my State Department colleagues of all cones who were there with being extremely fine representatives of the civilian side of an issue. The three USIA people did very well, too. Everybody from the civilian side did extremely well. In fact, there was a lot of resentment when the distinguished graduate names were named. Of the 10-12, three quarters of them were civilian. There were no Air Force in that particular year. There were a couple Navy and one or two Army. That was wrong. They should have-

Q: How were the nominations made?

TAYLOR: The advisors are also the faculty, so they've observed you through the year. Of course, it has to do with your participation, the kinds of questions you ask, the kinds of reasoning that you show in class, the papers… We had to write an awful lot of papers. That was the worst part of the year. I really felt that had we not had this burden of the papers, I would have learned more. I learned less from writing my papers than I learned from having the time to talk to people and do more reading. But that was a requirement. They also chose distinguished graduates based on participation in other things. Being a well rounded person… There were a couple of people who were outstanding academically but you never saw them anyway. They never said a word. They never went to anything. Leadership was one of the things they were looking for. The faculty all voted. Each faculty was able to throw two or three names into the pile and then however many they decided they were going to have.

Q: 1991, after this glorious year, whither?

TAYLOR: Well, I mentioned my friend Ed Penny. He was to be going out to Morocco as the public affairs officer after his sojourn at the National College and then back to become area director of NEA and South Asia. His assignment was to be PAO in Morocco. He asked me if I would consider going out as the CAO there. North Africa was a place that always had an interest for me. I wanted to get away from South Asia and the

Middle East. I didn't want to go to Europe, which was the other place I could have gone. My husband by this time had retired. He was intrigued by the idea of North Africa. We had never even been there as tourists. The idea of working for Ed was wonderful. So, that's the only job I put in for. I got it, although I was not an Arabic speaker. So, they sent me to FSI. Unfortunately, it was not here. It was still in Rosslyn. I studied Arabic for one excruciatingly difficult year. In the end, my dear friend Ed was not able to go to Morocco because he was diagnosed with prostate cancer, of which he died six or seven years later. That was a tragedy, but I went anyway. He stayed in the United States. He didn't retire immediately, but eventually he did. So, '91-'92, I was still a student. Two years of being a student and not being in the real world was sort of unusual. By the end of the year of studying Arabic… I liked the study of Arabic, but it's the hardest language that I have ever studied. I very much wanted to take the second year, which is in Tunisia, and said that if I were sent to Morocco with just one year of Arabic, I couldn't use it as a language – at least not in the professional sense. Of course, they don't speak Arabic in Morocco anyway, not the kind they teach at FSI. They speak a mixture of Berber and a Moroccan style Arabic that sounds nothing like what any teacher at FSI teaches. So, I was not given that second year in Tunisia because the person I was going out to replace was retiring. They were not willing to extend him in my job. So, it was one of those cases where I had to get there. It's also one of those cases that therefore USIA really wasted a year of training. I had a wonderful time learning Arabic. I probably got to a strong 2/1+, which was pretty good in a year, but I was nowhere near a 3/3. That's why they had the two year program. So, that was kind of shortsighted on USIA's part. It was too bad. I did speak fluent French, so I was able to work in French. But you lose something being in a country like Morocco if you don't have Arabic.

Q: You were in Morocco from '92 to when?

TAYLOR: '95.

Q: Who was your ambassador?

TAYLOR: When I arrived, it was the tail end of the Bush administration. With one exception, the ambassadors to Morocco have always been political appointees. The first ambassador was Ambassador Vreeland, commonly known as "Freckie." Freckie was an extremely interesting character. He had had a CIA career. He had been posted to Morocco as a young CIA officer. But really he was a political appointee. His mother was the famous Diana Vreeland, who was at the time of her death the curator of the costumes division of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. More famously than that, she was the 30 year editor of "Vogue" magazine and the inventor of Diana Vreeland red and the lady who made the famous comment that pink is the navy blue of India. Freckie was a very colorful character. He was our ambassador. He loved Morocco. He and his very brilliant wife, who was a British artist, a mosaic specialist who made beautiful mosaics, which of course were an art of the country, had a rather glamorous villa in Marrakech and were very famous and well known by Hermes and Yves St. Laurent and everybody who had villas in Marrakech. So, we had an ambassador who was really plugged into Moroccan

high society as well as the European high society who came to winter in Marrakech. It was all very social and all very interesting. Freckie and Vanessa were devastated when the election came around in 1992 just shortly after I got there and Bush was defeated and Clinton was elected and that meant that Freckie would no longer be the ambassador. He did try on a trip back to the United States to make the case that he was not a political appointee, that he was rather a career person because, after all, he had this background. But that didn't fly with the Clinton administration. Eventually, a guy named Marc Ginsburg, whose name you may hear, was sent to Morocco some months after Freckie left. Freckie tried to string it out as long as he could. Marc was interesting because he was the first Jewish ambassador in Morocco.

Q: What was Ginsburg's background and how did he approach things?

TAYLOR: His background was that in the Clinton campaign of '92 he was public affairs director for international affairs or something like that. He had a very prominent position in the campaign. He was a lawyer from the Washington area. He was married to a woman from Arkansas, a very pretty blond woman. I think in his law field he dealt mostly in international communications and international commerce. So, from that respect, he was not completely unqualified for the job. He had also spent a good deal of time as a boy in Israel. I think he lived on a kibbutz for a while and speaks fluent Hebrew and did some schooling there, but not university.

Q: Going back to Ambassador Vreeland, from what you were saying, it's great to know high society, but generally within the Foreign Service context, this isn't worth a warm bucket of spit. It's great socially and you have people coming out – Malcolm Forbes and others – but the society element really isn't important at all.

TAYLOR: Well, it is in Morocco. The King, now deceased, Hassan II, really had a major input over the years into the selection or at least the approval of the U.S. ambassadors. He felt that the most important thing was that his American ambassador would be able to pick up the phone and call the White House. This was true of Freckie. This was also true of Ginsburg. In Morocco of the time there one important person and that was the King. High society in Morocco was made up of the same people who ran the country. So, when I say that it was all very social, it was the social elements who controlled everything else. It's a very small society. Freckie, to give him due credit, got around a lot. He would do anything you asked him to. If you asked him to show up at something that you thought was important that the U.S. be represented at the ambassadorial level, he was pretty willing to do that. He was pretty willing to work with the press. He and his wife both loved the world of culture, so they were active along those lines. As far as visibility and reaching out and extending a hand of friendship to the Moroccans, he did that very well. Ginsburg less so because he was a little bit more hostile toward the Moroccans and he had a much more abrupt dealing with them. He could aggravate people, particularly the Moroccans. He had no use whatsoever for USIA or any of our programs. I'm not saying anything out of school here because he said it himself. He participated very minimally in the kinds of things we were trying to do. He felt that the only thing that he was supposed

to do while he was in Morocco was to encourage privatization and develop some kind of a higher level of trade relationships between Morocco and the U.S. on the one hand and Morocco and Europe on the other. That was certainly a worthy goal. Morocco was sort of in the 17th century in some respects in terms of its trade relationships. Ginsburg made it his goal to try to position Morocco better for the next century of international trade. In doing that, he broke a lot of china in the china shop. I can't say that even the royal palace was very happy with him all the time. Certainly for us and USIA, it was difficult. The Vreelands would come up with some wild, off the wall ideas that they wanted USIA to spend its resources on. I won't really go into what those were, but they were pretty wild. Ginsburg on the other hand really didn't have anything that he wanted us to do.

Gradually over the three years that I was there as the CAO, we were beginning to educate him that we were not just a fluffy, frilly organization. I put together an International Visitor Program of parliamentarians to look at how the U.S. Congress deals with such things as setting up the committee approach to deal with an issue, so they divide up responsibility. The Moroccan parliament was almost inept. How you set up a congressional research service. We did different kinds of things to attempt to modernize the Moroccan parliament, which was largely an old boys school of very wealthy, highly placed Moroccans. I think Ginsburg at this point saw some value in doing things like that. So, at the time I left, he was coming around a little bit more to being supportive. He was doing a little bit more with the press, although he was fairly combative. One thing he loved was, he was truly a gourmet. I don't know how he did it exactly or how it happened, but all of a sudden there was this international food festival in Morocco and Ginsburg saw this as a way to get Morocco, which does have a wonderful cuisine, more involved in the whole international trend toward eating interesting foods. If you've noticed, half the waiters in Washington are Moroccan. All of a sudden, there were all these major foodies in Casablanca for five days. Then they went all around Morocco to different cities having food seminars and cooking sessions. He helped pull that off. He did do some interesting things.

Q: I've never served in Morocco, but one of the charges I've heard about our ambassadors to Morocco is that very shortly they start referring in cables to the King of Morocco as "our King." In other words, they begin to identify with Morocco rather than American interests.

TAYLOR: That's right.

Q: Did you see this?

TAYLOR: Oh, yes. Absolutely. On the other hand, Morocco is one of the few countries which has consistently supported the United States position on Israel. The Moroccans have a history of having protected their own Jews during the Vichy occupation of Morocco during World War II. The then King Hassan II's father, Mohammad V, I don't think he wore a yellow star on his shoulder, but he went close to doing things like that. The Moroccan Jewish population was protected. They were not deported. Had the King

not taken that position, they might have been. Andre Azoulay, who is one of the most elegant, intelligent, articulate men I have ever met in my life, is one of the leaders of the Moroccan Jewish community. He was and still is senior advisor to the King on community affairs and even much closer to that. We appreciated that of the Moroccans. Also, I think they sent a contingent of forces to the Persian Gulf War. There is a system whereby if any of the launches in Cape Canaveral, Cape Kennedy, go wrong, there is an alternate landing base in the desert in Morocco. All these films that are made there… "Blackhawk Down…" So, there is a tremendous amount of cooperation. Moroccans love to say that they are the country that first recognized the United States. The French would argue with that, but if they weren't the first, they were the second. There is a long historical closeness. Ambassadors do come under this spell. The Moroccans entertain lavishly, more lavishly than any other country I've been in. My very first job when I got off the plane was probably one of the most interesting things I've ever done, which was to be put in charge of the 50th anniversary of the Casablanca Conference. This was part of the whole 50th anniversary celebration of D-Day and the end of World War II. I literally stepped off the plane and was handed this. For four months up until January of '93 when it took place, I did nothing but that. It involved all manner of Churchills and Roosevelts and Alistair Maclaine was there, as were Doris Kurtz Godwin, Arthur Schlesinger, a bunch of Eisenhowers, Pamela Harriman from France (She was not yet ambassador but she was living in France). There were 85-100 luminaries sponsored by the Roosevelt library and Hyde Park – and the King. Then the U.S. embassy was supposed to deal with all these egos and get everybody organized. Of course, the Moroccans never ever do anything – and they say this about themselves – until the very last minute. So, we had 95 very important people coming. I didn't know up until probably two or three days before they came exactly what the itinerary would be. The palace always knew. Even Andre Azila could not get the thing shaken out until the very last minute. Finally, the King laid a plane on for all of us and we flew all over the country. We had a meeting with him, a reception with him, at his palace in Fez, which I think very few Americans had ever been in. It was just totally lavish. The King paid for most of this. So, that was a real experience for me, particularly being newly arrived in Morocco. But it leads me to understand how the palace's charms can be pretty captivating for an ambassador who is subject to them all the time. I don't think Marc Ginsburg spent as much time in the company of the palace as his predecessors. He did have this culture clash with them, not because of his Jewish heritage but because of his personality.

Q: Did you find as cultural affairs officer that you were nose to nose with the French there?

TAYLOR: All the time. But the Moroccans have this real… I mentioned the love-hate relationship between the U.S. and India. The Moroccans have a real love-hate relationship with the French. Increasingly, they are looking towards the West in general and the U.S. in particular to draw away from the rather hide-bound culture and educational structure and commercial structure that the French have left them with. Even moving away from the three hour lunch period every day is something that most modern Moroccans in the cities at least would like to do. Moroccan women in particular who are very professional

and yet they have to go home and cook lunch for everybody for three hours every day. Then everybody goes back to the office at 3:00 or 4:00 and they stay there until 8:00 or 9:00 and they're all exhausted all the time. Particularly since the traffic was getting to be such a problem… In Casablanca it's unbelievable, or even in Rabat, this sleepy little village, people would find themselves driving 45 minutes to pick up their children, come home, make lunch, make lunch for the husband. So, everything that the French left behind is now coming under scrutiny in Morocco. The Alliance Française and the other French cultural centers had just money to burn. They had beautiful centers. They had first class exhibits. Of course, the distance from France to Morocco was so close that they could bring people in on a very cheap air ticket all the time. So, their schedule of activities at their cultural centers – and they had four or five major ones and eight or 10 minor ones throughout the entire country – was just spectacular. There was something like 45,000, maybe even more, French teachers in the Moroccan school system. 45,000 in a country that small is just amazing. So, there was no way we could compete on that level. But there was this real friction between the Moroccans and the French, much more so than between the Moroccans and the Americans. It's one of the places where we don't have this long history. The only thing we do wrong is our support of Israel. But even then the Moroccans are fairly supportive of us on that. So, yes, the French… I just realized we couldn't compete. Our cultural center was overflowing. Everybody wants to learn English. Everybody wants to go study in the United States. All of the professors and graduate students that I knew who had gone to study in Paris or in France understood the difference in going to a U.S. university, where the professor has to talk to the student because the professor respects the student, whereas in France the professors couldn't care less about- (end of tape)

The French certainly had far greater inroads and far more resources to spend in Morocco. Vast numbers of Moroccan university students and graduate students were going to France than to the United States either through French scholarships or even on their own dime because it's so much cheaper. But they also understood that they were getting, compared to what they would have gotten in the U.S., a pretty third rate education. Number one, the French university system is so hierarchical to begin with even French students don't get full attention from their professors. Then you have the societal racial attitude between the French and the Moroccans. Moroccans are very proud of the fact that, unlike Tunisia and Algeria, they never became a real colony. You can argue as to whether they were or were not a colony given the fact that the French presence was pretty much saturating the country. Nevertheless, Morocco remained independent through all those years while the French were there. But they're there. All educated people speak French.

Q: How did you find American education took? Did the Moroccans who went to the United States become absorbed in the United States?

TAYLOR: Oh, they loved it. The Moroccans just took to, gravitated to, the whole idea of American education. In my day, the rate of return was pretty good for Moroccans. There were some problems but it wasn't as bad as some other countries. They embraced the

whole educational structure. They came from this very rigid French structure superimposed on an even more rigid Arab society. You almost had total paralysis in the universities as well as at the upper levels, where professors were appointed and faculty chairmanships and deanships were decided. All of that was based on who knew whom and it was all very incestuous. Everybody knew that and everybody knew there was no way out of this vicious circle. So, Moroccan students at any level whether they went as graduate students or post-docs or as senior lecturers and professors, they would find themselves blossoming in the U.S. educational structure. We also had a summer program for Moroccan professors. It's worldwide. We have a summer program called the Summer Institute where foreign professors or teachers, even high school teachers, of American history, American literature, American politics, economics, American studies, come to the United States for a six weeks intensive seminar. It can be on American literature. It could have a focus on Faulkner, for example. They'll go to the University of Iowa and it's summertime, so it's relaxed, it's a seminar environment. They're thrown in with professors from our program from other countries. Let's say there are 25-30 of them studying in a place like Ames, Iowa, or in a place like New Mexico or wherever. They have a wonderful time. First of all, the libraries are open to them. It's an open stacks library in our university systems. No European even has access to books in libraries. Particularly in Morocco, since first of all, there aren't any books in the libraries. Secondly, if there were, nobody would be able to take one out. So, in the U.S. they're just overwhelmed by the library systems. They're overwhelmed by their access to professors, by the openness of ideas, and by the fact that they're encouraged and practically pushed into talking, whereas in Moroccan universities, the professor talks and you don't question what the professor has to say. That's very much a legacy of the French. So, the Moroccan experience in the American educational environment is nothing but positive, just extraordinary.

Q: Were there any other elements that you were dealing with in Morocco?

TAYLOR: Well, there was a huge artistic community. They were very hungry for contact with the outside. They hadn't developed a degree of sophistication, largely due to resources. The Ministry of Culture is totally disorganized and under-funded. But there is a huge interest in the arts. Moroccan design and the use of color and the use of architecture is very important. So, there was a burgeoning movement within the artistic side of the country. Many people are interested in the arts, but not much was going on. There was one theater in Rabat. In the three years that I was there, other than things that we or the French brought, there were maybe three or four different programs that were Moroccan produced. Those would last two or three days. It was really a sad scene. So, we tried to help there.

The environment is a major issue of concern to Moroccans as well as to us. I wouldn't say they're primitive, but they have a long way to go in terms of cleaning up their waterfront, cleaning up their beaches. Pollution is just unbelievable. It's fortunate there aren't more cars in the country. It would be even worse. So, we did a number of programs to address those issues. The idea of universal education, literacy, were issues that we tried to work

with. There is a system of American language centers which are now privatized but which USIA started in the '50s. There are 10 of them now throughout the country. While they're not nearly as elaborate as the French language teaching centers, they're extremely effective and each one has an American director. There must be 50,000 students studying English in these American language centers. I sat on the board of the ALCs. We didn't give them any money, but we could provide facilitative assistance. We did teacher training together. We were able to give them some things. A fellow running the whole system, the director, who was based in Rabat, has been there for almost 20 years doing this. He is an American. That was a very effective counterpart to what we were doing. It was a spin-off of what USIA used to do when they used to teach English directly.

Q: Was it becoming a given that for international language, English outclassed the French?

TAYLOR: It was becoming a given that if you were under 35 years old and you had gotten your Ph.D. speaking nothing but Arabic and French, you really needed to start learning English. I had one very good friend at the University of Marrakech, a professor of comparative religion, and I sent him on an International Visitor Program. He went to the United States speaking very rudimentary English. He was wonderfully educated, a very intelligent man. He came back after 30 days speaking pretty good English. As I left, he was enrolled in English classes at the ALC in Marrakech. That was happening anyway. Then the whole Internet issue came up. The Moroccans, like several other Arabic countries – Saudi Arabia was among them at the time – this was 1995 – had not yet decided that Internet was the wave of the future. In fact, they were quite concerned about the evils that it might bring. There was a conservative element there that was arguing against opening up the portals to receiving Internet. In the meantime, the universities, students, businessmen, and everybody else were just anxious for this. My assistant cultural affairs officer, Laura Berg, who has subsequently spent the last five years and still is in Saudi Arabia, had this brilliant idea of setting up an Internet conference. Although there was no Internet in Morocco at the time, she did it. I never thought it would succeed. She somehow managed to get with very little cost to us over 20 or 30 top speakers on the Internet. Bill Gates was not there, but just about everybody else was. Plus, the university in Rabat lent us its space. The Ministry of Communications did the same thing. All the while, the PTT had made Internet connections impossible because of the cost. So, while Internet had problems coming to Morocco, they did allow and encourage us to sponsor this huge Internet conference. This conference was famous. It was all Laura's doing. The French were just beside themselves. I heard they tried to intervene at the last minute and tell the Ministry of Communications, "We don't want the Americans to be doing this. This is going to bring too much American commerce to Morocco. The Americans are going to dominate your whole Internet future." Laura really pulled off a major coup there. So, those two things, the Internet and the fact that so much of it is in English, plus a growing realization that France is a wonderful place but it's not the wave of the future means that most educated Moroccans understand they have to learn English.

Q: Things have developed so rapidly in the Internet that '95 was antediluvian Internet.

But the great inhibition was that the telephone system just wasn't up to it or they weren't thinking ahead and they were charging by the minute. That pretty soon went by the boards. So, this was a tremendous inhibitor, the cost.

TAYLOR: It wasn't just the cost. It was also a way of keeping out this dangerous thing. The Moroccan ministerial advisors to the King were not yet quite sure they wanted to bring into their country. One of the American presenters put a map of the world up on the screen. It showed in different colors which countries were Internet active and which ones weren't. At that time, '95, the only ones that were not – there was this big suave of Internet active colors (let's call it blue), and then there were these countries in red that were not. Red countries included all of Africa with the exception of Egypt and maybe Tunisia, Morocco, plus Saudi Arabia and a few of the poorest places of the former Soviet Union. I forget what the situation was in China. But that just opened everybody's eyes up. There was the Middle East, Internet active. It was a very effective map that this man just very casually put up there and said, "Look, you, too, can be part of the next world."

Q: I take it when you left there in '95, you left with pretty good feelings about Morocco.

TAYLOR: I love the country. Of course, you always have wonderful friends. I found myself frustrated by the Moroccans. They couldn't decide whether they wanted to live in the 17th century or the 21st century. It seemed to be one or the other. They didn't seem to be finding their way. You would think that you'd be making tremendous progress on the one hand… For example, the King personally decided that he wanted to have an American style, an American modeled, university in Morocco. This university, to make a very long, complicated story short, was funded by Morocco from funds that it received from Saudi Arabia. It received those funds from Saudi Arabia because at one point somewhere in the late '80s an oil tanker had broken off the coast of Morocco in the Atlantic Ocean. There was the potential of an enormous oil spill onto the Moroccan coastline for which the Saudis gave the Moroccans $50 million in the anticipation that they would have a big cleanup cost. Well, the oil never came. It went in another direction. So, the King has $50 million. So, he says to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, "I want to start a new American model university and will call it the Two Brothers University, meaning you and I." That seemed like a boondoggle to fall into our laps. We wouldn't have to pay a dime. There would be an American curriculum. It would be taught in English. All the professors would be American educated. It would be a private university. Students would have to pay money there. Therefore, they would have to graduate at some point instead of going on and on. This is a good and wonderful thing. But it is so fraught with Moroccan politics including the hiring and firing of people who are or are not in favor at the royal palace of the day. King Fahd finds out there are going to be women at this university. He hadn't been told there were going to be women. All power to the Moroccans for allowing that to happen. Of course, these women all show up in their black leather miniskirts and their Ferraris because this is a private university. The American faculty that's hired thing finds out there is no real freedom for the professors and the faculty. There is no way that this is run the way an American university is run. So, they do a good thing and then they ruin it somehow. It's just like they build a beautiful hotel and within a year it's all

trashed. Then they let that go to seed instead of fixing it up and keeping it nice. Then they build another one. There is also a certain amount of duplicity in personal and professional relationships, though never among my staff. Moroccan staff are as dear to me as anybody. Several of them live here right now. But in some of the dealings I had with Moroccans in institutions throughout the country, I always felt that there was something else there. I never felt that way as much in any other country. Everybody always has a hidden agenda, of course. In international relations, we have to accept that. But in Morocco, I felt that it went beyond that. It went beyond what was necessary. So, I didn't leave there altogether positively. It's no secret that American tourists who go to Morocco consistently say they would never go back again. Despite the fact there is this spectacularly beautiful country with spectacular scenery, wonderful food, interesting things to buy, interesting history, the way they are treated sometimes by tour guides or being ripped off here and there quite blatantly is something that American tourists, having now had experience in other countries, find is not very appealing to them. I have close friends who are very sophisticated travelers who say, "I had the most horrible experience of my life in Morocco." I don't feel that I had the most horrible experience of my life in Morocco, but I understand what the problem is. So, I wouldn't say that I left there altogether positive. I'm not even sure I'm altogether hopeful for Morocco. It is a place of tremendous tolerance and I respect that. I more than respect it. I just think it's wonderful. You see Berber people with more Negroid-type features fully integrated into the cities. There is a fair level of open tolerance. There is a lot of intermarriage. Other religious groups are allowed to exist and practice their religions. For an Islamic country, it's a very secularized society. There are increasing problems of radical Islam spilling over from the Algerian situation. Something like, depending on whose statistics you believe, 50-80% of the young men under the age of 30 are unemployed. 50-80% of young women are illiterate. These are problems that the government is just not facing even with the new king. There is some hope that with him they will, but it's almost the way I feel about Sri Lanka. Here are people who really have a chance. They're not at the bottom of the heap. They do have an infrastructure. They do have a chance to make it. They're not taking advantage of every opportunity. Some opportunities are turning to dust.

Q: It's an interesting feeling that one gets in some places where you think everything's great. I felt the same thing when I left Greece after four years. Oh, how wonderful it was. I'd never want to go back there again. Greeks blamed everything on the United States. Individually, they were delightful people.

In '95, whither?

TAYLOR: We came back to the United States and I became the executive secretary of USIA. That meant that as the executive secretary in the Department of State, I was part of the senior management of the Agency. But this was at a time of Joe Duffy, whom we've talked about before. He certainly had no interest in the Agency. He was beginning the process of dismantling it. So, it was a fairly discouraging year for me. In essence, Dr. Duffy and his political advisors decided they did not want a senior Foreign Service officer in their front office. My position was eliminated at the end of the year. This kind of thing

had never really happened to me before. There was a tremendous movement among my career colleagues, who sort of rose up en masse and went to say, "You can't do this. We have to have an executive secretary. We have to have a liaison at the senior level with the other agencies." Nevertheless, they did it. I wasn't sorry to leave the front office at that point. I had sort of lost my respect for them. But I was sorry that this meant there was total lack of communication between that group of people and the rest of the Agency. I had served as this very thin thread for a year. That was pretty wearing and not very gratifying. So, my first year back, I was glad to be back and reconnecting with the United States in other ways, but it was not a good time in USIA. The issue of consolidation had not come up yet, so that was not the issue. But the fact that Duffy was allowing us just to whither on the vine plus some rumors that there might be something like consolidation, although no one could have conceived of it happening quite the way it did, characterized pretty much my first year back.

When that ended, they had to do something with me. I wasn't prepared to go overseas again at that point. There wasn't really very much available. That was how I ended up as a policy officer for Eastern Europe and the NIS (New Independent States) in '96, which was not a job I ever would have applied for. It was the first job I had ever been directed to without my saying I had an interest in it. But there was nothing else that could be done at that point. Duffy had eliminated it supposedly on financial grounds… "We need to cut the director's office by X amount."

Q: If you're trying to destroy things, you get rid of the professionals. Otherwise, they get in your way.

TAYLOR: There was an unfortunate incident that happened during this period of time. I think he would have eliminated my position anyway because they didn't want me around. What tipped it over the edge was when Princeton Lyman was out in South Africa as ambassador. Al Gore had four different bilateral relationships going. One was with the Soviet Union and with Russia. One was with South Africa. And he had two other countries. He would go off with a whole bunch of advisors. These were bilateral talks. They would be held here and then the next year they would be held in another country. Well, South Africa was one. Mbeki, who is now the president of South Africa, was at the time Minister of Education. Joe Duffy was to have been his counterpart on the Al Gore trip out there. You may or may not have heard from others that Duffy never went anywhere in the eight years as our director. He never visited a USIA post anywhere unless he happened to be in that country for other reasons. Even then, it was like he was dragged kicking and screaming to go to visit a post. I think he went to Mexico City and he may have gone to Canberra – in eight years. He didn't like to travel. Well, then you think about that before you take a job like that.

Anyway, during this particular unfortunate series of events, Duffy was supposed to go out with Al Gore and meet with Mbeki on education issues. We were the international education agency. He was all set to go until about two days before they were all supposed to leave. He said, no, he wasn't going to go. This was so typical Duffy. Anybody could

have predicted it. Princeton Lyman got very upset and said in a cable back to the Agency, "You can't do this to Mr. Mbeki. He is a very important person who is likely to become an even more important person." That cable landed on my desk. I was the executive secretary, so I sort of filtered through the important stuff in the morning and took it to the political appointee, who was the executive assistant to Joe Duffy. She had known Joe for many years. I said, "Well, Iris, I hate to show you this, but Princeton Lyman's pretty upset about the fact that Dr. Duffy's not going to travel. You really need to have a look at this first thing in the morning." She snatched it out of my hand. She said, "I know very well how to deal with these things." I said, "Okay, I'll just leave it at that, but you might want to give Princeton a call sometime during the day." They didn't do anything about it. So, his cable was pretty much of a rocket. Then when they didn't do anything about it and they didn't answer him back and they didn't contact him and they didn't do anything, about a day or so later, he sent a zinger not to USIA and not to Dr. Duffy, but to Al Gore and Leon Firth. This thing lands on my desk the next morning at 7:00 or whenever I got there. I had to go back up to Iris before our little morning meeting. I said, "Iris, I'm really sorry to have to do this to you, but Ambassador Lyman is pretty angry about this and he's written to the Vice President's office." She hit the ceiling and was very angry. The day after that, I was told my position was being eliminated. So, that was their way of dealing with something that I think that they caused. So, that was my short, happy life as the executive secretary. After that, I turned my energies toward making sure I worked downward through the system and kept the other top level office directors and their deputies informed… I was doing this all along, but I really redoubled my efforts, knowing that my position would come to an end and nobody would be in that position to help create the conversation flow through from the ranks to the top.

Q: I was in INS at one point as a liaison officer and saw there that the top level of INS is political and they had no connection with the professional service.

TAYLOR: Yes. Well, it took me a long time, but I finally figured out that Duffy didn't want it. He didn't want that connection.

Q: Well, they get in the way.

TAYLOR: I remember him sitting in meetings even after this happened, wearing my next hat in the Eastern Europe and NIS office. I would still go to meetings where he would be present. I remember him sitting – and many other of my colleagues have experienced the same thing – he would sit leaning back and would have his hands on his head. He'd be looking up at the ceiling and he'd say, "You know, I'm still trying to find a mission for USIA." So, I think with that, I'm going to stop.

Q: Today is January 28, 2002. So, we're talking about which period?

TAYLOR: We're talking about when I returned from Morocco. I spent one year as the executive secretary of the USIA. Then since I was off-cycle, there wasn't much left to bid for.

I landed in a job that I never would have bid for. It was the first time in my career where I was stuck in something that I hadn't asked for, didn't want. But in a sense, it sort of made sense for the system. Even though I didn't want the job, it did draw on some of my experience. It was a job in "the policy officer jobs of the geographic office," which we called "area office." This was one of the top three management jobs in the geographic bureau. Policy was clearly a misnomer. All of my State Department colleagues said, "Wait a minute. We do policy. You don't do policy." But it was really more of a coordination liaison overarching role that one played when you had this policy officer job. It was for Eastern Europe and the NIS.

Q: The time period was what?

TAYLOR: '96-'98, through the spring of '98. So, I was the executive secretary from '95-'96 when I returned from Morocco. Then from '96-'98 for a two year period I became the policy officer in what we called in USIA the Office of Eastern Europe and the NIS, the former Soviet Union, the Baltics, the Balkans, the Stans, and Russia, the whole empire, plus Eastern Europe extending to the Oder, what was formerly East Germany. We had Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and the Balkans. I went to this position reluctantly not because I wasn't interested in the regional issues. Having served in Moscow, I was always interested in the regional issues and particularly after the fall of the Wall and the breakup of the former Soviet empire. But what I wasn't interested in was the content of the job. It was really an awful lot of work, big heavy duty writing assignments, preparing the OMB submission for the entire region, which was more than 20 countries and an enormous budget, preparing most of the other working documents for the geographic bureau in the constant money struggle that went on in Washington. I also played the major liaison role with the Department's various offices and geographic bureaus dealing with the same region of the world. I was the link for our posts overseas to the two functional bureaus in the then USIA, which actually ran our programs. By those I mean the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, which still exists, and a bureau called International Information Programs [IIP], which also still exists under the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. So those two entities survived pretty much intact after the consolidation that was later to come. During the years '96-'98 when I was in Eastern Europe, the content of the job was just an enormous strain. It was really a job for two or three people. It was sort of what everybody else didn't want to do ended up in my box. The joy of it was that I had worked in the region before. Eastern Europe and particularly Russia tends to attract people who want to go back. So, most of the people we had out in the field as well as a fair number of those in the area office in Washington where I was working were people who had been around the subject area most of their careers. They were real experts and knew what they were doing. I had known them all for a long, long time. So, it was sort of going back to a family for me. That was the good part. I had a wonderful boss, Bob McCarthy, who earlier in his career had been a political officer in the State Department. He decided maybe 10 years into his career that he, having gotten a Ph.D. in Soviet area studies and having spent two or three tours in Budapest and twice in Moscow, that the kind of work that we were doing in USIA was

more interesting to him. He became a USIA officer. He is now back in the Department, but he is still in the public diplomacy area. He was our area director at the time. He was very senior and was just a wonderful guy. He knew what a drudge job I had and was grateful that I did things that he didn't have to do. So, he and I and the third member of the management team, Paul Smith, whom I had known since I was in Moscow as a junior officer… Paul is currently, although he's a PD officer, the DCM in Moscow. He went out to Petersburg as CG a few years ago. Then with some personnel changes that took place in Moscow a year or so ago, they asked him to become the DCM. I understand he's retiring this summer. So he'll be somebody you will want to get your hands on.

Q: Oh, absolutely.

TAYLOR: He started out his career as a guide with the big exhibits that we used to send around the Soviet Union. He speaks wonderful Russian; as did his wife. So the three of us were running this mammoth operation. Although I went there kicking and screaming, it turns out that those two years were very full and very rich and extremely rewarding.

Q: Was Joe Duffy still with USIA?

TAYLOR: Oh, yes, but he wasn't really ever with us. But he was still the director.

Q: Were you trying to cope with fewer and fewer funds and less and less support?

TAYLOR: Yes, except ironically in the office where I was working, which was the NIS, the Congress had passed two major assistance programs, SEED (Southeast European Economic Development Act) and FSA (Freedom Support Act). Both of those acts provided as much money as we could intelligently spend on a multitude of programs out in Eastern Europe and out in the former Soviet Union. But that was just for our region. Being part of the Washington scene and part of the senior management, yes, we felt the cuts very strenuously when we got together for our weekly brown bag meetings across the Agency. We in Eastern Europe and the NIS were not suffering, but we knew that that was not reflective of what was going on in the rest of the Agency. In the mid-'90s, the handwriting on the wall was clear. When I came back to Washington from Morocco in '95, the administrative types and the executive people in particular were talking consolidation, consolidation, consolidation, even though it was not yet legislatively on the books. There were those of us who had been out in the field long enough that we just thought this could never happen. It took me a couple of years to realize it was happening. But the Washington people, particularly the Civil Service people at the higher levels, and particularly those in our administrative area, I think had heard enough and seen enough and been on the Hill enough that they were pretty convinced this was going to happen. Certainly that effort and that movement colored everything that we did. But again, in Eastern Europe and NIS, we were pretty immune from the immediate budget impact because we had more grant making authority than any other job I've ever been in, including when I worked in India. There were any number of NGOs out in the field doing what we wanted them to do in terms of establishing free and independent media, or at

least trying to.

Q: Did USIA have a role with these NGOs?

TAYLOR: Oh, yes. We made grants directly to them. We did not have the personnel to handle the millions and tens of millions of dollars in grant money that the SEED Act and the FSA Act afforded us to carry out in those countries. So, I can't impress on the readers how many different NGOs and really well qualified people were receiving AID grant money and receiving FSA and SEED grant money. FSA and SEED were administered at that time by the State Department, but we in USIA enacted the grants.

Q: Was there any concern that some of these things, particularly those that had to do with AID, were the playthings of universities where they would have their graduate students go out to X country and do whatever they're supposed to do. It's problematic about how much the country…

TAYLOR: I think it's one area of concern, especially with AID's money. They've got so much and they don't have enough people to monitor what's going on on the ground. They've got so much, but I think they need more. In terms of the FSA and the SEED grants, we had pretty good staff work on the ground at our embassies. By this I also include the Balkans. I'd like to insert here that when I took this job reluctantly, the one bright shining light on the horizon was that I could once again get back to working on things pertaining to Russia because I had had such a wonderful experience there in Moscow years earlier in my career. But in actuality, from '96-98, I spent 60-70% of my time on the Balkans. That was the big buildup at that time. Every morning, I would get up and say, "Today I am going to work on our Russian programs." I would get to the office at 7:30 with the international conference call headed up by the White House and with our people out in the Balkans and would just be sucked into that Balkan quagmire for the entire day. Then the next day, I'd come in and say the same thing, "I'm going to do something different today." But I inserted that but don't want to lose sight of your very good point about the NGOs going out to various countries where they have varying degrees of expertise and experience and how well do they do and how well do we do in monitoring them, keeping them on track, making sure they're doing what we originally had proposed for them to do, making sure that they're effective. I think the record is mixed on that. There are some places where the NGOs have succeeded really well. Helping small businesses become more effective, helping women's groups become a voice for change or a voice for political action, helping even universities become more modernized and streamlined. But this all happened so fast in the '90s that what we did to assist the former Soviet Union countries to remain on a path toward eventual democratization and opening up and liberalization of their systems was a new ballgame for everybody. It's almost like the new ballgame we're in now. In a sense, it was the blind leading the blind. What I think Bob McCarthy did so well as my boss was, he restrained us from rushing into projects with lots of money that he felt either we or the NGOs involved were not quite ready for or had not thought out seriously enough. He did a remarkable job while he was in that position.

There were people at the State Department with ambassadorial rank who were charged with administering the SEED and FSA funds. There were lots and lots of layers of responsibility and accountability. The Department was kind of floundering because they had extremely limited staff to deal with this. The Department doesn't do programs. It doesn't do action oriented things. So, the partnership with USIA and EEN (my office symbol) in particular worked very well. It meant that very few people were working extraordinarily hard to keep track of all of this. I suppose along the way if someone were to write an analysis and a history of it, there probably were some bloopers and we probably picked out some Russian partnership entities which weren't the best. Our embassy was doing a very good job of trying to identify in the brave new world of the post-Soviet era with whom is it we should be working, whom can we trust, who is in this for the long-run, who are the good guys, who are the bad guys, who are the con artists, who is connected with the underworld? To a certain extent, it was a whole new horizon for all of us. Everybody did the best they could. A lot of good things came out of it. There were tremendous things done in the field of rule of law. There were some very good things done in privatization. But it's a massive country.

Q: When you think about it, the country had never had a democracy until about 10 years before.

TAYLOR: And it is very chaotic and very confused and very colorful and always interesting and absorbing. But the political game of the day was the Balkans.

Q: Before we move to the Balkans, did you play any role in coordinating what we were doing to bring about a changed Russia, particularly with the Western European countries? Was there any coordination there?

TAYLOR: I think there was far less than there should have been. In the early '90s, I was overseas. I didn't have a real sense of how the rest of the world was reacting to the fall of the Soviet Union and what new opportunities were presented. I think that we were pretty much in competition with all our western allies in Europe. I have no proof that supports my argument, but I would say that I don't think we were as well coordinated as we should have been.

Q: Just the fact that you're unable to say, "Oh, yes, we have a coordinating board for this or that" means that there wasn't much of a structure for coordinating.

TAYLOR: When you moved to the Balkans, there was. Of course, there were so many different national militaries represented there. There were coordinating boards. But those broke down almost more frequently than if you had had no coordinating board. But it's a very good point that you raise. It's one that if I had more time I'd like to look into, what were the other western allies and maybe some of the Pacific countries doing in Russia at the time? I have a feeling we were pretty much doing our own thing and letting others do their own thing. Whether we collided or tripped over each other's feet or whether we

were duplicative or redundant, I really can't say. That would be a good thing to bring up with people who were actually serving in Moscow or Petersburg at the time. Paul Smith, for example, would have a good sense of that.

Q: Now let's go to the Balkans. What were we doing public diplomacy wise in the Balkans?

TAYLOR: I wanted to finish an earlier thought. I do think that the enormous political pressure emanating from the White House caused us to focus on the Balkans not exclusively but far more than I would have liked. During that very critical period of time, the entire administration was not paying enough attention to Russia. Certainly we in USIA with our programs… We had money. We had the FSA. That money went to the former Soviet Union. But I don't think we were sitting around the table brainstorming about the former Soviet Union to the degree that we should have been. We were already feeling a reduction in staff and personnel. So was the State Department. The enormous political pressure coming from the White House to do something about the Balkans, to fix it, to make it so that the news wasn't so bad in the New York Times every day about how the place was just going down the drain, took a lot of energy. I think that some of our best thinking went into what to do about Bosnia and Herzegovina as opposed to what to do about the robber barons who were taking over major institutions in the former Soviet Union. I felt I was this little bleating voice every day saying, "But wait a minute. There is this major opportunity we've got in Moscow and we're letting it slip through our fingers. We're not taking enough care and we're not paying enough attention because we're doing these other things."

So, what did public diplomacy do in the Balkans? We really did a lot. A lot of money from George Soros was floating around in the Balkans.

Q: Soros is a Hungarian refugee who made pots of money.

TAYLOR: That's right. He has a foundation which does lots of good things. As you can imagine, it's very political and there are a lot of huge egos involved in the running of the foundation. As happens in any democracy, there is a lot of clash of opinion as to how something should be done. But the Soros Foundation did come up with money for a number of projects which meshed beautifully with what USIA was doing. One of those was a project with many subprojects attached to it designed to enhance a free and independent media in the Balkans. When I talk about it sort of makes some people laugh. But we went to extremely strenuous lengths. It took a whole year of my work and some very good people from VOA and some wonderful guys from the Air Force and some good hearted people at the State Department and AID – we were a working group of 25-30 people – to try to do many things. We were physically setting up transmitters that would be run by those independent media groups that we felt were valid in Bosnia. This was the most complicated, excruciatingly bureaucratic thing I ever did. I'd have to go back and look at my notes to recall all of the arcane detail that we had to get into and the bureaucratic hoops that we had to leap through. I mentioned the Air Force. The Air Force

was there to fly these enormous transmitters from someplace in Texas to Bosnia. Then we had a team from Voice of America who were engineering experts to go out and hire local people to actually physically erect these things. There were problems of communication and problems of security and problems of hostile governments not wanting this to happen. Then there was the bureaucratic struggle between the Department and USIA and George Soros and everybody else under the sun. It really was like banging your head on the wall day after day after day. I used to throw these pizza parties in my office. I felt that I was heading up this effort, but I felt that we needed to keep everybody going because it was so discouraging and we were all expending so much effort and there were times when we just didn't seem to be getting there. Everything would be all loaded on the plane and then someone would not grant clearance. Then the plane would have to stand down. The Air Force was getting very anxious. It costs them $1000 a half second to run these things. They were spending far beyond what they had budgeted for this project. But it was, after all, an exercise in cross-agency coordination, doing something that had never been done before and that was really probably impossible to do. But we eventually did do it. We got those transmitters up. We got 30-40 Bosnian radio people, professionals, to the United States, got them trained, got them to understand how you do run an independent radio system. This was in the midst of the war. I think there were even some people killed in the process when they actually went back to do some broadcasting. But it was a source of independent news and information that we were able to establish in Bosnia. That project took a good part of my time. When you think about what I really should have been doing and the magnitude of the area that I dealt with and how much of my time as one of the top three people in the region for USIA went into this one project, there was something out of balance there. It was a good thing that we did. We pulled off a superhuman feat. We kept everybody going and on-track, although there were people that were just ready to jump overboard any chance they got. But that was the great neglect of other projects.

Q: To put this into context, and correct me if I'm wrong, but in the Bosnian conflict, you already had in place radio stations run by the Serb nationalists, by the Bosniak nationalists, and by the Croatian nationalists. Our idea was to insert the equivalent to Voice of America or BBC – in other words, people who would try to disseminate a more balanced view rather than be a propaganda tool.

TAYLOR: That's exactly what we were trying to do. And particularly in the case of the Sarajevo area to make sure that the Bosnian voice was heard. The Serbs were closing down some of their own more independent but not entirely independent radio operations. But the idea was to establish something beyond the Voice of America or BBC so that from within the country itself there would be an independent, believable, respectable source of news.

Q: We've already seen the effectiveness of this in Yugoslavia, in Belgrade itself. There have been some independent radio stations which have carried the torch against the extreme nationalist rhetoric that was coming from Milosevic.

TAYLOR: Right. And they were always in great jeopardy of being closed down. They were closed down. They were closed out of their offices. We did a great deal of training for the B6, the station in Belgrade, and brought as many of them to the United States for training as we could. We sent experts out there. We helped them with equipment. We helped them with programmatic material. If they were trying to broadcast 24 hours a day, they obviously couldn't always have news on, so we would give them some programmatic material to fill in. Yes, we did work with them as well. But the idea with the transmitters was to make whatever voice was on the air go farther. We were pretty successful at that. I have no idea what's happening to it now. When I left that position, I didn't follow up on where it all went.

The other major activity that we were involved in other than the usual USIA country team-country plan kinds of programming was civic education and civil society. There was a great deal of money. All of a sudden, we had this windfall of money to use, not just in the Balkans but in Eastern Europe in general and also in Russia, to enable the educators, the ministries of secondary and higher education to do a better job. Eventually, the goal was to extend it into primary systems of education to set up what you might call a glorified civics course but one that would really be effective. Unlike my civics course when I was in 9th grade, which was a total bust, these courses were designed with the assistance of American expert curriculum designers. They were designed to bring different communities together whether they were different ethnic communities, different religious communities, or just communities that didn't get along together and were warring and killing each other. Through the school system we sought to build a feeling of tolerance and respect for tolerance and respect for the other. A lot of effort was put into this. There are several major centers for civic education here in the United States. One of them is in California. One of them is based at the University of Pennsylvania, although I might be wrong about that. They had experience working with the Poles in particular. Once the Soviet system was gone, Polish ministry people and educators realized, "We have to rewrite every textbook that's ever been written." The same was true throughout the rest of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. In some places, these countries undertook this kind of project by themselves. But where we could help - and USIA had a lot of money to do this and we were able to hire additional people on contract as well as to make grants to outside entities to spend two or three years… In some cases, there would be an NGO working for two to five years in the Balkans or in Poland with curriculum experts. Partly these came out of the commitment of our agency Deputy director, Pen Kemble, also a political appointee, who became very fascinated with the idea of civic education, almost to the exclusion of anything else. That was what he did in USIA. But for the Balkans and for Eastern Europe, it certainly was a good project. Although we probably heard more about it from the Agency's deputy director than we would have liked because we thought he should be looking at other things, too, his enthusiasm for it and his ability to go out and get the money and get the various groups around the U.S. interested and involved, on the whole, was a good thing.

Q: Some in the administration spend an awful lot of time just running around without really accomplishing a lot. Within government, the big thing to do is to really get a

project through. Did you find that the Baltic states were separate as you were dealing with this? They have their own political constituency in the United States. Did you treat them differently?

TAYLOR: It's such a delicate thing. All those years when we did not recognize the Baltics as part of the Soviet Union, but in effect we did recognize them as part of the Soviet Union… Then when the Soviet Union dissolved and the Baltics were truly independent – and there were so many constituent members of the Baltics living here in the United States – it did become a very separate group of countries with special issues. They are so pro-American in the Baltics that what the Department can do there, what we as USIA could do there, was only limited by time and our personnel limitations. They're small countries. They had always maintained a level of education and progressiveness beyond what was done in the rest of the Soviet Union during the worst days of the communist system. So I think the Baltics were pretty well positioned to leap forward after 1990. They have. There is a high degree of English spoken in the Baltics, so it made it quite easy for NGOs to move in to that region even without U.S. government assistance. Again, both with USG assistance and without it, the projects that seemed to be going ahead most successfully were projects working on constitutionalism, rewriting the whole legal code, trying to rewrite the financial structure and the regulatory systems because the three Baltic states were all ready to move ahead with private enterprise. They considered themselves part of the West. They always had, even during years of Soviet occupation. So, what they really needed was a little bit of expertise. We did a lot of work with them on trying to get them up to date and au courant about matters pertaining to the Internet. But that was really one of the joys working with the Baltics. It's too bad that they were so much farther ahead than the rest of the whole region because we therefore probably neglected them more than we should have. We had very good people out there and so did State in our three embassies. Everybody who was there during that period, at any time during the '90s, felt that they were accomplishing a lot and they were helping move these countries forward. Also many émigrés came back with their American money and their commitment. The present president of Lithuania is an American citizen who spent 40 years in Chicago. There were those kinds of connections. The private money plus the smallness of these countries helped them a lot.

Q: This was '96-'98?

TAYLOR: That's right.

Q: Did you get any feeling about what the assistance that was coming in from us and others and also the major effort on the part of the Russian people themselves… What was your feeling towards the end? How were things going?

TAYLOR: Well, I'm one of the optimists about Russia. I think that the Russian people have such genius and creativity and such a zest for life that despite all they have endured and undergone. They are resilient to say the least. I felt early in the '90s that once the exhilaration of having shaken off the Soviet system wore off, clearly, reality was going to

land with a thud, and it did. That was when in the mid-'90s, a lot of pundits and people who wrote about these things said, "Well, there is a huge threat that the Russian people will realize that without communism there is only chaos." It's sort of like after De Gaulle, "le deluge" he used to say. Well, I never felt that way. I felt that with the exception of some of the really elderly pensioners and some people living in some godforsaken places in Russia there was a real chance for the age group of 50 and under to have an improved life even in their own lifetime and certainly for the future. My feeling was that once the genie was out of the bottle, you couldn't put it back in. Once people had had a glimpse of what life could be like despite the underworld, despite the Russian mafia, despite the enormous corruption, despite the lumbering systems they still have not yet completely dismantled, there is no turning back. Their bureaucracy is still just as ponderous as it was then. But there are ways around it and there always have been. The fact is they're beginning to develop the unfortunate trappings of a capitalist society in western civilization where you have an economy with few people at the top and many people at the bottom who are larger in number. But I guess I have to take a very callous point of view and say that under the communist system, although they didn't have a pyramid structure, everybody was at the lowest common denominator and there were very few who lived well at all or what we would even describe as approaching western terms. Now there have been people bubbling up from within this morass of a dismal economic structure. Although they might not be the ones who are the most admirable or the most deserving, slowly there is being created a system and a way for others to find a way toward a more prosperous and a more healthful life. The health statistics in Russia are appalling. Although that's not really the State Department's job nor is it USIA's, I wish that something could be done to help them improve their health statistics. The rate of death has reduced in age in the last 30 years by something like 10-15 years for Russian men. The average lifespan for Russian men now is somewhere in the 50s. When we were in Moscow, it wasn't great, but it was at least in the high 60s. They've had a cataclysmic disaster as far as health statistics are concerned and something really has to be done there. But they are people of great creativity, great energy, great genius. This is not the worst that they've gone through in the last 70 years of their history. A lot of people were very pessimistic about Putin. I'm one of the great Gorbachev fans. I'm one of the people who feels that Gorbachev has gotten short shrift from everybody. There are those who say, "Well, he wasn't enough of a modernizer," but I think they knew exactly how far he could go. He was almost like Khrushchev in a way, who saw something of what needed to be done, took some risks, and realized that he would only managed to get himself and his reformers toppled if he went further. So, there are a lot of people in the State Department who badmouth Gorbachev, but I just think he's far more than Yeltsin key to the success of what has happened there. I don't think Putin has turned out to be such a bad guy after all.

Q: What you gather is that a skeleton of a modern state is getting erected – laws and all. It's slow, but…

TAYLOR: But it's the optimism, the spirit of optimism, that is key here. Even if they bumble along through chaos and even corruption, as long as the people remain optimistic

– and you frequently read articles that there is doom and gloom and a spirit of great pessimism spreading over Russia. That's just periodic. It comes and goes.

Q: What were you getting out of the State Department as you were going through this? All this pressure to do something about the Balkans… But were you getting anything from the office of Strobe Talbott, who was the Under Secretary at the time who was essentially a Russian expert? Was he playing any role that you knew of?

TAYLOR: Strobe Talbott remains a mystery for a lot of people. He is such a Russian expert. By the end of the administration my sense of Strobe Talbott was that he had pretty much disappeared. He didn't seem to be focusing broadly on Russia or on what was happening in the whole system. He never seemed to gather a group of people around the table to say, "Where can we go next?" It seemed there was a lot of introspection going on. But I don't think that a lot of creative ideas were coming out of his circle. I don't think that his level at the Department asked us to do as much as we could have been asked to do. Where we really had good working relationships were desk officer to desk officer, office director to office director, and our liaison out with the field. Strobe would go out to Moscow and he would talk to Yeltsin's chief guys, but it never really trickled down into action. I think it might have trickled down to marching orders for Jim Collins in his discussions with the MFA and his discussions with other relevant personnel. But in terms of actual program and action and what can we do to further assist, Strobe was really much more in a more ethereal and philosophical mode. The embassy and the Department regional bureau and AID were much more interested in seeing how we could get these various projects going and what would be the outcome of them. They were all experiments in a way. Some worked and some didn't. There was a little petite scandal with a Harvard University group over there. We had given them money and there were accounting and regulatory problems. The Harvard group had gotten in with the wrong folks in Russia. So, these things were all happening at a lower level than Strobe Talbott. I almost think that he was much more of a thinker and philosopher than someone who could translate this into action.

Q: The structure was falling apart and needed an engineer, not a deep thinker.

TAYLOR: Yes. We didn't need to analyze it anymore. Something had fallen in our laps. It was a great opportunity to do things. I certainly wouldn't say that he was a negative force here. I just don't think he played a really active influence. I remember people saying, "Well, where is Strobe Talbott in all of this?" He did travel out to Russia frequently.

Q: Did you get out there at all?

TAYLOR: No, I didn't. But I was on the phone with them every day all day long.

Q: What about all these projects… Who were you dealing with at our embassy in Moscow or at other embassies around this area? Was it the public affairs officer? This

sounds like it's much more across the board.

TAYLOR: It was across the board. The coordination out there was very good. Embassy Moscow has always been staffed with great people. I was fortunate enough to have my first tour in Moscow. My view from Washington of the coordination within the embassy was that it was extremely good to excellent. There were a few personality clashes. Some of those personality clashes transcended sections, including some in our section, which was public… We were still called USIA at that time. Although in Moscow, we always had to be called "Press and Culture" because the Russians didn't like USIA. There were a few little dueling matches between some people in the political section and some people in the USIS office out there. There is bound to be disagreement when you have something as big as this. But basically it was pretty well coordinated. We had a very wonderful, active, kind of impatient guy, Bob Gosende, whose name is familiar from Somalia. He played a role there. He is retired now and has a fabulous job at the State University of New York in the president's office running the State University's $100 million a year program with Russia. Bob is a USIA officer originally, but he had a very strong background in Africa. During the time of "Blackhawk Down," Bob was the State Department representative in Somalia. There is a very interesting story there. I don't want to say anything more about it. But he was our PAO in Moscow at this time. He is a very strong, opinionated person and has all the right motivations and all the right reasons for being the bull in the China shop and he would not object to me saying that. But what he did object to was that very often other people in the embassy didn't see how right he was. So, I took it upon myself to fight Bob's battles back in Washington. That meant fighting some of them at the Department. We won some and we lost some. Overall, we were all pretty professional about it. We got into some snarl, wrangling things. Our agency decided we should do a brochure about NATO structures so as to convince the Russians that the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe to include three new countries – the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary – would not be a threat to them. The people in USIA who did these types of brochures worked very hard to come up with something. We worked with the Pentagon and everybody all over town. In the end, no one would clear it. Everybody was shouting at everybody. We felt that it would be useful as a tool in Russia to have something like this. I don't want to go into all the details of what was and was not in the pamphlet. But it was an example of something where when you're trying to clear a public document, it's almost impossible to get everybody on board when there is any kind of a serious policy issue involved. Of course, the enlargement of NATO was a serious policy issue. It was looked at different from East to Western Europe. I spent an awful lot of time on this thing before it finally bit the dust and we buried it forever and it will never see the light of day. But probably we should have known from the beginning that we couldn't get the clearances necessary.

Q: One of the concerns that I've heard people have about the former structure of USIA was that here in Washington, USIA might have desk officers and all, but they're not in on policy development with a country – yet when you get to the field, the public affairs officer and the USIS contingent is as integrated as you can think as far as the country team. They're all together and all consulting along with the ambassador and all very

much on the policy implementation. Yet you're talking here about things you're doing which would seem to be probably more than anything very strongly in terms of policy: whither Russia and its former empire?

TAYLOR: You're right. Presumably, consolidation should have helped solve some of that. But don't forget, I must have talked with my State Department counterparts on Russia or the Balkans more than once or twice a day. Plus, my boss, Bob McCarthy, spent more time at the State Department than he did in our office. I spent a lot of time physically at the Department during this period of time, especially with the Balkan task forces, which were always headed by a State Department person. We would do a lot of reporting explaining, justifying, what we were doing, as well as taking orders and taking ideas back to our own working groups. Similarly, we invited our State Department colleagues always to come to our planning sessions. We never ever would have done a major project or taken up a major initiative without having discussed it thoroughly at several levels – desk officer to desk officer, office director to deputy assistant secretary and above depending on the sensitivity of the project. I don't think the cohesion in Washington has ever been as great as it is in the country team process overseas. Indeed, there have been some times where the State Department or USIA has proposed a plan, an idea, a project, where the ambassador will hit the ceiling and say, "You're not doing this in my backyard." So, those things would happen also. Then of course you put the poor PAO in a terrible position when Washington wants to do something and the ambassador doesn't. This particularly happened in my experience when the White House instructs the political appointees in an agency like USIA. The White House will tell Joe Duffy or Charlie Wick, "We want this to happen out in Moscow." Then they will come back and tell our agency, "The President said do this whether the State Department likes it or not." That has been an historical source of friction between USIA and the State Department. Mostly, USIA and State Department people would be singing off the same sheet of music were it not for the sometimes conflicting directives that we have gotten from the White House over the years. We have always been more public. The State Department has always been more inward looking and just generally by the nature of the beast tends not to like public events or much publication or publicizing of what the policy is, what the plans are, what the goals are. So, there is that friction and that clash of culture, too. But I think the major issues have come about when the most egregious things that USIA may have done in the eyes of the State Department anywhere in the world have usually come about as a result of some insane thing that the White House told us to do. The blacklist period during the Charlie Wick period… Then ambassadors would hear about this and hit the ceiling. Or some of the more propagandistic, anti-Soviet stuff that we were doing during the Reagan period would make career ambassadors cringe. We came out with Charlie Wick's "Let Poland Be Poland." It was actually so boring I don't know why anybody felt threatened by it. But just the whole idea of it was counter to what some of the career State people and the career USIA people were trying to do out in Poland at the time. So, there have been those things. That's always been fun.

Q: In dealing with particularly the Stans, were any of our programs… Looking over our shoulder at what was going on in Afghanistan… Was there concern about the spread of

fundamentalist Islam?

TAYLOR: Well, the post-Soviet governments in those countries, some of which hardly changed at all, have been out in front in expressing their concern about the spread of Islam, particularly Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan to a lesser extent, and the Caucuses to a lesser extent. Of course, they've had their own internal issues as breakaway states. I think that because the issue was publicly addressed in some of the Stands by the governments themselves, our offices there felt that we could take it up as one of a panoply of issues, but not to focus overwhelmingly on it. Nobody, including USIA, has figured out how to deal with fundamentalist Islam. Page three of this Sunday's "Outlook" section was almost as though someone in USIA had written the whole page, talking about the positive impact of the Fulbright Program on bringing Middle Eastern Islamic students to the United States and how, other than the 19 hijackers, how for the most part this becomes a process of developing understanding and broadening tolerance and at least, if not having these people embrace the United States and its way of life, having a benign understanding of it. So, we do those things. But nobody's come up with a magic formula yet. In the Stans, we did small things related to Islam and tried to say that the United States welcomed any religious faith and allowed it to flourish and practice. To the extent that we could present material and information on that to the publics in those countries, we did. But we didn't make a big issue of it. There is a discussion in the Department – I don't know if it's over now – about absorbing the Stans, Soviet Central Asia, into some part of South Asia, in reconfiguring however they're going to work the world in the Department for the next 20 years. Where do you lump those countries together? Of course, the Russians wouldn't be very happy if we began to look at their former southern tier as part of another part of the world.

With the recent absorption of the NIS into Western Europe, creating an enormous bureau from Greenland all the way to Siberia, it becomes unwieldy. I don't know what the consideration was. I had heard some talk that the Stans might join up with a unit that would include Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran. Then what do you do about Iraq? Does it stay with the Middle East? Iranian issues transcend both. It is hard. Much as we like to think we can transcend areas and regions, we don't very well. We've become compartmentalized.

Q: It has its effect. I was in Greece when Cyprus was taken into the European role with great unhappiness. It was like bringing some squabbling kids into the sedate corridors of Western Europe.

TAYLOR: That's right. Wasn't North Africa for a long time part of Sub-Saharan Africa?

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: I think it is more sensible to have it in NEA because of the Islamic factor. But once we lumped the Stans with Europe, which I guess we've done now, our opportunity to put them elsewhere is gone- I'm sure there are good arguments for that, too. Certainly

the vestiges of Russian culture in that region of the world would argue for that. Certainly the wishes of the Russians would argue for that. The influence of the Russians remains. On the other hand, it causes us to look at those countries through the European-Russian prism rather than looking at them from what is happening on the other side of their borders. I got quite excited about it about a year or so ago when I heard that there was talk of creating a different kind of a structure.

Q: In '98, whither Louise Taylor?

TAYLOR: At the end of my servitude in EEN, where I really did burn the midnight oil – I don't want to be a big martyr here, but I know my boss would go to bed every night saying, "Please don't let Louise get the flu." At the end of two years of doing this really horrible job, I got the Senior Seminar. It wasn't really payoff, but it was recognition. I hadn't been treated very well by Joe Duffy when he eliminated my job. I got put in something that I didn't want, never would have applied for ever in my life. The first time this had ever happened to me. I was a senior Foreign Service officer. Things are supposed to get better for you at that point rather than worse. I don't want to leave the impression that my years in EEN were not worthwhile. I learned a lot.

Q: It sounds like what is known as a really challenging job.

TAYLOR: It was. It just had some of the most onerous tasks associated with it.

Q: The Senior Seminar would be '98-'99?

TAYLOR: Yes.

Q: How did you find it?

TAYLOR: Fabulous. I don't know anybody who hasn't thought the Senior Seminar is one of the best things they've done.

Q: I did it '74-'75.

TAYLOR: Then that was earlier in your career. I think it should be earlier.

Q: It really is designed for people moving up toward senior ranks.

TAYLOR: That's right. The argument now is that they want at least Foreign Service officers to be at the senior level because that enables greater access when we travel around the United States. You meet with mayors, governors, the heads of this and the heads of that, and university rectors. If we were all at the 01 level, there would be better access. The four military in our seminar were at the Navy captain and the Army colonel level, so they were 01s rather than Senior Foreign Service level. But there were only four of them. The majority of people were either SES or Senior Foreign Service. There was

one State Department officer who was an 01. He is now a Senior Foreign Service officer. That's the rationale. But at the end of it, I felt the focus on domestic policy… We're all smart people. We all keep up with U.S. domestic policy and we all factor that into our Foreign Service lives. But you're really an expert on domestic U.S. policy by the end of the year at the Senior Seminar. To have had that earlier in my career would have been invaluable. The other thing was the tremendous amount of training that we got. I finally learned really with the help of a professional that they brought in for two weeks how to do a congressional briefing, how to write a speech… I had written speeches my whole career, but somebody finally came in and sat down and made it easier to do these things. How to do a briefing to convince your State Department colleagues – and I was still in USIA – that this was a good and valid undertaking. We had a guy, an outside consultant named Frank Storoba, who terrified me. He spent two weeks working with us. Then he came back in at different times throughout the year and videotaped us. We did debates. We did a debate related to one of the current scandals in the Clinton administration, taking pros and cons. We did a debate where I had to take the pro side for the National Rifle Association. That was fun. I did not do very well at that. I had been a public person. I had done an awful lot of public speaking even in foreign languages. If I had had this training before… It wouldn't have to be necessarily the Senior Seminar, but to have that kind of public speaking, organizing your thoughts, doing a briefing, having the flow charts, the overhead graphs and all that, that's just invaluable.

Q: In '99, whither Louise Taylor?

TAYLOR: At the end of the Senior Seminar, I got parachuted into EUR again for a short period when Jamie Rubin, who was then the spokesperson for the Department, had grabbed away a guy named Jeff Murray, who was the head of the EUR Public Diplomacy/Public Affairs Office. Jamie Rubin had said, "I need this guy for the next three months," so there was a void there. I was just finishing up in the Senior Seminar, not really sure where I was going to go. many of us didn't know, oddly enough.

Q: They always promise you, but when the time comes around…

TAYLOR: Yes. It happened that way for a number of my colleagues, too. So, I filled in there. Once again, I was only there for a short period of time, but it was three months over the summer of '99. I mention it because once again, I got thrown right back in the Balkans, where I had never, ever, ever expected to go back in my life. But the Balkans were still hanging on. The Clinton administration was still pretty much torn apart by this. Again, it was the problem of dealing with the press, so I played a big press role there. It was terribly frustrating because I hate to write and rewrite and rewrite and rewrite and rewrite and we do that in our entire careers in the Foreign Service, but where you do it most is when you're writing press guidance. This job was basically writing press guidance on the Balkans. The Secretary, Madeline Albright, was traveling to the Balkans during this period. We were up until 3:00 am for four or five nights doing the briefing books, doing the talking points. By the time you've rewritten this 1,000 times, you've said nothing. You've dumbed it down to the lowest common denominator and that was

kind of how I spent those three months, in the process of which I was assigned to the South Asia Public Diplomacy Office and took that up in the fall of '99.

Q: You did that from '99 to when?

TAYLOR: To about a year later when I decided that it was not working out for me. I thought that was the time to retire. I also in the course of that year spent three months on the 01-OC promotion panel. That was the first time I had been on a State Department promotion panel. By this time, USIA was in the Department. I sat on this reviewing all the 01s. It was the largest panel. It took us three months. Ambassador Peter Burley was the chairman of the panel, a wonderful guy. He was waiting to go out to the Philippines to be ambassador there, but he was held up by Jesse Helms. Finally Peter decided that he had had enough and he was going to retire. He is living happily ever after in Florida. I just got a letter from him the other day. So, it was in the process of sitting on this three month panel... They take you out of your regular environment. You're sequestered behind closed doors for about three months. There were just seven of us on the panel. I began thinking it over very seriously. I was faced with another foreign assignment probably within the next year or so. My personal life, which at this point now includes a mother in law who has come to live with us, just didn't seem to be moving in that direction-

Q: Was Jim retired by this time?

TAYLOR: Yes. It just didn't seem to be moving in a direction where I could in good faith negotiate an overseas assignment. I could see myself doing that and then possibly canceling out and feeling terrible about that. So, a lot of factors came together and led me to decide that probably that was the time for me to retire. It was a voluntary decision. I had no idea that Afghanistan would be front and center on the front pages. Had I known that, I might have made a different decision. I don't regret it, but had all of what is happening now been going on at the time, I would have fought my way off the promotion panel, if you can do that.

Q: You have gotten involved with what is now the State Department, with the integration of USIA and State. What have you been doing?

TAYLOR: Subsequent to my retirement, I planned to sail off into the sunset and be a lady of leisure. Within a month or two, I was called by a unit here at FSI and asked to write the public diplomacy handbook or manual in the new world of consolidation, the Brave New World, as I call it. How do we do our work under the new construction? I thought this was a worthy goal. When I looked at what existed, the remnants of the existing USIA manual, it was just in tatters and it didn't make sense and it was written by hundreds of different people. Some of it dated back to the '60s. It hadn't been updated. Clearly, the way we operate now is so far different from how we always operated before. So, I thought this was a worthy project, although I recognized a certain amount of tedium involved. Indeed, it turned out to be much more tedious than I thought it would be. I spent the better part of this last year beginning in April or May up through November/early December

working on this. It turned out to be about 400 pages of original written material - that's a lot – with probably an additional 400-500 of linkages. I found web sites and included State Department web sites and FAM (Foreign Affairs Manual) web sites that support the original text that I've written. I've interviewed hundreds of people, went to conferences, went to the Internet conference, went to the PAO conferences when PAOs came in from around the world to talk about the new problems that they're encountering. I struggled with trying to contact people overseas to get their perspective on how do you work this out with the administrative officer now when we used to have our own administrative executive section, we used to have our own car pool, we used to have our own people to pay the bills, we used to manage our own budget? Now all of that is done in the embassy's B&F (Budget and Fiscal Office), which they now call FMO (Financial Management Office). This gets down to infinite detail. Then I found out that this is happening differently from post to post all over the world. There is no uniform method. We're still working it out. It's still an evolving scheme. It's still a work in progress. So, it's very hard to write the family Bible when there is no overall guideline. Patrick Kennedy was extraordinarily helpful in this.

Q: He was what?

TAYLOR: The Under Secretary for Management was an appointee named Bonnie Cohen under the Clinton administration. He was Assistant Secretary for Administration. He was the highest level career person concerned with management. He was very supportive of this effort. He was also very supportive of trying to make things work well for USIA when it became part of State. He was really a very positive player in the whole process, as were a number of people. Part of it is that the structures were just very different and merging them together sometimes was not possible. They couldn't merge. They just bumped up against each other. So, I spent more time than I would have liked doing that. I don't know whether at this point it will ever see the light of day. It's out in the clearance process now. I understand that the State Department lawyers have said that this cannot be called a manual, nor can it be called a handbook. So, I've suggested, "How about PD for dummies?" I hope that I won't ever have much more to do with it again. When it finally all gets cleared, I have said that I would agree to work with the section in the former USIA, now in the bureau called IIP (Office of International Information Programs), which actually does formatting and they make documents look pretty and they can put together a 400 page document in hard copy. I would work with them on formatting and writing headers and things. Plus, they will also try somehow to get it uplinked electronically. That's the only way it will make sense. Then someone is going to have to do the follow-up and keep it up to date and take a look at it every year and make the changes and tweak it here and there. But that's not going to be me.

Q: A final question: we now have a public diplomacy side to the Department of State. USIA no longer exists. What is your impression in 2002, what are the pluses and minuses as far as the effectiveness of the whole foreign affairs apparatus?

TAYLOR: There are both pluses and minuses. It almost varies from office to office and it

almost varies from regional bureau to regional bureau. Much of it depends up on the personality of the Assistant Secretary for the bureau and how he or she regards the usefulness of public diplomacy or even how he or she knows what to do with it. Much of it also is dependent on the Deputy Assistant Secretaries and their respect for their USIS colleagues in the past, their good or bad experiences at having worked in the past in the field with USIS. The problems seem to be more acute here in Washington. The ability of the two cultures to come together and work harmoniously seems to have been more of a problem here than in many posts overseas where consolidation really didn't mean much at all except that the PAO was no longer head of an agency but merely head of a section and the PAO lost the administrative section, but otherwise life was going on as normal in many posts overseas. One gratifying thing that's happened is that, more so than previously, PD people are getting DCMships to a greater extent than ever before. They're being made acting DCM in places where they are PAOs but when the time comes up to have an acting DCM, we see more and more frequently that PAOs are playing that role. I think there are regional bureaus where it works well. South Asia I'm sorry to say was not one of those, which probably had something to do with why I left. In the NEA bureau, for example, the PD people are called upon much more frequently to come to the table to be on the takeoff rather than only the crash landing. Another bureau where this has worked exceptionally well is WHA [Western Hemisphere Affairs, formerly AR]. I have to credit the leadership. They call it WHA because it now includes Canada. This was another regional realignment of countries. The Canadians aren't real happy about not being part of Europe anymore. In the individual country level, it seems to be working much better than here in Washington. One thing that's happening in the field is that ambassadors, now that they know that they own PD, take greater interest in it. They realize that they can order it around and use it more to their own benefits. That's not to say that in the past we didn't work for ambassadors. We always did. But now they feel a little bit freer to say, "Hey, I have an idea. Let's use PD to help us get this message out." So, that's working well.

Where it's not working is in some bureaus where there is a tendency to just sort of blow PD off. This sometimes is a result of personalities maybe of the Deputy Assistant Secretary. There is a terrible problem at the administrative level here in Washington where a lot of people who worked in the traditional administrative style in the State Department just cannot fathom how we moved money around as nimbly as we did and how we paid for things. There have been some people who have said, "Well, all of your executive officers should be in jail now." Well, we had inspections. We had outside audits. I don't know that we had Arthur Anderson, but we seemed to be doing things legally. So, there is a terrible backlog and bottleneck sometimes at a mid level in moving paper and moving money. This gets people a little tense. It creates not a harmonious working relationship, but rather some distrust and mistrust on all sides. You will hear PD people saying, "Well, the Department just doesn't understand that we do things. We are operators. We have to move people. We have to move money. We have to move cars. The Department doesn't understand that we sometimes have to do it right now." Then the Department will say, "Well, we have these procedures. We have these various layers. It takes us six or eight months to make a grant," whereas it would take us a week if we

needed to make the grant. So, those kinds of things are being worked out slowly. In the meantime, it's grinding up some very good people. That's the downside.

On the upside, there is greater integration of USIA or PD people into the policymaking apparatus. The ambassador has more of a tendency now and some Assistant Secretaries have more of a tendency now to turn to the PD representative in the meeting and say, "Well, what will be the public impact of this? How will the Islamic street in Jakarta react to this? If we're going to do this, how should we wrap it?" That's happening more and that's a good thing.

Q: I guess this is a good time to stop.

TAYLOR: I think so.

Q: I want to thank you very much.

TAYLOR: I want to thank you for this opportunity to review my whole life, in a way.

End of interview