

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

JAMES C. POLLOCK

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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[Note: This interview was not edited by Mr. Pollock.]

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Program Officer, Foreign Policy Program Office, USIA, Washington, DC	1977-1978
Far East personnel officer, USIA, Washington, DC	1978-1979
Cultural Affairs Officer, USIS, Rabat, Morocco	1980-1984
Deputy, Fast Policy Guidance Unit, USIA, Washington, DC	1984-1986
Program Manager, Foreign Policy and International Affairs Office, USIA, Washington, DC	1986-1988
Counselor of Embassy for Public Affairs, UISIS, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia	1988-1992
Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Dakar, Senegal	1992-1996
Deputy Director, International Visitor Program, USIA, Washington, DC	1996-1999
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 13th of February 2002. This is an interview with James; do you have middle initial?

POLLOCK: C.

Q: C. Pollock. P-O-L-L...

POLLOCK: O-C-K

Q: And this is being done on behalf of the association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Do you go by Jim?

POLLOCK: I do.

Q: Jim, let's start kind of at the beginning. When and where were you born and can you tell me something about your family?

POLLOCK: I was born in Detroit, Michigan, October 6, 1942 and lived there for six weeks before moving on to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This, of course, is family history; I don't necessary recall living in Pittsburgh at that time but my father graduated from university during the depression.

Q: What university?

POLLOCK: He went to Princeton University and he went to work on the mill floor in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He was from a Pittsburgh family and his own father, my grandfather, had been approached rather late in his career as a banker in Pittsburgh to help a couple of young men found a steel company. Jones and Laughlin, were the two individuals. When my father graduated from university the only jobs that were available at the time were on the floor of the steel mill in Pittsburgh, at Southside Works, and my father worked there for a couple of years. Then he was approached by the company to find out whether he had an interest, as were others working in the mills at that time, in joining the first management trainee cadre that the company had put together and moving into sales which my father did. He spent his career as a steel salesman for them and apparently was a pretty good one.

We moved every three years or so from Pittsburgh as far west as Kansas City and from Detroit through the Midwestern belt of Indiana, Ohio, Illinois. So following my birth in Detroit, as I say, we were in Pittsburgh for a while and then Cincinnati, Ohio; then Indianapolis, Indiana; Kansas City; Columbus, Ohio and Dayton, Ohio; and eventually back to Pittsburgh where my father ended his career as head of home office sales for the company.

Q: What is your mother's background? First place, on your father's side Pollock sounds English or not?

POLLOCK: It is English, the family traces its roots back to the, I guess, the Northern England Scottish border area where Pollock or Polk or however it got translated in some cases Powelliman, apparently in the language in that area. It indicates that one may have been involved in the coal or some sort of mining trade industry. The derivations of the word apparently come from the idea of working in or over a hole in the ground. So on my father's side we trace our heritage back to Northern England basically.

Q: Now your mother what was her sort of upbringing and her family background?

POLLOCK: My mother was a Campbell from a small town a little bit north of Chicago. Her father was a civil engineer who came to this country in the religious and idealistic period when various communities were being established in Canada and then later in Northern Illinois that had a religious background to them. He met his wife in such a community a little bit north of DeKalb, Illinois. They decided that rather than staying with this Utopian community idea they would move south to Chicago and he would follow his profession as a civil engineer. He was approached by a group of businessmen in Chicago who were interested in building a small city which would become their summer homes north along the shore of Lake Michigan. They approached my grandfather about his willingness to serve as a civil engineer and lay out a few streets and some foundations for such a community. He did so. These were the McCormicks and the Armours and a group of other prominent business people in Chicago. My grandfather laid out an area that he called Lake Forest, Illinois. The gentlemen who hired him were very pleased with his work and asked him if he would like to take a second contract to realize the drawings that he had put together in real terms. He said yes and not only laid out and built this city of Lake Forest but then later served as city manager for his entire lifetime.

My mother grew up with two other sisters in a house that granddad had built in Lake Forest. She went on to college after completing her high school work. She went to the Bouve School for Women in Boston. She became a physical therapist and was working in Detroit when she met my father.

Q: When did you first sort of latch on, I mean start going to school and all? You have a multiplicity of locales which can you remember where you started school?

POLLOCK: I started school at PS 86 (public school) in Indianapolis, Indiana, and went through the first three grades there. My father and mother were always very dedicated to education. They saw that the pressure from Jones and Laughlin Steel became greater for them to move with the company. The forties and fifties was a time when this was an accepted practice. Father had a company car I recall and the company would say, "Al, we would like you to move to Indianapolis, to Kansas City and if you don't want to move you no longer have to be an employee with us but we think it would be to your benefit and ours." Father always picked up and moved with the company. That style obviously

moderated through the sixties and seventies and really dropped out of favor during the eighties. But, at the time, I think my parents were quite concerned that if we continued to move as we had, my brother and I were children, that we would lose continuity of education in the public school system. So it was worth it to them to see if they could place us in private day schools and pay the tuition fees necessary to do that.

Q: This would be about 1950 then?

POLLOCK: It was '51, '52 because my brother was finishing high school. We stayed in Indianapolis an extra year. I went to Park School there for my fourth grade year and my brother Charles finished high school at Park School. We then moved during the intervening summer to Kansas City. I went for one year to Westwood View public school in Kansas City, Kansas, and then went to Pembroke Country Day School for my fifth, sixth and seventh grades. Half way through my eighth grade year we moved to Columbus, Ohio, and I started at the Columbus Academy, which was also a private day school.

Q: In this elementary school period, how did you find the education at the public...I mean you were getting both public and private. Did you see much of a difference?

POLLOCK: That's a very good question and difficult to talk to. I had a very good time at the public schools as I did in the private schools. It wasn't until eighth, ninth grade that I began to distinguish the rigor of the private school situation versus the public school situation. Until that time I had pretty much found first, second, third grade I learned to read, I learned to write. I went through that marvelous period of time when teachers would stalk down the aisle and slap the back of your hand for writing with your left hand. I'm very left handed. One of the great stories of my childhood was my father coming home one evening and we were sitting at the dinner table and he made the comment that the back of my left hand looked red and swollen. He was interested as to whether I had gotten in a scuffle during the day. I said, No, I hadn't really I had been practicing my A, B, C's and with my left hand I went A, B, C, D and then my teacher would come down, slap the back of my hand with a ruler and make me transfer my pencil to my right hand where I then would laboriously do A, B. The next morning unbeknownst to me but around ten o'clock in the morning my father arrives at school and marches into my first grade class and confronts my teacher and says to her that I had always been left handed, he was pleased that I was left handed and asked her to desist from beating on my left hand and let me write with my left hand if I wanted to. I always think of those great childhood stories, of people going home and saying my dad's better than your dad or my dad will beat your dad. I always remembered this figure of my father marching in and winning the day so that I could continue to write with my left hand.

Q: There was a theory at the time that this was just an aberration on your part and they could snap you out of it, if they hit you hard enough.

POLLOCK: This was correct.

Q: I have a brother who has atrocious handwriting because he was a left hander and they made him write with his right hand.

POLLOCK: Through that period of time I really probably did not distinguish one way or another whether public schooling or private schooling was better. I began to distinguish this most certainly by the time I had gotten to the Columbus Academy where a gentleman by the name of Sumner F. Demit was head master and he was of the old school.

Q: Sounds like a president of my old college at one time was a Tyler Demit, way before my time but probably of the same family.

POLLOCK: Could well have been. He was a very proper gentleman and he was going to make sure that we knew how to diagram sentences and our nouns from our pronouns and our adjectives from our adverbs. We certainly did. We were drilled on that and I found in my association with public school friends that this was somewhat different in the training they were getting. Also, being a very traditional school at the time we were learning Latin and the people in the public schools were not. This is where I began to determine that there was more rigor to the education that I was receiving than perhaps was true in some of the public schools.

Q: What about, we are talking about elementary and into just before high school, up to that...what about your reading? Were you a reader and what sort of things were you reading?

POLLOCK: My reading was atrocious. I was not a reader. It was always laborious for me to read and in my early grades my mother spent hours and hours with me each evening because I was having quite a bit of trouble. I was having trouble with math. I was having trouble with my alphabet and learning to read and she worked with me with flashcards at the dining room table throughout the period of second, third, fourth, fifth grade but I never was a reader, never was a good reader. I was never particularly excited by reading.

As a result of not being a good reader I took a speed reading course in my junior year in high school. The gentleman who taught the course was quite dedicated to helping us increase our reading speeds. As my reading speed increased what we noted on all of the tests was that my comprehension dropped off markedly. Part of the exercises that were being used by this gentleman in the speed-reading course was to expand our peripheral vision. One of the ways to do this was to flash number sequences on a screen. The idea was the number sequence would be flashed on the screen. It would be black on white and we would then see an after image and we would write the numbers down on a piece of paper. The numbers started out to be three numbers or five numbers in a sequence and would be as long as ten numbers in a sequence. They would start out with half a second on the screen and then get down to a very short period of time on the screen, one in which one couldn't look at all of the numbers. The idea was the after image and that would increase the speed with which the eyes moved down the page and still had an after image imprinted in the brain. I would start out with reasonable scores in these exercises and end up with straight zeros. One weekend Mr. Evans took the papers home. He was disturbed

by the fact that I would get complete zeros. He took the papers home and he came back in on Monday and asked me to set up an appointment with my parents that he thought he had found some things in looking at the papers that he would like to discuss with them.

What he found was I had all of the numbers right but I had them in totally reverse order. He recommended that we go up to Ohio State University and take some further tests up there and it was determined that I was dyslexic. What my mother had very successfully done at the dining room table when I was six or seven years old was convince me that what I saw was W-A-S and not S-A-W. As long as I was able to look at words and pronounce them to myself I continued to see W-A-S. But as soon as I began to speed read I would subconsciously go back to seeing S-A-W and so a few WASs becoming SAWs, a few O-Fs becoming F-O-Rs, I would interpolate the R and all of a sudden comprehension would go askew. So we determined that one of the reasons that I was not an avid reader, although a persistent reader, was because of dyslexia. It was a benefit to me to know why it was I could not succeed as a faster reader and therefore organize my time, organize my course work in a way that I knew how long it was going to take me to read or to digest material. That influenced the way I did research which we were even starting to do in high school in those days. This was a great revelation. Now I certainly was aware when I was in college that if I were ever going to read the great works of European literature, I was going to take that course and I was going to force myself to do it. It meant that I would organize my classroom schedule so I could spend a good deal of time reading War and Peace rather than doing other sorts of course work. I think the basic motivation for my own collegiate major in the humanities, and primarily in the fine arts, may well have been to relieve the reading load and to turn that more into visual responses to my course work or to select courses where visual responses were as appropriate as reading and interpretive responses.

Q: Was dyslexia a name or acknowledged as a problem? I mean I take it because it tends to dawn on people kind of late in their education that they have a problem. I was wondering whether...but at this time was this a field of study at all?

POLLOCK: It was just being identified. The whole field of learning disabilities and why people were having trouble in the classroom was really just beginning to be uncovered. This is in the mid-'50s now and it was just beginning to be identified by researchers and people at the university level working in education. I think in many ways this was a problem in the minority because of the size of our population at the time while today it has become much more analyzed in an expanded field and learning disabilities is now a professional field. The ways of approaching dyslexia and other learning disabilities have been put to some test and improved upon. At the time, I think it wasn't really identified. You either persisted and went ahead with your course work or you didn't necessarily and you went out and got a job.

Q: Yeah.

POLLOCK: One of the things we certainly face with our own children growing up is that the ease with which my brother and I found employment had passed us by. Population

had simply and union movement and the society in general had moved us through this period of time. I worked and made very good money, made all of my college money by working during my summers as early as twelve years old. When we were living in Kansas City, I went off the summer that I was twelve and joined a wheat harvesting crew starting in Oklahoma and working all the way up into South Dakota. You didn't think anything about this at the time, twelve, thirteen, fourteen year old individuals were allowed to drive...

Q: What were you doing?

POLLOCK: Basically harvesting, threshing, bundling, I worked with a crew of twelve people from their twenties down to me, a twelve year old, mostly teenagers. My brother during the same period of time or shortly after was engaged in laying the runways at the Air Force base outside of Dayton, Ohio, where the Dayton Accords were later signed, pouring concrete. We made very good money during our summers that my own children simply face the situation in which they didn't have those opportunities for physical labor and to make that sort of money and were delegated to babysitting and paper routes and things of that sort. I think that educationally the same sort of thing happened. Our population was such and our society was growing at such a pace at that time that if you didn't make it in high school so what, there was a great job out there.

Q: Sure.

POLLOCK. Go do it...

Q: Yeah.

POLLOCK: And you could make good money doing it. The accent on education and learning to read and learning innumeracy and literacy was not as strong then as it is now. I think it wasn't as essential then as it is now.

Q: Of course, you had parents who were bound and determined I take it that you were going the academic route?

POLLOCK: I had parents who were bound and determined I was taking the academic route but what was even more interesting to me and again I am talking about population and timing, it would never happen today, but it was fascinating to me. I had obtained early admission to Trinity College, which I think now is Trinity University in Hartford, Connecticut, on a football scholarship. I was going to go to Trinity and play football. Trinity was a good school, is a good school...

Q: A very good school.

POLLOCK: We thought Trinity was fine and the fact that I could play football was great. I never did discern whether my father had invited his boss to dinner or whether his boss was simply in town looking at the Columbus office and came to dinner or not, it's never

been quite clear in my mind. But, it was turned into sort of a fascinating dinner conversation in which this gentleman whose name was Charles Merit wanted to know, he was executive vice president for sales of Jones and Laughlin. He wanted to know what I was doing. I told him that I was very proud; I had just gotten early admission to Trinity and I was looking forward to going to Trinity. Mr. Merit looked across the dinner table at me and he said, "But didn't your father go to Princeton?" I said, "Well, yes he did." Mr. Merit said, "I did not have the benefit of a college education and I can say this. Princeton is a better university than Trinity although Trinity is a good college. Princeton is better than Trinity in its academic staff and were you to go to Princeton University I think it would give you ten seconds for the rest of your life and you should examine whether you working with your father you could get into Princeton University."

I found this idea that ten seconds for the rest of my life just intriguing, I had no idea exactly what that meant but I found it an intriguing idea. So I sat down and talked to my father about it and my father academically and socially, I think, I enjoyed my father's style of raising his children. He never talked about his own...there was never a rah, rah college Princeton banner, Princeton alumni spirit...

Q: Tigers and all that sort of stuff.

POLLOCK: Exactly, he was exceedingly low key; all of that stuff was in the bottom dresser drawer. Our academic choices were our own, the stipulation being that we could make any academic choice we wanted, we did not necessarily have to go to a State school that his...what he called his social commitment. He had two social commitments to his sons as he described it and the definitions were, "I will pay for education, it's important to me and it is important to your mother and you will achieve whatever you want to achieve and you may go to whatever school you would wish to go, and whatever field you wish to pursue. It is my responsibility to make sure that we have financial means to make that possible for you."

The second part was that, "I will buy you a new pair of shoes, a new suit and a new white shirt once a year and in response for that you will take your mother to church. And the quid pro quo is I will never question the way you spend your own money. You may accept whatever faction you wish to accept, you may buy whatever bicycle...you are the master of your own funds. So what you are working for you can spend on yourself as long as you wear your white shirt and your suit and take your mother to church on Sundays."

He kept both words. He never pressured either my brother nor I on where we would go to school and he never gave us any grief over what we chose to wear or what path we chose to follow. So it was I that began to needle my father about Princeton University and what it would take to get into Princeton and in the end I was accepted to Princeton. I retook my SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) tests and made some contacts and opened up a dialogue with Princeton and in the end had adequate scores to be admitted to Princeton and chose to do it.

Q: I want to go back a little, particularly when you were in high school and all, going away to school. But you were coming home; you were living at home more or less?

POLLOCK: I went to day schools; I always lived at home.

Q: What about sort of the family sitting around the table, was there much of this talking about politics? Particularly I think of your father coming out of big steel, I mean this was a breed apart in a way at least this is what I've heard. What was your...I mean would you talk about the world, the politics?

POLLOCK: We did talk about the world, we talked about politics, we talked about economics, he was an economics major as his undergraduate major at college, at university. He would bring the office home; he would bring issues home, which we would discuss. We usually discussed them or it was perfectly possible for my brother or myself to bring up issues at the table. It was a period of time until I got into high school really, when we would have dinner at the table each night rather than in front of a television show or something of that sort. It seems facetious, but it was quite true, and that is part of truisms, it was, "How was your day dear?" would start the discussion. My mother would talk about what her day was like and my father would talk about what his day was like.

A lot of discussion was about labor unions being involved with big steel and in actuality it influenced some of the things that I did in high school. I can recall writing a history paper at least on the union movement and how significant it was to the United States. But I remember a dinner table conversation late in high school which I found very interesting. This was 1959, 1960 and my father was talking about the change in the use of U.S. steel. Where I find this very interesting is that we have decided as a nation as I found in my Foreign Service career we thought that we were going to be the industrial nation of the world. We were going to produce all of the world's goods coming out of World War II and that this was going to remain constant forever. Our steel industry as part of this was churning out everything from barbed wire and nails to specialty steel. We made this very clear internationally when we sent out GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and eliminated agriculture from the GATT codicils and have now gone through this whole metamorphosis as we have changed into a post-industrial society and as other countries begun to industrialize so that the whole renegotiation of the world trade organization was designed to get agriculture back in and to let us work in the world economy with an agricultural foundation that in actuality has turned out to be perhaps more significant than our industrial basis.

Q: And also services too.

POLLOCK: Services?

Q: Banking, insurance, intellectual properties, computers and that sort of thing.

PPOLLOCK: Absolutely. But what I find interesting on this conversation that I relate from high school is the impact that it has had later in the day, later in our own history. My father was talking about being out of the business of the steel he was selling when we were in Kansas City just a few years earlier which he termed as “scrap steel”, quick production, left over from specialty steel production that we were still able to sell as a country. The fact that we were being challenged by the Japanese. The point that he made was, it was pointed at the union at the time, the point that he made was that the Japanese were now producing cold-roll sheets from which auto bodies were stamped. They were producing cold-roll sheets in Japan, putting them on trans-Pacific freighters, shipping them to San Francisco, unloading them in San Francisco, putting them on train beds, training them across the United States, unloading them in Detroit and charging a price for that steel that was less than Jones and Laughlin could charge producing cold-roll sheets, at the Southside Works in Pittsburgh, putting them on a flatbed truck and driving them 14 hours to Detroit and unloading them. He predicted that that was the beginning of the end for big steel in the United States when we couldn't drive cold-roll sheets from Pittsburgh to Detroit for less money than it cost the Japanese to ship it from Japan.

Thirty-five years later a gentleman at the University of Pittsburgh wrote a book called And The Wolf Finally Knocked, which went back and researched the position of big steel, the position of the unions through this period of time. By this time, which was in the 1990s, big steel was gone. U.S. steel was now... Jones and Laughlin had closed up and been bought out by Link, Temple Watts in the mid '70s and had gone bankrupt several years thereafter. U.S. Bethlehem was gone, U.S. was gone into varying specialty steels. U.S. Steel the leader was no longer in the steel industry, it was USX. and was into diversification. It was interesting to be able to buy this book for dad and present it to him and say, “You'll find this an interesting read. It puts the flesh on the bones that you had already predicted.”

Q: What were the politics of the house?

POLLOCK: Politics at the house were Republican; I can remember in '52 going downtown in Indianapolis and being held up so that I could see Dwight Eisenhower come through on a campaign swing. They were Republican but they were very liberal Republican. I'll explain in a bit why this was interesting. When I had made the decision that I had wanted to join the Foreign Service I was a fine arts major. I put together a special program in Humanities at Princeton. I had wanted to major in the fine arts, which I had just discovered but I also was terribly interested in things like cultural anthropology, which were not major subjects at the time. I was fascinated by relating how music and literature and the social policy of an era was reflected in its art or its art reflected a society so that we could come up with a term such as the Renaissance or the Baroque. I was interested in putting together a number of courses in adjunct to my art courses. But, I then found the Foreign Service, found the United States Information Agency while taking job interviews. I thought this was going to be terrific, I could do exhibitory films, all of these things that I was interested in doing. But USIA told me that in order to come into USIA (U.S. Information Agency) I had to pass the Foreign Service exam.

Q: Let me just stop...we were talking about the politics of the time and where your family came out. You said they were liberal Democrats?

POLLOCK: Liberal Republicans.

Q: Republicans, Eisenhower Republicans, liberal Republicans.

POLLOCK: As I pursued my Foreign Service idea I was informed that I needed to pass the Foreign Service exam. As a fine arts major, I hadn't really studied much politics and economics. These being big parts of the Foreign Service exam, it was suggested that I do some graduate study. So I enrolled in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA) at the University of Pittsburgh. It was the first year, it was a new school at the time and it had been started by two gentlemen who had attachments to USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development). They had just brought Americans in; it was primarily a school for mid-level administrators from overseas in economic development, political, cultural areas and things of this sort. There was a cross-cultural relations section to it and this section had been created the year before as a way of bringing Americans into the course work because the foreign students wanted to interact with Americans. One of the glories of the school initially set up for the people working from overseas was that while you would do a certain amount of course work, it was also required that you took an internship in a U.S. government agency or a nonprofit institution something of that sort. Then you came back and you wrote a masters paper that sort of compared what you learned in the real world to what you learned in books.

So the American students had to do the same thing and we came down to Washington and tried to find our internships. I had dropped my resume off on Capital Hill with a gentleman from the American Political Science Association named Don Tacheron. The American Political Science Association trains the new freshman Congress people. Don was in the process of doing that at the time. He said that he would pass my resume around to various Congressmen who were looking for legislative assistants. So shortly thereafter I got a phone call from Lee Hamilton, a new congressman who went on to an exceedingly distinguished career on the Hill as the Congressman from the Ninth District of Indiana. He called one morning very early and wanted to know if I was...he had looked at my resume, could I be down in Washington this evening to take up this position as legislative assistant. He needed a legislative assistant for six months and that seemed to be the period of time that I was available and would that be good for me. I said tonight would not be good but I could be there perhaps by next Monday. He said, "Well, OK, if that's what it takes you to...". I said, "Well I have to pack up a house." I was married at the time and my wife has to give some notice, we have to look for a place to live so if I could have three or four days I would appreciate that. So he said this was all right and he hung up. It was about six in the morning and I rolled back over and I went back to sleep. About 45 minutes later the phone rang and it was Hamilton again and he said, "You know I forgot I got you laid on as my legislative assistant here because they put me on to the Foreign Affairs Committee as some big reward for beating this Republican in my district. But I want to get on Post Office and Civil Service so I need you to work on the

Foreign Affairs Committee for me while I am busy doing some politics around here but I forgot to ask you know what are your politics?" I said, "Well, I guess I have to say I am a liberal Republican, I've got to be honest with you. My family has always sort of looked Republican and voted Republican. I would say I am a liberal Republican." He said, "Well I would say that I am a conservative Democrat, so we ought to get along just fine." As it turned out, we did.

Q: Well now we will go back to this...so you came sort of out of that group from your family and all of that. Now before we leave high school or prep school were you involved in, I take it sports, you have to be football if you are getting a football scholarship to Trinity, dramatics or singing or anything else like this?

POLLOCK: Well what I had found in a year that I took between high school and college was that I had come from a very narrow background. There really at the time was no school dramatics, no music department; there was no art department. There was English, history, math, and the science or language. You had your choice, you had to take four and that was it and so it was a very constrained, narrow high school base academically and culturally.

Q: Well now prior to going to Princeton had the elder world intruded at all the Cold War, we are talking about your family, the dinner table conversations and school and all, the Cold War, well the international world?

POLLOCK: Not, not particularly. If it had sort of intruded at all, I mean we all did our...those were the bomb shelter days, we all did our little drills, we got down on the floor in sort of a fetal position under your desk when the air raid sirens sounded, or you went to the basement cafeteria or whatever the locale was supposed to be. We certainly were aware of it. I was aware of it academically from studying history in school. I was aware of the international world because my father would discuss it from an economic sense but I wasn't really engaged. I liked people. I became involved in two sets of extracurricular activities. One was sports and the other was the Junior Red Cross.

It was probably through the Junior Red Cross that I had my most international set of connections where issues were discussed as to why the Red Cross did what it did and how it organized people overseas in times of disaster and in times of war. These issues were raised at the high school level. The reason for joining the Junior Red Cross was I haven't looked at this motivation before but a possible reason was my education was in an all boys school. By going into the Junior Red Cross there were a selection of people from a number of high schools around the city of Columbus and it was just a much more vibrant group of people. It was an escape from the school environment. I later found in the Foreign Service that I could do such things as join the local Rotary Club in several posts as an escape from the embassy environment and so possibly this was the same motivation but it was...Columbus is an interesting city. At the time it was really on the east-west access. The American Field Service would use the Junior Red Cross to put together outings for its American Field Service exchange high school students. One of the things that those two groups did each year was they would put together the West Coast

group and they would bus to the East Coast in order to see the United States. The East Coast group would bus to the West Coast and usually they would cross in Columbus, Ohio. So our chapter of the Junior Red Cross would host these students in our family for a night or two and take them out around town and show them Columbus. Talking with these foreign exchange students and dealing with them in that sort of Junior Red Cross perspective was probably my first introduction to the broader world. It was much more cultural than it was political or economic. It was not until I had graduated from high school that I really played this out.

We've talked about dyslexia. I was a capable student, a persistent student. I wasn't a particularly brilliant student. In becoming interested in Princeton over Trinity I had spent a couple weekends at Princeton staying in the dormitory with various friends who were already Princeton students. I met some absolutely brilliant individuals whom I realized were just a year older than myself. This was terribly exciting, and at the same time terribly daunting. So, upon graduation from high school I got cold feet. There was an interesting gentleman who lived in Columbus who had an educational ideal as well as an educational idea about how one would start to influence change in the world, if one could do it. His idea was that the United States at that time was the country where the wealth was. He wanted to put together a group of students to lead on a trip around the world before they had made their commitment to a university major. He felt that by the time you were a junior/senior in college you made a commitment to a major and you were stuck there and would not be influenced by a trip around the world. So Carl Yeager wanted to put together a group of students, he thought the Americans could pay for it although he had quite a bit of money himself, and he invested most of it into this school. I think none of us really paid the full amount we should have been paying. He put together a group of students all of whom were basically seniors in high school. It was called the International School of America. It lasted for about three years and then went into various iterations since, but the idea was it was registered with the New York Board of Regents. So Carl had been able to persuade some schools to let seniors go for a year of credit, their high school year of credit. There were twenty, twenty-one students. Most of us were in the year between high school and college. One of us had thought about it the year before and then gone off and had his freshman year at Northwestern and decided he didn't really like what he was doing there so came back and joined this International School of America. We were the second year group. We were 21 students and four professors and we took a year and traveled around the world.

Q: Oh, wonderful.

POLLOCK: We traveled west to east. We started in Boston and looked at the United States founding from the point of view of the founding fathers. We stopped in New York and looked at the United States economically a little bit, stopped in Hawaii and spent some time with a culture that wasn't white Anglo-Saxon and then moved on to Japan. We spent a month in Japan, two weeks in Tokyo and two weeks in Kyoto, Kobe, on to Hong Kong, Bangkok, about six weeks in India, traveling around India, into the Middle East, Beirut, Jerusalem for Christmas, Cairo, Istanbul, Athens, Rome, Paris, London. School ended in July, we started in September.

Q: This would be July 1960?

POLLOCK: We started in September '60 and finished in July '61. There were only two or three times when we could not stay with families. We lived with the local family and held our classes in hotel rooms or a university classroom and it was a breathtaking, eye-opening experience. This group has just...we held a fortieth reunion last summer and there isn't a member of the group who did not have their lives radically changed by this experience. People went in different directions. I was going to major in history; I'd been good in history in high school, but when I got back two things had happened. Stanford had raided Princeton's history department that year, the year that I was gone, so Princeton had sort of a skeleton history department and was rebuilding and I was no longer really interested in history. I was interested in art and music, religion and culture and what made societies different; what had affected me so as a privileged youth growing up in Midwestern America with all of the ideals that that entailed in the 1950s. It is marvelous for me to see these works now that are coming out talking about the '50s, the overall life of the '50s, particularly in the Midwest of the United States. All of that was challenged by what I had seen abroad in the streets of Calcutta, in the political demonstrations in Cairo, in rural classrooms in Turkey, in visiting the artistic monuments in Greece, all of these things, all of my foundations were challenged. I then set out on my Princeton education. There was a luxury to it which I fully admit to. I set about to examine and had the luxury of examining at a good academic institution all of these things, testing all of these ideals and hypotheses that I had grown up with and now were challenged during this year traveling all around the world.

Q: This would be a good place to stop and I put at the end of the tape so we know where to pick it up next time.

Basically we talked about your upbringing and your year abroad so we will pick this up with your going to Princeton, which would be in '61 to '65?

POLLOCK: Correct.

Q: A couple questions I will ask about Princeton would be sort of what was the site case of Princeton at the time? And also did this year abroad and all set you out to...as you got there what was the idea in the back of your mind that you were going to be dealing with international affairs or were you caught up in the Kennedy movement of asking Americans to do what they could for their country and all that. I mean, was this part of the thing when you entered? We will pick that up at that point.

POLLOCK: Great.

Q: This is the 27th of February 2002. Jim we got you to Princeton.

POLLOCK: Correct.

Q: You were there from when to when?

POLLOCK: I was there from 1961; graduated in 1965.

Q: How did you find Princeton?

POLLOCK: I actually started at Princeton in a very... I was very disenchanted with Princeton. Certainly not with the academics and the spirit of the campus but with the society of Princeton. I was not a Princeton person. I was not on campus to take over my daddy's business or to become a great lawyer in New York or to work on Wall Street or to do something of that sort. By and large Princeton is an eastern establishment place. It tries to have a diversity in its student body and that, of course, has become more pronounced since it has gone coed. But at the time I found it a pretty stuffy place. I found most of the people that I had met initially to be pretty stuffy fellows versus my sort of Midwestern upbringing and this year that I had spent traveling around the world.

My goals had changed, my academic goals anyway, my academic interests had changed tremendously in the year that I was abroad. So I set out to explore religion and philosophy and anthropology, art, music, all of these things that I had not had a chance to be introduced to in my secondary school work. So in that sense I found Princeton quite stimulating and a tabula rasa in terms of the things that I wanted to study and pursue.

Q: How did you find...these were the '61 sort of the Kennedy years and all, was this sort of hitting the campus and all? The government go out there Peace Corps, that sort of thing or...?

POLLOCK: We had all been fascinated by the Kennedy-Nixon debates and there was I think a definite spirit on campus. It was still a traditional, I will use the word traditional campus. We were engaged in Vietnam, there was no dissent to that. That did not come until the end of the sixties. We were the children of the fifties and most of our parents had fought in World War II and there was a certain mentality about that that pervaded the campus. I remember in particular I had gotten involved in the Civil Rights movement and again I think that was a reflection of the Kennedy political interest and the U.S. society at the time. I had spent two years going around to my colleagues in their dormitory rooms and attempting to raise money, we raised money...we found out that the African-American population in Princeton was relegated by zoning law to six square blocks of the city and couldn't go beyond that. We wanted to challenge this in court. We hired a lawyer and I spent two years going around knocking on my fellow students' doors and raising money to pay this lawyer. The year after I left Princeton the student body marched down main street, Nassau Street, and simply trashed the establishments, the business establishments, they tore up the president of Princeton's garden. It was just a sea change in the way people moved to change things that they were unhappy with. That certainly got the attention of the town. The lawyer was unnecessary at that point for the legal purposes related to African-Americans and zoning. That simply crumbled very, very quickly and probably would have gone on in the court process for years and years. But from my perspective this was something that was important to do and the way you did it

was that you worked with the establishment, which meant hiring a lawyer and playing the game the way it was played in the legal system at the time.

Q: How about you say you were sort of exploring various courses and things like that. Did you find yourself attracted to the international field at all or were you pretty much sort of sampling everything?

POLLOCK: Well I was sampling everything. I certainly was attracted to the international field that came out of my year abroad and simply underscored in a different way my interest through high school in history and politics and public policy. But I was going at it in a different way. I appreciate that I had the luxury to do it and I was expanding my horizons beyond Columbus, Ohio. Good Bye Columbus was a good book.

Q: By Philip Roth, I think it was.

POLLOCK: Yep, so I was doing that. During this period of time the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton was coming into its own and it was certainly possible to take courses there as well as throughout the departmental structure of Princeton. You had a certain number of required courses or areas in which you needed to select courses during your first two years prior to your major subject. Then you had a set of electives while you were doing your major study. So there was an opportunity to take other courses and during this period of time I got deeply involved in Princeton in Asia, that's the Asian Studies department which was quite renowned at the time. I did the same with Middle Eastern studies and took a number of Middle Eastern courses and those I think reverberated in my later career choices. I was able to go back and use that training very well when I came into the Foreign Service.

Q: How did you find the club system? Meeting club system?

POLLOCK: I found the club system to be an interesting system. In my opinion it was a good system and it certainly benefited me. There were several benefits to the club system, which didn't become obvious until later. I think they can be made up and I'm certainly aware of the arguments on the other side of the club system but it was fascinating to me. You went through a process of interviews with a set of roommates or whomever you chose to go through what they called this "bicker" system with. The clubs would come along and interview you in your rooms. You, of course, had some ideas of the clubs which you would like to go to, but the clubs also had ideas of who they would like to have. Through this interviewing process they made a determination as to whether you were the type of individual who would do well in their club. The more often they came back you never knew, you bickered in a group of three or four people. You never knew when the club came back each evening whether they were interviewing you or they were interviewing somebody else in the room. You did this in the period just prior to exams in your sophomore year, your midterm exams.

Princeton has an interesting exam system. You take your course work from September to the Christmas break. Then you come back after the Christmas break, and you have two

weeks of what is known as reading period. During reading period you are expected to be studying for your exams doing outside reading and in effect getting your mind together for the examination period. So this two weeks in early January was the bicker period.

By the time you have gone through it as a sophomore and then two other times as the interviewer, your sophomore, junior and senior years, you in effect had gone through an interviewing process that prepared you for graduation and entering the job market in a competitive way that was, I believe, a marvelous experience. To go back to Charlie Merit's comment at the dinner table when I was in high school, I viewed the bicker system as giving me thirty seconds for the rest of my life. I had that training when I started to take job interviews that other people might not have had.

The other thing that the bicker system did, and I think did exceedingly well, unlike pledge systems and things of that sort, is that it made a determination about personality and about interest that builds while an eclectic group, a group with many things in common which you came into a club with. So that while you might as a sophomore, or freshman or sophomore, have a particular idea of a club that you wanted to go to in, actuality when it came down to the bidding night and various clubs came and bid you, you found that when you met the rest of your section, when you met people from that club you had some things in common. As a consequence my last two years at Princeton when I moved... what happens with the eating club system is that it is not a dormitory facility. You move out of the common main dining halls on campus and you go down and you eat your meals and have your social events in the club context. What I found there was a group of very compatible individuals, many of whom I still stay in contact with. This really expanded my Princeton experience and in effect made my Princeton experience.

Q: I don't know...I mean the clubs have names don't they?

POLLOCK: They do.

Q: Which one were you in?

POLLOCK: I was in a club called Tower Club, which was a club that was very interesting. There was an academic side to the club, and it was the first club to have started what they called a preceptor program. They started it with Woodrow Wilson when he was president of Princeton. It was a program the club had started in which professors were invited to come down and sit in the front room in front of the fire and get into a real debate with club members. The Tower Club still selects professors each year to be Tower preceptors and in effect to be an honorary member of the club for the year. But what grew out of that was the academic tradition at Princeton which is now utilized in all class work in which you have in most cases two lectures a week and one precept a week where the class breaks down into very small groups of four or five people who sit either with the professor or with the teaching assistant and discuss the work of the lecture and the work of the reading. It becomes a real opportunity for creative learning, that whole creative learning process the idea of challenging the teacher and examining your own point of

view vis-à-vis the teacher's point of view in a non-structured, non-formal way, which I think is very good.

Q: Well then you graduated in 1965?

POLLOCK: Correct.

Q: Did you have any plans on what to do?

POLLOCK: I had no plans on what to do. My background when I graduated was such that I was infatuated by the Peace Corps, this whole experience that I had had prior to Princeton, and then the Princeton experience itself through which I had the opportunity to build a special program in the humanities. I felt I was ready and eager for the Peace Corps. The young woman whom I was to marry, however, had a very different point of view. She was not infatuated by the idea of grass huts or sandals or no running water and diagramming English sentences. So some form of compromise needed to be worked out and I started taking job interviews.

What I discovered during the job interviews was that I had what I have later termed as a three-year personality. I was anxious to move and to continue to move which was a tradition in our family. The idea of thirty years in Corning, New York, with Corning Glass, although exciting from the design point of view or the idea of a career on the drawing boards of Time Magazine, just wasn't ringing the bells that excited me. Eventually in the progress I was fortunate enough to attend a presentation by the United States Information Agency, which attracted me, which hit me immediately on several levels. First of all for the very first time they had one of these paper tape programmers and they were running eight 35 millimeter slide projectors all at the same time, phasing in pictures and I was fascinated by this idea. The presentation was given by an absolutely fascinating man who had taken some time off from USIA to follow the trek of Jason...

Q: The Argonauts.

POLLOCK: And the Argonauts. He was a metallurgist by training and I just found the combination very exciting and I thought, "Wow, I can do that and what a marvelous way to get engaged with the world," and it provided running water for my wife. That's what interested me in USIA.

Q: Did you take an exam to get in or how did you...?

POLLOCK: Well I did and this is what I found interesting and curious about the whole thing. After the presentation I went up to the presenter and said, "Sign me up, I can do this, I'm ready to go." And he said, "Well, can you pass the Foreign Service exam?" I said, "I have no idea what's in the Foreign Service exam." He said, "Well a lot of politics and economics." I said, "Well no, I'm a fine arts major with a good humanities background and why would I need politics and economics to get into book publishing and exhibit presentation and graphic design and things of that sort which were all part of your

presentation.” He said, “Well because we are developing a professional Foreign Service corps at this point and in order to do that you must come in through the Department of State and the Department of State mechanism requires that you take and pass the Foreign Service exam.” So this stunned me somewhat and having not planned to do any graduate work but to get out of the academic shackles as quickly as possible I now found myself very late in the Spring trying to figure out how I would get the background I needed to pass the Foreign Service exam. By this time my parents had moved to Pittsburgh and I was discussing my dilemma with my mother and she said, “Well, you know I was talking to some ladies the other day and there is this very interesting new institute at the University of Pittsburgh that is looking for American graduate students.” I said, “Well, let me examine this.” It turned out this was the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at Pittsburgh. It was a school initiated by two gentlemen who had been senior administrators at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). They had recognized that part of our problem with USAID work in the 1960s was that there were no mid-level trained administrators in many administrations of other countries around the world. Their idea was to start a school that served that purpose. They were successful in doing that but the school was...

Q: This is Tape 2, Side 1 with Jim Pollock.

POLLOCK: and what their foreign students were lacking and made it known to the administrators was some sort of interface with Americans. So in the academic year that ended in the Spring of 1965, the Administrators at GSPIA decided that they would start a cross cultural communications section. They found themselves then in the summer of '65 trying to find Americans to join that class. It was very fortuitous because I did not have to take all of the graduate exams which one starts to take in the spring of one's graduating year, if one is going to graduate school. I simply went in in the summer of '65 and sat down with the dean of the school and presented my academic transcript and talked with him for about a half hour and found myself admitted to the Fall class at GSPIA. I started my graduate work in the cross cultural communications section of the school. I was working primarily on basic economics and basic government and politics going back and reading these things and taking some courses which were not in the graduate school but in effect preparing myself for the written exam.

Q: Could you plug into the University of Pittsburgh's undergraduate courses?

POLLOCK: Absolutely.

Q: Because this is where you would be picking up your, I would think, American history and your...that sort of thing.

POLLOCK: Exactly what I was doing. It was the cognate course situation and auditing, doing the reading for courses, listening to the lectures and getting that basic background that I needed to take the Foreign Service exam.

The exam process itself was interesting. At the same period of time I needed to go through the military draft requirements. Vietnam was ramping up. It was a very interesting time socially in Pittsburgh because I had married in the summer of '65. So in the summer of '66 in particular and the summer of '65 as well I needed to earn money to go to graduate school. I found myself working in the steel mills in Pittsburgh during a period of time when the organizers of the African-American community had come in from the West Coast and from Chicago in particular. Pittsburgh is a music town historically black jazz town and there had been a number of excellent jazz artists who have come out of the Hill district in Pittsburgh. I was a jazz aficionado at the time and we lived close to the Hill district. I would go up to the Hill district very often to the bars and nightclubs there and listen to jazz and became very friendly with a number of people in those establishments. I walked in one night to a particular club and there were a couple of people with whom I worked as well as a bartender with whom I was quite friendly who immediately came over to me and said, "You don't want to be here this evening. Why don't you go home." One gentleman said, "I will see you at work tomorrow." I said, "OK, thanks," and left the club that evening. We talked the next day. I found out that there were a number of organizers in town at the time. They were attempting to organize the community in the Hill district of Pittsburgh in a violent way, and certainly in an assertive way, but violence was indicated, to change their social conditions and legal conditions in Pittsburgh.

What was interesting to see that play out over the summer of 1966 was that the community wanted no part of it. The reason they wanted no part of it was that the mills were working twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, turning out armor plate for Vietnam. Everybody had a job, unemployment was nil, they were making good money, and that old warning of the military industrial complex was playing itself out economically and sociologically in Pittsburgh during that period of time '65 to '70. What was interesting about that for this white Anglo-Saxon Protestant youth (me) was that the normal volunteer quota for the U.S. Army out of Pittsburgh was zero. Therefore the draft was in effect and I had received my draft notice and it was time to go down and to go through the draft board process. I did so and found out how capricious bureaucracy can be. I had some severe knee injuries from playing football, I was over weight at the time, I had always been near-sighted. All of these things seemed quite irrelevant to the examining-in officers because there was always a remedy. There was the fat bodies platoon, there was this, there was that, and what I found disheartening in a way was that at one part during the process I had a rather severe nose bleed. It was winter, I had been studying long hours in preparation for the Foreign Service exam, and I had a nosebleed that had splattered on the starched white coat of the examining physician. They took me in the other room and stanching my nosebleed and when I emerged I was handed a piece of paper that informed me that I was 4F (code used by U.S. military meaning "unfit for military service") because I had chronic nosebleeds. So I tried to protest my 4F status and again I refer to the signs of the time. I was very willing to go to Vietnam to serve my country. That was simply the spirit with which I had been raised and the protest movement was just beginning to flower and was not well underway at the time. So while I was following my mother's and my wife's admonitions that I should take a letter from my doctor about my knee and my weight was self-explanatory as I climbed on the scale.

Nevertheless I was ready to succeed in this process and had been thwarted by a nose bleed of all things. My protest had great effect, I was immediately reclassified 1Y (to be drafted only in case of national emergency) and told to go back to school and pass the Foreign Service exam, which I then succeeded in doing.

Q: Before we get to that, two things. One, what was the background of your wife?

POLLOCK: My wife was a theoretical mathematician. We had met in high school and dated then. She also went to university training on the East Coast.

Q: Where did she go?

POLLOCK: She went to Connecticut College, which now also is coeducational.

Q: It was then called Connecticut College for Women.

POLLOCK: It was Connecticut College for Women at that time so we dated through college and fell in love. She was an exceedingly good student, very bright. This has ramifications later in terms of an oral history, with some reflections on the Foreign Service and Foreign Service life. But she had majored in mathematics. We were of the same age and since I had taken a year off between high school and college she had done graduate work prior to...because she graduated in 1964. She had done a year of graduate work in theoretical mathematics at Michigan and we were married then in the summer of '65 when I graduated from college. She had found a job...actually we had a little gig that would go on. I was working in the mills. My father was the head of district sales for the Pittsburgh office of Jones & Laughlin and my wife was working at the Jones & Laughlin Research Center at the time. So we were labor, management and research all in one basket. We used to have a good time playing with that.

Q: Your class, what about this? I assume it had been originally designed for people from what we call the third world or something coming to develop mid-managers and all that. Was this the thrust of what this...?

POLLOCK: Exactly.

Q: What was your impression of your classmates and all that?

POLLOCK: My impressions of my classmates were outstanding, they were very high quality individuals, very intelligent and just genuinely hard working. It was a marvelous experience. My time in Pittsburgh reinforced my interest in cross cultural dialogue immensely and it instilled in me the first real wonder about the human being and human nature, the development of the human mind and spirit. This is something that I worked with throughout my Foreign Service career. It became a theme in my Foreign Service career, the education became a theme and for the following reason.

Throughout my career starting with this graduate experience at the University of Pittsburgh I met people whose minds were superb and then later would see them in their own social and cultural situations in which grinding poverty, no facilities, no tradition of academics, no opportunity seemed to make absolutely no difference. We do call them the elite, the cream-de-la-crème, these are individuals with enormous talent and diet didn't seem to make a difference, opportunity didn't seem to make a difference, they were born with an intelligence that just shone through. Interestingly, in most cases, in many, many cases there are circumstances for this obviously that come out of the colonial experience. These people do go into public policy type work or they go into education. They come to the fore with some idea that they are going to serve their populations. It's a way to make money. It's a way to serve other purposes of course but I've always been quite struck by the way individuals with talent, with intelligence, with human spirit, gravitate toward doing something for their populations. It can be artistic. It can be a singer like Yusef Durr in Senegal who has established a foundation for Senegalese to develop and preserve their singing traditions and their musical traditions or it can be the poet politician, Leopold Senghor, to use another Senegalese example. But to work with these people whom I first met in this graduate school experience it was marvelous. There was a language requirement to graduate as part of getting the graduate degree at Pittsburgh. Of course, the graduate bureaucracy wanted French or German or Spanish or something of that sort but when I came into the Foreign Service the language that they taught me was Indonesian and my first assignment was to Malaysia. As a result, graduate school had served its purposes for me. I was in the Foreign Service at this point. I had learned my language, I had written my graduate paper which was a requirement. On our way to Kuala Lumpur I went back to Pittsburgh, spent a week to say goodbye to my parents, and I handed in the paper and discussed it with the faculty, and to see whether I could pick up my graduate diploma. They said, "Of course you have to take a language course and you haven't done that yet and we can't give you a degree without a language test." I said, "Well fine, I don't need my degree, the academic training has served its purpose, thank you." They said, "But you've got to be able to...can't you pass a language...?" I said, "The only language which I probably could pass would be Indonesian." They said, "Well, we can't test you in Indonesian." I said, "Well, actually you could, there is a..." I'd developed a very good friendship with a gentleman and his wife who were from Kuala Lumpur and I said, "There is a very nice young administrator here and his wife who is an academic and teaches at the university and they could give me a language test and if they feel that I spoke the language adequately you could use that grade." Well, after some discussion, they decided that this was possible. Bear in mind, of course, that the administrators were former USAID types and so this made sense to them. So I sat down in a room and talked for an hour or so with my colleagues in Bahasa Melayu. They came out and they said, "You are exceedingly good."

So I got my degree using Malay as my language and that friendship and that experience in terms of the Foreign Service played out in the following way: Twenty-five years later when I went back to Kuala Lumpur to serve as the counselor of embassy for public affairs, this gentleman had a high political position and was mayor of Kuala Lumpur. To be able to reestablish that connection right away gave us an entrée into cross cultural and educational programs and civic development programs that we wouldn't have had

otherwise. My experience in graduate school established that link and established the first realization that links of that sort were exactly what educational exchange and cross cultural relations were supposed to do in the true Senator Fulbright sense of developing greater world understanding and interdependence.

Q: You took the Foreign Service written exam and you passed that?

POLLOCK: I passed that.

Q: How about the oral exam, did you recall it at all or how it went?

POLLOCK: I can recall it vividly. I give full credence to Princeton, my time at Princeton and my training at Princeton for helping me with that. I was going into an examination process, both in the written and the oral, in which I was not fully prepared in the traditional State Department political, economic officer sense. I succeeded in the written examination because I was not particularly good at taking these sorts of tests but I totally relaxed. I remember the first question referred to the year in which Babe Ruth hit 60 home runs and I thought, "Oh boy, I can get this." The question then went on to ask: and which of the following also occurred, the establishment of the Federal Reserve Board and a few other things. I said, "I can't even answer the first question, this is ridiculous, I'm not passing this exam." I totally relaxed and for the first time I broke out of that sort of chained bind that I was in and simply went through the test and answered every question that I could answer out of sequence which meant that the picture from the Ajunta Caves in India was easy for me but maybe not for somebody else. As a consequence I was able to spend some time thinking about questions that I had put question marks by, answer the ones that I knew the answers to. There was a written part of the test and I think I was well prepared for that and I succeeded. I then went in to the oral part of the test where I faced sort of the same thing and there were lots of stories, as I found out most of them apocryphal or possibly apocryphal...

Q: The purple glass, the lack of ashtrays...

POLLOCK: The lack of ashtrays. A friend of mine had told me that one of the questions that she had been asked was to name the states that border Tennessee. So I had spent a good deal of time looking at a map of the United States and there are more states that border Tennessee than one imagines. So I memorized all of these things. I spent a couple of weeks reading Time Magazine which I thought was the best preparation. I went in and once again the ability to be relaxed to present yourself in an interview situation was very important. Again, this was the traditional Foreign Service, this was the raised dais, desk, with three individual sitting behind it, you sitting in front of them like an inquisition and one was an ambassador and was very formal and very frightening. I got off I think to an excellent start because I sat down and I looked up at these gentlemen and behind them...the interview was conducted in a classroom at George Washington University and behind these three gentlemen was a wall sized map of the United States. I started to laugh and they asked me why I was laughing and I told them the story of having prepped for the question on Tennessee and then I said, "There is a map of Europe behind me and if you

asked me that question I'm sunk right now." Everybody had a laugh over that. It put the room at ease and it enabled the interview to go on in a matter that had a certain flow to it that helped me a great deal because I botched one question big time. The ambassador asked me a question; he asked me to describe the difference between balance of trade and balance of payments. At the time I had no idea what the difference was between balance of trade and balance of payments and how it related to the United States. I had no idea how to answer that question and so I answered it exactly in the reverse. I had us with a great balance of payments and a terrible balance of trade. No, I had us with a great balance of trade and a bad balance of payments and it was the other way around so there was quite a debate when I left the room as to whether this person should come into the Foreign Service or not. I was fortunate. The USIA representative on the panel apparently won the day and said, "Listen, this individual is not going to be an economics officer, we know that, he's going to be a Foreign Service Information Officer and we are all of one accord that his abilities to communicate and to talk about the United States and to convey the essence of the U.S. and U.S. culture are very good, let's take him." So, grudgingly, I think they overruled the ambassador and I came into the Foreign Service.

Q: So you came in when?

POLLOCK: I came in the State Department A-100 course of October 1967 and I came in as a State Department officer. The first class of previous officers hired by USIA did not pass the Foreign Service exam. They came in by an oral exam on lateral entry and they were Foreign Service Reserve officers with the red passports. I was in the first formal junior officer class for USIA, came into the Department of State, was issued a diplomatic black passport and then administratively transferred to USIA.

Q: What was your A-100 course like; can you sort of characterize it, the composition of it?

POLLOCK: My A-100 course was a straight FSI (Foreign Service Institute) State Department training course. There were 75 State Department officers and 25 USIA officers.

Q: That was a big...

POLLOCK: That was a big class and we did straight State Department training. As USIA officers that was part of our critique of the course to our own training officials. Our own people at USIA needed to have more of what has now been integrated into the Department of State as public diplomacy. They needed to have more public diplomacy, cross cultural relations training go into the A-100 course. We simply came out of the A-100 course with having gone through the consular segment, the writing for political purposes, reporting for political purposes segment, the economic analysis segment, all of these things but not having gone through a media segment, or a cross-cultural information dialoguing segment.

So our critique was you need to put this into our training because now we are going to go through a set of training experiences equal in length to the A-100 course and you're just wasting too much time on training in that sense. You could design a course for USIA that would be much more effective. That later happened and USIA then did its own training until its dissolution in October of 1999. It is now back to training junior officers in some of the State Department skills. But, with the addition I think of public diplomacy skills, which it is now giving to State Department officers. I think that that amalgamation is effective. State Department officers increasingly, overseas, because of the communications revolution, increasingly have to deal with publics in a way that they did not traditionally have to do -- certainly not during my career and prior to my career. At the same time I think certainly my own career was jump started by the A-100 course because I was able to take the consular course. I was able then to take a consular assignment after my JOT (Junior Officer Training) in USIA. I had a marvelous opportunity to open, reopen, USIA operations in Medan, Indonesia at the consulate there by being assigned as a consular officer.

Q: Well then your first assignment however was to Kuala Lumpur, was that it?

POLLOCK: Correct.

Q: How did you find Indonesian training, language and all?

POLLOCK: I found Indonesian training absolutely marvelous, exciting, and terrific. Unfortunately, some of my other language training experiences in FSI were not as exciting as Indonesian. The course that I took in Indonesian the linguist was iconoclastic for the time and the structure at FSI and he didn't last very long. He only lasted a couple of years there which doesn't mean that the training at FSI hasn't changed over time and may be very different now as is the recruitment process for Foreign Service officers. The whole idea of interviewing has gone, has been replaced by this sort of simulated work exercise for the oral interview part in which you see how people interrelate during the course of a day, a simulated day in the Foreign Service. The same thing has happened with language training I am sure but the Indonesian course may have been the model for that.

Our linguist was a guy named Harter. He had been through the Second World War and thereafter. He had been a language analyst at the Department of Defense down in the bowels of the Department of Defense and he knew book Indonesian perfectly. He never heard the language spoken so he was fascinated to have come to FSI and have Indonesians as Indonesian language instructors and to sit in the class daily and listen to the language being spoken for the first time. So he was a hands on linguist and he was convinced that one of the ways you really learned language was to get engaged with it and in it. As a result he would come in every afternoon after a morning of the drills and the exercises and we had the Indonesian book and so on but he would then come in the afternoon and we would play games like Jeopardy and Monopoly and things of that sort in Indonesian. The last two weeks of the course he took us all off to Coolfont in the West Virginia mountains and we rented several cabins and brought our families and the

instructors brought their families. We all chipped in and we paid for this. The ground rules were we were going to speak nothing but Indonesian, there was not going to be any English spoken. It was a marvelous experience. We learned Indonesian well and we learned to use it in a very useable way. That last two weeks in particular when you are cooking a curry with your Indonesian instructor you are dealing with the language in a very different way than you are in a text book.

Q: Was there a difference between Malaysian Indonesian and Indonesian Indonesian?

POLLOCK: There is a difference and the difference continues to exist. It is a difference very analogous I think to the difference between British English and American English. One of the things that I found as an English speaker in Kuala Lumpur was that we could get together with friends of our own age representing the Canadian High Commission, the Australian High Commission, the New Zealand High Commission, the British High Commission, the American embassy, and we could sit down for a weekend and at any time during the course of that weekend any of those national groups could cut out all of the others simply by going into a vocabulary and a dialect unique to their country. Indonesia and Malaysia can do the same thing. What is known as the Austral Melayu language group is hugely expansive. It runs from the Philippines all the way down through the sea arc that runs through the Indonesian archipelago and ends in Madagascar on the African east coast. You can use that language group throughout that huge expanse and more or less be understood. The Indonesians were ingenious in creating their language, which was created in 1948 after their independence, or as part of the Independence struggle, and there was a debate, a very strong debate, as to what they would use as their national language.

Indonesia is a nation of more than 3 thousand islands, the dominant language and the dominant island has been Java. Kromowegio, the Javanese dialect, was the contender for the language of the country. They did not make the mistake that the Indians made in saying, "Well, let's choose English." They did not say, "Let's choose Kromowegian." They said, "No that would alienate all of the other island groups." There were already accessionist tendencies and we see them coming back to the surface even today. There were already secessionist tendencies and they said, "We don't want our language to divide, we want the language to unite." So they created this language and they basically went to Melayu, Malaysian language, which had been used as the trading language and is the reason that it's a familiar language throughout this huge ocean expanse. It was used as a trading language and that's what they adopted as the base of the language. Then the Indonesians built upon that their Islamic heritage and their Indian heritage, their Hindu heritage, and so their vocabulary is a richer vocabulary than the Malaysian vocabulary.

They used many words in a different way than the Malays use their vocabulary, but there has been a project that was underway as early I guess as 1969, '68-'69, which simmered during the '70s and really flowered in the '80s and is now back. It's cooled down a bit, but the project was to tie the two languages together first by spelling, which has now happened. When I took Indonesian Jakarta was still spelled Dj with the Dutch Romanization of the way sounds were presented. Malaysia and Indonesia have

regularized their spelling. It is more English in its nature although they have put in various letters, phonetically, to stand for sounds. So the writing looks somewhat different as Chinese Romanization script now looks a well, where Beijing is spelled with an X rather than with a B. The same thing has happened in the Indonesian-Malaysian languages. But the idea was if we could set up one central school publishing or magazine publishing operation then both countries could save an enormous amount of money.

That project has gone forward. The debates that go on are the same sort of debates that we now find in the English language either when we deal with the text that we've negotiated with Great Britain or when we deal with a text that has been translated by a computer and you begin to find that...

[Tape 2, Side B]

There are historical moments in Malaysia that are terribly exciting. This period of time we were just very lucky to be there when was hugely dynamic for Malaysia.

We were there at a period of time in which the Foreign Service had not yet fully shrunk. It had started to shrink, but we were still adequately staffed. We were not optimally staffed but we were very adequately staffed. I had the opportunity to rotate through various sections not only in USIA but of the embassy as well. Such a position no longer exists in the Foreign Service to the great detriment of the Foreign Service today as with many positions that have been abolished. I was university liaison officer. I was still in my twenties. Malaysia at the time used a European educational system in its higher educational structure. I was the same age as the students at the University of Malaya. So I spent the majority of my time outside of the embassy on the campus, in the society, in the coffee houses and reporting back and meeting people and learning about them and learning about their interests. The payoff was that after all of the turmoil of 1969, and what went on politically in Malaysia between 1969 and 1989, was that when I went back to Malaysia as counselor of embassy for USIA I knew everybody in government. I knew ministers, I knew the head of state, Mahathir bin Mohammed, very well from my time on campus, knowing campus leaders, knowing their professors. Mahathir was a teacher at the time on the campus. Sitting around talking to these people gave me an entrée when I went back that I would not have otherwise had.

Q: Well in the '68-'70 period in the first place what were you seeing as far as the Chinese-Malaysian relationship, I'm talking about the ethnic relationship?

POLLOCK: Hugely tense, very tense relationship. This was part of my junior officer experience that I think could not be replicated, is not being replicated today. Obviously the circumstances in situation have to be present but I just don't see our training today, our junior officer training going in the same direction. I lived through the elections and the civil disturbances of 1969 in Malaysia which shattered the Malaysian social structure and have influenced it ever since.

Q: What happened?

POLLOCK: I attribute it to the same period of weak construction as those who experienced the civil war went through. Malaysia was, and remains to some extent, although the word Malaysian, Malaysian citizen, I am a Malaysian citizen has much greater meaning today than it did in 1968, '69. I have much more credence now. The dividing rule of policy of the British defined the social fabric of Malaysia and it was an invidious but ingenious concept that the British used to rule. They went to the Malaysian, the local Malaysian monarchs, Satraps, really, and they said, you're our political guys, you know your population. It was an agricultural, rural population and the British politically empowered our monarchy, your monarchy, type of thing. They empowered the Malays politically, they then brought in Chinese whom they empowered administratively and economically to run banking, to run business, to run petty commerce, trade and they then introduced their own agricultural crops, spices, rubber in particular, and to run the plantation agriculture they brought in the Indians. So you had this situation in which even at their own independence when there was a unity of spirit for independence from Great Britain after World War II they had a situation in which the political deal subscribed to in writing was that the Malays would continue to control politics, the Chinese would control the economy and the Indians would control the labor force or the unions, agriculture, big plantation production.

When I arrived in '68 the society remained very evenly divided about 43 percent Malay, 45 percent Chinese, 12 percent Indian. In both political movements, Chinese and Malay, the Indians played a second role, a supporting role, but obviously they sided more with "the opposition" which were the Chinese parties, Indian parties and the Tunku, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who had negotiated Malaysia's independence from Great Britain and had become the first prime minister and had put together this united Malay national organization. It was almost completely Malay in its cultural makeup but it had a Chinese affiliation and it had an Indian affiliation and for political purposes shared the ministerial positions in government. To elect given their percentage of the population, to be elected politically in this parliamentary system following the British model, the Malays needed a Chinese contingent and an Indian contingent to make up their voting population.

What was fascinating in the social strife that went on all through this period there, following independence, and tied sort of beautifully into the Vietnam era, there was the Chinese communist uprising as it were rebellion or terrorist operation in Malaysia. It was put down in Malaysia because your rural population was Malay and they knew very well who Chang Pi and the communists, the Chinese, were because in the jungles the Chinese stood out. So it was a movement that was suppressible and when the United States went into Vietnam we went in with that model. Having learned from our British cohorts we thought, wow, we can be successful with this because we can use the government and we can isolate the Viet Cong and this is something that we can be successful at. Well, in Vietnam the Viet Cong was no more distinguishable from a South Vietnamese villager than any other South Vietnamese. It was just very different in Malaysia.

Q: While you were there though what was happening?

POLLOCK: The tension between the two societies was immense and it played out as it does in every society. It played out in that rural-urban friction that develops. Major populations in the urban centers were Chinese, major rural populations were Malays. Malays and Chinese did not get along well together, they were very aware of their cultural differences. The youth at the time were terribly idealistic. A spate of Malay Chinese educated Malay boy marries Chinese lady, young Chinese businessman takes Malay wife, there were a large number of these inter ethnic marriages, a very interesting period of time, a very vibrant period of time.

One of the other things that has saved Malaysia from ethnic destruction explosion is that the economy has done well for everyone. It has done well for everyone up until this most recent, for thirty years, certainly up until this most recent economic downturn in Asia. Malaysia grew at eight, nine, ten, twelve, sometimes even twenty percent real growth for twenty years. So it was possible for everyone to enjoy the benefits of this constantly expanding pot and that saved Malaysia in many ways. When we look at ethnic conflict and they say, "Well look Malaysia did it again" it's a unique situation and you need to understand why and how they did it but the inter ethnic conflict was marked and marked when I was there. I, of course, associated with this group that was much more inter ethnically related than dissenting and yet the election of '69 was fascinating. It was during a period of time in which I was doing my political tour in my training. I was assigned to the political section and the number two in the political section and I took off for about six weeks of traveling throughout Malaysia up north in particular and then across and down the east coast of Malaysia where lived the traditional Malay majority, conservative, rural voting districts. They are the districts from whence the Malay reaction, the Islamic Malay Muslim reactions have grown up since. I spoke Indonesian and by this time I had been in Malaysia almost a year and I spoke Malay pretty well. I was not hampered by spending my office days in the embassy speaking English so I was out transitioning my Indonesian to Malaysian. I went along as part of this interviewing process which was tremendously educational. I was listening to the questions and most of the people we were speaking to spoke English very well. They had been English educated but there was always this process in which they would use Malaysian to talk in the room amongst themselves and then they would answer in an English phrase and when we would leave these interviews I had the benefit of then being able to sit down and then we would write the report and I would be able to say, "Now this is interesting, this is the debate that was going on in Malaysian that reflects, that colors the answers a little bit."

I had this whole State Department political reporting build-up to the election. I wrote what I consider to be a very interesting piece. Of course, the truth, the real truth, of the election of '69, whether it was or not, is another matter, but I thought I had a brilliant insight into the whole election process. What happened in the election of '69 I attribute as a direct result of the international visitor program that was administered by the Department of State. That program in those days was part of the bureau of cultural affairs and still resident in the Department of State although always administered by the United States Information Agency overseas. The international visitor program brings foreign visitors to the United States to travel for a month for professional purposes but really to get to see the United States as a functioning polity. A very interesting thing happened in

'69 in Malaysia in the Malaysian elections. The opposition held an opposition congress. What they analyzed during the course of the opposition congress, and there were maybe twelve opposition parties, was that the opposition vote in every electoral district, with the exception of one or two in the far north and on the east coast, the opposition parties always had a majority of the vote but because of the plurality of both Malay plus some Indian and Chinese voting, which were always done on straight party lines, the unknown candidate, the governmental candidate would always win. So, the opposition congress came to the conclusion that if they wanted to win parliament, the way they would do it was that they would run only one opposition party candidate. They needed to come to an agreement that divided the country politically so that each opposition party ran the same number of candidates. Then each opposition party in the opposition government, if this ploy were successful, if this strategy were successful, would have equal representation or fairly close to equal representation. So, they made that political trade off at this congress. They put up one opposition candidate, usually the strongest agreed upon amongst the opposition parties, against one united Malay national organization UMNO (United Malay National Organization) candidate during the election. The results were overwhelming. I think this resulted from the international visitor program. I think they analyzed our two party system and how it had always been successful in putting down third party challenges by expanding to include whatever the third party issues were over the next course of four or eight years.

This is exactly what happened in Malaysia in 1969. The predominantly Chinese and Indian opposition parties engineered a 125-seat switch in parliament and one politically controlled parliament. Tunku was resigned to the fact that a democratic process with all of the flaws of turning out the vote that existed in all democratic processes, the democratic process nevertheless had run its course and UMNO had been defeated and he would turn to the opposition to form a government. The Chinese parties were absolutely elated and it was still a young enough political system that that elation went overboard. On the night of Tuesday, May 13, or the night of the 12th bands of Chinese youth went through Malay areas in primarily the large urban section. They went through Malay areas and celebrated. One of the tokens of their celebration was to smear pork fat or to throw chunks of pork meat onto the porches of the Malay houses. There was some violence; there was some vandalism from these Chinese youth gangs. It was interesting because while the Malays were in higher education it was the Chinese youth that were primarily in menial jobs, the under employed. They were either at home in their families shop houses or they were part of the restless youth-about-town in an urban environment. They weren't in the academic section because the Malays political purposes had kept them out of the educational process except for the Chinese schools. The school systems were separate at the time. All of these things conspired to create this restless youth wing of the Chinese opposition party that just had gone overboard in terms of their celebrating

The reaction from the Malays was immediate. It had religious and psychological overtones. It spread through the countryside immediately and by the morning of the next day, I guess the morning of the 13th, there was sort of real civil war in Kuala Lumpur, in Penang, in Johor, in Bahru, in the major towns. It played out viciously in the countryside where the Malays came into the small towns and took vengeance on the Chinese and

Indian shop keepers who were in the minority in the rural sectors of town. Then rural Malays marched on the cities, on the larger urban sections, and there was a period of carnage and civil strife in the urban centers. It was handled quickly and it was handled very interestingly watching now through the course of my Foreign Service career. It was very instructive to see the way that British training regarding the civilian population held true in the police forces. These were mixed because they were dealing with a civil and urban population. The Indians, the sheiks in particular, had found a place in the police force in Malaysia and risen to some prominence but it was a mixed police force. It was Malay and Chinese and Indian with the Indians actually having done quite well as a military police and an acting civil police. So, they really did protect the population. We had a Chinese lady who came to our apartment a couple of times a week and she actually set out on the morning of the 14th to come across town because she was to come and work for us that day. She was stopped at a barricade at the head of her street and was told, "You are unsafe, go back home." There was a high likelihood that if she had been permitted to continue on her way she would have been killed in the center city of Kuala Lumpur by Malay rioters at that time. The army on the other hand was not as well trained. It was almost purely Malay and there were many stories of the army driving through town in army trucks but wearing civilian clothes and machine gunning crowds on the first pass through and then stopping on the other side, getting into their military uniforms and coming back as the national guard to exert the peace having already done the damage between conflicting elements of youth gangs who were roaming the streets looking for each other. This whole turmoil went on over the course of about a week, was tempered and then finally order restored. What happened was that we had a period of civil emergency in which the Tunku reasserted his authority and the election was thrown out and in order to restore civil obedience the Malays remained in control of politics and the government.

It was a decisive moment for Malaysian history because that was the end of the Tunku. He was done as a politician and a whole new breed and brand of Malay political person came to the fore. The old days were over and the new dawn in Malay politics was to come to the fore through the 1970s.

Q: Looking after...the first place who was our ambassador at the time?

POLLOCK: Our ambassador at the time was James Bell. James Bell was a labor organizer in the United States and was a great friend of Bobby Kennedy's. Bell had accompanied then President Johnson to Malaysia on a trip in Johnson's swing through Southeast Asia, which I believe was his first foreign swing after he assumed the presidency. This was in the mid-60s; on that trip he virtually left Jim Bell behind as ambassador at the request of Bobby Kennedy. He had known Bell himself but he basically...Bell was a Kennedy man. Whether Johnson was preparing for his own election situation in '64 and thought it would be good to leave Bell behind I don't know any of the politics of that but Bell really was a political appointment that had just sailed right through. He was a very savvy, interesting man but he was not a career diplomat. He was perfect for the time and place up to the civil disturbances of May 13th. He would step through the back hedge of the residence every morning at 8:00 a.m. and play nine holes

of golf with the prime minister. He would then come in and sit down with his staff and recount the conversation on the golf course to his political people and his economic people and his USIA cultural people. We would have this running dialogue with the government that informed our running dialogue with our contacts. He was a great raconteur and he was a savvy guy and it worked exceedingly well.

Under the crisis management mode Jim Bell, like the Tunku, couldn't believe that this had happened and had absolutely no idea of what to do next. The DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) was a political officer who had come up through the political ranks. He was, in my opinion, a stick in the mud, so impressive that I can't remember his name and he was quite ineffectual. The most effective operative at the time was the chief of station for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). He played a very important role in the first two or three days of the way the embassy reported back and handled its crisis management. He did so because the parallel to what was happening in Malaysia was our own engagement as a country in the society of Vietnam. During my time in Malaysia I did not have a straight line position as a cultural affairs officer or an information officer but was in this circulating training mode I sat in on a lot of meetings that I would not otherwise have had the opportunity to sit in on. I developed a great deal of empathy, probably sympathy more than empathy, for Lyndon Baines Johnson during this period of time. He obviously was attuned to what was happening in the United States himself and he wanted out of Vietnam in the worst possible way. Every week he would hold a telephone conversation with the leaders of the Southeast Asian nations that later became ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and he would talk to Marcos in the Philippines and he would talk to Lee Kwan Yew in Singapore, he would talk to the Tunku in Kuala Lumpur. He talked to the head of the Thai government and these would be long conversations. They would go on for an hour, an hour and a half at a stretch. To a person the political leaders of the Southeast Asian nations wanted the United States engaged in Vietnam. They would reassure, they would demand Johnson that he stay engaged, he was doing the right thing, their countries would fall. They either believed it to the quick, which I think may well have been reality, or they had bought the domino theory as well as the American establishment had bought the domino theory, but they were absolutely convinced and they convinced Johnson that were it not for the United States all of Southeast Asia would crumble.

The argument in Malaysia was 'look at all of the Chinese, the Chinese are helping to fund, the Chinese may hate the Vietnamese because in effect they are a thorn in the Chinese underbelly, they are of Chinese extraction themselves'. All of the things that Johnson would throw at them about the Vietnamese being Vietnamese, that Tunku would argue back and the advisors, the head of national defense, the people in the Tunku's government who would be party to these conference calls would argue back, "Yes, but they are Chinese funding. And the Chinese, look at our own Chinese communist uprising. Chinese money is flowing in here; it will put together the same sort of uprising here. It will leapfrog Thailand if it needs to but it doesn't need to because all of southern Thailand and all of northern Thailand and control of the opium trade and all of this will come into play and the whole place will come tumbling down."

Q: Was Indonesia with its Chinese, well it had pretty well eliminated the Chinese as a factor in '65 I think.

POLLOCK: In '65 although there are people like Benedict Anderson at Cornell who have a different point of view of that... whether that was going to be a Chinese communist uprising that tied into Vietnam and was going to create a second front or whether this was a military taking power in and of its own volition and plotting. I think it is debatable. We certainly have our point of view and Anderson was ostracized for his point of view.

Q: Well I mean there was Cornell which had its foreign policy and the American government had its. I don't think they ever did meet.

POLLOCK: There was a section of the Cornell school which had its foreign policy and that basically was I think directed by Anderson and a couple of his colleagues. George McTurnan Kahin who headed or founded the Indonesian school was not all that opposed to the way we viewed Indonesia at the time. He had his point of view on our Vietnamese policy but not necessarily on our Indonesian policy.

But the point being, that Johnson weekly would get this urging to stay engaged in Vietnam. I think, I mean it tore him apart.

Q: You were picking this up from your...

POLLOCK: The reason that I can then go on with this story of what was happening in that first week after May 13 in '69 was that there were only two of us in the embassy who spoke Malay. As a consequence, anytime that as with the political swing prior to the elections, anytime that we were going to do a conference call and we were going to do some things that involved the possibility that somebody would come in and would be speaking Malay I was engaged. As soon as this civil disturbance started in Kuala Lumpur I was brought into the embassy. Our major source of information until three or four days later when we could finally get out on the streets and drive around, which again I was engaged in because I spoke Malay, our major source of information was to monitor the police radio which in those days in terms of technology was an FM band on the regular broadcasting system. So we could tune in and listen to the police reports and record them and transcribe them and there were only two of us who could...

Q: Who is the other?

POLLOCK: Paul Redman.

Q: This is Tape 3, Side 1, with Jim Pollock.

POLLOCK: And so they needed somebody to monitor the police radio and we would work these 24-hour shifts. I was privy to what was going on in the embassy during this period of time. Now the embassy was downtown and right in the cross hairs of where the Chinese and the Malay populations were going to come together, as was my residence. I

lived at the time next door to a renowned restaurant called Le Coq d'Or. This was a continental cuisine restaurant that was the former residence of a very wealthy Chinese gentleman who made his money in tin. He built this huge residence because he had come from poverty and he had fallen in love with the daughter of a rich Chinese businessman and asked for her hand in marriage and was rebuffed because he had no money, he was from poverty. Then he made a fortune in tin while the Chinese businessman fell on hard times. As a consequence, this gentleman, having been rebuffed, built a huge ornate mansion across the street from the Chinese businessman who had fallen on hard times and whose fortune was on the dwindle to show him that he had made the wrong decision in not permitting his daughter to be married to this gentleman. He built a house set back further from the street next door for his older son. In his will he directed that his residence would become a restaurant and would never be torn down. That is still true today. The Bok House sits as a Chinese palatinate structure done with Carrara marble and in the Renaissance revival style with Chinese flair in the middle of what now, with the expansion of Kuala Lumpur and its population, is the business section. The property now faces this huge tallest twin tower structure in the world and the residence that I lived in, which had been divided into apartments horizontally. We had the upstairs and the family lived in the downstairs below us. That was turned quickly into one of the first "baburn", shopping centers, in Kuala Lumpur.

But the point of this was to show the tenor of the times regarding the United States and also how I was engaged during that first week in the embassy.

We sat across the street in this Chinese, known to be a Chinese building, known to be a Chinese owned and operated restaurant. We sat across the street from the major living area of the Malay population, the Malay "campon" of Kuala Lumpur. So as the Chinese sought refuge they came out of the surrounding area and sought refuge behind the gates of this restaurant and our house in the living quarters where the Chinese owners still have their residences. The gates were shut and the gates stopped the Malay mob.

That night before the night that the riots started I put an American flag out over the balcony. They saw the American flag, they did not come through the gates, they would fire, we were under gunfire, which would come in from the gates but the mob never stormed the gates. When the embassy needed me the next morning they sent a jeep with a number of the marine detachment driving and a Marine in the back with his weapon. When they drove up the firing stopped, the crowd split, the gates were opened, the jeep drove in, they picked me and my wife and dog up and deposited my wife and dog at the Merlin hotel around the corner. Then they drove me down to the embassy and it was like, ugh, the Americans are here; it was not Somalia. The difference between the two is the difference between politics and a worldview of the United States and how we are perceived and how civil disturbance and terrorism, using power for political ends, is perceived between then and now.

But this then threw me in the embassy very early on. Office doors were open and the person in control of the embassy at the time was the chief of station. Ambassador Bell simply paced his office shaking his head, wondering aloud to himself how this would

happen and contacting his contacts in the government including the Tunku who was wondering how this riot could happen, this civil disturbance, how could my population, how could my children do this. The real politic on the ground was the fact that we had 250 American soldiers in town on R&R (rest and relaxation). Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Bangkok, these were all R&R posts from Vietnam and they'd come in on the 11th and 12th and then dispersed. The Chinese hotels in downtown Kuala Lumpur right in the midst of the riots, were "good" R&R places. They were clean, they were starched, they were medically examined.

Q: Young ladies.

POLLOCK: Young ladies and American soldiers could have a very good time, good cuisine, great beer and nice women. Those Americans needed to be extracted from this civil carnage immediately and within the morning and afternoon of the 13th and the 14th C140s were dispatched. They came into the airport and the Malaysian security people knew where every single one of those soldiers was and the CIA, with their contacts with security forces, knew where every single one of those soldiers was and the same thing happened that happened when the Marines picked me up. They drove buses escorted by Malaysian security people through the downtown area of Kuala Lumpur. Everything ceased, the waters parted, soldiers, Americans, came out of these hotels and get into the buses and were driven to the airport and all 250 of them were gone within the matter of about 36 hours.

That was my first introduction to the value in American interests of having an unannounced chief of station, CIA, security intelligence people operating in our embassies. So that's how I had this inside view of the embassy and an inside view of the derivations and origins of the civil disturbances. Then as the military curfew was established we began to get out into the streets, first with political reporting and then USIA -- my public affairs officer. At the time there were 13 Americans on the staff for USIA in Kuala Lumpur and a similar number of Malaysians. A large majority of those people at the start of the disturbances and the subsequent days were isolated in the public affairs officer's residence. That first evening there was a party for a film crew from our regional film office in Tokyo that had been filming some educational and economic development films for projects that were going on. They had been in town for about a week and they were at a party that evening at the PAO's residence and that's where they stayed. So as the curfew began to take place, the public affairs officer, a marvelous gentleman named Errol Wilson...

Q: A real China hand.

POLLOCK: A real China hand. He set up a USIA command center out at his residence. We began operating relief efforts the next week for the refugees of this civil disturbance most of whom had been taken by Malaysian police and military forces to the two large soccer stadiums in town. So there was a real relief effort going on with Red Cross personnel and Red Crescent personnel in the stadiums. We began, first of all, seeking out our staff, bringing food and water into their residences in the stadiums, talking and

debriefing a lot of people in the stadiums and running a relief operation from there on. So I was engaged in that at different levels and inserted into it and had a unique and formative experience.

Q: Well then shortly after that you left didn't you? I mean fairly soon after?

POLLOCK: I was going through the bidding process of my two-year junior officer rotation, which was to come to an end then in the spring of 1970. I'd arrived in the Spring of '68, it was to be over in the Spring of '70 and I had been trained in Indonesian and the idea was that I would then go on to Indonesia for a full four-year assignment. The initial thinking of that assignment was that I was going to be an assistant cultural affairs officer in Jakarta at the American Center helping to reestablish our English teaching program there. In the Chinese Communist insurgency of '65 and the coup attempt, which led to Sukarno's ouster, the embassy, as that tension grew through '63, '64, had been drawn down and our consulates in Medan and Surabaya had actually been evacuated. As the coup attempt took place, most Americans in Jakarta were also evacuated and our Ambassador Marshall Green kept his information officer and they were the two, three or four who remained in the embassy during the real coup days of '65. He saw the opportunity in his relationships after the coup when General Suharto solidified his position and Sukarno was ousted. Green saw the opportunity of reopening American interests in relations and set about doing so first in Jakarta and then he left and Francis Galbraith...

Q: I'm wondering if we can stop here because I'm just looking at the time. We will pick this up and you are explaining how Medan became opened up and we will pick that up the next time.

POLLOCK: Great.

Q: OK, today is January 8, 2007. I'm not sure how long this has been on hiatus, but quite a long hiatus.

POLLOCK: Yes.

Q: Whatever we are right back where we left off. You were talking about Suharto working not only in Jakarta but outside and how Medan got reopened or something?

POLLOCK: Yes, Francis J. Galbraith had come to Jakarta as ambassador in 1969. Frank had spent his entire Foreign Service career on Indonesia and a very illustrious career it was. He had assignments in Hong Kong, certainly in the Netherlands, in London, all Indonesian watching jobs with the one exception which was as ambassador to Singapore in the mid-'60s. That led him then from Singapore to Jakarta as ambassador. On the USIS staff in Jakarta were at least two officers who had formerly served in Indonesia, one in Medan in particular. Medan, on the island of Sumatra, is a principal port through which all of the agricultural produce of the island or at least the eastern coast of the island was shipped on to other destinations. Sumatra also had been one of the islands after

independence that felt that its own independence was as important as the independence of Indonesia itself so there were always fears of secessionist movements. There was a Christian population, the Batak people, who inhabited the mountainous area immediately around Medan. To the North was the province of Aceh, which at that time 1966-67 through the mid-'70s, was where the "modernizers" had come to power. They wanted to lead Aceh away from its traditional deep Islamic traditions into a more modern industrial, agricultural alignment with Jakarta's policies and with the rest of the developing countries of Southeast Asia.

So Aceh was a concern and the industrialism around the Medan port was of interest and it made very good sense to reopen the consulate in Medan. At the time, as well, Mobil Oil was coming into Sumatra initially looking for oil. That proved unsuccessful over probably a 5-7 year period from '65 or '66 into the early '70s. What Mobil Oil had found was that the whole tip of Aceh was one big natural gas bubble. So with the heating crisis of maybe the winter of 1970 in the United States, maybe 1970-'71 in California in particular with natural gas prices skyrocketing Mobil decided it was in their interest to develop the natural gas in Aceh. Initially they were just going to abandon the place because they hadn't found oil and they were rather disgruntled.

There were all these factors: the exploration that was going on with the U.S. firms involved, the reintroduction of commercial interests including the Japanese. They were not permitted to come out of Jakarta but were permitted to travel as business people. They would lodge in the major hotel in Medan and sometimes would stay for as long as two or three years in a hotel room doing business.

The ascension of the military command on the island I think all of these things probably lead to the decision to reopen Medan. The first consul there when I arrived was Roger Sullivan. Roger had been a political officer in Singapore and was a Southeast Asian hand and he had reopened the consulate. I had been preceded by about a year by another USIS officer who had come up to Medan simply to establish an office in the consulate and to have a USIS presence. In 1969 Christmas time, I was assigned as the branch public affairs officer there and arrived at post in January of 1970 having come across from Kuala Lumpur. I stayed in Medan for three years. I had come over on a two-year assignment, '70, '71 and then stayed on into '73, into August '73. It was a very productive three full years, three years plus, in Medan from my perspective.

By the summer time of 1970 Roger Sullivan was replaced as consul by Jerrold Mark Dion. Mark had been initially a Latin American scholar with Spanish language and Portuguese language. He had served his introductory tours in Europe and then had taken a tour in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He had found the area absolutely fascinating. So he went back to Washington perhaps in '64, some place between '64-'66 and had served as a desk officer. Then he had gone to the University of Cornell which has probably the leading center for the Study of Indonesia and Austral-Malayo Cultures in the country. Mark had gone up to study there and had done so for a couple of years, I believe, and had then come out as consul in Medan. One of his interests, of course, from his studies at Cornell was to travel the island of Sumatra and he proposed to do this by car. He had

asked for volunteers to go with him and I thought what better than the person representing the United States in a cultural and educational capacity than myself. So Mr. Dion and I did a great deal of traveling around the island of Sumatra by car and it was absolutely fascinating.

Q: I wanted to ask you about the Cornell connection because unlike any other place that I've talked to people about Cornell was very big on Indonesian studies. In this period seemed to have an almost diametrically opposed stand than the embassy and the State Department. I know Bob Martin, whom I've interviewed somewhat later, but close to the same period he was political officer got crossways with them. I mean he felt one thing and they felt another. How did this play out with a principal officer who had been trained there, did he come with a bias or...but anyway talk about the sort of Cornell connection as you saw. What the problem or the difference was?

POLLOCK: The Cornell connection was important and it played out in several different ways. There will be some gaps of names here that I can fill in later when I look at the written text but there were several people at Cornell who were influential in the making of intellectual discord regarding Indonesia. First of all the center's founder had spent many years in Indonesia and there were Indonesian hands with a deep understanding of the culture and local politics of the country. Clifford Geertz certainly was part of this group of people although I'm not sure that he was at Cornell that is something that I will have to check out. He was influential in Cornell thinking and there were a couple of younger people that Mark Dion in particular considered intellectually, exceedingly bright and capable. The basic issues I think that were involved in terms of a view of Indonesia that was not the public view held by the United States government was that Indonesia itself had a deep cultural tradition and sense in that the divisive internal situation in which the military had come to power and appeared to have the best interest of the country at heart, to have modernization on their mind, to certainly have political stability as one of its goals and objectives. After the turmoil of Sukarno this was quite welcome in terms of U.S. policy. One of the reasons is that the Sunda trench which comes down out of the outer islands and I think comes through at the end of Borneo and the Sulawes, either that or it goes around the other side on down to the Bondi Sea, is one of the deepest draft water trenches in the Pacific. So for our fleet to move from the Pacific into the Indian Ocean, if necessary, a friendly Indonesia and particularly one with whom we had good military relations was and I presume still is of great strategic interest to us. So to have the military friendly to the United States at the time certainly in favor of our policies in support of the South Vietnamese government, our involvement in the region being welcomed, the chilliness of our relations with China at that time, although President Nixon would soon warm those up...

Q: Oh really, now we are talking close to ten years later, not quite, no this is the early '70s. Oh yes, so it was very close.

POLLOCK: The early '70s. All of these things I think from a political standpoint were quite welcomed by U.S. policy and U.S. security interests. The economy was something that we were exceedingly interested in as well. USAID had a huge mission in Indonesia

and was working diligently to spur economic development. USIS was interested in teaching English and we opened two new English centers. We had a center in Jakarta previously but we opened a cultural center in Surabaya and in Medan. One of the things that I was instrumental in concluding was a move out of the consulate and into a separate cultural space where we could build a library, conduct cultural events that were open to the public, teach English and in effect get away from sort of the security requirements that were necessary for an Indonesian citizen to come onto the consulate grounds. There was always the view that people would talk to us more openly and equitably about how they felt the military actually was ruling and conducting itself in the country if they didn't have to be seen at the consulate. So we had educational programs that we were carrying out to introduce school age, college age, university age population in Medan; there was the teachers training school, the EKIP, as well as the university in Medan. There were a couple of academic institutions and training institutions there. We were going back onto those campuses after a hiatus of several years and reintroducing ourselves to the population. I was doing a lot of lecturing on the American political system, American music, the things that USIS center directors in the day were called upon to do. The introduction of an English language program was all part of our country plan projects. We were establishing a dialogue with the Indonesians that could be seen as productive as the one that we had in Malaysia. These were the years that British tuitions were put into effect for overseas colonies and Malaysia had always sent its English language students abroad for training in Great Britain. They now found that it was economically to their benefit to do so in the United States. Therefore numbers that started in the hundreds and quickly grew to the thousands of Malaysian students were going off to the United States and Indonesia was seeing if its students could pass the TOEFL (test of English as a foreign language) test. They saw the United States as a place to go and study as well. So all of our USIS programs were designed to foster and encourage these developments.

I think the Indonesia school at Cornell on the other hand was looking at the Suharto government much more in the light of a government like some of the military dictatorships in South America -- that is a government much more interested in using the military as a force for control, as a force for sucking up population that the economy in Indonesia did not have jobs for, of relieving urban overcrowding by providing some training, by providing a constant salary, by providing some discipline, three meals a day, all of the things that a military can do to relieve some of the urban problems and economic problems that were evident in the country at the time.

Sukarno had been a marvelous, charismatic leader. He took great delight: a delegation would go in to see Sukarno, he would welcome them, he would embrace them, they would wonder why education hadn't been extended to their province or their city. Sukarno delighted in saying, "Ah, but there is a school there, I've just decreed it. When you go back you will find a school open." Of course, there was no funding or structure foundation on which schools or other economic industrial projects were built. The military had inherited this and was going to set off either by conscripted labor or using penal personnel or whatever they were going to make some advancements.

Driving around Sumatra with Mr. Dion was that we had an opportunity not only to look at the state of education and culture but also to look at the state of the economy. Mark would point out that in the Dutch days the roads were good and let's say this should be an eight-hour trip from Banda Aceh to Medan. Now we had undertaken something that was going to be at least a two-day trip, maybe a three-day trip. So while the U.S. government welcomed the Suharto government, people at Cornell were a little bit more leery about the real interests of the people in power and how the military would rule, and what that might mean for Indonesia in terms for U.S. policy. If you looked at U.S. policy from the point of view of an ally welcoming our presence, and particularly our military presence and our stability in the region, the stability that we provided, then the military was a perfect ally. But if you looked at U.S. policy from the point of view of creating a stable country growing and prospering, exercising entrepreneurial interests, then in some ways and I think this was the Cornell argument, the military may not have been as good an ally as other forces within the society could have been. It was quite true that basically the military in order to equip and feed itself became the major business organization and ultimately a political organization with the Golkar party that controlled the country. Suharto was in power a good twenty years before he left.

Graft and corruption were things that were a given. The issue was how much and who was channeling it, what was the military involved in and there were a couple of interesting stories related to that. We saw the policy repeated after Indonesia. I cannot state whether it was a given policy for Indonesia but we have certainly seen the United States consider that corruption is a given in a situation and if privatization is going to occur I'm thinking let's say of the initiatives that went into the Soviet Union, or the former Soviet Union after the break up of the Soviet Union. The privatization in Russia and some of the other satellite states, forces of corruption hugely instrumental and yet United States policy saying well you know investment in privatization will eventually limit corruption because investors simply won't stand for it. They'll make it known that in order for businesses to succeed other things need to take place and corruption needs to be curtailed although as we have seen corruption may be part of our own political and economic system to a degree that we were not aware of, at least I was not aware of as a youth growing up.

I think the Cornell argument was military dictatorship is one thing and it is a style of government that has been known in Indonesia and perhaps these are not as saintly as rulers might be, not as saintly as U.S. policy would like to portray them. I think that that was part of the conflict.

Q: And also, part of the analysis that I've gotten from people who were at the embassy when the Sukarno/Suharto business took place I think in '63 I guess it was or '62 was that Sukarno was well on his way to declaring a Communist state. I mean he was moving very quickly in that direction and hence the murder of some of the top people in the military and then the military sort of reacted before he reacted. Then there was the great controversy in that period after Sukarno was squeezed out of office. How many Chinese were killed, I see that the Indonesians whenever things went badly they went out and killed the Chinese minority. What were the people saying about that?

POLLOCK: That certainly seems to have occurred and the books of the time The Night of the Generals and I can remember John Hughes in The Year of Living Dangerously certainly recount this toll taking that goes on. The Chinese had been introduced throughout Southeast Asia, the British were responsible for it in Malaysia and the Malay feeling in Malaysia is exactly the same toward the Chinese. I had witnessed that in the civil disturbances following the elections in May of '69 in Kuala Lumpur, which were very anti-Chinese in their nature and lead to Malay establishment of affirmative action programs that are still discriminatory against the Chinese in Malaysia. I think Indonesia was the same way. There were a couple of Chinese on our staff or people with Chinese heritage on our staff at the consulate and they were seen as I think in common stereotypical light. They were expeditors; this one gentleman in particular was the consulate's expeditor. He knew his way around the port extremely well. He had his connections and while the military went earnestly about eliminating some of the Chinese population, of course, they also used the Chinese population for their commercial accretion. Suharto himself, through the companies that were family companies for the Suharto family, certainly had Chinese advisors and "commercants" who worked with them.

We had a gentleman who lived down the street from us who was of Chinese background and he made it his responsibility to be on very friendly terms with the military command in Medan as well as with the commercial people. He was a businessman and part of doing business was to have the military on your side and he was terribly aware of that. I think that in just my personal conversations with him in private I think there was no doubt that the fact that he had located his house in a triangular situation that involved the front gates of the military barracks, three houses of the American consulate and himself around a little triangular park. I think there was no doubt that his residence was picked strategically and that he was a good neighbor to us and to the military. I think that this situation, certainly Indonesia unlike Malaysia interestingly, Indonesia had adopted the same policies. I'm not sure when this happened, but they had adopted the same policies as the Thai which you needed to take an Indonesian name rather than maintain your Chinese name as a way of confirming your allegiance to the country and your citizenship as an Indonesian or as a Thai. So that certainly was one of the social practices that the Chinese population adhered to.

Q: I understand in Thailand that a great many Chinese married Thai wives. Was this going on in Indonesia?

POLLOCK: I can't really speak to that. I'm going to have to assume in the countryside this probably was a practice. It was in Indonesia, certainly, and it may have been a practice interestingly spawned by independence. Certainly in Malaysia this was true. There were these halcyon days in Malaysia between '56 and '66. The young people in the society believed that they were the forerunners of a new society in which they were all Malaysians and Chinese and Malays could publicly intermingle, show affection for each other. There had always been some intermarriage as I think there always is but whether there was the same sort of spirit in Indonesia after independence I don't know. Certainly,

I know it was present in Malaysia and it came to a grinding halt with the events of '69. When I later went back to Malaysia as public affairs officer at the end of the '80s the conversation with my friends from the '60s would still go back to the fact that the society had not recovered from '69. It was a very different society, very much a more suspicious and wary society.

Q: The riots and...

POLLOCK: Riots in '69.

Q: Well let's talk about Sumatra. Sumatra is a huge island. I always think of Aceh that thing up on the tip of the northern tip of Sumatra and Medan is right there.

POLLOCK: Medan is down the island somewhat. Medan is actually the capital of and in the province of north Sumatra. Medan is located pretty much across the Straits of Malacca from Penang in Malaysia. As you go north from there, Aceh really fits in and Aceh falls really into two regions. There are huge, probably the highest mountains in Indonesia. That may be proven untrue in Kalimantan in Borneo, but at least a mountain spine of considerable height runs down from the tip of Aceh, runs down well into the island of Sumatra. In Aceh, in particular, it leaves the east side of the peninsula as a population basin, rice growing and an agriculturally fairly self-sufficient region with access to export through Medan to Malaysia or Singapore or to other ports.

On the other side, the western side of the spine, the Indian ocean side, has lived traditionally this group of people who have always felt shunned and apart from the rest of Indonesia. It's played itself out in several ways, certainly communication, roads up over the mountain just don't exist, you've got to go around the tip and back down the other side. There have been some projects and even at the time that I was there in the early '70s there was a mountain highway that was in various stages of construction or completion or incompleteness -- the idea being that there ought to be a way to get across the island other than going all the way around. But communications were such on the island that the whole back western side felt really cut off from Indonesia and felt that it could do what it wanted to do. That was the breeding ground for the independence, the secessionist movement, the more conservative Islamic movement, not part of the Java modernized, modernizing Islamic sentiment of the day. I think that sentiment has changed somewhat as traditionalists, or more conservative voices, have appeared in the Medan school system, the religious school system.

The Acehese succession movement was instrumental in the independence movement. The forces who wanted to see an independent Indonesia, wanted to drive the Dutch out, were basically rebels in the hills, rebels in the mountains in those days. As those rebels were successful and independence was granted certainly a number of the leaders, at least in Sumatra, of civil society, came out of that group. That was an absolutely marvelous, phenomenal individual named Nordine. He was head of the teacher training institute in Padang, had been at Princeton University in the Institute of Advanced Study working on the bomb during the war, a physicist by training. He was just a phenomenal individual

who had been in the hills with the independence movement but was now down in Padang running this teacher training program of building furniture for classrooms. He was just one of those individuals that we wished could be cloned, energy, excitement and a love for Indonesia and its possibilities and where it could go and what it could do and educating people and moving them out into trades and into the economy and into sustainable agriculture. All these things that, I think, we were rather idealistic about as Americans raised in the fifties and coming into service for our country in the '60 and '70s.

But the counter to that were the people who stayed in the hills and said this was not for us. They were not following our principles and that became the background of movement for succession in Aceh. It was spurred on by contacts with the West with the United States that were not successful contacts: Mobil Oil's exploration during this period, geologists in the field who didn't respect local culture or religious traditions, who perhaps were even playfully so, who knows, but overly aggressive with Indonesian-Acehanese women. The society would take its retribution and we would have them in Medan for repatriation, for burial. Contacts of this sort were not favorable in terms of the Acehnese population.

Mobil Oil was going to invest the money necessary with some Japanese backing in developing what became the natural gas fields in Lhokseumawe. They were interested in bringing in 300, it started at 300 and I believe it went on into the thousands but it started as 300 U.S. families out of Texas and Oklahoma and Louisiana. Wellhead geologists, riggers, all kinds of people who were going to put this gas plant on the line were coming into Medan. This was a tremendous economic influx for the city of Medan itself. But I remember in 1973 seeking permission from the embassy and the USIS office, my public affairs officer, in Jakarta to write my own entry plan for Medan. That plan actually focused a good deal more on a cross cultural training with American families coming into Medan than it did on espousing American attitudes and culture informing Indonesian people about the United States. We were concerned at the consulate about this very quick influx of families with no interest in being in Medan per se or being in Indonesia or Aceh per se but an interest just to build these gas wells. We were concerned that this would cause a tremendous social conflict in north Sumatra and in Aceh. That would be directly counter to USIS objectives of informing the population about the United States and its ideals and its educational institutions and values. We would create in effect an antagonistic rather than a friendly and welcoming and understanding atmosphere. So I'd asked for permission to establish a dialogue with Americans to help them understand the culture that they were coming into as much as we tried to help Indonesians understand the culture that we were coming from.

That was an important issue of the day. The university in Aceh and the government in Aceh through the early seventies was a government that we respected and looked at as modernizing. It was a government very interested in its people but also interested, as many modernizers of the Islamic faith are, in taking from the west what they felt was invaluable in terms of satisfying the economic needs, the agricultural needs, even the political needs of their population while maintaining traditional values. So they were in

conflict with an element of the population that was more conservative, that wanted to remain more isolated from western influence.

Some of these people had been trained overseas, spoke English reasonably well. One of them eventually the Rector of the university, Shawalla, did later go on down to Jakarta as a minister in the ministry of economics and development. We had a Fulbright scholar. He had specifically requested a Fulbright scholar to come and teach English and American literature, English literature and this gentleman, Roger Burr, has had a long and continuing history with the university and with the professorial cadre at the university. Roger stayed at Shawalla through the year of his Fulbright assignment and stayed on for another year.

Mobil Oil at that point was interested in having a liaison office, an office that was representative of culture and social concerns that the United States had, that they had as the United States company being involved with its society. Roger stayed on and worked in that office for a while and later came back to Shawalla again as an independent teacher. He now lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, continues to maintain contacts with his friends in Aceh and was very, very deeply involved with the tsunami relief effort in particular, which impacted families that he has known for 35-40 years now.

Q: USIS, I mean you are trying to basically make other societies aware of American culture and make them feel positively towards the United States. I would think that this particular group in Aceh, the fundamentalists, would be almost impervious to Americans. I mean at the time how did you find this?

POLLOCK: Not at all impervious and in many ways quite interested. I now recognize, looking back both over my career, over some of the bureaucratic arguments within my career, and certainly from the perspective of today's structure of the State Department and today's policy, that my conversations in Aceh over this time, and in Medan and throughout Sumatra, were conversations that influenced me and I think influenced the people with whom I was speaking.

There was a natural inquisitiveness about the United States. I think that inquisitiveness remains for many reasons. Certainly militarily we're seen as a huge country and a strong power economically. We have interests on both major ocean regions of the world, the Pacific and the Atlantic. At that time we had our conflict with the Soviet Union and Communism which intellectually, theologically, was an anathema to conservative Islamic individuals. Town meeting democracy that we prided ourselves on has now been overwhelmed by population size and urban growth. Indonesia has exactly the same thing. At the village level they are tremendously democratic and their interest was in how the United States manages that, what our democracy was all about, what our common law was all about. Our American descendants of British common law has much more in common with Sharia law in Islamic societies than it does with the legal heritage that has been carried over into these societies from the colonial times, certainly much more in common with Sharia law than the Napoleonic code and also the Dutch European legalistic traditions.

So, in many ways you could have a discussion about moral and intellectual values that was a very pleasant discussion and a very dynamic discussion that was not at all at odds with a conservative Islamist. Fundamental, bad choice of words which I probably will change, but born again Christianity. The Christian movement in the United States shares a great deal in common with conservative Islamic movements overseas.

So those conversations I would say were much more enlightening than they were antagonistic in any way.

Q: To sort of sum up, in the fundamental Islamic areas at that time there was nothing inherently anti-American?

POLLOCK: Not at all, certainly not that I could perceive.

Q: What was the feeling that you got both at the consulate but also from the embassy about this independence movement because anybody looking at Indonesia as sort of like Africa. Once you start breaking off there is no end to it. We still had the Vietnam War going on and sure as hell didn't want to see that area break apart which would mean an opportunity for the Communists. How did you feel about that situation?

POLLOCK: We felt as though Indonesia should remain a whole, that there should not be a whole set of separate independent movements. An island country is always difficult to manage. Our concern was did we have a tension between what was being taught at Cornell and what was being advocated as policy in Washington or Jakarta.

I think the conflict is that the idea of a republic, that the idea of institutions that reflect a political hold that operate in the best competitive advantage interests of a country are important but at the same time maintaining local cultural traditions and a pride in local groupings, or island groupings, is equally important. You can assert the authority of Jakarta through military control in the same way that Rome asserted its control over the Mediterranean basin. Or you can through means of economic development responding to needs of citizens providing education that talked about a structure in Indonesian nationalism that coalesced Indonesia as a country rather than as a disparate group of islands was part of the issue involved. So as a consulate and as an embassy and as a country I believe we had no interest in seeing Indonesia become a disparate group of islands.

I think we did have an interest in evaluating whether the military's control was simply a control for its own benefit or whether it was a control for the benefit of its population. There were many things within the Indonesian structure at the time that could be played upon. One was the absolutely ingenious cohesive idea of inventing a language, creating a language upon independence that was a new Indonesian language. It wasn't Komerling off of Java, it wasn't one of the local Batak dialects, it wasn't Islam or Arabic. It was a created language that drew on all of those sources and yet could be used as a language of commerce and industry.

It responded to the Astro-Malay language group that runs from Honolulu to Madagascar. You could be understood in any port in the Pacific in the great sailing days of that ocean empire. So this was a language that drew on all of these sources and it said to anyone who spoke it that it was the national language. We are a nation. It was taught in the schools, it was the language of instruction at the university level. There were these elements that could be used very productively and cohesively to pull these islands together, while at the same time recognizing full well that Aceh had traditions, West Sumatra had traditions, Sumatra itself had traditions but they were in many ways in conflict. I mean it would be interesting to see Sumatra wanting to secede with a matriarchal society imbedded in Western Sumatra around Padang and a conservative Islamic society in Aceh. There is a formula for a conflict in dissolution even within the same island itself. So the idea of keeping these islands together as an island nation I think makes very, very good sense, very good policy.

But basically how is this implemented? Is it implemented in a constructive way or a destructive way? U.S. policy at the time because of its involvement, this is reflected I mean in my own career. I can see this playing out for instance in my very last assignment overseas in Senegal. We changed the accepted foundation of American policy in Senegal overnight because the terms and conditions that had created that policy twenty years earlier had changed. I think the same thing true in Indonesia. The terms and conditions of our policy involvement there at the end of the sixties and throughout the seventies was very different than it is today. I think that the consulate and the embassy in Jakarta did a great service to our country by reflecting some of the problems that might be there in dealing with the military as the rulers of Indonesia with an agenda of its own rather than a populist agenda. I think that that was our function.

Now, for political reasons that may not have had a great deal of resonance in Washington over a period of time and certainly the events that lead to Suharto's downfall and a change of government. My guess is that similar to the experience I had in Senegal where the embassy determined, you know the foundations for our policy here are twenty years old and they just don't work anymore, very likely the foundations for our policy with the Suharto government were twenty years old and hadn't really been questioned in Washington. It may well have been questioned in the field, which is part of what happened in Senegal. I think we may have had the force from the field with a country like Senegal to change what the foundations of U.S. policy really were.

In Indonesia I suspect that would have been terribly difficult and I think that we are going through a period of time of rearming of reestablishing military relations with the Indonesian government again and I think both sides are more wary now than they were in the early seventies. I think both the consulate role, the role of academics such as the Cornell school, our embassy's role, the political and economic reporting coming out of Jakarta at the time, I think all of these played the constructive questioning function even though the conclusion may be, yes, we are staying with this government, we support this government but there was a questioning attitude to it.

Q: How did you find the visiting scholars from Cornell because at one time we practically didn't have diplomatic relations with Cornell, between our embassy and Cornell, but time had passed and how did you find it at that time? Did they come out? Were they seeing the same Sumatra that you were seeing?

POLLOCK: I'm not sure. You are absolutely right about the separation with Cornell. There is an academic at Cornell who was a great Indonesian hand and I will insert his name here when I remember it but sort of a genius Indonesian scholar, not of the old group but of the younger new breed of Indonesian scholars. The next generation after George McTurnan Kahin, but the Clifford Geertz's and so on. He floated the hypothesis that his study and his contact and his research indicated to him that this Night of the Generals might not have been as innocent from the military standpoint as you said earlier. The generals acted before Sukarno maybe had a chance to act or did the generals act was this...

Q: Well the generals a whole bunch were killed and dumped down a well by Sukarno and Suharto almost by happenstance in his division happened to be passing through Jakarta so I mean he was able to...

POLLOCK: Correct, and he took control. There was some questioning about how this all unfolded. Was it really a Chinese Communist attempt to in effect overthrow the government, usurp the government from Sukarno and put him up as a puppet? Or was it the fact that these elements were in favor with Sukarno and the military felt it really should move...

Q: This is Tape 4, Side 1, with Jim Pollock. Yeah.

POLLOCK: That the military perhaps should move in a preemptive way. Admittedly I'm an information and culture officer. I didn't read all of the political cables nor was I privy to a whole lot of insight into embassy political sections; but, from my perspective, in any of these situations in which an individual decides that it's time for them to step forward and take power, there is always somebody who may not want to do that. So who were the generals that were actually eliminated and to what benefit for the generals that then succeeded to power. I don't know. In any event what I had seen with several academics as my career progressed, this individual was declared persona non grata, never again to be admitted to Indonesia, no visa for him. So he changed his career field from Indonesia to other things and is no longer at the Indonesian school at Cornell although he still teaches at Cornell.

Certainly, when individuals came into Medan from Cornell they were welcomed and I believe they were welcomed in Jakarta equally. Mr. Dion had spent time at Cornell and was friendly with those people. Robert Pringle, who had a very distinguished career at the ambassadorial level in the State Department, was also an officer in Jakarta and had studied at Cornell at this point and been very interested in the Borneo, Malaysia, and Indonesia situation. So I think these people were listened to sympathetically, or

empathetically, in terms of who their sources had been, what their field research had shown in years prior during the forties and fifties when they were younger scholars.

Q: What was the impact while you were there of the war in Vietnam? It was reaching the kind of the end game there and the peace process was going on before the final collapse. Was that much of a factor?

POLLOCK: Well, it certainly wasn't much of a factor in our day-to-day activities. As a young officer in Malaysia, visiting Thailand, in Indonesia I never found any discussion any situation in which the United States involvement in Vietnam was not applauded as something terribly necessary and something that the countries of Southeast Asia could not do. I think we were highly respected for being there. I think that all of the reasons that we stated for our being in Vietnam were not only applauded and encouraged by the governments of Southeast Asia but generally applauded by the populations as well.

In Malaysia, I know from a couple of conversations there that President Johnson would call and talk to Natonku regularly, he would talk to Lee Kwan Yew regularly. The nature of those conversations was: I got my fanny in a sling here in domestic politics and I've got to do something about Vietnam. The answer to LBJ always was: stay the course, we need you there, you are there for a reason but we cannot play the role you are playing and we need to have you there. So I think that Johnson was always in a dilemma when he hung up the phone because from a foreign policy standpoint everybody in the region encouraged him and applauded his policy and from a domestic standpoint it was all unraveling. I became very sympathetic as an officer to the position that he was in.

There were two instances when I was in Medan that come to mind that reflect on Vietnam. I was talking, as USIS does every four years, about the American presidential electoral system. I had a university audience for this. They had come to the American center and we were discussing this. I would have a weekly meeting that probably had 35-40 people in it. Some from the local government in Medan but mostly academics. Then Watergate occurred. This was a group of people who that thought Nixon was beloved and McGovern was just somebody who "it would be disastrous if the American people were to elect McGovern." I said to this group, "Watch out for this Watergate thing. The American mentality wants to be as pure as it can be about its electoral democracy. What you dismiss, and what I might dismiss because, holy smokes, European politics is so much different and you understand the European political situation. This would simply be overlooked, or it is just seen as common practice and forget about something like this." But I said, "If this goes sour for the president, the results of the election no matter how overwhelming they might be, my guess is that this isn't going to a factor in the election, but if it continues, because it is too close to the election, if it continues to boil, however, and somebody gets their teeth into this and it unravels for the president, just watch the reaction of the American populace to this."

The conversations that then went on as Watergate unfolded showed the interest from this group of people. They were an intellectual cadre and interested in the United States. Our involvement in Vietnam and Richard Nixon's role in Vietnam just made him adored and

a namesake. The Batak people have a tendency to name their offspring after people they consider famous and there were a lot of Richard Nixon Bamoons and Richard Nixon Semantongs born in Medan during this period of time.

Throughout this area starting with Lee Kwan Yew's decision in the late '60s or '70-'71 that individuals coming into Singapore who did not have short hair were representative of a hippie culture, of a culture that probably were smoking marijuana, probably traveling around to this region using marijuana in an illegal way. Now marijuana was sold in the market place for culinary purposes. It makes an excellent spice if used in making curries and things of that sort. I could attest to that having stayed behind. Mr. Dion had gone out with the governor of Aceh to inspect a power plant. I said I didn't need to spend the afternoon looking at a power plant, I'd far prefer spending the afternoon, if it were agreeable with the governor, working with his wife in the kitchen to prepare the curry. He was having a big reception for us in the evening and I was interested in Southeast Asian cooking. So I wanted to see how she prepared her curries. So I was taking copious notes including the note that said, now just a pinch of ganja. I queried her on that and she said, "Oh yes, for medicinal purposes and for cooking purposes, we all use a little ganja every once in a while. Certainly not for illegal purposes." But I found that interesting and it was easily available. Lee Kwan Yew had decided that people with long hair were using it illegally so when you arrived in Singapore you either had to have hair cut above your ears or your passport was suspended, was held at customs and you had to come back with a hair cut or you had to leave. Then there were repercussions throughout Malaysia where if you were caught with marijuana you were hung; this was an offence worthy of death and so on. So there was this cultural response to individuals traveling in the region who were perceived as being users of marijuana in an illegal fashion.

We had a situation in Medan in which a young American said he had been purchasing marijuana in quantity for medicinal purposes. He was a nice young man. I suspect strongly that it wasn't all for medicinal purposes, that he was using the marijuana that he was transporting and probably selling or at least sharing with friends. He wasn't in Medan for a long period of time but he was apprehended one night. He went immediately to jail; do not pass go, because he had marijuana in his possession.

Indonesia was a country in which at this point he faced very severe illegal penalties. He could have been executed; certainly a long jail term was going to be involved. We, the consulate, was responsible, of course, for going down and seeing him, representing him as an American citizen making sure that the conditions he was subjected to were no worse than the conditions that anyone incarcerated in Medan was subjected to. That episode lasted for about four weeks. He was in Indonesia because he had had an exceedingly bad experience in Vietnam in the military. He had been honorably discharged, he had several purple hearts and he just wasn't prepared to go back to the United States. I'm equally persuaded that he was suffering chronic pain from wounds, and so that there was some medicinal argument that could be made. From the beginning, when he was booked and had to change out of his civilian clothes and into his prison attire, and the guards had an opportunity to see the wounds that he had suffered in Vietnam, there was complete leniency. They thought it was just fine if we wanted to have

this individual over for dinner, take him out of his jail cell for the evening, shower, shave, have a glass of wine, have a dinner at the house and we would take him back. This was perfectly accepted. A lawyer came forward to represent him pro bono. The end result was that his appearance in front of the magistrate lasted about 15 minutes. The judge made the argument that he was using marijuana for medicinal purposes, that he had obviously made a mistake in purchasing as much as he had, but that he in no way should be punished. He certainly wasn't a dealer, he certainly wasn't using marijuana for any other reasons than these wounds that he had suffered in Vietnam and pictures were shown to the magistrate and the gavel rang and the case was dismissed. We were asked to make sure that he left Medan on public transport.

But that to me was an indication that in their view here was a young man in his twenties who had been in Vietnam, we as Indonesians hadn't been in Vietnam and the Americans were doing something that we, as Indonesians, honored. It struck me that once the wounds were seen the Indonesian attitude changed dramatically toward this man to really one of sympathy and how can we just expedite this and have it happen. Those were the two instances in which Vietnam factored for me.

Q: I think looking at the time; this is a good place to stop. In '73 you left, where did you go?

POLLOCK: I had become very fascinated from the beginning in this Islamic culture that I had been dropped into in Southeast Asia. So I was interested in learning what its impact had been and how it operated in Southeast Asia and I was interested in pursuing it further in the Middle East. So one of my preferences had been Turkey as an assignment. I had initially sent off my assignments letter in 1972 because that was the end of my four years in Southeast Asia -- two as a junior officer and then two in Medan. It was time for me now to bid on another assignment. A telegram apparently had come back to Jakarta assigning me as the cultural officer at our branch office in Istanbul with Turkish language training and all the rest. I was to leave in August of '72. Our public affairs officer at the time had sent a telegram back to Washington on my behalf saying thank you for the assignment to Istanbul but there was a lot I still had to accomplish here in Medan and that in actuality I would like to stay for an additional year rather than accepting this assignment to Istanbul and I would be in touch again.

Our administrative officer had been on leave during this period of time. When she returned from leave she was reading through the chron file and saw this telegram and went to the public affairs officer and said, "Jim must be absolutely ecstatic, Istanbul, holy smokes, he wanted to go to Turkey. He must be terribly excited." The PAO informed her that he had responded on my behalf refusing the assignment and asking to extend for a year. Bless her soul she went ballistic and she said, "You cannot do that. You owe it to Mr. Pollock, if you want Mr. Pollock to stay for another year that's one set of conversations but you owe it to him to tell him that he's been assigned to Istanbul." Well by this time, of course, the assignment had been broken and so the PAO convinced me to stay for another year but had to formally apologize to me. Certainly, he came down to Medan to apologize to me and had to send a telegram back to Washington telling them

what he had done. So a year later I received an offer from personnel to go to Istanbul, this time as branch information officer, with language training in Istanbul following my home leave. What then occurred on home leave is another interesting reflection on the personnel system at the time. So we can pick up there.

Q: OK well we will pick up there. Great.

Q: OK, today is the 17th of January 2007. Jim, what year are we talking about?

POLLOCK: We are talking about between August of 1973 and January of 1974.

Q: OK, what happened on home leave?

POLLOCK: Well home leave was exceedingly interesting. We came out of Medan and the assignment to Istanbul included language study. We stopped in Istanbul on the way back to the United States and met the branch public affairs officer and looked around at some apartments and things that were available and talked to the people I was going to study Turkish with and then went off on home leave.

While I was on home leave two things happened. One, these were years of great change I think in the diplomatic service at least particularly in personnel. I'm not exactly sure whether this was a reflection of all of the computer technology that Robert McNamara had brought to bear into the Department of Defense but two things happened in the early seventies.

In 1972 the Department decided that the wisdom of making all female officers resign were they to marry was perhaps bad wisdom and that people could marry, maybe could even marry officers and remain in the Foreign Service. So that was one great sea change that occurred. Female officers could now marry and remain officers in the diplomatic corps. The other thing that started to happen was that our paper resumes of where we'd been assigned and what we had done previous to joining the Foreign Service and what our educational background was all began to be entered into the computer. The idea was that job availability would be matched with a skills database and therefore you could make more rationale assignments of individuals.

In my case, I had been part of a discovery process in Medan that launched a rethinking of the way we should redo our libraries and cultural centers overseas. I had discovered one day as I came into my library the mayor of Medan standing and looking very thoughtfully at our bookshelves. I approached him and said hello and he was rather flustered and we had a conversation. Then I asked him why he was here and he said actually he was looking for some books, his English wasn't particularly good but he was hoping we might have some books on political science and urban matters that he could take a look at. I said, "Yes" and went over and demonstrated the use of the Dewey decimal system card catalogue that we had at the time. I realized that possibly one of the reasons that our library membership and library statistics were not particularly high was that the concept

of a Dewey decimal system, particularly in countries where people were not really conversant in English or in our library systems, was rather daunting.

Q: Could you explain for somebody listening what the Dewey decimal system was?

POLLOCK: The Dewey decimal system was a way of cataloguing books in which subject areas were given numerical rating and then books would be cataloged by author or alphabetically under the numerical rating. So that if you went to look up a book you could look it up under let's say history or you could look it up under a set of numbers 7600s. So you would find a book catalogued as 7602WH and that might be our WHT and it might be the political biography of William Howard Taft or something of that sort. We had all learned how to do our library research from the get go in grade school by using the Dewey decimal system.

Q: Just parenthetically, I wrote a book on history of the consular service and the Dewey decimal system was JX1706.K46. That just gives you an idea if you want to know about an American consul you would look at JX, which I believe is diplomatic history or something like that.

POLLOCK: Exactly and if you were raised in the American educational system you understood this cataloguing system that John Dewey had created. You understood how it operated and why it operated that way. But overseas that was not necessarily true and it was a difficult system for people to use. With this realization and some cable traffic back and forth I was able to link into a couple of individuals who were very new to our library services in Washington. They were contemplating the idea in any event of color coding our libraries rather than cataloging them. So I became part of a movement that color coded our libraries. By color coding I mean we decided that all books, let's say on history, would have a red spine on their cover and all books on political science might be yellow and the arts might be blue and sociology might be green and international affairs might be purple. So we began to break down the Dewey decimal system, cluster books in areas of the library under a color code and then have a very nice graphic display as you came into the library that indicated which color represented which field of study. What we found was that library use boomed as a result because people didn't have to deal with this arcane number coding system. They could come into the library interested in let's say American history. They could see that American history was red. They could follow their eyes to the red corner of the library. There all the books on American history were available for them to browse through and see what they might like. So they looked intelligent in the search process and that meant I think that more and more people would come in to the library and certainly our library statistics in Medan just skyrocketed once we color coded the library

So one of the things that happened on my home leave was that it was discovered through the computer that I was a fine arts and graphics major in my university studies. This, of course, had not been used because I had taken the Foreign Service exam in politics and economics and the graphic arts had been left behind. I hadn't had a Washington assignment yet. I wasn't in the books division or I wasn't in the exhibits division and

overseas I was not using my graphic arts. It had been decided that there would be a reorganization of USIS Germany. They wanted to modernize all of the offices and all of the Amerika Hauser. It was decided that they were going to go this graphic arts route of color coding the library and changing all of the stationary. They were going to get away from red, white and blue and flags and stars and stripes and all of these things, and lo and behold they had a Foreign Service officer who was a graphic artist or had had graphic artist training.

So in the midst of my home leave I received a telephone call from the area personnel officer for Europe informing me that my assignment had been changed and I was no longer going to Istanbul. I instead was going to Bonn, Germany. I let it be known in no uncertain terms that no, no, no, no I didn't want to go to Bonn, Germany, I wanted to go to Istanbul. The personnel officer was rather flabbergasted by this because in those days the intent of many people was to become members of what was known as the European club. That meant that you would get an assignment to Europe, you would ingratiate yourself with European hands and you might be able to serve out your career between Bonn and Paris and London and Rome. That was very appealing to many people. It was not to me and I wasn't interested in getting into the European club and at the time Turkey was considered the Near East and South Asia rather than a part of Europe. So I argued, no, I was really interested in Islam at this point and I would be delighted to retain my assignment to Istanbul. But that was not to be. The European area director wanted me so my assignment to Istanbul was broken.

In January of 1975 I arrived in Bonn, Germany, in a newly created slot of program officer, media affairs officer I guess, and this was designed to bring an American officer onto that staff to be in charge of the new graphic look for USIS Germany. I had asked for language training and, of course, that wasn't possible because I really wasn't programmed enough. I was only working with that element of the German population that only spoke German, they didn't speak English but never mind. It was a challenging and a very interesting time and I was fortunate enough to have the resources and talent at my disposal of Ray Camay. He was a very highly decorated artist and designer in USIA at the time. He was detailed to Bonn at the same time that I was there and over the course of two years we renovated all of the Amerika Hauser six America houses. We color-coded the libraries, we used super graphics, we designed a rather inventive, I think, invitation format in which we used colored paper corresponding to the super graphics and the color-coding at the America Houses. We designed a system of folding these pieces of paper into several different shapes and using our in-house printing presses to use these colored pieces of paper as invitations. You put the address on one side and then you would unfold them in sort of an ikebana fashion and there you would have an invitation to an Amerika Haus event. The idea was to get away from using the old standard sized envelopes that probably went into in-boxes and were never opened and replace them with something colorful that had an unusual shape to it and would attract the attention of the individual that we were inviting. This was in a highly competitive German society in which individuals who were receiving the invitations were receiving many competing invitations at the time. We thought that sending them these sort of attractive and unusual invitations might attract their attention and bring them to events. We did see an increase

in attendance; the Amerika Hauser were a big hit as they reopened with these super graphics. It was a vibrant and rather exciting time but it was a time in which I did not have the good fortune to have much of an interface with the German population or the population of the country to which I was assigned in a programming sense. That was sort of frustrating. I felt as though I had done a good job but it wasn't the job that I had joined USIA to do.

At the end of those two years we did have program successes. But it wasn't rewarding to me in terms of the intellectual exchange of ideas which was part of my inspiration in going into the Foreign Service and I wanted to get back to doing that.

Q: Well, were you feeling any of the impact of Amerika Hauser of the Vietnam War or were they disengaged and all that or I mean were these buildings the center of demonstrations or not?

POLLOCK: No. The demonstration period that I had been aware of in Southeast Asia going on in the United States and going on in Europe had pretty much receded by the time I arrived in Bonn. I don't recall during my two years there any situation in which we felt challenged on Vietnam policy.

Q: We were getting out, of course, at that point, weren't we?

POLLOCK: We were drawing down in those days and people in Germany seemed focused on other things, at least that was my feeling. A lot of our programming was focused on economic issues, it was focused on political-military issues that were NATO-Warsaw Pact oriented more than they were Vietnam centered.

Q: Did you get any feel for what were the main reasons why the Germans would go to an Amerika Haus?

POLLOCK: The United States remained just a fascinating country. One of the things that one could do in Europe, in particular, was to exchange between countries American intellectuals, expatriate Americans, Fulbright professors, American university abroad professors, all of these individuals who would be in Europe for one set of reasons or another. They would make themselves known or USIS personnel in the cultural sections and programming areas, the information areas, would seek them out. During this time we started our own little speakers' bureau. The idea of a speakers' bureau had grown out of the European area and individuals, conferences on ideas and issues could be very easily put together and staffed with American personnel to stimulate the exchange of ideas. There was a great sort of yeasting that was going on that covered all areas of U.S. society. I remember once we were holding a writers conference and Heiner Müller and two or three other very well recognized and award international renown award winning writers were quite interested in meeting with Americans.

Washington came back and said, "No, no you can't program James Baldwin." We immediately assumed that it was because of his writings and the fact that he was part of

the Black Pride Movement and was critical of U.S. policies in certain areas. It turned out none of that was true. The reason why Washington didn't want Baldwin to come over is that he was gay. So the discrimination was not because of color, it was because of sexual preference. It was this sort of discrimination nevertheless so we couldn't program James Baldwin. As I recall we got Paul Theroux as a Baldwin replacement. He was in London or resident in England and was delighted to come over. I specifically remember a question that was posed to him by Heiner Müller and Müller said, "I don't believe any of this stuff about your Americanism. Look at you, you live outside the United States, you are an ex-patriot." Theroux said, "You know in some ways I do this by choice. First, I am married to a lady who is a citizen of Great Britain. Beyond that one of the benefits of being an American living outside of the United States is that every time you go back it is all fresh and new and so exciting all over again that you realize what a grand country the United States is and can be." It was a very startling answer for...

Q: Paul Theroux is a commentary on present day society and different places. He writes all about trains and kayaking in the Pacific but also the Appalachian Trail, I'm not sure about the Appalachian Trail but he's done a number of...he essentially is a travel writer and he hits the United States rather frequently I believe.

POLLOCK: We had a very lively dynamic arts program as well. Nanjun Pike and various other people who would come to Europe, video art exhibits; this was all new and exciting. In many ways Vietnam was in the background and Vietnam politically was certainly still with us, but my recollection of those years was that the vibrancy of social dynamic and what was going on within the society of the United States and the culture of the United States was of more interest to the German public than our politics or our international involvement.

That doesn't necessarily speak I believe for the quiet diplomatic dialogue that went on between our embassy officials and officials of the Bonn government. But certainly in our public presentation, the social dynamic was more compelling or appeared more compelling than the other.

Q: Did you find I realized that you are saying you were somewhat removed from the Germans but still you are dealing with in many ways the art scene, the intellectual crowds and all of that in Germany? Now were people in France, we've always had to fight this thing with intellectuals in France, tend to turn up their noses at American culture and American things wear as the general populace, particularly young people, gobbled it up like mad. Did you find in Germany that the intellectual class was of a different sort you might say than the French?

POLLOCK: I found that as an individual I couldn't speak to it in the same depth as those of our officers who were the cultural affairs officer or the assistant cultural affairs officer would be able to. One of the things that is marvelous about Europe frankly is sort of this idea that at the end of the day you go out and you have a glass of wine on the way home. You sit in the café, you have a cup of coffee or whatever it happens to be and we were as disposed to do this as anyone else.

I have not been back but at the time Bonn was really a rural city on the banks of the Rhine river with a university and a historic plaza downtown. The Americans were all concentrated along the banks of the Rhine and the local population referred to our living quarters as the “golden ghetto” because it had all been built, it was the home of the American occupation administration following World War II and we were still there. Part of what I sensed in Bonn was this coming of age in which there was one generation following the war where we had at one point in Germany twelve or fourteen Amerika Hauser. We now had German-American Institutes and America Houses. We had kept our America Houses in Berlin and Hamburg and Stuttgart and Munich and Koln and cities that we considered important, Frankfurt. But in the smaller cities or the cities that for policy reasons we considered less important we had gone in with the intent of closing our libraries. It was this German population, the town fathers, the university presidents in these cities that said, “Oh no, no, no you can’t do that. We will pay for them; we will pay to keep them open. We will provide housing in the university for you, you can donate your library collection and we’ll have an American wing in the university library, whatever, but please see if you can keep an American officer to represent you.” So on one hand there was this movement. If you were with a group of university students, graduate level or senior level students or artists in a café in Bonn or again in Koln, Munich, you were much more likely to hear a story that “you know, our economy is doing well, we are back, we don’t need American tutelage anymore. We need to understand our Germanness again and that needs to begin to flower.” You wouldn’t hear that sort of conversation at the Bragan Center in Paris. On the contrary, they knew they were French, they had always been French and the conversation was a different conversation all together. It could be snobbier if you were sitting talking to a French man than if you were sitting, talking to a German lady.

It was a time during which those Germans on our staff who had come to work for us immediately following the war were now at retirement age. We were facing the retirement of some senior people who had been very instrumental in building United States representation and translating United States representation effectively in Germany. It was quite a quandary during those years, ’74, ’75, ’76 as to how we were going to replace these individuals. They, because of German economy and European currency, in general vis-à-vis the American dollar, these were high priced individuals. Our senior staff in a couple of cases made as much if not more than our senior American officers. On the one hand there was this idea that almost like professional football today “You know we are going to get some salary cap room when Frau Norataya van Staten retires but how are we going to ever replace her?”

We initiated a hiring practice. We went to the universities for young graduates or for assistant associate professor level personnel, young, dynamic, very current in their knowledge in their interests and we offered them a package that basically said to them, “We cannot pay what German business can pay when you graduate. You can go into a German firm and you will begin making more money than we can offer you and five years from now you will probably still be making more money than we can offer you. However, what you will be doing for us will introduce you in terms of identifying

program areas of interest to the German society, economy, political structure, arts, media, that will help advance the dialogue between the United States and Germany. In the process of doing that you are going to meet people and work with people who are the people that you want to work for ten years from now. So, if you come to work for us for five to ten years we will through networking (it wasn't called networking in those days, if we'd thought of that term it would have been great but it was like you'll make introductions, you will meet people) and ten years from now you can go out on the local market and get hired at a salary much higher than your counterparts are going to be able to obtain because you are going to have the right doors open for you." I really didn't follow events in Germany very closely after I left, but to my knowledge of the four or five people that we hired during those two or three years only one is still working for USIA in Germany. The others all took exactly the package that was described and within five to ten years left for prominent jobs in the German economy.

Q: OK, in 1977 was it or when did you leave?

POLLOCK: I left Bonn at the end of the summer in 1977.

Q: Then where?

POLLOCK: Then back to Washington. We had been out since '67 and it was time to come back to Washington and so that opened up the Washington side of my USIA, my first Washington tour.

Q: In '77, what did you do?

POLLOCK: I worked as a program officer in the foreign policy program office of our center services division. Several things had been going on in the late '60s, early '70s. A lot of it stimulated frankly by officers in Europe and what we were able to do in terms of communications in Europe that we weren't necessarily doing in other parts of the world. Certainly the difference between Medan, Indonesia, in those days and Bonn, Germany, was light years. In Medan we were showing movies against bed sheets tacked on the side of pavilions up in the mountains running the projector with a generator that we bounced along with us. Bonn, Germany, was totally different and the German programming mode totally different.

Officers coming back to Washington from environments like Japan, or Rio, Bonn or Berlin came back with a whole different style of how they wanted to represent the United States. From the early days of USIA, say 1956 to 1966, the idea in USIA was to tell the American story. It was publications, it was exhibits and it was you doing your own lecturing about the United States. I was right in the proper mode in Malaysia and Indonesia for those years.

Between '66 and '76, the whole idea of how we communicated with the rest of the world began to change. Part of the change came from some very dynamic officers who came out of several different posts. Alan Carter had come out of India, out of New Delhi, and a

couple of other names that I will remember and fill in when I reread this. But a gentleman who came out of the European experience or out of the Asian experience began to think about ways in which you not only could communicate but you could reinforce that communication. Congress, at the time coming out of the Vietnamese war in particular, and again the statistical approach that McNamara had taken with the Department of Defense led Congress to begin to ask us for evidence of effectiveness. We began to think we as an agency, the Department of State, as a department of the U.S. government, began to devise systems in which we could at least indicate to Congress that maybe we were having an impact on the thinking, perhaps even the policy formation of other countries.

Two approaches were being devised in Washington at the time. One came to be known later as “packaged programming” and the other was an accountability system known as “PPBS”, which I think was Planned Programming Budgeting System.

Q: Oh yeah. This is a matrix.

POLLOCK: Exactly.

Q: I remember that thing.

POLLOCK: The idea behind packaged programming was that if the value of GATT, the general agreement on...

Q: Tariffs and Trade.

POLLOCK: Tariffs and Trade. If our interest was that GATT was a good monitoring and brokering system, and we were in favor of GATT, the idea of packaged programming was if GATT was going to be something that you talked about, and you talked about favorably vis-a-vis whatever country you happened to be in, then you didn't just have a conference on GATT and say, “OK, that's it, thank you very much.” But you started an entire two or three-year program on GATT with a conference. The conference would, of course, have handouts and a bibliography, perhaps a videography that would go with it. So you would put this together. You might have an exhibit that then would follow it up. This would show the success of GATT visually worldwide and you would bring even though the country, let's say, was India you might bring the exhibit into India. You might even design the exhibit especially for India with the hopes that you could show it in other countries as well. You would continue to look for magazine articles or for books on the issue which you would follow up the conference with. You would look for a Fulbright professor for the university in this field, international trade and economics, something of that sort. So in year two you might get an American professor who then was a programming vehicle in and of himself or herself. So that the whole idea was you put together something that was not just a one shot presentation but it was a whole system of coordinated events hoping to achieve some sort of end result -- the support of GATT by a local government or a university economics department or whatever it happened to be.

Then as people began to think of the ways in which that could be charted you came up with this planned program budgeting system. It was a matrix which said to you, who have you invited to your GATT programs? How many times did they attend? How interested were they? Did they generate anything? Have you spent the money that you spent on the GATT program package effectively because the undersecretary from the ministry of economics has attended fourteen dinners and two conferences and has asked for several books and magazine articles on the subject and therefore we believe this individual at least is entertaining our arguments or is following the information we are providing him or her? That then became exposures. We got into something just as awful as the Nielsen ratings or whatever on television, and how many exposures had someone been subject to? And etc. But these changes lead to quite a difference in the way that we were programming, as USIA in general, against themes that the United States was interested in emphasizing overseas. Where heretofore somebody would go out and make a movie and do a this and do a that or get the rights to republish a book we were now looking at it in thematic areas. We were looking at ways in which we could put together staffs of officers all programming on a specific set of themes that were identified as international relations, relations between the United States and in other countries or that could be identified as economic or American studies or arts and culture.

So organizationally the same sort of color coding that had caught on in our libraries in the early '70s was now by the mid '70s being replicated in the way we organized office staff into programming teams. I joined this international affairs programming team, foreign affairs programming team as one of their programming officers and worked for two years in that capacity. The idea was that each of the programming officers on the staff had either, and in most cases both, they would have a programming specialty such as nuclear disarmament or Islam or NATO. They would also have a set of countries for which they were responsible and they would be in dialogue with those countries. They would attempt to meet the country's interest in having speakers and having various programs on a set of issues that might be relevant to specific bilateral concerns between the United States and country X. I thought it was a proper approach and I worked with some very good officers. I had a very enjoyable time programming on foreign affairs those two years.

During that period of time Jimmy Carter was elected to the White House. In the course of that election USIA had put together talking points to present to both political parties indicating things that we would like to see happen if that particular party won the election. Basically we were interested in having a career officer be appointed as director of USIA. This had come about, I think, because part of our formation had been the creation of a Foreign Service information officer corps. We thought we now had a professional corps of officers that we were recruiting for that were coming into the service, not because they were transferred over from the old office of war information or some other entity but because they had taken the Foreign Service exam and had been recruited to come into USIA in the same way that Foreign Service officers were a professional corps coming into the Department of State. Since we were an autonomous agency and not a department of government we knew that we would take foreign policy guidance from the Secretary of State. We thought it would be to our benefit just simply

from the point of view of budgeting and program development to have a career officer as the director of USIA who really understood USIA's various offices and entities.

We were successful in this. I have no idea whether we won the day with anybody in particular or whether Jimmy Carter just thought or was aware of this in his own right or whether people brought it to him. We had advocated individuals such as John Hope Franklin and various people who had either very strong credentials in American history, Americana or had a career background in USIA. In this case, Carter chose a career officer, John Reinhardt. He had come up through USIA ranks and had then gone to the Department of State as an ambassador, and was now back in Washington as a senior officer, highly respected.

John became director of USIA. As a career officer, John had been subject to many of the quarks of the system. The strain of personnel reform that had been going on continued during the Carter administration and particularly under John Reinhardt's tutelage as director of USIA. We decided to make a fair and open assignments policy in which all of the jobs available worldwide would be posted and individuals could see what those jobs were and when they were opening up. If they corresponded with the individuals availability because of the end of a tour of duty they could bid on these jobs and then the personnel system would look at those dossiers and make a selection accordingly. This was a totally new approach to the old idea of writing a wish list in a letter and sending it off to a personnel officer and seeing what happened. Personnel officers, of course, all knew what job availabilities they had because they had officers assigned on a tour of duty policy that had various conclusion dates so we all knew which jobs were coming open when.

Mr. Reinhardt instituted a number of other reforms. One was that if you came back to Washington you should be expected to go back overseas again. A number of officers had come back to Washington and simply camped out here. So Dr. Reinhardt decided that when you were back in Washington you could stay for three years, your expected tour of duty, you could ask for an extension for a fourth year and under rare circumstances requiring a waiver you could even stay for a fifth year. But the general principle was three to four years and you needed to go back out into the field. Another part of this was that particularly for younger officers the idea of coming back to Washington was to introduce you to USIA from a Washington standpoint. So you should take a two year assignment followed by a one year assignment or a two year assignment followed by a second two year assignment in a different part of USIA. So you would gain an understanding and a better appreciation of how the different offices within USIA could interface to further enhance program concerns overseas.

So my second two years in Washington, this being '78-'79, I actually had bid on and was successful in becoming the personnel officer for the Far East. I moved into that position in 1978 from the program officer position and was part of implementing these personnel reforms. What I liked was you didn't just see a post in and of itself as a functioning entity. You saw an entire area through the eyes of the area director and deputy director and policy officer and the people working in Washington interfacing with the White

House, the Defense Department, the Commerce Department, the Department of State -- all U.S. entities focused on what U.S. interests in a particular area of the world might be and within that how each particular post within that area served those purposes. This general overview of how that system operated and how decisions were made I found very interesting and hugely informative.

One major change involved language policy. We had always classified languages in categories of what we considered difficulty of the language. Difficult languages like Korean, Chinese, Arabic, in some cases Russian were considered languages that you really needed a couple of years to study while the romance languages for instance would only be a ten month course of study.

The problem was that given the promotion system in effect then, an officer with some field experience in mid-career, let's say ten to fifteen years of field experience, was up against a promotion window that was five to seven years long. So the idea of taking an assignment that would require two years of language training rather than being able to get out into the field within one year and get busy on the job and be competitive for promotion was a discouragement. My major ally facing this problem was the personnel officer for the Middle East and South Asia. He had to find people to learn Arabic and Urdu and some other languages that would require a couple of years of study and he couldn't fill positions. I had jobs for Chinese and Japanese and Korean and Thai speakers, those languages requiring two years of language study. This was exacerbated because our relationships with China were just on the drawing board. We had spent a number of years convincing some officers that studying Japanese was really to their benefit. We had some Chinese language posts; we had Hong Kong, and we had Singapore, and we were hoping to train officers in Chinese so that when China actually opened and developed a program we would have officers ready to go in and staff positions.

When you put the open assignments policy on top of language training it all of a sudden became quite obvious to officers what positions were available and what the language requirements were. We found that at mid-career positions in particular we were not getting any recruits. We stewed about this for a while and we concluded that one of the best approaches that we could take is to begin to offer what we called hard languages on an annual basis. So we actually set out for a while to recruit officers to take Japanese, let's say, or Arabic. It took one year in Washington and then you went to the field. By the end of one year, particularly if you concentrated more on speaking than you did on reading and speaking, you could get around fairly well. You couldn't hold sophisticated conversations with individuals but you could get around town and you could initiate discussion and you could put yourself in an environment where the language was being spoken at all times. So the idea was to train people for ten months in these hard languages, send them to the field. If they enjoyed the assignment and were intrigued by it or intrigued by the language two things would happen. Over the course of a two to three year and in some cases even four-year assignment they would be studying the language on the ground rather than in the classroom and their language facility would increase. Then if they were interested they could go on for the second year of language study,

perfect the language, and have it as an operative language as many of our officers had romance languages as operative languages.

We had some success initially with this approach. We were able to show statistically that it made no difference. If you took two years of language study in all likelihood you were going to be promoted more or less at the same rate as people who only took one year of language study; and yet this fear that you were losing a year of competitive advantage in the field was thwarting the recruitment of officers for hard languages and I think we addressed that. As I say, I believe that had policy implications because we were able to put good capable officers certainly older ones for one reason or another were interested in the Asian languages. Those officers did exceedingly well and moved on, did learn more language when they were in the field, went back for a second year in some cases and went on into the senior ranks of the Foreign Service. I think we had the benefit of very capable programming talent in the mid-career level during those couple of years that we wouldn't have had otherwise.

Q: Well then you finished this Washington tour in, what are we talking about here?

POLLOCK: 1979. I completed my Washington assignments and it was time to go back overseas. I needed language training, I wanted language training. At the time I felt that I needed what I considered a world language. As a consequence, I had two things in mind from my background in high school and American Field Service and experiences prior to going to college and so on. The Foreign Service was attractive to me because I wanted to go to Japan and I wanted to learn Japanese. The other thing attractive to me was that I had an opportunity to go, I felt, to Latin America. I thought Spanish was a good language to learn. So I bid on jobs in Japan and jobs in South America.

For probably all the right reasons I was not successful in any of those bids. The Asian area with whom I was on very good terms nevertheless felt that my language qualification testing did not warrant that I should actually go take a hard language, or that I should go take Japanese. All of us when we came into the Foreign Service took a test.

Q: It's called the MLAT – Modern Language Aptitude Test.

POLLOCK: Modern Language Aptitude Test. You can test how adapt at learning languages a person might be and the higher your score on that the better you are for what was considered difficult languages. I'm not a good standardized test taker and my score was not glowing. So the Far Eastern area thought maybe Japanese wasn't for me. So the Japanese assignment was out and then I was actually considered very seriously for a job as information officer in Lima, Peru, with a year of Spanish language training. The head of Foreign Service personnel at that time for USIA was Francis Gomez. Frank and I were on great terms but my colleagues from the South American bureau brought my name forward to Frank and Frank said, "You know, information officer with just new Spanish, uh uh, I don't know, that's not going to work. You are an information officer in South America you've got to have awfully good Spanish." So that nixed my assignment to Lima.

So, I went back to the idea of Islamic culture and of Islamic societies and how we as the United States operated in those environments. The job of cultural affairs officer in Rabat, Morocco, was open. At that time you could have language qualification for Rabat in either French or Arabic. That's now become an Arabic language position rather than a French and Arabic and/or position. The major portion of my study for the year was in French. I had some background from high school and college in French so I went through the French course to the required 3-3 level. Then because it was an either/or language and because I had been part of this idea of mid-career officers spending some time on hard languages, we decided that I could be a very good guinea pig for studying Arabic in addition to my French. The idea was that after Morocco, if I were still very interested in Islam, I could pick up the Arabic and move on with it, perfect it as it were. So I also studied some Arabic at the time.

Ultimately none of that worked out. The Arabic confused my French somewhat although I regained the French all right. The problem was that Arabic has, like Chinese, dialects across that huge, broad area that is Islamic. I was studying Mashriqi, Eastern Arabic, which was taught at the Foreign Service Institute, but in Morocco they speak Maghrebi or Western Arabic. So I had been carefully trained in Mashriqi and I had done speaking only and actually had some benefit from prior language learning to help me. The influences in Malay and in Indonesian are from Arabic, a number of word cognates are similar and the idea of prefixes and suffixes is similar. The idea of using the passive voice is similar so grammatically understanding the structure of Arabic it got me into it quite quickly. I had some vocabulary in the bank already and that also helped so I came out of four or five months in Arabic with a pretty good speaking score. Had I gone on to an Eastern Arabic country, had I gone on to Cairo or Amman or a country capital of that sort I probably would have done very well in Arabic over the course of the next several years. But the only time I really had a chance to use this Arabic training in Morocco was listening to the King who would give very formal addresses on television. Those I could get the gist of, but when speaking to the local Moroccan in the street, French became my language of office usage.

Q: Well then you were in Rabat from when to when?

POLLOCK: I was in Rabat from August of 1980 to August of 1984.

Q: Who was the ambassador or who were the ambassadors then?

POLLOCK: We had an interesting set of ambassadors. When I arrived in Rabat the ambassador was Angier Biddle Duke. He had been appointed toward the end of the Carter administration, was in place when I arrived in 1980, and was not replaced for a year. Then he was replaced by Joseph Verner Reed, Jr., who had been appointed by the Reagan administration. Both of these gentlemen were politically appointed ambassadors not career ambassadors although Angier Biddle Duke had served in ambassadorial appointments previously.

Q: Why don't we talk about what was the situation in Morocco when you got there in 1980?

POLLOCK: There was quite a change in our presentation and our comportment because there was a great change in American policy. It didn't necessarily seem great on paper or in its verbalization, but psychologically there was a huge sea change in U.S. policy.

In the '70s one of Morocco's major economic resources was phosphate and Morocco itself owns territory with a great deal of phosphate being mined in it. But more importantly there was a Spanish enclave to the south of Morocco. It was called the Spanish Sahara. All of the North African countries, particularly Morocco and Algeria, have been interested in this little chip of land. They would bring students up to Casablanca or up to Algiers, on full scholarship, and basically get them wound into the political concept that the Spanish Sahara really shouldn't be the Spanish Sahara. It should be maybe independent, one way or another but basically they would create these operatives who went back. The operatives took on the name of Polisario. They began to argue for one way or another of getting Spain out. This was fairly successful. Spain decided that phosphates were on the world market, they didn't need to spend any further money, time, personnel. For whatever reasons I gather Spain decided they would give up this chunk of territory. One of the things that convinced them was that the King of Morocco, Hassan II, decided that he would lead what was called the Green March. Green was the color of Islam and there were all kinds of emotional...

Q: He's a direct descendent of the Prophet Muhammad...

POLLOCK: He claimed descent from the Alawite Kingdom. Morocco has been instrumental in many ways at times moderating the disputes in the Middle East because of the standing of Hassan or at least his claims of being a descendant of the Alawite Kingdom.

Hassan leads this large march, which was sort of comparable to a march on Washington down the mall. I mean people arrive by bus and line up; maybe like the Oklahoma land rush in its day, big banners, horns honking and they come across the border into the Spanish Sahara and Spain says we're not interested anyway, it's all yours. Algeria, on the other hand, which had also been instrumental in saying Spain should withdraw from this territory said, "Wait a minute, it can't all be Morocco's. We've got a claim to this territory as well." So one of those great or ill-defined border disputes begins in which Algeria and Morocco are in a state of war, in some ways more like border raiding, but war. The relations between the two countries were very icy; there were borders further north coming down the Atlas mountain range out of the Mediterranean in which it was very difficult to get across. The border in many places was closed. There would be a little thawing every once in a while but you didn't set out from Tangier to drive to Algiers any more. You just couldn't get across the border in most cases.

The Carter administration had taken the point of view that local disputes should be solved locally. That this was not a U.S. matter and we were not interested in being involved in

any way except in encouraging Morocco and Algeria to discuss these issues and to come to a peaceful resolution of them, if possible.

So the idea that we had taken one side versus another side was not present in the Carter administration and both our military spending and our political involvement reflected the whole idea that local disputes should be solved locally. What's missing from my mind is what the military aid program is called. But it works in the same way as USAID economic or agricultural aid. It's just military hardware and training package instead of grains and management and things of that sort.

Q: Well were you there during the Green March?

POLLOCK: I was not. I arrived after the Green March and during this war in the Western Sahara.

President Reagan, on the other hand, took a very different view which was that Morocco was in a strategic position. Morocco from a policy standpoint and a social stand point was a moderate Islamic state rather than an Islamic state in which conservative elements all were growing and rather than being a state in which a former socialist government had held sway after independence. Morocco prided itself on the fact that it had only been a French protectorate; it had never been a French colony per se. There were very fine differences about this and the Kingdom of Morocco was the first country to have recognized the independence of the United States. President Reagan and his ambassador decided that this was going to be something they wanted to underscore. That in effect we were going to take sides in this conflict and in other developments as we saw them in the Middle East. So a very strong advocacy of our good friendship with the King and the good friendship between the King and President Reagan was to be underscored.

We undertook to show this in several different ways. The military aid program was reconstituted and so military loans, equipment and training and all of these things, were boosted or energized in that sense. Politically, the ambassador made the decision that he wanted to have at one time or another during his tour as ambassador every single Cabinet level official in the Reagan government visit Morocco. He, with political will, succeeded with only one exception and that was the director of the Peace Corps. Everybody else did come on a visit to Morocco. The King had a state visit to the United States during these years, and we made it clear that our interests and our energies were focused on Morocco. That was perceived by the Moroccans, and I'm sure by the Algerians as well, but certainly by the Moroccans as a real sea change in their relationship with the United States. We had moved from the policy that this local dispute will be resolved locally to we're on your side, you are our allies, you first recognized us and now we recognize you.

Q: OK, let's move more to the specifics. What was your job when you got there?

POLLOCK: I was the cultural affairs officer.

Q: What were you doing during this '80-'84 period?

POLLOCK: We did a whole lot of programming. We did some interesting things in furtherance of this policy that Morocco was our friend. The ambassador made it clear that one of the ways that he wanted to demonstrate the strength of U.S. friendship with Morocco was by emphasizing programs which the Moroccans could see. So the cultural affairs section became a focus for this and we designed some major program goals most of which we were quite successful in achieving.

At the time there was a growing not dissatisfaction necessarily but a growing tension between Morocco and France in the academic field. There had been this assumption that in the former colonies, in the former protectorates, if you went to a French Lycée or a Lycée based on the French educational system and you passed the Baccalaureate exam you had an entry guaranteed into a French university. The French university system had been in reform for many years and continued in reform and some of these reforms were coming to the fore. But, part of it was if you had a chair, a seat, an entry, into a French university that meant that you had a dormitory room, you had a living stipend that was paid to you, you had your books, your classroom privileges and you were there to study. That's a pretty expensive proposition and all of the European countries who had based their elitist educational foundations on doing this were discovering that it was costing a great deal of money to support it. So one of the ideas was that they would begin charging tuition fees to people who came from other countries and particularly since Morocco had been a protectorate and not a colony. That meant that Moroccan students were suddenly subject to something like out of state fees at American public universities.

We decided that we would offer the possibility of study in the United States where we could show comparable academic training for comparable costs. That is, if you are going to pay money to go study in France why not go study in the United States as well. The United States educational system was very highly regarded then, and I presume still is, but certainly the idea that you are going to get this education in the United States, which was a pretty good education for what you paid for, was appealing. If there was any way that the United States government could offer some help to that the Moroccans were willing to examine it. So we started negotiations to create a Fulbright Commission.

The Fulbright program, as you know, grew up when Senator Fulbright proposed we were repatriating ex-World War II military equipment and it was costing us a lot of money to get this equipment back to the United States where it was to be junked. Fulbright suggested that maybe what should happen was that we should simply dispose of that equipment in place and take the proceeds from those sales and put them into commissions that would sponsor educational and cultural exchange between the United States and the countries where the excess war material was. So for instance, after the World War II effort to fly supplies out of India into China, when we disposed of our excess war material in India, we created a Fulbright Commission for educational and cultural exchanges. This commission was funded better than the Indian government for several years could fund itself.

We had a huge repository of funds. People seemed to think this was a marvelous idea and a great way to sponsor exchange between countries and foster the development of understanding between our society and other societies. The whole Fulbright program just mushroomed and took off and was tremendously successful. It was so successful to the point that the U.S. Congress began to say, "For all of these countries where we have now established Fulbright Commissions that were not based on excess war material but rather on our interest in conducting educational and cultural exchanges this is beginning to cost a little bit too much money." So there was a hiatus, about a ten-year hiatus, on the formation of any new Fulbright Commissions.

We proposed a new Fulbright Commission that would, over the course of time, raise funds from both governments. We approached it in several different ways but we had administrative funds and requirements to cover and we also had scholarship funds to cover. There were a number of creative ways in which we were dedicating personnel and funding the Commission through resources in both governments. It was different from previous Fulbright Commissions and nevertheless it was considered a Fulbright Commission and it was negotiated as such.

Over the course of the first three years that I was there, we were successful in bringing those negotiations to a conclusion and in establishing the Fulbright Commission, in having our first set of exchange students going both ways. On the Moroccan side it was more students. On our side it was more professors. Our idea was that as people selected through the Moroccan side of the Fulbright Commission were going off to the United States for advanced training, we would replace them with American personnel at the professorial or managerial or expert level. Thus the Moroccans' positions would be covered and students or office co-workers would have an experience working with an American during a year or two years while the Moroccan was studying in the United States or training in the United States. So we were bringing personnel both ways with the Commission. That, over the course of time, has lead actually to the establishment of an American style university, the majority of classes taught in English, in Morocco and a flowering of educational exchange and thinking.

As an aside, one of the great successes of the Malaysian experience has been that the Malaysian government, with English already considered as their competitive advantage, they had invested a huge amount of money in moving their educational system from a system of training colleges with one major university to a system of now twenty major universities in the country. So they used what training institutions they had to spring board to university levels for their growing university age population.

Morocco now has done some of that. They certainly have moved away from the specialized training institute to broader based college or community college institutions and one major university built along the American model. A lot of negotiation, of course, has gone on to equalize degrees, degree credibility. That has been done through UNESCO (United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and various other organizations. Thus the equivalency between the United States degree of four or five years and a French degree or a European degree at the doctorate level, that

might take 20-25 years, is now recognized. This means that the teaching personnel in educational systems in other countries can benefit from that training both in terms of their ability to come into a classroom, to maintain an academic or intellectual dialogue either on international boards in the consultative situations or in academic publication enterprises. Or, ruminatively, from the point of view of moving through a professorial tenure track system in their own countries where becoming a professor is financially viable in terms of making a living.

Those things were going on in Morocco at the time and I think that they were and have proven to be quite successful.

Q: How did you find though in a society like that were students who were coming out getting appropriate positions and all that? You know so often you have a university system that is fine but then unless the graduate is of the right family; I know this is true in Italy, they kind of languish.

POLLOCK: Well I think that this is true and remains true even today. I mean the huge outcry that goes on even in our own streets, as we have seen, against World Bank and IMF (International Monetary Fund) policies is a reflection of this. Some of those policies have worked to destroy the accepted traditional culturally inherited ways of making it in a society. Basically, at least in the societies that I worked in, this was predicated one way or another on a European model in which the government would hire a majority of university graduates either into petty civil service positions and then let them into entry level civil service positions from which they could move up. Or, entry level industrial positions which in the European model that survived into the '80s and '90s in any event, often was predicated on state operated utilities or other industries that had a state related connection to them one way or another. University graduates were used to fill those entry level positions and as a result of that had an opportunity to feed back to their families the investment that their families had often made in focusing on one or two children to leave the house, get into the educational system and get through it. World Bank and IMF have shattered some of those assumptions and they have left people alienated from what they considered the social contract when they went into the university system and alienated them in some severe ways. It has had a social impact.

In Morocco's situation, from all that I could gather, while the economy was in the hands proportionally of a smaller group of people than is necessarily true in the United States, nevertheless had ways in which it was absorbing, or at least it appeared to be absorbing its college graduates in a productive capacity. In small businesses, in some of the things that it was doing in terms of social change where the society itself was adapting in ways in which university graduates had better access to positions and to ways in which they could use their entrepreneurial skills.

Q: OK, well I was just looking at time now. Next time we will pick this up in '80-'84, is that right?

POLLOCK: Yes.

Q: In Morocco and I would like to talk about a bit of the cultural life. You've talked about the educational side and all; about the American culture and Moroccan culture from your job perspective how they...what one was doing and how this worked? Also, talk a little bit more about Ambassador Joseph Verner Reed because he was quite a controversial character, so well known in the professional association of ambassadors of how not to be an ambassador you might say. It may be a little unkind but anyway so let's talk about that.

POLLOCK: All right, yes, actually that would be great.

Q: Today is the 6th of February 2007. Jim you want to talk a bit about the cultural life of Morocco because Americans seem to always get along well in Morocco, it goes way back. How did you feel, were we missing something, I mean were we really doing...was there a good fit or not?

POLLOCK: A good fit in terms of cultural experience?

Q: Yes, well in other words were we able to you might say penetrate their society for our purposes of maybe use it to communicate too.

POLLOCK: Well I think there is always a charm and seduction in my opinion about Moroccan society, and about American society -- particularly the popular cultural aspects of American society which have served over the course of the past fifty years or so as a magnet to the world. We started in the '50s talking about the colonization of the world and certainly we've seen Michael Jackson and Michael Jordan and McDonald's and all of these things.

I think I was telling the story about in Malaysia. A gentleman I knew when I was student affairs officer in the late '60s was an economics professor on the campus who ended up under the Malaysian legislation of the '80s and '90s and I questioned him at one point about how he had been so successful because Malaysia is a country of fast foods. Everybody has about six meals a day. You have a little bowl of rice in the morning, a congee (soup), and then you pick during the day at these roadside stalls. All of a sudden Kentucky Fried Chicken has taken over the market place. He said, "Well, what I discerned was that people in Malaysia do like they do around the world. If they wanted a family restaurant that was air-conditioned that fit into their fast food tradition and so here was Kentucky Fried Chicken and what a marvelous opportunity." So that sort of seduction of American culture I think has been used and misused around the world.

We are such a communicative society in so many ways, films, verbally, that it's been exceedingly hard for our culture not to have an impact overseas, sometimes to the good, sometimes to the bad. I think we are going through a period right now where people are beginning to understand that not all of American culture or the way Americans interact with other societies is productive and that if we are to adhere to our principals of

democracy and liberty that we need to let other societies structure their own view of the way their society and culture can best operate and interface with us.

I think this is particularly true in Morocco. In this past week's book's section in the Washington Post America was being introduced to the Middle East with this great picture of the Saracens fighting with U.S. Marines along the Barbary Coast. This, of course, was the coast of Morocco and Algeria, Tunisia. The Marine Corps hymn talks about fighting American battles along that shoreline in particular. There are tremendous stories and histories of various conflicts between the United States and Moroccans, Moroccan pirates, during this period of time. Morocco in those old days had prided itself as being the first country to recognize the newly independent United States and the United States was attempting to establish itself as at least a sailing power in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. So I think all of these things interface and they interface in exceedingly interesting ways.

I'm in Morocco, of course, during the period of time that Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young made the "Marrakech Express" famous in the United States and...

Q: Is that a record or a song?

POLLOCK: This was a musical pop tune about taking the train from Casablanca down to Marrakech and all of the marvelous delights. I talked previously about Indonesia and how things that we consider illegal drugs in our country are used for medicinal purposes and as condiments and spices and herbs in other countries and the legal fuss is not as large as we have made it.

But there were a lot of Americans coming to Morocco and Morocco truly is a fascinating country. It is geographically probably the size of Oregon and stretches down the Atlantic coastline from the Mediterranean mouth in Tangier down along the coast of Mauritania and into West Africa. It is a country divided both horizontally and vertically by the Atlas mountain range. Areas like Marrakech and Fes and Tangier are all really very separate and very, very different areas of the country. They have their own culture and their own style, their own cooking influences, their own rug weaving patterns and designs, their own ways of dancing and music. When you served in Rabat as a Foreign Service Officer and I think maybe even if you traveled the country as a tourist or an American on educational exchange or under the auspices of the Fulbright program that we got started in the early or mid-eighties, I think you favored one area over the others. I mean I was a Marrakechis, I really liked Marrakech. Other people were Fesis and they loved that big grain valley that spread from Rabat over across the plain to Fes and then into the mountains in Fes. They liked what was going on in Fes. Other people enjoyed Tangier and the Rif mountain range and looking at the Mediterranean and the cultural influences particularly from the Spanish who still have an enclave on the North African shore surrounded by Morocco.

Q: I was wondering. Was there any disquiet on our part, I'm talking about the embassy taking your responsibility about American cultural influence, getting in and screwing up the works or something?

POLLOCK: Well, on the contrary actually. We were very eager to promote our cultural and educational influences. The King's nephew actually decided that rather than taking the French track and going to a French school he would go to the American school in Rabat which meant that he was destined to do his college education in the United States. This was a real break in tradition and as I had been saying earlier French tuitions for overseas students began to impinge upon Moroccans' abilities to go on to the French higher educational system. The American alternative became viable and we were exceedingly interested in introducing American educational thinking and American cultural thinking. Joseph Verner Reed, Jr., as ambassador, took a very promotional view of American culture and did so for political purposes.

I talked earlier about the change in American policy between the Carter administration and the Reagan administration; from regional conflicts being solved regionally, with an American hands off attitude, to Morocco as our friend and ally and the first country to recognize the United States and we were going to be exceedingly supportive. We were doing so for our own political reasons as part of the bargain. We were quite interested in changing our military approach from one of a static large fixed force movement to one of what we were calling rapid deployment. This was a reaction and military strategic thinking that grew out of the Vietnam War. We wanted during this period of time to structure a number of what are called Status of Forces Agreements and our interest in Morocco was advanced basing purposes. Morocco being reasonably close to the U.S. mainland, we wanted to be able to get to North Africa either to project ourselves into the Middle East or to project ourselves into Africa, if the situation warranted. There were a number of military bases that had been active during the '40s and into the '50s that were a result of our involvement in the Second World War, and the way we approached both our defense in the Second World War and our interests in projecting our forces into the European theatre of combat. We worried about the eastern coast of the United States because of the western coast of Africa. Dakar, Senegal, was the furthest most western projection of the African continent. It was used from the early 1900s on as actually the shortest way to get to South American and then on to North America. All of the first mail courier planes established by the French in particular made their way down out of Europe into North African into Morocco and Algeria then down into Mauritania and Senegal and then eventually across into Brazil and then would hop back up into the United States.

Q: What is the interest here?

POLLOCK: We wanted to convince the Moroccans that with military aid we should be allowed to reestablish these bases, although now in Moroccan hands, but as over-fly space for American troops for American aircraft, for landing and refueling purposes, for arms stockpiling purposes. It was my understanding anyway. I was the cultural attaché; I was not in the political section or the military attachés office, but it was my understanding that this was going to be a difficult sale with the Moroccans. One way that

Joseph Verner Reed, Jr., wanted to approach that was by embracing Morocco culturally, throwing our arms around their shoulders and showing them what good friends we could be with the idea that that public demonstration would enable the diplomatic private talks between the United States government and the Moroccan government to come to fruition.

So my cultural program was given the green light to be very ambitious; it was promoted by the embassy. The ambassador himself was a very garrulous, outgoing person, wanting to be seen, wanted to be on stage, wanted to use the residence in a very promotional way, and we set out to do that.

Through a set of several different cultural agreements we worked very closely with a young artist and a very cultured gentleman who hailed from the city of Asilah, just south along the coast out of Tangier, whose name was Mohamed Binaissa. He was a young politician from his local region with some national recognition, had worked in UN circles and academic circles. He later went on to become an ambassador to the United States and a foreign minister in Mohammed VI's cabinet after Hassan II died and his son succeeded to the throne.

Binaissa was charmed by American jazz and American art and wanted to establish an arts festival which he saw as a tourist attraction for his little fishing village of Asilah. We set about to turn the Asilah jazz festival into an international event, certainly a European event, where people could come on vacation and stop as they would at Monterey or Newport in the American tradition of jazz festivals in the '50s and '60s. We were able to attract exceedingly good talent out of the United States. I had money in my budget to do so, USIA and Washington supported this. We brought over several noted jazz performers, Dexter Gordon being the one that I remember most explicitly because he and his group were a difficult group to handle.

Q: What were they...?

POLLOCK: Dexter had a heroin problem and as in all of these cases somebody would arrive with a medical bag and maybe a "doctor" in the entourage and then one needed to deal with that diplomatically over the course of the week or so that the group would be in the country. But his virtuosity on the saxophone, I think, was never questioned when he was on stage and he put on some great performances. We had a number of jazz musicians and other American musicians coming out of France in particular where for airfare and per diem we could have some very good cultural presentations travel the country. We had art exhibits and we had a number of American study seminars and intellectual activities that were sponsored by the Fulbright program.

We had a project with the National Juridical Institute, the director of which had come to me and had asked me to examine through the Fulbright program if we could bring somebody as a guest lecturer to the Juridical Institute for a couple of years to examine American common law. What the Moroccans were interested in doing was rewriting their legal system and their legal codes because they had inherited the Napoleonic Code from France and it simply did not fit in Islamic culture or society. Their own study had lead

them to the conclusion, I think properly so, that American common law, the British sense of common law and the way it had developed in the United States, was in actuality exceedingly integrative with Sharia law and had many principles and tenets in common.

So we needed someone who not only had a full legal understanding of the Napoleonic Code and could teach in French but also had an understanding of Sharia law and could teach in Arabic and also a full comprehension of American common law and legal principals and could convey those in both French and Arabic. I rolled my eyes initially and said, "Sure, we'll take a crack at this but don't get your hopes up." Lo and behold, in about six-months we got a response, totally unexpected, but a gentleman came out for two years, Rudolph Disife, from Northern Illinois University. Rudolph's family had been involved with de Lesseps and the building of the Suez Canal and Rudolph initially grew up in Egypt of French parentage, went to French schools and learned the language and the law there. He went into the underground in the Second World War and because of what he had done in conjunction with allied interests ended up with an offer of citizenship anywhere he would like it at the end of the Second World War. He decided that he would like it in the United States. So he came to the U.S. and went to law school and was a practicing lawyer in Illinois and teaching at Northern Illinois University. He had gone to work for John Anderson of Illinois in the presidential bid when Anderson had established his independent party movement as a liberal Republican in the '70s. Disife thought the idea of coming to Morocco for a couple of years, under a Republican administration, was just a terrific idea. So he pitched up in Rabat for two years and was terribly successful, very dynamic in the classroom, understood how to teach, understood how to teach Moroccan students, had the language, had the background in all the legal systems and was really quite instrumental in influencing the rewriting of Moroccan legal codes over the course of a couple of years.

We did the same thing in a couple of different fields in introducing American thinking and an American approach to problem solving. We played an instrumental role, because of our location and the King's interest in the Middle Eastern situation, in finding individuals to participate in a USIA program at the time, which was known as the Salzburg Seminar, which was conducted in Salzburg, Austria. It was funded by USIA to bring together representatives of Arabic and Islamic countries in the Middle Eastern region and their counterparts from Israel to put them in an environment that was not politicized in nature and to let them engage in some real opinion discussion and problem solving.

These sorts of programs, I think, demonstrate how American thinking and American education, American social and cultural values and interests, in a very positive way, had an impact in Morocco and across the region. Going the other way, we had the time and the impetus and inclination to introduce Morocco to the United States. There was a good deal of work that went into a book on Moroccan rugs and tapestry. There was a huge exchange exhibit of Moroccan rugs sponsored by Meridian House and by the Smithsonian Institution. There was a grand gala type of opening in Washington and then a tour around the United States to several museums. The Textile Museum here was involved and other similar museums across the U.S. Chicago, Houston, I recall as venues

and a lot of work research, photography, some funding went into putting together the book that accompanied that exhibit.

The Tangier-American Legation Museum Society was resuscitated and buoyed during that time and efforts were begun to use the institution which is a marvelous building down in the heart of the souk in Tangier and had been our first legation building overseas historically. We wanted to do something with that building; obviously the consulate had left that location and moved to a stand-alone building that would be subject to the security concerns that the diplomatic corps had become subject to by the 1980s and even earlier than that we had left the building. It was not a tenable site for a consulate. But it was a marvelous, marvelous building as a museum and research center. Working with the overseas research branch in the Smithsonian, we were able to start the process of turning that building into a research center for Americans coming to North Africa. Malcolm Forbes had a museum.

Q: He was a very wealthy magazine publisher.

POLLOCK: Of the time and he had a home in a museum in Tangier and would visit several times during the course of the year and worked with us. I don't know if he was on the board of trustees at Princeton University at the time, but he was a Princeton graduate and his sons had all gone to Princeton. There was a lot of academic fervor around his interests in Morocco. So there were many ways in which the two cultures could interface and thrive with one another. As I say, I think the end result of that period of time was that there is now an American style university in Morocco that's doing exceedingly well.

Q: Great, I wonder before we leave Morocco could you talk a little about your impression of Ambassador Reed because he's a controversial figure and accounts have differed and I would like your impression of him?

POLLOCK: I think ambassador Reed is a controversial figure. Controversy takes on several different connotations. I don't know that he was as controversial as much as he was stimulating. He is a very public figure and he is a tall, lanky individual, photogenic, garrulous and he just had a certain style about him. He'd stride into a room and take it over. If he was controversial, it was because he had come to Morocco with certain panache, a certain vibrancy about him that was in some ways ego driven, personality driven.

I remember my first meeting. He arrived in Rabat and the USIA offices were not on the embassy compound. We had a separate building where we had our offices up over our library and cultural center in downtown Rabat. The ambassador came down to stride through the officers and to meet everybody. He came into my office with a big smile on his face and his hand extended. I rose from behind my desk and he said, "Hi, I'm Joseph Verner Reed, Jr., just call me Joseph Verner Reed, Jr." You know it was like yes, sir Mr. Ambassador, I'd be delighted to do that. He liked to be active. There was a maelstrom of activity around Joseph Verner Reed, Jr. He would often schedule a reception for 6:30 and a dinner for 9:30 in the evening and it was different audiences. We were rather schooled

on how one would get an audience of 150 for a reception out the door by 8:00 p.m. so that the house could be set up for dinner for twelve by nine. This is the way Reed operated. He was in many ways a wheeler-dealer and set out to establish a Moroccan rug collection that was museum quality. He would be about town, he would be down in the souk, he would be out at the palace. He had a style that he said, for instance, "We will show the Moroccans how interested we are in them by bringing every member of the Reagan Cabinet to Morocco for a visit." Sure enough he did it with one exception, the lady who was the director of the Peace Corps. He had had, I don't know, they rubbed elbows or something in Washington and she didn't come for one reason or another but she was the only person, otherwise they all came. Actually, I discovered one of the greatest assignments in the Foreign Service quite by accident. The ambassador had been looking for an escort officer for Mrs. George H.W. Bush because the Vice President was visiting and...

Q: You're talking about Barbara?

POLLOCK: Barbara Bush was coming with him. The Ambassador hadn't been very successful about her schedule and finally one morning he called and said, "You're cultural attaché. You have just become control officer for Mrs. Bush." I said, "Oh my goodness, how do I go about this." I found out by the end of that visit that one of the greatest assignments you can have is control officer for the spouse of the principal visitor because it's the principal who runs around with a death-like schedule, traveling here and there and meetings and note takers and all the rest. It is the spouse of the principal who gets to go do the fun things and still be involved in all of the state dinners and all of the chitchat. So I became a professional control officer for the spouse of the visiting dignitary. It was great to be with Mr. Kirkpatrick when Jeane Kirkpatrick visited as our ambassador to the UN, to be with Mrs. Shultz, to be with Mrs. Bush. These are individuals who have great personalities and interests of their own. It just proved a very fun assignment.

One of the individuals that we saw very often during this period of time was General Vernon Walters. He reminds me of a Richard Armitage figure in today's State Department or, you know, a military man with diplomatic credentials, political credentials. Walters arrived often in Morocco during this period of time. I think that was the quiet side of our diplomacy and mine and the ambassador's were sort of the brash public side of diplomacy. An ambassador of this style I think does cause controversy. He was a political appointee; he had been a special assistant to David Rockefeller in New York. That was his, I think, introduction to Republican political circles. He viewed himself as a friend of Ronald Reagan's; he felt that he could call the White House any time he wanted to. When you are an ambassador and you call the White House directly the State Department gets upset.

The deputy chief of mission, of course, is the individual who is to run the embassy and to help political appointees, who may not be as schooled in diplomatic protocol as career officers are, to help the political appointee through the rough spots, not to stub their toe, not to rub people the wrong way, to follow State Department policy. Our DCM when

Joseph Verner Reed, Jr., arrived was Peter Sebastian who is probably one of our most outstanding and distinguished North African diplomats. He had been consul general in Casablanca. He had served almost his entire career in Morocco, Tunisia and North Africa. He understood the society exceedingly well, understood the politics and the economy of the country exceedingly well. He understood how the State Department operates exceedingly well. He was an intellect; I was always fascinated to listen to Peter Sebastian talk about Morocco and the society and the culture and how he understood it and the depth of his understanding.

He understood that Moroccans liked to arrive at a 6:30 reception sometime between 8:30 and 9:00 perhaps in the evening and stay until maybe three in the morning. So the fact that Joseph Verner Reed, Jr., wanted them there at 6:30 and wanted them out of the residence at eight was a stylistic change and a cultural wrench for the Moroccans and it didn't fit very well at first. You know, he was viewed sort of as that crazy American. Peter Sebastian understood that this was a change and I'm sure counseled with the ambassador to perhaps change his style a little bit. I don't believe anybody was going to change Joseph Verner Reed, Jr.'s. style. He came back here as chief of protocol and went on to the UN as chief of protocol and that was just his public image.

I think in many ways as disconcerting as that might have been to the diplomatic corps he had an impact and in some ways that's what diplomacy is all about.

Q: Great, then in '84 where did you go?

POLLOCK: In '84 I came back to the United States. I had gone through a divorce process and our two children had stayed in the United States when I went to Morocco and I was eager to come back to the U.S. so I had asked for an exception to tour of duty policy. Normally I would have stayed out probably another four years or maybe even as long as six years but I asked for exception to tour of duty and it was granted. I came back to the U.S. and into one of the best U.S. jobs that I could think of. It was in an office we had reorganized into two large operating bureaus. One was for information and policy guidance and programming on issues of relevance and the other was for cultural affairs and exchange and Fulbright education, libraries, teaching English, that side of USIAs charge.

In many ways I think the reorganization had taken place because Congress was increasingly interested in evidence of effectiveness and accountability. We had to show results and the traditional journalist approach to information and educators approach to culture and educational programs often was not as effective in proving evidence of effectiveness as reorganization into a more dynamic, a more program driven approach to USIA's ability to tell America's story to the world might be. Therefore some reorganization had taken place.

We were beginning as an autonomous agency at that point to feel the impact of what had happened in the early years of John Kennedy's administration when the president had

formed the Peace Corps and had been looking for a mission statement for the Peace Corps.

Q: This is Tape 6, Side 1, with Jim Pollock.

POLLOCK: As a consequence, the USIA mission of telling America's story to the world was moved over to the Peace Corps where we had young Americans out in the field and why not let them tell America's story. They represented us exceedingly well.

For USIA then you had to come up with a new mission statement. In that mission statement, for the first time, you see the advocacy role that USIA was to take on in which we were charged with supporting and advocating U.S. policy. Edward R. Murrow, in those days, argued that if you were going to change USIA's mission then USIA needed to be present at the takeoff. He had used this as a result of trying to recover from the Bay of Pigs situation. Murrow said, "You know, if we are going to have to explain this after the fact then we jolly well better be there when you start to discuss how to plan it." Of course, we all enjoy looking back and learning from history. I'm not sure that we've learned very much because Karen Hughes has now been brought on by George W. Bush to try and explain what went wrong in Iraq. USIA, or its carry-over when it was amalgamated into the State Department in 2000, was never really present for the planning and the discussion; or if we were present certainly not listened to about what the impact of shock and awe in Baghdad might be several years later on an Islamic public that was already divided between Sunni and Shia.

In any event, the idea that USIA was now an advocate of U.S. policy meant that we had to defend ourselves and our budgeting process in front of Congress in a different way than we had done so previously. We reorganized and part of the reorganization was to create an office of policy and to have that office be engaged in understanding the background and rationale for U.S. policies overseas; not just as reflections of American public or American interests but as an extension of what America was in its best interest overseas. We modeled ourselves on the State Department. We had an executive secretariat, we had an operations center, we had an office of policy. The policy officers covered various issues or various parts of the world and we had policy officers in our area offices covering the policy interests of their particular geographical regions.

In one of the small offices, there were two people, myself and the head of the office, and I was his deputy. We were called the Fast Policy Guidance Unit. We were the phone number that you called 24-hours a day, seven days a week and the issue was our issue for the first 24-hours. We were then charged with being able and clever enough to hand it off to either a topical policy officer or a regional geographical bureau policy officer where the staffing and addressing of whatever the issue might be would take place in a much more elaborate way. But there were two of us in this Fast Policy Guidance Unit. We would get into the office every morning at about 4:30/5:00 and we would read all of the overnight cable traffic and all of the major, what we considered to be, the major newspapers, the New York Times, Boston Globe, LA Times, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune and four or five others. We would go through these newspapers and about

7:30/8:00 in the morning we would hold a conference call with the White House press office and the State Department's press office and we would decide with those individuals what we expected to be the questions of the day both at the 9:00 White House press briefing and at the 12 noon briefing by the State Department spokesperson.

What a lot of people don't grasp is that as stale and trudging as the State Department noon briefing can be, it actually is a statement of U.S. policy on any particular issue. The spokesperson is on the record and has a briefing book that has been cleared all the way up through the office of the deputy secretary of state and often the secretary of state about what can be said on a particular issue on a particular day. It seems trudging and behind the power curve. Very often, the press and the media will know that a story is developing much faster and have a huge number of rumors about a particular issue. The State Department may well have the story as well but is not going to say anything about it until certain things can be confirmed, number of deaths in, number of people evacuated from, discussions on such and so with foreign minister whose-e-what. But the preparation that goes into drafting those documents, which in effect become signed off on as policy statement documents, is rather elaborate and much more tumultuous, since it takes place between about 8:30 in the morning and 12 noon, than it would look on the calm surface when the spokesperson flips to page so and so and says, "I'm glad you asked that question Bernie, or whomever, Helen."

So we would sit down early in the morning after reading the newspapers and we would say this is what appears to be the situation from the overnight cable traffic and from the morning newspapers. These are where the spokesperson is probably going to get the questions of the day. Those questions would then be assigned out to policy officers at State within the geographic bureaus and these policy statements would be drafted up. Then about 8:30 we would sit in conference with the policy officers from the bureaus and a representative from the program division where policy officers dealing with, let's say, military security issues, privacy act issues, intellectual property issues, economic development or economic policy issues, environment, science or technology issues. These would be the area expertise issues where a particular policy officer would go into great depth on an issue versus an area geographic bureau policy officer who would know what was happening in Japan and Malaysia on the same day. We would go through the questions that we hypothesized would be addressed at the 9:00 White House briefing or the 12:00 noon State Department briefing. Then, one or the other of us would take off for the White House and the other one would go over to the State Department and we would participate in the briefing of the spokesperson at the department and the review of these policy papers as they would come in to go into the spokesperson's briefing book.

We would then attend the noon briefing, come back to the office with the policy guidance from the briefing book and hold a 2:00/2:30 afternoon briefing again for the policy officers at USIA. We would distribute those documents, if necessary write a memorandum to USIA's director, if there were an issue that might involve the director or an issue that the director was particularly interested in. Then that would be the end of our business day and off we would go unless the phone would ring and there would be some

immediate crisis at which point we would come back in to USIA and handle that crisis for however long it took us to set up a policy team to hand it over to.

Q: You were doing this from '84 until when?

POLLOCK: I was in this office from mid-'84 to mid-'86.

Q: After this time you had rather heavy exposure to policy situations what did you do?

POLLOCK: In those days a Washington assignment was to be three years with an extension for a fourth year being possible but preparation to go overseas again certainly by the fifth year. The assignment idea was that you should be in a job for one to two years and then take a second follow-on assignment for an additional year for an additional two years.

So after my year and a half to two years in the Fast Policy Guidance Office, the program manager for foreign policy and international affairs in the program division job came open. I got that job so I became program manager in the foreign policy and international affairs office. This office fulfilled the requests of overseas posts for speakers, educational materials, background materials but primarily speakers on foreign policy or domestic policy or economic or science and technology issues that were of concern to the countries in which they were serving. Posts annually would write a rationale for the way they wanted to spend their money and how they wanted to do their programming, what the important issues to their particular country were. From these statements we would put together a program plan for each country and break it out into program support primarily in the form of speakers but also in the form of topics. If a speaker were asked for a particular topic we would try to do a package. If it lent itself to audio-visual support, we would put together audio-visual materials that would address the issue. If it lent itself to bibliographic support there would always be a bibliography, reading materials, magazine articles that we would put together to support the issue throughout the year.

So my staff dealt not only with particular geographic regions in which they would cover the waterfront but I also had, for instance a political-military officer on loan from the Defense Department who would deal with military issues. We would turn to that officer to cover a military question, whether it be Iran contra or whether it be the contra issue itself in South America. The office that put together programs specifically related to South America, at the same time it put together programs specifically related to arms control and disarmament or development or whatever it happened to be.

Q: Did you run across...this was the era of Charlie Wick wasn't it?

POLLOCK: This was the era of Charlie Wick.

Q: Did you run across the problem of essentially a blacklist? Phone calls couldn't be used, etc. In other words could you get people to present both sides of both _____?

POLLOCK: We did. I came into this office just after the blacklist problem had hit the fan. There was a new bureau manager. The gentleman who headed the programming bureau was new at the time. His name was John Mosher and John actually was not a career officer; he replaced a career officer. John had a very high ethical strain in him and he wanted it known that blacklist did not exist in his program office and he would fight this tooth and nail and that we were in the business of presenting America's discursive side. Yes, we wish to support policy but we were going to be discursive about it.

There is a great tendency for the United States internally to really tear an issue apart from all sides and angles. When you send someone who may be terribly opposed to a particular policy that the United States is advocating, when that individual travels overseas that individual becomes an American. So even though the individual may be taking the dissenting point of view, usually that individual always made it very clear that I dissent with the policy but let me tell you where that policy is coming from. There are kernels of rational intelligent forethought in that policy. I happen to disagree and I disagree with them in the following way but let's look at the way that plays out. But it was never, that policy is just ridiculous, it always was: I may be opposed to that policy but I'm opposed on some of the following grounds. Let me show you where that policy is a good policy, let me show you where that policy comes from and let me show you there the elements that I represent or the intellectual disagreement that I have with it where those elements come from as well. Then you can debate this a little bit more freely.

A perfect example of this was a program that we did in Morocco on religion in America. We took a representative of Islam in America to an Islamic school in Morocco for a discussion of separation of church and state, what that means in the United States versus what that may mean in Islamic countries. It was a very dynamic, exceedingly interesting discussion. We had a gentleman who could speak Arabic, often went into Arabic during the discussions, could quote from the Koran, could talk about the United States as well. At the end of the session, the head of this institute turned to me and said, "You know, we could never have had such a discussion and such a debate with a representative from the French culture. The Lycée tradition in France would not have permitted a discussion of this nature to go on in this institute." That was the type of thing that I found all of the time, even when you had someone well known in the United States for dissenting with a particular point of view of American policy. That individual would always present it in the American context.

Q: Well then but you had a very political, very active head of USIA, Charlie Wick, very close to Ronald Reagan. How did that play out with him?

POLLOCK: It played out to my knowledge, as something that Charlie had attempted to influence, saw what was happening, saw that that was not well representing the United States and therefore backed off. This does not... I won't say that this was an open forum for debate. There were people in dissent that we were not going to program because we did not believe that they were balanced in their approach, but the idea of presenting a balanced approach and the idea of not letting someone speak because they happened to be opposed was the distinction that we were able to draw.

We are now ten years after the fact that we couldn't program James Baldwin in Bonn at a literary seminar, not because he was black but because he was gay. We could now program James Baldwin. We could now program a Madeleine Albright wherever we wanted to. Now an Abbey Hoffmann could we program? eh, probably not although by that point I think he was working on Wall Street and maybe he would have been quite programmable. I'm not sure. But the idea of a blacklist because, oh gee, they weren't of your political party or your political persuasion was something Charlie Wick lived with and I think may have lived with quite comfortably.

Q: OK then, we are talking about what '88?

POLLOCK: '88. In '88 I bid on counselor of embassy for public affairs, the head of our office, in Kuala Lumpur where I had started my career twenty years earlier. I got that assignment so in '88 we packed our bags for Kuala Lumpur.

Q: Let's see this puts you from '88 to when?

POLLOCK: '88 to '92.

Q: You said we, who is we?

POLLOCK: I had remarried at this point. My wife, who is a Foreign Service Officer, went through that process that we had been instrumental in drafting in the '70s about tandem assignments. She said, "If you can go back to Kuala Lumpur as public affairs officer then I will take leave without pay." So, initially, she went to Kuala Lumpur on leave without pay. That changed during the time we were there but initially she went on leave without pay and I was the officer seeking the assignment and was successful in my bid.

Q: OK, '88, you were off to Kuala Lumpur. What was the situation vis-à-vis the United States and Malaysia at that time?

POLLOCK: It was very much the way it has always been vis-à-vis Malaysia and the United States. I remember one of the ambassadors for whom I had served shaking his head one day and saying to me, "You understand Mohammed Mahathir the prime minister better than anybody else probably. You've known him longer certainly than anybody in the embassy and why does he always want to be the leader of the little guys instead of one of us?" We've always had this sort of feisty relationship with Malaysia. They have a different way of looking at the world. On the one hand they say, "We're going to run our policies this way. You're a big, gigantic consumer, we don't like your popular society, we don't like this about you, we don't like that about you, we don't like your policies here there and everywhere. You are against these little countries, you exploit us." On the other hand they turn around and by this time we're sending 500 fully paid for scholarship students a year to the United States and the minister of education said to me, "We will not change that, we want those students studying in the United

States.” Malaysia still sends probably three thousand students a year and the program had started off with a huge number of scholarship students. Malays coming to the U.S. when tuitions in Great Britain got to the point that they weren’t going off to Great Britain for their education.

Malaysia has always benefited economically with its relationship with the United States and has enjoyed that relationship with duty free zones. Going back to the ‘60s and ‘70s when computers and computer chips were first getting started, Texas Instruments had come to the area and conducted a set of tests, fully expecting to find out that the Chinese were the ones adapted by disposition to be great computer chip formulators, builders, workers. Instead, it turned out it was more the Thais and the Malays and the Indonesians who were adapted and suited or showed proclivities for doing this sort of work. The computer chip industry, and the electronic fabrication industries went into Malaysia early on and contributed to the economic growth of the country. Malaysia has always enjoyed that side of the relationship. It has brought prosperity to the country. They have always been open to American ideas. They’ve always been interested in American culture and in the true artistic cultural sense not just the Kentucky Fried Chicken sense, but it’s always been a yin-yang, love-hate relationship, politically vociferous, socially and culturally embracing.

Q: How about I mean it is a relatively small country and it has a tremendous flow of students to the United States. One, did they come back and two, the ones that came back what sort of...how did you...one, could you exploit this? I’m using it in the good terms, but also how did this reflect when they came back?

POLLOCK: Well it had several different types of reverberation. It had been true when I was there in the ‘60s. We dreamed up the American-Malaysian society. We were promoting this. When I was there in the end of the ‘80s and early ‘90s it was really interesting to put the graduates of American universities together with the old Malaysian-American Society. Graduates of an American university are now in the thousands. When Malaysian graduates of American universities held their annual dinner it was all ...the room looked like a political convention. Here is Cornell in this corner and University of Minnesota in that corner. They all had these table groupings representing the universities and the various years that they graduated from the universities. It had become just a totally different set of arguments that we were making on the interface of cultural and educational dialogue.

While we were attempting to find Malaysians who might want to go to school in the United States in the late ‘60s, by the late ‘80s we were arguing with the Malaysian government about the credentialing qualifications. Was an architect who had graduated from the University of Cornell with a five year architectural degree as qualified as someone who had graduated from a British university that had required years of academic training, internship training on the market and then back for additional structural studies and so on and so forth. So the whole nature of the argument had changed from whether the American degree had value to whether an American degree

had the same credibility and value as a degree from Oxford or some place else. That was a whole different range of discussions.

In the '60s everybody wanted to go to Harvard, Yale, Princeton. By the 1980s we had a very active and huge student counseling program and language testing program, TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) testing program running out of the binational commissions offices in Kuala Lumpur. People understood exceedingly well that if they wanted to study organic chemistry, the University of Minnesota had invested a huge sum of money to become the best department in the United States, or so they thought. Boy, they wanted to go to the University of Minnesota, they didn't want to go to Harvard, Yale or Princeton anymore.

So I found that change terribly interesting. There were five educational consortia in Malaysia at the time teaching Malaysian students who were preparing to be the grantees for government scholarships who studied in the United States. The Malaysian government had discovered that if you send a student off to the United States for four years it's a pretty expensive proposition, but if you allow them to live at home on the local economy for the first two of those years and then just go on to the second, the two years, junior and senior year of advance study, (1) you had a better student prepared for the American classroom and (2) you conserved your financial resources.

So we had done educational exchange contracts with five separate consortia of American universities who would come in and teach at the associate degree level. These students over the course of two years would get an AA (Associate of Arts) degree and then they would either go into the Midwest university consortia or the Texas university consortia or the east coast university consortia, SUNY university system, the New York state university system. Because they had an AA degree, they didn't necessarily have to go on in an American institution if they weren't qualified to do so they would go back into a Malaysian institution many times.

So the whole nature of the educational dialogue with Malaysia had changed remarkably.

Q: What was the impact of the American educated students in Malaysia in the late '80s?

POLLOCK: When they first decided that they were going to go to the United States for advanced education, they had sought universities that were capable of taking or interested in taking a large number of students. This was in the early and mid-'70s. The students went off to the United States and they had in many cases a bad experience for them and in many cases a bad experience for the Malaysian government. 300 students climb off of an airplane in Chicago and take a bus to Southern Illinois University in September. In October they experience their first snow fall and they're in a dormitory with Pakistanis and other Islamic students. They are barricading themselves and they are burning bureaus and desks to stay warm and they are having a bad experience and they are going home from that experience and they are going out to the Malaysian village and they are sitting down with their mother and father and they're saying, "You know, you really don't practice Islam the way it should be practiced. We learned in the United States, among

other things, that you are pretty loose in your Islamic traditions here.” The Malaysian government had no more interest in hearing this than the children’s parents did. So there was a rebound period in which started to foster an Islamic revival in Malaysia following that period of the riots in ’68. Everybody realized the halcyon days of co-existence of Chinese and Malays and Indians may have come to an end.

One of the things that struck me deeply in ’88 was to go back 20 years later and get together with the same people that I had been on the university campus with and been in discotheques with and had to my house for dinner and to just see what had been a spirit of flowering, the whole let the flowers bloom, the whole Chinese thing comes to mind. These were the leaders of their society and they now were very sober and just the whole civil disturbance situation was very, very sobering in 20 years, 30 years, 40 years later. A society still is trying to cope with what had happened and why it happened and who they were and who they are and why they are that way. It was heartening in some ways to hear the conversation switched from you’re Chinese and you eat pork and I’m Islamic and I don’t eat port and our two cultures can’t get along and until now a conversation of how do you get the kids to school with all this traffic, the commute is horrendous and why are we building more cars and can’t the road situation be and look at these high-rise apartments, there is now flooding in the city and what’s going on here. Neighborhoods become neighborhoods again; it was heartening to hear that sort of conversation. But it was disheartening to see the glumness, the seriousness that had touched the society in the same way that we saw in our own society, this sort of huge advancements in the late ‘60s in sort of what we called our great Civil Rights movement that now seems to be glacial and people reflect back on it and what’s happened.

You know we have sort of that same glumness about what’s going on in our own society. Listening to the debate on immigration today sort of brings back these same issues where human beings who at one point sort of understand their... minister of education who was concerned about the issue. He was concerned that Malays in particular were losing their ability to speak English well and to be competitive. Part of the educational consortia experience was beginning to reveal that well they were teaching English as a second language during the first six months of the first year on the ground where this had been an English speaking culture. So the gentleman who was minister of education at the time was Anwar Ibrahim and he has had his own political problems in Malaysia and repercussions since. But this was and I think in many ways because of some of the views expressed by this story.

He wanted to discuss ways in which English could remain a competitive advantage that had served Malaysia economically so well. In the course of the conversation I suggested that they reintroduce language testing at the senior high school level as a qualification for graduation. We noted that since now that Malay was now the language of national education, language testing was no longer an issue since the people who didn’t normally speak Malay had to speak it in the classroom; it was part of their academic reading. Why should we then reintroduce a language test? I said, “Well, if you look at your society and you reintroduce a language test for foreign languages what’s going to happen? You are going to find the Chinese are going to take a test in Mandarin, the Indians will take a test

in Madrasi or in Hindi and that the Malays, since they can't take a test in Malay, will take a test in English. I said, "You know one way to keep Malays on their game in terms of the English language is to offer a test at the end of secondary school in which English is one of the options because we know that the Chinese will learn English and the Indians will learn English. Their families make them do it in the same way that their families make them learn Mandarin even though they may be Hakka or Cantonese speakers if they are in Malaysia. Those families will make those kids learn Mandarin because that is the Chinese they want them to know. The same thing is true in the Indian community and maybe the same thing would be true if you wanted to consider English a competitive advantage maybe the same thing would be true in the Malay community."

So there were ways in which again the American experience or exposure to the American experience were things that the Malaysian government want to have happen. Also we discussed the introduction of what was the rage in American secondary education at the time: this whole critical thinking idea in which critical thinking required perfect teaching and it went together. Anwar Ibrahim, as minister of education, wanted us to put a lot of money into bringing critical thinking to the classroom in Malaysia. He thought that the students were still far too passive and they needed to be energized because that's where the new thinking would come from. They needed to be able to challenge. I said, "You know what that's going to get you politically? That's going to get you a whole lot of challenge politically that you may not want to deal with as a government or as the United Malay National Organization as a political party." He said, "You know, that's our problem. We have to be prepared for that."

So the impact of the riots, the impact of 20 years of association with the United States still play out in Malaysian society. I think the major issue of the day was Desert Storm, Gulf War I, and the Malay reaction to that I think was terribly interesting, maybe we can pick up next time here.

Q: OK we will pick that...a couple questions I want to ask the next time. At kind of this point we will talk about the reaction to (1) the essential breakup of the Soviet Union and all up there whether it made any difference at all in the Malay perspective, then we'll talk about the Gulf War and also what about Islam during the time you were there? How did that play because that would have been very much your thing? Also, public diplomacy operations, how did they...what sort of things were you doing and did...I'm not sure what you call it but Borneo, I call it, the Malay part, it has another name doesn't it?

POLLOCK: Yes, it's called Eastern Malaysia.

Q: Well anyway...all right.

POLLOCK: Borneo as Borneo is now called Bandar Seri Begawan, which was the British enclave.

Q: Be that as it may, Malaysia on that big island down in the south there. Was this a different kettle of fish or not as far as..?

POLLOCK: That's an interesting...

Q: OK, and so we will pick it up then. We are talking about your time '88- '92.

POLLOCK: Right.

Q: OK, today is the 28th of February 2007. Jim?

POLLOCK: Yes, where do you want to go from...? Where do you want to start, I guess or restart from where we were last time?

Q: OK, well maybe the Gulf War first. How did things work out there?

POLLOCK: The Gulf War and you had mentioned Islam. Maybe I will try and put the two together because the way the two coalesced is very interesting. Starting back in the '70s the Malaysian government began sending Malay students particularly to the United States for study. This was a result of increasing academic costs in Great Britain where Malays had traditionally gone to school. Chinese and Indians in all of this are simply left to pay their own bills and in most cases can do that very nicely but the Malay students were given government support. Malaysia has always been and remains very concerned that a certain proportion of its students, of its young people, study overseas, particularly Malays, because it sees that study as a way of, I think, invigorating the society when these students come back. It not only invigorates the society but it also adds elements of discontent. Being away from Malaysia itself, being in a foreign environment, studying there can in some cases be quite disruptive.

During the initial phases of Malay training overseas particularly in the United States there were a number of mistakes made. The government simply went out in search of American universities that were ready, willing and able to absorb Malaysian students. So in the first couple of years, Malays would arrive in the United States in rather large numbers, 3, 4, 500 at a crack and be transported off to universities, Northern Illinois University, Southern Illinois University, various other universities around the country that were prepared to take them and wanted the tuition fees but really weren't prepared to support them in terms of a foreign student program at all. One of the things that happened was that these students would come up against situations that they never faced before in their lives. They would be homesick, they would get depressed, and they would fall into foreign student associations that were radical or fundamental at best, headed by Pakistanis or by other individuals from Islamic countries that were in the United States studying. In many cases it would turn out to be a situation in which these students themselves were introduced to an Islam that they had not been aware of while in Malaysia. They would return home quite critical of their parents' practice of Islam in the past -- a rather sweet, generous type of Islamic tradition, peaceful for the most part and not particularly adherent to the prescriptions of Islam. Then the students would come home and begin to criticize their parents for not being more strict in their adherence to the faith, for not following some of the practices that the students had learned overseas.

At the same time, there's a stream in the Malay political tradition that is much more conservatively Islamic. Those elements began to win favor and win electoral votes in the Malaysian parliament.

There was a very prominent individual, he's fallen out of prominence I think because he had a falling out with Prime Minister Mahathir, but he is coming back into prominence now. His name is Anwar Ibrahim. He was a young, dynamic, very thoughtful intellectual individual with political ambitions and began to rise through the United Malay National Organization, UMNO, the Malay political party that really controls politics in the country and has since independence. UMNO was the founding block of the independence agreement that Malays would control politics, the Chinese would control the economy and the Indians would control the labor force and the labor movement. Anwar Ibrahim began to rise very quickly through the UMNO political ranks. He had associations in the Middle East. He brought back these more traditional conservative political views, which won favor both in the conservative wing of the Malay party of UMNO in PAS, which is the Conservative Islamic party in Malaysia. Also, Ibrahim had support from modernizers and people involved in civil society, in that he is a very intelligent individual and truly, I believe, interested in Malaysia and in Malaysia in a national sense.

In any event, he had brought to the country, and returning students had brought to the country, this adherence to an Islam, support of Islamic issues and causes. Prime Minister Mahathir had recognized this, embraced Anwar Ibrahim and pulled him up into cabinet level positions. When I was there he was minister of education and then just before I left had moved into a position that all former prime ministers had had which was control of the Exchequer, minister of finance of the economy and later went on to become deputy prime minister and that's where I think Mahathir perceived of him as too much of a political threat. There were charges that he had betrayed the state, that he had engaged in extra marital relationships and homosexual relationships, that he was undermining the party. He was brought up on charges and eventually jailed. He's now out of jail and he's been exonerated. Mahathir has since handed over control of the government to his successor. Anwar Ibrahim lost for several years in that political struggle but may well now be on the mend and in a period of revival.

Q: But he was one of the students who went to...?

POLLOCK: No, he was older than that. I'm not sure what his academic background was, but by the '80s he was in his 40s and a real political figure in the country.

Q: Going back to these students going to the United States was this...what could USIS do? When you see a situation evolving of a whole group of students going and one can't help but have qualms about where they are being sent, if nothing else, going to Illinois for the winter from Malaysia. Was there anything you could do from Kuala Lumpur or from Washington in cases of this nature to make sure the kids were well received and well supported?

POLLOCK: Yes actually there was. Basically that started with the Malaysian government. For all of the niggling and nitpicking, our relationships with the Malaysian government and Malaysian government offices I think has always been exceedingly good and very constructive. It was part of their policy. They wanted to form their government and their business offices or staff these offices with individuals some of whom had been educated in Malaysia, some of whom had been educated in the United States, some of whom had been educated in Germany or the former Soviet Union or in Australia and Great Britain. They wanted to have this mix of training and ideas bouncing off of each other. They felt that that dynamic would produce good results, and I think it has. The whole educational situation that occurred probably over a three to five year period was addressed very quickly by the government. They recognized that their plunge into American academe was over their heads, and they needed to reconstitute it in a constructive way that was more responsive to their interests and that could fit into the breath and dynamism of the American educational pattern.

They addressed that very quickly and we were able to help them do it. The whole Fulbright Program and U.S. government interest in that program came into play. Basically, the Malaysian government identified foreign student advisors who were assigned to the Malaysian embassy in Washington and traveled across the country maintaining an association with students. Large blocks of students were broken down into smaller blocks, widely distributed rather than concentrated. So that these groups of 3-500 that might be camped out on an American campus were broken down into groups of 30-50 and distributed over ten universities instead of clumped at one university. The Malaysian government began looking very seriously at university-to-university linkage programs in which American universities would partner with universities in Malaysia and serve as channels for absorbing Malaysian students.

While I was there there was a large program going on. The Malaysian government was seeking a consortium partner because they had come to the conclusion that financially and academically it might be better to train Malays in Malaysia for the first two years of their academic training, higher tertiary level academic training, and then send them to the United States in the junior and senior years. They proposed to do that by working in conjunction with American university consortia. The SUNY program was there, the University of Maryland was there...

Q: The SUNY is the State...

POLLOCK: SUNY is the State University of New York. The Texas academic Consortium, University of Texas system, had a program there, the University of Indiana representing the Big Ten was there. The Malaysian government was looking at these programs to see which was the best fit for them. All of these programs had the basis of teaching two years in Malaysia, awarding an associate degree and then selecting the best of those students to go on to higher training at the third and fourth year level for a bachelors degree in the United States. Of course the Midwest university consortium offered all of the Big Ten universities as placement, the Texas consortia offered all universities in Texas, the SUNY system all the universities in the New York higher

educational pattern. So Malaysia moved with the help and consultation of USIS, to defuse the problems and ameliorate the problems that these initial groups of students had had.

Q: Did you address or the Malay government address the problem of extremist organizations, warn their students or some looked at and select places carefully? I mean was this part of their policy or did they ignore it?

POLLOCK: They didn't necessarily ignore it. It was part of their policy, they were quite aware of it. In some ways they actually embraced it. The Malaysian government was going through a time of embracing Islam and this is what is interesting as an input to the Malaysian reaction to Desert Storm. What we saw was an emotional outpouring. Malaysia was far enough away from the Middle East that it could really wear its Islam on its sleeve. There was a great emotional outpouring that the United States had come into the area as an aggressor and there were demonstrations in the streets, there was certainly very critical press and these demonstrations were well organized. They would come by the embassy after Friday prayers, and because of the civil disturbances that went back to May 13th of 1969 the government was very well prepared to handle demonstrations. You needed permits, you needed police escorts, the government was still very, very weary of large crowds taking to the streets and controlled them. So demonstrations were by and large peaceful, although there was some gunfire directed at the embassy, drive-by shooting on occasions during this period.

We certainly were on alert. The Malaysian government allowed its population to express these Islamic sentiments, but at the same time in a very pragmatic, very practical way, they worked very closely with us in efforts to maintain peace and civil control. They established a new license plate system for instance, for our cars, so that Americans could drive around town without being distinguished as diplomatic personnel. They escorted our school buses out to the International School of Kuala Lumpur. They took several very distinct measures to make sure that we had Malaysian government protection and oversight in concern for our personal safety for which I think we were appreciative.

At the same time, they did allow a critical press and they did allow a civil protest in front of the embassy and marches throughout Kuala Lumpur in opposition to our presence in the Middle East.

Q: I'm curious because I mean here certainly a secularist regime of Saddam Hussein invaded an Arab country, Kuwait, overwhelmed it, there was a coalition with Saudi Arabia being the main staging phase, Syria was in there, Egypt was in there, in other words other Islamic countries were going against Saddam. So I mean this was...although we had the main military role certainly the Gulf States and all were playing a role. So it wasn't the U.S. versus Islam looking at that war. But why did they take Saddam's side?

POLLOCK: Malaysia and Indonesia were far enough away that the distinctions that were taking place in the Gulf and in the countries in the Middle East were distinctions that were not at all pertinent to the Malaysian situation. They could follow their heart; they

could be emotionally enraged without having to think about any political consequences or even break down what was happening on the ground as you have so excellently put it. Certainly we were going in against Saddam, we were not going in against Islam, and we had our supporters including Malaysia, and this is where the story gets exceedingly interesting.

The Malaysian government concern for diplomatic safety and diplomatic decorum allowed the embassy to address the disturbances and the criticism in a very collegial way. It allowed us to go out and actually engage in a dialogue with our critics rather than being barricaded in an isolated fashion behind embassy walls in a fortress embassy.

So very quickly, after the first set of demonstrations, we established a working committee within the embassy. As public affairs officer, I played a very prominent role in formulating the way we would address the criticism and the way in which we would interface with it. We established a discussion group and we asked the leaders of the demonstrations after Friday prayers, each Friday afternoon, to designate a committee of the same number of people that would meet with us and establish a dialogue. So very early on the demonstration would arrive in front of the embassy gates, it would state its protest, it would be present, it would be quiet and peaceful, its delegation would come in or our delegation would go out as we got closer to the end of Desert Storm, and we would sit down and talk. We would exchange views and we would make the arguments that the United States government was making in support of our presence there and in support of the coalition and what we had done.

We had actually done this I think in a very constructive fashion as a country. We did have a coalition to oppose Saddam. In actuality, Malaysia was a part of that coalition. Prior to Desert Storm and prior to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Malaysia had assumed a seat on the United Nations Security Council. So while demonstrations could go on in the streets and the Malaysian public could be demonstrative in its objection to our presence and to Desert Storm and armed conflict, the Malaysian government, at the same time, was working very closely with us to understand what the situation was, to listen to our arguments. It turned out to be the only government of an Islamic country that voted for absolutely every single one of the UN resolutions put forward at the time.

Q: Well now during the Gulf War I understand people around the globe were sort of transfixed by the...particularly the air war and the very short land war by watching it on CNN. What happened in Malaysia and did this happen?

POLLOCK: Malaysian television is more open than some television environments. The Malaysian government is very interested in what its people see, what its population sees and hears. This leads back to my mention of Anwar Ibrahim and I will try and wrap this together because it's all going on at the same time. He is minister of education at this period and also a political figure. He is one of the political figures who has deep ties to the Islamic world and is in part a sponsor of opposition to U.S. policy in the Middle East and to our military presence there. So Malaysian television does allow in a good deal of Al Jazeera broadcasting, broadcasting from other entities that are up on the satellite.

People have access to this. Their licensing and distribution of satellite dishes is not controlled, it's a booming business.

Malaysia itself is very much like the United States. What you see on our three commercial networks, ABC, NBC, CBS is comparable to what you see on the three Malaysian licensed television channels that have government affiliation. There is a government channel as well as these two private channels. But the private channels are...there is oversight of the private channels and what goes on the air and why. But at the same time, like our cable and satellite programming, Malaysians satellite programming is available to Malaysians and they watch it. Certainly we saw broadcasts from CNN all of the time, broadcasts from Al Jazeera all of the time in Malaysia.

In the almost tripartite dialogue, embassy, Malaysian government and this Islamasist population in the street, we could use the embassy, we could use our own satellite, we could use our own broadcasting facilities out of Washington to bring a great deal of programming to both the Malaysian government and to this population in the streets. There was a turning point about the mid-point of Desert Storm or of the buildup to and then Desert Storm and the denouement after Desert Storm.

At the middle point of this, I had been receiving from my colleagues in the Middle East, of course, their daily press cable traffic and what they had seen in the press in Cairo, Morocco, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, throughout the Gulf. We had very early on presented our interlocutors with the daily press translations that had been transmitted to Washington. When they received these, of course, they looked at them, took them away, they came back and they said, "You know this is all in English, it's all American propaganda, we're not going to accept any of this." Thank goodness, of course, for advances in communication technology. I simply went back to my office after that meeting and sent a telegram to all of my counter parts throughout the Middle East and I said, "As long as you are sending press translations here is my fax number, please fax me the originals in Arabic." So at our next set of meetings I was able to present our interlocutors with these press excerpts with the banner from the paper and a faxed text in Arabic. To that their response was, "You know your translations word for word were exceedingly good and absolutely accurate. It wasn't propaganda at all." Well, one man's propaganda is another man's information and we all know that. Obviously what was being sent back to Washington in press translation were editorials by Islamic writers in Egypt, in Saudi Arabia, and in the Gulf States who were very much in favor...

Q: They were selective but at the same time it gave them a feel that...

POLLOCK: But it did give them a feeling exactly. It gave our interlocutors in Malaysia the idea that we were being open and honest with them. That then led to their interest in coming into the embassy to hear our point of view with electronic dialogues and video conferencing...

Q: When you say electronic dialogues what do you mean?

POLLOCK: Electronic dialogue was something that USIA and the video conferencing were two things...

Q: This is Tape 7, Side 1, with Jim Pollock.

POLLOCK: The electric dialogues and the video conferencing were two things that USIA was using during these years. The public diplomacy effort now in the State Department continues to use them although they've become obviously with computer technology much more sophisticated. At the time, the term electronic dialogue referred to, in effect, a broadcast conference call. You would sit in a room around a table with one of those marvelous three-legged pods that you would put on speaker and you would have a dialogue, a conversation, with a similar group of people in Washington or New York or at an academic site in California -- wherever we could set up the conference call or with whomever we could bring into the conference call. So in some cases you could have a three or four or five-way conference call going on with U.S. government resources or academic resources or think-tank resources in conversation with a group of twelve to twenty in our conference room in the embassy that was on speaker phone.

The video conferencing is the same concept except using video technology. Very often we were able to do this by bringing U.S. government principals or academic principals, think tank intellectual resources into our television studios or our film studios in Washington. We then beamed that signal by satellite to our embassies around the world, in this case Malaysia. At the time Paul Wolfowitz was a deputy secretary of defense and had come into that position having had a very successful and a very public tour as ambassador in Indonesia. So he was exceedingly well known by the Malaysians and was a very credible interlocutor with them.

One of these video dialogues in particular had Wolfowitz in our studios with Kuwait's ambassador to the United Nations. We had them on big screen in the theatre in the embassy and then we had the audio link-up for the audience. So we had an audience of probably 50-60 people, that we had sent out invitations to, here in front of the screen discussing U.S. policy and actions in the Middle East and in leading up to and going into Desert Storm. It was a great dialogue and it simply was like sticky paper; once you have a program like that everybody wants to come back and continue to have programs like that. It does establish dialogue and I'm absolutely convinced that had the U.S. government made the decision to continue dialogues of this sort with the Islamic world we would be in a much different situation today in the Middle East than we find ourselves.

Q: What happened, I don't mean to jump ahead but as part of it had we after this period did we stop this or what?

POLLOCK: By and large we did.

Let me return to the dialogue going on in Malaysia during this time. We could get large audiences into the embassy to hear our point of view, to discuss it, to debate it and have embassy officers present to carry on that discussion after the hour or so of video or audio

conferencing. We could follow up with that and we did, at the Malaysian government's request, with small group dinners held in the embassy's cafeteria that brought together groups of people interested in various things. This was an exceedingly productive and fertile time in Malaysia. UMNO (United Malays National Organization) was this Malaysian moderate, really, Malay ruling party that has a Chinese political constituency and an Indian one. It was very aware of opposition Chinese parties and of more conservative opposition Malay parties particularly outside of the capital and its immediate surroundings on the west coast of Malaysia. The east coast of Malaysia is a much more rural, northern Malaysia along the Thai border is a much more rural, much more conservative Islamic situation. The Malaysian government itself, UMNO as a political party, found itself in this sort of dichotomous situation. It had a population in the streets, a critical press and in some ways a critical face that it wished to present publicly while at the same time it was voting for resolutions that we had sponsored in the United Nations.

Think of how grass roots democracy, town hall democracy, in the United States really worked. How did we go into a city, go into an electoral district, how did we handle our redistricting when our Congress came together to do that. How did we handle dealing with an opposition at home in a town hall sense, in a neighborhood sense, how did we organize politically. Their interest, of course, was how did we, as UMNO, go out and sit down in the villages in eastern Malaysia and make our point, make our case? How do we develop local grass roots to debate with the grass roots more conservative PAS and other Islamic parties that are operating day-to-day in these villages?

So our entire engagement in Desert Storm led to a much broader dialogue and a much deeper dialogue. I believe, or so my political friends and the ambassador and my friends from the Langley School of Applied Political Science believe, that we had not had dialogue at this level. We'd not had the ability to identify young Malaysian political people interested in the political process nor had political operatives in the embassy been able to identify them and open discussions with them previously. I can't vouch as to whether their opinion was true or not but we had a very dynamic situation going on that was much broader than the Middle Eastern crisis at the time and had, I think, great ramifications.

I want to leave that then and go back to Anwar Ibrahim, a bit, in his capacity as minister of education. We were dealing in our other USIS programs very definitely at the village level because we were deeply into primary and secondary education as a result of having been so deeply involved with the consortia and the Fulbright Program at the tertiary level.

The Malaysian government had been introduced by the Fulbright Program to the whole idea of our secondary school creative thinking approach to education. This was partnered by those who initially came up with the concept and wrote the books and started the training for creative thinking. It was partnered with what they called perfect teaching. So the idea of training the teacher to be a teacher who could introduce creative thinking and dialogue with the classroom rather than rote memory presentation which...

Q: Which was sort of the tradition in that part of the world?

POLLOCK: Absolutely.

Q: Pretty much like the Madrasi and all the others. You sit around and you learn the Koran and that sort of thing.

POLLOCK: True at the Madrasi level, also true at the academic level. Your reference to the Madrasi situation I will get to later when I get to Senegal. What we were able to do was to work very closely with the Malaysian ministry of education, Anwar Ibrahim himself, and all of their teacher training programs and facilities. We wanted to introduce, to attempt to break this pattern that gave full credence and almost the word of Allah, the word of God, to whatever came out of the mouth of the professor standing behind the microphone on the dais at the front of the lecture hall. This was the educational model that they had. It has European roots although the European educational system, as we have found, has changed drastically. What it spawned in former colonies had not changed drastically. Anwar Ibrahim, the minister of education, was interested in seeing this change. I had a very frank conversation with him, I had known Anwar for many years from the time he was a student when I was first in Malaysia. I count him as a friend and I think that he does the same. I had a very frank conversation with him and said, "If you get critical thinking into your classrooms it's going to create a political fallout that you do not want." He said, "Well, we are going to have to be prepared politically to handle that. Certainly you do in the United States; certainly they do in Great Britain. We simply need to be prepared to handle that because if we don't have critical thinking in our classrooms we will not continue to develop and be competitive as a country. We have to have that way of thinking come forward and we just have to be prepared to deal with it as a society, we have to grow as a society," which I thought was an exceedingly open and progressive intelligent position on his part. It's one of the reasons I've always admired him and admired his politics and his thinking.

So we were bringing USIA resources to bear, to bring into the country people who were talking about how do you reorganize the classroom? How do you reorganize your curriculum? We were using USIA grants to do that and it enabled us to use USIA grants to bring in individuals who would make the same point but in a political forum or in a press forum that we were making in an academic forum. It enabled us to mix audiences rather than segregate audiences, to mix audiences to give us press access to stimulate the dialogue with the critical press, of what was happening during Desert Storm. We had access to the press to present our point of view in the Chinese language press and in the English language press and ultimately because of the fax machine in the Islamic language press as well.

We had a very dynamic international visitor program. We were able to send groups of academic secondary school teachers to the United States to look at how we were teaching, to establish relationships, to bring people back to use Malaysian conference facilities for conferences to which they would provide teachers. This is mandatory in-service training for you guys. You are going to get three days off to go to this conference

in the Gentling highlands that's being sponsored in conjunction with the USIA and the ministry of education and you as teachers are being told that you need to go show up for this.

So our programming during this period of time, I think, was hugely dynamic and it was packed. I didn't have enough money to do programming and, as a result, we actually did some programming with private sector sources that was equally supportive of all that we were doing with press and academics. All of a sudden Robert Rauschenberg appeared on my doorstep.

Q: Who is Robert Rauschenberg?

POLLOCK: Robert Rauschenberg was a famous artist of the '50s and '60s in the United States, still working artist today of American expressionism. He actually moved American art in a direction of public involvement in a way that it hadn't been so involved before. Rauschenberg had set out to visit various countries around the world that interested him, whose cultures had interested him, and he had set up this Rauschenberg international cultural organization or institute. He had come to Malaysia and said that he was interested in Malaysia, interested in studying Malaysia. He wanted to know if we could be supportive of his interests. He proposed to spend six to eight months in the country, hoped that we could provide him with some cultural interpreters to travel with him. He then was going to go away for a year and do some painting. He was then going to come back to Malaysia and bring a collection of 200 of his art works and his new Malaysian paintings. He would then stage an exhibit over a four-month period in Kuala Lumpur International Gallery, if that were agreeable to us and he was going to pay the bills. We said this was very agreeable to us and it all came about. There was a little finagling. Once he took a look at the international gallery he wanted to make sure that there was insurance on his art work. So our ambassador held a dinner for all of the American insurance representatives in KL and asked if they could put together an insurance package and would they contribute that to the presentation. They did. They were interested enough, eager enough and kind enough to do that. So we had this marvelous exhibit, really a retrospective of Rauschenberg art, presented in the National Gallery of Malaysia with Malaysian government support, Rauschenberg's own financial and artistic support and the United States being represented by the American Insurance Association in Kuala Lumpur.

All of this tied together in just a very dynamic way.

Q: While you were there, I mean, Malaysia, of course, was a former British colony. Was the British Council or some element of the British government doing anything parallel to what you were?

POLLOCK: Yes, very definitely the British Council had always been active in Malaysia and continues to be active in Malaysia. When I was first there in the sixties, of course, it was all British Council. They sponsored all of the exhibits, the theater and play readings, they sponsored all of the English language training and educational exchange. Now by

the 1990s they were certainly represented and a player and very important with very deep ties to the country. But the United States was the show on Broadway, in terms of our cultural and educational activities and where the Malaysian government was interested in terms of educational reform, political domestic politics, operational nitty-gritty political party-making constituency development issues, things of that sort, and in terms of press freedom and press interest. There was a good deal of press interest in economic reporting. This had not necessarily been a field that we had been interested in as a government representative, but we found that our audience was interested in how one develops a newspaper reporter. They saw that a newspaper reporter obviously needs to be a broader individual than one simply saying “And what is the minister’s view of this?” and then slavishly reporting it back.

Q: Let’s talk about I can’t remember what you call it, but the Malaysian element of that big island down to the...

POLLOCK: East Malaysia.

Q: Southeast.

POLLOCK: East Malaysia is a fascinating construct. It is a colonial hangover. When Malaya was set up, the Sultanate of Brunei, of course, was the headquarters of British Petroleum. So that remained in and of itself, but all along the coast there was British interest in having a presence. So there was eastern Malaya that then became eastern Malaysia.

Eastern Malaysia, of course, has a different ethnic composition than the western Malay Peninsula. This is much more tribal and I’m not going to say primitive but more coastal. The interests, both political and economic, are different. When I was there, there was a Christian element in the states of Sabah and Sarawak which are the two Malaysian provinces of east Malaysia. They run across that eastern or northern coast of the grand island of Sulawesi, the majority of which is Indonesia. But there it all progresses up to a mountain spine and that’s the border area. It is like the Continental Divide, rivers flow down to the south and flow up to the north. So that is the national dividing line between Indonesia and Malaysia.

The two provinces are Sabah and Sarawak. Sarawak had remained in the control of the Malay political parties or parties related to UMNO and in support of the government in the parliamentary system. But in Sabah there was a Christian party that had come into control. I had a great visit out to Sabah and met with everybody and did the usual USIA thing. When I was first in Malaysia we had a branch public affairs officer who handled eastern Malaysia and I had had a chance even then to go out and visit as part of my junior officer training. In my capacity in the ‘80s and ‘90s, ‘88-‘92 in Kuala Lumpur, I was also accredited to Brunei’s capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, and that was Darussalam, So there was reason for me to travel and I would go out periodically to Bandar Seri Begawan and consult with the ambassador about various things. Then I would always make a stop in either one or the other of the capitals of the Malaysian provinces.

In this one occasion in Kinabalu I was sitting talking with a couple of journalists about this Christian government and what changes had taken place in the province once the Christian government had come into power. They said, "You know, actually absolutely no changes. They all do politics in exactly the same corrupt way but what is interesting about this is that a new segment of the population is getting the cream this time around. So it's become actually very leveling, it's been very supportive of a new middle class sponsorship of different people than had previously been sponsored, so it is passing around the wealth, the distribution of the wealth is different and better."

By distribution of the wealth our major concern as an embassy with eastern Malaysia was horrific uncontrolled logging of the hardwood forest, really primeval, dense, jungle forest. The Japanese and the Filipinos and the Thais and I'm sure their financiers in Europe and the United States were exceedingly interested in the logging trade, which was absolutely uncontrolled. It was considered as a provincial matter and therefore controlled by the provincial governor; logging leases were controlled by the provincial governor. There was just a huge amount of money to be made and absolutely no environmental control at all. Our great concern was that Green Peace Organizations, International and United States in origin, would come out to eastern Malaysia and we would find ourselves in the situation where we, as an embassy, would be representing a U.S. citizen who had chained him or herself to the boom of a logging crane and would prefer to die than to be removed from the crane. Of course provincial police, Malaysian military, national guard would come out and physically remove the person from the crane and then there would be diplomatic appeals from the government to intercede. We would have consular interests in making sure that detentions were similar to detentions of anybody else and that the American citizen was not being treated either favorably or unfavorably in terms of the condition and food and so on.

The embassy was constantly involved in eastern Malaysia and involved in environmental concerns and endangered species concerns and in all of these things that we get involved in worldwide in terms of moderation, in terms of our interests in having relationships with a local government that respect the environment to the extent that it is possible and take care of American interests in these fields.

Oil, of course, was a concern. There is some oil on the Malaysian coast but it's mostly concentrated in a very interesting bubble under Bandar Seri Begawan.

Q: Well then you left Malaysia when?

POLLOCK: I left Malaysia in July of 1992.

Q: And whither?

POLLOCK: Whither? Dakar, Senegal.

Q: You were in Dakar from when to when?

POLLOCK: I was in Dakar then from the fall of 1992 to the fall of 1996.

Q: Well let's talk about Senegal. What was the situation in Senegal when you got there in 1992?

POLLOCK: '92. I, of course, had been interested in Senegal, been aware of Senegal and aware of Dakar which everybody called the Paris of Africa and I think one day probably it was.

Q: Go ahead, we're talking about how you got to Senegal.

POLLOCK: I had been aware of Senegal, of course, from my time in Morocco. My wife came into the office one day and said she had been looking at the open assignments list, which is that list of posts we talked about earlier, the list of posts that are coming open on which officers could bid. She said, "The public affairs position in Dakar is open. Let's bid on it, it would be great to go to Dakar, Senegal." I said, "Well, be that as it may Senegal, Dakar, is a sought after posting for people in the African area. They're going to take care of African hands in that posting and I really don't have a chance at that." She said, "Well but you are a clever fellow so you'll figure out something." I went home that night and I stewed for several hours and eventually I wrote a paragraph that described in glowing terms my 28 years of working in non-theocratic Islam areas and developing this great specialty, not in the countries that are ruled by Islamic governments, but the countries that are Islamic cultures in which they have accepted the idea of a sectarian separation of church and state and therefore have civil government. I felt I had developed an expertise in this that could be particularly useful at this time when organizers were coming down out of Mauritania and out of Algeria and speaking fundamentalism and radical principals and organizing Senegal which was in dire economic conditions and ripe for some sort of overthrow of its civil government. Therefore I felt that I could come in and program in this environment better perhaps than other people. I understood it particularly well.

I sent this off along with other bids as my time in Kuala Lumpur was coming to its end. I was particularly interested in our delegation at the United Nations and had an opportunity. I was offered an opportunity there but my wife continued to hold out for Dakar. So, I kept putting off the decision on the UN and I got a call from the African area director whom I had known throughout my career. He and I were contemporaries and I had known him as someone totally involved with Africa. He'd had one assignment outside of the African area and that was to Italy where LaGamma could use his Italian well.

Q: And he was?

POLLOCK: Bob LaGamma.

Q: Yeah, I'm interviewing him.

POLLOCK: So I got a call from Bob and he said, “You know Pollock, when we read that paragraph we all laughed. We are six, seven months into it and you’re looking better and better as a candidate. Are you really serious? Do you want to go to Dakar?” I said, “Bob, I really am serious, I would love to go to Dakar. It is my first choice.” As things then happened, it turned out I was assigned to Dakar.

It was my first introduction to Africa and to an African culture. One cannot speak generalizations about African cultures but this was a different way of life and of approaching life, work and thinking than I had experienced throughout the rest of my career. So it was great to sit down and get immersed in figuring out how does this culture work? How am I going to interface with it most effectively from our programming standpoint and how can we be effective in what we want to do.

It was a culture in which things moved more slowly. It was not a dynamic, everybody working to save for tomorrow type of culture. It was a culture in which people aggregated resources and then supported family members; whatever family member was in crisis or had a celebration or getting married or whose child was graduating. That’s where the resources of the whole family would go. There was a tendency to look at the family in terms of people who made it and therefore were responsible for the rest of the extended family and people who for want of something better who didn’t make it who weren’t engaged at this particular time although they could be. The fortunes of the family could change. The person in such and such a position or head of such and such a business could fail and somebody else in the family emerge and take over the responsibility of, in effect, being head of an extended family. There was just a very different dynamic. Great intellect, great energy, but channeled in individuals not shared throughout institutions.

Most of the time there we were interested in it as a relatively peaceful country, with a democratic, in the European tradition, democratic tradition. Of course when I arrived, it was only on its second president but the handover had been peaceful. Abdou Diouf had followed Leopold Senghor. It was a monolithic, one-party system that was beginning to see the development of other political parties and opposition. We were interested in Senegal because of the stability and because of the runway that Pan American Airlines had built as we went into North Africa in our engagement in the Second World War. It was a long runway, and we could land military aircraft on it and we viewed it as a launching pad for whatever humanitarian or military concern we might have in Africa.

I think over the period of time that I was there our interests in Senegal did change and our ambassadors, Mark Johnson in particular, were instrumental in understanding that change and in leading it.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you arrived?

POLLOCK: When I arrived the ambassador...there actually wasn’t an ambassador, yes there was. Katherine Shirley. She was a political officer at State. Her husband, Jock, was a USIA officer, a European hand, who had won his ambassadorship to Tanzania and

retired. Shirley had stayed in the Foreign Service and was ambassador to Senegal. Jock had stayed behind to sail in the Mediterranean or something. Ambassador Shirley was actually on her way out. I think I shook her hand. Then Prudence Bushnell, a State Department officer with lots of African experience, was serving as chargé. She was replaced as chargé and deputy chief of mission by Robert Kott. Then we were awaiting the arrival of Mark Johnson who had been appointed ambassador or nominated as ambassador by President George Bush, Sr., in the summer of '92. The Senate decided that it would not confirm Johnson and so Bob Kott, Robert Kott, became chargé.

Then there was one of those quirks, fates, of history. We all thought that when President Clinton won the election that Mark Johnson would not come out as ambassador that there would be another nominee from the Clinton administration. But it turned out that Johnson and Clinton went to Georgetown together. Clinton had said when he came into office that he was going to look at diplomatic nominations, he wasn't going to just change them out of hand. He held a class reunion at the White House very soon, I guess in the summer, after his inauguration. Mark went to the class reunion, shook hands with Bill and said, remember me, I'm your nominated ambassador to Senegal. Bill said, "Of course I remember you Mark, let's make sure that nomination goes forward." So Clinton renominated Johnson to the Senate and Johnson eventually then went through the confirmation hearings and did come out and I think had an enormous impact in Senegal all to the better.

Q: What was Johnson's background?

POLLOCK: He started out, I believe, in the economic cone. He was a career Foreign Service officer, and actually had Indonesian experience. We liked to talk about Indonesia; he was in the economic section in Indonesia at one point in the '70s. He had worked in congressional liaison in the department where he had been very successful. At one point had been engaged on the Iran desk during the hostage crisis where he had come to the attention of, I think, leadership in the department. He's a very intelligent, very dynamic individual, just a very considered individual, a superb officer. I think that was demonstrated in Senegal. He understood the economy, he understood what was happening with the economy which was going downhill in Senegal. It was going downhill because the economy had been based on the peanut trade. The discovery of the peanut and uses of peanut oil actually was the stimulus that took Europe out of the slave trade and into the exportation of agricultural commodities to France from Senegal. The peanut boomed as a basis for peanut oil which was the basis for soaps and perfumes and things of that sort. It was only the United States and Great Britain for a while until they discovered that economic things such as tea could serve the purposes better than the exchange of human beings. So it was only the United States that continued the slave trade longer than others for our economic interests.

The problem with the peanut trade was that nobody put anything into it and it leeches the ground considerably. But during the heyday of the peanut trade when northern Senegal was lush and pampas grass high plains area watered fairly well by the Senegal river which forms the northern boundary with Mauritania.

The religious leaders of the country came to play and founded their religious capital in a city called Tuba, which is right in the heart of the peanut basin of Senegal. It is a magnificent city rising now from the desert. Because it's a magnificent city rising from the desert this Moreed Islamic religious sect still controls the population and controls the money and controls the agriculture and doesn't have any interest in moving its capital from where it is. As a result, the land now is virtual desert; it costs Senegal now more to produce a ton of peanuts than it does to export a ton of peanuts. So it continues to lose money on its cash crop.

Johnson looked at sustainable agriculture, Peace Corps interests, Peace Corps programming in sustainable agriculture and agricultural dry land, agricultural traditions, that USAID programming in the north of Senegal, in literacy and accounting practices, innumeracy in traditional medical practices which could be used to fight HIV and AIDS, in focusing resources away from grand schemes, irrigation schemes in the north that the European community was pouring tons of money into only to see the water in the irrigation channels simply dry up in the desert. The U.S. wanted to move its money into the southern area of Senegal where there had been a secessionist movement, but it was still the area of the country that is fertile. It gets enough rainfall to sustain itself and to produce agricultural abundance that can be exported as cash to help the balance of payments. Johnson understood all of these things.

He also understood what was being faced in the political and the social sense of a country where population dynamics were flowing from the land into the city. They were creating an aggravated youth corps, unemployed, on the make and ripe for Islamic organizers in the radical sense moving in from the north. Our programming was directed to meeting these necessities. I can remember the country plan formulation process the second year that he was there which was the third year that I was there. We had been called together for a daylong retreat during which we were going to write the mission program plan. This was during a political period in the United States in which Jesse Helms had raised various ideas about the organization of our foreign affairs bureaucracies.

Q: Jesse Helms is the ...

POLLOCK: The Senator from North Carolina, and a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Q: A North Carolina Republican, very conservative.

POLLOCK: With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the breakup of the Soviet Union Jesse's opinion was that we no longer needed the U.S. Agency for International Development to help stem the Communist tide and we certainly no longer needed the United States Information Agency. All of these, he felt should be melded back into the Department of State. So State was preparing for this with what had become known as the mission consolidation process. That had been started by a mission program planning exercise that was to take place each year in which USIA, our offices, public diplomacy and public

affairs, were brought in as equal contributors to a document that would have a public affairs component to it rather than having our own independent country planning as we had had previously. So we had laid out some public affairs portions to the mission program plan in the previous year. Johnson wanted to continue that process by having the embassy sections go into a daylong retreat and actually work in conjunction with each other to prepare what the elements of the mission plan were going to be. He came out, he gave us a pep talk at the beginning of the day, about 9:00, and we were to work through the day and then we were to be joined by our spouses in the evening, have dinner together and spend the evening together.

Johnson came back out about oh 3:00-3:30 in the afternoon to see how we were doing. We hadn't gotten much further than we were when he had left about 10:00 in the morning and this concerned him. So he took a poll of the room and he came right to the heart of the debate that was going on. It was a debate between those in the political section of the embassy who were maintaining that our major strategic goal in Senegal was to prop up the government by any means possible as a friend of the United States and as a government that would give us access to this landing strip which we needed for strategic purposes and that was our reason d'etat for being in Senegal. Opposed to that point of view were the head of USAID, the station chief of the CIA and myself. We argued that the best way to assure that Senegal remained a stable friend of the United States was to focus on social development issues. The United States had some models and could make some investments that would benefit Senegal in the long run vis-à-vis the control that was still being manipulated from France of a former colony. It would be legitimate for us to make those investments rather than the political-military investment.

Johnson, after hearing these two arguments, turned to the colonel who was heading the military liaison office at the time, looked at him and said, "Colonel, what's your position in this? What's the position of DOD?" The colonel looked at him and said, "While the runway here is nice there are lots of problems. The problems go to probably what AID and USIA and CIA have been talking about. My frank opinion is that I would far prefer to use the runways at Cape Verde than to use the runway here in Dakar." Johnson said, "Fine, gentlemen, thank you very much continue your discussions," and he left the room. He was gone for about a half hour and he came back into the room and he said, "This has been a very productive day for all of you, I know. Dinner for tonight is cancelled. It's rescheduled for tomorrow night. We are having a second day of retreat and tomorrow the mission director from AID will chair this meeting and we'll see if we can come up with a mission plan with him in the chair and starting the discussion from a different point of view." So that was the way that things went when Johnson was ambassador.

We did a major study on how the mission could be consolidated. What came out of that study was that the entire mission was reorganized. It was reorganized in a civil-social rather than a political-economic way. In a proposed staffing pattern, the slot of deputy chief of mission was not to go to a State Department officer but rather to go to a USIA officer or an AID officer. The economic counselor was totally rearranged so that AID and State sat in conjunction with each other rather than in separate offices, one having a reporting function and one having a program function. It was a very interesting way of

reorganizing American resources. Unfortunately, I think it only went through the planning stages. Jesse Helms took Madeleine Albright down to Carolina for a couple of graduation exercises and made a deal with her: he would support the chemical weapons ban treaty in the Senate, which was an important treaty to the Clinton administration, if Vice President Gore's office would back off on the idea of keeping information and culture a separate entity. The whole idea of mission consolidation and coordination now became much more a process by which USIA could be absorbed by the Department of State rather than integrating its programming effectively.

On the ground in Senegal our programming was directed to these socio-cultural issues in an effective way. This is where the Madrasi school situation that you mentioned earlier came into play. Our office was able to establish very good relations in education and religious affairs and we did start a program using AID and UN resources. We were able to start a program, not in all but in several segments, of one of the Islamic sects, at least in their madrassa. The program got established in the ministry of education in which we actually encouraged a curriculum and teaching in the Madrassa school that went beyond memorization of the Koran. Many countries with Islamic origins have used the fact that children can recite the Koran as an indication of literacy. The issue was whether it was a question of literacy or a question of memorization and I think conclusively it was a question of memorization. Working in conjunction with the ministry of religion and the ministry of education in Senegal we structured basic reading, writing and arithmetic into the Madrassa curriculum in conjunction with the Koranic studies which we weren't about to mess with at all.

But, one of the things that was impacting the economy of Senegal enormously was that it had gone along with World Bank and IMF (International Monetary Fund) restructuring proposals in order to get World Bank loans. One of the things that Ambassador Johnson had sort of piloted through in Senegal, which was outside of my realm completely, was the devaluation of the West African Franc. This had always been tied to the French Franc and therefore was a currency whose value was built on air, at best. In order to become competitive in the agriculture sector this French CFI, the West African Franc, had to be devalued and it was a World Bank requirement. Johnson and President Diouf of Senegal said, "Absolutely not, they would not do that being as close a brother to France as it was with a province that was actually a province of France at one point, the northern province from which Leopold Senghor came." That this just was never going to happen. Johnson representing the U.S. government and the World Bank negotiated this through in one-way or another.

We did work in conjunction with World Bank funds to sponsor some journalistic training that looked at economic principles in particular with the view toward how did you really assess the economic balance sheet of a state owned industry versus a private industry. But by and large socially and culturally, if not economically, but certainly from the point of view of the social infrastructure and the cultural traditions of Senegal, the World Bank's program was disastrous. That left a great gap for USIA. But, if we were going to confront what radical Islamic organizations were putting into the country, in terms of what they wanted to see as educational teaching and reading materials, if we were going to address

that in conjunction with the Senegalese government, then that was the ground that we needed to rush into. How did you deal with the civil society? The problem for Senegal was with the cultural inclination to focus on individuals as representatives and saviors or protectors or provider's representatives and providers for their families. The traditional way that this had been carried out from the beginnings of the colonial period, if not before that certainly, in the tribal sense, was that families would within the first four or five years of life make a selection of an individual child that they thought exhibited creative or clever or intelligent faculties, true or not, and they would invest in that child. That would be the child that the whole family would come together to support to go into the French educational system, learn French, to go through the Baccalaureate level, to go to university in France or in Senegal, to come back to Senegal, to graduate and then to go into either a state supported industry or the government. At which point as a "functionaire" that individual then became the channel through which state benefits, state programs money, whatever corruption was going on, would be channeled back to the family for the family's benefit.

Q: I assume it was also a male?

POLLOCK: Mostly male but often quite female. In many of these countries the females often hold the purse strings.

Q: Oh yeah, the market women are renown...

POLLOCK: The Senegalese female is not an exception to this practice in many of what we designate as Third World Countries. Predominantly male, yes. But unlike Morocco for instance, where when females started to be admitted to the universities they really had to come in dressed the Islamic part. They had to be escorted in by a brother or an uncle, they had to wear the veil, they had to be covered. Senegalese Islam is not like this and so Senegalese would admit the female to university as quickly as they admit the male if the grades on the Baccalaureate exam were high enough. Female entrepreneurs were prominent in this society, prominent enough, at least when I was there, that the government felt it important to always have at least one female minister in the Cabinet and not necessarily women's affairs or women's and children's affairs, but other Cabinet level positions as well. So, while I would say, yes predominantly male, the female, as in Malaysia interestingly enough, the female had academic access that was as great if not greater given the student body population that I saw at least at the secondary school level, as great if not greater than the male population.

Q: OK, we'll pick this up the next time. I want to talk about the relationship with the French there. The idea of being a cultural officer among other things, education and all dealing in a place that was so overwhelmingly focused on France. I think it should be quite interesting. Then were there any political or social crisis developments during that period?

OK, today is the 14th of March 2007. Well I'll put it to you, how did it...I mean here you are trying to speak about culture to the French sounds like trying to persuade them to use margarine instead of butter.

POLLOCK: You're absolutely right and so, of course, we didn't talk culture to the French. We talked really about American arts and culture in the entrepreneurial sense as much as anything.

The French colonial experience and the way the French operate in their former colonies is just fascinating. They are simply in bed with these people. The entire country is owned by 250 French folk and 250 Senegalese and they just divide the spoils amongst them. It is fascinating to see how these things work. There's always a portion of French foreign aid set aside for political purposes and also for domestic French political purposes. There is this marvelous sort of scorpion dance that goes on between the colonies and French metro in which all of the political candidates for, let's say, president will make their tour of the former colonies. They will embrace with the leaders of Senegal for instance. This is all designed to show what strong political support there is both for the candidate and for the country, the colony, involved. The president of the country then will always turn around and make a political contribution to the campaign of the person running for president in the French presidential elections. Of course it's the ten percent of foreign aid which is set aside, it is earmarked when it comes as aid, it is earmarked for the president's use, the Senegalese president's use, and then he, of course, donates it back to the political campaign in France.

Everything travels at least in Senegal. Everything traveled north-south. If you were talking to an academic, for instance at the university, the academic could be working on a computer, he could be writing a book, a historical tome as a example, and he would draft the tome and he would put it on CDs on his computer. But in order to have it published, it would have to be sent to France, back to Paris, where it would be edited and then printed on French printing presses. So, this Senegalese academic would have to use the French services, which of course would cost money and part of the publishing fees would remain in France and all of the work and activity of the publication itself would be done in France. So in effect the French would have their 15 percent cut of Senegalese academe. That was true across the board.

I had a very close relationship which was actually set up for me by Ousmane Sembene, the great Senegalese poet and writer; he had introduced me to Youssou N'Dour, a very popular singing figure. Youssou N'Dour and I worked together very, very closely to set up a recording studio in Senegal that Youssou N'Dour actually owned. It was incorporated on Senegalese soil for exactly the same thing that was happening in publication was happening in all of the arts and letters. Everything had to go back to Paris to be recorded or issued or stamped or published or whatever it happened to be.

Q: This is Tape 8, Side 1, with Jim Pollock. Now well was there a reason behind trying to undercut the French monopoly?

POLLOCK: Well there was and basically it was United States interest at the time. Ron Brown was Secretary of Commerce. There's always been a question and a debate about why the United States does not do more for Africa and why we are not closer to Africa than we appear to be both economically and socially and culturally. Ron had a very interesting approach: it's that spheres of influence thing that goes all the way back to the '50s and '60s -- which countries had which spheres of influence, and it was always deemed that Africa was not an American sphere of influence and that we would not be involved. We would cede the ground to the French or to other European countries; the French having actually remained the most involved in Africa of all of the former colonial European countries. Ron Brown came in in 1993 maybe '94 and he challenged that. He let the Senegalese know and he let the French know in no uncertain terms that the United States had real true business interests and socio-cultural interests. There had been a number of academic studies, I think I referred to them before, that had tied Senegal, particularly the population of Senegal, to the initial founding of New Orleans. African Americans felt a great affinity to Senegal and would make a pilgrimage back to Senegal. The Senegalese were aware of this, wanted to embrace African Americans and wanted to associate with them. We had a booming business in the city-to-city program, these linkages and Ron Brown came in and he said, "Look, we want to do business here, we see absolutely no reason why there should be eminent domain for the French." So there was a big economic push in these years. He then died within probably eight months or so of that trip to Senegal in the plane crash. But this was a big boost to what we were doing in the commercial, economic/commercial, section and what we were doing with arts and letters in particular in Senegal.

It was related not so much to challenging the French as it was to encouraging greater linkages between the United States and the Senegalese population. We had certain ways to do that. We brought in a New Orleans brass band and did the whole funeral march procession both through the downtown streets of Dakar as well as around the island of Goree with very popular performances.

Humanitarian efforts in Senegal, which USIS could encourage, were huge. All of our popular cultural heroes were exceedingly well known. Michael Jordan tee shirts and Chicago Bulls baseball caps were probably the most prominent in the early and mid-90s when I was there because there are huge shipments of used clothing which come into the African ports and then go on the local market at very reduced prices. So lots of American clothing was sported by Senegalese population.

A huge Senegalese population was migrating to the United States and taking over great sections, square blocks of Harlem, and setting up business. We talk about the economy, the formal economy, being a very lackadaisical, lack luster, economy in Senegal but the off-market economy, the black-market economy was booming. If you got to the United States, you catch a cab uptown to Harlem and they had apartment buildings that were designed like corporate structures. The first six floors were hotel accommodations, efficiency apartments, seventh floor was an entire banking operation, eighth, ninth, tenth floors would be warehouses with umbrellas and gewgaws for street merchants and just a very...faxes and telephone conversations, cell phone conversations in Wolof going back

and forth between the Senegalese market place and Manhattan. It was a great, thriving, under the table business.

Q: Did you have...what about sort of the French cultural representative? Were you acting like competitors or how did it work in the field?

POLLOCK: In Dakar, in Senegal itself, not particularly so because, and this is interesting, it certainly reflects on the French mentality. While the United States was interested in teaching English in Senegal, we had an English language center; we had our library and our cultural center. We were interested in bringing in cultural exchange performances and working with schools. As I had mentioned, starting programs educational linkages to the extent possible between Senegal and both secondary and tertiary institutions in the United States. We were quite successful in working out several different approaches that perhaps had not been tried before. Let me digress a little bit here.

We were in a real cultural and educational exchange relationship with the Senegalese in a way that the French were not, and I will explain why after talking about some of the educational linkages that we were able to form. One, the Internet was just being introduced in Africa and it was very interesting to see our younger officers on their first assignments or second assignments and they would arrive in Africa with "Where do I plug into the internet?" Well you don't yet; it's not accessible. The French had an Internet connection -- again a north-south connection. They had a research institution in the outskirts of Dakar and you could send an email to that institution. It then would put it on its server and go up to the Internet and send the email out through their host academic institution in France. It could then get in the ether. So we had these email exchange accounts with the French research institution. That's the way we were introducing to the Internet, but certainly the Senegalese were aware of the Internet; they wanted to get on to it so there was an entrepreneurial sense. There was an academic sense they were working with us.

Many of our institutions of higher education in the United States wanted to have university-to-university linkages but those linkages were of no use. There was a disconnect between Senegalese institutions and American institutions because the Americans wanted, of course, to send anthropologists, sociologists, graduate students in those fields. The Senegalese wanted to send back to the United States individuals involved in math and sciences. So on the surface there was no particular linkage that would work in the traditional direct exchange relationship that you would see drafted in these university-to-university exchange documents. What we suggested was that the American graduate student actually goes through a large amount of mathematical and data base correlational training in terms of a graduate study, whether it be sociology or anthropology. There's always a statistics course; there's always an applied data course that an American student now takes. As teaching assistants these Americans would be perfectly prepared to teach in Senegalese institutions where these skills did not exist, if the Senegalese institution were amenable to using sociology graduate student to teach let's say applied statistical methods. Once we got over that hurdle we were then able to

exchange Senegalese graduate students into American universities to study science and math and substitute for them until they were able to come back with American students who wanted to come to Senegal to do field research in archeology or sociology or anthropology. That worked out exceedingly well.

The community college model also was just made for countries like Senegal that were facing overwhelming financial costs in bringing students from the countryside into the city for a traditional French education at the one or two universities that had been structured for the entire population of Senegal. Introducing the community college model where students could stay at home, where the curriculum taught was relevant to the local region, worked in Senegal exceedingly well and was so exciting to the Senegalese that they really were willing to invest themselves in that formation and have done so.

The French did not run what I would call a typical or competitive cultural program with us because the cultural institutions in Senegal were French cultural institutions. The libraries were, in effect, started as French libraries. They now had Senegalese direction, but they basically were French institutions stocked with French reading matter, an educational system exactly the same. A secondary school system was all a French school system taught by French “cooperal” who were doing that as our Peace Corps. The French “cooperal” is tantamount to our Peace Corps but they would be doing this as a substitute for military service in France. They would take two to four years and come abroad and teach in the Senegalese school system or serve as minor functionaries in the Senegalese bureaucracy.

There was an entire French bureaucratic structure in all of the Senegalese ministries with people on loan from parent ministries in France. The French population in Senegal was still significant enough that there was a plane load a week of groceries that would come down to the duty free shops. These were run by the French embassy, and the French population would then go and shop on Saturday and Sunday for goods that had been flown in fresh from Paris on Thursday and Friday. So in that sense the idea of running a French cultural program was in effect almost preempted by the fact that there was at the sublevel of society a French social program in full force, in full swing.

It was the United States and other cultural programs, the Italians, the British, who were introducing ideas such as primary education in national languages because the primary educational structure in Senegal was a French language educational program. The same was true with culture. We had, for instance, our young musical ambassadors’ program where young classical performers would travel abroad to perform in the American Cultural Center or the ambassador’s residence. The French simply used the Senegalese National Theater for this. There would be a tour of a French pianist or an ensemble that would come down and play chamber music in the Senegalese National Theater. So the idea that we were running a competitive program was not present because we were overwhelmed by a French social program that was already ongoing.

Q: While you were there were there any significant developments of political or economic disasters or anything of that nature?

POLLOCK: Not really. The economy was in a disastrous situation and it simply continued to deteriorate because the Senegalese themselves were not taking the necessary actions to, in effect, save their environment. USAID and the Peace Corps both in Senegal were working in the area of dry land, sustainable agriculture and introducing those practices that was a band-aid. The aids epidemic, pandemic, of course, had touched Senegal although in a different way. The aids strain, the HIV strain, in Senegal is different and less virulent than that in other parts of Africa. Our own academic research Center for Disease Control had some researchers in Senegal and they were actually studying this strain to find out as much as they could about it in research terms. It is sort of like type two diabetes, could you downgrade, could you get one strain to move in effect to control itself and downgrade itself into the other strain? Was the other strain treatable or more treatable than the strain with greater virulence? So there was aids study going on in Senegal and being funded in Senegal with good funding from our point of view, more funding than in other places.

I would say there was a financial crisis in the devaluation of the currency that went on which was a World Bank advocated practice to untie the Central African, West African Franc, from the French Franc and have it fall back to an appropriate exchange level. World Bank programs in Senegal were not being particularly successful, they were rather devastated.

Q: You left Senegal when?

POLLOCK: I left Senegal in 1996.

Q: Whither?

POLLOCK: Well I had actually been hoping for an onward assignment somewhere overseas but that was not to be. I had been talking about coming back perhaps in a deputy position in the African area office, the African bureau.

There was quite a push in Washington about women as well as minority groups. There was a great recognition that we had a very capable staff of officers regardless of gender and that it was time for our female officers of great merit to assume higher positions of leadership than they really had access to heretofore. There was an African hand of long standing serving as the deputy director of the office of international visitors. The African area office was very eager to have that individual transfer back to the African area office. She was very interested in going back to the African area office. I was looking for a Washington assignment and so a deal was brokered in which I was offered as a replacement for this individual if she could be released to move to the African area office. I was exceedingly interested; I've always thought that the international visitor program was one of our finest programs. I used it to great effect and I was exceedingly interested, if the opportunity was available, to go into the position of deputy director of the international visitor program. So a series of phone calls took place. The switch was made, I bid on the position, and it came open as one of those emergency positions to be filled. I

bid on it, I got a telephone call from the director of the program. It was a successful interview and I was asked if I would come back to take over that position in August.

Q: You came back from when to when?

POLLOCK: August of 1996 until November of 1999.

Q: What was the position? What did the position do?

POLLOCK: What the position actually did and what the position was designed to do were two different things. The position was designed to represent the Foreign Service officer corps and the interests of the international visitor program from its overseas perspective from what the posts wanted it to do through the development and inclusion in their country plans. The director's position for a long number of years had been a politically appointed position. The deputy then was to be the Foreign Service officer who knew how the program operated, what the program was designed to do in terms of furthering embassy objectives in countries overseas, and was able to interpret that and manage it with a staff in Washington and then a largely volunteer staff at the council for international visitors in various cities around the country.

The office was designed and structured so that the deputy's position was a Foreign Service officer position. Each of the geographical branches were designed as Foreign Service officer positions. The thematic staffs were designed to be general schedule, GS domestic employee positions, and the functional staff within each of the branches was a GS staff, a permanent technocratic staff. Foreign Service officer positions, of course, rotated as officers came into Washington for Washington assignments and then were open to overseas assignment after that. I think that was a very good functional design. It had Foreign Service interests. You had people who understood Foreign Service climates and how a post might design a particular program. The office could translate and implement that with a staff that was knowledgeable of what the U.S. resources might be to put professionals from overseas in touch with their American counterparts at both a social and professional level. Thus the bilateral relations could be strengthened between the United States and the foreign country involved.

In practice, over the course of time, the deputy's position really became a brokerage position, a little bit like a talent agent's or at least I so perceived of it. The director of the office of international visitors was a political appointee. Then there was my Foreign Service position and some senior executive service positions at the branch level. But also then, under me, were some political appointees as branch chiefs. This set up in my opinion a very awkward and very difficult working set of circumstances in which the deputy for international visitors was trapped between the deputy director of the bureau, the director of the office of international visitors and then branch chiefs for which the deputy director's position theoretically was responsible.

So there was a huge amount of politics and it was politics that was not only domestic politics but it was politics that were then workplace politics as well. A number of our GS

employees did not feel as though the best interests of the program were being served by having political appointees in effect running the program at the day-to-day implementation level, that political interests came into play. We had made reference to the blacklist situation in the speaker's bureau in the program bureau under Charlie Wick. This was similar to the situation that I faced in the international visitors area. As I see how deep into the service structure political appointees have gone I think it sets up a very bad working environment in which at any particular time somebody comes forward and says, "Oh, I know exactly the people this individual should see in Little Rock when they visit or in Texas when they visit."

And yet, probably the most successful program which we held during my years in the office of international visitors, from a political standpoint, not necessarily from an operational or functional standpoint or benefit to the post standpoint, but from a purely political standpoint, was a group of parliamentarians from India who visited. Our interests, of course, were to make sure that they had good briefings and met members of our own Congress, House and Senate on Capitol Hill. But as we began to explore the formation of that program with our Congress we found that there were a number of executive assistants and legislative assistants in the offices of Congressional representatives and Senators on the Hill who were of Indian descent. They picked up this group of Indian parliamentarians and held a reception and made the appointments. We'd asked for receptions to be hosted or perhaps a small luncheon by a Congressional representative. Usually you got maybe five people. This reception there were fifty Congressional representatives and their staff present for and Senators dropping in and out and it was a tremendous success from a programmatic standpoint.

That maybe is the payoff: the international visitor program was given high visibility with the people that we wanted it to have high visibility with and for as a result of political connections. But by and large, on a daily basis, the first director of the office that I worked for basically was there to pay attention to Cuban policy. He spent most of the time on the phone or across town either at the Department or at the NSC talking Cuban politics. He was perfectly happy to have me as a deputy run the office first, and also to attend and take notes at the political meetings. Well, of course, I would knock on the door and say, "I am here to take notes for the boss," and the head would shake back and forth. "You're not allowed in the political meeting. Sorry, tell him to call the director and he can get his notes that way. Thank you very much but go away." In that sense it was a disservice to the international visitor program.

Q: Was there any sort of visitor's group that came from hell, I mean, I guess you get a feel for it I mean there had to be some that were just awful?

POLLOCK: There's probably a visitor's group each quarter that comes from hell and there is a visitor's group each quarter that just shines.

Q: Give me one of each.

POLLOCK: I'll give two shining examples that were really great. One example was a group of individuals from Mongolia who had come to the United States to study corruption. The embassy had put together this group with an eye on anti-corruption programs, how do you limit corruption? The embassy was playing off of the fact that there was no real love lost between the Mongolians and their former keepers, the Soviet Union. There they were now independent and wedged between the Soviet Union, Russia, and China. So there were a lot of inherited practices and there were a lot of natural practices and the embassy had set out to see if maybe there was a way to address these issues. The program officer just did a brilliant job, first of all of changing the traditional first week in Washington of traveling around the city and meeting various people in politics and people at the Department of State and people in the think tanks, a tour of the city and so on and so forth the historical monuments and the rest of it.

We designed a program that brought in a couple of academics. We got clearance to pay their per diem and bring them down to Washington and work in a conference room setting that the World Bank provided for us through their anti-corruption office. It was a weeklong seminar. It covered what measures you had to take, what needed to be done, developing a political will, getting the political will institutionalized through whatever parliamentary or governing structure there might be, getting into various ministries, making it worthwhile for the people in lower ranking positions who were susceptible to on the job daily bribes, and how you address that. The seminar went on for a week and came up with a working plan, goals that these seven individuals had set out to accomplish and then they went off around the United States and met with counterparts in various cities and state level legislators and governors and looked at those programs.

I include this because I knew the ambassador and continue to know him from times in Malaysia, Indonesia, where I had known him when he came into the Foreign Service. He is now the executive director, Alphonse La Porta, of the American-Indonesian Society.

Q: I did an interview with Ambassador La Porta.

POLLOCK: So I was able the other day at a luncheon of the Indonesian-American Society to say, "By the way Al, how did that group of anti-corruption Mongolians ever turn out?" He said, "You know, they came back, they had a tremendous impact, they actually worked on legislation, they got legislation passed, they got by-laws and working guidelines into some ministries. They actually were doing an exceedingly good job, they were on their goal schedule, and they kept in touch with the embassy." I gather that there has been some recidivism as a result of a coup in Mongolia and a change of government. So there has been some backsliding but it was a program that obviously had inspired the people involved. They had gone back and actually some goals had been set by the program and there were some steps to demonstrably fulfill them.

There also was a group from what I believe is the city of Auschwitz. If it is not the city of Auschwitz, it is the city in which the prominent historical institution is that remains of Auschwitz.

Q: This would be Poland.

POLLOCK: Yes. They had come to the United States because they wanted to turn Auschwitz into a historical memorial to the horror that happened there but in a way that commemorated the lives that were lost and what had gone on in a positive and humanitarian way. So they had come to the United States to look at the way that we had memorialized places like Andersonville and other historical monuments like Appomattox, Wounded Knee and the Custer Battlefield, Antietam. They had come to look at how we had put together memorials to ... individuals concerned for their fellow being for humanity and they were just a delight to work with and it was just a very interesting program to put together.

Q: Did they go to the Holocaust Museum?

POLLOCK: They went through the Holocaust Museum and had several days of appointments there and then went on to various battlefields and memorials that we've mentioned.

Both of these groups did not have a high political content that some of our groups had but we did have equally successful programs. We had a group of political leaders and ministerial level individuals from the European community and various European countries to talk about genetically modified organisms and their impact or lack of impact. At the time the European community was embargoing the importation of genetically modified agricultural goods, in particular from the United States, and we wanted to influence that, if we could. The structure of that program was very good. I'm not sure how it turned out.

The program from hell was a group of Chinese filmmakers. Like many people in the artistic community it was just a very high strung, high maintenance creative group of individuals. One of the U.S. cultural and economic interests is intellectual property rights and has been for a number of years now and China, of course, is a major transgressor on intellectual property rights. So the idea of this group was to address the intellectual property rights question through putting together a group that represented both the ministerial level, the policy-making level and the creative level of filmmaking, the film production industry in China.

There are a set of rules and regulations that the escort interpreter of these groups is supposed to monitor and to implement as the group travels around the United States: what they spend their per diem on, what they do in their spare time, how they comport themselves as representatives of their country in our country. Early on there was a stop in Boston in which they were on the streets late at night in a rather unsavory part of town filming and playing various roles. They would go out, they would talk to people in the streets while one of their members was photographing in a documentary stance. We are not sure if anybody was taken back to any of the rooms but that got us involved, that red flag went up early on. Artists being artists there was a good deal of consumption of

alcohol and quite an interest in spending their evening per diem in the bar rather than in a restaurant. That was going on.

The highlight of the visit of both from our stand point and theirs was the Sundance Film Festival. We had managed to get them invited as special guests to the Sundance Festival so they had access to the VIP rooms and they had free tickets to the movies. Well it started out that the movies that they had been given free tickets to were not the movies that they themselves would have chosen to see. They said, why hadn't they been consulted which movies they wanted to see and why weren't those tickets available? They put the poor escort interpreter in a real bind at the film festival. All of this had been brewing over the course of the trip so there was quite a flare up between one particular filmmaker and director and the escort interpreter, and there was some pushing and shoving which is a definite no no. So language services at the Department of State was immediately involved. Was there another Chinese escort interpreter that we could pull off of the job and get out to San Francisco which was the last stop on the trip? What had really happened? The escort interpreter was filing reports with the program officer and the group was on the phone to their program agency, which are the independent non-profit groups that we would often work with to do the programming for these groups. It was a mushroom cloud. There were two escort interpreters, one male and one female. The male escort interpreter, with whom this shoving match had come about, was convinced that there was a tremendous amount of sexual harassment that was going on with the young female interpreter. He was concerned about the team and the interpreting team's ability to keep control of the group. This young lady was asked to be doing laundry for the group and so forth. There was a phone call every hour after a while.

So because there had been alleged pushing and shoving the escort interpreter was suspended. Of course, he felt that he was playing a protective role and he was at the end of his rope because of all the various things that had gone on confrontationally anyway. This was a volatile group. "Vociferous", "demanding" and "volatile" were the three adjectives that would characterize this group. The deputy director of the office had to get on the plane at 4:00 in the afternoon in Washington and go out because there is always a debriefing session on what went right, what went wrong before the group was given its final tickets back to their country and bid adieu. So I had to fly out to California and conduct the debriefing for this group. There was a little lecturing and mentoring that you have to do both for the sake of form and for the sake in many ways of function. That's because when the group arrives back in Beijing they are turned over then to the assistant cultural affairs officer in the post to handle from that side of the Pacific. So form had to be followed but I'm not sure much benefit or function came out of this particular group.

Q: Did the amalgamation of USIA into the State Department effect you at all?

POLLOCK: Part of the amalgamation was that the international visitor program was going back into the Department of State and that's when I decided that it was really time to retire. So my retirement took place on the 30th of September in 1999.

When I assumed the job of deputy director the budget for the office was \$50 million and there were 125 employees listed in the office. When I left three years later the budget was \$35 million and there were 82 employees in the office. So there was the entire administrative effect of implementing what in effect were political decisions both within USIA and within the office of management and budget. This was creating quite a strain and a lot of discontent and anxiety over what the reduction in force, how it would be implemented, whose job was at risk and so on. We faced all of the administrative requirements to make sure that this was done equitably and according to the procedural rules of not only the government but government labor unions representing individual employees and so on.

I had always assumed that it was the Congress who would cut our budget; that it was the Congress to whom we needed to represent ourselves and make sure that if somebody from Iowa who worked in the international visitor program as a host were in town that they got up on the Hill and they saw their Congressional representative and they talked about the program. It is true that that is a vital function of keeping the program alive and visible for members of Congress and functional and applicable to members of Congress. What I was not aware of was it was basically an OMB (Office of Management Bureau) line item in the budget and we were expected to tie to those budget figures.

So when the administration wants to produce a budget that is either a reduced budget or a balanced budget or a budget that accentuates other programs for which they need to find financial resources, then it's the Office of Management and Budget of the administration itself that tells you, hello, we are cutting \$5 million from your program this year, you find the way to eat it. When the director of the agency or the secretary of the department goes in front of Congress to argue the budget, they do so as representatives of the Executive Branch and therefore they are on board. This is the budget that they wish to propose to Congress.

What you then have to do is sit two rows back with a briefcase filled with evidence of effectiveness hoping that a member of the committee will say, "Well, this just seems ridiculous, we should be adding money to your money, not cutting it." You then let the spokesperson for the administration and your program argue all of the reasons that, of course, they can take the budget cut without losing effectiveness. You then hope that another member of the committee raises the issue again or asks for specific documentation. You can then step forward and supply the director or whomever it is is arguing with Congress in the positive sense hopefully getting some of the money that the administration has asked to be cut restored and, in fact, restored to you in the committee process or on the floor of the House.

Going through that process was a great eye opener. The process required a good deal of office work aside from conducting the program itself. Looking after the housekeeping of the program was an important function that the deputy performed and was an enervating function.

Q: Well you left in 1999. Just briefly what have you been up to since?

POLLOCK: I had always said that when I left the Foreign Service I would leave it behind and happily do so. I felt there were other ways to be involved with overseas programming that didn't exist in the middle of the 1960s and there were other ways to be involved in the society than through foreign affairs interests. I tried to adhere to that. I had always been interested in radio broadcasting, and communications. I took some voice training work and now work as a voice over professional doing books on tape, now audio books as they are called, because we now no longer do them on tape and commercial practices and reading and things of that sort.

My wife and I have become deeply involved in community activities. We work very closely with an organization called Into Books, which was established about the time that we retired, 2000, 2001, which has developed a literacy curriculum for the DC public school system. We live in the District and are very concerned about educational and social programs for District residents. We've been involved in the Community Council for the Homeless in the District. In comparison to the Virginia and Maryland suburban districts, the concentration of homeless people in the District is statistically higher.

We've gotten the seven year itch. We have accepted a contract that utilizes our association with the Department of State and our foreign affairs overseas knowledge. We are part of a research team looking at privatization in the former Soviet Union's Newly Independent States and why that was so bally-hoed in the early '90s, dashed on the rocks in the later '90s, and is now being reconsidered. People don't want to make the same mistakes twice.

Q: Good, well, thank you very much.

End of interview