

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

**ROBERT C. REIS, JR.**

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy  
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*Q: Today is the 20<sup>th</sup> of September, 2008 and this is an interview with Robert C. Reis, Jr. and it is being done on the behalf of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. You go by Bob.*

REIS: Right.

*Q: Bob, let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?*

REIS: I was born May 8, 1944 at Stewart Army Air Corps Base, near Newburgh, New York. It's now a civilian airport.

*Q: That West Point's airport, wasn't it?*

REIS: It was West Point's airport. My father was then a quartermaster officer assigned to the base, and the officers who were assigned there were actually the part of a group assigned to West Point. They had the West Point insignia on their army uniforms.

*Q: Well, let's talk a bit about your family. Let's go on your father's side. Where do the Reises come from?*

REIS: My father's great grandfather, Valentine, and his family, which had nine children, came from *Biblis am Rhein* in Hesse, Germany in 1846, and they came through New Orleans. They took a ship from Le Havre, France to New Orleans, and then came up the Mississippi by boat to St. Louis. According to a family history, Valentine had two brothers and, perhaps other relatives, already in St. Louis. My father's grandfather, my great grandfather, was at the time 16. His name was Michael Reis. Actually, they would have called it 'rice', but somehow in the United States the name got changed to 'reese'.

Michael and his father, Valentine, who had been a farmer in Germany, went into the lumber business, as did others among Valentine's children. Michael and Valentine were in the lumber business in St. Louis. Then, at some point, in the 1860's, my great grandfather, Michael moved to Belleville, Illinois, which is about 15 miles southeast of St. Louis and established a lumber business there with his brother, Henry. The business was called the H&M Lumber Company. Michael was also on a bank board and was a member of Belleville's council of aldermen. And, for a time, in the late 1880s, was the mayor of Belleville. He died in 1908. At some point in the mid-1850's, my great, great

grandfather Valentine moved to Shakopee, Minnesota with a number of his children, some of whom later returned to St. Louis. In Minnesota Valentine ran a mill. It is not clear whether it was a flour mill or a lumber mill.

In 1856 my great grandfather, Michael Reis, married Apollonia Eberle, who was also from a family from Biblis. It seems that people who were from Biblis and were in St. Louis or in the St. Louis area knew one another and kept up with one another. After my grandfather and Apollonia got married. She died in 1895.

Michael and Apollonia had seven children, of whom my grandfather, August, was the last. My grandfather was in a lumber business in St. Louis, I think with others in his family. From what I gather from my mother, that company went bad and went out of business in the mid-1920's. (My father did not want to talk about that.) My grandfather then was a bookkeeper for an insurance company for the remainder of his life. He died in 1942, during the war.

My father was born in 1911 in St. Louis. After his father's business ceased to exist, the family was not in great financial shape, so he worked his way through high school. He went to St. Louis University High School, which is a Jesuit school in St. Louis. He graduated from high school in 1929. He didn't have the money to go to college, so he got a job as, what was called in those days, a window dresser, somebody .....

*Q: ....who put up window displays in department stores.....*

REIS:..... and drug stores and other shops.. Then, later on, he became an insurance adjuster. While he was working as an insurance adjuster, he went to a night law school in St. Louis, without having gone to college. I think he took some courses at Washington University in St. Louis but he never got a degree. So, he went to night law school and was admitted to the bar. He continued in the insurance adjustment business until I think it was early 1941, when having completed, I think, a part-time army-commissioning course for army reserve officers in St. Louis, he joined the Army as a second lieutenant in the quartermaster corps. He served during the Second World War, but never went overseas. He was in Chicago first, and his job was to go around to factories that were making defense products and inspect them and make sure that the products were being made properly and, I assume, to some extent to try to prevent fraud and over-charging.

From Chicago, he traveled around Illinois and the surrounding areas doing that. Then, after that, he was transferred to Stewart Field and was a quartermaster officer there. He had diverse duties. For example, he ran an apple orchard on the base and used the army prisoners from the brig there to pick the apples. Then, after that, he was transferred to Keesler Army Air Corps base in Biloxi, Mississippi, where he was at the end of the war.

Towards the end of the war, the army tried to ship him overseas. However, he had been in the service since early 1941, before Pearl Harbor. And, apparently, President Roosevelt had said something that anybody who was in the service before a certain date, did not have to go overseas from that point on. So, my father, having been married by that time

and having had me, said he didn't want to go overseas. After some fuss, the army accepted that view. So, he left the army in December of 1945, I think.

He returned to St. Louis, where he was in the insurance business, as an adjuster again, until about 1948. At that time he went into law practice, first with a law partner and then later on by himself. He was a lawyer in St. Louis until 1971. In 1971, he became an administrative law judge for the social security administration. He continued that until about 1983, when he retired. I should also mention that after the war my father stayed in the reserves and retired in 1966 as a colonel and the commanding officer of the 307<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs and Military Government Group. He died in 1987 of a heart attack.

My father's mother's family was from Alton, Illinois, which is about 30 miles north of St. Louis, on the river. Her maiden name was Florence Wyss. I don't know an awful lot about the family. She was raised by her grandparents, who were of Swiss stock. How many generations removed from Switzerland they were, I don't know. My grandmother's mother, according to family lore, came up from one of the Carolinas just after the Civil War as a small child, 3 or 4 years old. The family story is that her father, that is, my great grandmother's father, had been killed in the Civil War. I don't know whether he was a confederate soldier, or whether he was a civilian casualty or whether he died of disease or what. Their name was Fagin, or perhaps Feighan, and they are from someplace in the Carolinas.

My mother's was raised in Northern Kentucky, across from Cincinnati. Her maiden name was Wulftange. The family is from a village near Osnabruck, in Germany. It's in Northwest Germany, near the Dutch border. They came in 1848. The maiden name of my mother's grandmother on her father's side was Fette. I have a list of her (my great grandmother's) ancestors in the United States that goes back to about 1800. My mother's mother's (my grandmother's family), was half German and half Irish. My grandmother's mother was born in Ireland and came over sometime in the late part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Her maiden name was Henry. My grandmother's mother's father, was a man named Kaercher. His family, allegedly, was from around Stuttgart, Germany. My great grandfather Kaercher was a streetcar driver in Northern Kentucky.

While I was growing up, my father was in sole practice in a time when sole practices were, in a sense, in a decline as law firms were getting larger and more sophisticated and the valuable commercial business went to larger firms. I think my father was quite a competent lawyer. He did personal injury work, he did workman's compensation, and he did probate work. But, it was really a wills-and-deeds practice. We lived perfectly comfortably in a house that was built in 1951 for \$16,500. We were not by any stretch of the imagination, wealth or affluent.

*Q: I'd like to go back a bit. Do you have any feelings, why your families way back in the 1840s, moved from Germany and settled in St. Louis? There's quite a German community there.*

REIS: *Biblis am Rhein* is on the east bank of the Rein about 40-50 miles south of Mainz, so that you're 90 miles southwest of Frankfurt. It's a Catholic town and my family is Catholic. I don't, for a fact know, why they came. It was a time when Germany was beginning to be unified. There was a draft in many places. In many places mandatory military service was at least six years. I think there were restrictions on marriage. You could not marry if you didn't have a certain amount of wealth. Certainly right there, there was no prejudice against Catholics in Biblis, but I don't know beyond that, whether there was any prejudice. It was before the revolution of 1848, and the family's emigration probably did not result from civil unrest. They evidently went into business pretty quickly. They seemed to be comfortable— I don't know how comfortable – but they didn't seem to be living in privation.

*Q: Did you get any feel from family stories about the German community around St. Louis?*

REIS: I grew up in the 40s, 50s, and into the 60s. When I grew up in St. Louis, people *knew* whether they were mostly Irish, or they *knew* if they were Poles or Czechs, although there weren't very many of them in St. Louis. And, people *knew* if they were mostly German. It would have been hard to deny that St. Louis was a city that was heavily German. But in the 40s and 50s, people, after the two world wars, I don't think, wanted to identify themselves very much with their ethnicity, at least with their German ethnicity. People wanted to consider themselves Americans, not German-Americans. As far as I remember, the Irish, in those days, did not place the same emphasis on their Irish background as they do today. In St. Louis, you didn't have big St. Patrick Day celebrations, as far as I recall in those days. The one ethnic group that did maintain their identity was the Italian community, which continued to live on "The Hill," the Italian section in South St. Louis. Let me note before we move on that in St. Louis, as elsewhere in the Midwest, there were a lot of marriages between Catholic Germans and Catholic Irish.

*Q: I know my family on my mother's side is very German. Actually, they came out of near Köln. They were products of 1848, for the most part. My grandfather was out of Wisconsin and was an officer in the Union Army, but his name was Lackner and he had rocks thrown at him in Chicago, during World War I. Germans have never been great at having these great national get-togethers. They do from time to time, but it's not like the Irish or the Italians, you know.*

*Do you have any feel for what the family did during the Civil War?*

REIS: Well, my great grandfather – I have the Civil War record for him. I never looked up information on any of his brothers. He was in the Union Army from May of 1861 until August of 1861.

It's an interesting story. In 1861 St. Louis was of course heavily German. It was divided into three groups: Catholics, Protestants of two kinds: Lutherans and Evangelicals, and the so called Free Thinkers, many of whom came after 1948. The Free Thinkers were all

pro-Union. I don't know about the Protestants. The Catholics, many of them, according to a book by a professor at St. Louis University called German Catholics in St. Louis, tried not to get involved in the Civil War.

There was an arsenal in St. Louis. And, of course, St. Louis was mostly pro-union and out-state Missouri was mostly southern in sympathy. The governor of Missouri was Claiborne Jackson who, in the spring of 1861, formed an army to march on St. Louis to attack the arsenal to get the weapons. Fremont, the great California explorer, was at the time living in St. Louis and President Lincoln got him to form an army of Germans to prevent this invasion or incursion. I don't know what happened exactly, but my great grandfather at that time enlisted for three months, presumably as part of the force assembled to thwart the attack on the arsenal. I once asked a historian from Ohio State, who was a Fulbright Fellow in Sapporo when I was there, how it was that someone could get away with being in the union army for only three months. His answer was that in the early part of the war, the enlistments were for only three months and once a soldier completed his term of enlistment and was released, then he could not be drafted later on. I've never looked this up, but he was a reasonably well-known historian, so I assume he was right. So, that's what happened to my great grandfather. As far I can tell from the Civil War record, he was in the army for that period of time, but never was in any battles, although there was a battle, the Battle of Camp Jackson, between Claiborne Jackson's force and the union force in St. Louis in which Jackson's forces were routed.

*Q: Jumping way ahead, how did your father and mother meet?*

REIS: My father was in Chicago, as I mentioned, in the army. My mother was visiting Chicago. She'd always liked Chicago. She was from Cincinnati. Up until the late 30's or the early 40's, her aunt and grandmother, her father's sister and mother, lived in Chicago. They'd moved there from Cincinnati because my great aunt had a job there. (Later they moved to Miami.) So, somehow or another, my mother went to Chicago for a trip. I don't know if she was with a girlfriend or not, but in any event, she went to an outdoor classical concert. My father was at the same concert and somehow they struck up a conversation and one thing led to another. They carried on this romance, mostly by mail, I think, with occasional visits. Then, my father got transferred up to New York, and eventually they got married. They got married on June 26, 1943 in Northern Kentucky. It is the most unlikely story you could imagine, particularly if you knew my father, who was rather quiet and certainly not flamboyant or a pick-up person, or anything like that. My mother is somewhat more outgoing. But, again, she was not exactly an adventuress.

*Q: Who knows the ways of love, but it seems to work.*

*What about your mother's education?*

REIS: My mother, who was born on January 21, 1918, went to Catholic schools in Northern Kentucky. She may have gone to two Catholic high schools, switching from one to another one after her sophomore year of high school – why I can't remember. Anyway, she graduated and when she got out of high school in 1936, in the middle of the

depression, she had the offer of a scholarship to a catholic college in the Cincinnati area, but couldn't take it as she needed to help to support her family. That she was not able to go to college, I think, has been the greatest regret in her life. After high school she went to a secretarial school and worked for a coal company for a time. Then she worked for a hotel in downtown Cincinnati as the secretary to one of the executives. Then, she got married in 1943 and never went back to school.

*Q: An interesting thing. The people I am interviewing now are about your age and you're probably at the end of an era when your parent's weren't for the most part, college graduates. Very few of my group were college graduates. It wasn't until after the end of WWII and the GI bill started to kick in and the economy went up and colleges became really open, much more open.*

*Let's take it as a kid. Where was the first place you remember growing up? Was this down in Mississippi?*

REIS: No, I was very small when I was down there. I was born in May of '44. My parents left Mississippi probably in November or early December 1945, so I would have been a year and a half, so I didn't remember that.

*Q: Where did you become a kid?*

REIS: The first thing I really remember was living in south St. Louis. When my parents returned to St. Louis from Biloxi, Mississippi, housing was tight, as it was, I think, in many places around the country. My grandmother Reis had been widowed in 1942. She had never worked and my father was supporting her in an apartment on South Grand Avenue, in south St. Louis, in St. Cecilia's Parish. So, my parents moved in with her.

I think I remember – I've seen photographs of it and I think I do remember being there at Christmas, probably in 1946 or 7. I can remember being in my grandmother's backyard and basement in what was called in those days in St. Louis, a four-family flat. There were two apartments on the first floor and two apartments immediately above them on the second floor. The landlord lived, as I recall, on the first floor, as did my grandmother on the other side of the landing, the entrance. There was a basement below the house and there was a washing machine down there.

Life was a lot more organized in those days, or prescribed, because there was a day for laundry, which was Monday, if I am not mistaken. So, on Mondays, my grandmother would do the laundry. Of course, there were no dryers, so there were laundry lines outside, going back from the house towards an alley, which was another typical thing. You had an alley in the back, which was where the coal deliveries came in, for the furnace in the basement. Next to the alley was a cinder pit, which was a concrete bin in which the cinders from the furnace were dumped for pick-up. I can remember going out in the back yard even on cold winter days, when it was usually sunny, and seeing the clothes lines propped up by clothes poles, which were maybe eight or nine feet high. Since the lines sagged from the weight of the laundry, the clothes poles, or laundry poles,

were put under the lines to hold them up from the ground. It all seems very quaint today. You never see this anymore.

Q: I recall that too. By the way, did you have brothers or sisters?

REIS: So, we lived on South Grand until 1948. There was some commotion with one of the neighbors, according to my mother. I think it had something to do with my parents storing some stuff down in the basement. Another tenant got upset about that; an argument ensued and my father flew off the handle. My grandmother was rather a timid person and the tension with the neighbor upset her. So, then my mother and father found an apartment in Jefferson Barracks.

Jefferson Barracks had been was the oldest army base west of the Mississippi but it was decommissioned after the war. I believe the 19<sup>th</sup> century part of the base, with a parade ground and houses around it, is still there. However, the old 19<sup>th</sup> century houses were sold off to individuals in the 1940's or 1950's. The rest of the base had been built up with the same kind of WWI or WWII buildings as those on other bases around the country. At the end of the war, in order to relieve the housing shortage, the U.S. Government turned the base over, I assume, to some county or municipal body and they turned some of the building into public housing for veterans. We lived in a BOQ (bachelor officer quarters) that had been turned into an eight-family flat. So, that's where we lived from 1948 until September 25, 1951, when we moved to Webster Groves, a suburb in St. Louis County about 12 miles southwest of downtown St. Louis. My parents had bought a new house there under a loan program for veterans.

Q: *Do you recall life as a kid, the early years?*

REIS: Well, until we moved to Jefferson Barracks, I don't remember a whole lot. I remember a few things. We have some good friends from St. Louis, some of whom are still there, called the Knaups. Marianne Knaup is my mother's good friend and Marianne still lives in St. Louis. My mother now lives at Goodwin House at Bailey's Crossroads. Marianne had four children and she had a daughter about a year younger than I am, named Kathianne, who is now a judge in Missouri. I remember Kathianne from that time living in south St. Louis and later on at Jefferson Barracks. I do remember the Barracks.

It seems fanciful in this day and age, but it was really a pretty free life for kids. In front of the converted BOQ in which we lived at Jefferson Barracks, there was about 125 feet of pavement and in front of that there was a fence and beyond that were two railroad tracks. And beyond the tracks there were woods and the Mississippi River, which occasionally in the spring would come up close to the railroad tracks. I remember once the river covered the tracks. The amazing thing is that parents would permit kids – I was four at the time – to just go outside and roam around, so there were always kids around outside. There was an abandoned quarry about a half mile away. We would go up there and fool around; go into the forest and play. We were told never to go near the river, and we weren't supposed to cross the rail road tracks, but we did. So there were plenty of things to do.

Behind the BOQ was a hill. In those days the winters were colder, so we could go sledding down that hill for weeks during the winter.

Across the road that came down the hill, there was a foundation from a building that had been removed and the foundation rose perhaps 15 inches above the concrete slab under it. At the bottom of a hole about eight feet below the surface of the slab, there was a valve for water and so somebody got the idea to turn that slab into a swimming pool for the kids. So, without seeking permission from anybody, somebody in the neighborhood who was a plumber used a valve key that he put on a long pipe and opened the valve and turned on the water. The water came shooting out of a pipe and that was our swimming pool and nobody ever complained. As far as I know, no one sought the permission of the housing authority for the pool. Bureaucracy weighed less heavily on everyday life than it does now.

*Q: Now I am a grandfather and all, and I watch children being escorted, driven here and there; we were sort of feral.*

(General laughter)

*Q: It was the parents saying, "Now, go out and play and don't come back until dinner time."*

REIS: That's exactly right.

*Q: When we were older we made up baseball games. We took care of ourselves.*

REIS: Yes. Some of the things we did were sort of dumb, but we survived.

*Q: What was family life like? Did you sit around the dinner table and talk about things as a kid? How did the family interact?*

REIS: My sister was born when we lived in Jefferson Barracks. She is four and a half years younger than I am. She was born on November 30, 1948 and my brother was also born there, on August 25, 1951. He is seven years younger than I am.

My father was very much interested in politics, not in participating in politics but in following it. He was a rabid Democrat, a Roosevelt Democrat. There was always political discussion around the table. In the house in Webster Groves, the kitchen formed an 'L' from the living room and dining room and the television was in the corner of the dining room. My father put casters on the bottom of the TV. He would turn the television around at dinner time so that he could watch the news while we ate. So there was a lot of discussion of the news during dinner. It was during the Eisenhower administrations and my father he didn't have much use for Eisenhower or for any of the Republicans.

My father was, in some ways, quite extraordinary. He was trained as a lawyer. He was very careful with the English language. He spoke clearly and was intolerant of what he

used to call ‘\$5 words.’ He just wanted plainspoken, precise English. My father was – I wouldn’t say eloquent – but, certainly very clear and logical in his expression. He was also extremely talented with his hands. He could build anything. He could do brick work that was better than most professionals could do today. He made furniture. He made a beautiful coffee table. He did a lot of built-in work in the house. He was not so interested in gardening, but in the lawn and kept the lawn beautiful. What other things did he do? He could do electrical work and he could fix just about anything.

In all of his construction or repairs he had only two disasters or near disasters. Once he was using a bench saw and nearly cut his finger off. And another time, he was putting in some floodlights for the brick patio he had just completed and the wires got crossed and the wires started to burn. I remember him yelling to my mother from the attic, “Call the fire department!” Well, by the time the fire department got there, he had already figured out what had gone wrong and he snipped the wires, putting an end to the electrical fire. Those are the only two disasters I can think of.

*Q: What religion was your family and how important was it?*

REIS: They were both Catholic and it was central to them. In those days, that is, in the 50s, the split in society based on the Protestant Reformation still existed, at least in St. Louis. There was a strict division between Catholics and Protestants. There was an extensive Catholic parochial school system in St. Louis. We all went to Annunciation parish school, a grade school. I went first to St. Bernadette’s School at Jefferson Barracks and then to Holy Redeemer parochial school in Webster Groves before Annunciation was built. When Annunciation opened up, we all went there then. I always complain to my mother about this, because we had very good public schools in Webster Groves and yet we were sent to Annunciation.

People today would not believe the stuff that went on in a catholic school in those days. I was born two years before the first baby boomer, but there were already a lot of kids who had been born during WWII. In my grade school class there were 44 kids. The school was run by nun and there were some lay teachers but it was tough to keep control of 44 kids. I think my sister’s class had something like 60. The kids were literally packed into the class room like sardines into a can. But in public schools, the classes had fewer than 30 pupils in a room and they had a much wider range of facilities and special education teachers, art teachers, music teachers and that sort of thing. At Annunciation, or at any Catholic school in those days, I think you learned the three R’s pretty well, but a lot of the other subjects were neglected.

*Q: Were the pronouncements taken as the ‘word of God?’? Would people pay attention to what they said regarding books or movies? How were priests viewed?*

REIS: Let me make a distinction between the priests on the one hand, and the broader institution of the church, on the other. The Church, in those days, essentially decreed that Catholic parents had to send their children to Catholic schools, so my parents, particularly my father, insisted that we go to catholic schools. My mother, left to her own

devices, probably might have said, “This is nuts!” – she’s somewhat less devout than my father was – and would have sent the kids to public schools. But, my father took it to heart and said, “Okay, the church said you’ve got to go to Catholic school, so you’ve got to go to Catholic schools, and that’s that.” (I should note, however, that Catholic parents who did not send their children to Catholic schools were somewhat divorced from the Catholic community. In other words, there was a social cost for them at a time when being “Catholic” was not just a religious identification but a social one.)

On the other hand, my father took a certain independent attitude toward the priests. He was helpful to the Church. In those days they had fund-raising campaigns to raise money to raise money for the parish and the archdiocese. Being a lawyer, my father was considered capable and was always asked to help in organizing these campaigns, so he did. In retrospect this seems a bit odd as he was a rather quiet person and somewhat awkward in asking people for favors. But, he regarded the priests as people, not saints. I remember one time my father had helped to start a Cub Scout troop and the troop used the church hall at night for its meetings. The parish priest, Father Ryan, like many priests, was an alcoholic, or close to it. So, one night, he came drunk into one of the Cub Scout meetings and threw a fit and said, “What are you people doing in this church hall?” and my father said, “Well, we are in a Cub Scout meeting.” And the priest said, “Yes, but who is going to pay for the electricity?” And my father said, “Look! We pay for the electricity; we are the contributors. We pay the costs of the parish. It doesn’t come from you, so leave us alone”

(general laughter)

So, he could be fairly straightforward and tough when he had to on that kind of matter.  
*Q: How did you find the nuns? You hear all these horror stories about nuns in schools from that era. How did you find them?*

REIS: I’ll go through my experience to give you some idea of what the schooling was like. In third grade, which was the first year I was in Annunciation, we had an 18 or 19 year-old lay high school graduate, who taught the class. It was a year of total chaos. I don’t know how we learned a thing there. She was incompetent. Intellectually, she wasn’t up to it. And she just couldn’t control the class. The next year, we had a nun named Sister De Lourdes. My sister sent me Sister De Lourdes’ obituary that appeared in a Kansas City newspaper about two years ago. She died at 106, or something like that. She was tough, but fair and a good teacher. So you got somewhere there. The next year, we had a lay teacher, who was probably 24 or 25 or something like that. Her sister had just died and the teacher basically was in a nervous breakdown for a whole year. She would come in the morning and put her head down on the desk and maybe move about noon time. And that was about it. It was unbelievable; we learned nothing. The next year, sixth grade, we had Sister Noreen, who was again competent, capable and decent.

Seventh grade was the story you referred to. We had this horror named Sister Mary Lorenzo, who was from Ireland. She was not an Irish-American; she was from Ireland with an Irish accent. She was brutal. She walked around the room with an old-fashioned

pointer. If a kid was doing something disruptive or wrong or not paying attention, she hit him with the pointer. I have a vivid memory of one incident. A friend of mine, Oliver Schuchard, sat next to me in the class. (I'll show you his books. He's done several books of photography on Missouri, and retired from the University of Missouri where he was the head of the art department for a number of years.) I don't remember what he was doing, but he might have been distracted, or distracting someone else. Well, Sister Lorenzo walked up along the row between Oliver and me and leaned back as far as she could and went across with the back of her hands to hit him. He caught her movement out of the corner of his eye and ducked. She would up two rows over. She actually went airborne, which gives you some idea of how violent she could be.

Well, in eighth grade, we had Sister Mary Maureen, who I think is still alive. She was competent and capable and was the principal of the school as well as one of its teachers. It was a pretty sorry grade school experience.

*Q: Let's talk about your real education. What were you reading? Were you a reader? How were you learning?*

REIS: Well, I learned two ways, I guess. The first way was to read a lot. I read a lot of history, a lot of literature. I wouldn't say it was children's literature, but Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, James Fennimore Cooper and other American authors – whatever happened to be in the library. I also read biographies that were written made for high school students – stuff like that. So that basically was a lot of what I learned. I also learned through the boy scouts and camping a little bit about geology, a little bit about natural history, and about Missouri geography, and so forth.

*Q: Well, you mentioned reading various things. Do you think any series of books that particular grabbed you? Tell me about the elementary school period.*

REIS: I think mostly biographies. I mean books are written for kids between the ages of 10 and 14. Then the James Fennimore Cooper books, and Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn.

*Q: How influential was the Mississippi and that region on your historical awareness of St. Louis being the entry point to the west and all that sort of thing?*

REIS: Very central. The Mississippi – if you live close to it – is the reference point. Everything else is 'down by the river', or it's 'across the river', or it's 'up the river' or 'down the river' so it's a geographic reference point. I can't say that I knew very much about the Civil War in the time. I learned later that there were a number of Civil War battles in Missouri. The battle I referred to earlier was the Battle of Camp Jackson, which took place right on Grand Avenue, near St. Louis University.

*Q: Somehow, Nathaniel Lyons sticks in my mind.*

REIS: He was in St. Louis, too. I'd learned about all that much later. I don't recall the source of what I was reading.

*Q: It strikes me that the system was horribly chaotic with all these large classes and all. Did your father begin to wonder at the wisdom of bringing you up in this atmosphere?*

REIS: No, I don't think so. I think he was busy with his own life. In a way, when I look back on it, I think he was really caught in another age. St. Louis in those days certainly, and even to some extent today, is a very parochial place – not parochial in the sense of parochial school, but parochial in the common usage of the word. So, people didn't have very much connection – or at least my family didn't have very much feeling of connection with the outside world. My grandmother lived in Northern Kentucky; we'd occasionally go there. We really didn't take any vacations until I was in high school. So, many people around me were somewhat isolated in tradition and local culture. As you mentioned before, up until the end of WWII, many people didn't go to college and so I think there was a real absence of a sense of possibility. Can anything really be different than this? Without that imagination, you get stuck in your rut.

*Q: A kid can read and learn an awful lot on his or her own. Hand a kid a book and if they enjoy it and they will really absorb that book. What about things like mathematics and writing and all that?*

REIS: There was a certain amount of writing in the school. First and second grades were fine. For three of the six years I was at Annunciation it was pretty good. We had competent teachers. You might not like discipline, but there was plenty of it, so that was fine. For those other three years, it was a catastrophe. In the three good years, there was a certain amount of writing and in terms of arithmetic, I got it. And I learned to spell. So, the basics were pretty good. It was the frills that were not there. I painted a pretty awful picture, but looking at what came out of that school, I find there were a lot of successful people. I've lost contact with a lot of the people I went to grade school with. One guy went on to the University of Missouri in Rolla and became an engineer and then, I think, got an MBA and is now a very senior executive at Proctor and Gamble. Another friend of mine went on and ultimately went to medical school and is now a professor of medicine at USC (University of Southern California). My friend Oliver is retired from the University of Missouri. Another friend was a banker in Denver, Colorado. Several are retired military officers. Another is a Ph.D. Economist. And I wound up in the Foreign Service.

Q: It proves the point that so much education takes place on one's own, anyway. How about as kids playing around. In this place, when you were turned loose, did the kids break down into groups of Catholics and non-Catholics?

REIS: To get back to this, a lot of the social life of my parents was built around the Catholic parish and school. There were various events. In those days there were hardly any women who worked. There were rummage sales that the women worked at. There were Girl Scout troops, Boy Scout troops, card parties, Friday night fish fries, and all these kinds of things. People were expected to be at the liturgies. To an extent that seems impossible today, it was really a fairly cohesive society in St. Louis.

During the school year you were mostly with kids you went to school with. In the summertime, certainly until I was 10 or 12, you played with the kids on your street. There was a kid down the street down from me, whose family was German and from an area about 60 miles west of St. Louis, a German farming area, and they were Evangelical and Reformed – but in German, they were *Evangelisch*. I used to play with him all summer. His name was Gordon Yost. I also was on a municipal summer swimming team for two years when I was in grade school and almost all the other swimmers were from the public schools

*Q: How important were television and movies for you prior to high school?*

REIS: We first got television in 1954 when I was ten. We watched the news on things. On Saturday mornings there were all the programs: “Sky King,” and these various cowboy programs like “Roy Rogers,” “Wild Bill Hickoc,” and “Hopalong Cassidy”. While we did watch the Saturday morning programs for children, I can’t say we spent a lot of time watching television. About two miles from where we lived in Webster Groves, was a theater called the “Ozark” and you could see the movies on Friday nights there for 25 cents until you were about 14. In summer the public grade schools had day camps. You could be enrolled in one of the camps for a fee, but in the afternoons at those day camps once or twice a week there were movies and anybody could go to those without charge. And, so, occasionally we would go to these. The camps showed two or three-year-old movies, or something like that. We would sit on the floor and watch the movies.

*Q: What about high school?*

REIS: I went to St. Louis U. High, where my father went, which was a Jesuit high School in St. Louis. We lived in Webster Groves and the school was probably about a half-hour car ride away, so there was a carpool for kids in the neighborhood in the morning. There were five kids in the neighborhood within two blocks of one another, so one father a day would drive us in. To get home, we would either take the bus or – though it seems unreal – hitchhike. You would see kids hitchhiking home all the time and people would pick them up and there never was any real problem and it was pretty reliable to do it. I did it off and on for three years and there may have been one time I thought I didn’t like the situation I was in, but nothing happened. That was the only time that was even the least bit dicey.

In any event, it was a school I had to test into. You took an entrance exam and if you passed you went to St. Louis U. High. It was a real classical education. I don’t think the curriculum had changed since my father was there, at least not much. There were 220 students in a class year. The tuition was \$220 a year, which my father paid. The interesting thing is that when he left that high school in 1929 – and he had worked his way through it as a drug store clerk – I think the tuition was \$175. So, between 1929 and 1958, the tuition had gone up by \$45.

Under a curriculum that had been in place for many years, in the first year you took Latin, English, algebra, history five days of weeks, and then, of course, religion for three

times a week, and physical education. It was a pretty academic, pretty rigorous program. The classes were taught by Jesuit priests, some lay teachers and what were known as scholastics, who were Jesuit seminarians. When people went into the Jesuits in those days, typically they did so after high school. They studied for seven years and by the time they were 25, they had completed a bachelor's and a master's degree. From the time they were 25 years old until they were 28, they taught at a Jesuit high school. It was a very well-ordered school. The Jesuits had had several hundred years of history in doing this and they had a clear mission. It was a well run school with a very heavy emphasis on writing.

In the second year, one had all the same subjects, except the mathematics course was geometry. I was high enough in my class that I could take a second language, so I started German. In junior year it was German again. In that year I didn't take any mathematics, which I disliked, and I took chemistry, which for me was a disaster. And in the final year I took all of the same subjects, except not German, which was offered only for two years. Also, there was physics instead of chemistry. If you wanted to take more mathematics, you certainly could have. I was not particularly good at it and wasn't interested and was lazy about it, so I didn't take it.

*Q: Was the high school divided into a girls' section?*

REIS: There were no girls.

*Q: Was there a sister high school nearby?*

REIS: Well, St. Louis has quite a number of catholic high schools. First of all you've got diocesan high schools which admit anybody and are co-ed. The one for our area of the south St. Louis suburbs was Bishop DuBourg High School. There were also non-diocesan schools run by orders of Catholic priests, brothers, or nuns. The Christian Brothers, for example ran the Christian Brothers Academy for boys, a military high school. The Sisters of Loretto, the Ursuline nuns, the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Sacred Heart nuns each had a school for girls. If I was going to go to a prom or another event, I would invite a girl from one of the Catholic girls' schools. I might mention that St. Louis still has one of the highest rates of attendance of Catholic schools in the country and most of the high schools for boys and for girls are still in existence.

*Q: Were you dating much – you and your friends?*

REIS: No. I can't say we did date a lot. We'd occasionally do things if there were dances and we'd occasionally go out to some other event, like a high school football game. While I was in high school, we did a lot of camping in southern Missouri. This seems a little odd, for two reasons. One is that our parents might have, for example, insisted that we do something a little more structured to improve ourselves. There was none of this business of putting children into accelerated math classes or whatever. That just didn't exist. The other thing that is a little bit funny is that I would tell my mother on Friday night, "Well, we're going camping at Cook's Spring." She'd say, "Well, where's that?"

And I'd answer, "Reynolds County." And she'd just answer, "Oh, okay. Goodbye." She didn't have a clue where Reynolds County was.

*Q: I watch my children manage their children. They're just part of the system today, where you know where your kid is and your kid has to go by car and the whole system is designed for the parents to shuttle them back and forth.*

*Did you find yourself doing summer work or after-school work, or not?*

REIS: You had to be sixteen to work in Missouri. From the time I was about sixteen through most of senior year in high school, I worked for Webster Groves Public Library. I worked for eight hours a week and I got paid 50 cents an hour. In March or April in my last year of high school, I went to work for McDonald's and took orders. It was interesting because in those days you had to add things up. You couldn't just punch a hamburger button on the machine and the order goes in and the bill is tallied up. I was in some ways a valuable employee for the McDonald's franchise because I was faster at adding up the bills than others. An interesting footnote is that there were no women or black people who worked for McDonald's or for other drive-in restaurants in St. Louis in the early 1960's. St. Louis was in those days a pretty segregated place.

*Q: During the time of your high school years, what part did race play in your life – or did it?*

REIS: It was sort of interesting. My father was absolutely against segregation and he just thought it was unfair and awful. My mother, too, was against it. My father had been raised in St. Louis and my mother had been raised in northern Kentucky just across the Ohio from Cincinnati, which in some ways is an environment similar to that in St. Louis because it is a Midwestern city on the edge of the South.

In St. Louis, things were pretty segregated. On the north side of Webster Groves, which was a town of about 30,000 people, there is a black area called North Webster, which is a part of the city of Webster Grove. Up until Brown vs. the Board of Education....

Q: '54, '55....

REIS: '54 – There was a separate high school for black students in North Webster and then in, I think, 1956 the city integrated the schools in accordance with Brown v. the Board of Education.

St. Louis University, for example, which was the Jesuit College where I went, was segregated until some time in the '40s. The municipal swimming pool in Webster Groves was closed from about 1948 until 1953 to avoid integration. I can still remember the first time I went to the pool, in 1953. It was a chilly Memorial Day. (Memorial Day in St. Louis can be chilly, just it can be in the Washington area.) It was the first time I had had any real contact with black children.

*Q: It's hard to recreate those times.*

*In high school, what did you particularly like and what were you working at?*

REIS: Well, what I really liked and what I did best in was history. It was really what I was interested in. It took an advanced placement course in my junior year. It was basically Europe from the Renaissance on. I enjoyed that quite a lot.

I enjoyed languages. I have to say, in retrospect, that I wasn't as diligent as I could have been. I liked Latin and found the grammatical parts of it very interesting as there were a lot of forms that we don't have in English. I had a pony, an inter-linear translation which you could buy at book stores. Every day, you had to prepare something like 30 lines and you'd buy the pony so that you could look at what the translation was in the pony. Somebody who was really diligent would have worked their way through it and then looked at the pony to make sure they were right. But, I have to say that I wasn't that diligent. I enjoyed German. I enjoyed English literature.

The things that I didn't like because I didn't understand them in the least, and didn't have much aptitude, for them were mathematics and science.

*Q: Did the outside intrude much? The cold war was on and the Korean War had come and gone.*

REIS: Yes, it intruded. I can remember my uncle, my mother's brother, who is ten years to the day younger than she is, graduated from the Naval Academy in June 1950. He bought a 1950 Ford. He and my grandmother drove from Cincinnati to St. Louis. He'd been assigned to the west coast, to San Diego, I think. He was planning to take a leisurely trip to the West Coast and get on a ship and do whatever. While he was staying with us, the Korean War broke out.

*Q: June 25, 1950.*

REIS: Yes. He had to clear out the next day, I think, and head for San Diego. So, that intruded. The cold war was there. I can still remember, being in this grade school and there were bomb drills where you'd lie down under your desk with your arms over your head to protect yourself from an atomic bomb. It all seems rather risible at the moment. Anyway, that did intrude.

There was concern about communism. My father thought this was perfectly absurd. He'd rant and rave about the House Un-American Activities Committee. He shared an office with another lawyer. My father and Leo didn't have a lot in common, I don't think. Anyway, Leo was a very sort of – how would you put it – a rigid catholic. He was constantly carrying on about communism in the United States and how it was going to take over the country and there were communists everywhere. One day, my father, who sometimes went over the limit, went into Leo's office and was crawling around on the floor looking under the couch. Leo said, "What are you doing?" and my father said,

“Well, Leo, I’m looking for those communists. You tell me they’re everywhere. There’s got to be one around here someplace.”

(General Laughter)

So, that was going on, but other than that, not too much.

The interesting thing about high school was that you felt in retrospect it developed a certain a connection, I think, not only to the classical world, but also to Europe. In first year Latin you did basically the basics, in second year you read Cicero, in third year it was Caesar and in fourth year it was Virgil’s Aeneid. The students also had to do some reading in English on classical culture. So, there was a connection to the classical world. And, second of all, some of the teachers had lived in Europe. The German teacher, a Jesuit, had lived in Germany and had studied in a German seminary for a time. Others were connected just by the Jesuit culture to Europe. It’s odd, but while in some ways St. Louis was very parochial, in other ways it had connections to other worlds.

*Q: Did you have any connections – we are talking about other ethnic groups, such as the Jews.*

REIS: Well, Webster Groves. My wife was raised an Episcopalian but is Catholic now. She went to the public high school in Webster Groves, Webster Groves High School. She says that there was only one Jewish family with children there. I had a friend who was a couple of years older than I am who lived in Webster whose father was Jewish, but whose mother was Catholic and he was Catholic. I believe that most of St. Louis’s Jewish population lives north of a line running due west from the St. Louis Gateway Arch. When I was growing up, there were strong Jewish populations in University City, which abuts the City of St. Louis on the Northwest side, and Clayton, the country seat. There was one Jewish boy in my class at St. Louis U. High, who commuted from Belleville, Illinois, about 20 miles away.

*Q: When did you graduate from high school?*

REIS: 1962.

*Q: How did the election of Kennedy and his campaign and his being a catholic and all that engage you?*

REIS: We were very interested in the campaign and followed it fairly carefully. As I have said, my father was very interested in politics. I can’t remember specifically his saying anything about Kennedy’s religion. (My father would have voted for Hindus or Buddhists if they were Democrats.) I can remember the primary in West Virginia but there wasn’t a lot of discussion at home or at school about what Kennedy’s nomination and election meant for Catholics.

*Q: In 1962, what where you pointed towards?*

REIS: When I got out of high school in 1962, there was not a lot of imagination at home or among the teachers about options.

About half of St. Louis U. High's 1962 class of 200 students went directly to St. Louis University. (I should note here that the class included one black student, the son of a musician who, I believe, also was an officer in the musicians union.) The options that were out there for people to consider as professions were engineering, law, medicine and business. That was pretty much it. My family didn't have much money and I knew I was going to have to work my way through college, with some help from my parents. So the question was what was cheap and St. Louis University was the cheapest option. When I started there the tuition was \$950 a year plus books and a few minor fees – not much. I lived at home and commuted there.

*Q: What university was this?*

REIS: St. Louis University. It's a Jesuit university in St. Louis thirty-six blocks west of the Mississippi and about 15 blocks from where I went to high school. Two of my cousins, who lived in Texas, had gone to St. Louis University.

*Q: So, you were in the class of '66.*

REIS: Yes.

*Q: What was it like?*

REIS: Well, it was not much different than it was in the 40's or '50s, when it comes down to it. St. Louis is socially a very conservative place. Things did not change there as fast as they did in other parts of this country, I don't think. I tried to figure out a class schedule that would permit me to work. So I would either try to get classes three days a week and then have two days free, or to have classes in the morning and have the afternoons free – whatever worked out. I commuted from home. Sometimes I'd have my father drop me off near the university on his way to work downtown if my mother needed her car. In that case I took the bus home. If she didn't need the car, then I would use it. In my freshman year, I worked part-time for McDonald's. The next two years I worked for a manufacturer of TV stands, products that do not really exist now. The final year I was a coin teller for a local bank.

In retrospect, it was quite a good education. I wound up majoring in history. St. Louis University had a pretty good undergraduate history department. I minored in English, and that was pretty good too. I also had a minor in political science, and that was not as rigorous as either English or History, but interesting. I also took a lot of philosophy. I think I had 15 hours of philosophy, which was rigorous and I did well at it. All those required a lot of writing. When I began college, I didn't know what I was going to major in. The possibilities were history, English, political science or German. I really didn't think much beyond that. I took a class in psychology and I didn't like that. I found

psychology spent an enormous amount of effort to prove the obvious and I didn't like that much.

*Q: Who ran the school?*

REIS: It was a Jesuit University. The president of it at the time was Father Reinert, from a German family in St. Louis. His younger brother, was also a Jesuit priest, had been the vice principal at St. Louis High. One of my father's second cousins, Father Raymond Reis, whom I met only many years later, was a Jesuit priest and taught biology at the university. Members of my extended family had gone to the university for years, so it was the logical place to go.

In those days, St. Louis U. High discouraged its graduates from going to anything but Catholic colleges. In my class of 200, only one person went to the University of Missouri in Columbia. One person went to the then newly-established University of Missouri in St. Louis. There were four or five who went to what became the University of Missouri in Rolla, which in those days was called the Missouri School of Mines. It was an engineering school. One person went to the University of Michigan. One person went to Princeton. Two or three went to Washington University and one went to William and Mary. Everyone else went to Catholic colleges, mostly Jesuit colleges.

*Q: I have heard the word 'Jesuitical' as an adjective. Was there such a thing as a Jesuitical technique that you were picking up as you went through these institutions?*

REIS: It's very heavily analytical, basically, with close attention to words. That's basically what it is. Now, 'Jesuitical' has a pejorative meaning. It means you are engaging in trickery in one sort or another or a close use of words to perpetrate trickery. That's not really what they were up to.

*Q: Perhaps 'Jesuitical' is the wrong term. But would you say that the Jesuitical approach was a certain type of analysis? Did you find that in later life this way of looking at problems and situations had been inculcated in you?*

REIS: Yes. It is very logical. There were two aspects of it. One is ethical. The Jesuits taught that one is here on earth for a certain purpose in life. Making money, while important for sustenance, is not the only reason to live. There is an obligation to society and we are all in life together. We all should try to help one another in life together. That's the ethical part of the whole thing. In terms of academic things, it is the historical method, in literature it is close reading, in philosophy it is reading texts with care and coming to conclusions about them. The other thing is building up a trove of knowledge about western society and culture. There weren't many requirements in those days, not only in St. Louis University, but in most universities, including universities on both coasts to learn about non-western societies. At St. Louis University There was an requirement in for history majors to take at least one course on non-western history, that is, non- U.S., non-European history, so I took a course on China. But, apart from that, there wasn't very much.

Q: I graduated from Williams College in the class of '50 and I was a history major. I think Russia was about as far as you could get into Asian history.

REIS: Yes.

There were some interesting people at St. Louis University. In the political science department, I took a course on African politics and I took a course on the Soviet system taught by a refugee from Ukraine. I also took two courses on International Law from Professor Kurt von Schuschnigg, who was Chancellor of Austria when Hitler took over Austria. Von Schuschnigg and his family were in a concentration camp during all during the war. After the war, he emigrated to the United States and wound up at St. Louis University teaching.

*Q: Did Africa excite people a bit? This was the '60s and when Africa was opening up and this was the 'new world' in a way.*

REIS: Well, it was very interesting. I thought it was fascinating. The feeling was “well, now that you'd gotten rid of British and French colonialism, the whole continent would blossom; that Africans were like everybody else, they have all these natural resources and they would use these natural resources and develop into wonderful places.” This proved not to be the case, but there was excitement about it. The Peace Corps was established in 1963 and there were a lot of people who wanted to go into the Peace Corps and wanted to go to Africa. I was interested. Later on, when I joined the Foreign Service, I was interested in going to Africa and eventually served in Somalia and Zambia where I saw the difference between hope and reality.

But, back to your question about what it was like going to college in the 1960's. The Viet-Nam war was expanding. I can remember that in the last semester of high school a classmate in a social studies class made an oral presentation on the insurgencies in Southeast Asia. During college, after the first big infusion of troops into Vietnam in February '65, there began to be study meetings and things like that at universities, including St. Louis University. I can remember going to one on a Saturday afternoon with a friend. By and by people chose either to get drafted or to enter the ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corps) or they rebelled and tried to avoid the draft, although most of that came later in '67 and '68. A student who was a year behind me in high school for ethical reasons refused to be drafted and served time in a federal penitentiary.

*Q: During the '62-'66 period, there were three things: civil rights, Vietnam and a life style. Did any of these things begin to intrude?*

REIS: Well, Vietnam began to intrude. It certainly was a matter of conversation, because it was on television news all night, every night. My mother was dead set against U.S. involvement in Vietnam. I don't remember what exactly what my father's position was. He was a colonel in the Army Reserves; I think he got out in the summer of '66. I remember at dinner one time at the house one evening in 1965 or 1966 I argued that the

Vietnam war was not in our national interests. He replied, "If you don't like it, then get a commission and do something about it. Go into the Army and see what you can do to learn more about it."

By that time, I'd already been in the Army Reserve so I didn't want to go back on active duty. In the summer of 1963, after one year of college, I was working in the city park in Webster Groves, Missouri, for a dollar an hour. It was about 95° every day; I was repairing fences and cutting grass, trimming trees and doing other manual work. I didn't mind the work, but I thought it was a waste of my time at a dollar an hour. I decided that, given the draft, I was going to have to go into the military at some point and I might just as well join the Army Reserve. In those days you could fulfill your military obligation by doing six months active duty in the Army and then five and a half years of reserve meetings. I joined the Army's 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division in Missouri, the so called Ozark Division and went on active duty for training on July 3, 1963. I did basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri and then was assigned to Fort Sheridan, Illinois, where I worked in an office. I was in the Adjutant General Corps, which meant paper pushing. I got out of active duty on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December '63, and started the reserve program. So, I didn't get drafted, nor did I have an inclination to go back of going back into the army.

*Q: I think this is a good place to stop. We'll pick this up again next time. We're moving towards, when you graduated in 1966, what were you planning to do and what happened to you and all that.*

REIS: Sounds good.

*Q: Today is the 13<sup>th</sup> of October, 2008. Well, where did you graduate from?*

REIS: I graduated from St. Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri in June 1966.

*Q: And what were you up to?*

REIS: Well, I'd passed the written Foreign Service exam, which I had taken in December 1965 and so then I took the oral exam in July of 1966 and passed that.

*Q: Do you recall any of the questions you were asked on the oral exam?*

REIS: It was very interesting, and very academic. I'd studied history, English, American literature and political science in college. They didn't really get into political science much.

*Q: Why do you think they didn't.*

REIS: I don't know. I suppose they did ask one African area studies question. There were three panelists who conducted the exam in a federal building in downtown Kansas City. The questions were academic. One question was something like: Some people have said that the United States gained most of its territory through aggression, violence or war. How would you respond to that? I went from the Louisiana Purchase onto the war against

the Spanish and the Seminoles, the removal of the Cherokee and Creek Indians from the South, the Mexican War in 1846, the wars against the Plains Indians, and the Spanish-American War. Apparently, my answer was satisfactory.

Then they said, "If you were overseas and a foreigner asked you, "What American novels would you recommend and why?" Then I gave them a list of books. Then, finally, they got onto Africa. I'd taken a course in African politics and they asked "What did you study in that course and how did the course work out?" I said, "Well, it was fine. It was an interesting course. I did a paper projecting the outcome of elections in Nigeria, which were held in 1965, and I was wrong." They looked at one another and they said, "Well, that sort of thing has happened to all of us."

(Laughter)

Anyway, it all went well enough. They did say that my grounding in economics was deficient. That wasn't surprising because I had never taken a course in economics.

*Q: I was told exactly the same thing. I had taken a course in economics and got a D- with a circle around it, which meant, "this is a gift, fella!"*

*So, in 1966, you passed the written and oral.*

REIS: I passed the written and oral and my name went onto the list.

*Q: Excuse me. In those days, you weren't coned, were you – just on the list?*

REIS: There was no coning; that came later. So, I went onto the list without any sort of designation.

In the meantime I went to work for the Labor Department in the Wage and Hour Administration, which does the enforcement of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1937, which sets the standard work week at forty hours and provides that if a covered worker works for more than forty hours a week he should get time-and-a-half overtime pay. The act applies to companies that are engaged in interstate commerce. The act it is a real education in American politics because it contains all sorts of exceptions. For example, seasonal wreath makers in certain counties of North Carolina were exempted from the act's effect in those days. I worked for the Labor Department for about two months and as I didn't like some the law enforcement aspects of it at all I quit.

After about a month I got a job at Graybar Electric as a credit manager. The company sold electrical products from large generating equipment to household toasters. My job was essentially to collect unpaid bills. I was 22 years old. I had never studied accounting, economics, business or finance. And they said, "Well, you need to collect these debts that are on these ledgers, that's part of it. The other part of it is you've got to make decisions when salesmen come to you with a potential sale; you've got to tell them whether it's okay or not from a credit point of view.

Luckily, there was another guy who was four or five years older than I was and who'd been doing the work for a while. He was very helpful. He'd say, "Now, look. Here's what you have to look for. When you are making these decisions, there are certain companies, for example large construction companies whose debts are four months past due; that's normal and don't bother them. They're major customers. Just let it go. But for other people, if the billing is over thirty days, you just give them a call. If it's over sixty days, you start to press for the collection."

In most cases it really wasn't that customers didn't have money or they didn't want to pay; there usually was some confusion in the billing. That meant that I had to go through the billing records, which were all paper in those days, and try to figure out where the mistakes were, where the confusion was, and then try to persuade customer to pay if they did owe money.. It usually was pretty easy.

In terms of making decisions on who got credit and who didn't, I did have the authority to request Dunn and Bradstreet reports, so I'd get those and see what the customer's credit record was. It usually was pretty good, so I'd go ahead and allow the credit.

*Q: And of course this was all before computers.*

REIS: Yes.

*Q: Paperwork confusion, not that computers don't create as much confusion, but there is some sense of organization with the computer.*

REIS: Yes. Well in these days there were files with paper in them and in most cases you should have been able to find the paperwork and figure out what was probably the problem. In some cases past-due bills had been neglected and mistakes built on mistakes built on mistakes and so I'd have to go back several years in records in boxes in a storeroom. Not much had changed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Dickens would know all about it.

*Q: You had a typewriter rather than a quill pen.*

REIS: I had a typewriter, although I hardly ever used it. It was very interesting the way things worked then and don't now. I had a Dictaphone, a primitive recording device. It had a big wide tape that went around in a circle.

*Q: It was a Dictaphone.*

REIS: Yes, I believe that is what it was called. I really didn't have to write anything by hand or with a typewriter. To compose a letter, I spoke into the Dictaphone. One of the group of young women in the typing pool, who were from 20 to 25 years old, collected the tapes several times a day from me and others. The typing pool then would type the letters in draft and bring the drafts back for proofing. I'd edit the letters and after one of

the women typed it in final I would sign and send it off. The system was totally different from what you'd do today.

*Q: How long did you do this?*

REIS: Well, I started there in September of '66 and then in December, a couple of weeks before Christmas, I got a call from the State Department saying, "Would you like to join a entry class?" They initially offered a January class. I said I couldn't get myself organized that quickly. I asked to join the next class and the Department agreed. I started driving from St. Louis on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, 1967.

*Q: I assume you took the A-100, the basic officer's course.*

REIS: Yes. I took the basic officer's course, which began on March 2, 1967.

*Q: Could you characterize the class and the people in it?*

REIS: Well, we had forty-two or three people in it. I was one of the younger people in it. I'd say the average age was probably twenty-six or twenty-five. In those days you had to be 21 years old to go into the Foreign Service. You couldn't be older than 31. We had one guy who was just about thirty-one. He'd graduated from college, been in the Navy for three years, went back to college and studied medieval history for a number of years and then decided he wasn't going to make a living out of that, and then got an MBA at Columbia University, after which he joined the Foreign Service. It was a mix of people. There were some young people. There were some people who were twenty-five or twenty-six who'd been in the Army or Navy, some as enlisted men and some as officers. There was one lawyer from Louisiana. He didn't stay very long. He left after he had got through the A-100 course and had taken sixteen weeks of German. He had a personal reason to get out of the Foreign Service, so he did.

It was an interesting course. It was run by Alex Davit, who I think did it for quite some time and was well known for doing it. There was another officer, Ruth McClendon, who was Alex Davit's assistant for at least part of the time I was in the A-100 course. Mostly, we went around to different government agencies and talked to them about what they did. I remember going over to DOD (Department of Defense). We were at the State Department for several days, I think. At least one day I was on the Uganda Desk with somebody watching what he did. It was more socialization than learning, I have to say.

*Q: Were there women? Were there minorities?*

REIS: In terms of women – I'd have to get the picture out – I guess there were probably ten or eleven.

*Q: It was not inconsequential.*

REIS: No. The only member of an ethnic minority was Bob Tsukayama, a Japanese-American from Hawaii. He was in the Foreign Service for some years and then went into the State Department Civil Service and was in the Consular Bureau for many years. He may still be there. He lives not very far away, here in Alexandria.

*Q: you were there when the Vietnam war was picking up. What were you picking up from your colleagues about their attitudes towards war?*

REIS: I think there was a fair amount of skepticism about the war's point and prospects. There was nobody I can remember being overtly against it. I think there were people who were skeptical about the whole thing.

A good part of our class was sent directly to Vietnam. I didn't go because I was engaged to be married and the Department did not send first-tour officers who were married or engaged unless they wanted to go. I got married in the fall of '67. Anyway, I think we had about 14 or 15 guys out of the class go to Vietnam. Some of them went through Vietnamese language training and some underwent French language training.

*Q: You mentioned being engaged. Can you tell me a little about how you met your wife and little about her background?*

REIS: My wife, Ninette, and I grew up in the same little suburb of St Louis, Webster Groves. Her sister, Elaine, was pretty well known as she was involved in drama in high school and later at what used to be known as Webster College and is now Webster University in Webster Groves. Elaine was a rather well-known actress and got good local reviews. I also knew my wife's older brother, John, as were on a summer swimming team together at the municipal swimming pool when I was eleven or twelve. I did not know the family well but I knew who they were.

After I had been on active duty for training in the Army and was in the reserve unit, I met Elaine's boyfriend, and later, husband, Bill Neal, who was also in the reserve unit. Bill and some other people in the reserve unit were going to go on an evening cruise on the Mississippi on a boat called The Admiral. This sounds terribly old-fashioned.

*Q: I'd try to capture this.*

REIS: I can remember being on the boat when I was about three or four years old. It was a sleek, aluminum, streamlined boat docked on the river in downtown St. Louis. It made two cruises a day. One was in the morning and it seems to me it left at 11 o'clock and it went down to the Jefferson Barracks Bridge, which was probably about ten or twelve miles south of downtown St. Louis on the Mississippi. The boat then turned around and went back to its dock. In the summer there were lots of children with their mothers on the boat, which had a game arcade and snack bars where you could buy cokes and probably sandwiches. People usually brought their lunches, as I remember. An excursion on the Admiral was a good summer outing for families. The kids could play.

Adults could look at the scenery. And the interior of the boat was air-conditioned when homes were not.

The Admiral also had evening cruises with a band and dancing. As they made plans to go on an evening cruise, in July or August 1965, my friends asked me join them. I said, "Well, I'd like to go, but I don't have a date." They said, "No problem. We can fix you up." So they fixed me up with my wife and that's how we started going out.

*Q: How did she feel about the Foreign Service?*

REIS: Well, she was rather excited about the whole thing, I think. She had no objection to it, I think.

I think if we made a mistake, it was probably that we didn't wait a bit to get married, because she had finished three years of college and she dropped out of school when we got married just before I went to my first post. Berlin was our first assignment. She took some courses at the University of Maryland in Berlin and she finished her degree at George Mason University in 1978. She later got a Master's in Education at UVA's branch in Falls Church. So, in the end it all worked out but in retrospect getting married before she finished college seems a dumb thing to have done.

*Q: Well, you are in an A-100 course and it was a wonderful time to get together. Where did you want to go and where did you go?*

REIS: Well, I said that I'd like to go to Africa, because I was interested in Africa and Africa was really interested in the 1960s.

*Q: It was the decade of the discovery of Africa by the State Department then.*

REIS: Everyone thought that Africa had a chance, that if you just got rid of the colonial rulers, the continent would bloom. So, I was interested in it. I put down Africa on my wish list and I wound up getting assigned to Berlin, which was fine. After the A-100 course, I did the consular course for a week, which was woefully inadequate.

*Q: Did you have Alice Kern (?) as your instructress in the consular course?*

REIS: The name is familiar, but I don't remember.

*Q: She was the lady who used to lock people in the course.*

REIS: No?!

*Q: I am a consular officer by training and background. She poisoned the well. Everyone who came through hated her.*

REIS: No. I can't remember that at all. I don't recall the course as being unpleasant. I do think that a week-long consular course was even at that time inadequate. I don't think it was particularly well-taught, to be honest with you. They never said, "Ok, fine. Look, this is the outline of the law and let's go through it paragraph by paragraph and explain what it means for you doing visa and passport work." It was, "Here is the law. Memorize it." I just didn't find it terribly satisfactory.

*Q: What was your job? Was it rotational?*

REIS: It was rotational job in Berlin. Initially, I was in the administrative section, first in the personnel unit and then in the general services unit. I was in the administrative section for about two or three months. I then was the Minister's staff assistant and protocol officer. Finally, I was in the consular section. I have to say that the first half of the experience was really not very satisfying because in the personnel unit I was simply told to go read regulations. I didn't really have any work to do.

*Q: Thinking of personnel, they'd got such an efficient German staff that....*

REIS: That's right.

*Q: ....you just got in their way.*

REIS: Well, plus, there was a State personnel officer who himself was not terribly busy. Then I did GSO work, and the GSO also had an efficient German Staff. But a lot of the actual work was subcontracted to the Army, because it was the U.S. Mission in Berlin which was part of the Allied Government of Berlin. So, a lot of the support for the State and USIS people who were in Berlin was done by the Army.

I went to office of the minister, the head of the U.S. Mission. The minister was Brewster Morris, who was then in his late 50s. He had been the ambassador to Chad. He was from an old Main Line Philadelphia family. The DCM was a very quiet guy, Parker Wyman. The two of them didn't pay much attention to me. I had no idea what I was supposed to be doing. As a first-tour officer, I didn't know what a staff assistant to an ambassador or minister was supposed to do and no one really gave me any instruction. After a while, they decided to eliminate that position and I went off to the consular section. The head of that was a woman named Alice Clement.

*Q: Oh, yes. I knew Alice. Back in the '50s, we worked together in Frankfurt. She was a rather senior consular officer in those days when I was a brand new vice consul.*

REIS: She was very nice. She ran a good ship; she had high morale. She was personable; she seemed to like the junior officers that worked for her. She had a woman named Betty Nussbaum, who worked for her. Betty was a consular officer, too, but I think had come up through the secretarial ranks and then became a consular officer. Betty was then about 50 and had a lot of common sense and was a really sound person. I did non-immigrant visas all day, which was interesting.

Then, in August of 1968, I got a cable saying, "Your job had been eliminated." It had been BALPAed. BALPA stood for "balance of payments." In 1968 the United States began to have a serious international balance of payments problem because of the Vietnam war expenditures and growing imports. (As the international payments system was based on gold until August 15, 1971, the balance of payments problem was a more serious problem than it would be now, when the dollar is the world's principal reserve currency and a U.S. balance of payments deficit does not result in foreign claims on the gold reserves at Fort Knox.) In order to deal with the problem, President Johnson tried to reduce foreign expenditures and BALPA was part of that effort. In any event, the telegram said, "Your job is one of many around the world being eliminated and you're going to Mogadishu." On October 20, 1968, I took off for Mogadishu.

*Q: Let's stick to Berlin. From what you were gathering at the time, what was the situation in Berlin?*

REIS: Well, the situation in Berlin was interesting. Things were very quiet in terms of relations with the Russians. The Berlin crisis had been in '61 when the wall went up and after that things pretty much stabilized. What did go on in Berlin at the time, apart from just the administration of the occupation by the three allied powers in the West in Berlin, United States, Great Britain and France, were demonstrations against Vietnam by German students. And, so there was a lot of that going on. The political section of the mission monitored and reported on those and tried to figure out what was going on.

We used to be able to go in and out of Berlin in three different ways. One, you could drive out to Helmstedt which is on the East/West German border east of Braunschweig. It was 110 miles from Berlin to Helmstedt. To drive there one had to get allied travel orders. To go out, you had to pass out through an American check point and a Russian checkpoint. To go into West Germany, you had to do it in reverse, to pass through a Russian checkpoint and then the American checkpoint. Two, you could fly out. Three, there was what called a duty train, which traveled every night. One went from Berlin to Frankfurt and another made the reverse trip. Again, you had to have travel orders. The train was free of charge. The United Kingdom ran a train that went to Braunschweig and France ran a train, once a week I think, to Strasbourg. I never took the British or French trains.

You could also go to East Berlin, if you got a sort of travel order. We were followed, I think, on a couple occasions over there. One time was right after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. We were looking at an East German war memorial in the eastern part of East Berlin and we were walking across the street back to where we had parked our car, which had military license plates. An East German television team came up to try to interview us. We said that we were on a personal visit to East Berlin and that we had nothing to say.

*Q: Were you feeling under any threat that the balloon would go up or anything like that?*

REIS: No. It was very calm, really. The only big event in Eastern Europe when I was in Berlin was the political relaxation in Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1968. There was euphoria in Czechoslovakia and, to some extent in Germany. Then the Soviet Union sent troops into in August. After that there was a big German rally in the square in Berlin where Kennedy had spoken. I think the Mayor of Berlin spoke to the rally, attended by thousands of people.

*Q: Did you get at all involved in the visa side with the refugees from East Germany and that?*

REIS: No, we really didn't. The consular section did not deal with refugees. Occasionally Poles would come to the mission for visas. You had to go through the procedures to get the visas approved by Washington and then you would issue them. The people who applied for visas in Berlin in those days were almost all Germans living in Berlin. Sometimes non-German Europeans and others would apply for visas in Berlin. One was Melina Mercouri, the Greek actress. Another time, a friend of mine issued a visa to a Chinese in Berlin and then went on vacation. The issuance was a big mistake. The next day, I had two or three Chinese come in and all of them had cameras and all said they wanted to visit the United States as tourists. In fact, they were working in the back room of a restaurant in Berlin and they thought that if one vice consul had made a mistake, maybe another one would too. We said, "No, thanks."

*Q: I'm curious about Melina Mercouri. This was the period of time when she was basically in exile. It was when the Colonels took over.*

REIS: That's right.

*Q: Her father had been the Mayor of Piraeus. She was pretty much on the left. Was there any problem with her?*

REIS: I don't think there was. She wasn't in the visa lookout book. I remember her coming in but I can't remember if I issued the visa or my friend did it. We shared an office. I remember her being in the office. She spoke English. She had somebody with her. I think we probably checked with Alice, who said the application was okay. So one of us issued the visa and off Melina Mercouri went. I don't why she was in Berlin, whether she was there because appearing publicly or she just happened to be passing through the city.

*Q: I think she had a movie which came out at about that time, "Never on a Sunday" or something like that.*

REIS: Yes.

*Q: So, off to Mogadishu, how did you feel about this?*

REIS: I was interested in going.

Mogadishu was something else. We left Berlin on an afternoon and the next morning via three transfers we flew into Mogadishu on Alitalia from Athens with a stop in Asmara, then in Ethiopia, now the capital of Eritrea. We flew in along the ocean and then over the city of about 200,000 people. From the air we could see shacks with metal roofs and little courtyards where there were cattle, goats and/or sheep. Somalia was, and is, one of the least developed and poorest countries in the world. My wife wondered how we would survive in the place.

We were met by Walter and Virginia Hayden. He was in the economic section there. I was going to be half economic officer (although I'd never had any economics) and half consular officer and to do whatever else the embassy wanted me to do. The Hayden's picked us up and took us to our house, just across the street from the Indian Ocean. They'd hired a servant for us to buy food and to cook for us. They invited us to a picnic or party around the swimming pool at one of the housing compounds south of town and said they would pick us up in the late afternoon. We were tired but thought it would be a good opportunity to meet other people. We had a nice time at the party and we saw that other people were surviving.

*Q: You were there from October '68....*

REIS: We were there from October '68 until about the end of April '70. It was eighteen months.

*Q: Who was the ambassador?*

REIS: The first one was Raymond Thurston, who, funnily enough, was from the same town my wife and I are from. He'd joined the Foreign Service in the '30s. His father had actually been the architect of the town hall in Webster Groves, Missouri. I had no idea he was from Webster until long after I first met him. He'd been in the Foreign Service so long that he was from no place. He'd been the ambassador to Bulgaria before he was in Mogadishu. He was a very nice man. He didn't pay an enormous amount of attention to me, but he was very personable, very nice.

Did you know Mike Ely?

*Q: Yes. I interviewed Mike.*

REIS: Well, he was the head of the economic section there, and for part of the time he was the acting DCM. He was an FS-1 (under the current Foreign Service ranking system; an FSO-3 in the old ranking system). I remember one time Mike had a luncheon and the Ambassador was going to be there and Mike was nice enough to invite us as well. The Ambassador discovered we were from Webster Groves and he started singing the high school song at the luncheon table. After about a year he left. He had a lot of sense. He was just very sensible. The next ambassador was Fred Hadsel.

*Q: What was the situation during this time in Somalia?*

REIS: Well, Somalia was in an interesting situation. It was a side show in the Cold War. The Russians ran, or advised, the Somali Army. The Italians, Americans and West Germans advised the Somali police and had police advisers there. The Somalis tried to play the West against the Russians to get more assistance.

In 1969 there was an election there. Muhammad Haji Ibrahim Egal won in the parliamentary elections and remained prime minister. As you may know, there are six clan families in Somalia. Under the clan families there are clans and sub-clans and smaller groups under them. The clan system was the basis of politics. There had been an awful lot of money spent in this election on bribing people. It was plainly a corrupt election. In reaction to the election's outcome, the army, which I believe was dominated by another set of clans or clan families than those who supported the prime minister, intervened and carried out a coup in the middle of October. That brought a change in the political situation. The former government had been friendly to the United States but the army favored the Russians. Mohamed Siad Barre, the army's commander stayed in power until the early '90s.

Things began to get rough after the coup. Just after Christmas the Somali Government demanded the removal of the Peace Corps from Somalia. There'd been probably 75-100 Peace Corps volunteers scattered around the country.

Their job had been mostly to build school houses. It was one of these things that made sense on paper and in Washington. The Peace Corps volunteers were sent to Somalia to gain the assistance of villagers in the construction of schools. The volunteers then would teach English in the schools. Well, the villagers couldn't be bothered. They had no interest in these schools at all. They didn't care about the Peace Corps volunteers. However, the Peace Corps volunteers were resilient. They formed work teams among themselves to build schools with materials provided by USAID (United States Agency for International Development). Instead of having one Peace Corps volunteer and ten villagers, they had a gang of six to eight Peace Corps volunteers who'd camp together and build one school and then go to the next town and build another school and so forth. So, that's how that worked out.

*Q: Well, you were the economic officer part of the time. What were you reporting on? Bananas?*

REIS: Yes. It was bananas. It was bananas and the trade of animals out of Somalia to the Arabian Peninsula. And then, there was some prescribed reporting. I had to a report every year on the administration of UN assistance to Somalia. So, I had to go around and interview people at USAID and at other places and gather this information and put it down and send in a report to the Department. There was also an annual report on minerals too. In those days there was still some oil exploration in Somalia. However, the embassy was overstaffed. Mike Ely was the head of the Economic section.

*Q: I'd say. Mike Ely was a pretty high-powered economist.*

REIS: Yes. He was an excellent economist. Then there was Walter Hayden, who was bright and wrote well. He was an FS0-5 in those days, an FS3 in the current ranking system. I was supposed to do some economic and political reporting and I did consular work half the day. Two and a half economic officers plainly were too many for a country whose economy was based on nomadic herding. The embassy also had a senior political officer doing reporting and USIS had three American officers to provide information to 200,000 Somalis in Mogadishu, of whom only a small number were literate in English.

*Q: How was the situation there health-wise, travel-wise and all that?*

REIS: Mogadishu was pretty healthy with very little malaria or water-borne diseases. We lived right across from the ocean, and our neighborhood was very dry except after heavy rains, which occurred during the two short wet seasons of the year. The household water was brought in by truck and put into a tank on the roofs. It came from a well outside of town. It looked clean but was not pure. The water had to be boiled and put through a filter and stored in the reservoir at the bottom of the filter.

We never really got sick. I think I had a bad lobster one time, and that was about it. Mogadishu was pretty safe, pretty healthy. There was one child, I remember, who did get hepatitis. If there was anybody who had a serious medical problem, he or she had to be evacuated quickly because the medical facilities were not sanitary or adequately equipped. The European Community had built a hospital in Mogadishu and had completely furnished it and had completely staffed it for a while. When the EC turned it over to the Somalis, the place became dirty and things were stolen, so you didn't have any of the equipment you needed for surgery or anything else. So, if there was any serious problem you had to get out of there.

I remember Virginia Hayden, for example, went into labor early before Christmas 1968. The baby was born with jaundice. The embassy called in a military aircraft from Ethiopia, the defense attaché plane, and on Christmas Eve, the airplane took Virginia and the baby to Asmara, where there was Kagnev Station, an American Army communications base. So everything worked out. Another person guy had an eye problem and he had to be evacuated overnight on a private aircraft.

*Q: Were there any problems traveling around? You had some pretty vicious tribes out there, particularly up in what used to be British Somaliland, the Danakil (ed. Note: the Afar Tribe – according to the internet this is the preferred name. This tribe does not want to be known as the 'Danakil' as the word has an offensive meaning in Arabic.).*

REIS: Well, the Afars were actually in French Somaliland (Djibouti, today) and in that area, so that wasn't a problem for us.

It is amazing that there really was not too much trouble in traveling. I'll get to some of it in a bit. The main problem was that there were not that many roads. There was a place called Jowhar, which is about 60 miles northeast of Mogadishu and you could go up there

by road. There was an Italian sugar plantation and refinery there. If you went south, there was a paved road that went down to a town called Merca, which was a banana port. From Merca the road continued unpaved for about 200 miles to Kismayo, where there was another port, also for bananas. There were Italian populations in Kismayo and Merca, where there were banana plantations. I think at that time there were 3,500 Italians in the whole of Somalia.

We'd go down to a place called Baraawe, which is about one hundred miles south of Mogadishu, on the ocean and just off the Merca-Kismayo road. So, we would go through Baraawe, which was an old maritime trading town that had been there for centuries. We'd go south of the compact town made up of two and three story coral block buildings and then camp out. Embassy employees could rent an embassy Land Rover, but only with the driver. You had to pay for the driver and the Land Rover. So, we'd do that. I had a Volkswagen bus. So, we'd have that and other people would have other vehicles. We'd park on the beach and camp for the weekend. We'd put up a tarp between two vehicles. It was great fun. We never had any problem.

But, one time I was in the north with Ned Schaefer, who was the officer in charge of the embassy office in Hargeisa, the principal town in the former British Somaliland. I think I took the pouch up. We drove to another town about 100 miles east of there and talked to some people up there. We stayed overnight with some German aid workers who were there and then went back to Hargeisa. We were about thirty miles outside of Hargeisa at about 4:30 in the afternoon when a spring came off the carburetor. The driver was trying to fix the mechanism. While he was doing that, a Somali government official came by and stopped. He asked us what we were doing and we said we were on our way back into town. He said it was late. He pointed out that it got dark at 6:00 and we shouldn't be out there at dark as it was dangerous and someone could shoot us. The official and his driver helped us get the carburetor fixed and we went on. When you drove around the north particularly, but in the south too, you'd see these nomads slouching along after their camels with old British 303s over their shoulders. So I suppose there was always some danger.

*Q: Old British army field rifles.*

REIS: Yes. Enfield rifles

*Q: How was the Ogaden playing in those days?*

REIS: Well, that had been settled, in a way. Earlier in the 1960s, the Somalis had waged a guerrilla war against Ethiopia for the Ogaden, which was inhabited by Somalis, and a guerrilla war against the northeast province of Kenya because there is a large Somali population there.

The Somali flag has on it a five-pointed star. The points represent British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, French Somaliland, the Ogaden and the northeast province of Kenya. The Somali Government hadn't fared very well in the insurgencies against Kenya and

Ethiopia, so they withdrew. The borders were pretty peaceful when I was in Somalia. Within the country there were always problems with rustling and violence associated with rustling. To deal with this, the Somali National Police maintained a para-military force.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the American politics of the region? I was Horn of Africa in INR back in '66. It always seemed that Somalia was up for grabs for whoever wanted to put what was not a hell of a lot of money in. But, for us, Kagnev Station was the overriding concern; the whole Horn of Africa policy revolved around keeping out mitts on Kagnev Station.*

REIS: Well, I think that was a good part of it. There was a fairly large Russian diplomatic mission in Mogadishu. As I said, Somalia was a sideshow in the Cold War. We had to have a presence because the Russians had a presence. There was really very little intercourse with the Russians there. You just didn't see very much of them.

There weren't that many dealings with the Somalis themselves. There really was not that much in the way of business. Part of the U.S. strategy was to provide the Somalis with foreign assistance. Under a USAID contract, the University of Wyoming ran an Agricultural Research facility on the Shebelle River about 30 miles southwest of Mogadishu. The University of Eastern Michigan built and ran a teacher training institute in that general area, too. Those were the two main U.S. assistance programs. The Peace Corps was also in Somalia. It seemed to me that the U.S. presence in Somalia had very little to do with Somalia itself. It really had to do with balancing or thwarting the Russian. I don't think the U.S. policy in that part of the world was necessarily very well thought through.

*Q: Did the embassy and you have much social contact with the Somalis?*

REIS: Not an awful lot. Certainly, I didn't have a lot of contact with them. I had some business contacts with them in the sense that I issued visas. I was the only visa and passport officer there.

Interestingly enough, there were about maybe 20 Somali-Americans who had returned to Somalia, if you can believe that. They were all former merchant seamen. The Somalis would get jobs on American ships, somehow or other. They would then somehow wind up in Baltimore or New York. They'd spend time here in the United States in between voyages and get eligibility for Social Security and become American citizens and then retire to Somalia. One ran a coffee shop in Afgooye, near the Eastern Michigan teacher training institute. In general, however, the Somalis were sort of standoffish; they didn't really want too much contact with Americans.

*Q: Sometime, in an earlier period, I was in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia and we didn't have that much contact. The Saudis resist contact. First of all there is the language problem.*

Did Kenya play any role?

REIS: No, not at all. The Somalis had no diplomatic relations with Kenya or Ethiopia at the time because of their continuing claims on Kenya and Ethiopian territory. I can't remember whether Tanzania or other sub-Saharan African countries had diplomatic representation there. The Egyptians were there. I think there probably were Saudis there. The Chinese had an embassy there.

*Q: You say Chinese. You're talking about the....*

REIS:....mainland....

*Q:....mainland Chinese.*

REIS:...China had an embassy there, but you never saw Chinese in town. They were self-contained; they lived in the embassy; they worked in the embassy and you never saw them. You'd see Russians around, particularly at the fish market and the fresh vegetable market, but you'd never see the Chinese out – ever.

*Q: It's sort of creepy.*

REIS: Yes. It was very creepy. I can remember driving by the Chinese embassy, which had a steel-barred gate early one morning. All of the Chinese were doing their exercises in the courtyard behind the gate and in front of their building. That was the only time I ever saw them.

*Q: You were there until when?*

REIS: I was there until the end of April '70.

*Q: How did the Foreign Service seem to you and your wife at this point?*

REIS: Well, it was interesting. We liked Mogadishu. It was an interesting place to be. The Somalis are an interesting people. You could deal with them on a person-to-person basis. When you dealt with them either in business or with embassy employees, their view was, "Hey, I'm as good as anyone around here" So, there was none of this post-colonial attitude that you sometimes found in other places in Africa where people were subservient or uneasy about dealing with whites. Somalis certainly weren't.

There was an interesting crowd of expatriates there. It was like being in a Somerset Maugham novel. One British guy had been in Kenya but could not go back there. Rumor was he'd either killed someone in a bar or had been in a bar when an African had been killed and he had had to leave Kenya, get out of there. I think he initially went to Somalia to write for some Somali tourist publication, which was a joke because Somalia had no tourism. Derek was said to be a remittance man – his family paid him to stay out of England. Every once and in a while he would be down in his luck and he'd wind up sleeping on the deck of the Anglo-American Beach Club. He eventually took up with a

German woman and he actually got a job working for one of the oil companies that was still exploring for oil there. I think the companies found oil but I understood that the geology is so fragmented that oil production is not economic. So, there were a lot of interesting people there. So, it was in a way, very romantic.

Q: I take it you didn't get much of a feel for Africa, did you?

REIS: I did a little bit of traveling in Somalia. I went, as I said, to the north. We used to go down along the beach and do things there. Somalia is an interesting country. For example, Baraawe and Mogadishu were towns of mixed populations. There were Arabs and Persians who had intermarried with Africans and they'd been there forever.

Baraawe was a Swahili-speaking town. It's where the Portuguese tried to land in 1607. The Baraawanese carried on a long negotiation with them until the winds came up. Twice a year, the winds change. The winds blow from the northeast from early December until the first part of April and then they stop. And then from late May until late August they blow from the southwest. The Baraawanese knew when the winds were going to change – to within a day, anyway. So they prolonged the negotiation with the Portuguese, and by the time the negotiations were over, the seas were too high for the Portuguese to put any boats in, so the Baraawanese won.

So, it was an interesting place to be.

Q: So we are up to 1970?

REIS: 1970, yes.

Q: Then what?

REIS: Well, then I was transferred to Lusaka. I went on home leave at the end of April and I got to Lusaka sometime in the middle of June.

Q: Lusaka is the .....

REIS: ...capital of Zambia. I had two jobs again. I was the consular officer and I was a political officer. Lusaka was a small embassy for a reason. The Zambians did not want to have large diplomatic establishments, except the British. The British were an exception because they were the former colonial power and provided the Zambians a lot of continuing administrative assistance. The Zambians didn't want a lot of Soviets or East Germans, and others from the Soviet bloc in Lusaka. Accordingly, all embassies, except the British, were limited to twelve people, if I remember correctly. That limit did not permit us to have Marine guards.

I was the consular officer and I also was supposed to follow the national liberation movements of southern Africa, all of which had offices in Lusaka.

On the consular side, I think we issued 750 visas a year. I think we had about 700 Americans in the country. So, I did all the visa work and all the passport and American protective services work.

The Ambassador was Oliver L. Troxel, who is still around. He must be close to 90. He was a nice man – very capable and very sensible. He was from Minnesota. His father had been a rather eminent educator in Minnesota, I think. Ambassador Troxel was a career Foreign Service officer. He'd spent some time in INR, too. He insisted, having seen the chaos in the Congo in 1963 and 1964, that I had to keep track of where the Americans in Zambia were so that in the case of civil violence, the United States could evacuate them as easily as possible. So one of the things I had to do was to drive around Zambia visiting Americans and seeing where they were and figuring how to evacuate them if it ever came to that. That was very interesting. I think I went to every province in Zambia except one, the western province, which was hard to get to for about six or seven months of the year. In those days – I don't know how it is now – there were just dirt roads and that region gets 70 inches of rain a year. Part of the area is a flood plain and is inaccessible by land when the rivers are in flood.

*Q: Kenneth Kaunda was the president.*

REIS: He was the president.

*Q: He really ruled.*

REIS: Yes, but you could see that things were going downhill pretty steadily while he was there. Zambia became independent in 1964. After that, there were tax and other policies put into place that caused a lot of the white Zambians, who were commercial farmers, to leave. So, if you drove around Lusaka, which was at about 4,300 feet and got about forty inches of rain a year all concentrated between October and March, you could see that there'd been well-established citrus and other farms there. Many farms had been abandoned because the white farmers had moved to what was then Rhodesia, and now Zimbabwe, or to South Africa. It was sad to see the abandoned farms and groves and the decline of the agricultural economy. A couple of other things affected the economy adversely. One was white Rhodesia's independence.

*Q: This was unilateral....*

REIS: Yes, it was a unilateral declaration of independence, which I think was in '65. That disrupted Zambia's copper exports, which had gone by rail through Rhodesia to the port of Beira in Mozambique or to ports in South Africa. Zambia had to ship the copper, its largest export, by road from the Copper Belt, three hundred miles north of Lusaka, to Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, a journey of about 1,200 miles. Enormous trucks carried the copper. The road was paved all the way from the Zambian border with Tanzania to Lusaka and up and to the Copper Belt. Parts of the road in Tanzania, perhaps a third or a half of it, were unpaved. The trucks raised clouds of dust. The transport of the copper by road rather than by rail raised costs and reduced the efficiency of Zambia's economy.

While I was in Lusaka, four other things happened. One was a mine disaster in Mufulira in the Copper Belt and that knocked out about a third of the country's copper production. The second thing was that the Zambian Government declared that people engaged in either retail or wholesale trade had to be Zambian citizens. Prior to that, the sector had been dominated by Indians. Only some of them had Zambian citizenship and the citizenship requirement disrupted the distribution and sale of goods.

*Q: It was the same thing that happened in Uganda.*

REIS: That's right. But the Zambians did it several years later than the Ugandans, maybe five. A third thing that occurred was the winding down of the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war. That in turn caused world copper prices to go down. And, the fourth thing was that Zambia managed its state-owned corporations increasingly poorly. For political reasons, the corporations employed more people than they needed and became burdens on the government's budget and the economy.

*Q: Was there a general feeling that they were suffering from that London School of Economics' disease?*

REIS: Well, that was part of it, yes.

*Q: Well, this was like Tanzania and other places, where so many Africans had gone to this University. It was a socialist disease.*

REIS: Well, part of it was this socialist disease, and part of it was racial, both in terms of getting rid of the white farmers and getting rid of the Indians. And part of it was just poor policy. Probably not even a good British socialist would have burdened the corporations with three times the number of workers that they really needed, because it wasn't sustainable and it proved not to be sustainable.

Crime also increased while we were in Lusaka. We were burgled three times. The crime could be dangerous. An older white woman, a grandmother, was killed in a burglary on a Saturday afternoon in an area about a mile from where we lived. A white, long-time British colonial family left the grandmother at home and went to a fair. When they returned they found her murdered. After we were burgled a second time, the embassy put bars on all the houses of embassy's American employees and everyone got a night guard. Of course, you had to make sure the night guard stayed awake.

*Q: What were you doing? Was it strictly consular?*

REIS: No. The other thing I was doing was keeping track of the national liberation movements. I had to do a lot of reporting on that. There were two movements from Rhodesia, or Zimbabwe. There was the Zimbabwe African National Union and the Zimbabwe African People's Union. The Zimbabwe African People's Union was predominately made up of members of the Ndebele tribe. The African National Union

was made up of members of the Shona tribe. From Southwest Africa, there was the South West African People's Organization, or SWAPO, which later took power in independent Namibia. From Mozambique, you had FRELIMO, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, and another, smaller organization. There were two organizations in Angola. One was UNITA, which was from the southern part of the country, and then there was another, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, MPLA, which took power at independence and was engaged in a terrible civil war with UNITA for years afterward. (The MPLA was supported in the civil war by the Soviets and by Cuban troops and, according to the press and books, the CIA financed UNITA, which was led by Jonas Savimbi, who had a following among Republicans in Washington.) And from South Africa, you had the South African National Congress and a couple of other smaller organizations. So, my job was to go around and talk to the representatives of these groups in their offices and see what they had to say and report on what was going on. It was very interesting.

*Q: Were you in the position of being told you could offer encouragement?*

REIS: No. It was pure reporting.

*Q: This is just 'what's happening.'*

REIS: Yes, just "what's happening." It had to be. Ambassador Troxel also told me at the start of my work in Zambia that I should not seek or listen to any information on what he called the movements' "tactical" operations. I think he wanted to avoid any possibility that I or the embassy could be accused of leaking the movements' operational information. As it turned out, the movements' representatives were careful not to discuss that sort of matter in front of me.

At that time the U.S. government took a position that all of these disputes in southern Africa should be settled peaceably. One could see at the time that that was not a realistic proposition. The white South Africans were not going to allow the end of apartheid through peaceful negotiations. In the end it took internal violence and external pressure to bring about regime change in South Africa. When I was in Zambia, there was a hostile but mostly quiet situation between the liberation movements and the regimes in Rhodesia and in Southwest Africa, which South Africa had administered since the end of World War I, when the League of Nations gave it a trusteeship over the formerly Germany territory. SWAPO was present in northern Southwest Africa and one heard of occasional violent actions against the regime. And, once in a while there were incursions into Rhodesia from Zambia, but again, very rarely. In Angola, there was a full-scale guerilla war between the Portuguese government and the liberation movements. The same thing was true with Mozambique. The liberation movements in Angola and Mozambique seemed to be supplied from places other than Zambia, but they did have offices in Zambia. So, my reporting was a window into what they were thinking, what they were doing.

*Q: What was your impression of the African liberation leaders?*

REIS: Well, I didn't really know the leaders because the liberation movements also had offices in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania and elsewhere. The leaders of the movements usually were not in Zambia. I got to know the heads of the local offices. The representative from FRELIMO spoke English and was well educated. He laid out for pretty clearly what FRELIMO wanted to accomplish and what its strategy was. He was friendly and easy-going and I think FRELIMO and the other organizations wanted to maintain some contact with the United States.

A number of the representatives of the liberation movements had been students in the United States. For a time the United States Government had had a program to train students from southern Africa. It had come to an end by that time I was in Zambia. In the early 60's, the United States had anticipated that South West Africa would become independent and that, similarly, Rhodesia would become independent. The independent states would require educated people to run their governments. Accordingly, the United States provided scholarships for students from Rhodesia and Namibia. Some of these people had returned from the United States and were in the liberation movement offices in Lusaka. Moses Garoeb, from South West Africa (Namibia), was very friendly. We got to know him and his wife. The representative of ZANU also had studied in the United States under the scholarship program.

*Q: So, at that time, what was your outlook as to where Africa was heading?*

REIS: Well, I guess had two thoughts. One was that things were going downhill, that in many African countries, government policies were just not going to work, that their economic policies, particularly in Zambia, were just silly and they were not sustainable, I thought that the struggle for majority rule in southern Africa was going to be a long slog, but that the independence movements ultimately would prevail. The demographics could not lead you to any other conclusion.

*Q: Did you get any impression about dealing with Kaunda?*

REIS: Ambassador Troxel was a very smart and realistic person, a good analyst of people and situations. I think Ambassador Troxel's approach to dealing with Zambia was based on the realistic assessment that the United States had limited interests there. The Russians had no major presence in Zambia, which was even more isolated from the Cold War than many other places in Africa. With this assessment, the embassy had a limited role. I deduced that Ambassador Troxel thought that the embassy should keep track of what was going on politically and economically, maintain some presence and provide efficient consular and commercial services. In the environment in Zambia at that time, a very active and visible embassy was not necessary or probably desirable. Ambassador Troxel knew two or senior aides to Kaunda and he'd have lunch with each one of them once a month and get what domestic political information he needed.

Kaunda was a real populist politician. I believe there are about five major tribes and many small tribes in Zambia. It seemed to me at the time I was there that the tribes

balanced one another and that there was little chance of inter-tribal violence. (Since I was in Zambia, there has been no serious ethnic violence in Zambia.) No doubt, Kaunda had to maintain the tribal balance. However, the absence of serious tribal tension permitted Kaunda to preside over a fairly stable government and to promote his own socialist policies, which were a failure then and in the end.

*Q: What about missionaries? Did we have any American missionaries there?*

REIS: That was interesting. Yes, there were a fair number of missionaries. We had two kinds of non-official Americans. Some were teachers who taught in the Zambian schools. And there was a larger group of missionaries. Among them, as I recall, were Mennonites, Baptists and Catholics I visited a small group of Franciscans in northwest Zambia very close to, within ten miles of, the Angolan border. I got to know them pretty well. The embassy's political officer and I went out to visit them one time. That was the most remote place I have been to in my life. I also visited a protestant missionary group about 100 miles southwest of Lusaka.

*Q: How about the Zambians as a social body, your contact with them and all that?*

REIS: Well, I had a lot more to do with the people from the national liberation movements than with Zambians. A few Americans used to play softball, baseball every Sunday morning with a group of people from the African National Congress, for example. I had some consular dealings with the Foreign Ministry, and they were friendly enough, but generally standoffish. The Zambians had had a very difficult colonial period. There was no high school for Africans in Zambia until 1948 and there was pervasive discrimination against Africans until the late 1950's.

*Q: Good God!*

REIS: Until the late '50s or early '60s, if Africans went to a butcher store in downtown Lusaka, they had to go into a back alley to get their meat; they couldn't go into the shop with the whites. It was really a sort of South African approach to racial relations.

The colonial history of Northern Rhodesia, later Zambia, was a story of constant tension between the settlers, mostly farmers and miners, who I believed numbered 70,000 at the peak, and the British colonial administration. The British government, on the one hand, saw its primary obligation as being to the native population, because Northern Rhodesia was a protectorate and not a crown colony. (Southern Rhodesia was a crown colony in which the settlers had greater influence.) Yet, the British administration had to deal with the local settlers, who had a sort of legislature.. How do you do with that? Do you put up with the settlers and their approach or look after the local population? The Zambians had a rough time of it.

Zambia's relations with whites at that time with whites were not all together easy. There was a lot of suspicion.. In order to travel anywhere outside of twenty-five miles out of Lusaka, diplomats had to put in a note to the Foreign Ministry requesting permission.

*Q: Were the South Africans messing around there?*

REIS: Yes, I believe they were messing around there. South Africa didn't have an embassy in Lusaka, but no doubt they had spies and informants. One evening night, I was in my nice ranch-style house talking with a couple of people from the African National Congress. Two or three of the members of the African National Congress had the habit of just turning up and expecting lunch, drinks or dinner. So, that evening they had turned up and we were sitting in the living room chatting. There was a knock on the door and I answered it. At the door was a white man with a South African or Rhodesian accent and with the Southern African costume, fairly short shorts and a bush jacket. He said, "Can I come in?" and I said, "What do you want?" and he said, "I'm selling encyclopedias." And I said, "I'm *not* interested in encyclopedias." Nonetheless, he stepped into the entryway and I chatted for a couple of minutes with him before he went on his way. I am almost certain that he was some sort of South African intelligence agent following the ANC. There'd been a large white South African population in Zambia before independence and some of them were still there. The contractor that the embassy used to paint houses was an Afrikaner.

*Q: If nothing else, you got a very good look at what was going on in Central Africa, with this liberation movement and all. You got quite a good look at them.*

REIS: It was very interesting. Ambassador Troxel was very encouraging. Nowadays, it's all very structured. If you are DCM or ambassador, one of your principle duties is to, as they say, mentor junior officers. You have to pay attention to that. It's all down in regulations. In those days, there was no prescribed obligation to mentor junior officers. Either senior officers took an interest or they didn't take an interest. Ambassador Troxel did take an interest. He'd call me up every once in a while and ask me to go to his office. Then we'd have a little chat and he'd tell me about this, that and the other thing.

I can remember his giving me "Intelligence 101," a lecture on how our intelligence establishment works, and the history of its relations with the British intelligence establishment. Ambassador Troxel had worked in INR for a long time, so he knew it inside and out. It was very helpful, because I would never have learned about intelligence matters until much later without his tutorial.

Towards the end of the time Ambassador Troxel was in Lusaka and as my assignment was coming to an end, he said something like, "Look, you've followed the national liberation movements. You've had exposure to members of the U.S. Congress who've come out and looked at the situation in southern Africa and have heard what they've had to say and you've heard what other people have had to say about the issues. You ought to write an airgram on what you think what U.S. policy toward southern Africa and towards these liberation movements should be."

So I wrote a four or five page message. The gist was the United States was following a perverse policy which in the end would not do our country any good. By not pressing

South Africa and Portugal for majority rule, the United States was supporting the status quo and eventually the status quo would change in favor of the Africans and not the whites. So, we would be better off in the long run by doing the right thing. That is, the United States should take an active role in trying to solve the problems in southern Africa and encourage majority rule and the end of the national liberation struggles. The ambassador sent the airgram to the State Department with a note that the views were those of any officer who had followed the national liberation struggles for two years. I can't remember who it was, but a lawyer working on African matters in the State Department's Bureau of Legal Affairs sent me a nice letter, agreeing with my views, and he copied the Ambassador on it.

*Q: Did you have any connections with the accords going on in Southern Rhodesia at that time?*

REIS: There was no negotiation going on. It was '70. There may have been some *sub rosa* (*secret*) negotiations, but nothing very public. The British Government had pulled out of there all together. There was an embargo against Rhodesia. We couldn't, as U.S. government employees, enter Rhodesia. All the young whites had to go into the army. There was really not very much in the way of violent attacks on Rhodesia during the time I was in Zambia. I think there had been some incursions into Rhodesia by liberation movements before I had got to Zambia, in '69 or '68 maybe. But the guerillas had been captured or killed. After that, I think the liberation movements considered it futile to mount attacks against Rhodesia until much later. There was active guerrilla activity in Angola and Mozambique but Portugal continued to hold these territories until the Carnation Revolution in 1974 against the conservative government that had been led by Salazar ....

*Q: ...Salazar was dead, but the officers took over his successor.*

REIS: Yes. So, nothing happened there. Namibia's independence didn't happen until 1990 and I think Rhodesia didn't become independent Zimbabwe until 1980.

*Q: But nothing was happening. This is probably a good place to stop. Where did you go after you left Lusaka?*

REIS: I came back here. I was in the Operations Center for a year.

*Q: Ok. We'll take it up there.*

REIS: Ok.

*Q: Ok. Today is the 20<sup>th</sup> of October, 2008. Bob, we are at 1972 and you are going to the OP Center. You were at the OP Center from when to when?*

REIS: I got there in September 1972 and left there in August 1973, so it was just about a year. When I was getting ready to leave Lusaka, the assignments process was much less

formal and a much less transparent than the one than exists at present. As I recall you just waited for an assignment to come. You didn't really have very much to do with what it would be. I knew I was going back to the United States, but I did not know what I was going to do. So, finally, I got this telegram saying that I was going to go to the Operations Center. It turned out that there was an officer whom I'd known in Berlin, named Bruce Flatin, who was the Deputy Director at the Operations Center and he had recommended me for the job.

*Q: I know him. I've interviewed Bruce.*

REIS: He left just before I got to the Operations Center. I think he saw my name on a list of officers up for transfer and suggested me for a job in the Operations Center. I was happy to go there. I was on a rotation most of that year with a guy named Bill Newlin, who was an FSO-4 in those days, FS-2 in the present ranking system. I enjoyed working with him quite a lot. He had spent a good part of his career in Europe. Some years after I worked with him, Bill retired from the Foreign Service and several years ago the "State Department Magazine" had an article about his subsequent work as a nature photographer.

It was an interesting year. We were on a rotating schedule of eight-hour day, evening and night shifts that could be a bit disorienting. We were on for three days, we were off for a day; then we were on for three days, we were off for more than that; then, you were on for four days. It was a very irregular sort of thing. For the whole time that I was in the Operations Center, people were trying to figure out a more sensible way to deal with the schedule because the switching among days, evenings and nights was so disruptive. Nobody ever came up with a better system when I was there. I don't know if they have a better one now.

*Q: Did you get involved in any memorable things during your time there?*

REIS: Well, there were things that were sort of interesting. There were three or four different things.

The first thing I think was something that happened in December that year. There was the Christmas bombing in Vietnam. You could see, coming through the message traffic all these reports of bombings in Vietnam. The bombings themselves were quite controversial in this country.

Another thing was around Christmas and the first part of the year, when both President Truman and President Johnson died. So, the Operations Center was involved in facilitating communications with foreign governments on their delegations to the funerals.

Then in March 1973, I think, terrorists attacked a Saudi Arabian embassy reception in Khartoum and took hostages. There were three western hostages among them: the U.S. chargé d'Affaires, George Moore, who was the guest of honor at the party as he was

about to rotate out, Cleo Noel, the U.S. ambassador and Guy Eid, the Belgian chargé d'affaires.

Immediately, a large number of people at the State Department assembled in the operations center and started talking about what to do about the problem. Pretty soon, it became less a discussion about what was going to be done about the problem, and more a discussion about how they were to get on a military aircraft and go to Khartoum to deal with the problem. It was a perverse situation in which the discussion turned away from the emergency and towards a fairly prosaic subject of transportation to get out there. That was an interesting insight into how bureaucracies tend to work, I think.

The only other thing that I remember vividly about that year was the return of the POWs (prisoners of war) from Vietnam. That was in January or February 1973, or something like that.

*Q: I think that was the end.*

REIS: The United States had reached an agreement with North Vietnam on the removal U.S. combat troops from Vietnam and for the return of U.S. POWs. The POWs were repatriated by U.S. military aircraft that landed at Stewart Field, New York, where I was born. In 1973 it was a civilian airport and Air Force Reserve base.

Apart from that, the work in the Operation Center was fairly routine. On the day shift one of the jobs you had to do was that as what they called 'the editor.' You had to put together a summary of events for the principals of the department every day. During the other times you sort of acted as a message center and first line of information for people. The work was interesting.

*Q: After that year, what did you do?*

REIS: After that year, I told personnel that I'd like to be assigned to do something on Africa. Eventually, a personnel officer, Janet Hall Diggs, who was the wife of Charles Diggs, the Congressman from Michigan, called and said, "You've got an assignment in the International Organizations Bureau working on UN political affairs." At the time, I was a political officer, so that was fine.

My job was to deal with the various things that were going on up in New York with regard to the African colonies of Portugal, plus South Africa, Rhodesia and Southwest Africa. There were all sorts of resolutions every year at the General Assembly on majority rule for the southern African territories. The questions for us were, "What do you say about majority rule? How do you vote on the resolutions?" So, my job was essentially to coordinate with others in the department and try to reach consensus with the African Bureau on how to vote and then second of all, to write the statements and the explanations of votes. It was an interesting thing to do.

*Q: What were the issues particularly at that point?*

REIS: It was in the General Assembly. Nearly all the countries in the General Assembly took the position that that these countries should be freed immediately, that Portugal should withdraw from its colonies, which included Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands. They should withdraw and give these countries independence. On Rhodesia, the proposed resolutions generally called on the British to remove the breakaway government in Rhodesia and give the country independence under majority rule. The vast majority of the members of the General Assembly condemned apartheid in South Africa and called for fully democratic processes under majority rule. They also called on the South African Government to leave Southwest Africa.

It was indefensible in a lot of ways that the Portuguese were still in their colonies. The British and the French had decolonized. There were vicious guerilla wars going on in the Portuguese colonies, with the exception of the Cape Verde Islands. The Portuguese were fairly brutal. It was inconceivable that they could last there forever. I think that at the time there were 180,000 Portuguese in Mozambique, and there were about 600,000 in Angola. The African populations were a lot smaller then than they are now. But even so, there were something like twelve million people in Mozambique and five or six million in Angola. It was not that the Portuguese could stay there forever. In the meantime, there was just an awful lot of bloodshed. And yet, because we had an alliance with Portugal and because, particularly in the fall of 1973, we needed the Portuguese for base rights in Azores during the Yom Kippur War, the United States would not criticize Portugal's policies and actions in Africa. There were a couple of really awful incidents that had happened, I think, in Mozambique at that time and there was some effort in the Department for the United States us to abstain on the resolutions in the General Assembly. But the Yom Kippur War broke out. There was an enormous shipment of tanks and other material from the United States to Israel by military aircraft and the aircraft had to make an intermediate stop someplace. The only place they could stop was the Azores. The Germans wouldn't let them stop in Germany and other places in Europe wouldn't let them either. So they stopped at the U.S. Air Force Base at Lajes in the Azores Islands.

As a consequence Secretary Kissinger decided that the United States had to vote against, not abstain on, any resolutions critical of Portugal. I can't remember all the 'theology', but there was a whole 'theology' that surrounded these.

*Q: How did you operate? Were you basically passing information along, or what were you doing?*

REIS: Well, I had a counterpart up in New York named Jay Katzen, who is now a Virginia State Senator from Fauquier County. He would usually report to Washington orally or through cable or both on upcoming resolutions and request instructions. I would discuss Jay's reports with counterparts in the African Bureau we'd come to some decision and get it approved by our bosses and that'd be that. This had been going on for several years, so there were precedents for virtually everything. At that time, there was no taste at all in the Department for reversing precedents in this area.

*Q: It must have been sort of difficult being up against real politik, wasn't it?*

REIS: Yes. But I could understand intellectually why some of these things were happening. You generally had to vote against these resolutions on South Africa, which condemned apartheid and called for actions to bring it to an end. The reason that we gave for opposing the resolutions, which frequently called for the overthrow of the South African Government, was that the United States opposed violent actions. But the real reason for it, in the case of South Africa, we had various relationships with it, some in business and some of them military, I think. Moreover, there were still people in Congress who regretted the U.S. civil rights movement and saw no reason to support majority rule in Africa. In the case of Portugal, as I explained, we did have an alliance and we needed Portugal for a particular thing in 1973. We did take the position that as the United Nations had revoked South Africa's trusteeship over Namibia, South Africa should permit self-determination there. A lot of this is pretty fuzzy in my mind.

*Q: Well, there had been a revolution in Portugal around '74, I thought.*

REIS: In 1974 there had been a revolution, but that didn't change anything in the 1974 General Assembly. Within a year or two, the Portuguese withdrew from their African colonies and there was no more discussion of Portugal at the UN.

*Q: How long did you do that IO political job?*

REIS: I was supposed to be there for two years but the end of a year and a half, or something like that, the Bureau of International Organizations Affairs asked me to become the staff assistant in the Assistant Secretary's office. I was happy in IO/UNP and was not thrilled with the idea of doing staff work but I agreed to do it for a year.

*Q: Well, so you became a staff aide in about '74?*

REIS: I think it was about January of '75.

*Q: As a staff aide, you did this for a year or so?*

REIS: From January of '75 to January of '76.

*Q: You were staff aide to whom?*

REIS: It was Assistant Secretary William Buffum, who had spent a lot of time working on UN affairs. In fact, when he retired, he became the Under Secretary at the UN.

There was virtually no substance to the staff assistant's job at all. It was a matter of getting into the office early and getting the assistant secretary's morning briefings and all lined up and organized. It was also going through the telegraphic traffic and putting the things that were important on his desk and getting rid of the rest of it. Then during the

day we managed the flow of information through the office and from the bureau to the seventh floor principals. The work gave me a view of how the department worked. However, it was mostly mechanical work.

*Q: Where did you go in '76?*

REIS: In '76 I went to the economic course at FSI. I'd been interested in doing that. In those days it was a six-month course. It went from January to July 1976. It was really a very well run, course, a terrific course. The guy who ran it was John Sprott, who had a PhD from the University of Arizona in economics. He later was in the Foreign Service for a time. His deputy was Bruce Duncombe, who was an excellent teacher and later also joined the Foreign Service and served in Indonesia. Then the other person who was there was John Harrington. He eventually took over and ran the course. Then, after that, he was in the Bureau of Latin American Affairs, working ARA/EP – economic policy. I believe both Bruce Duncombe and John Harrington had taught at Georgetown University before they joined FSI.

When you signed into the course on its first day, you found your desk and on it a stack of books that was probably two and a half feet high. Everything was just perfectly organized. The people that ran that course knew it was going to be rigorous and knew that you had to be organized to do it and they wanted to make things as easy as they possibly could. Not intellectually easy, but administratively as easy as possible. It was just a terrific course.

*Q: Were there areas of economics that strained you and others that you flowed in?*

REIS: Well, I'm not a mathematician. There were a couple of courses that were difficult for me. The first was calculus. Before I took the course, FSI sent some books to you with a request to brush up on Algebra. I took off a couple of weeks after New Year's and studied the algebra books. The course started with calculus. So, that was not easy for me. I think I understood the operation in calculus for about twenty-four hours after I took the exam and that was the end of it. And, then the other thing that was extremely difficult was econometrics. John Harrington, who is, I think, one of those happy people who are gifted in mathematics, gave the course. I remember one day he started writing equations at the front left part of classroom, which was on the tenth floor of the old FSI building in Rosslyn. (Airliners came by all day long and on some days, especially on days when the clouds were low, you thought the planes would come in the window.) Well, John went all the way across the blackboard on the front of the room and then got to the right side of the room and went all the way across there with line after line after line of proofs of these econometric theorems. It was just unbelievable. I couldn't follow it. I don't think there were too many other people there who could either. By the end of the economic course, I understood the meaning of mathematical correlation and its use in economics but not much else of econometrics.

*Q: After you were through with this, this minted you as an economist. How much of what you learned did you actually use?*

REIS: A fair amount. The course was very well designed for the work Foreign Service officers actually do. You took micro- and then macro-economics. Those courses imparted the knowledge that is essential for all economic work. Then you had money and banking, trade, development, international finance, econometrics and statistics. Statistics was useful just in general terms. Occasionally, when you were reading something, or come across something, you'd say, "Ok, that makes sense." Econometrics is basically regression analysis, so in other words how things correlate with one another in economics and that was useful as you see references to correlation or R-squared which is the measure of correlation all the time in economic work and in the financial press. So, that was okay. The money and banking was extremely useful because it told how the banking system operates and the central bank's role in it. Trade theory was very useful, not in a practical way but just as the basis of why the United States has had a free trade policy for the last forty or fifty years. It was very, very useful.

I served as economic officer for about twenty-five years after the course, most of it dealing with trade and some investment. The course gave the students a mental approach to things in a general way. But, in addition to that, I can follow what is going on in the current economic crisis because I had the course in the State Department in money and banking. It was very useful. Some of the courses were good causes for argument. I can remember one argument in the course on development economics. The instructor was a professor from Maryland University. (FSI hired outside instructors to teach some courses.) The instructor argued that corruption was not bad in a developing economy as it was a way of spreading the wealth. In the economic class were Foreign Service officers who had served in Vietnam and other places where they'd seen that corruption isn't just bad, it's utterly corrosive to the society. In truth we got into a heated argument with the professor and he was answering questions from all over the room. It was a very good lesson, because you go to different places. For example, later on I served in Malaysia and there found why corruption is just awful and is a tax on economic activity. It is corrosive and causes ill will among segments of the population. It was just an excellent course. It really was.

*Q: After '76...*

REIS: Well, the summer of '76, I went to the office of commercial policy in EB, which handled trade relations with developing countries and also handled the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). At that time we, were in one of the trade negotiation rounds, the Tokyo Round, so a good part of the job entailed going to interagency meetings and expressing the State Department's position on particular aspects of the negotiations.

I can remember, for example, I was looking at what the State Department position should be on cuts on duty cuts on various textile items. I went through all the details and trade figures. The Commerce Department often would argue against cutting the duties or tariffs on any textile or apparel products. However, many of these textile or apparel items were no longer made in the United States. They were lace items and things like that had stiff

duties on them despite the lack of U.S. production. So, I went through the list of items, tariff line by tariff line, looked at the trade volume, looked at whether there was production in this country and made recommendations on that. On some of them we had the duties eliminated. It was tedious but worthwhile.

One of the other things I did was to work with the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) in preparing the U.S. position on the budget at GATT, because the United States had to pay its contribution to the organization. GATT proposed a budget and the two of us would go through the thing and look at it and say, "Well, that makes sense." or "Why has this gone up so suddenly? Why don't we reduce that?" That was an interesting exercise.

*Q: Textiles, particularly in the '70s, was a highly charged political issue...*

REIS: Yes, that's right.

*Q: ...because the Republicans were getting their teeth into the south, I think, through the protection of textiles, weren't they?*

REIS: Yes, they were. That's why the only items on which we could cut duties substantially were those items where there was minimal production in the United States.

The other interesting thing is, of course, that whatever you did on tariffs on textiles didn't really matter very much, because there was an international agreement called the Multi-Fiber Agreement, which was a sort of deviation from the GATT that allowed developed country governments to negotiate bilateral voluntary restraint agreements with textile exporters. It was a nonsensical arrangement because the bilateral restraints did not really result in reduced the reduction of U.S. imports of textiles and apparel on a sustained basis. For example, after Hong Kong, which had been an enormous textile producer, put caps on its textile exports in an agreement with the United States, U.S. demand for the items Hong Kong had made did not disappear. So production moved to Mauritius or Malaysia or wherever it happened to be. And then when the United States negotiated agreements with Mauritius or Malaysia, the production moved on to someplace else, so the total amount textiles and apparel that came to the United States did not change very much. It was a nutty way of doing business, but it was political.

*Q: How did you find working with the Department of Commerce at the time?*

REIS: They were okay. They had a textile unit and they frequently took protectionist positions.. USTR, which ran the meetings and was in charge of trade, was, I thought, intellectually more rigorous in their approach to things. I think they did a better job in managing negotiations. Commerce was sort of a side player. They had certain niches that they did, but they didn't do too much. And Treasury and State, of course, usually took the same positions, in favor of free trade.

*Q: Did you find some of the issues like this, where you bring Commerce and Treasury and all together that you were dealing with people who had dealt with these issues for*

*years? The State Department tends to throw up people like yourself who were on two-year assignments into this mix. Did you find yourself in a way outdone or not?*

REIS: Not particularly. We were talking about particular things and in their particularity all of these subjects were new for everybody. You could have a discussion one day on what the tariff on lace handkerchiefs or another product should be. As long as you have the general notion that free trade promotes innovation and promotes the efficient allocation of economic resources, then you were okay. So, it wasn't so much a problem. In Treasury, you generally had people who hadn't been working on trade matters for very long, because trade was, and is, not the agency's main function. There was an office of trade and investment in Treasury, but they had a fair amount of rotation through there. Commerce did have many people who had been there for years. When I first started doing work with USTR, it also had some people who'd been working on trade for a long time, starting at the State Department during the years right after the GATT was signed in 1948 and then they moved over to USTR when the function was established at USTR.

Q: You were there how long?

REIS: I was there for two years, to the summer of 1978. During that time I got interested in trade and started getting interested in Japan. Japan was hot at the time and everyone was talking about Japan's economy. There'd been a book that came out in 1976 that was two and a half inches thick edited by Hugh Patrick. He is at Columbia University. It is called *Asia's New Giant, How the Japanese Economy Works*. It was an interesting analysis of why Japan worked the way it did. So, I thought it would be an interesting place to go. I didn't have Japanese. I went to personnel and requested an assignment to Tokyo via Japanese language training. The assignments officer said that there were no language positions open, but there was a job in Tokyo that did not require language training. After some discussion back and forth I was assigned to Tokyo as trade officer in the economic section.

Before the end of my assignment in the trade office in EB -- I think it was in March or April 1976 I came into my office one day and my boss called me in and said, "How would you like to have a new job for a few months?" I already knew I was going to Tokyo. So I responded that I would prefer to stay in the trade office. I had been working on an MBA at night at George Washington University and I didn't have to learn a whole new job while I was doing some courses. My boss said I did not have a choice. It turned out that the Office of Development Finance had lost some people so Jules Katz, who was the assistant secretary in EB at the time, decided I should go to the Office of Development Finance. In those days one didn't argue about with an assistant secretary.. You didn't go to personnel, you just did it. So, I went down from trade to development finance for four or five months before I went to Tokyo.

Q: *Did you work with Jules Katz?*

REIS: A little bit. I was very junior and he was the assistant secretary. He was an extremely bright guy and knew everything about economic work. He'd been around. He

was a civil servant and had been in the State Department since 1950 and he'd been in EB for virtually the whole time. He had broad experience in all sorts of economic work, including aviation. So, he was a capable leader.

*Q: So, you're off to Japan in 1978?*

REIS: It was late in August, I guess.

*Q: What was your job?*

REIS: It was a mix. The economic section of the embassy was different than it is now. In those days it was a combined commercial-economic section. There were some distinctions. You had a commercial counselor and you had a deputy commercial counselor. You had some people who did more commercial work. However, all of the economic officers had to do some commercial work.

I was supposed to be doing economic work. My main job was to work with the Foreign Ministry, and to a lesser extent the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), on trade matters. There were at the time a lot of different bilateral trade negotiations because Japan was a relatively closed market at the time. It had, what in those days seemed to be a rather large trade surplus with the United States. The trade barriers and the size of the bilateral trade imbalance became political issues in the United States. Japan had also been involved in some dumping cases particularly having to do with television and steel. So there was a lot of bilateral trade friction, as the Japanese called it. I worked with the Foreign Ministry in managing these negotiations and participating in these negotiations. They were on all sorts of subjects. Leather and footwear was one. Lumber was a constant problem. Japan would import logs but, to protect an inefficient lumber mill industry, it wouldn't import cut lumber. In particular, Japan did not import 2x4 lumber as it had a different framing system for houses. Those were two negotiating topics. Later on there were discussions on semi-conductors. There were negotiations on a voluntary restraint agreement on automobiles that we were involved in. So, a lot of this had to do with acting as a liaison between USTR/Washington and the Foreign Ministry and to a lesser extent, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), now the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI).

*Q: This was at the very height of the opening of Japan, all over again, wasn't it?*

REIS: Yes. There were really two problems that were related indirectly. The first was Japan's persistent trade surplus with the United States, and in fact with the world. The surpluses were caused by macroeconomic phenomena in Japan and in the United States. In very simple terms Japan had a very high savings rate and the United States had a low savings rate that contributed greatly to the U.S. demand for imports, from Japan and elsewhere, and to the trade imbalance. The second problem was that Japanese Government import restrictions and the structure of the private economy in Japan created real barriers to imports. The press, politicians and government officials in the United States, and elsewhere in the world, tended to conflate these two problems. As time when

on, it became more and more obvious that the United States could reduce its trade deficit with Japan and others only by changes to its own macroeconomic policy. However, negotiating improvements to market access in Japan was important, not just to create export opportunities and jobs in the United States but to manage overall relations with Japan, a major ally during the Cold War and the base for nearly 50,000 U.S. military personnel.

*Q: What was your impression when you first got there of the Japanese and the people you were dealing with and their negotiating position and the policy?*

REIS: Their trade policy was perverse at its fundament. The people I dealt with in both the Ministry and meetings were very nice people and for the most part truthful, honest and helpful. I made some pretty good friends in the Foreign Ministry. We were like lawyers. We each had a different position. The Foreign Ministry's position was to maintain the Japanese government's position with regard to imports and my position was to try to open it up.

For example, we had a long negotiation on cigarettes. The Japanese Government had a tobacco monopoly. (Since then the company has been privatized and is no longer a monopoly.) The monopoly imported just a few cigarettes and it manufactured cigarettes and sold domestic and foreign cigarettes in Japan. The Japanese Government had all sorts of restrictions on tobacco products. First of all, it had domestic taxes, applied on top of a high tariff. The way the taxes were applied was a little opaque, as I recall. Then the Government had restrictions on advertising and marketing that seemed to apply more to foreign cigarettes than to domestic products. And, so, we had a long complicated negotiation with the Japanese on the pricing and marketing of cigarettes in Japan.

The first part of the negotiation was just trying to find out what was going on, how the system worked. Once we had figured out how the system worked, then we began to negotiate to reduce the system's adverse effect on the sales of U.S. cigarettes. USTR would send negotiators over for some negotiating sessions. In those days, the economic counselor was Bill Piez. He just lives on Glebe Road. You passed his house on the way here. Anyway, he'd do a lot of the negotiations himself because it was somewhat harder in those days to travel across the Pacific. The air fares were more expensive, U.S. Government budgets were lower, USTR couldn't fly over there all the time, and communications were not as easy – there was no internet, obviously. So, he did a lot of the negotiations on the tobacco himself. I wound up working with him.

I can remember doing the negotiations on advertising, on what the rules for advertising should be. That was an interesting experience because you had to work with the tobacco company representatives and then you had to work with the Foreign Ministry and they would work with the tobacco monopoly and try to work things out. Eventually, we wound up with an agreement on taxes, I think and also one on tariffs, and also an agreement on the rules for advertising. And, after that I think there was a minor increase in U.S. exports of cigarettes. Nowadays, the U.S. government is absolutely prohibited from doing anything for any tobacco company.

*Q: I was going to say, you were close to being an advocate for merchants of death.*

REIS: Bill Piez made a comment about this. I can still remember him saying it. He had a very dry sense of humor. He said, “My view is if they want to kill themselves, they ought to kill themselves with good products at a fair price.”

(Laughter)

After that – I don’t know if it was a Congressional mandate or whether it was an executive order, but U.S. government may not do anything to help the tobacco companies or to help farmers to sell raw tobacco.

*Q: How did you find the Japanese way of negotiating? How would you describe their negotiating style.*

REIS: Well, the first part of a negotiation was a discussion of whether or not there really was a problem. They’d say, “Well, we’re surprised that you say that there is a market access problem because we don’t think there’s a problem.” Then there would be a long discussion. Then, they would have various stock phrases. One was, “Tamago ga saki ka, niwatori ga saki ka.” In English, that is, “What comes first, the chicken or the egg.” In other words, what is the real cause of the U.S. companies’ inability to penetrate the Japanese market? Is the market closed or are the U.S. exporters just not making sufficient efforts to enter the Japanese market? Eventually, the Japanese negotiators would concede that there could be an impediment to market access in Japan. At that point the Japanese negotiators might say, “Yes, there’s a problem, but you don’t understand how difficult the problem is.” Then you’d get into a long discussion on the realities of the structure of Japanese business, politics, and other matters. Then, finally we’d arrive at the point where they’d say, “Now we know that you understand us, but this really isn’t such a big problem for you.” Then you’d say, “Yes, it is a big problem for American companies and their political allies. At this point the Japanese negotiators might respond, “Well, maybe we might be able to do something.” Then we’d get a little offer and then maybe later on we would get a bigger offer. Well, basically, the way things really got done, somebody like Bill Piez or an official from USTR would get together with a counterpart, the director of the Second North American Division in the Japanese Foreign Ministry, which dealt with economic matters, and work out a deal.

Meanwhile, the Japanese were gradually, for reasons of their own, liberalizing their economy. For example, in 1980, they liberalized their capital markets. Before that, you had to have all sorts of elaborate permits to bring capital in or to take it out. There were still restrictions on foreign currency investment, which is one reason why Japan had a very low rate of foreign direct investment. Japan gradually began to open things up. It opened the capital market and once that happened, Japanese manufacturing companies began to invest more overseas. That was important because the companies realized they could operate a lot more cheaply overseas. So, first Nissan and Honda, then later on Toyota and others, moved to the United States, and other places as well, in the 1980’s.

Since then, of course, these giant companies have turned themselves into global enterprises with interests that were quite different than when they had been only domestic manufacturers.

*Q: Were we subscribing to the idea that Japan Incorporated was the way the economic way the world should go?*

REIS: That was in the late 1980s. That was when Japan was “buying up America.” That was at a time when I was on the Japan Desk and just after that when I was working on investment affairs in the Economic Bureau. A lot of what we did in the investment office had something do with Japan.

The argument in the United States was interesting. James Fallows, who writes for the Atlantic, had spent a year in Japan and then went on to Malaysia and spent some time there. He wrote that Japan had probably discovered the right way to manage an economy.. He said that METI or MITI....

*Q: The Ministry of International Trade and Industry.*

REIS. It's now called the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, METI. Before, it was MITI. Fallows said that METI had really discovered the right thing, an intrusive industrial policy in which the government directed investment and nurtured firms. He argued, as I recall, that the United States should emulate Japan and establish a broad industrial policy to nurture U.S. companies and industries.

Clyde Prestowitz, who worked at the Commerce Department as a deputy assistant secretary in the mid to late 80s, said some of the same sorts of things. There was also an FSO named Mike Smith, who for many years was assigned to USTR as the deputy U.S. Trade Representative who also seemed to favor a U.S. industrial policy..

*Q: Yes. I interviewed Mike some years ago.*

REIS: At one inter-agency meeting, Mike Smith argued for the preservation of AT&T (American Telephone and Telegraph), which the U.S. Government was pursuing for alleged antitrust violations. A few years passed. AT&T was split up. And what happened? There was been a blossoming of telecommunication services in this country with all sorts of new services and new products made by companies like SISCO, QUALCOM and Apple.

Later, Clyde Prestowitz, to his credit, wrote an article in the “Washington Post” or “The Wall Street Journal” – I can't remember which – in which he said that a free market and competition, not industrial policy with protection and assistance to companies, brought innovation, competitiveness and economic growth.

*Q: Who was the ambassador when you were there?*

REIS: The first time I was in Japan, from 1978 to 1984, the ambassador was Mike Mansfield. He was terrific to work with. He was very quiet and effective and certainly kind to me and many others.

He didn't get involved in a lot of the detailed day-to-day work of the various sections and agency representatives. He let people do their work. But he was an excellent representative to Japan and had a steadying influence on U.S. policy.

*Q: How did you find the Japanese media? Were they beating us up for trying to open up Japan? What was happening there? Did they have much influence?*

REIS: They didn't have a lot influence on U.S.-Japan economic relations. I think they reported the trade negotiations in a slightly nationalistic way but the coverage varied among the newspapers. I think the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, Japan's premier economic newspaper, gave a fairly even presentation of economic matters. We didn't really pay terribly much attention to the positions of the newspapers. The *Asahi Shimbun* was a left-of-center paper and it often was critical of U.S. defense policies.

*Q: Did you run across a Japanese way of doing things where everything has to be consulted?*

REIS: Oh, yes.

*Q: Was that more obvious? In a way, if we are negotiating a trade policy or something like, there is a hell of a lot of consultation on our side. How would you describe the difference?*

REIS: It is interesting. Later on, from '82 to '84, I was in Sapporo as a consul and my consular district included northern Honshu. I was in Sendai one time and I was reading a Japanese newspaper to kill time before a meeting. By that time I could read Japanese. I The newspaper said, "You know everybody says we Japanese are so good at what we call *nemawashi*, or coordination. (The word in Japanese is a bonsai term that means root-binding.) but in fact the Americans are much better at coordination than the Japanese are." Then they cited some academic studies that showed that Americans, in their work in business or government, do an awful lot of coordination.

*Q: You have to.*

REIS: You have to. The Japanese generally did a lot of coordination, but there was an awful lot of inter-agency bickering in Japan. I think it was in my later time in Japan, I was in a U.S.-Japan negotiation, in which the Agriculture Ministry and some other ministry were represented. I was sitting there listening to the negotiation when suddenly there was a blow-up on the Japanese side. As I recall, the Agriculture representative criticized the other agency and challenged its competence in the matter under discussion. It was the only time I saw anything like that in front of a U.S. delegation, but there were plenty of inter-agency squabbles in Japan, just as we were saying.

*Q: We'll touch on it again and again. I would think that your Foreign Service Nationals staff, particularly in this type of thing, would be absolutely invaluable, for one, their depth of experience, and for two, to be able to point out to you what was happening and how the system worked. How did you find them?*

REIS: The Foreign Service Nationals system didn't work as well as it should have. You had a lot of people there – in 1978-1981 – who had been with the U.S. government since the late 40s or very early 50s. I don't think they had been challenged very much in their work. They were not terribly energetic, which is unusual for Japanese. They weren't very imaginative. So, the FSNs were not as helpful as one might have expected them to be. I don't know what the experience was in other places, in other large embassies. But in Tokyo the Americans did their things and the FSNs did their own things. If you asked them to translate something and if you asked them to come to an appointment they would, but they didn't offer suggestions very much. If you asked them about some particular thing they would provide you with enough information, but not a great amount, so it really was not a very satisfactory situation. Later on, after those people retired, we began to get another type of Japanese in the embassy, younger people who had better English and who were much more helpful..

I can offer you two examples of the old system. First, when we were looking for a way to nudge the Japanese government to make some concession on the cigarette issues, Washington was considering for retaliatory trade measures against Japan. I thought that if we were going to choose Japanese products on which to place import restrictions, we could choose products made in the districts of Diet members who represented tobacco growers and opposed increased imports of tobacco products. So, I asked the FSN with whom I worked, Sasaki-san, to identify products made in these Diet districts and exported to the United States. He did not want to do that at all. I suppose he may have thought complying with the request was unpatriotic. Eventually, I got a Japanese secretary in the embassy to do the research for me, but Sasaki-san wouldn't do it.

I can give a second example. In Japan is outcast group of leatherworkers. The politically correct name for this group now is "Dowa" but the more common name is "Burakumin," which means 'villagers.' Members of this group do leatherwork and have done it since the medieval period in Japan. Many of these people are in Osaka and in other parts of the Kansai region, but there is a neighborhood in northern Tokyo where there are leather companies operated by members of the Dowa group. At the request of U.S. tanners and shoe manufacturers, the United States was trying to remove Japanese barriers to the import of foreign leather and leather products. As I didn't speak Japanese at the time, I asked Sasaki-san if he help me interview some people in the leather industry in Tokyo to learn more about their view on imports. He went with me and he did a nice job, but he was not in the least bit enthusiastic about this project at all. I think he found my effort to learn more about the Dowa , who suffered discrimination in Japan, a bit embarrassing.

*Q: He didn't want confrontation, or something.*

REIS: Yes.

*Q: In some places you find the Foreign Service Nationals get quite enthusiastic about helping the Americans. They understand what the weak places are and what some of the things are. I would think that particularly in a place like Japan where there are all sorts of hurdles, where there are scenes, behind scenes, behind scenes that it would be very useful to have somebody who understood the terrain.*

REIS: Later on, when I was there in the early '90s, the commercial section had developed a staff that was really quite capable and that did that work. That brings me back to commercial work. When I was there in the late 1970s and early 1980s, up until 1980, the State Department had the responsibility for commercial work overseas. The 1979 Foreign Service Act changed that and created the Foreign Commercial Service. My own observation was that a separate commercial should have been created a long time before. Many of the people in the State Department who did commercial work really didn't want to have to do it. They were interested in economic reporting or negotiation, not helping small American businesses to find customers. And, most State Department Foreign Service officers didn't know how to do commercial work. There was very little training in commercial work for FSOs, who consequently were not very competent in doing commercial work. I think it was probably a smart thing to assign the commercial function to the Commerce Department. It may have made the operation a little bit more professional and it did get people into commercial work who actually saw it as a desirable career, something that they wanted to do.

*Q: How did you and your wife find life in Japan during this period?*

REIS: It was pleasant. We enjoyed it. The embassy had a housing compound with three poured concrete buildings. I think two of them were built in 1954 and the other one was built in 1956. We lived in the one that was built in 1956, Grew House, which was named after Joseph Grew, the U.S. Ambassador to Japan from 1931 to 1942. The apartments were adequate but the lobby was a little bit shabby. The building had gotten a little bit run down. But it was on eleven acres of properties and was a safe place for the kids to play. They could run all over the compound. There were two tennis courts and a swimming pool on the compound. The housing was one subway stop from where the kids went to school, so it was pretty easy for them to walk up to the subway stop, which was a quarter or a third of a mile away, get onto the subway, and be at school in just a few minutes.

*Q: Was there much social contact between the Americans and the Japanese?*

REIS: Yes and no. Yes in the sense that there was a lot of business social contact. You'd have negotiating delegations and there'd be dinners and receptions for them. Either the Japanese or the Americans would give them. The Economic Minister had a beautiful house, which had been built by a Czech disciple of Frank Lloyd Wright, Antonin Raymond. The Economic Minister entertained there quite a lot. I had a lot of evening socializing with counterparts in the Foreign Ministry. Life was gruesome for officials in the Foreign Ministry and in other government agencies in those days. They supposedly

had to work half days on Saturday, but a half day meant until four o'clock. They were in the office every week night until eleven or twelve. So, when four o'clock came on Saturday afternoon, the last thing they wanted to do was socialize with their foreign counterparts. There were a couple of times when we invited my counterparts over for lunch or for an early dinner on Saturday night and received return invitations but you could see that the young officials were exhausted.

*Q: Did you get any feel for what they were doing while they were working for these long hours?*

REIS: I think it was mostly a waste of time. They were coordinating or writing positions on trade or other economic issues. But, I think it was one of these perverse things one sometimes finds in bureaucracies. As long as the boss was in the office, his staff had to be there. Sometimes office directors would go out of the office at, let's say, seven o'clock, for an evening engagement and then they would come back in at ten o'clock and ask members of their staff to people to do this or that. It was a perverse thing and to some extent still continues. Japanese Government officials do not work on Saturdays anymore, unless there's an emergency. But they do work late. And, again, I wonder just how much gets done.

*Q: I was wondering whether you ran across something I ran into when I was Consul General in Korea at about the same time. I wasn't on negotiations. What we found that when Koreans, particularly officials at mid level or businessmen, had been told to achieve something and you could almost see them being quite desperate if you weren't going to give way. They had to answer to their boss, who wouldn't accept 'no'. This may be very Korean., I don't know.*

REIS: I deal with Koreans now, so I know what you're talking about. Japanese are more subtle than that. They wouldn't show that same degree of anxiety. They're good at handling relationships.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the role of women in business and government?*

REIS: In those days there were virtually no professional women in government. There must have been some, but there were none that I dealt with. That didn't come until later. You did have what they called OLs, office ladies, and they served tea and Xeroxed and kept the office running. But, there were no professional women in the 1970s and early 1980s.

*Q: You were there from....*

REIS: I was in Tokyo from 1978 to 1981.

*Q: Were there any shocks – big or small?*

REIS: There was a shock from the rise in oil and gas prices after the Iranian revolution, in 1979, but I don't increases affected the Japanese as much as it did us because, after the first oil shock in 1973, they had really reduced their energy consumption very substantially through an effective government effort. This is one case where an industrial policy did work. They really did cut their energy usage down. At the moment – I saw the statistic the other day – the amount of energy that Japan uses per unit of output in its economy is one half that of the United States. So, they were less affected, I think, than we were by the second oil shock.

*Q: In 1981 you were ....*

REIS: In August 1981, I went to Yokohama. I'd been studying Japanese in the morning at the embassy for an hour a day and studying on my own at night when I was not doing something else. So, at the end of three years I'd gotten to be about 2/2 (Foreign Service foreign language level) in Japanese. So, I was then able to go to Yokohama. I went to the DCM, Bill Sherman, in the fall of 1980 and said, "I'd like to study Japanese and the only onward assignment that I can see looking at the personnel charts is as consul in Sapporo beginning in the summer of 2002 via language training." He said, "That's great. I'll make it happen." He did not say, "I'll talk to personnel." or "You put a bid in." or "We'll support your bid." There were no bids. You just did it. He controlled personnel in the Japan realm in Washington and in Tokyo, or anywhere else in Japan. That was the DCM's job. That is quite different from the current system, controlled by the human relations office in Washington.

*Q: Did you get the feel when you got there that there was a 'Chrysanthemum club' – old Japan hands who had served there in various capacities and were all chummy with each other?*

REIS: Well, there were people who spoke Japanese, who'd served together in Japan again and again. So, yes, there was. Al Seligman, who was the Political Counselor, is still around. I think he must be around 87 and lives in Hollin Hills, south of Alexandria. He learned Japanese during the war in one of the Army language schools.

*Q. Pickering lives down there too, doesn't he? Hollin Hills is below Alexandria. Anyway, there are three generations of FSOs who live down there.*

There was a guy by the name of Ed Featherstone, who'd grown up in Japan partially. His father had worked for the Army as a lawyer. Bob Immerman, who's retired and living in New York now, spent virtually his whole career there in Japan. I liked these people and they were nice to me.

*Q: I take it you have an affinity for language, don't you?*

REIS: I have a reasonably high language aptitude and I find Japanese interesting. So, I went to Yokohama.

*Q: How long did you do that?*

REIS: It was a year, or actually eleven months. My wife was able to study Japanese too, which was interesting. She'd been teaching at the Sacred Heart International School in Tokyo. When I was assigned to Yokohama, she said she'd like to study Japanese, too. So I went down to the language school and talked to the head of the language school, Ben Park, a Korean-American, and asked if my wife could study Japanese. He gave me a million different reasons why it would not be possible. So, I spoke with the administrative officer in the embassy, who said he would send a telegram to the State Department asking if my wife could study Japanese in Yokohama. It was one of those few times when you send in a message and get a speedy response. FSI Washington quickly replied that the Department's policy was that when there was space available, a spouse, whether in Washington or one of the overseas language schools, could join a language class. So, that was that.

Initially, when we went down there, Allen O'Neil and I were language partners and my wife went into a class with a couple of Army officers whose interest and language aptitude were not high. Then, later on, a USIS (United States Information Service) woman came in and my wife went into her class and they got along very well. So, that worked out.

*Q: Did you find that the Japanese you were getting began to open up a new world for you?*

REIS: Well, it was very interesting. Yes, because once you can read and can listen to the radio, you learn all sorts of interesting things. I have to say that after a year of training at the Foreign Service Institute, I came out with a 3/3+ (3 in speaking and a 3+ in reading). The problem with the FSI program is that you tend to learn the sort of things that you would hear in an office conversation or on the Japanese equivalent of PBS (Public Broadcasting Service). That is fine but it only gets you so far. One of the real deficiencies of the Yokohama program was that it did not teach colloquial Japanese. (This is not a complaint as the one-year program did have time to teach colloquial usage of Japanese.) Even after two years in Sapporo, when my Japanese was as good as it ever got, I couldn't look at a soap opera or a TV drama or something like that and understand more than about forty percent of it.

*Q: Well, you went to Sapporo.*

REIS: Yes, to Sapporo.

*Q: How long have we had a post in Sapporo?*

REIS: The consulate has its antecedent in the occupation of Japan. I think that sometime in the late 1940s the State Department established in the U.S. occupation government an entity that provided visas and passports and did other sorts of work, such as political analysis. Then in 1952, when Japan regain sovereignty, the consulate opened. In 1982 we

had three Americans in the consulate. I was the consul. We had a vice consul who did all the consular work and some of the commercial work. Then we had a USIS officer. Until about four years before I got there, the consulate and the USIS offices had been separate. Then, the consul, Larry Farrar, with Washington's permission, was able to sell or trade the properties downtown for property at the western edge of Sapporo, next to a park. The Department's Foreign Building Office built a consulate and a USIS facility together and just next door built the consul's house. It's very nice. It's still there. It works very well.

It was an interesting job because you had to do a lot of different things. The consular district included Hokkaido and four northern prefectures on Honshu: Akita, Aomori, Iwate, and Miyagi, so I could travel. I did do a fair amount of traveling or just going around talking to people in those five prefectures. I did some political reporting, some economic reporting. At one time Sapporo was the eleventh largest visa-issuing post in the world, with one vice consul doing it consular work three-quarters of his time. But it was easy. Every morning these travel agents came in with big bags of passports and signed visa applications. The visa applicants were all going on group tours to the United States, many of them to Hawaii.

*Q: Or to Guam, I suppose too.*

REIS: Or to Guam, too.

*Q: This was part of the honeymoon circuit, wasn't it, too?*

REIS: That was part of it, yes. These people all came back. You never had any 212(b) problems.

You only had three sets of complications. The first one was fisherman. That was a problem because they usually weren't fishermen. They were going to work in fish factories in Alaska as managers, supervisors or trainers. The problem was often their employer had not applied for the proper temporary work visas for the employees, who then would apply for a B-1/B-2 visitor's visa or a ship's crew visa. We denied the visitor visa applications in those cases and told the applicants to apply for temporary work visas.

*(Laughter)*

So, that was one problem. Another problem was that there were Chinese there left over from the war when they'd been brought in as workers and they had PRC (People's Republic of China) passports, so you had to deal with that problem. Finally, there were North Koreans in Hokkaido, who were workers from the wartime period or family members of the workers. The consulate had to get Washington's approval to issue visas to North Korean passport holders.

*Q: Did you have any reflection from the Soviet 'empire' to the north.*

REIS: Well, we did. One day in September 1983 I listened to the NHK (Japan Broadcasting Company) news at seven in the morning, as I usually did. NHK reported that a Korean airliner that was coming from the United States had gone missing over the north Pacific. They thought it was close to Hokkaido. So, I got into the consulate right away. The vice consul was Dave Shear, who is the head of the China desk now at State. He was a new vice consul. He'd only been there for six months. I said, "Look, get your manual and figure out what you have to do about taking care of Americans, either dead or alive, in a situation like an air crash." He'd never had anything like that. So, Dave was busy looking through his book when the embassy in Tokyo called and asked me to see if I could find out anything about the missing aircraft from the Japan Air Self Defense Force group at Chitose Airport. This is the civil airport for Sapporo, but it's also a Japanese military airport on the Pacific side of the island, about 40 miles east of Sapporo. The chief Japanese employee at the consulate was Tanaka-san, who'd been with the U.S. Government since 1946, first with the quarter masters running a laundry and then with the consulate. He was the chief political advisor and was the go-to guy for everything. I asked Tanaka-san to call his contact at Chitose to learn what he could. A few minutes later he reported that the air staff had refused to provide any information and suggested that the embassy get in touch with Defense Agency in Tokyo. I passed that on to the political section in Tokyo. Then we found out, of course, that this was the plane....

*Q: ....the one that was shot down.....*

REIS: 007.

*Q: .....over the Kamchatka peninsula.*

REIS: It went over the Kamchatka peninsula, and it was shot down just north of Hokkaido. So a couple of things came out of that. The Japanese got all the debris that washed up on shore together and put it in a gymnasium in Sapporo so people who had had relatives on the plane could go out and look at it, and if there were clothes or things like that that they recognized, they could claim them. We did have some Americans who'd had lost children on the plane who came and looked. Dave Shear took care of that. The second thing that happened was that you had a number of American naval and Coast Guard vessels that were in the waters off of northwest Hokkaido for several weeks to look for the aircraft's black box.

Then, finally, there was a mission that went up to Nevelsk, a town on the west side of Sakhalin. I got a call from Bill Clark, the DCM in Tokyo, who said that I should accompany a group of people from State's Russia Desk, the FAA, the U.S. Navy, and ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization), who were going to go on a Japanese Coast Guard vessel, along with a senior Japanese Foreign Service officer, to Nevelsk to pick up the remnants from KAL 007. We all boarded the Japanese Coast Guard cutter in Otaru, which is on the Sea of Japan about forty miles from Sapporo and went up to Nevelsk over night.

We pulled into Nevelsk on a crystal clear day at about eight o'clock in the morning. I'd never been to Sakhalin; I don't think too many Americans had been. Along the shore on the south side of Nevelsk were large Stalinist poured concrete apartment buildings. In the center of town just up the slope from where our cutter docked were older buildings. About two blocks in from the port, the town went up the hill rather sharply. On these terraces going up the hill were all these, what the Japanese call "nagaya," whose dictionary translation is "tenement." They were old fashioned one-story barracks buildings that Japan's Oji Paper Corporation had built for logging worker in the 1920 s and 1930s. The Russians were still using these dilapidated structures. I wasn't able to get off the ship, but the others did. They went into town and had a short discussion with the Russians, who then delivered to the cutter bits and pieces of fuselage and some rolls of textiles from KAL 007. It was an interesting experience.

*Q: I was in the Air Force security service during the Korean War. At one point I was stationed in Misawa. For us, "Siberia" was being sent to Wakkanai.*

REIS: Oh, yes. Wakkanai had been a U.S. base in the extreme northwest of Hokkaido, just south of Sakhalin, until I think 1973. Then the United States returned it to the Japanese. I visited Wakkanai a couple of times. Occasionally there were Americans from Misawa Air Force Base and other U.S. bases who visited the Japanese facility in Wakkanai.

*Q: Basically, communications, eavesdrop.*

REIS: That is what people said.

*Q: The winter Olympics were over by this time, weren't they?*

REIS: The Winter Olympics were in 1972.

*Q: Had that left a significant complex there?*

REIS: Well, there were some things. There was a skating rink in Sapporo that was open to the public. That was still there. There was a ski jump, which was right close to the house, actually, a mile away. There were some downhill ski facilities just outside of town, which I think we went to one time. We used the 1972 cross country ski facility just south of Sapporo quite a lot.

The course went through hills covered with birches and conifers. It was really just gorgeous. We'd go out there usually on Sundays. The downhill ski slopes in Hokkaido were busy on Sundays, so if we were to go downhill skiing we'd go on Saturday and then go cross country skiing on Sunday.

*Q: How did you find dealing with the local government? Was this a different world from Tokyo?*

REIS: That was the one thing about Sapporo. It is a much more relaxed place than Tokyo. People really had a lot more time for themselves. At that time it was a city of 1.5 million. All of Hokkaido was 5.5 million. It was just a totally different atmosphere, so we did get to know a fair number of Japanese up there. They were gracious in inviting us to things. We went camping one time with a group of people. There was a tennis club that we were honorary members of, not that we played there, but they had events a couple times a year and they'd invite us. We got to know journalists through USIS programs. The USIS director for most of the time I was there and I got along rather well. We'd do things together. I'd help with programs. We had a great time. Then, if you went around and talked to people....part of my job was to go around to little cities and talk to people and find out what was going on. The people were always pleasant, helpful.

*Q: Were there any political movements out there?*

REIS: In those days because Hokkaido was split politically because there was a significant socialist presence there. I'd say in all parts of Japan except perhaps Okinawa and Hokkaido, the rural areas are very conservative and great supporters of the Liberal Democratic Party. In those days, up in Hokkaido, people who did what they call 'hatake', dry land farming, not rice, tended to be socialist. They grew a lot of potatoes up there. They grew some other things like wheat and corn. They had some sheep. In the northeast they had a dairy area. Part of that area had been opened up just after 1945. Up until that time it had been wilderness, so you had some farms up there that were one hundred acres, which by Japanese standards was pretty big. However, there were not many contentious political issues in Hokkaido when I was there. I can remember that the economy was basically subsidized by Tokyo. There was something that was called the Hokkaido and Okinawa Development Agency that was the conduit for subventions by the national government.

*Q: Were the northern islands, the northern territories an issue?*

REIS: Oh, yes. That was a big issue. There was a little town, Nemuro, just south of the northern territories, composed of two groups of islands. If you visited Nemuro, the town officials would take you out on the northeastern tip of Hokkaido to show you the northern territories. A photographer was always present to record the visit and the photo would be in the paper the next day as a demonstration of continuing U.S. interest in the northern territories. I think the main value of the northern territories lies in the fish stocks in the waters around the islands.

I think when I lived in Japan again, from 1990 to 1993, NHK showed a documentary on the islands. The NHK team visited a fishing port on the Pacific, 75 miles or so south of the northern territories, Kushiro, to interview people who had lived on the islands before the Soviets captured them. They asked one man in a retirement home who had lived on one of the islands if he would like to go back. He responded that he would like to return as it was his home and he really felt an affection for it. His grandson was there and they asked him what he thought about going back there. He responded by saying, "Bunka

*seikatsu wa amari yoku nai yo.*”, which in Japanese means: the cultural life there is not too great.

*(Laughter)*

I wouldn't think so.

*(Laughter)*

When he said *bunka seikatsu*, he was talking about nightclubbing. He did not mean high culture; the term is a euphemism.

*Q: You left there when?*

REIS: I left there in '84. *Q: We'll pick it up on tape 4.*

REIS: Great.

*(Picks up mid sentence)*

*Q: .... 'cause he seems to listen.*

REIS: Do you know Bill Breer? He's an old Japan hand.

*Q: Yes, a long time ago.*

REIS: He was DCM in Tokyo in '93.

*Q: Ok. Here we'll start. Today is the 10<sup>th</sup> of November, 2008 with Bob Reis. Bob, you're coming back from Sapporo, Japan. When did you leave and where did you go?*

REIS: I left in mid-July 1984 and came back to Washington to the Japan Desk. I was working on economic matters on the Japan Desk. This was a time when there was still quite a lot of trade friction with Japan on all sorts of different things. I think just before I got to the Japan desk, the two governments had set up something called the MOSS negotiations, which were Market-Oriented, Sector-Selective negotiations. They were on telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, electronics and forest products. They were rather elaborate negotiations. Telecommunications and electronics were led by USTR. Pharmaceuticals and medical equipment were led by the Commerce Department, if I recall right. The Department of Agriculture led the forest products talks.

There were three economic officers in the office at the time. The director of the office was Desaix Anderson. The deputy director for political matters was John Malott and the deputy director for economic matters was Aurelia E. Brazeal, who later was ambassador in one of the Micronesian countries, Kenya and Ethiopia. I worked for Rea with whom I had served in Tokyo. The third economic officer on the desk was Brian Mohler, with

whom I worked at various times before and since then. We divided things up among the three of us. I did telecommunications and Rea did some other stuff. I did aviation negotiations. I did the environmental portfolio, including whales. That's how we divvied things up.

*Q: You did this from when to when?*

REIS: I did it from August of 1984 to the summer of 1987. I did it working with Rea for two years and then I took her job and I did it for another year.

*Q: Let's take these various things you did. What were the issues and what developed during the time you were dealing with them?*

REIS: To put it in perspective, what we were really trying to do was to manage U.S – Japan relations with two purposes. One was actually to make progress on the individual economic issues. The second purpose was to make sure that the overall relationship with Japan, which had various facets, not the least of which was military – and this was during the last years Cold War – was not damaged too much by the economic friction. We tried to maintain some sort of comity in the discussions.

Central to many of these negotiations was a discussion of Japan's regulatory system and the need for transparency in regulation. The problem was that Japan was still in those days a regulated economy and it used un-transparent forms of regulation that had the effect of discouraging foreign companies from participating in Japan's market. What some of the regulations really did was to exclude new market entrants of any sort, including new Japanese market entrants. So, what we did was to set up these negotiations with the Japanese to try to negotiate agreements that would open the market in these various sectors for American companies.

In telecommunications, the Japanese had various opaque rules for what sort of equipment Japanese telecommunication providers could use in Japan. So, we tried to define what the problems were. We tried to learn what technical rules were in place and then tried to make them transparent. We tried to relax them to some extent, to the benefit of American companies. For example, in the United States in those days, and I think still too now, the only standard for hooking something up, a telephone in a house or something like that, or in an office, to the telecommunications lines, is that the product causes no harm to the system. That is one of the principles that we got the Japanese to agree to in the telecommunications talks. It was a real education for me in how the bureaucracy and regulatory system in Japan worked. In those days, too, you still had a lot of industries or industrial sectors that were subject to guidance from one or other of the Japanese ministries, the ministry of international trade and industry, the ministry of communications and so forth. All of these ministries had advisory groups made up of academics, think-tank people, former officials and people from the industry. And, in the 1980s, there was not much possibility for foreigners to be involved in the advisory process. Now, there is. Nowadays – this is stepping ahead – in Japan, for example, 40% of the pharmaceutical industry is owned by foreigners. Representatives from foreign

companies are regularly included in committees that provide advice to the Ministry of Health and Welfare. It was a process of gradually “peeling the onion” with Japan.

*Q: I might be wrong, but when you have complicated rules and regulations, it usually means they're complicated to order to exclude somebody and to benefit somebody.*

REIS: Well, usually.

*Q: There, you can try to be transparent and get people to think it out, but in the long run, it means Mitsubishi will lose some of its market, or something like that, so you're really not talking about rules, but about commercial-political corridors, aren't you?*

REIS: Well, yes, to some extent. But, the opposite side of that is that in a regulated economy, the rules or market exclusion measures inevitably harm some domestic companies and consumers because the regulations raise prices. So, there are countervailing forces within the economy. They were suppressed for many years by a stable bureaucratic system of regulation and direction that began to age and then atrophy and then finally to begin to fall apart in the 1980s and then into the 1990s. A lot of that is now gone because the Japanese now recognize that they have to compete internationally and they cannot have costs at home that are too high. That really is the story of the 1990s. They were just beginning to realize this in the 1980s and beginning to see that there was some advantage to making Japan's economy more open and less regulated.

*Q: How did you operate in communications? Would you take some aspect of communications and go through the rules and regulations and find out what the problem was and then go back to the embassy and saying, “Will you work on this.” How did you work?*

REIS: It was done on an interagency basis. For example, USTR was in charge of telecommunications. Don Abelson at USTR was a specialist in telecommunications things. Sometimes alone or sometimes with members of the interagency group, which included State, Commerce, USTR, FCC and maybe Justice (I can't recall), and probably another agency or two and Treasury too, he'd meet with the U.S. telecommunications industry's representative and would try to figure out what the problem was. These companies which were trying to sell things to Japan like switching gear and other equipment. We're not talking about just household phones. We're talking about big switches and electronic products of one sort or another. They would say, “This is how it works in the United States. This is the problem we see in Japan. This is who it benefits. These are the rules. These are our goals. This is what we want you to do for us.”

The Japanese were similarly constituted in a way, but probably somewhat less representative bureaucratically, but they certainly had in the case telecommunications, somebody from the Foreign Ministry and somebody from the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications. These people would form their own position with representatives of Japanese industry and then there would be a negotiation and so you would go to Japan for a week or something like and talk about the issues. It was more like three or four days

usually, but in any event you'd go to talk about all this and then gradually work your way to a statement of what Japan might agree to do. And, then, typically at some point there would be a smaller, under-secretary-level meeting between U.S and Japanese officials who would reach final agreement that resolved the issues the United States had raised.

Michael B. Smith at the U.S. Trade Representative's Office played a major role in U.S.-Japan negotiations. He was an FSO, who went over to USTR as a textile negotiator and then spent the rest of his career there.

*Q: Yes, I met him a long time ago.*

REIS: He was the undersecretary official who oversaw a lot of this, so he spent a fair amount of time going to Japan. The US Trade Representative spent a lot of time in Japan, too. When I was in Tokyo in the late 1970s, I can remember we had U.S. Trade Representatives William Brock and Robert Strauss both visit more than once. They would intervene and reach agreements, as well. It was a rather elaborately structured set of negotiations that took place with Japan. And, over time, I think it was educational to the Japanese. I think it provided some benefit to the U.S. economy and I think it provided a greater benefit to the overall relationship with Japan.

*Q: What about whales?*

REIS: The whales issue was a mess. It was the worst two months of my career. I got back to Washington in late August after having taken home leave. I came into the office and the office director said I was going to do whales. I was also told there was a big fight within the State Department and within the U.S. Government about what to do about whales. At the time there was a law that provided – I can't remember the statutory language anymore, but it provided that if a country caused a substantial harm to the cetacean population, the U.S. Government could impose sanctions against the country. At the time, Japanese companies were fishing in the United States exclusive economic zone in the Gulf of Alaska, because we didn't have a fishing fleet that was large enough to exploit the fish stocks there. So, for fees paid to the U.S. Government, Japanese fishing boats were permitted to fish up there. The concern was that if Japan was found in violation of this part of the statute then there could be some retaliation against Japan's fishing operation off Alaska.

So, there was a big fight: the Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science was on one side, the East Asia Bureau was on the other. The European Bureau had some interest in all of this because the Norwegians and Icelanders were both taking whales and also might face sanctions. The European Bureau tried to stay out of it despite our best efforts to bring them into the fight because we figured they'd be an ally. But the European Bureau didn't want any part of this. I can't remember what the final arrangement was. But, in the end there was just an awful lot of fighting back and forth between the East Asia Bureau and the Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science.

Q: Where did each stand?

REIS: The Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science basically wanted to find the Japanese in violation of the statute. Our position was there was no reason to do that. This all was leading up to the International Whaling Commission, which was about to put in place a moratorium on whaling. The Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science and the Commerce Department (OES), a part of which is responsible for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the agency's fisheries management, wanted to have this moratorium and also wanted to find the Japanese in violation of the Magnusson Act, I think. So, they were on the one side, we were on the other. There were a bunch of nongovernmental organizations that were putting pressure on elements of the U.S. Government, including OES and the Commerce Department, to act against the Japanese. The Japanese Government made plain that sanctions would have an adverse effect on U.S.-Japan relations. We, EAP, were opposed to doing anything like that.

Then, there was just an awful lot of deviousness on the part of these non-government organizations. For example, they asserted that the sperm whales were about to go extinct. Well, an article in the "Atlantic Monthly," which I happened to see just by chance, said there were two million sperm whales swimming in the oceans. Japanese whalers in a few villages along the coast in northern Japan took only a few sperm whales a year in traditional, artisanal whaling operations. The Japanese also wanted to take minke whales, which are small whales that are abundant in the south Atlantic. So, the environmentalists' support for the moratorium, which was based on the assertion that certain populations of whales were about to go extinct, simply was not true. These nongovernmental organization were really rather unpleasant and vitriolic to deal with, so it was not very much fun to meet with them.

And, of course, OES took the position of these nongovernmental organizations so they were not exactly straightforward in their arguments either. And, you couldn't get any attention up on the seventh floor (the Secretary of State) to the whaling issue. OES blocked a joint OES/EAP decision memo which might have resulted in a decision. Consequently, the problem just lingered and gave rise to two months of constant bureaucratic warfare. Finally the U.S. Government did reach a position in favor of voting for the International Whaling Commission's moratorium, but it imposed no sanctions on the Japanese fisherman.

*Q: What other environmental things did you get involved with?*

REIS: In the 1990s, there was something called the 'common agenda' on environmental, scientific and certain other matters between the United States and Japan. But in the 1980s, there was not a defined agenda with the Japanese on environmental things. There is now and there is a lot of cooperation on energy and other matters. But, in those days, it was whatever happened to come up and the one thing that did come up was the Chernobyl nuclear plant problem. The Japanese have quite a large nuclear industry and so they were very much interested in what happened in Chernobyl and they didn't have their own first-hand intelligence on what was going on, so they were trying to get that from us.

I tried to help them because the OES people working on Chernobyl were too busy to take phone calls from embassies. For a week or two I maintained contact with the people in OES and passed to the Japanese Embassy what I learned about Chernobyl.

Another thing we did was fish. The Japanese, as I mentioned, were taking fish in the north Pacific in U.S. waters. There were three sets of issues. The first one was Japanese long-line fishing in the northeast Pacific. The Alaskan fishing organizations were putting pressure on the U.S. government to end long-line fishing because of its effect on salmon populations. Some of the Japanese fishermen's catch of salmon was intentional and some of it was incidental. The fishing boats put out long lines which go for two or three miles in the ocean with baited hooks dangling from them. Even if the fishermen were fishing for other species, they would catch salmon. In either case, intentional or incidental, the salmon died. The problem is, is when you take the salmon, a migratory species, way out in the ocean you cannot know where the salmon is coming from or going to and so it's very hard to manage the fishery because you don't know whether the salmon that died was going up to this river, that river or the other one over. This made conservation of stocks by spawning river difficult. From a fisheries management point of view, it wasn't a very sound practice, so there were negotiations mostly between NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), the National Fisheries Service, which is a part of NOAA and the Japanese Fisheries Agency to try to solve that problem. I can't remember exactly what the solution was. Over time, the Japanese phased out high seas long-lining and U.S. fishermen began to take salmon only close to the mouths of the rivers in which the salmon spawned. I think the Japanese fisheries officials recognized that it long-lining in the open ocean was not a good thing to do. Moreover the salmon catches were declining.

The negotiations were always led by somebody from one of these other agencies; in this case it would have been the National Marine Fisheries Service, but there was usually somebody from the State Department, which meant either me or....

Q: What were you supplying to these negotiations – the research, the U.S. position, the diplomatic finesse?

REIS: Well, we were trying to manage the negotiations so that we knew exactly what was going on, we balanced one thing on another. The main thing was, you had the Japanese embassy and government people coming into the State Department all the time saying, "Look, you've got to support us on this, that and the other thing." We weren't in a position of necessarily supporting them, but we did want to know what was going on and occasionally you could sort of work out some misunderstanding. I'll get to an example of that in a minute.

The second thing was the question of the amounts of fish that were being taken in the North Pacific in the Gulf of Alaska. It was basically pollock, I think, or halibut. The Japanese had these enormous factory ships there and they would catch these fish and then they would turn it into something known as surimi, which is sort of a fishcake that Japanese use in soups and things like that. The questions were how much of this fish

could Japanese fishermen take and over what period of time were the Japanese fishermen going to be supplanted by American fishermen. I think up until that time there hadn't been an enormous demand for this fish. Then, the Japanese discovered the demand and then got leases, or paid fees to be able to take the fish.

There is something called the Magnusson Act, which was from the 1970s, I think. Well, basically it said that you can let foreign fisherman take fish in American waters, but over time they would be phased out as American fishermen gained the capability to catch the fish. The question was over what period of time was this going to happen. The Japanese were not unreasonable. They knew exactly what was going to happen. They realized that they were paying fees for this fish and that at some point or other U.S. fishermen were going to take it over. So it was a question of the timing of this takeover. We weren't terribly involved in that.

There was also a negotiation over the coastal herring fishery in Alaska. And again, it was one of these things where the Alaskans hadn't been terribly interested in herring but then the Japanese got interested and the Alaskans saw there was a market so they wanted to serve the market and take the fish. So, the question was over what period of time you could get the Japanese out of the in-shore herring fishery.

The negotiation was held at the NOAA building, which is in Silver Springs now, but used to be at Florida and Connecticut Avenues in Washington. I was in this negotiation. Somehow or other – for reasons I still don't understand – the trade negotiator from USTR took over the negotiation, rather than having people from the national marine fishery service lead the talks. So, I was there. At the time my Japanese was reasonably good, better than it is today. We had an interpreter. They had a young negotiator from USTR doing the negotiations, a lawyer who was about thirty-two, thirty-four or something like that. Japan sent a very experienced negotiator, a fisheries official. They started negotiating. He spoke in Japanese and the U.S. representative spoke in English. And I was there for a full day of negotiation. The fundamental problem was that the Japanese had come to capitulate and the negotiator couldn't figure out that that was what they wanted they do. So, we had this long negotiation which was almost surreal because the negotiators talking past each other. I told the USTR negotiator that his Japanese counterpart just wanted to give up and to take the offer. He did not believe me. The interpreter was just rolling her eyes. She couldn't believe what was going on. Eventually we got a deal. But it was the most difficult easy deal you've ever in your life seen. In retrospect, it seems funny. That was pretty much the extent of the environmental work I did on the Japan Desk.

The other thing I did was aviation negotiations, which were quite interesting. The U.S. and Japan had an aviation agreement that went back to 1952 or 1953, right at the end of the occupation. It provided that four U.S. carriers could fly between the United States and Japan and beyond and that one Japanese carrier could fly to the United States and beyond. The agreement specified the routes for both parties. One of the carriers, TWA, had dropped service between the United States and Japan a long time ago. TWA was still alive, but it was not engaged in trans-Pacific transportation. So you had Northwest, Pan-

American, and then you had Flying Tigers, which was a cargo airline. The owners of Tigers were trying to sell their company, so their interest was to try to get as high a stock price as possible.

To step back, after 1952 there had been various efforts on the part of the U.S. Government to negotiate increases in service over the Pacific and the Japanese always said no, because they only had one carrier and they didn't want anymore. They basically wanted to protect JAL; that's all they really wanted. So, that was their situation. Then, in January of 1985, Nippon Cargo Airlines (NCA) was established by a group of companies, including All Nippon Airways (ANA), a domestic Japanese carrier. So, for the first time, Japan had something it wanted, so we embarked on this negotiation with the Japanese. Japan insisted that since we had three carriers and it had only one, we should just admit NCA and be done with it. The U.S. side, including the airline industry, wanted additional rights to and beyond Japan and refused to grant Japan new rights without payment.

Frank Willis was a lawyer who had originally started in the Office of the Legal Advisor in the State Department. At the time of the aviation negotiations, he was the deputy assistant secretary for transportation in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs. He was brilliant and a real wheeler dealer. Some of his discussions with the Japanese negotiators made the Transportation Department's negotiators nervous because his ideas were so imaginative. But, in fact, the responsibility for negotiation of aviation agreements is by law assigned to the State Department.

So, Frank worked out a deal after several rounds of negotiations in Washington and in Tokyo that had a Chinese-menu format. Japan, or Nippon Cargo Airlines or ANA would get limited service, perhaps six days a week or something. They weren't made a carrier with the same rights as JAL or the U.S. carriers. Frank then worked out a deal where Japan would grant the United States five possible opportunities of which three could be realized. So, you could have three new U.S. carriers come in, but they would get only limited service and they could serve three of the five routes mentioned in the agreement. One could take each one. The new carriers would have a choice. So, if you had three new carriers, each could choose one of the five opportunities, but there were five opportunities. So, Frank had created the illusion that there was much more to be gained for the U.S. carriers than there was. In the end, ANA got in and started carrying cargo. FEDEX got limited rights to carry cargo between the United States and Japan. DELTA got some rights and I think United Airways got some rights. So that was the deal.

Frank devised this arrangement in order to build up enough support in the aviation community to overwhelm Flying Tigers, which had support in the Senate and wanted no part of the agreement because any additional cargo service, they thought, would reduce the value of their own franchise. So, Frank came up with this scheme and it was brilliant and it worked. Luckily, he had a job offer outside the government and it didn't have anything to do with the aviation industry. He knew the moment he finished the negotiations, successful or not, he could walk out the door and make more money and

there would be no conflict of interest at all. So, he was in fat city. He did a terrific job in the first major break-through in U.S. – Japan aviation relations in thirty years..

Later FEDEX bought Tigers, so it got a full franchise. I think UPS picked up the right that FEDEX initially had gotten after that negotiation. And, then Pan Am went bankrupt and United picked up its franchise. That was in 1986 or 1987. It was really cold when it happened because I remember being in Secretary Shultz's office and he had a big fire going in his fireplace when the Japanese Ambassador came in to make the final agreement recognizing United's assumption of Pan-Am's rights. Just after United acquired Pan-Am's rights, the Japanese Government had said, "Well, wait a minute. The 1952 agreement says something about Pan American, Northwest and Flying Tigers. It doesn't say anything about United Airlines." The United States took the position that United Airlines was the successor to Pan American. It was a successor to their rights. We made clear that we weren't going to pay for that. The Japanese Ambassador came in essentially to concede to Secretary Shultz on that point. I can still remember sitting there scribbling out the notes on the meeting. It was an interesting time. I learned a lot on aviation. It was fun.

*Q: You did this for what – two years?*

REIS: It did it for what turned out to be three years. I was one of the subordinate officers for two years and then I took over Rea's job and did basically the same thing for the third year and then I moved on.

*Q: Where did you move on to?*

REIS: I moved to the Office of Investment Affairs. I became the deputy director in the Office of Investment Affairs in EB.

*Q: You did that when? When did you move?*

REIS: My assignment was from the summer of 1987 to August of 1990. The director of the office when I first went there was a woman named Marilyn Meyers, who had been economic counselor in Tokyo. I'd known her for years, although not well. After about two years, she left the office to take a DAS position in the East Asian Bureau and I became the acting director. The deputy assistant secretary was a Bill Milam, who wound out as an ambassador to....

*Q: I've interviewed Bill.*

REIS: ....Bangladesh, and then later onto Pakistan. He was also in Monrovia, Liberia. when the country was in chaos and had no functioning government. He was one of the two or three best bosses I had in the Foreign Service, because he was very direct, very straight forward. You'd go in and say I want to do this, or that. Then he'd say, "What's wrong with you. That is not going to work." But if I explained my reasons, he usually

would authorize my proposal. Bill was always honest and direct. He had a good sense of humor and was bright and very nice. Working for him was fun.

We had a number of things to do in the Office of Investment Affairs. One thing we did was negotiate bilateral investment treaties and we shared that responsibility with USTR. The State Department still shares that responsibility with USTR. I remember I was involved in a negotiation with the People's Republic of the Congo. My staff participated in a number of other negotiations, including one with Tunisia.

The office had a number of other functions. It had primary responsibility for the United States' participation in the Committee on Investment and Multilateral Enterprises (CIME) at the OECD. Twice a year I took a delegation to CIME meetings in Paris. Representatives from Commerce and Treasury also participated. The discussions were really antiquated in the sense that a lot of them derived from the 1970s when the Europeans were afraid of U.S. investment in Europe. At that time the Europeans set up a discussion group at the OECD on the activities of multinational enterprises.

*Q: When you say, "Investment Affairs", what was the concern? Were we looking to arrange investments for our people abroad, or were we concerned about foreigners investing in the United States?*

REIS: Well, the two of them. The United States had had for years a free investment policy and we had pursued this investment policy through the OECD. Treasury led U.S. participation in the OECD Committee on Capital movements and invisible transactions. Through that committee the United States pursued the principles of national treatment and most-favored-nation treatment for investors in the OECD area. Underlying the U.S. policy was the sound view that investment funds should flow to their most efficient and profitable use without discriminatory actions by governments.

As American investment in Europe increased, concern grew in Europe about European companies' ability to compete with American corporations. In 1967 Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber of France wrote "The American Challenge," which sold 600,000 copies in France. At the initiative of Western European governments, the OECD established the Committee on Investment and Multinational Enterprises. Originally CIME was established so that continental Europeans could complain about American investors in Europe and about their supposedly rapacious behavior, what the Europeans now call Anglo-Saxon capitalism. They asserted that American companies fired people abruptly, closed factories with short notice and did not cooperate with unions. The committee provided a venue to air these complaints. After a time the members of CIME set up "contact points" in the capitals to which workers, unions and others could submit complaints about the labor practices of companies from other OECD members. The Office of Investment Affairs in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs was the U.S. contact point. During the time I was in the office, we did not receive any complaints about U.S. companies' actions in other OECD members.

However, by the time I started working on investment matters things in 1987, there had been quite a lot of European investment in the United States and American labor unions were using the U.S. contact point and the contact points in other OECD countries to go after the European investors who were resisting the unions' efforts to organize workers in the investors' plants and stores in the United States

One case involved Electrolux, a Swedish company that made vacuum cleaners and other appliances in Tennessee. The union tried to unionize the Electrolux plant and when it failed, lodged a complaint with us that Electrolux had prevented unionization. Under the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, it's pretty easy to prevent unionization and under the Reagan/Bush Administrations, there was not much support for unions. I had little doubt that Electrolux had discouraged, if not totally prevented, the labor union from unionizing. However, the union evidently did not have a basis for a suit against the company in a U.S. court. As a consequence, the union submitted to us a detailed memo of complaint with a request that we forward it to the Swedish contact point. In accordance with our standard practice, we requested a response from Electrolux. Then we sent both memos to the contact point in Sweden. The process was pointless as if Sweden wanted to ignore the union's complaint, there was nothing we could do about it. We could take up cases like the Electrolux case at the CIME meetings in Paris but the discussion there did not affect the outcome.

I remember speaking with lawyers at the U.S. National Labor Relations Board about the contact point system. They said the board had its process and that the unions using the Guidelines process were those that had failed in the U.S. regulatory system. The unions were trying to embarrass foreign investors like Electrolux. The contact point system was time consuming for us. We had to deal with the unions as well as the U.S. Council on International Business, which was the voice of business at OECD. Then we would have to discuss the case at the OECD. The other case I remember was Food Lion, the grocery store that was not unionized. The labor union was using the contact point system as part of its effort to unionize the company, which was Belgian-owned. Our office was always in the middle. The unions complained that the process was ineffective and the U.S. Council for International Business complained to the EB assistant secretary every time we sent a case to a foreign contact point.

You may recall that in the late 1980s, there were loud complains that Japan and some European companies were "buying up America." The surge in foreign investment had its roots in the 1985 Plaza Agreement among the world's major economic powers. The agreement resulted in the depreciation of the dollar and the appreciation of the Japanese yen and European currencies. (The United States had pushed for an agreement on currency values as the dollar had been strong in the early 1980's. Because of the strong currency, the United States had large trade and current account deficits.)

In late 1987 or very early 1988, Congress passed the Exon-Florio Amendment. The Exon-Florio Amendment said that if a foreign merger, acquisition or takeover could cause harm to the national security of the United States, then that investment could be

rolled back. In other words, the investor would have to dispose of his investment. Treasury was responsible for executing the amendment.

*Q: This was when Radio City Music Hall was bought and one of the movie companies - Universal?*

REIS: This was when Radio City was bought. Sony bought one of the movie companies. Then, the golf course, Pebble Beach, was bought by a Japanese investor.

*Q: Yes, yes.*

REIS: These purchases raised fear in corporate board rooms and among the public. That's why the Exon-Florio Amendment was put in place.

Originally, the Exon-Florio Amendment had said that the U.S. government could act against foreign directed mergers, acquisitions or takeovers – not “green-field” investments – if there was harm to the national security or the **national economic security**. James Baker, as Secretary of the Treasury, in negotiations with the Congress got “national economic security” out of the law. Treasury had to set up a system for managing this whole thing and so they came up with the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS). A career Treasury official, Steve Canner, ran the whole thing. He was the head of the Office of Investment at the Treasury. He and the Treasury lawyers drafted the regulations for the administration of the Exon-Florio Amendment and created the Committee, which included State, Commerce, Defense, USTR, Treasury, Justice and one or two other agencies.

Under the law and regulations, an intending foreign investor who had his proposed merger, acquisition or takeover reviewed and approved by the committee before going through with the investment was safe against any subsequent U.S. Government demand to disinvest. It took about a year for Treasury to set complete the regulations and to set up the review system.

I still remember, on the Saturday after the presidential inauguration in 1989, being in a room somewhere by Farragut Square – it must have been a law office – and working on a draft letter to Monsanto authorizing the company to sell to a foreign company five silicon wafer factories around the world: one in Germany, one in Malaysia, one in St. Peters, Missouri, which is near St. Louis, one in South Carolina, and one someplace else in the American South. Monsanto wanted to sell its silicon wafer business and use the money to invest in something more profitable. Initially Monsanto was going to sell the silicon business to a Japanese company but the Defense and Commerce Departments objected. Eventually Monsanto found a German buyer. Defense and Commerce opposed this sale too but had no cogent argument against the sale. Silicon wafers were and are not high-tech products. They are commodity product that could be made anywhere and the sale of the wafer business to a foreign company posed no harm to national security. The committee attached some minor conditions to the sale and Monsanto sold the company to

the German firm with the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury. The extended debate on this anodyne case was perfectly ludicrous.

The one lesson I learned out of all of this is that one reason industrial policy does not work is that bureaucrats like me, my colleague at Treasury or the people at Commerce or Defense know nothing substantial about these industries the committee reviewed. They knew nothing about whether a foreign merger, acquisition or takeover would cause any harm to the economy or to the national security. Yet my colleagues from Commerce and Defense were all too eager to second guess business decisions..

*Q: It's come back in spades in the European Union where they tried to regulate everything. It's bad enough what happens here, but in the European Union trying to regulate the size of cucumbers? It's a bit like herding cats.*

*Did you feel you were in competition with the Europeans, because the European Union was developing at that time, too?*

REIS: Yes, they were developing at that time, too. But, we weren't in competition with them. What we were trying to do was to maintain an open investment environment simply because we needed the investment. Certainly, we were accepting all green-field investment. That was the time that Japanese car companies were coming in and building new factories. We also had a case involving a Japanese purchase of an existing, but defunct paper company in Oregon. The committee reviewed and approved the purchase and the Japanese company turned the paper factory into a profitable venture providing employment to American workers.

If the Japanese didn't want to accept foreign investment at home, that was unfortunate for them and the international economic system. But why not accept the investment and modernize our economy? So, that was our view. Moreover, whatever we did in this country would wind up being done to us someplace else. We did not want to create a justification for barriers to U.S. companies' investments and operations overseas.

The final part of my job in the investment office was to represent the United States in the discussions on transnational corporations that were held at the United Nations in New York in the spring every year. The discussions began in the 1970s when the UN system set up a number of negotiations between developed and developing countries to establish a "New Economic Order."

The purpose of the talks was to provide an opportunity for the developing countries to get their part of the global economic pie. There were various negotiations. One was on commodities. Another was on intellectual property rights. Then there was a negotiation on a code of conduct for transnational corporations. The premise of the talks was that a developing country was too weak to deal effectively with a transnational corporation and that the corporation inevitably would fleece the developing country. The idea was to gain the developed countries' assent to putting as many restrictions as possible on transnational corporations' investments in developing countries. The developing

countries sought to deny transnational corporations national treatment and other sorts of protections. I can't remember what they were anymore, but there were four or five matters of real principle for investment policy that were involved in draft code. There were lots of other deviations from customary international law and from the general policies we follow in this country to maintain an open investment climate.

The UN negotiations were between group B, made up of the developed countries, and the group of seventy-seven, the developing countries. At the end of the debate on this, which went for several days, the investment committee issued a statement setting out the status of the discussions on transnational corporations. Remember that the discussions started in 1976, when the developing countries were desperately afraid of transnational corporations. By the late 1980s, the international mood had changed. Countries like Singapore and Malaysia had figured out that if you attract foreign directed investment, it's good for you. You can develop that way. But, nonetheless, the ideology among the G-seventy-seven was that foreign direct investment was dangerous and bad if it's done by developed countries.

The head of the Group B was Marino Baldi, who was a Swiss and very sensible, and was a fairly senior official in Switzerland's commerce ministry, I believe. He organized and spoke for the Group B countries. I was there to defend free investment. The British were pretty much doing the same thing. The Germans mostly did that too. Then you had the Dutch, the Norwegians and the other Scandinavians, who were fairly skeptical about foreign direct investment by major multinationals. I can remember the third year I attended the investment discussions in New York, the G-77 was headed by a fairly senior Mexican diplomat, who was perfectly fluent in English. He tried to push through the code of conduct on transnational corporations. He said that there were really only four or five issues that needed discussion and that the remaining 30 or more items that had been under discussion for ten years could be considered minor and agreed by all. Mr. Baldi didn't say anything and I wasn't supposed to say anything as he was leading the discussion. However, I couldn't contain myself and said, "No, I can't do that as there is any number of problems. I count thirty-five of them or something like that and here they are, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven – thirty-five. No, we're not going to do it." And I thought the Dutch woman was going to murder me right there on the spot she was so mad. (Laughs)

*Q: Did you come away from this type of negotiation with any profound thoughts on this?*

REIS: No. A lot of what goes on at the UN is absurd. The representatives of developing countries frequently spoke and acted without instructions from their capitals. The views they expressed often were their own, based on their own world views and prejudices. The representatives of developed countries usually acted and spoke consistent with their governments' views. The representatives from some developing countries would carry on these silly, philosophical arguments on the benefits of a controlled economy and the horrors of capitalism. The positions they took would reduce investment inflows to their countries and were contrary to their countries' interests. The discussions flowed from the 1974 UNCTAD meeting in Nairobi. At the time the developing countries were elated by

the 1973 Arab oil embargo and thought that if they were tough and united against United States and Europe, or maybe if they waved a magic wand, they could change the whole international economic system by negotiation. They couldn't. They didn't. And, moreover, if they had, it would have been to their detriment. It was really sort of silly. But, anyway, we protected our position, which was the main thing.

*Q: When did you end this?*

REIS: I ended this in the summer - August 1990. Then I went back to Tokyo for three years, from 1990 to 1993.

*Q: This was still President Bush, George H. W. Bush. What were you doing?*

REIS: I was the Economic Counselor in Tokyo. I was back doing economics work again.

*Q: Who was the ambassador?*

REIS: The ambassador was Michael Armacost. After being ambassador in Tokyo, he came back here and was head of the Brookings Institute for a time and now he is at the Hoover Institute at Stanford. He had been an academic political scientist and came into the State Department laterally and rose quickly through the ranks. He had been the ambassador to the Philippines and then Under Secretary for Political Affairs before going to Tokyo. I worked directly for Joe Winder, the economic minister. He oversaw all of the embassy's economic functions and dealt with senior Japanese officials, American officials and senior members of the American business community. I supervised the day-to-day work of the economic section.

*Q: Did you see in this 1990-1993 period that there had been any major changes in the Japanese approach to things during the time you were away?*

REIS: There were some. There had been some changes. First of all, the Japanese, for the reasons I explained earlier, had been investing quite substantially overseas so the major Japanese corporations began to see that protectionism in Japan did not really serve their interests because it raised costs. Yet you still had many of the economic and regulatory structures that had existed before.

When I got there, there was a negotiation well underway called the Structural Impediments Initiative (SII) negotiation, in which, instead of looking at particular industries or particular little business sectors, looked at the whole economy. It looked at not only the Japanese economy, but it also looked at the United States economy. The negotiation was led by the Treasury Department; it had the major role. But, you had a number of agencies involved; State was there as the diplomatic agency. Commerce, USTR, and Justice were all there.

They all looked at features of the Japanese economic structure to try to figure out what the problems were and why things worked the way they did. You had Justice looking at

anti-trust policy. Treasury looked at macro-economic management. There was a question of the Japanese savings rate, because the Japanese had such a high savings rate, which had the tendency to reduce consumption and imports. Essentially, the high savings rate was associated with the large current account surplus, so the macroeconomic structure of Japan's economy underlay the whole discussion. Then there was a discussion of the Japanese regulatory systems in general. There were periodic reports of this discussion. I think it made some progress. In fact, it was fairly popular with the Japanese people. There was one famous newspaper cartoon where a housewife was complaining about high grocery costs, or something like that. The husband said, "Don't worry about it. The Americans and the Structural Impediments Initiative will take care of all of that."

*(Laughter)*

The SII talks got started before I went back to Japan in 1990. I think that the U.S. government used publicity in the Ambassador's speeches and things like that to say, "Hey look, we're talking about this stuff. Obviously, if we can change the economic structure of Japan so that importers of foreign goods have a better chance of importing it without too much trouble and U.S. exporters can benefit that's great, but it's also going to benefit you because it's going to reduce costs and make it easier for you to do business here." I think that there was some recognition of that through the process of negotiation and publicity and the economy began to change.

I can remember one time I was walking along a street near the embassy on a Sunday afternoon with my wife. A Japanese man came up and fell into step with us and said in Japanese, "Oh, you speak Japanese." I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, you know, The United States is right. You Americans really understand that the big Japanese corporations think only of themselves and take advantage of common people with high prices and poor services. He continued in this vein for several blocks as we walked along. So, I think there was some change there.

Another thing that had resulted from the Plaza Agreement was an enormous speculation in the Japanese stock and real estate. Corporations were investing a lot of money and that caused a real boom and that boom was still going on when I got there even though the Bank of Japan had tried to puncture the bubble by raising interest rates. In fact, it succeeded all too well. When the Japanese Bank of Japan had acted in 1989 or 1990, the Japan Nikkei DOW index was 40,000. A couple weeks ago it was only 13,000. It has never gotten back up to 40,000. The highest I think it ever did get back up to was maybe 17,000 or 20,000.

*Q: In view of where we are today, which is in the middle of a recession, a catastrophe on the stock market where things went way down because of manipulation based apparently for the most part on poor valuation of real estate, were you all as economic officers looking at the Japanese economy and saying, "Wait a minute. This thing is bubbling."*

REIS: The Treasury was aware of the effervescence in Japan. The Treasury attaché in Tokyo was. Treasury had an attaché and a deputy and later two deputy attachés in Tokyo.

They followed Japan's economy closely and reported in a prescribed format I don't think the bursting of the bubble was an enormous surprise.

*Q: Going back to Japan at that time, did you notice - particularly on the economic side – a difference in the Japanese investment/business class? If they were buying up properties in the United States and obviously elsewhere too.....this must have had an effect on the worldly outlook of the big business class to some extent, didn't it?*

REIS: Well, to some extent. I think that the companies that had made investments in productive plants in the United States were more changed than those who were investing in real estate for reasons I'll get to in a minute. The people who were investing in productive plants I think discovered, quite to their surprise, that American workers and European workers were really quite productive. They thought up until the late 1970s or so you couldn't possibly go to the United States and produce anything because Americans workers were undisciplined, difficult to train and not as hard working as Japanese workers.

But by 1990, the auto companies, which had gone to the United States under duress because they were afraid that if they didn't invest here, they would wind up not being able to export to the U.S. market, had discovered that investing in the United States was profitable. Nissan and Honda were the first car companies to invest in the United States. Honda has always been the most innovative and open minded of the Japanese automobile companies. Toyota resisted investment in the United States for a time but eventually did invest. The auto companies found that this country is a terrific market and is also a great place to make automobiles. There was that realization: Look, things really are pretty good in the United States. After Sony bought a Hollywood film company, there was a long article in "The New Yorker" describing Sony's realization that doing business in the United States is pretty easy.

*Q: Where were business people learning the trade? In business schools?*

REIS: In Japan, do you mean?

*Q: Yes.*

REIS: That's another point I was going to get to. In the Japanese system young people get out of college at 22. School ends after four years of college in March. Then, on April 1<sup>st</sup>, there are classes of new employees inducted into all sorts of major institutions, companies and government agencies and all sorts of things. The best of the graduates were recruited into the Ministry of Finance from Tokyo University's law school. Then you had other people who went to Keio University, which has a reputation for being a place where business people come from. They tended, and I think to a large extent still do tend, to study law or economics and they get out and they go into major corporations and to the government. Then they are trained to do what it is that they will do in the course of their careers.

In the 1990s some commentators claimed that Japanese university graduates who entered corporations did not have some of the financial skills that students leaving MBA programs, especially quantitative programs. I suppose that makes sense. Of course, the new employees got on-the-job training. The dearth of financial expertise seems to be a continuing problem. The Japanese government keeps talking about making Tokyo a financial hub in Northeast Asia but, according to the press, one of the reasons it hasn't happened is that Japan does not have enough trained financial people. There is a deficit of some tens of thousands that you'd need to make Tokyo a hub. The other reason is that the financial system in Japan is more regulated than New York or London or Hong Kong or Singapore, according to the press.

Not long ago I saw a guy who teaches in New York University's MBA program. He said that for a time in the 1990s and first part of this millennium, Japanese corporations were sending people who had been with them for five or ten years to U.S. MBA programs. So, people would come here to the United States and they'd take an MBA and go back to their company. Then, they'd be disgruntled because the company didn't operate like a streamlined U.S. company. It was not as entrepreneurial; it was more hierarchical and they couldn't do what they wanted to do. So, then they'd get disgruntled and say, "Forget it" and join some U.S. company in Tokyo. Not only did the company have to live with disgruntled employees for a period of time but then they found that they had lost their investments as employees left the company. Evidently the Japanese companies have reduced the number of people they send to the United States for graduate degrees.

*Q: What you say rings a bell with me. This goes way back in the mid '60s in Yugoslavia. We had exchange programs. Yugoslavs – they were 'Yugoslavs' in those days – well, most of them were quite patriotic. They'd go to graduate schools – medicine or one of the other studies and go back and they just wouldn't get the time of the day from their seniors because they were different and they were trying to do things in an American or modern way. They just wouldn't be accepted. This is a story that has been going on for a long time. They would end up going back to America, which was quite receptive of them.*

REIS: They would go to an American company in Tokyo and work there.

*Q: How did you find your staff, both American and Japanese, in the economic side of things?*

REIS: On the American side, we had a good staff but it was not altogether even.. In the economic section, we had some really terrific people, one of whom, Jim Zumwalt (James P. Zumwalt), spoke perfect Japanese and is now DCM in Tokyo. He won the Salzman Award for economic reporting for the work he did in Japan in the 1990s. He was terrific. There was another officer, Kevin Honan, who died about a year ago from cancer, who was bright, intellectually engaged and personable. Then we had a young junior officer who later left the Foreign Service and now an editor for "The Atlantic Monthly." He was very good. He grew up partly in Japan. His father was a well-know Japanologist and writer. We had another couple of excellent people. We also had a number of other people who were capable but not as versatile as others.

The composition of the FSN work force had begun to change by the time I returned to Tokyo in 1990. The administrative minister in the embassy was Bob McCallum, who came up with a very good idea. . The problem that Bob had correctly discerned was that the aging FSN work force, many of whose members worked for the embassy since the 1950s, needed to be renewed. Yet there was nothing to compel the FSNs to retire. I think they could stay around until they were seventy. So, Bob came up with the idea of trying to encourage some of these people to leave, because not only were these people expensive, but they were not terribly productive. He worked out a deal with one of the women's colleges in Tokyo to bring in graduates who spoke English. They'd be rotational within the embassy for a time then they would settle down in one office or another. We had three or four of them in the economic section and they were terrific. They really were good. There was one young lady who had been a high school exchange student in Milwaukee, so her English was very good and she was very bright. She had also worked for the Asahi Shimbun, their English language weekly (now also under the masthead of the International Herald Tribune) as a writer. She was just a bright, capable person who was interested in and good at writing things up and so forth. So, it was a smart thing that Bob did and it really worked out in the end.

*Q: Were there any crises while you were there?*

REIS: No great crises. There were continual trade negotiations on, as I say, the SII talks and some product particular trade negotiations.

One of the features of the Japanese economy then was that certain parts of the economy were cartelized – the glass and paper industries are cases in point. In each case, three companies shared the market and engaged in various forms of predatory behavior. One was in paper, for example. If one of the three companies was presented with price competition from a foreign competitor, it would go to the potential purchaser of their competitor's product would say, "We know that you are buying this paper from such and such a company in the United States and we know it's cheaper, but remember you can't get this and this or that from them and you also can't get special orders on time when you need them. We make a practice of serving our best customers the best." That was enough to tell this company, "You're treading on dangerous ground. If you continue to do business with this American company, you're going to wind up in a situation in which you need something bad and we're not going to give it to you." That would cut off their contact with the American company.

I mentioned Jim Zumwalt and this young lady a little while ago. The two of them did studies of the paper and glass industries and documented predation and non-competitive behavior and wrote it all up. That's how Jim earned the Salzman Award. But, it also gave rise to two negotiations between the USTR and the Japanese to try to break up these cartels and to set up a set of rules so that there could be some competition and American companies could have some opportunities here. I'm not sure that that was totally satisfactory, but there was some progress in that, I think.

Another thing that happened that was interesting took place in the fall of 1991. A year before the presidential election, there had been a bye-election in Pennsylvania and a Democratic governor had been elected. This was a wake-up call for the Republicans because they thought the election of the Democrat in Pennsylvania indicated that public support for the Republican president was weak. They attributed this putative weakness to the public's discontent with the Bush Administration's emphasis on foreign rather than domestic matters. President Bush had been planning to visit Australia, Singapore and Tokyo over Thanksgiving in 1991. As a result of this election, his political advisors told him to cancel the trip, so he did. Then, U.S. newspapers, including the "Washington Post," had article asking why the President had cancelled the trip and suggesting that he was running scared. The articles argued that visiting major allies was important and that he should not have cancelled the trip. Thereupon, the President reversed the decision and scheduled a trip to Asia for January..

Robert Zoellick, then the under secretary for economic affairs in the State Department and now the head of the World Bank, came out just before Christmas to prepare for the visit of the President to Tokyo in January, just after the New Year. When he came to Tokyo, Bush brought with him representatives from the auto industry because he thought this would demonstrate his concern for the domestic economy and the automobile industry and that this would help him in his election campaign in 1992.

Mr. Zoellick was put in charge of writing a statement about the automobile issue and what the Japanese were going to do about the automobile industry and imports of U.S. cars, what they were going to do about buying U.S. automobile parts and things like that. I was in the Foreign Ministry and it was about 9:30 on the night of the state dinner. A senior Japanese Foreign Ministry official was there. The director of the Japan Desk, Rust Deming and the embassy's economic minister, Joe Winter, were there as were members of the Foreign Ministry. All of a sudden, a junior Japanese foreign ministry official came in and said in Japanese, "The president has collapsed." I thought, "Oh my goodness. The President has had a heart attack or stroke, or something like that." The official turned on the television set and we saw the report. It quickly became clear that the President had the flu and had thrown up. Apart from that, the visit went well but it did not do much to solve the President's political problems. As we know, he lost the election in November 1992.

But the election started the next phase of things because one of the things that candidate Bill Clinton hit on in his campaign was that one of the reasons that the United States did not have a successful international economic policy was that while it had a National Security Council, it didn't have a National Economic Council. The new Clinton Administration established a National Economic Council, which began in about March 1993 to have meetings two or three times a week in Washington to try to figure out what our policy towards Japan should be. They did not reach a conclusion until late May and the members of the council realized that the G7 Summit was going to take place in Tokyo around the first of July and they better get a policy together or otherwise it might be a little bit embarrassing.

The members of the council flew to Tokyo on an Air Force aircraft in late May. Larry Summers, the undersecretary for international affairs at Treasury, was there as were Joan Spero, the under secretary for economic affairs in the State Department, Alan Blinder from the FED , and representatives of the Commerce Department and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. The leader of the delegation was Bowman (Bo) Cutter, the head of the National Economic Council. The group had discussions with an inter-agency group of Japanese officials for a day or so but the talks were diffuse and ended without any tangible results. The U.S. team returned to Washington and came back later in May, or perhaps early June. They still didn't get anywhere. Then, all during the G8 Summit, Bo Cutter negotiated with the then vice minister at the Foreign Ministry, Hisashi Owada, whose daughter was the diplomat who married Japan's crown prince. Mr. Owada and Bo Cutter worked out a joint statement, which really was a list of the topics that the two governments would talk about for the next year or two. There was no real agreement other than an agreement on topics for discussion. President Clinton and Prime Minister Miyazaki announced the statement at a press conference at the Okura Hotel, across the street from the Embassy on the morning of the Saturday the President was leaving Tokyo. After the press conference I heard Mr. Owada say to my counterpart at the Foreign Ministry. "Gokuroo-sama deshita," or "Good work." Mr. Owada obviously thought that he had come out on top in the U.S.-Japan economic discussions.

I can remember going into Ambassador Armacost's office after the press conference to bring him a copy of the statement. He looked at it and asked, "What do you think?" And I said, "Well, it looks like a writ to negotiate." He agreed and tossed it onto the side of his desk.

(Laughter)

I concluded that the Washington team had not accomplished much of anything. Obviously the Ambassador could not and did not say that.

*Q: Activity to show activity.*

REIS: Well, yes.

*Q: Well, you left in '93, was it?*

REIS: Yes.

*Q: Well, this is a good place to stop.*

REIS: Ok.

*Q: Well pick this up next time. In '93, where did you go?*

REIS: We came back to Washington and I was in the Office of Aviation Policy.

*Q: Well, this shows that once you get into the Chrysanthemum club, it's Japan Washington, Japan Washington, isn't it.*

REIS: Yes. Well, I had one more rotation on Japan in Washington and that was it.

*Q: Well, we'll pick this up at '93, when you are in the office of aviation policy.*

REIS: Ok.

*Q: Today is the first of November 2008.*

*Bob, when you're at the embassy and you're having these high-level economic of negotiations with the guys with suits coming out of Washington, what do you do? Do you sort of sit on the sidelines? What is your function?*

REIS: Well, there were a couple of functions. One was to take notes, although we generally used more junior people to take the notes. The other thing that I was trying to do was just trying to keep track of what was going on because my counterparts at the Foreign Ministry would raise things with me so you would have to have some idea of what was going on. Occasionally, somebody from Washington would ask a question about this or that detail of some economic problem and you'd have to answer that. But, it was by and large just to try to keep track of what was going on and to report to Washington. The Economic Minister, who was my boss, tended to have a little bit more to do with the Washington delegations. However, the delegations did not usually seek advice because their ideas had already been formed in Washington. They had the policy and we were simply there to execute it and help them in its execution.

*Q: Did you have a feeling that this was a Washington-created policy without much input from the people on the ground?*

REIS: In the process leading up to the 1993 talks, there was not much input from the Embassy in Tokyo. Before that, in the fall of 1992, after the election, there'd been quite a lot of analysis done in the Embassy and preparation of policy proposals. At some point or another, I think the ambassador sent in a long telegram saying, "These are the problems we face; these are our recommendation on what to do about them." But, after that, I think that senior officials in Washington operated independently didn't seek much guidance from us. Of course, we continued our regular telegraphic reporting on economic issues and developments.

*Q: Such is life.*

REIS: Such is life. Yes.

*Q: As a practical thing, looking at this as an operational thing, with policy one of the most annoying thing for people creating "policy" at the higher regions of the government in anything is to have the people who have to deal with the matter at hand say, "That's*

*all very nice, but this'll work, that won't work." It's much better to brush them aside so they won't 'sully' the 'beautiful' policy.*

REIS: Well, that's right. We'd learned a long time before in Japan that you really couldn't say, "Hey. You really ought to remember that four years ago this happened, or five years ago that happened. This is not going to work for this reason." So, the Washington delegations came to Tokyo, we welcomed them. They'd ask a question, we'd answer it. Otherwise, they pursued their own agendas.

*Q: Yes. And of course this happens in all other fields of foreign policy and I'm sure on can trace this thing to domestic policy, too.*

REIS: Yes.

*Q: Ok. You were doing aviation in Washington from '93 to when?*

REIS: To July of '95.

*Q: What was your job title?*

REIS: I was the director of the office of aviation policy. There were two aviation offices in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs. One was aviation negotiations. The aviation negotiations office negotiated service agreements, which set the routes and number of flights between the United States and its foreign aviation partners.

At the time there'd been a new formula that came up, which was set down in a pro forma "open skies agreement." Under this sort of agreement, U.S. carriers could run as many flights as they wanted into and beyond whatever country it happened to be and that country's carriers could run as many flights as they wanted into and beyond the United States. For example, U.S. carriers could operate as many flights as they wanted – let's say from Chicago to Seoul and then beyond to China or somewhere else and the Korean carriers could run as many flights to Chicago and on to Montreal or Europe. The arrangement provided a lot of flexibility to the carriers and introduced more competition into the market place. This new, liberal aviation agreement came at a time – this is a digression – when airlines were beginning to have code-share agreements. For example, Northwest had code-share arrangement with the Dutch carrier, KLM. Under the code-share agreements, each carrier could sell seats on the other carrier's flights as if they were their own flights. In this example, each flight would have a Northwest flight number and a KLM flight number. Our colleagues in the aviation negotiations office had to take account of these kinds of changes in the aviation industry as they tried to negotiate more open aviation agreements.

We in the aviation policy office dealt mainly with the FAA but also with the National Transportation Safety Board, the agency that investigate air crashes.

The State Department had certain responsibilities for aviation matters. The State Department oversaw the ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) in Montreal, a member of the United Nations family. (The International Organizations Bureau oversaw ICAO's budget as well as the budget and staffing of the U.S. Mission to ICAO.) The Office of Aviation Policy was responsible, with the Department of Transportation, for discussions at ICAO on general aviation policy, that is, how open and competitive the global aviation system should be. State and the FAA shared responsibility for aviation security questions. FAA handled many technical aviation matters largely on its own.

It was a pretty sleepy office. One major project was to figure out how to release FAA information about foreign aviation agencies' oversight of their airlines. At the time, the U.S. Airline Passengers Association was putting pressure on the FAA to release information on the safety of foreign air carriers. The FAA did not want to release documents on its inspections of foreign governments' oversight of their air carriers. The FAA feared that the release of reports critical of the oversight and the deficiencies in foreign airlines' safety records would disrupt cooperation between the FAA and its foreign counterparts. . (This seemed implausible as most of the foreign governments wanted their carriers to be able to fly to the United States and the carriers could not do so if they didn't cooperate in the FAA's inspections, which were required by U.S. law.) In any event the FAA asked me if the State Department could classify its inspection reports. I looked at the Freedom of Information Act and consulted the State Department's legal staff and found there was no basis for classifying the documents. I passed this on to the FAA.

We then began a discussion with the FAA, which was under continuing pressure from consumer groups to release these data. The Congress also had begun to take an interest in the matter. Eventually, we worked out with the FAA an arrangement in which it would give abbreviated ratings of the effectiveness of the foreign governments' oversight of their carriers. I think there were three different 'ratings.' The first was, for example, for a country like the United Kingdom. Oversight is effective. The second was for governments whose oversight was a little shaky and needed significant improvement. And the third category indicated failing supervision of the country's airlines. So, we worked this arrangement with the FAA, which was not a particularly easy organization to work with because it had a penchant for cutting corners and not being very open and then presenting a *faît accomplis*.

Later, the FAA wanted State to make a written commitment that the GPS service would never be turned off.

*Q: This is the Global Position System.*

REIS: Global Positioning System, which is run by military satellites. The military has a right for its own necessity to turn off service at any particular point in the world at any particular time. The FAA was afraid that the Western Europeans would use the U.S. military's ability to turn the GPS signals off as an excuse to build their own system, to the detriment to U.S. producers of GPS equipment. I thought that what the FAA wanted the

State Department to do, that is, to declare GPS never would be turned off, was fundamentally dishonest. It is plain as the day is long that the military will do what it has to do when it has to do it.

*Q: Yes.*

REIS: So, we got into a big fight about that for a while and eventually some compromise emerged, but I don't think it was plausible to anybody – not to the Europeans, not to anybody else.

The job of this office was basically trying to manage the foreign policy aspects of international aviation, safety and security.

*Q: How did you find your relations were with the other major airline carrier countries?*

REIS: Well, we didn't really have an enormous amount to do with the foreign carriers themselves and not even that much with the governments. Our job was mostly to deal with the FAA. You deal with foreign governments in ICAO, for example, but there you found most of the individual western European countries and the other developed countries were pretty reasonable to deal with. Some were more open than others. But, on technical matters on questions of aviation safety and security, they were very sensible, so you didn't have a problem with that.

Our colleagues in the office of aviation negotiations had to deal with the question of who in Western Europe had the responsibility for the negotiation of aviation service agreements. There was some ambiguity at the time about who in the EU had competence for aviation: Was it only the individual countries acting under the Chicago Convention of 1944, which places the responsibility for the supervision of carriers on national governments. Unlike the case in maritime shipping, you can't have a foreign flag carrier for an airplane. You can have an American-owned ship registered in Liberia or Panama, flying under a Liberian Flag or a Panamanian flag, but you can't have an American owned aircraft, airline flying under a Liberian or Panamanian flag. The drafters of the Chicago Convention wrote the agreement in this way intentionally because aviation security and safety were fragile and they wanted some responsible government in charge of them.

From that concept of having one airline supervised by its government, there came some ambiguity once the EU was formed about who had responsibility for negotiating aviation agreements. Eventually it was settled, I think it was settled in favor of the EU, not the individual nations. I think they may have come to that conclusion earlier, but I think it has only been in the last several years that you've had the U.S. on the one side and the EU on the other side negotiating aviation agreements. It got rather complicated because there were existing relationships: United States-Italy, United States Spain, United States and all of the rest of them. So, if the EU took over, question was: what are you going to do about that? Is the EU going to countenance U.S. aircraft flying from one European city to another when under U.S law the EU airlines could not board passengers in one

U.S. city and take them to another U.S. city. From the EU's point of view it was a question of balance. Many of the agreements between the United States and individual European governments contained 'beyond rights' that allowed flights within Europe. For example, a flight could land in Spain and then go on to Germany. In a sense, once the EU was assumed responsibility for aviation, these beyond rights became cabotage rights, rights within one economic unit, the EU. We were not, and still are not as far as I know, prepared to accord cabotage rights to the European, or other foreign. This is a long digression from what I was saying.

*Q: From your perspective, were there any particular problem areas in the National Transportation Safety Board? Were there any nationality groups or not that caused you particular problems?*

REIS: No, not really. We didn't have any particular problems. The National Transportation Safety Board is a very professional and honest organization. We did have differences with the FAA on some policy issues. For example, the FAA had a standing relationship with Russia, with the Russian aviation regulator, the FAA's counterpart in Russia. This counterpart wanted to maintain oversight over Ukraine and some of these other countries that had been in the former Soviet Union and the questions became, does this really make sense and should the United States be assisting the Russian aviation regulator to maintain its tentacles over these places or not? We got two different views. The Russia Desk advised against recognizing Russian oversight of the Ukraine's aviation industry. The embassy in Russia said it saw no problem. The FAA continued to work with Russia on Ukraine's aviation system. I do not think the decision made sense. My job was composed of a lot of those kinds of things, none of it terribly substantive, none of it terribly onerous, but a lot of little details and trying to maintain some consistency in policy.

*Q: In the State Department did you find that you were playing, what you might say either "the honest broker" looking out after national interest rather than airline interest? What was your role, would you say?*

REIS: The FAA is a big organization with thousands of people and we obviously couldn't control everything and we couldn't even think about it and it was beyond our capability to know the technical details of the matters under its responsibility. But, when they were setting up arrangements for oversight of safety and security the FAA would go to many countries and look at their government's oversight arrangements and come to a conclusion about whether they were good or bad. Our main interest was to make sure that the FAA's characterizations of the oversight arrangements were honest. As I mentioned earlier, the FAA had tried to use the State Department to classify their reports because they were afraid the release of the reports would harm their relationship with some of their foreign counterparts.

*Q: Let me understand this. When you say they weren't quite honest, what basically were they doing? Were they covering up mechanical defects or what?*

REIS: The FAA would visit countries with air carriers serving the United States and would determine to what extent the carriers' governments were complying with the obligations of the Chicago Convention to maintain adequate oversight of their airlines. "Adequate oversight" meant doing inspections, keeping records of inspections, and correcting deficiencies. Dealing with western European aviation authorities, Japan's authority and other developed country authorities wasn't a problem. These governments maintained excellent oversight. Some developing countries don't have the capacity to do what they are supposed to do. There probably is corruption sometimes and other times they're just sloppy. In their inspections, the FAA would come across some of these problems and document them in their reports. The FAA had come under pressure from consumer organizations to release these reports. However, the agency did not want to release them as it feared the revelation of derogatory information on the foreign governments' oversight and on the foreign carriers deficiencies would harm the agency's relationships with its foreign counterparts. That's when we got drawn in and the FAA asked us to classify the report as national security information. I told the agency that I understood its dilemma but did not think the U.S. Government should be acting in a devious way, which is one possible characterization of what the FAA was proposing. Following our discussions, the FAA established the system of several different categories so they didn't have to release their documents but they did have to give ratings on the various countries' oversight and on the carriers so that consumers could make a decision about whether they wanted to fly on this or that foreign carrier. The EB deputy assistant secretary for transportation matters and a senior FAA official described the new system at a hearing by a committee of the House of Representatives.

One of the last things I did in the office of aviation policy was to establish a course on aviation at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI). I had noticed from my own experience and from talking with other officers in the State Department and at Foreign Service posts responsible for aviation matters that the Department provided no training for aviation work. Officers just looked at the office files and tried to figure out what to do. With two members of my staff, I put together a syllabus for a three-day aviation course and asked FSI if it would support it. FSI agreed to do so. The course had segments on the Chicago Convention, U.S. aviation law, aviation service negotiations, the roles of the Department of Transportation (DOT), the FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), and the economics of the aviation industry, among other topics. We recruited as instructors colleagues from DOT, the State Department's Legal Bureau, the FAA and the NTSB, as well as a consultant on aviation and a representative of the U.S. aviation industry. I was happy that the course was a success. FSI later included an abbreviated version of the course in its nine-month economic course and also used the course as a model for other short courses on economic topics at FSI.

*Q: Ok. In '95 you moved on?*

REIS: In 1995 I moved to the Japan desk. I was the director of the Japan Desk. By that time there'd been an agreement on automobiles and automobile parts to ease access for U.S. exports to Japan. That was in June 1995. I moved to the desk in July or August. One of the reasons I was put on the desk was that I knew something about economics and

knew the history of the U.S. – Japan economic problems. It turned out that that the three years I was on the Japan desk there was very little that I had to do on economics.

Mostly, my work had to do with political military matters. I think it was over the Labor Day weekend in 1995 that a Japanese girl in Okinawa was raped by four U.S. servicemen.

*Q: I have just finished interviewing Al O'Neill. He was consul general there.*

REIS: Yes.

*Q: How did this impact U.S. Japan relations?*

REIS: The first thing that happened was that the Japanese wanted to renegotiate the status of forces agreement, because the existing status of forces agreement did not permit the Japanese to demand custody of an American serviceman charged with a crime until after he had been convicted in a Japanese court. So, until....ask Al because his recollection will be better than mine, but my recollection is that until there had been a trial, the defendant, the member of the U.S. forces, remained in U.S. custody. If he were convicted, then of course he would serve time in a Japanese prison. Because of the nation-wide outrage over the rape, the Japanese Government found that arrangement no longer satisfactory. It sought to renegotiate the status of forces agreement to allow Japan to take immediate custody of American servicemen charged of serious crimes. State and Defense worked together to negotiate an amendment to the status of forces agreement which provided for the release into Japanese custody of an American serviceman charged of a "heinous crimes of rape and murder." That solved the immediate problem. It took about two months to do.

The solution of the custody problems left the question of what to do about Okinawa more generally. At the time I think there was something like 44,000 members of the American forces in Japan and of those, I think about 28,000 were in Okinawa, which is a small island. A significant number of the Okinawan people were not happy with the burdens of hosting the American bases. The Japanese government was torn. On the one hand it didn't want any of these bases moving to mainland Japan because there was opposition there to having more bases. Yet the Japanese Government recognized the importance of the American presence to Japan's security. One possible way to ameliorate the situation in Okinawa was to consolidate the U.S. bases there, in DOD jargon, to reduce the American footprint.

So, there was a series of negotiations, or discussions more than negotiations I suppose, over two or three years about what to do about all of this. DOD had the lead in all that. Curt Campbell, who was a political appointee and the deputy assistant secretary in the office of international security affairs in the office of the secretary of defense, led the negotiations. He had been at the Kennedy School at Harvard University as a professor. Kurt's immediate superior was Assistant Secretary Joseph Nye, now the head of the Kennedy School. Campbell tried within DOD to build up support for handing bases in

Okinawa back to Japan. I have to say he didn't get too far. There were some bases that were surplus essentially and they were released. There were two golf courses in Okinawa and the military wouldn't release either one of them; they were sacrosanct. These negotiations just went on and on and on and on. They persisted well beyond my tenure on the desk.

They're still talking about what to do about Futenma, which is a Marine Corps air base with a lot of helicopter activity that is in the center of a populated area in Okinawa. It is actually, I think, right below where our consul general's house is. The question is what to do about this dangerous situation. There were various possibilities examined. There was a decision made about the time I left the desk, but that fell apart I think. Eventually, they made a decision to put the airbase on reclaimed land on another part of the island that is not so congested. Every time Campbell tried to do something, the military had all sorts of practical reasons why the proposal would not work. It was going to be expensive; it was going to require too much commuting; it was going to disrupt the lives of the American servicemen on the island. Kurt had a really a thankless job. He did his best, but it was a very difficult job.

*Q: I've interviewed people who fought the 'Second Battle of Okinawa', that's on the reversion, between the State Department – fighting the battle to revert Okinawa to Japan, it wasn't bloody, but it was loooooong and fierce.*

REIS: Yes. It was a mess.

The other major thing we did at the desk, which was actually a success, was to help to negotiate what is called "Defense Guidelines." We worked closely with Kurt Campbell and others at the Defense Department and with the embassy in Tokyo on this project. The guidelines came out in the fall of 1997. It was the first time there'd been a look at what the rules of engagement of the United States and Japan would be in the case of what was called a "Far Eastern Emergency", which is a term that comes out of the Security Agreement of 1960. So the question is what you would do about that.

There was a 1978 Guidelines Agreement, which was general. When we began to think about drafting new defense guidelines, I looked at the 1978 agreement, and found it was not very specific and I thought some of the phrasing was a little awkward. We then began to negotiate an agreement on what the two sides would do in the case of a far eastern emergency.

The interesting thing about it is that when we started this whole thing, we really didn't have very much in the way of guidance from our superiors. The first round of discussions was held at Fort McNair, if I'm not mistaken. The Japanese presented a text that was off target; it didn't address the main issues very clearly. So, we said politely, "This is not sort of what we had in mind. Let us look at the thing. Then, we'll come back to you and then we can talk about it." That was in the morning sometime, I guess. In the afternoon DOD and we each looked at the draft and then began to get some ideas of what we wanted to say in the agreement or in the guidelines.

So we came up with an alternate text, which we gave to our Japanese counterparts and began to negotiate with them. I can remember being in the Japanese embassy until 3 o'clock in the morning going over the text, trying to put things down so that it was clear which government would be responsible for what. Basically, the division of labor was that Japan would take care of things within Japan and on the seas immediately around Japan and the United States would take care of things further on.

But the question was exactly what those things are. I haven't looked at the Guidelines in a long time, but Japan would certainly protect American bases and do some things along its coast, but wouldn't go out very far. And the problem was, how do you create a division of duties that ensures a credible defense of Japan?

How do you do that when there are rather restrictive Japanese defense policies? Japan may not engage in what it calls "collective self defense." Japan's legal interpretation meant that there were substantial limits to what it could do. So, we had some really unusual discussions with the Japanese negotiators about contingencies. I can remember one time being at a negotiation in Hawaii and one of the U.S. military officers said, "Okay. Just to make clear we understand what the situation is here. Say there is a missile fired from North Korea and it's heading plainly towards Tokyo. When can you shoot it down?" Then there are some very brief conversations among the Japanese in Japanese and then the answer was, "Well, as soon as it crosses the Japanese border because before that it is in international air space and we could not know where it could go. It could turn around and go back to North Korea, theoretically. Once it enters the Japanese air space, we would shoot it down." There was just utter incomprehension in the room.

Since then, that's changed. In the end we got the guidelines done. We unveiled them at what was known at the Two-Plus-Two meeting in New York, attended by the foreign ministers and defense ministers from the two sides. That was in October 1997, I think.

Interestingly, one of the things that got a bit complicated was the question of NEO's (non-combatant evacuation operations). The Japanese wanted as a *quid pro quo* in this agreement an undertaking by the United States to evacuate Japanese citizens from places where there was danger or violence. What they were thinking primarily about was Korea. The problem is the United States had agreements with only two countries, Britain and Canada and both of those are confidential and they are also very short. They are not at all descriptive. The Japanese wanted something much longer. It got to be really pretty messy. I was in Washington on a Thursday during the negotiation in Tokyo of the final draft of the guidelines that was going to be reviewed by senior U.S. and Japanese delegations in Honolulu on Saturday. (I believe this was in early June of 1997.) In the draft was a paragraph that provided an assurance that the United States would take the interests of Japanese nationals into account when it was evacuating U.S. citizens from trouble spots. The language was pretty bland and simple.

The political military officer on the desk had cleared NEO language in the draft guidelines with several different parts of the State Department. But, somehow, at the last

minute, somebody in the management part of the State Department found out about it and said his office could not approve the language. So, there we were. I was about 12 hours away from getting on an air plane to go to Honolulu and we found out that the NEO provision was not cleared. Luckily, the political military officer had served in Cairo with Pat Kennedy, who was then the acting undersecretary of management. That was the good part. The bad part was that Pat Kennedy was at a reception and he wasn't going to get back to the office until 8:30 or 9 o'clock. Meanwhile the people at our embassy in Tokyo were calling me about every five minutes because the Japanese negotiators were very unhappy that the draft guidelines did not have anything in it about NEO. Eventually, about 8:30 or 8:45 we went to see Mr. Kennedy. I explained the problem. I said, "Isn't there something we can do here?" He said, "Sure there is." He wrote something out on his own and gave it to me. So I called Tokyo and said, "Here it is. This is what the undersecretary says we can do. It is take it or leave it." They took it.

(Laughter)

*Q: Oh, boy!*

Well, you were doing this job until .....

REIS: '98.

*Q: Why were economic relations pretty good?*

REIS: I think there were a couple of reasons for it. One is that the trade negotiators had gotten exhausted and there were no other major issues. Second of all, at the first part of the Clinton administration, President Clinton had been told that the reason we didn't get anywhere was because we didn't put the same emphasis on economics as we did on defense. Well, we subsequently found out that we had to put a lot of work on defense, so people got diverted by that. There were still some discussions on economic matters but the issues were not terribly serious. Finally, it was pretty apparent by that time that Japan was really in the doldrums. Japan went into a recession I think in 1991 or something like this and in 1996 and 1997 economic conditions in Japan still were not great. In the late '80s when Japan was buying Pebble Beach, Rockefeller Center and American companies here, American corporations and their CEOs had been worried that they were going to be eaten up by Japanese competitors. It was pretty apparent by 1996 and 1997 that Japan was in the doldrums. It was not buying up anything anymore. What it was doing was doing was putting in a lot of auto factories and other green field investments, which American workers and suppliers and their Congressional representatives welcomed. Japan was no longer an economic threat.

*Q: Well then, in '98, where did you go?*

REIS: in 1998 I went to the office of Undersecretary for Economic Affairs Eizenstat (Stuart E. Eizenstat). I was his executive assistant, or chief of staff. I had thought that I would get another job in EB as a DAS, but that didn't work out. In the spring of 1998, I

was visiting in St. Louis. I was actually at my wife's aunt's house and I had a phone call from my mother who said, "Mr. Larson wants you to talk to him." So I called him up. Al Larson was the assistant secretary of the Economic Bureau. He said, "Mr. Eizenstat is looking for an executive assistant. Why don't you do it?" I said, "Well, I've never done 7<sup>th</sup> floor work and I don't particularly want to start now. I'll think about it while we're driving back." So I thought about it and I called Al Larsen up and I said, "I'm sorry. I'm just not interested. I'd prefer to do something else." However, about three weeks later I got a phone call from Eizenstat's departing executive assistant. He said, "Mr. Larson said I could talk to you about this." So I went up and chatted with him. Then Mr. Eizenstat interviewed me and I agreed to do be the executive assistant for a year.

It was a pretty rigorous job. Mr. Eizenstat was there at 7:45 in the morning and he was there at least until 6:30 every night and sometimes later. He did try to get home more or less on time. I mean he tried to get out of the office by 6:30. He was programmed throughout the day in half-hour segments so his calendar was absolutely full.

*Q: His responsibilities were what?*

REIS: Well, he was the undersecretary for economic affairs. Within the department he participated in various international conferences. If you look at the way the State Department is structured for economic matters, you find there is an assistant secretary, who's responsible for the management of the economic bureau and the many particular issues handled by the bureau's offices. Then, there is an undersecretary who defines his own role, really. In the case of Ambassador Eizenstat, he was, for example, the U.S. delegate to the Southern Africa Development Community, which is the group of former British colonies of Botswana, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, as well as South Africa and Namibia.

*Q: All frontline states.*

REIS: Yes, they all had been. I think Mozambique maybe was part of the group too. So, he had periodic consultations with them. He took a great interest in the European Union and our policy towards the European Union on economic matters because he had been ambassador to the EU. He did some negotiations on particular things. Before I'd got there he'd done some negotiations with the Japanese on a shipping dispute – port rights in Kobe, I think it was. Then he participated in undersecretary or deputy-level meetings on economic matters in Washington. So, he was the department's chief voice in discussions with Treasury, and to a lesser extent with Commerce and with USTR and others. In the fall of 1998, there were economic crises in Russia and Brazil and Ambassador Eizenstat was the Department's representative in inter-agency discussions on those problems. Treasury, of course, led the discussions.

*Q: How did he use you?*

REIS: Well, I just kept things running. I supervised and coordinated the work of the special assistants who provided the substantive back-up Ambassador Eizenstat and his work.

The other thing I should say is that Ambassador Eizenstat was the U.S. Government's negotiator for holocaust assets and other holocaust matters. He led talks on the return of stolen art works and on restitution for slave labor and a variety of other things. So his job was to try to negotiate with the Germans and Austrians to try to get restitution from them for people who were still alive and had been in the slave labor camps. At one point, through his staff, he organized the first conference on what to do about art that had been stolen from European Jews during the Nazi period. That eventually resulted in a system which has been quite effective in setting up a data base and in restoring works of art to the families of people who had the art works before the Nazis stole them.

My job was to make sure that Ambassador Eizenstat had papers for all his meetings. As I said, he had as many as fifteen meetings a day. I also saw to it that he was prepared for his trips and that the staff was efficient. And then finally, I was in charge of real estate. That was a major problem, because the undersecretary's suite was not very large and he had a staff that expanded during the time I was in the office. He had a holocaust assets group, which got larger while I was there and we had to find room for them. We also had to get space for a couple of political appointees who had been attached to the staff. I can note here that the staffing of the office was not the usual State Department model, that is staffed by Foreign Service officers on rotation. There were, of course Foreign Service officers on the staff. But there was also a lawyer from L doing policy work, a Civil Service economist, speech writers on contract or borrowed from other State Department organizations and Ambassador Eizenstat's long-time personal assistant, among others. Some of the holocaust assets people were FSOs and some were contract workers.

*Q: I had a long set of interviews with \_\_\_\_\_.*

REIS: Yes. He was there for a time. It was a problem of finding office space for all these people. So I was constantly trying to do that and to manage human relations matters. At the time there was a political appointee on the seventh floor with whom I had to deal on issues involving political appointees. He was helpful but the issues usually were complicated.

One of the crazy things that happened was that Ambassador Eizenstat's speech writer, who was quite good, quit about four weeks after I got to the office to go to a better position at DOD, which was fine. Everyone wished him the best of luck. However, it meant that we had to find another speech writer. Eventually, through a friend, I found out that the speech writer for Ambassador to the United Nations William Richardson, the former-governor of New Mexico who had just resigned as ambassador, might be available.

*Q: ...as ambassador to the UN...*

REIS: ...as ambassador to the UN. His speech writer was abiding in the Bureau of International Organizations Affairs in Washington and I heard he might be available to work for Ambassador Eizenstat. So, I interviewed him. He was a young guy, a Civil Service employee maybe 25 year old. And I said, "Would you want to do this?" and he said, "Fine." So, then I had to call The U.S. Mission to the United Nations – I can't remember who the administrative officer was up there – but I had to call once a month and sometimes I had to have Mr. Eizenstat call once a month for three, four or five months to beg that we'd continue to be able to use this guy. Not that the mission had any use for him. He was sitting in Washington. I just found it needlessly humiliating. I don't know why the administrative officer at USUN the matter in this way. You know, if USUN wanted to say, "Look, we don't want to pay for it." I would have been happy to hear it. But, instead USUN made us grovel. People behave in strange ways sometimes. The young guy worked for us for a number of months and then he resigned. Then we had to hire somebody on contract.

It was a lot of personnel work and a lot of, as I say, 'real estate' work.

*Q: Did that go on to the end of the administration?*

REIS: No, that went on until late June of '99, when Ambassador Eizenstat went over to Treasury as the deputy secretary. By that time I'd been assigned to Kuala Lumpur. I went into DCM training to go to Kuala Lumpur.

*Q: So you were sent to Kuala Lumpur?*

REIS: I was the DCM in Kuala Lumpur.

*Q: And you were there from when to when?*

REIS: I was there from the end of July in 1999 until late July in 2002.

*Q: Who was the ambassador when you went out?*

REIS: It was Lynn Pascoe (B. Lynn Pascoe). He was a Chinese language officer. He'd had been the head of AIT in Taiwan and then came back to Washington. He then was a deputy assistant secretary in EAP. From there he went Kuala Lumpur. Then he went to Kuala Lumpur as ambassador. He took up his position as ambassador to Malaysia in January of 1999.

*Q: What was the situation when you got out there?*

REIS: Well, the situation was not good. In November – I think it was November, certainly the fall of 1998 - there had been the APEC, Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Kuala Lumpur. It was Malaysia's year for the rotating meeting. It was just after the 1997 Asian financial crisis. There had been a lot of bad blood during the Asian financial crisis between the United States and Malaysia because the United

States had told Malaysia and other Southeast Asian governments that their banks were over-extended and that the governments ought to let them go bust and that they ought to let their currencies float and to let assets like stocks and real estate reach a market-clearing price. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir rejected this advice and instead imposed currency controls and propped up the economy. In fact, taking the United States' advice would have caused political problems for Mahathir and Malaysia. The failure of banks and other businesses would have had a severe effect on Mahathir's political allies and would have harmed the growing Malay middle class. And Malays are paramount, according to the country's constitution. And all ethnic groups in Malaysia are concerned that economic hardship that could cause social friction. There is even today a strong memory of the violent riots between Malays and Chinese in 1969 in which several hundred people were killed. So, there had been a lot of bad blood between the United States and Malaysia over the response to the financial crisis.

In 1998, the Malaysian finance minister, a man named Anwar Ibrahim, tried to dislodge Mahathir from power. He failed and was charged with corruption and sodomy and jailed. Ambassador Pascoe's predecessor, John R. Malott, had been seen to be critical of Mahathir and friendly towards Anwar Ibrahim, according to Malaysians I met after I arrived in Kuala Lumpur. This had caused some problems. So, by the time Ambassador Pascoe got to Malaysia and still when I got there in July of 1999, you might as well have hung a sign out in front of the embassy saying, "Leprosarium. Don't Enter." It was hard to get appointments with Malaysian officials. Malaysians really didn't want to deal with official Americans.

*Q: How long did that last?*

REIS: Well, that lasted until the election of George W. Bush as president.

*Q: This was Bush II.*

REIS: Bush II and the election of 2000. Immediately after the election, Mahathir began to make overtures to the United States and in the end some of his associates hired lobbyists in the United States to help improve Malaysia's relations with the United States. I still don't know exactly how it worked. There have been references to it in the newspapers here. But it seems the Malaysians were involved with Abramoff, some way or another.

*Q: Who was a wheeler-dealer, who was eventually sent to jail and who brought a bunch of congressmen down with him.*

REIS: Yes. Some reasonably prominent Malaysians began to establish connections to Republicans in Washington. The first intimation of this was a planned visit to Malaysia by Congressman DeLay of Houston in the summer of 2001, when I was charge after Ambassador Pascoe had transferred back to Washington. When we heard of this visit, we did what every embassy does, that is to ask if there were anything we could do to help the congressman. I think we may have asked someone on the Malaysia Desk in the State Department to call Delay's office for us. We wanted to know what could we do to make

his stay in Malaysia comfortable and productive. We wanted to be as helpful as possible because not many members of Congress visited Malaysia. However, the word we kept getting from various people was Mr. DeLay was just visiting Malaysia on a private visit and did not want to be bothered with the embassy. He did not want us to arrange any appointments for him. I left it at that.

Well, it turns out that when DeLay arrived, he was taken to a very plush resort and wined and dined by cronies of Mahathir. I assumed this was an effort to build ties to the new Republican ascendancy in Washington. Then, after that, there was a U.S. – Malaysia Friendship Association, or something like that established. Some senior, but slightly shady Malaysians were involved in that. Then former Senator Wallop of Wyoming (Malcolm Wallop) and some other political advisors and lobbyists from Washington came to Kuala Lumpur to meet with people in the circles around Mahathir. I couldn't figure out what was going on.

At a dinner during the visit of one of these people, I met a Malay Malaysian and later called his office to ask for an appointment. I never got a call back. Five years later, or whatever it was, I read the "Washington Post" that Abramoff had been involved in all the efforts to built ties between Malaysian and the new administration in Washington and had had a retainer from somebody in Malaysia.

I was the Chargé when the 9/11 attacks took place. As I mentioned Ambassador Pascoe had left that summer to go back to the State Department where he became a DAS in the European Bureau. Marie Huhtala, who had been the deputy chief of mission in Thailand, was going to be the ambassador, and she was still in Washington. The day after the 9/11 attacks, at about 11:00 in the morning, I got a phone call in my office from Prime Minister Mahathir saying how sorry he was that the attacks had occurred and that they were a great tragedy. He added that terrorists cannot be tolerated. We, of course, reported all of that.

It was first time that Prime Minister Mahathir ever had made an overture like that. A day or two later, he came round to the embassy, announced, and signed the condolence book. That was the first time he had ever visited the embassy since it had been built 20 years before. So, he was really making a concerted effort to improve relations with the United States. I think he wrote a letter to the President as well. In fact, I think he was the first Moslem leader who sent a letter to President Bush after 9/11. The White House invited Prime Minister for a visit in May of 2002 and relations between the United States and Malaysia improved.

*Q: We'd had developed, over the years, a very solid relationship with Singapore. Do you think that annoyed the Malaysians or Mahathir?*

REIS: I don't think that bothered him so much. Prime Minister Mahathir wanted Malaysia to be independent and did not seem to want to be tied to or constrained by the United States. As I indicated earlier, there is no doubt that the United States' and the IMF's positions on the Asian Financial Crisis and the perceived U.S. support for Anwar

Ibrahim no doubt bothered him. There are books and books written about Prime Minister Mahathir's approach to government. He was not rude to people. Malaysians place a lot of weight on formal hospitality and give large receptions to which they invite foreigners. The Prime Minister had an annual reception at his residence at New Year's. I think I attended the reception at least once because the ambassador was away. The Prime Minister was very cordial. But for whatever reason he seemed to want to maintain his distance and independence on policy matters.

I might note at this point that it is fairly apparent to even a casual observer that there are racial tensions in Malaysia. The Malays community benefits from affirmative action programs that the Chinese and the Indians resent. The Malays maintain their distance from other ethnic groups in the country.

*Q: Did we have any major interests in Malaysia itself?*

REIS: Well, again, a variety of interests. The funny thing is they all worked. The relationships between the Defense Department and the Malaysian military services were quite good. You didn't have any problems there. There were cooperative programs between the U.S. military and Malaysia that went well. There was good cooperation between the Malaysian police and their U.S. counterparts as well.

And then there was the economic relationship and there really wasn't a problem there, either. 30% of the Malaysian economy is made up of foreign companies. The foreign investment is a combination of two things, really. One is the production of consumer electronics by Japanese and Korean companies. U.S. companies produced semi-conductors and other products, including Dell computers. Malaysia is part of the regional assembly process for a lot of electronics goods. While a good bit of business in Malaysia was corrupt, the foreign companies were not involved in the corruption. I think Malaysian business and government people knew that the United States has a foreign practices act and that U.S. companies could not and would not get involved in bribery or other corrupt acts. So, there weren't a lot of economic problems.

Occasionally there was something odd. At one point the Malaysian Government proposed regulations that would have had the effect of expropriating gas stations that were owned by foreign companies. It wasn't a full expropriation, but essentially it was what the lawyers called "creeping expropriation." So we wrote a letter. I think we worked with the British on that. It said, "This does not serve your interests and we don't think you ought to do it and it is not consistent with international law and hope you'll back off." and so they did. But, there weren't many problems.

*Q: Well, in a way, it cut down on your work, didn't it?*

REIS: Oh, yes. It was interesting, but it was the same for others. For example, just before we left, my German colleague was leaving and his ambassador gave a dinner for him and we were invited. He had invited a good number of Malaysians, some of them from NGOs and some of them from the government. And then he'd invited diplomatic people like us,

and I think the French and other EU people. And we got there and there was a single Malaysian who came. He was the German desk officer in the foreign ministry. That was it. I concluded that the Malaysians were just not interested in having much to do with foreign diplomats, at least not from Western countries.

*Q: How Moslem Islamic was Malaysia?*

REIS: That's an interesting question. Traditionally, they were not terribly Islamic. I don't mean that they were impious or not religious. But it seems that they were not as observant in the past as they are now. If you look at movies from the 1950s and 1960s in Malaysia, you see Malay women in sarongs and blouses and without head scarves. Then, you look around today and a good part of the female population is covered. You'd go to shopping centers and you'd see young girls, who might have on t-shirts and jeans, but wore the *tudong* (too-dong) – the head cover, and the use of the tudong was becoming more prevalent when I was there.

The question is why suddenly all of this happened. I interviewed a number of people to try to find out what the story was. I talked to anthropology professors and others at the university. The only answer I got that made sense was that the parents of a lot of these people had come from the countryside and were living in this big urban agglomeration and they needed some identity. Islamic dress showed that they were Malays and not Chinese or Indians. I asked one anthropology professor why there was greater mosque attendance and she cited the need for identity and ethnic connection as an important reason for it.

While we were there, from a political point of view, things got more Islamic. The northeast state, a place called Kelantan, had been run by the Islamic Party of Malaysia for a number of years. They had rather strict rules. There were restrictions on serving alcohol even to non-Moslems. There were separate lines in grocery stores; women stood in one and men in the other. While we were there, the Islamic Party of Malaysia won an election in the next state south, Terengganu. The new government introduced restrictions on alcohol and the separation of men and women in grocery store checkout lines. The rise of the Islamic Party owed in part to popular opposition to what some Malays saw as a corrupt national government. In Kelantan the state government passed a law to make apostasy a capital crime and the national government had to invoke the national constitution to override that.

The interesting thing is that Malaysia is not a very analytical place. I found it difficult to get people to explain in logical ways what exactly was going on with regard to the spread of Islam and the increasing orthodoxy of Islam in Malaysia.

*Q: Well, you left there when?*

REIS: I left there in July of 2002. Then I went to the Office of Development Finance in the Economic Bureau.

*Q: How long were you there?*

REIS: I was there two years. There, it was an office of five or six people. It was an awkward office because a number of people suddenly left and there were a couple of vacancies. One Civil Service employee was on military leave for a good part of the time I was there. And we were busy.

The first thing I was asked to do when I go to the office was to organize a conference on aid for Afghanistan that took place in October 2002. It turned out that the conference had to be held at the World Bank building because Iranian Government representatives had to be able to attend the conference. However, under our law or policy, official Iranians could not enter U.S. Government facilities. Accordingly, we held the meeting at the World Bank building. I think there were about 60 countries and maybe ten international organizations that took part in the meeting and pledged funds to help with Afghan reconstruction.

I found out in the course of organizing the conference that that in fiscal year 2003 budget, the administration had not included a dime for Afghan reconstruction. We were in a peculiar situation. We were asking others to pledge money for Afghan reconstruction and we did not even have money in the budget for it. Luckily, the Congress on its own appropriated funds for Afghanistan and so it turned out that there was some money but the administration had not asked for it. The only thing I can conclude is, and it seems silly in retrospect, is that the Bush Administration was preparing for the Iraq war and it didn't want to have any resources tied up.

*Q: It makes sense in that context. You had a bunch of almost ideologically-driven amateurs who were planning this war.*

REIS: It was nuts. But eventually there was some money appropriated for Afghanistan.

*Q: What were your personal feelings and those of the people around you about our involvement in Iraq and all?*

REIS: I was utterly opposed to it. I thought it was both stupid and wrong. I remember walking across the hall in the State Department in the spring of 2003 and meeting my predecessor in Kuala Lumpur, Anna Borg. We stopped and chatted for a moment and I said, "I think we're embarked on an enterprise of enormous folly and dubious morality." And I still think it. It was awful. There was no reason to go to war in Iraq and you could predict easily that enormous confusion would follow the invasion, even if we had been organized, which of course we were not. I thought that even if the United States had been organized for the occupation and administration of Iraq, there would be conflict among the ethnic and sectarian groups within Iraq that would tie the United States down indefinitely.

*Q: What did you think about Colin Powell?*

REIS: As a manager of the State Department, I think he was terrific. He really did a great job. But, in terms of what he did on Iraq, I think he made a great mistake. I think his presentation to the United Nations was a stupid thing to do and has proved harmful to his reputation. It was apparent at the time that the presentation was based on fiction, half truths and was poorly thought through. The “Washington Post” reported at the time that Secretary Powell been out at the CIA over the weekend before that presentation and was so concerned about the intelligence, so worried about what he was being asked to say, and so dubious about the truth of it that he called Richard Armitage, his deputy and friend, and asked him to join him out at the CIA for advice. It seemed to me at the time that Secretary Powell knew or sensed that the intelligence used to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq was shaky. Yet he did not do the only thing he could have done to slow or prevent the invasion: To resign.

*Q: Well, what happened in 2004?*

REIS: Well, after two years in the Office of Development Finance, I went to the Office of the Inspector General in 2004. We did the inspection of the Political Military Bureau, which was interesting. Then we did the inspection of our embassy in Tel Aviv and our consulate general in Jerusalem. Later in the year, we did the inspection of Santo Domingo. We were supposed to go on to Haiti, but Haiti fell into chaos while we were in Santo Domingo. At that point the Department canceled the inspection and actually evacuated a good part of the embassy. There’s been increasing violence in Port au Prince and twice within a week, U.S. embassy vehicles had been fired on by criminals.

Then I entered the retirement course and retired on September 30, 2005, after thirty-seven and a half years in the Foreign Service.

*Q: You’re doing what now?*

REIS: I now work for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce on Japanese and Korean business matters, more Korean than Japanese matters, actually. One of the main things that we are trying to do is push forward the U.S.- Korea Free Trade Agreement, which was signed in 2007. The Chamber and others have been trying to get the Congress to take up the agreement since then but it has been difficult.

*Q: Why has it been difficult?*

REIS: There are two reasons. The first is that there is a general unease about trade agreements, particularly on the part of Democrats. That’s one. The other is that Ford, Chrysler and the United Auto Workers have come out against the agreement. Their assertion, which is nonsense, is that it doesn’t give the U.S. auto companies adequate access to the Korean market. The real problem is that it removes duties on imports of Korean cars and most importantly on the imports of trucks from Korea because the United States has a 25% duty on light trucks, pickup trucks. The Koreans don’t make pickup trucks, but Ford, Chrysler and the UAE are afraid that the Korean manufacturers

would begin to make pickup trucks and then ship them here and then that would disrupt one area of their business that has been making money.

The unions, including the AFL-CIO, in general are opposed to free trade agreements, so the agreement with Korea, along with agreements with Colombia and Panama, are stuck. Panama is not controversial. It's such a small country. It doesn't matter to the unions, or to anybody else. But, Korea has a large and sophisticated economy with a vibrant trading sector and would provide competition to some U.S. companies. However, the agreement with Korea is a really a modern agreement that would be a model for agreements with other countries in East Asia, including Japan. It provides U.S. companies important intellectual property and anti-trust protections and good dispute settlement mechanisms, among other things. We will see what happens.

*Q: Of course, right now we're going through a horrendous breakdown in world markets. That's putting a lot of things on hold, anyway.*

REIS: I think the trade agreement with Korea is on hold for a while. We've been lobbying actively for it. Actually, if you go to talk to Democratic congressmen on the hill, many of them will say, "This is a terrific agreement. USTR finally got it right. They finally negotiated with a large country, an affluent one, and this is a good agreement that is good for U.S. companies, manufacturers, services companies, but Speaker Pelosi won't bring it to the floor. So, there we are.

*Q: Ok, I think that's probably a good place to stop.*

REIS: Well, I think that is it.

*Q: I really enjoyed this and thank you very much.*

REIS: I'm glad it all worked out.

*End of interview*