

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

**JAMES P. CALLAHAN**

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy  
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*Q: Today is the 28th of November, 2011, and this is an interview with James Callahan. Do you have a middle initial?*

CALLAHAN: P for Philip.

*Q: Okay. And this is being done on behalf of Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. And you go by Jim?*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

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

CALLAHAN: I was born in East Freetown, Massachusetts on January 4, 1948.

*Q: Where's that?*

CALLAHAN: It's a village in the town of Freetown in Bristol County, near New Bedford, in that general area.

*Q: In whaling country.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, yes, definitely, in whaling country. One of my fondest memories is visiting the New Bedford whaling museum which had a one-third scale whaler, just the right size for a six-year old to explore.

*Q: Okay. Let's talk, let's take on your father's side; where did they come from?*

CALLAHAN: Well my paternal grandfather, I think came directly from England. I don't have much background on my paternal grandparents, but other relatives tell me that my grandfather stowed away on a ship from England to the U.S. in search of his siblings who had been adopted and immigrated to the U.S. earlier. My father and my mother both died when they were fairly young so I really don't have a lot of family history other than what I can gather from my relatives still living in Massachusetts, but my understanding is that my grandfather on that side did come from England.

*Q: And your- Do you know what your grandfather was up to, what he did?*

CALLAHAN: His name was Jesse Briggs. He had, at the time when we were living in Massachusetts, a little antique shop. Basically he collected and sold antiques. I recall that my grandfather gave me American and German helmets from the first and second world wars, which I treasured but lost over time. I don't know what he did in his earlier years but he and my grandmother produced four sons and a daughter. My surname was originally Briggs.

*Q: And your father?*

CALLAHAN: My father's name was William Henry Briggs, from Fairhaven, Massachusetts. He served in the U.S. Navy for six years, including during the Second World War and was a sailor on a destroyer in the Pacific. After the war, my father couldn't find much employment and worked as a grave digger at the cemetery in Fairhaven and also for a time cleaning large industrial boilers. He re-enlisted in the military, this time in the Army, and served in Germany during the post-war occupation. My brother was born in Nuremburg, where we lived while in Germany. My father had a variety of blue-collar jobs during his lifetime and his last job, at the time of his death in 1966, was as a correctional officer at Walpole State Prison in Massachusetts. He was also in the Air Force Reserve at that time. .

*Q: And your mother; what do you know about her background?*

CALLAHAN: I know quite a lot more, actually, because after her death, my brother and I lived with her grandparents in East Freetown. In fact, my surname, Callahan, comes from my mother's side because when my mother died my maternal grandparents adopted my brother and me. They were Scots-Irish; the Callahans hail from the Williamsport area of Pennsylvania, in Pine Creek, the village in which their ancestors settled. Apparently the first Callahan from my family came from County Cork, Ireland, settled in the Pine Creek area and then married in that area and the Callahans pretty much lived in that part of Pennsylvania for many generations. Some family reports suggest that one of the early Callahans served in George Washington's personal bodyguard during the American Revolution. My grandfather, Clarence, on my mother's side was one of the few from our branch of the Callahans who left the area. He moved from Pennsylvania to New York where he was a railroad conductor and then to Massachusetts where he worked as a draftsman for the Massachusetts State Road Department in Taunton. It seems that most of the rest of the family, except for an uncle who took a government job in Washington, DC, and lived in Northern Virginia, stayed in Pennsylvania.

*Q: Was it Pine Creek you say?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, in Lycoming County.

*Q: What was the area like? I mean, was it a farming, industrial, what?*

CALLAHAN: It was sort of backwoods, I suppose, more than anything else. You know, you can still go up to Pine Creek and it probably hasn't changed very much from those days. I've been back there several times. I understand that at that time, hunting, fishing, and trapping were the primary occupations, but it's mountainous so it's not really a farming area. The first member of my family to settle there was Daniel Callahan who emigrated from Ireland in 1750 and was a noted hunter. One of the small tributaries off the Pine Creek used to be called Callahan's Run.

*Q: Sounds like fertile ground for the whiskey rebellion.*

CALLAHAN: Most likely, yes. This was the area inhabited before the Revolution by the "Fair Play Men" illegal settlers in what was recognized by the British government to be Iroquois territory. Most were early enlistees to the Continental Army.

*Q: Well did- When you were growing up in- where did-?*

CALLAHAN: After my mother died in Germany when I was about five years old, we moved back to the U.S. and lived in East Freetown, Massachusetts, with my maternal grandparents on their little, 10-acre farm. I had been born there in my grandparents' home, and when we moved back from Germany, my maternal grandparents took my brother and me in while my father served out his Army tour. Afterwards my father remarried but we decided to stay with our grandparents. They adopted us in 1956 and we lived in East Freetown until I was 10 years old. In 1958, though, we moved with our grandparents to Tallahassee, Florida, where my grandfather had found a job with the Florida State Road Department. He had a heart condition and thought it would be better for his health to move someplace without heavy snowfalls. Our place in Massachusetts had a long driveway that required heavy work with the snow shovel to clear it during the snowy winters there. My grandfather thought life would be easier and better for his heart in California or Florida. The first offer came from the Florida Department of Transportation. I sometimes wonder how my life might have changed if we had moved to California, instead. I did have an uncle from my father's side living there at the time.

*Q: Okay. Until you were 10 what was it like being a kid there?*

CALLAHAN: Oh, it was great in many ways, living on a small farm in rural Massachusetts. As you know, in those days, kids ran free especially in the countryside. We had 10 acres of partially forested land I could run around on, play all over the place and disappear all afternoon and come back in time for dinner. I explored the forests opposite our house, put homemade boats in the pond there and played in what we called the "roaring brook" nearby. It's not what you have today, when we have to watch kids all the time.

*Q: Was there a dinner bell?*

CALLAHAN: Usually my grandmother would come out and yell at dinnertime and I'd appear from wherever I happened to be playing. But it tended to be a bit solitary; my

brother was three years younger and the nearest neighbors with kids of my age were probably a couple miles down the road so I didn't have that much in the way of playmates. I had to keep myself entertained, which wasn't too difficult with 10 acres of partially wooded land to roam around on.

*Q: Were you much of a reader?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, I read quite a lot. We had a collection of National Geographic magazines that kept me going quite a bit in addition to other kinds of reading material around the house.

*Q: Well, as a kid, can you recall any books or magazines that particularly intrigued you?*

CALLAHAN: Books, nothing specific at least during that period, up until 10 years old, but magazines, definitely the National Geographic, Life, Saturday Evening Post, Boys Life. I really found the National Geographic to be fascinating.

*Q: They really did take you- I mean, for so many of us in the Foreign Service. Also, if you looked hard enough you could find bare breasts in -- that were quite acceptable in those National Geographics.*

CALLAHAN: That was certainly one of the attractions..

*Q: Did- You started school in Massachusetts?*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: How'd you cotton to school?*

CALLAHAN: Pretty well. I got along pretty well, I was well behaved in school, I would say and studied well during the elementary school period.. I had occasional playground issues with some of the other kids at times but nothing serious.

*Q: What was the sort of ethnic mix? Was it pretty much Massachusetts Yankee or?*

CALLAHAN: The elementary school was a rural school serving the area and the kids were pretty much Massachusetts Yankee. While there was a Portuguese element in the population, I don't remember many in my school. In that part of Massachusetts, though, there were lots of immigrants from Cape Verde who gravitated to the fishing industry in New Bedford, Fairhaven and other coastal towns.

*Q: How did Portuguese fit in?*

CALLAHAN: I don't recall that it was too much of a difference although I think they were mostly urban, living in the towns rather than in the rural areas where I lived. When my father remarried he married a Portuguese woman so my stepmother was Portuguese. I

think they fit in pretty well except my grandmother; my maternal grandmother with whom we were living was very prejudiced against them. She was English stock and really did not like the Portuguese at all. I still remember how angry she was when a man, who happened to be of Portuguese ancestry, stopped his car and shot a pheasant on our property without asking permission. As I recall, she was not happy when my father remarried and that probably had an impact on the decision to stay with my grandparents rather than move back with my father and stepmother.

*Q: Well this is of course a New England attribute, I would say.*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: And that- that absorbing.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, yes, definitely.

*Q: Were there any courses that you particularly liked or didn't like in school?*

CALLAHAN: Oh, I liked the history classes and I didn't like or do well in math. While English grammar study was not my favorite, I liked anything with literature in it. Definitely history was something in which I was really interested, or social studies as it was in grade and high school.

*Q: Did you have sisters, brothers?*

CALLAHAN: I have a younger brother, David, who is three years younger and currently lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

*Q: Well then when you moved to Tallahassee, this had to be sort of a shock, wasn't it?*

CALLAHAN: It was definitely a shock. -

*Q: Cultural shock.*

CALLAHAN: -It was quite a change. Tallahassee is not Southern Florida. It's in the Florida Panhandle and it was more like small-town Georgia at that time than what you would think of as Dade County, Florida. I had some trouble initially fitting in at the school because I spoke with a very strong New England accent and of course some of the boys liked to call me a "Yankee" and give me grief over being from the north. So I definitely had some problems with some of the kids on the playground and that sort of thing - at least during the first year, in fourth grade. I think it didn't take me too long, though, to fit in. At that time I was big for my age and somewhat overweight but I was also tall so that gave me some advantage in the playground situations. I also really wanted to play football in the Peewee Football League for fifth and sixth graders. I had to go on a diet to get my weight down to 110 pounds from 115, so I could qualify for the league and I think the football helped a lot to make friends and fit in. My grandfather died

from a heart attack in 1961 and after that things were more difficult economically. When I think back, though, I'm surprised at how normally we lived despite the difficult finances. My grandmother went back to work as a church bookkeeper and we also had some Social Security and Veterans pension income from my grandfather. I started working, as a part-time janitor at our church, as soon as I turned 14 and later worked at a supermarket part-time.

*Q: Well did- I take it the schools at that point were not segregated- were segregated.*

CALLAHAN: Right, yes, they were completely segregated at that point.

*Q: Was there much interaction between the races, black and white, outside of school?*

CALLAHAN: No, not really. We lived outside of town a bit and it was pretty much all white. In what you might call redneck territory. I can't think of any African-American families, and certainly no Hispanics who lived out that way.

*Q: What about did you get any feel for how the Civil War was treated there?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, it was pretty much, you know, the southern view of Civil War as having been a just cause for the south. There's a battlefield outside of Tallahassee, where the Battle of the Natural Bridge took place. This was one of the relatively small skirmishes that took place in northern Florida but the battlefield was a popular place to visit. That said, because of the university there, Florida State University, we did get kids from elsewhere coming through the school because their parents would be there doing graduate studies and they'd be there for a couple of years, so you got some of a cultural mix in that respect. Thinking back, most of my school friends were from those families. Of course, that meant they were only in the school for a couple of years and then would move away.

*Q: How'd you find schooling?*

CALLAHAN: You know, I didn't really detect a huge difference between schooling in Massachusetts and schooling in Tallahassee. I'm sure there was one, but it wasn't obvious to me at that age, fourth through the sixth grade, and I did pretty well in school in Tallahassee as well. I have to say that the teachers were dedicated and had a positive influence on me. However, when I got into the junior high school years, I let my studies slide for a while. I guess that I had an attitude toward things and I wasn't paying much attention in class. However, a couple of years on into high school, I had a really good history teacher who motivated me to buckle down and my grades improved dramatically.

*Q: Well how long were you in Tallahassee?*

CALLAHAN: I was resident in Tallahassee until about 1975 but in 1966, I went away to the University of Florida in Gainesville. I did my final year of university back in

Tallahassee, though, and went back there again for graduate school after three years away.

*Q: Well let's talk about high school a bit. What was high school like?*

CALLAHAN: My high school was newly opened as a junior-senior high to serve the south side of Tallahassee; it was a small student body - and I started in 7<sup>th</sup> grade with the first class. As we went along we were always the highest grade through twelfth grade which was kind of unique. I was relatively popular, I would say; in high school I was in a number of school clubs including the Junior Civitans, a member of the honor society, editor of the school newspaper and I played on the football team. I guess I was always part of the "in-crowd" despite being economically on the lower side of the scale, although in my school there weren't many on the upper end of that scale. I cannot recall anyone in our school being from a wealthy family. The upper end of the social strata at my school was still middle class.

*Q: How about the neighborhood when you came out of school? Was it a mixed neighborhood or was it- How'd you find it?*

CALLAHAN: Well the school was on the south side of town and it was near a fairly new subdivision but we lived even further south of town in an area of lower middle class homes and we lived in a 10 x 50 foot house trailer with a room added on. There was no diversity at all in our neighborhood. Even the larger area that served the school was not very mixed except for the handful of students who were there whose parents were in graduate school there or had been in the military and settled in Tallahassee after retirement. I had a variety of friends, some local and some from that kind of background who also came from elsewhere in the U.S. but it certainly wasn't a very diverse group. I've been to a couple of high school reunions and definitely not much diversity there. I think a year or two after I graduated from high school is when they first began to integrate the school. Since I graduated in 1966, though, the area and the school student body have changed almost entirely and are now heavily African-American. The current school principal invited the Class of '66 back for a reunion at the school in the spring of 2014 and it was quite an odd experience with my all white senior citizen classmates hosted by the virtually all black faculty and student body of our alma mater.

*Q: Well you graduated when?*

CALLAHAN: Sixty-six.

*Q: You're pretty far up in Florida but did you feel any effects of the Cuban revolution and the exodus from Cuba?*

CALLAHAN: No, not really. I think there were a few kids with Hispanic surnames whose families had been part of that, had come from Cuba but who very much were, from European Hispanic backgrounds. There were a very few of those kids, I'd say. I

digress but must mention that my grandmother was very religious. She was a Baptist, had been an American Baptist and so we always went to church in Massachusetts and then when we moved to the South the only option was the Southern Baptist Church, which was quite different and certainly, much more fundamentalist and, at that time pretty racist. That's when and where I first started to lose my religion and to have some real issues.

*Q: I was wondering because my experience is that Southern Baptist and that ilk religion tends to be you're either with us or agin us and did you feel that?*

CALLAHAN: Yes. I mean, there was a period, I don't remember the exact years when I actually was quite religious and I even gave a sermon in the church, a youth sermon, but eventually I began to start questioning, I suppose when I was a junior/senior in high school, the position on race that the Southern Baptist Church had at the time, or at least that of the leading members my Church had, which was very, very racist. I couldn't square that at all with the teachings of the New Testament so that's when I began to question the whole religious issue and soon moved away from it altogether.

*Q: Did foreign affairs of any type intrude at all in your-?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, in way, I guess. I was especially interested in history and did a lot of reading. Our history class in high school put on a model United Nations program in which I participated enthusiastically. I also recall that at least one of my teachers who was probably the most influential on me had traveled abroad to some extent. I had an interest although I didn't really aspire at that point to the Foreign Service and wasn't familiar with the diplomatic service but from the perspective of history and cultures I was certainly interested. Having lived in Germany briefly as a child must have also contributed.

*Q: Who was the- I'd like to get their names in to give them credit; who was the history teacher who-?*

CALLAHAN: His name was John Jones and he was from Virginia, actually from an old Virginia family, but he was certainly a somewhat unusual character in the school in Tallahassee. He dressed very well in tweed suits and English brogues and certainly stood out in that respect. He was quite sophisticated. He retired from teaching or left teaching to become an Episcopalian minister not too long after I graduated. He was very much an enthusiastic student of history and he certainly turned me around and got me very interested in history and other studies.

*Q: Did- At this point did the Foreign Service ever cross your radar?*

CALLAHAN: To some extent: although I was aware that the Foreign Service exam was famously difficult and assumed it would be out of my league. I was editor of the high school newspaper and interested in journalism. When I went to university, to the University of Florida, the first thing I did was enroll in a journalism course but found it to



be rather mundane. One of my closest friends in high school was from a military family and had lived in many countries, with lots of stories to tell of those experiences. In high school, I fully supported the Vietnam War and considered enlisting in the military. My friend was accepted into the Naval Academy.

*Q: How about political influence on your family? Where did they fall or did they-*

CALLAHAN: Well I-

*Q: left bank or were they-*

CALLAHAN: Again, it's my grandparents and my grandfather actually had died only three years after we moved to Tallahassee so I'm not real clear on what his political thinking was but my grandmother was extremely conservative, a rock-ribbed Republican of the old school but without the racial tolerance of the Massachusetts Republican Party. I reacted against that, basically, so my leanings were much more liberal than hers by far and certainly more so than a lot of others in my circle of friends - certainly in regard to race.

*Q: Did the Kennedy election affect, I mean, engage you?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, yes, we were very interested in that. I remember, now that I think about it, I remember being very engaged and very interested in that election and very pleased with the results. My grandmother on the other hand was extremely unhappy when Kennedy was elected. She constantly claimed that JFK's father had made his fortune as a bootlegger during prohibition. I also remember being very upset when Kennedy was assassinated while a couple of the girls in my class openly rejoiced, actually cheered the fact of his assassination.

*Q: Yes. Well they were, again, reflecting the parents and all this.*

CALLAHAN: Right.

*Q: Were there any- was there any movement towards integration? Because the Brown versus public- whatever-*

CALLAHAN: Board of Education.

*Q: -Board of Education had been in effect for a short time.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, in regard to the implementation of Brown, as I said, I think it was either my senior year in high school or the next year when maybe three or four African-American children were enrolled in the school in the lower grades. Then after that, after I graduated, it became much more rapid, the integration of the school and the schools in general.

*Q: Well you graduated in '66?*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: Were you the first in your family to go on to college?*

CALLAHAN: On my father's side, yes, I believe so. I'm not sure that if I had remained with my father and stepmother that would have happened because of my half-brothers who were all born afterwards, none of them went to college. My eldest half-brother, Steve, had to take care of his two younger brothers after their mother died when he was only about 18 years old. They all ended up in various blue-collar work in the New Bedford area. But my grandmother to her credit, despite the political issues that we had sometimes, was very insistent on our going to college. And on her side of the family she had relatives who had attended university.

*Q: Well you went to Florida State, was it?*

CALLAHAN: Initially, I had a small scholarship from the Tallahassee Rotary Club to the University of Florida in Gainesville, and attended there for three years. Then I married my first wife, Courtney, who had been my high school sweetheart, in our senior year of college. She was at Florida State in an education program that required an internship in Tallahassee so I transferred back to Florida State for my final year.

*Q: Well let's talk about University of Florida. What was it like when you went there?*

CALLAHAN: It was quite a new experience. I was really happy to get away from home and to be on my own to a greater extent. We didn't have a lot of money so it was difficult financially. I had a small scholarship for that first year at the university and National Defense Education Act loans at only three percent interest, so that helped quite a bit. We had some Social Security and Veterans Affairs pension from my grandfather which helped but money was running short by my sophomore year so I worked part-time washing dishes at a sorority house, and working summers in construction. I enjoyed university life, though; I had joined a small fraternity in my freshman year and was able to move out of the dormitory after the mandatory first year in a dorm. One of my best friends initially in the dormitory with me was an African-American from Panama City, Florida. The two of us actually went through the fraternity rush week together when freshmen students check out the fraternities and they check you out. So I went with this African-American friend; we went to the various fraternities and although on the surface my friend was welcomed to the rush week events, he wasn't accepted at any of the fraternities. I pledged at Chi Phi, a small one that was relatively unknown and relatively inexpensive, but in some ways always regretted doing so when my African-American friend was not accepted at any fraternity. I also drifted away from that friend as a result because I was spending most of my free time with friends at the fraternity.

*Q: Well what was college life like?*

CALLAHAN: I was more than ready to leave home for college having lived for the previous years with my elderly and very religious grandmother. The freedom from parental oversight was definitely a good experience. I enjoyed the friendship of a particular group of people within the fraternity and we were much more politically on the left than most of the other members of the fraternity. Studies were certainly difficult enough particularly since I was also working part-time to help support myself. I didn't have as much time to study as I would have liked and there were other social distractions and parties on the weekend but the college period was a good time; I enjoyed it. I didn't stay in the journalism area for very long because I felt it wasn't that academically or intellectually stimulating. So, I switched to English literature but that turned out to have been a mistake in my sophomore year when I had started the part-time job. I started to have some trouble with the English literature when we got into some of the more difficult writers although I had done well in my creative writing class. I switched to history as my major and had very good professors in history, particularly American history, and enjoyed that work and did well in it. I minored in philosophy which was also very interesting. However, I struggled through two years of German as my mandatory language elective, getting Cs most of the time there.

*Q: Waiting for the verb.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, and trying to remember the gender of definite articles.

*Q: You mentioned working; let's go back. When did you start working? Was this in high school or-?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, in high school really because after my grandfather died we were basically living on small Social Security and Veterans' pensions. We lived in a 50 by 10 foot mobile home with a small living room attached to the front that my great uncle, a carpenter by trade, had built for us. My grandmother worked part-time in a church doing the bookkeeping and we didn't really have a lot. She even made my shirts for school which as you might imagine were not the height of fashion. So, I started working as soon as I was old enough, first with my brother cleaning our church on weekends, and later, in my senior year of high school, at a supermarket, a Winn-Dixie Supermarket, bagging groceries. During one summer, I also spent a little time working at a men's clothing store but that didn't last for very long. I was working at Winn Dixie all through my senior year of high school - which made it a little more difficult to do well on our football team because I had to miss some of the practices. I had done very well during my junior year and been awarded the lineman of the year trophy but when I was trying to work and balance that with the football practice my football proficiency suffered.

Later, during the summer breaks from college I was able, through some of my high school friends who had connections with construction companies, to do construction work which paid better than the supermarket by far. When I started having financial trouble after the first year at the University of Florida, when the scholarship ran out, the fraternity found me a job washing dishes at a sorority house which in addition to

providing free dinners also paid an hourly wage. I worked part-time all through college and full-time every summer.

*Q: You were there during the end of the '60s; did the "60s", and I use quotes around "60s," have much of an effect? This is a lot of turmoil on campus.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, there was some. The state of Florida was conservative enough that the campuses didn't have nearly the level of turmoil that we were watching with great interest in the northern states and in California but it was there. I went to SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) meetings and joined in demonstrations against the war at both the University of Florida where the SDS occupied the dean's office briefly. I participated in antiwar demonstrations at Florida State, as well. My first wife's mother, my mother-in-law at that time, worked for the Leon County sheriff's department so I was amused when she brought home a photo of me taken by one of the deputies at one of the demonstrations and but my mother-in-law wasn't so amused. But anyway, antiwar sentiment was fairly active and in our fraternity, as I said, we had a group that was very much on the left so we were sometimes not seeing eye-to-eye with the leadership of the fraternity who we liked to term "The God Squad." My group in the fraternity was known by ourselves and others as "The Sloths" because of our generally not dressing to the fraternity standard and definitely being more in line with what we saw as the "hippie" dress style.

*Q: Well one of the things- I'm older and I was- one of my great regrets was that I completely missed the Sexual Revolution. It was all over and I was married and I had kids. Hell. How did it hit you all?*

CALLAHAN: Well, the South was definitely more conservative than further up in the North or out in the West but yes, I'd say there was still, you know, a level of sexual freedom that was definitely far more than I had seen in high school.

*Q: Did you feel any of the intrusion of politics within- I mean, you were at a state university in a very conservative state at the time and, you know, things were happening which did not sit well with the conservatives. Did you feel any of that?*

CALLAHAN: We took a certain amount of pleasure in annoying the people who were on a more conservative side and a great example of that was that the University of Florida had initially invited Adam Clayton Powell to speak on campus and then rescinded the invitation.

*Q: Well known Negro leader from New York City.*

CALLAHAN: Yes. Very, very outspoken. There was an outcry over the invitation, of course from the Florida Board of Regents, the governing body for the universities in Florida, and others which caused university to rescind the invitation. So a couple of us who were on the left in our fraternity decided to do something about it. One of my "Sloth" friends was the head of the fraternity speakers committee which was supposed to

invite speakers to come and talk to the fraternity. We cooked up a scheme to issue an invitation to Adam Clayton Powell to come and talk at our fraternity, which we just did unilaterally and on the authority of the fact that my friend was the head of the speaker committee and the fraternity bylaws authorized the head of the committee to make decisions about who to invite without going to the president of the fraternity chapter who would not have approved it. So we actually issued this invitation and it was picked up on the CBS News; I think Dan Rather reported it. And, of course, when that word got out all of the fraternity alumnae and the “God Squad” just went ballistic and rescinded our invitation. Then there was a move to put us, essentially, on trial within the fraternity to see if we were going to be blackballed and kicked out of the fraternity. So my friend and I arranged for one of law students in the fraternity to represent us in the “trial” and through that process and his excellent representation we won the case and stayed in the fraternity. I had a great deal of satisfaction from that, got a lot of interesting notoriety and made a lot of conservative alumnae pretty unhappy that we were still there but we also got a lot of pleasure out of that.

*Q: Well how did the young ladies with the university treat you all?*

CALLAHAN: They treated us reasonably well, considering in that we weren’t really the “in-crowd.” We weren’t the typical fraternity guys with the button down shirts and penny loafers and driving nice cars so we ended up with more down-to-earth or unique, girlfriends.

*Q: Well you know, despite- sort of moving away, I mean, in this social thing, in some ways I would think you would have been exposed to more interesting points of view and all.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, that’s definitely the case. The people who I was closest to in the fraternity were from a variety of backgrounds, even though all of them were pretty much from white Anglo-Saxon backgrounds, but still a variety. We had a couple of Cuban-Americans in the fraternity, whose parents had left Cuba during the Castro takeover, as well and definitely I was exposed to a variety of points of view. The Vietnam War was on our minds and I did a lot of reading of the various literatures on the history of Vietnam, history of the war, both points of view, the left and the right.

I suppose one of the formative things I did during university was to travel up to Washington, DC, in the summer of 1968 with two fraternity friends to look for jobs up here because we knew that the wages were higher in this area than in Florida and we thought it would be interesting to come here. I had a cousin who was working at the Department of Agriculture out in Beltsville with whom I was in touch. So we hitched a ride with a young woman who was driving up to DC, who lived up in this area. She dropped us off at the YMCA in downtown DC and we spent a night or two there until I could get in touch with my cousin in Beltsville. We stayed at his place in Beltsville for a while and looked for jobs. My cousin found us jobs at a lumber yard in Beltsville but one of my friends had a contact through his father and was able to get a job with the “New Republic” magazine in their mailroom downtown, on N Street, N.W. My cousin was

happy enough to have us stay but was sort of a strange fellow, also fairly religious, so we didn't stay there too long. Anyway, we didn't really want to live in a Beltsville suburb for the summer so we found a room downtown in a building on N Street near Dupont Circle. It was one room with a refrigerator, a hot plate and a bathroom so we moved down there and bought a couple of Army cots and shared the room among the three of us. That was a great experience, in terms of social awakening. Dupont Circle at that time was a gathering place for all types of people. People debated, played chess, smoked marijuana, lounged around on the grass. On weekends we'd hang out on the Circle. There were three college girls from the University of Maryland who lived in a nice apartment across the street from us. We got to know them and went to their parties, where I met an African-American girl who was going to Howard University, and who I dated for a while.

*Q: This is the summer of '67 or-?*

CALLAHAN: Sixty-eight, the summer when Martin Luther King was killed. So yes, we were there during the riots. I remember the smoke from the fires burning down in lower Northwest and that area.

*Q: You know anybody who was here remember 101st Airborne, I guess it was, with helmets and bayonets on Wisconsin Road (sic).*

CALLAHAN: One Saturday night, the three of us went down to Constitution Avenue and were sort of hanging around the Mall when a policeman stopped and asked us where we were going and so we made up something, that we were going to Union Station to watch the trains, but there were no buses running because of the violence. So, the policeman gave us a ride to Union Station. When we got to Union Station, we discovered you couldn't see the trains coming in anyway unless you had a ticket to the platforms. We wandered around the station but ended up getting separated and I walked all the way back from Union Station in the middle of the night to Dupont Circle by myself at a time when I really shouldn't have been out there alone on the streets. However, it was quite interesting because as I was walking along Massachusetts Avenue, locals would come up next to me and walk along with me for part of the way and then kind of veer off, didn't accost me or try to do anything to me and sort of felt like they were giving me some protection or something. They didn't say so specifically but that happened most of the way back to Dupont Circle and I don't recall what happened to my two roommates; they found their way back some other way.

*Q: It was a different world.*

*Well how did you feel about the Vietnam War?*

CALLAHAN: When I was a kid, I loved playing soldier, playing with toy soldiers and wearing the helmets and having toy guns. Tallahassee was a very southern town at that time and the war was popular locally. Barry Sadler's famous song, "The Green Beret" was very popular. I would say that when I was still in high school, I probably would have signed up for the military but once I started in college at the University of Florida and

was exposed to different ideas and started becoming more educated on the issues then I became very opposed to the war and joined some of the protests. My closest friends were also pretty much in that situation except for one who was in ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps); he went through the full four years of ROTC and became an Army Second Lieutenant but was still on the liberal side of the university spectrum.

*Q: How stood you with the draft?*

CALLAHAN: Initially I applied for conscientious objector status but not being very religious - actually not being religious at all by that time - it was rather difficult to pull off. But I did go through the process of having a hearing with the draft board, having them say "forget it; you're not getting the status." I went through the process of having an army physical; I think the draft board might have arranged for that. But then the government instituted the lottery system and it just happened that they didn't quite reach my number which was in the mid-range.

*Q: Well did you look into the situation say in North Vietnam, part of the Soviet Union and all, I mean China?*

CALLAHAN: Yes. I majored in history after dabbling in journalism and English Literature. Although, I specialized in American History, I took some courses in Soviet and Chinese history and did a lot of reading on my own in regard to Southeast Asia. I certainly never felt that the United States was on the wrong side of the Cold War. I think I looked pretty much at Vietnam as being a special situation, as more of a national resistance movement; more a grassroots thing and more genuine than something that was perhaps manipulated by Russia or China although I later learned much more about their involvement.

*Q: Well then, you graduated when?*

CALLAHAN: Nineteen-seventy.

*Q: Then what?*

CALLAHAN: Well, before I graduated, in my senior year, I married my high school girlfriend. We had split up in 1966 when we went to different universities; she went to a junior college and then to Florida State in Tallahassee. We started writing to one another while I was in DC during the summer of 1968. We started seeing each other again during school breaks in Tallahassee. Mid-way through my junior year, I transferred to Florida State because she was doing a teaching internship and couldn't transfer to UF. We were married in September 1969, lived together and then graduated in June 1970.

*Q: You're getting married your junior year.*

CALLAHAN: No, at the beginning of our senior years.

*Q: Senior year. But that's quite a leap, isn't it?*

CALLAHAN: Yes. It was probably not the smartest thing I ever did or my ex-wife, Courtney, ever did but in my semi-rural high school there were kids getting married right out of high school. We considered ourselves the sensible ones because we managed not to do that but we did decide to tie the knot earlier than we should have.

So when I graduated, when we both graduated, Courtney had a Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education while my degree was a Bachelor's of Arts in History with a minor in Philosophy. I thought about graduate school in history but it appeared to be more of the same courses, with seminars added for the Masters' program. However, Courtney found an alternative. Her father was from Mississippi and she had many relatives there. Courtney had a cousin, who was the guidance counselor at a rural, all African-American school in Greenwood, Mississippi. Her name was Dinah and she informed Courtney that the school district was looking for white teachers and was not too particular about how much training they had. The school district was under Federal court order to integrate the faculty, although not, at that time, the student body. The school was Amanda Elzy School in Leflore County, Mississippi, covering grades 1-12. The nearest city was Greenwood, Mississippi, smack in the middle of the Mississippi Delta cotton country. So we loaded up our first new car, an Opel Cadet and U-Haul trailer and drove out to Greenwood to be interviewed for the jobs in the school. Courtney, because of her education degree, was hired for a special, Federally-funded program that paid a higher salary, about \$6,500 per year as I recall, than the average of \$5,200, that I received. The students in her program were third graders and had a separate wing of the school to themselves, and much more in the way of teaching aids available to her and the other teachers in the wing. I taught junior high school, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, in Social Studies, Civics and Mississippi History. They had no special education programs in the county so you had kids who definitely had educational disability issues in the same class with the rest of the students.

*Q: I would think this would be an extremely difficult group to work with because, I mean, one they are coming out of a broken system and you were coming out of the rural areas. I mean-*

CALLAHAN: Yes, it was very difficult. The first week of the school year, the books had not arrived and we had to keep the home room students with us all day, with no books or teaching aids. After that, things sorted themselves out somewhat. Within the classes, my best students tended to have parents who were teachers. There was a chasm between these students and the majority who were from rural farms. Also because it was junior high school, you had all of the issues of that age range, too, 13-14 year-olds, some of whom were quite physically mature.

*Q: It's hormone high.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, there were hormone-related issues, really serious problems, and lots of disciplinary issues. The best students, as I mentioned, were the children of teachers.



There is a town adjacent to the Mississippi Valley State University, an all African-American university at that time, called Itta Bena, and a lot of the middle class African Americans lived in Itta Bena and the children from there tended to be pretty good students. Marion Barry, the former mayor of Washington, DC, was from Itta Bena although his father was a sharecropper. These students responded to teaching but I had big classes and a lot of other kids who were completely disruptive and/or just didn't have the background to do the work. I had done some reading on teaching methods when we decided to go to Mississippi and teach. But I tended to read the more progressive educational books such as those by A.S. Neill, the Master of the Summerhill School who believed that the school should be made to fit the child rather than the child made to fit the school. I was so idealistic that somehow I thought I could implement this kind of teaching method with rural, African-American children from deprived families in the Mississippi Delta. This didn't really work out well, as you might imagine.

I also had to deal with the Mississippi history textbooks that were really terrible. Among other problems, the portrayal of the Ku Klux Klan was that they were just a bunch of good-ole-boys in a harmless men's club. The way the textbooks described the Klan and slavery and Mississippi history was appalling. I just stopped using the books and no one seemed to care. I ordered some educational material on Africa, African history and then I taught that in the Mississippi History class. The good students found this really interesting and for the others it didn't matter what I was teaching as they weren't very responsive. So this was an interesting experience and of course I learned a lot about some of my ideals as not being very practical in the real world.

*Q: Well where were the- these are junior high students; your good students, did they seem to find a good education for you to put them in the high schools?*

CALLAHAN: I'd say often not. The traditional African-American teachers at the school, whose teaching methodology was pretty rudimentary, weren't really preparing them. They would either stand up and read something to the students or have students who could read, read something to the class as a whole. They used a lot of corporal punishment to try to bring discipline. Their teaching methods really were not very good so I don't think that the kids were getting a lot out of it.

And then of course in order to meet their integration targets in addition to a handful of idealistic young people like Courtney and me, the school district hired anyone who wasn't African-American. We had Koreans teaching there who didn't really speak English; we had Bolivians, Peruvians, again with difficult to understand accents; a couple teachers from the Indian Subcontinent. I don't know what their teaching methods were but we had a real mix of people there and education really wasn't getting done. We only stayed there a year although we were trying to decide in the spring if we should sign up for another year at Elzy, try to transfer to the integrated Greenwood city schools, or think of something else to do next. That's when the Peace Corps came through.

When I was a student at the University of Florida I had stopped at a Peace Corps recruiting booth, filled out a card with my contact information, and said I would be

interested in the Peace Corps, interested in going to Africa or India. While we were in Greenwood, trying to decide what to do next, I got a call from a Peace Corps recruiter asking if I was still interested and I said sure. The recruiter said they didn't have any places in the India or Africa programs for a married couple. He said couldn't place the two of us, as a married couple, with a family in any of the projects they had in India or Africa but he asked me if I knew where South Korea was. I did know but I replied that as long as it's not Greenwood, Mississippi, we would be happy to go there. So from Mississippi we went to a Peace Corps initiation in Chicago and were accepted into the Peace Corps Korea Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL).

*Q: Okay. Could we talk a bit about the process of getting you trained for Korea? Very different culture, isn't it?*

CALLAHAN: A very different culture, yes. And, of course, they said from the beginning of the training program that there would be culture shock. First, they brought several groups of us who would be going to Korea into different programs including the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) program to Chicago. Basically, anyone with an undergraduate liberal arts degree would be put into the TESL program, that and a tuberculosis screening program. During the initial screening in Chicago, we were interviewed by Peace Corps staff as well as by psychiatrists to make the final acceptance decisions.

*Q: Did you get any feel about the philosophy of selection? I mean, did they-?*

CALLAHAN: They asked a lot of probing questions to get an idea – I think - of your psychological makeup. I think that they were trying to get a feel for who would be suitable and who would not flip out in the face of a strange culture and that sort of thing, so that was definitely an element in the process, that probably would not be in Peace Corps recruiting currently, because they were making subjective judgments about the kind of personalities that applicants have. When we went into the training program, for which we were selected, there also seemed to be an element to that and there was some somebody who was kind of looking at you during the 10-week program and a couple of trainees were sent home. The training was in Vermont; they did it at the School for International Living in Brattleboro, although they had us off-site in a couple small towns in Vermont which was a delightful place to spend the summer.

*Q: Yes.*

CALLAHAN: We bonded really well with the other members of the group. I think there were 50 or so; this was a relatively large Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) group - Korea at that time had one of the biggest Peace Corps programs with more than 300 volunteers in the field at any one time. The training was broken up into a couple hours a day of teaching techniques, TESL teaching techniques, about half-day each day of Korean language training and then an hour or so of cultural acclimation, reading materials as well as discussions. The teachers, the language teachers, were- I believe - all Korean university students studying in the U.S. who were not professional trainers but were hired

to do language and cultural training during the summer PCV Training. So, they weren't really professional teachers for the most part and they were pretty assimilated into the U.S. Because of this we weren't really getting the kind of cultural understanding to fully prepare us for life in Korea, other than through reading various books on Korean culture. It was all very interesting, fascinating, and of course there were things that you would have to watch out for in Korea but we weren't really dealing with the average Korean in our daily training activities so we still had much to learn about life in Korea by the end of the training program in Vermont. The training included two weeks in Quebec, Canada, where we were supposed to teach English to French Canadian students. However, it was August and school was out so they sent us to public parks where we were supposed to try to teach English to children who just wanted to play. Quebec was very nice, though. When we finished the training program in September of '71 they flew us to Seoul and the first couple days were orientation at the Peace Corps headquarters there. We were still together as a group at that time and we discovered pretty quickly that what we learned in 10 weeks of half days of Korean language training wasn't going to take us very far. Even our first attempts at using chopsticks – which we had practiced in Vermont - also wasn't going to take us very far until we really got the hang of it.

After the first couple of days in Seoul, they separated us and sent us out to spend a week, with experienced Peace Corps volunteers who were close to the end of their tours. Courtney and I were sent to Kunsan, near Incheon on the coast of the China Sea. There was a U.S. Air Force base there, but we stayed with another PCV couple, at their place and we shadowed them to their schools where they were TESL teachers. Kunsan was a rough place because with the Air Force base there, there was a lot of anti-American feeling around and we learned pretty quickly that Americans were going to get harassed on the streets. We were harassed by kids yelling at us or sometimes by young adults making comments. But, despite this, we decided we were going to stay with it. I think we were overly dismissive of our PCV couple's unhappiness because we felt we were more empathetic and would be better than they were in our efforts to acculturate. However, at that point, after the week with PCVs in the field, several volunteers in our PCV group packed it in and said they couldn't take it; it was just too much of a cultural clash for them. Actually, the young woman who had scored the best on the language and TESL tests was one of those who decided to go home. In another case we had a Korean-American woman from California who was great in training but couldn't speak Korean, other than what she'd learned in the 10-week course and she had a terrible time because, you know, she was-

*Q: This is a real pattern because the Koreans won't accept the fact that somebody that looks Korean can't speak it.*

CALLAHAN: Right. So, she left; after that one week it was enough and she left. But, for the rest of us in the group, for the most part I think we stuck it out for the two years. There were one or two who left somewhere in the middle of the two-year tour. Courtney and I were sent down to Jeju, Seogwipo, a town in the southern part of Jeju Island which was kind of backward compared even to the rest of Korea at that time. Of course, Korea in 1971-73 was still very much a developing country. So, it was not the easiest thing I

had ever done and there were definitely periods of time when I was questioning whether or not the Peace Corps was going to be the best way to spend two years of my life.

*Q: Was there much in the way of bonding with your other Peace Corps colleagues?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, very much so. We had a group, within our PCV group, and we were very close. Within our group of 50 and there were a group of maybe, I guess, up to ten of us who were quite close and we would periodically get together either on the mainland or on Jeju. Once, they came down to Jeju and we partied on the beach about 20 miles from Seogwipo, and other times Courtney and I traveled up to the mainland to Gwangju, Kyungju, Seoul, and Taegu and stayed with them.

*Q: Did any of you get the idea of coming into the Foreign Service? Did you have much contact with the embassy?*

CALLAHAN: Our only contact with the embassy was usually when we would go to Seoul for some conference or some gathering, which wasn't that frequent. Then we would go to the embassy cafeteria and have breakfast, which was a real treat because you'd get bacon and eggs and the usual American breakfast not, you know, a bowl of ....: *Fish heads.*

CALLAHAN: -fish head soup, which is what we were getting in Seogwipo for breakfast. But yes definitely at that point I was starting to think about the Foreign Service and taking the exam. Surprisingly, no one in my Korea PCV group went into the Foreign Service except for me. Of course, I've run into a number of former Peace Corps Korea volunteers from other groups who are Foreign Service Officers, including Kathleen Stephens, who recently finished out her term as ambassador to Korea.

*Q: Where is she now?*

CALLAHAN: She is a diplomat in residence in Georgetown for a year.

*Q: What were you picking up about- there's so much but Korean social structure? Was this a hard thing to get a feel for?*

CALLAHAN: It was not so much a hard thing to get a feel for but because it's so closely knit, within a family that you really didn't feel like you could break into it in any way. The ideal situation and what they did with most volunteers, the single volunteers, was to place them with a Korean family, they'd live with the family. But the experiences varied. Some had families that they just didn't connect with and then they didn't have a good experience. Others had really nice experiences, usually if they were placed with a pretty well-educated family. There was a volunteer in another group in Seogwipo who was placed with a doctor and his family and Courtney and I would be invited to their house for meals at times; some of the other volunteers and us. That was a great family environment. Friends on the mainland often had similar experiences. Courtney and I didn't have that because there were two of us so it took months for the schools to find us

a family to stay with. This family rented us a room in their compound and we hardly ever saw them so we didn't have any kind of interaction with the family. And they weren't interested in having interactions with us. Other volunteers who did have very good family relationships, became very close to their families and I felt that those were really very rewarding experiences.

*Q: What was your impression of the rule of Park Chung-hee at the time?*

CALLAHAN: I would say his was pretty much an iron fist rule. On the other hand I would say that he did a lot to bring that country along and given how far Korean society needed to come, I would say he was successful. What South Korea was like at that time and what it is today is a night and day transformation. I remember there was never a queue anywhere and if you went to the post office or you went to get a bus it was just everybody trying to push to the head of the group (there were no lines or queues), jump on first and then, you know, the usual mob scene. They would do air raid drills at our school. I taught at the boys' middle school and we didn't have an air raid shelter so basically we'd be doing an air raid drill and everyone would go stand outside in groups behind a teacher with a flag pretending they were in an air raid shelter. The drills were mandatory but every time they did it, and, of course, they did these on a regular basis, it seemed like they did it for the first time, everybody was running around trying to find their batons or their flags and get to where they were supposed to be. I did have the impression that it took a fairly strong hand to bring that country together and move it in the progressive direction it went. However, there was no love lost for Park Chung-hee and I was there when he dissolved the parliament and stationed tanks in front of the parliament building; I have a picture that I managed to snap of one of the tanks, much to Courtney's chagrin at the time. But you know, I think that it's probably a useful and necessary step in their development.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the North Koreans?*

CALLAHAN: Only in the attitudes, I guess, of the Koreans in the South. I mean they definitely were afraid and concerned. I mean there was no love lost and it was always in peoples' thoughts with the air raid drills and the other precautions. Our group did go up to the DMZ (demilitarized zone) during our initial orientation. I recall later that there was an incident at the DMZ in which an American soldier was butchered by North Korean troops at the DMZ.

*Q: That would have been I think '76 or '77.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, after I left. But I mean, yes, I certainly had a sense that the North Koreans were, you know, difficult, tough characters and certainly threatening.

*Q: Were there any incidents of submarine landing of troops or anything while you were there?*

CALLAHAN: No, no, I think I remember reading or hearing some reports but not at Jeju.

*Q: How about did you get any feel or was it too far away about the South Koreans' view of Japan?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, it was quite clear that the Koreans still hated the Japanese for its invasion and colonization of Korea. However, there was regular ferry service between Korea and Japan. We traveled a couple of times to Japan by ferry from Busan to Shimonoseki and then traveled around in Japan.

*Q: As a couple, what- how did they split up your work?*

CALLAHAN: Well I taught at the boys' middle school and Courtney taught at the girls' school. They were close together so we'd walk to our respective schools. She was a much better teacher than I was due to her training in education and her interest in teaching. I was more interested in the cultural experience of being in Korea but I tried to make a go of my teaching responsibilities. Every middle school class was made up of about 70 students and we worked with Korean co-teachers who would teach English grammar and they knew the grammar, backwards and forward, far better than I did. So my co-teacher, Mr. Kang, handled the grammar lesson and I did the speaking lesson, the pronunciation drills, which were fairly boring. Courtney was more creative, I would say, in her work and I always felt that it would have been more fun to work with the girls anyway than with the boys, based on what I saw when I photographed Courtney in her classroom.

*Q: Well did you note or your wife note the discrimination towards women?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, that was quite obvious. She noted it and I noted it in the work place and society as a whole, especially in rural Jeju. However, Courtney's Korean co-teacher at the school was male and she got along well with him and I recall him being a really decent guy. But, yes, you could certainly see it in the attitudes of some of the other male teachers towards the female students and teachers. And, generally, it was obvious in society although I did see an incident in the market once involving a big argument between a woman who was, I guess, selling fish and I don't know if it was a customer or somebody else, like a competitor. She took one of her fishes and starting hitting this fellow with the fish until he backed off. (Because I finished my teaching day earlier than Courtney, I usually did the food shopping at the market.) The situation was a little different on Jeju, I think, because there was a tradition there of women taking a stronger role in earning the families' livelihoods. The diving women of Jeju are pretty famous there and I often saw women working in the fields more so than the men. So I think from that respect there was a little more respect, I guess, for women in Jeju.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the pressure of the families towards pushing their children towards, you know, the top schools, universities?*

CALLAHAN: Not really in Jeju, because we were teaching middle school students and most of these kids were coming from rural working families. Seogwipo was not the provincial capital; it's the second largest town and most of these kids were coming from

farm families and they were just in school because they had to be there. There was, however, a handful in each of my classes who were interested and motivated, and fun to teach. I really would like to know what happened with those kids after they moved on.

*Q: Did you get a feel for the policy of Park Chung-hee of sort of giving priority- a certain amount of priority to farms? He was, you know most dictators milk the farmers and as I understand it he didn't. I mean, he-*

CALLAHAN: It wasn't obvious to me what his priorities were. I know one of the things that he did and had been done by the time I got there was to fully link the countryside to the electrical grid. So, in that respect he was getting electricity into the rural areas and I think that went a long way toward the progress that the country has made. I do remember there were rice shortages at the time and rice was rationed to avoid imports so that every other day instead of having rice with your meal you would have barley and a millet sort of combination of grains.

*Q: Well then you did this for how long?*

CALLAHAN: Two years.

*Q: As you were there what were you thinking about?*

CALLAHAN: Well, I think for part of it I was thinking I didn't really ever want to be a teacher again. Part of it was that I really enjoyed the ability to see Korea, the countryside and learning about the culture even though it was a difficult culture. I was becoming very interested in photography - which I'd started when I was still in Mississippi - and wanted to become a photojournalist. There were so many opportunities for photography in Korea that I became pretty good at it. So, during all my free time I would be out walking around, wandering, and looking for opportunities to make photographs. Not too long before I finished my Peace Corps tour, I convinced Peace Corps Seoul headquarters to send me around the countryside and photograph PCVs and their projects, which I did, and turned over the photos for the Peace Corps archives. I started looking to the future and thinking about how I would try to establish myself in photojournalism when I got back home. I was still interested in the aspect of foreign affairs, too, but at that point I was pretty much focused on photojournalism but also wondering if I should stay with the PCV tour for the full two years or curtail since the teaching part of the experience just wasn't satisfying and I didn't see a future in teaching for myself. I also didn't feel that it was going to be very useful even for the Koreans in my classes because of their backgrounds in Jeju and the lack of opportunity that they would become fluent in or use the English language in the future. They weren't going to be in the tourist industry, for the most part.

*Q: Well maybe you were in the wrong place to get a feel for it but did you, when you got ready to leave, did you have any ideas about the impact of the Peace Corps? Was it a positive thing, a negative thing, a moderate or mixed bag or what?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, I was pretty convinced that the Peace Corps, the impact of the Peace Corps experience was really much more on the volunteers than on the Koreans. I felt that the development impact, at least at that time and with the kinds of programs that we were doing, was pretty limited. That said, I was back in Pusan, South Korea, for a meeting in September 2009 and the meeting was hosted by the supreme prosecutor's office of Korea. I discovered that a number of the officials with whom I was meeting spoke reasonably good English and several had been taught by Peace Corps Volunteers. So, I had to refine my views based on that experience but at the time I felt that we really weren't having much of a development impact.

*Q: Well one of the things I think that was happening was that with exchange, I mean Koreans going to the United States, the Park Chung-hee government's receptivity to change and bringing in experts often Koreans who went through the American educational process, he came up with a pretty, you know, pretty good combination.*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: Did you have the feeling that Korea was sort of moving ahead or?*

CALLAHAN: At that time, living in rural Jeju, I didn't really see it. At that time, from '71 to '73, and especially having traveled a couple times to Japan, which was, in that period of time, just so far ahead of Korea that I never would have expected that Korea would be where it is now, because it didn't seem like they were moving very fast. They still had a long way to go in regard to development. Maybe in part that was because I lived in Jeju; Jeju was the least developed part of Korea, then.

*Q: Well when you left Korea, when there, did you know what you and your wife wanted to do?*

CALLAHAN: Not really. We traveled back through Thailand and then spent some time traveling in Malaysia, which impressed me very much, and Europe, buying and riding bicycles in the Netherlands for a few weeks, and then back to Tallahassee. In Tallahassee, Courtney didn't have much trouble finding a teaching job but for me, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history, there really wasn't much of anything. I, initially, took a job selling shoes at the local K-Mart for a few months and then I was offered a graduate assistantship to go back to Florida State to do a master's degree. Ironically the degree program was in the School of Education, in the Reading Education program. I took it just because I didn't want to keep selling shoes and didn't see anything else really out there. Also, the assistantship was working with a professor who was doing a lot of groundbreaking work in values education and that was interesting for me. Although I received my MS in Education, my heart wasn't in it and I certainly didn't excel.

*Q: Well did you find that the Peace Corps experience had maybe alienated you from the Florida culture or not?*



CALLAHAN: Yes, to some extent, although not so much alienation as not being able to fully share the experience with friends and relatives. The Peace Corps had counseled end-of-tour PCVs to expect to have “reverse culture shock,” that you’d come back home and find that, if you talked about your experience in Korea with friends and relatives, the conversation was good for about five minutes before they got bored and-

*Q: Yes, the blank look.*

CALLAHAN: Yes. So, we did feel a bit like fish out of water in that respect. However, going to graduate school was useful in developing some new friendships with some other graduate students who had broader horizons in that respect even though I wasn’t really thrilled with my program. I didn’t really see myself going back into teaching with my degree, which would have also required quite a few additional courses, anyway, to qualify for teaching certification. Toward the end of my graduate school period, through my brother who was working as a part-timer, as needed, at the post office, I was able to get a part-time job as a substitute rural mail carrier for the post office and could actually make pretty decent money. After I finished graduate school, I began covering for a mail carrier who had had surgery and was out for several months. I was able to save some money but in the meantime Courtney and I had had our first falling out and decided to separate about three or four months before I finished graduate school.

*Q: Would describe the falling out, I don’t want to get to far into personal details, but the Peace Corps experience or just getting married young and-?*

CALLAHAN: A variety of things, including marrying too young and experiencing broader horizons in the Peace Corps.

*Q: Didn’t help?*

CALLAHAN: Courtney actually initiated the separation because I was still in a period of floundering around, trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life and being pretty indecisive about it. I moved in with a friend for a few months and after I finished graduate school and worked a few more months at the post office, saved up some money, decided to travel up to DC to try something new. In June 1975, my brother, David, and I took a motorcycle trip up the Blue Ridge Parkway to DC. David was still in university and had a summer break so the two of us rode our motorcycles up here where I had friends from my college years who had relocated to this area. So, we stayed with them for a while and did some traveling to see relatives in Pennsylvania, do some touring around New England, and went back to East Freetown, Massachusetts, where we had lived as kids. When summer came to an end, I decided I would stay in the DC area while David went back to Tallahassee to finish his studies. During that period, I tried to do some photojournalism work and wedding photography and I started work at a photography shop in Silver Spring. I also took the Foreign Service exam during that period.

*Q: Had you- Was this sort of on impulse or had you really-*

CALLAHAN: In a way it was an impulse because I'd been interested in it but everything I had heard about the exams sounded pretty daunting: the difficulty of passing it. So I didn't go out of my way when I was in Tallahassee to take the exam. I saw the exam was being held at the Woodrow Wilson High School on 13th Street, NW, not so far from our apartment in Takoma Park, Maryland, and so I, thought that I might as well take it. So, in a way it was an impulse. I tried to study a little for it but not very much.

*Q: Well did you have a feeling that gee, I didn't go to an Ivy League school or my family doesn't have inherited wealth and so this, I'm going to be a fish out of water?*

CALLAHAN: Well not so much that I'd be a fish out of water but that it would be difficult to be accepted into the Foreign Service because of those factors. I did have the impression that it was oriented more toward the Ivy League schools and graduates from Ivy League schools and the GW School of Foreign Service at Georgetown and so I thought that I would not be very competitive based on my background.

*Q: Well I take it you passed the written exam.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, I kind of squeaked through the written exam. I didn't pass with flying colors but enough to make it.

*Q: I took it back in '53 and I was averaged into the Foreign Service. I had to get a 70 and I got a 69.8 or something.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, I was just barely above 70, I think.

*Q: Yes. Well did you take- when did you take the oral exam?*

CALLAHAN: I can't remember exactly. I had left the job at the photo-shop and was unemployed. I'd come to the conclusion I wasn't going to make it really in photojournalism; they put me in sales and I'd never been a very good salesman so that didn't work out so well. Then they had me driving the delivery truck, which was actually kind of fun; the pay was decent and I got to learn my way around the DC area. But then they decided I was over-educated and they didn't really need me around anymore so they fired me from the photo shop and it was during that period that I took the written and oral exams. At that time, the oral consisted of a three-person panel of senior FSOs.

*Q: This is when about?*

CALLAHAN: Oh, maybe '77, sometime in '77.

*Q: I had been on the Board of Examiners giving- I mean on the panel in '75-'76 and it was three-person. How did it- Could you recall any of the questions?*

CALLAHAN: I recall that some of the questions were focused on what newspapers and periodicals I read to keep up with current events and foreign affairs and what I thought

about current events in foreign affairs. They gave me some hypothetical situations and asked what would I do in a particular situation, how would I react. I don't recall the specifics though of what the questions were. There was somebody from USIA (United States Information Agency), there was somebody from State and I don't know where the third one was from now, maybe an outside agency.

*Q: Did they ask you what you wanted to do or sort of the coning situation?*

CALLAHAN: They may have. I mean I knew that the consular cone had the shortest waiting list so I knew I was going to go for the consular cone. I didn't feel I had a strong enough background for the other cones; I certainly didn't have it in economics. I wasn't interested in administration and I didn't feel I had a strong enough of political science background to try the political officer route, although I believe my drafting and writing is quite good. Plus, I could see that with the written score I had that consular would be the one to go for. And you know, I knew enough, or I learned enough, about consular affairs that I wasn't turned off by the idea.

*Q: Well then what happened?*

CALLAHAN: It took quite a while. I was on the roster. Actually, it was taking so long that I took the test a second time, I passed again on the written test but then the second time around I didn't pass the oral, which was curious but I was still on the roster from the first time. In the meantime I started doing volunteer work for the ACTION Agency, which was the agency that at that time had incorporated the Vista and Peace Corps programs into a single agency under the Nixon Administration. After doing some volunteer work, I got a regular job with ACTION, a temporary job as a program assistant on a program to organize returned former Peace Corps volunteers and to reconnect with them and to set up a network. That was quite a fun job and I sort of hated to leave it. I was editor of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) newsletter, called "Reconnect," for which I called on my experiences in photojournalism and in editing my high school newspaper as well as work on the University of Florida newspaper. I also did a lot of outreach work and some domestic travel to meet with RPCV groups around the country. So, I was doing that when they called me up finally for the class that started in October 1978 based on the first roster. One of the amusing aspects of my Foreign Service recruitment was that when they did the background investigation, the FBI interviewed my best friend at the time in Washington, somebody who I'd lived with for a while when I first came up to the area and who was a college fraternity brother. He had relocated to Washington and, despite having a college degree, was driving a taxi in Maryland, and selling fruit and vegetables on the side of the road out in Montgomery County near Bethesda at a roadside stand. He was one of my references and he FBI ended up interviewing him at his vegetable stand. They took me in anyway.

*Q: What was your class like?*

CALLAHAN: It was pretty diverse, interesting. I'd say that I guess most of the people in the class probably came from economically more advantaged backgrounds than I had had

with my family after my grandfather died. There was some diversity, not a lot, but I guess the most interesting character in the class was Alan Keyes, who later was picked to be Jeanne Kirkpatrick's assistant at the United Nations mission and later after a falling out with Deputy Secretary Whitehead, left the Foreign Service, and ran for president.

*Q: He surfaces from time-*

CALLAHAN: Yes, I haven't seen him in a while, though. I got along well with Alan. He is very bright, and he certainly was the gadfly of our Foreign Service class. When we had speakers come in you could count on Alan to ask them tough questions. The rest of the class was pretty much a cross-section America but also pretty much predominantly- with the exception of Alan - all white. I don't recall even any Hispanics.

*Q: Alan was an African-American?*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: Well did you get any feel for the standing of consular work with- since you came in?*

CALLAHAN: Oh yes, it was pretty clear that although admin work wasn't really that highly thought of, consular work definitely was the one that people wanted to try to get out of as soon as they possibly could, especially after a couple of years on the visa lines.

*Q: I speak as a veteran consular officer on the record here.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, at that time, as you know, your first tours were going to be consular tours no matter your cone and there was pretty much no way to get out it so there were people who weren't very happy about that. We had an odd class; it was especially large because there due to the settlement of a lawsuit over immigrant visa priority numbers for Mexico many of our class's available assignments were in Mexico, mostly in the border posts. So, we had a limited selection of posts for our group. The exceptions to the Mexican options were Bombay, Kingston, Maracaibo (Venezuela), which had all of us running to the atlas to try to figure out where Maracaibo was, one in Guayaquil, and several in in Iran, both Tehran and Isfahan because of the large visa issuing operations there at that time. I was actually intrigued by the thought of going to Isfahan, Iran, but Courtney very adamantly and perhaps with foresight said she didn't really want to go to Iran. It turned out that all of our friends in our group that went to Iran ended up as hostages or hiding out in the Canadian Embassy, so we were happy that we didn't go there. Four of our colleagues from that time featured as characters in the film, Argo and several others who didn't escape spent the entire time as hostages. I didn't really want to go to Mexico since it was still in North America. We ended up going to Maracaibo, to the consulate which had closed and then been reopened a couple years before, for our first tour. At post, there was a consul general and two junior FSO posts, one of which had recently been added, along with a United States Information Service branch public affairs officer.

*Q: Okay, I think this is probably a good time to stop, a good place to stop, and we'll pick this up the next time. You're in Maracaibo from when to when?*

CALLAHAN: I got there in about June of 1979 and stayed until January of 1981. It was an 18-month tour, our first tour.

*Q: Alright. Let's take a peek at the calendar.*

*Alright. Today is the 2nd of December, 2010, (sic) with Jim Callahan. And we left off-had we talked about your A-100 course?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, we talked about the A-100 and the people, my classmates and that Alan Keyes was the most prominent of the group. After the A-100 course at FSI, I went through consular training and then Spanish language training for 20 weeks.,

*Q: And then you went to, it was Maracaibo?*

CALLAHAN: Went to Maracaibo.

*Q: What was Maracaibo like? It's sort of an interesting post.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, most people had never heard of it, including in our Foreign Service class, but it's the second largest city in Venezuela after Caracas but very different from Caracas. It's obviously on Lake Maracaibo, close to the Colombian border, and part of the Guajira Peninsula. Maracaibo was pretty chaotic, a low-rise, spread-out sort of city. There were a lot of American and local oil workers who worked and lived on the other side of the lake so even though there were quite a few American expats we didn't see much of them. They were well-integrated and often had local spouses. The oil industry had been nationalized by then but there were still Americans who worked in it. It was on the other side of the lake, and Lake Maracaibo is huge, so we didn't really see too much of them except when they came in for consular services. In the city itself there really were very few American expats or expats of any description. There really wasn't very much to do in the city, either; I mean it was not really a family-friendly place for expats.

*Q: I remember when I came into the Foreign Service back in 1955 one of our men went to Maracaibo and found it very difficult because it was expensive.*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: Oil, you know oil workers got paid a lot and vice consuls did not get paid a lot.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, it was expensive, that's for sure. Another reason why there really wasn't a lot to do was because what there was to do tended to be fairly costly. I recall going once or twice to a salsa club with some friends and every table bought a bottle of Dimple Scotch whisky. I don't know why Dimple was so popular but it was \$100 for that bottle of whisky so we didn't go out clubbing much. But yes, it was expensive and what

we ended up doing, Courtney and I, because the consul was a member of the local, low-rent yacht club; and had a boat, was to join the club. There was also a more prestigious yacht club on the lake, an expensive club which had all the luxury power boats and motor sailors to which the wealthy expatriates and locals, known as Maracuchos, belonged. And then there was our little, low-cost yacht club which was headquartered in a ferry that had been grounded and then used as the clubhouse. It was called the Los Andes Yacht Club. They had a small fleet of 20-foot or so wooden sailboats that had belonged to the Shell Corporation before it was nationalized and had its properties taken over by the government. The club bought them. The membership fees were pretty inexpensive and the club had an interesting group of members, an expat former British Royal Air Force officer, married to a Venezuelan, some Chileans, Peruvians, Argentines, and Mexicans who just happened to gravitate to this particular group and who found difficulty actually getting along with Venezuelans anyway.

*Q: Well first place, was it sailing on a lake?*

CALLAHAN: Sailing on the lake.

*Q: I mean you know, one looks at the lake and I was thinking a lake of oil practically because you hear so much about the oil; but what was-*

CALLAHAN: You wouldn't really want to swim in the water, but the oil rigs, were on the other side of the lake from the city of Maracaibo so for sailing it was fine. We sailed across the lake a couple times to a small beach but there was also a big petrochemical plant on the other side of the lake which was discharging who knows what into the lake so you didn't really want to swim in it. I remember one time when we did sail across the lake trying to keep out of the way of the tankers coming down the channel and of course they had the right of way; and we didn't have any power. Maracaibo weather was very hot; it was extremely hot all year round, near the equator, and very humid. Once we were becalmed on the lake in the open sailboat and that became very unpleasant.

*Q: What was the government like of Venezuela?*

CALLAHAN: Well at that time it was reasonably democratic. As I recall, the President was a Christian Democrat. However, the government at all levels was extremely corrupt. We didn't see too much evidence of the national government in Maracaibo, other than the police services, but we certainly saw plenty of evidence of corruption. I mean the whole mindset of people seemed to be to get what you can any way you can. We had a bi-national center there with a USIA officer and I recall they did a survey of their English language students on ethics and corruption and basically the kids all indicated they had no scruples at all about taking whatever they could get so that was very clearly an issue.

*Q: What were you doing?*

CALLAHAN: I was one of the two vice consuls. There were two vice consuls and the consul and we basically were issuing visas all day. We had some American citizen

services, the expat oil workers who would come in for passports occasionally. Maracaibo clearly was not a tourist destination so we almost virtually never saw a tourist come wandering in for any purpose. We did have a number of arrest cases of Americans. Usually they were flying in with private aircraft, got confused and landed in Venezuela instead of Colombia (the Guajira Peninsula is divided between Colombia and Venezuela) where they intended to pick up large shipments of marijuana to fly back to the U.S. They would be immediately arrested and under Venezuelan law, the police had eight days to detain and investigate somebody that they picked up. The planes usually came in empty because they hadn't made it to the pickup locations. They would come in empty but they'd have extra fuel tanks and passenger seats removed from the aircraft and lots of big trash bags to fill up with marijuana. So, and the police would arrest them, investigate and usually after eight days would deport them, The problem for the consulate was that the government always kept the planes which were invariably leased; they didn't actually belong to the people who flew them in. So, then we had ongoing problems trying to help the owners of the planes to get them back from the government. The government was not willing to let them go. That sort of thing livened things up from the usual consular visa issues. In those days, the Venezuelan posts were pretty much visa mills.

Venezuelans, because of the oil money, were considered to be good visa risks so we were just issuing visas right and left, usually without an interview. We spent most days just sitting at our desks looking at applications and signing off on them. We interviewed the occasional Colombian who would show up and who was considered to be high risk because they had no permanent status in Venezuela but were labor migrants in the country. Colombia's economy was much weaker at that time. It kept us pretty busy but the work was relatively boring. The other vice consul and I would switch off duties, though; for six months I would be the lead consular officer, handling American Citizen Services and the other vice consul would cover the administrative work. So it was a useful learning experience.

*Q: Did you have any contact with Venezuelan officials?*

CALLAHAN: Very little. Only-

*Q: Police?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, we had contact with the DISIP which was the intelligence service. The DISIP took over whenever foreigners and drug cases were involved. We also had some contact with customs officials because of the commercial issues that we had. The Consul was the one mostly having contacts with government officials. Also, my Spanish was pretty poor, at that time. The other vice consul was considerably better because he was from Texas and had some Spanish-language background coming into Foreign Service. In fact, although he entered the Service a class behind me, he arrived in Maracaibo before I did, due to attenuated language training.

*Q: Who was that?*

CALLAHAN: Actually, it was Bill Brownfield who is now the Assistant Secretary responsible the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) where I am currently working under a Personal Services Contract (PSC). So it's quite a coincidence that I'm working with him (actually, for him) again after more than 30 years.

*Q: Well as you did this how did the Foreign Service strike you?*

CALLAHAN: Oh, I thoroughly enjoyed it. As I said before, I had been interested in photojournalism and I didn't really know if I would be suitable for the Foreign Service but I decided when I passed the exam that I'd just go ahead and apply myself to the Foreign Service to see how I liked it, and I liked it very much. I enjoyed being assigned overseas and I didn't really mind the visa work too much. The variety of dealing with other kinds of issues was sufficient and I just liked living in another culture and yes, I was pretty much hooked at that point, had no desire to do anything else.

*Q: Okay. Well then, you were there for how long?*

CALLAHAN: Eighteen months. In those days the first assignment was usually an 18-month assignment, pending tenure.

*Q: How'd your wife feel about the-?*

CALLAHAN: I think she was okay with it. She made some friends in Maracaibo and she helped out at the consulate during the busy season. She also did some paid work for the bi-national center because of her education background, including some work on curriculum development, so I think she was happy enough there too.

*Q: Did you get any feel about Venezuelans as-?*

CALLAHAN: Well, yes. The FSNs (Foreign Service Nationals) that we worked with, particularly the female FSNs in the office, were great; they were really nice, nice people, and very competent. We met a number of people who we got along well with but the language was a bit of a barrier. I think the Venezuelans at that time, in particular, because of their oil wealth were considered to be difficult to get to know well. Even other Latin Americans who we knew, Mexicans, Peruvians, Argentines, with whom we were friends through the yacht club and in our apartment building, also found it difficult because they felt the Venezuelans were a bit arrogant over their wealth and so on.

*Q: Well there was quite an influx of Colombians, wasn't there?*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: To get more menial type jobs and things.*

CALLAHAN: Right, yes. Really, all of the skilled and unskilled labor work, such as auto mechanics, things like that, were pretty much all done by Colombians. In general,



Venezuelans just wouldn't do that kind of work. Every house would have four or five cars in front, often big Chevy Impalas. Cars were very expensive because even though they were assembled in Venezuela, all the parts were shipped in from the U.S. and they were just assembled in Venezuela with very high labor costs. A new Chevrolet Impala would cost four or five times what it might cost in the U.S. But, every family had three or four cars. Drivers were just completely out of it. I never saw so many accidents as I did in Maracaibo. Every day, almost every day I would see an accident. The guys would just drive down the road and if the light would be red they'd start blowing their horn and run right through the light blowing the horn to let everyone know they were going to run it. But I saw just an amazing number of accidents there.

*Q: Was Cuba and Castro, were these factors there?*

CALLAHAN: Not so much. At that time I remember there were some issues with, I can't remember his exact name, Bosch, Orlando Bosch, I believe.

*Q: Dominican- He was in the Dominican Republic.*

*Q: You were there from when to when?*

CALLAHAN: It was just '79 to the beginning of 1981.

*Q: Well where did you go after that?*

CALLAHAN: I went to Lima, Peru; we left Maracaibo in January of 1981 and had kind of an extended home leave, but went to Lima in March of '81, again in the consular section.

*Q: And Lima, you were there from-?*

CALLAHAN: Eighty-one to '83.

*Q: Eighty-one to '83. How'd you find Lima?*

CALLAHAN: Oh, I really liked Peru much better than I had Venezuela and certainly Lima was a much more pleasant place to live than Maracaibo was. The climate was a lot better. It was a big embassy so you had a bigger social circle than we had in Maracaibo where there were just a handful of Americans and other expats. I enjoyed Lima very much and I liked working at the embassy. The ambassador was really good; the first year, Edward Corr was the ambassador and I got along very well with him; I had a lot of friends within the embassy from various sections. The work was really interesting even though I spent about the first six months on the visa line. But that was certainly more interesting than it was Venezuela because we had to interview virtually everyone and my Spanish improved tremendously. Also, the Spanish that the Peruvians speak is much better than in Maracaibo where the Spanish spoken is what they would call "costena," in

the coastal areas, and was pretty difficult to follow. I didn't learn very much Spanish in Maracaibo but in Peru my Spanish improved a lot. After about six months on the visa line I managed to get myself moved over to the American Citizen Services section and was put in charge of the section as a second-tour officer. We had a lot of issues there with American citizen welfare and whereabouts; there was a lot of tourism in Peru, and a lot of arrest cases. I was constantly going out to the prisons to visit Americans there, going to the courts to try to follow up on their cases, liaising with their relatives and Congressional offices, etc. We had about 42 Americans in prison there at that time, most of them in the court of the "first instance," so their cases would take about two years to run their course before receiving a verdict.

*Q: What were they- what was the-?*

CALLAHAN: All but one of the Americans were in on drug trafficking charges, cocaine, but I'd say really all of them except maybe one or two were just small timers, just individuals who thought they would come down to Peru and score some coke, take it back, maybe sell it to their friends but they weren't big time traffickers.

*Q: What about the Shining Path? Was that going on?*

CALLAHAN: They were becoming more aggressive during the period I was there. I did a rotation with the political section but I wasn't following the terrorism issue. But Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) was becoming more and more active during that time and by the time I left Peru, they were starting to attack the aqueducts outside of the city and causing problems to the water supply. It wasn't long after I left that they began to launch attacks within the city itself.

*Q: Well what- Were the Peruvians a consular problem? I mean for visas and that sort of thing?*

CALLAHAN: Yes. The economic situation was such there that they were pretty high risk so the refusal rate for visas was pretty high. There were communities in the United States, still are, I'm sure, Peruvian communities in strange places like Patterson, New Jersey, and areas where you wouldn't expect Hispanics to congregate. There were a lot of efforts by people trying to get up to the U.S. to stay and work, just resettle in the U.S.

*Q: How would you describe American relations with Peru? There had been a time when the Peruvians were grabbing American companies; I mean and there was, you know, these international companies were getting involved there but Peru has, was it various- was it bauxite or what?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, I was there after that period. I think it was the Romero government in the late '60s which kicked out the Peace Corps, nationalized U.S. companies and cozied up to the Soviet Union. The relationship with Peru at that time was really very poor but by the time I got there they had a democratically-elected civilian president and the military no longer influenced the government. I remember that Belaúnde was the

president and that relations were quite good. After Ambassador Corr moved on to his next assignment in La Paz, Ambassador Frank Ortiz came to Lima. He was an interesting fellow as well. Frankly, I found Ambassador Corr much easier to work with but still Ambassador Ortiz was certainly good. He had been a political officer in the late '60s in Peru and I think he was PNG'd (persona non grata) by the Romero government so coming back as Ambassador was a bit of a triumph. The relationship was good with the Belaúnde government, very supportive.

*Q: Well how about how'd you find sort of social relations, you and your wife?*

CALLAHAN: Good. My Spanish had improved quite a bit and we had a pretty wide circle of friends within the embassy with whom we socialized mostly but we also socialized with Peruvians. I met a number of Peruvians in the Ministry of Justice through my work on American Citizen Services issues so we had some receptions and dinners at our apartment that we invited them to and we got along well with most of our neighbors in the apartment building who were all Peruvian.

*Q: Did you get to travel much?*

CALLAHAN: Not as much as I would have liked. The problem was that Courtney was pregnant at that time with our first child, Brian, so for the first half of the tour she couldn't really travel and then for the second half we had a small child. So we did take a road trip up into the mountains with friends when Brian was about one-year old and we did a trip to Arequipa, near the border with Chile. I traveled a few times for consular trips up to Cusco because we had an honorary consul and a couple of prisoners up there so I went up to see them; so I did some travel but I didn't get to the Amazon which I really would have liked to have done.

*Q: How did the honorary consul business work from your perspective?*

CALLAHAN: Well it was fine. We had one in Arequipa and one in Cusco and it was really good to have one in Cusco. He was a young guy and I can't remember what he did; he wasn't a local. He was an American and he was married to a local but I can't remember what his actual business was up there. It might have been tourism, a travel agency or something like that. But having him there to deal with the many American tourists who would visit Machu Picchu was really very useful. It is a big country, with a good deal of tourism and we didn't have consulates outside Lima.

*Q: Did you have many sort of drug travelers, I mean kids who, you know, came down and wanted to do- see Latin America and on the way pick up a-?*

CALLAHAN: Well, most of my clientele in the prisons were in that situation. Virtually all of them, about 41 or so, were amateurs. They just happened to go down to Peru to pick up some coke for themselves and friends. I think probably almost every one of them made their buy from a DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) informant and, of course, my friends down the hall in the DEA office had something to do with the fact that

I had to go visit these guys in prisons for the next two years. But even that was fascinating in itself. I met some really interesting people, you know, on those prison visits, including one who later on became a fairly well known writer, John Anderson, and became friendly with him and was somewhat instrumental in finally getting him out of prison and out of the country. John married a local Peruvian woman he had met before being arrested and I went to their wedding. There were some interesting prisoners with whom I dealt and I also learned a lot about the justice system there which obviously didn't function very well. We also had a prisoner transfer treaty, negotiated by the consul general while I was in Lima, and I was closely involved in the first transfer which involved difficult negotiations with the Ministry of Justice on a variety of issues.

*Q: You might explain about the prisoner transfer.*

CALLAHAN: It was an agreement between the government of Peru and the U.S. Government that would allow convicted prisoners, once they'd been convicted, to be transferred by the U.S. Bureau of Corrections back to the U.S. where they would finish their sentence in a U.S. prison but under U.S. rules, so the standards in terms of when they would be eligible for parole would be under U.S. rules. That resolved a lot of the problems because having these people in prisons in Peru was extremely expensive for the families back in the U.S. to pay for lawyers, to provide food for them because the food provided in the prisons really wasn't sufficient. So, the parents would have to send money and support other expenses in addition to the emotional hardship. Naturally, there was always a tremendous amount of congressional interest. We, basically, in the embassy managed internal accounts for all of the prisoners because they couldn't have all their money with them in the prisons because it would be stolen. So, every two weeks when I went out to the prisons - and we had four prisons we visited - I would take money for the prisoners, take them vitamins and dietary supplements, reading material, magazines; I was loaded down with things for them. But the prisoner transfer treaty was designed to alleviate the problem of these kids pretty far from home and their families very worried about them. Also it was precipitated to some extent, I think, because of two issues before I arrived in Lima. Two American prisoners decided to try to make a prison break with the help of some friends outside. In that process, a guard was killed and these two prisoners subsequently, after they were recaptured, died in prison. Their relatives charged were that they were killed in revenge; the Peruvian authorities claimed that they committed suicide because they weren't going to be able to get out. But, there was a lot of publicity about that as well as intense Congressional interest. Then, there were also some issues of a number of American tourists who had recently gone missing in Latin America and there had been a "60 Minutes" program on that issue. So there was a good deal of congressional and media attention in general on American citizens' problems in Peru.

*Q: I've heard of this problem in Peru; what was your sort of gut feeling about where these tourists had disappeared? How- What happened?*

CALLAHAN: Well I think they were off on their own usually, that is traveling individually, in some fairly remote place and, they likely met up with the wrong type. I'm sure they just met up with somebody who decided to take advantage of them and rob and

kill them; it was pretty easy to make sure that their body was never found somewhere in the mountains or in the jungle. So basically it was the mistake of traveling alone and without taking enough precautions, and being inexperienced. That's pretty much what it came down to, I believe. There were similar cases in Ecuador but the authorities in both countries really weren't capable or perhaps not even that interested in effectively investigating the disappearances.

*Q: Well how was living there?*

CALLAHAN: It was good. We had a nice apartment; it was in an old colonial style apartment in the section called the San Isidro, which is just outside the very center of the city, very pleasant and near a golf course and nice restaurants. Peru has a decent climate, nice beaches and great tourism opportunities, so it was a pretty pleasant place to live. I enjoyed it. And the embassy was right downtown at that time. The embassy now is outside of the city.

*Q: Yes. Well then, you're moving up for a third tour.*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: Whither?*

CALLAHAN: When it was time to bid, my CDO (career development officer) said okay, it's time to go back to Washington and do something there. I was ready to do that, particularly with a small child, and my wife wanted to get back to Washington as well. I had some friends from my A-100 class who had done tour in the INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research) Current Intelligence Staff (CIS), sort of the INR version of the SS-

*Q: Operations Center.*

CALLAHAN: -the Operations Center. And so I bid on that job, got it and went back to Washington. The INR/CIS assignment was only a 15-month assignment because it was a 24/7 rotation; we did shift work, evenings one week, nights one week and days for one week, rotating; it was not a long-term assignment but it was interesting. We had to have SCI (separate compartmentalized intelligence) clearance and on the day shifts we would take the TS/SCI briefing materials every morning to the principals in the building. I recall that General Vernon Walters was one of the people who I would brief; brief meant I took him the material and waited with him while he read it. The job was interesting from that perspective but it also became pretty routine once you got used to it, pulling the material off the teletypes to review it and then doing the daily summaries of the most important issues to be briefed. We did have some interesting occurrences on the Watch, though. For example, I was on duty when the Korean Airline shoot-down over Russia took place.

*Q: Oh yes.*

CALLAHAN: That was-

*Q: Over the Kamchatka Peninsula.*

CALLAHAN: Yes. So that was a time when things were pretty exciting in the INR watch because we saw the transcripts of the pilots which had been intercepted. So that was okay. At the time, the shift work worked out pretty well because it gave me time during the days to spend time with my young son and also we had moved into a row house on Capitol Hill that needed some work so the time during the days I could do some work on the house. But yes, 15-months on the Watch were enough.

*Q: Well then after 15 months?*

CALLAHAN: Well, then, because I was a consular cone officer, I bid on the job to be the special assistant to the head of the Visa Office. It turned out that it wasn't an official Special Assistant position but a regular consular officer job that had been re-written to be an assistant to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Affairs who then was Lou Goeltz. Lou was also a great guy to work with and his deputy was Allan Otto who again was really a nice guy to work with and I learned a good deal about visa work and made great contacts among the civil servants in the Visa Office. These contacts were very helpful in my later consular work. However, the job basically was kind of an administrative job. I was responsible for things like getting new office furniture and deciding where it was going to go; who would receive which types of desks, etc. At the time, the Visa Office, located in Columbia Plaza, had a big problem with all of the paper visa files that filled hundreds of metal file cabinets. They became too heavy for the floor and there were some real concerns that they were going to come through the floor at some point so I was responsible for the process of redistributing these files all around the building so they didn't put too much of a load on the floor, and for identifying a more efficient filing system. So, really these were administrative things that I didn't mind doing but they weren't what I really want to do in the Foreign Service. I had the special assistant position, I think, for about six months when a position in the Consular Affairs (CA) public affairs office suddenly opened up. The CA Press Officer, an A-100 classmate of mine, went on vacation one day and never returned. He had decided he was going to become an investment banker California and wasn't going to come back to the Foreign Service. I was familiar with his job from talking with him previously, and it seemed much more interesting than my work in the Visa Office. I had a bit of a journalism background, having been the editor of my high school paper and had worked on the university newspapers at both Florida State and the University of Florida. So, I volunteered to fill in and CA ultimately asked me to stay on as Press Officer, which was a great job. I did that for about 18 months to finish out a two-year tour in CA.

*Q: What sort of things did you do?*

CALLAHAN: Well we had to do the daily press guidance for the Department Spokesman, who at the time was Bernard Kalb, on consular issues. There were a lot of consular issues in those days because that's when the Achille Lauro ship hijacking

happened and there were a lot of issues related to travel abroad by Americans; the early terrorism concerns. Also, Meir Kahane was having his issue over his U.S. citizenship which the Department stripped when Kahane was elected to the Israeli parliament. There was also this group in Israel whose members called themselves the Black Hebrews. These were African-American citizens who claimed to be descended from the ancient Israelites and who claimed residence in Israel under the Israeli "Law of Return." The Israeli government didn't recognize their claims and tried to deport them. However, the members of the group in Israel renounced their U.S. citizenship so they couldn't be sent back, as stateless. CA had many issues about which the spokesman's office needed guidance. In addition we did quite a bit of press outreach, interviews and organizing interviews for Consular Affairs principals on visa issues, passport issues, American Services and so on. The work kept us pretty busy and there was a lot of exposure, a lot of opportunity to talk to the media, to carefully talk to the media, and to deal with the Spokesperson directly.

*Q: Well you talk about this group in Israel; what were they called, the black-?*

CALLAHAN: I think they called themselves the Black Hebrews.

*Q: Oh, the Black Jews.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, because they claimed to have been descended from a lost tribe of Judah, I think, of Israelites who disappeared into Africa or something like that. They would travel to Israel and then once they got there they would renounce their U.S. citizenship so they could try to stay.

*Q: What were they- and did they set up a colony or something?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, to some extent although I think in many cases they ended up being on the Israeli welfare system because they didn't have any sources of income; they weren't allowed to work really. It was a big headache for the Israeli government and for our government as well because of all of the issues with whether or not their renunciation of U.S. citizenship was really true renunciation and so on. At that time, there were a number of cases in the courts as to what it would take to lose your citizenship. The Supreme Court had recently ruled on a number cases and threw out many of the previous reasons for loss of citizenship such as voting in a foreign election, etc. So, there were a lot of issues that kept us busy and a lot of need to coordinate and to work with other parts of the Department, embassy consular sections, the desks, the legal advisory section in CA and so on.

*Q: Who was the head of consular affairs?*

CALLAHAN: Joan Clark was head of consular affairs then. She was in that position for quite a long time.

*Q: Yes. Well how did you- here you're sort of exposed the inner workings of the consular business; how'd you feel? Did you still want to stay in it?*

CALLAHAN: Yes. I liked it. I enjoyed the various aspects of consular work. Although, I also wanted to do other things in the Foreign Service; I didn't want to just do strictly consular work for my entire career but I was happy enough when I was doing it. There was enough day-to-day variety to keep it interesting. In Washington, clearly I wasn't doing visa interviews anymore but still the work was interesting. A lot of the legal issues I found very interesting too even though I never went to law school despite having thought about it off and on. I really found the legal issues to be a particular aspect of consular work that I enjoyed. One of my best friends in CA/VO was the head of the Office of Advisory Opinions, the late Steve Fischel.

*Q: Well then, did this young woman who later got arrested in Peru, was she a factor in your time in-*

CALLAHAN: That was after I left. I remember reading about her situation.

*Q: Berenson or something.*

CALLAHAN: Lori Berenson, yes. I don't think she was involved with Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path); it was another group.

*Q: No, she was Sendero, I mean-*

CALLAHAN: Was it Sendero? (Note: the group was not Sendero Luminoso; it was the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA)).

*Q: I think she ran a safe house for them.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, yes. That was after my time.

*Q: Well then, again we keep moving; where did you go?*

CALLAHAN: Well then, at that point I really wanted to try something out of cone and it turned out again that my old friend and colleague from Maracaibo, Bill Brownfield, had been the desk officer for El Salvador in the Latin America bureau, known as American Republics Affairs (ARA). A friend of his, Bill Wood, was the El Salvador desk officer and was leaving, finishing his tour, the next year. They encouraged me to bid on the job and recommended me to ARA-CEN (Central America); I went over and interviewed with the deputy of ARA-CEN then, David Dlouhy, and they picked me to be the lead Salvador desk officer. There were three of us on the desk at that time because it was a big program and Central America was the big issue in the Reagan Administration. Even though Nicaragua was the bigger issue within Central America, El Salvador was still pretty active and topical.



Also they didn't have a lot of bidders on these jobs because a lot of Foreign Service officers considered them to be too controversial or they didn't agree with the politics; so in that respect I didn't have a lot of competition for the job.

*Q: Okay. Well then you did the El Salvador job from when to when?*

CALLAHAN: That was '86 to '88.

*Q: What- for somebody who doesn't know it, could you describe the situation in El Salvador and in the United States vis-à-vis El Salvador?*

CALLAHAN: Well El Salvador was in the throes of its own civil war with at least three or four different factions fighting, primarily communist factions, fighting against the central government. The central government had been basically a right-wing government controlled by the military; however, through strong U.S. efforts the Salvadorans elected a civilian president not long before I got there. Jose Napoleon, yes, Jose Napoleon Duarte, a Christian Democrat, was elected and very much supported by the U.S. Government. There was a good deal of U.S. military support to the Salvadoran government as well as a good deal of civilian support through USAID, including justice reform funding. This was because and there had been a number of incidents of American citizens being killed there, in some cases by death squads; there was a group of American nuns who had been killed by soldiers in 1980 but whose case had not been resolved. There also were two American AFL-CIO field service workers who had been killed by a death squad, and then there were four Marine Embassy Guards, who were gunned down by one of the rebel factions at a café in San Salvador. So there was quite a bit of media attention on the country and, quite a bit of controversy. It was somewhat overshadowed by what was going on with the Contras and Nicaragua, which as you know, had a lot more administration attention to it and, of course, even more controversy. There was a lot of opposition, particularly among leftist groups, among student groups in the U.S., in general, opposition to our Central America policy at the time. There was special opposition to the support for the Contras but certainly there was plenty of anger and unhappiness about our policies in El Salvador.

*Q: So what does a desk officer do? I mean, you had a significant portion of the American public opposed to whatever we were doing there; what were you doing?*

CALLAHAN: Well my day to day job was really to liaise between the embassy and the various Department offices with an interest in the issues as well as with other Washington agencies- on El Salvador issues, and that encompassed quite a few agencies at the time. So, we dealt a lot with whatever issues might come up, whatever the embassy, the ambassador, the DCM would, advise that they needed some assistance on or needed me to contact somebody on, internally, with DOD (Department of Defense), with USAID, the Agency, the Department of Justice, etc. We did a lot of work with the Department of Justice because again, we were trying to push the Salvadoran government and the judicial system into a system that could be trusted and was fairer. I believe this was really the impetus and the beginning of a program - that's now become quite large and global - of sending U.S. Department of Justice law enforcement advisors and prosecutorial advisors

to El Salvador to advise on reform of the judicial system there, to monitor investigations and trials, and to assist the prosecutors who were prosecuting the cases involving extrajudicial killings of Americans and others. So it was very active with a lot of liaison work sort of across the bureaucracy. I also worked quite closely with the Salvadoran ambassador in Washington, as well.

*Q: Could you talk a little about the killing of the nuns, which is so unusual in a Latin American- well I mean anywhere. Why did this happen and what was done about it?*

CALLAHAN: Well, I don't remember which order they were; I think there were four or five of them.

*Q: Maryknoll, was it?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, that's correct; they were Maryknoll nuns, yes. As I recall the case, e they were driving in from the airport after having just arrived in San Salvador and they were stopped at a National Guard roadblock in the countryside. And it's never been entirely clear what actually transpired. I believe they were raped and murdered by the soldiers. Although there were allegations by the human rights community that this had been ordered by higher authorities, this was never proven. According to the outcome of the trial, which did not happen for quite some time, it appeared that these soldiers abused their authority and then covered it up. But, of course the military didn't want to give them up either so it took quite a bit of work and investigation; the FBI was sent down to help with the forensic investigations and ultimately they were brought to trial, I think in a special court in which it was assured that the judges couldn't be bought or gotten to or threatened. So the soldiers were convicted but to my recollection there was never anyone at a higher level arrested or convicted.

*Q: Well was it felt that, I mean, you know, there's rape and rape. There's political rape and just plain rape. I hate- I'm not trying to trivialize this but was this sort of our feeling that this was sort of a, you know, a plain rape rather than sending a message to Maryknoll or something like that?*

CALLAHAN: Definitely, the Maryknoll nuns represented the Catholic Church in El Salvador which at that time was in the "liberation theology" camp, or at least the right-wingers thought so. The Church was a champion of the downtrodden peasants and in opposition to the ruling elites. It is possible that someone wanted to send a message to try to scare away foreign supporters of the Church through this attack on the nuns. It's also possible that it was a senseless crime perpetrated by ill-educated draftees. I don't think I ever saw anything that would indicate that this was something ordered to send a message.

*Q: Was Ollie North roaming through your grove?*

CALLAHAN: More or less. I can't recall if I ever met him. He was much more engaged with the Contras than with what we were doing in El Salvador. Elliott Abrams was the

assistant secretary of ARA at that time and I saw a fair amount of him. Bob Kagan, who now is a pretty well-known columnist-

*Q: Columnist, yes.*

CALLAHAN: -was part of ARA at that time, too. I don't recall running into North but he definitely was on the radar screen.

*Q: Did you get from your fellow colleagues or just on your own that gee, this whole thing here is a real political briar bush and one has to be very careful and all or was it just doing a job?*

CALLAHAN: It was definitely part of doing a job but I enjoyed it. I felt that the policy El Salvador was a good policy and it seemed to me that by supporting the Christian Democratic government trying to move the government to be more democratic and their justice system into a more just system was the direction that we needed to be going. There was a lot of manipulation of the facts, certainly in the media and by people in the human rights community and opponents of the Reagan Administration. I felt we weren't going to get anywhere just simply by boycotting the government. The communists most certainly would have taken over and then you'd have had a much more authoritarian and totalitarian system maybe than what they have now. Ultimately, I think it was successful because they do have a democratic government.

*Q: Yes, I agree with you but did you- this, sort of the- both Nicaragua Sandinistas and the guerilla movements in El Salvador became sort of the flavor of the month for many people of active liberal persuasion.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, definitely.

*Q: In particular Hollywood but in the press and else- Did you feel that?*

CALLAHAN: Sure, yes. It was easy to feel beleaguered. Even sitting around late in the evening with my two colleagues - because we worked pretty long hours on the desk, we had times when we were trying to think of somebody from Hollywood who we might be able to enlist- support our point of view; we'd think of Arnold Schwarzenegger or Clint Eastwood, for instance, as a counterweight to Oliver Stone and his film, "Salvador," as well as a number of others from Hollywood. I went and spoke to student groups at times about Central America policy which usually ended up being not very much fun because they didn't want to hear what I had to say. But, I did reach out and I made it a point to talk to the people at Human Rights Watch and at Amnesty International, who we were dealing with Central American issues so that I had a pretty good relationship with those people even though we didn't always see eye to eye.

And then also I dealt a lot with Congressman Dave Obey, Chairman of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations, because a couple of the Marines who had been killed were from his district. Now Obey is of a liberal

persuasion so he wasn't that happy with what we were doing in Central America and he was the head of the subcommittee that provided our foreign assistance funding for El Salvador. But he also was very interested in what we were doing about finding the people who killed the Marines. So you know, he called me up to the Hill, on various occasions to explain our policy and what we were doing to advance the investigations. He would usually run me through the ringer, but he was somebody I could talk to and get along with and I believe we kind of respected one another..

*Q: Well I mean, this is an interesting bit of both history and career, a taste of how- essentially is normal consular work comes right up against the political realities of people of various persuasions-*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: -in the United States.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, I thought it was one of the best jobs I had in the Foreign Service and you know, recommended desk officer jobs to anyone who asked.

*Q: What was your impression of the American media?*

CALLAHAN: "The Washington Post" and "New York Times" editorially were pretty much in opposition to the policy in Central America at that time. However, I knew some of the individual journalists; William Brannigan from "The New York Times," covered El Salvador and I had the impression that he was straight in terms of his reporting and what I read and in talking to him and a number of the other journalists - then you get people who are sort of like Joan Didion who was not really a journalist and definitely let her persuasions come through in what she wrote. It depended on the publication. But "The Post" and "The Times," even though their editorial policy was certainly in opposition to the Central America policy I felt that their reporting was pretty straight.

*Q: What was your feeling about Elliott Abrams and others above you about their direction?*

CALLAHAN: Well, I liked Abrams. I thought he was a good guy to work for; I mean, he was quite informal, easy to talk to, cared about his staff. I know he had lots of issues on the Hill; they would make him actually be formally sworn in when he'd go up to testify; the Democrats on the Hill felt that he wasn't being straight with them and, perhaps, on some occasions he wasn't.

*Q: Okay well you're getting close to finishing your Washington tour.*

CALLAHAN: By that time, my daughter, Kate, had been born - in '86 - and my son, Brian, clearly had some learning and behavioral difficulties. It wasn't really clear exactly what the problem was and we had taken him to the Georgetown Child Development Center and were working with him. His problems made it very difficult to identify an

overseas assignment where Brian could receive appropriate education and care. So, at that point, I needed to stay longer in Washington and I got sort of a waiver, an extension to stay in Washington for another year or so and I bid on and was selected for a Congressional Fellowship. I did the Congressional Fellowship, a one-year fellowship, during the 1988-89 period with Dave Obey's office, on his personal staff.

*Q: Let's talk a little about Dave Obey.*

CALLAHAN: Well, I have a great deal of respect for him. I'm sorry to see that he's retiring or has retired. He's very principled, very down to earth, sometimes, very caustic - he doesn't mince words if he disagrees with you. But he's kind of the old style liberal who's strong on defense, kind of the Sam Nunn school, I guess, in that respect. Strong on defense but, liberal on social issues and very fair, I would say.

*Q: Where, his district; what- could you describe his district?*

CALLAHAN: The 7<sup>th</sup> District of Wisconsin. It was one of the more rural districts in Wisconsin as I recall so despite the liberalism he was not a gun control advocate because he had a lot of hunters in his district. And, he had Indian reservations so he had some other interesting issues that he had to deal with, with the Indians up there.

*Q: What sort of things- I mean, did you get involved in any of the Indian issues?*

CALLAHAN: Not really. When I worked for him I basically covered Latin American issues and to the assistance to Latin America. But I recall he did have some issues with the Indian reservations in his district but I don't remember what they were.

*Q: Why would Obey have Latin American need?*

CALLAHAN: Well because of his position as the chairman of the foreign operations subcommittee. It wasn't something that he necessarily needed greatly but he was willing to take me on the fellowship, to work on his staff and that seemed to be the area to which I could contribute something.

*Q: When you say the "foreign operations," what does that mean? I mean, what was the committee dealing with?*

CALLAHAN: They were basically dealing with all of our foreign assistance, USAID, ESF (Economic Support Funds), INL (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs); all of our assistance issues on the civilian side and within the appropriations committee so they were responsible really for the budgets that INL has now, USAID has and that we had for any of our assistance needs. Despite the role of the Foreign Relations Committee, the Committee on Appropriations really made the decisions in regard to what kind of foreign policy initiatives that involved foreign assistance funding would be approved.

*Q: Well how about the view from Capitol Hill on the State Department? Did you find the State Department as- I mean many people from Capitol Hill felt the State Department isn't very responsive.*

CALLAHAN: Yes. When I was on the desk, I tried to make sure that I was responsive to the Hill and other interlocutors, which is how I came to know Obey relatively well and why he took me on to his office staff for the fellowship. I got along well with the staffers but they really had a certain arrogance about themselves. The staffers saw the Federal agencies in general as subservient to the Hill and they didn't have a tremendous amount of respect, I would say for the agency staff. I would say, though that it depending on the individual and I think probably the professional staff rather than the personal staff, had a better, or a more positive, view toward the Department. Mostly though, they were dealing with USAID.

*Q: Well you know, and looking at it, if someone should look at Congress well at the time you were there, there really was a difference between the staff of a committee and the personal staff. I mean in- almost in type of person and all that. Could you describe your feeling on-?*

CALLAHAN: Yes. The personal staffers were much more politically invested in the political situation of their congressman or senator. They had to be much more involved in campaign issues and constituency issues, pleasing the constituents, making sure that the right donors were treated well by agencies. Whereas, I would say that the committee staff were much more professional. Obviously if there were a change in the party and the leadership in the Congress they could end up losing their positions but they generally had a longer term, longer-term view, a more professional view, and they were not as beset by the day-to day-political and constituent issues with which personal staff would have to deal. And therefore I'd say they would be more reasonable whereas the personal staff is going to take the side of the constituent, you know, and no matter how obnoxious.

*Q: Did you get involved in- you would have been there during an election or preparations for an election?*

CALLAHAN: No, I started with Obey's office in December 1988, after that year's Congressional elections.

*Q: Then what, after about two years you-?*

CALLAHAN: Just one year on the fellowship. Then, I was able to find a consular assignment in Toronto, at the consulate general there. Courtney did a lot of research to find out if they had educational facilities there that would be suitable for my son. I was assigned as one of the consular unit chiefs Toronto. It was a pretty big operation because Toronto was a gateway into the U.S. for third-country nationals. Canadians didn't need visas, obviously, except certain types such as E2 investor visas. Even though Canadians didn't need tourist visas a lot of them did want to immigrate to the U.S. or had questions since many were "Snowbirds" and would spend their winters or half the year in Florida'

The Consulate General had a consular information unit (CIU) which was very busy. We had about six locals plus a vice consul, and an American unit chief running it, constantly fielding calls from third-country nationals as well Canadians who wanted to know about various aspects of immigration or living in the U.S. Running the CIU was my first job in Toronto.

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

CALLAHAN: That would have been '89 to '92, a three-year tour.

*Q: Who was consul general?*

CALLAHAN: Consul general when I arrived was Mike Durkee and the consul who was responsible for consular issues, consular affairs, who was my supervisor, was John Rattigan, who remains a good friend. We also had an economics officer.

*Q: What was sort of your biggest issues or problems that you dealt with?*

CALLAHAN: Well I guess one of the biggest issues that kind of engaged me not long after I took over the CIU was to arrange a contract and set up a telephone answering system, sort of the telephone tree information system so that we could try to cover a lot more of the phone calls through automated messages than we were covering with the live staff. That really kept me very busy during the period that I was head of the information unit, getting that organized and established. As I recall, this was one of the first such systems that the CA (consular affairs) Bureau set up anywhere in the world to deal with the calls. It was pretty complex, trying to set it up in such a way that it wouldn't drive people absolutely crazy.

*Q: Yes, there's nothing worse than getting up and if you do this press one otherwise press two and then- Except that in the case of so and so press seven.*

CALLAHAN: We had a lot of frustrated people as we were trying to get that thing up and running properly. But, it was an interesting process, doing that. I learned a lot in the process about contracting and management issues.

The unit chiefs rotated through the four consular units. During my three-year tour, I also spent a year in the immigrant visa (IV) unit and issues there tended to be focused on visa adjudications. Toronto would often get people from third countries, who became landed immigrants (legal permanent residents) in Canada and then immediately headed for California or someplace warm to resettle. It was not unusual for these people to present their landed immigrant documents or their Canadian passport, claim to the U.S. immigration officer at the port of entry that they were just visiting, and then take up residence in the U.S. And then, years later when they finally qualified for an immigrant visa, through the numerical system for a U.S. immigrant visa because of a petition by a brother or another relative, or in accordance with the 1986 amnesty, they'd show up in Toronto for their IV interview, and then you'd have all the issues of fraud at the time of

their original crossing into the U.S. when they had misrepresented their intentions to the immigration officer at the U.S. port of entry. It was a very sad situation at times because they'd be there with their kids who were in school in California, or wherever, had friends there and then these people would get hung up because of their parents 'previous fraudulent entry.

*Q: Well what had they done? Had they-?*

CALLAHAN: Basically, when they went into the U.S. they had lied to the U.S. immigration officer about their purpose of entry, so they were ineligible for the IV and needed to apply to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for a waiver. There weren't huge numbers of those who got themselves in that situation but there were enough to make it some very sad situations.

*Q: How did the Canadians feel about this? Or did you get any feedback?*

CALLAHAN: About-?

*Q: Well I mean they had people who came to Canada, just using it as a springboard to get into the-*

CALLAHAN: We didn't get too much feedback from the Canadians as I recall. We lived in a Canadian neighborhood, had Canadian friends and I don't recall that they had much of a concern with it themselves. In the case of landed immigrants, they had to reside in Canada for five years in order to be eligible for Canadian citizenship but I had quite a few cases in which the landed immigrants had gone almost immediately to the U.S. to reside and then returned to get their Canadian passports. The Canadian authorities didn't seem interested in questioning them on this issue. Some of the Canadian officials that I knew and dealt with had other concerns. One of the concerns we had at the time, and that the Canadians had with us, was that large numbers of Somalis were obtaining U.S. visitor visas, arriving in New York City and heading straight to the Canadian border where they made claims for political asylum in Canada. I worked with the Canadian foreign ministry - now called the Department of Global Affairs - on this issue. The Canadians weren't very happy about why our Embassy in Mogadishu was issuing all these visas to Somalis who evidently had weak ties to their home country. I had to go back through CA to our embassy in Mogadishu to try to put a stop to that. Somebody there was just issuing those visas right and left.

*Q: Well were you- In Canada and particularly Toronto and Montreal has a reputation of being sort of havens for a good number of Non-Canadian groups, I mean like Somalis, Ethiopians; was this true?*

CALLAHAN: Yes. Quebec, in particular, because they gave special preference to French speakers, so there were a lot of Haitians who ended up in Montreal Many of whom were not so happy with northern Canada's climate. Toronto had quite a lot of ethnic enclaves. There were old ethnic enclaves; they had large neighborhoods of Croatians and Serbians,



Ukrainians, a Greek section; Italian section. A lot of Chinese, particularly from Hong Kong had settled in Toronto; there were a lot of Jamaicans. So yes, there were quite a few ethnic groups there who were pretty well settled in but a fair number of the newer migrants tried to make it across the border to resettle in the U.S. A lot of Armenians and Iranians in particular - preferred California – where there are big Armenian and Iranian diasporas - to Canada.

*Q: Yes.*

CALLAHAN: After the IV Unit, I went to the Non-immigrant Visa (NIV) Unit which was pretty much a big visa mill with long lines outside and, again, we were trying to work on ways to improve and streamline the application process. The lines of waiting applicants did not make for good publicity. We set up the first NIV appointment system in Canada to try to get away from having people lined up in the middle of winter out on the streets for blocks. But the most interesting aspect of the NIV work there was that of the treaty investor visas because that was a big business for the immigration attorneys, both the Canadian immigration attorneys based in Toronto and the Americans based in Buffalo. They would bring in Canadians but others as well who wanted to find a way to live in the U.S. through the E2 investor visa process. The lawyers would sometimes cook up investments for them which often were very much fly-by-night operations so we spent a lot of time going back and forth with the immigration attorneys on a lot of these investor cases, trying to adjudicate them. We really didn't have the kind of backgrounds that we needed to understand business plans and so forth in these investment cases but I gradually learned more and more of what these businesses should look like if they successful. That was probably the most interesting aspect of the visa work there.

*Q: Did you find being an American representative in Canada sometimes a heavy burden with your Canadian neighbors and all?*

CALLAHAN: Not so much with the neighbors; we got along well with the Canadians that we knew but the Canadian media was extremely anti-American in tone: perhaps not extremely, but definitely anti-American. "The Toronto Globe and Mail," editorial page frequently slammed the immoral neighbor to the south for various and sundry reasons. People in the media seemed to take very seriously the claim that the U.S. 10th Mountain Brigade Division was based in Buffalo so they could be poised to invade Canada at some point.

*Q: Huh. Well lots of luck. I mean, I keep thinking about the War of 1812, you know, if our generals had been a little more competent we might have ended up with the whole Quebec problem and now thank God we didn't.*

CALLAHAN: Yes. That was the irritating aspect of it. It wasn't the people. We got along well with everyone, never had any issues with any of the people we knew.

*Q: Well I know I have some Canadian- through my wife I have Canadian cousins and I remember not too long ago going up there and here I am a retired Foreign Service*

*officer and all and they looked at me when we first met and what do you think of- and it was the prime minister. It was the prime minister today whose name I can't even think of and you know, I looked blank. And of course this sent Canadians up the wall because we really don't pay much attention-*

CALLAHAN: Yes, yes.

*Q: -to Canada. And they pay a hell of a lot of attention to everything that we do, particularly the nasty things.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, that's true.

I guess one of the interesting things about working at the Consulate General in Toronto was that I met a number of people I wouldn't otherwise have met. I met Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, who went to the Consulate for their O visas for their concert tours in the U.S. For some reason, instead of getting them in London, their lawyers would bring them into Toronto for interviews. Elliott Gould was up there doing something and came in for some Citizen Services and I had a chance to chat with him about some of his films. It was fun in that respect and the lawyers knew we liked to meet them so they made sure to bring them in. I had Keith Richards sitting in my office while we processed his visa,- because he had to have a visa waiver; both he and Mick Jagger needed waivers for their drug convictions.

*Q: Well were there any issues between Canada and the United States while you were there that raised temperatures across-?*

CALLAHAN: There was an event that happened before I was there; it was the case of a pretty well-known Canadian writer who was denied entry to the U.S. by the INS on the grounds that there was something derogatory in his INS files but there was still some political fallout from that. I can't remember his name but recall that the issue was something like he bragged in a newspaper that he had pointed a rifle at an American fighter jet flying over his property. Of course, the Canadian media was outraged over this denial of the fellow's entry into the U.S.

We had INS pre-clearance in the airport in Toronto so we dealt a lot with them and they handled our waiver issues but since this fellow was a Canadian and it wasn't the State Department that had denied his entry, it was an INS issue. But still it certainly raised temperatures and certainly got a lot of negative attention in the Canadian media as well as in some of the American media because it was kind of ridiculous that he was in the system.

*Q: Well then again you didn't with sort of the social life, you didn't- did you find yourself cornered at parties and why are you Americans doing this and that?*

CALLAHAN: Not usually. We weren't really part of the diplomatic circuit being a consulate so while we had Canadian friends we didn't attend official dinners or

receptions.. There may be some discussion at times about American policies but it didn't really get very political.

*Q: Yes.*

*Okay, then where? I mean, in the first place how did things work out for your son?*

CALLAHAN: Well, now he's almost 30 and he still has his problems but at least Toronto was a good place for him. They had a very good program there and actually it was the first place that we had an accurate diagnosis of his condition, which is Asperger's Syndrome, which we never got at Georgetown Child Development Center or in the U.S. so we were pretty pleased with the competence in Canada. We felt that the Canadians were ahead of the U.S., actually, at least some in Washington, in this area of autism and Asperger's Syndrome.

*Q: Did you run across this rather peculiar thing of the Canadians are very proud of their medical system yet there's a steady stream of Canadians who go across the border to see doctors and all that. Did that-?*

CALLAHAN: Yes. Courtney contracted pneumonia in Toronto and was hospitalized for about a week in a Toronto where they had whole wings in the hospital with empty beds, which I found pretty strange. We had a fair number of Canadians who needed drug treatment which was not available in the numbers needed in Canada. Because of the drug issue they had to have a waiver in order to get across and they were going into the U.S. for treatment rather than having it done in Canada because of a lack of capacity in Canada. The Canadian government was paying for it. I also noticed that a lot of Canadians seemed to prefer, if they had the money, to go to the U.S. for other kinds of treatment. The Canadian government would pay for some of these kinds of things. As I recall, for example, there were very few MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) machines in Canada,

*Q: These are Magnetic-*

CALLAHAN: Resonance imaging; so if somebody needed an MRI they'd need to be on a waiting list forever in Canada or they'd have to go across and have it done in one of the hospitals in Detroit or Buffalo. I think that was the same for some of the other specialty issues. In the Canadian system you could be on a waiting list to get the right test or to see the right doctor and if you have cancer then that's not such a good thing.

*Q: Yes.*

*Well then, okay, we come again to movement. Whither?*

CALLAHAN: This was a tricky one because of the need to find a school for Brian. A good friend of mine who I had known back in the Department in the CA Bureau, Bill Griffith, was the Consul General in Dublin and was leaving the next summer. He

recommended Dublin to me and Courtney and I did a lot of research to see if there was some place in Ireland, in Dublin, where we could get Brian the appropriate schooling since at least it is an English speaking country. We did find, through Bill's help and through the help of a couple of the officers in Dublin at the time, a special school there that would be able to accept Brian and deal with his issues. I bid on the Dublin assignment and got it. I was pretty happy to have a great assignment that a lot of people would like to have had. We went to Dublin in 1989 to head up the consular section there which was a big operation because at the time the consular section was dealing with the first rounds of the lottery visas. Initially the lottery —which was promoted by Irish-American members of Congress with large Irish-American constituencies – only covered the Irish.

*Q: Well before we move- you were there from '89 to when?*

CALLAHAN: Ninety-two. No, let's see. No, I was there from- No, no, sorry; '92 to '94, yes.

*Q: Okay. Who was the ambassador?*

CALLAHAN: When I first got there the ambassador was an Irish-American, of course, they were always Irish-American. It was William Henry Fitzgerald, appointed in June 1992 by President Bush. He only was there for the one year which was my first year in Dublin because after Bush lost the election for a second term, the Ambassador had to resign. He was in his 80s, but a very courtly gentleman who'd been a naval officer and then an investment banker. He was a very nice man and very good to work for. He didn't want to be involved in visa issues and told me, "that's your shop, you deal with it," and he just wouldn't listen to Irish members of the Dail, the Irish parliament, who would constantly complain over their constituents being refused visas. The visa issue was a big deal for the Irish at the time; the government didn't like the fact that Irish citizens had to get visas in the first place- because at that time the visa waiver was in effect for the UK (United Kingdom) and some other European countries. However, there was a significant overstay rate by the Irish in the U.S. on nonimmigrant visas and therefore the visa refusal rate was too high for the Irish to qualify under the Visa Waiver Program.

Ambassador Fitzgerald left post in January or February and of course there was a great deal of speculation about who would replace him under the Clinton Administration. There were a couple members of Congress who had been instrumental passing legislation for the Irish Visa Lottery Program and they both thought that one of them would be nominated. - There was Congressman Bruce Morrison and Congressman Brian Donnelly both of whom had the two separate visa lottery programs named after them in the Irish press. But the final nomination turned out as a real surprise to everyone: it was Jean Kennedy Smith, sister of John F. Kennedy.

*Q: Ouch.*

CALLAHAN: -a choice that, of course, the Irish loved but someone completely without any diplomatic background; government background. The DCM at the time, Tom Tonkin, had also been very supportive of the consular section and staying out of the visa business and had said some things in response to Irish complaints about Irish visa overstays – comparing them to his experience in Guatemala, previously - which annoyed the Irish no end. Of course, this word got back to Jean Kennedy Smith and she demanded Tom's ouster before she even got there so Tom was on his way out and she selected another DCM, a career FSO who I think had been the head of the political section in Stockholm at the time and who had actually gone to the U.S. to be interviewed by Kennedy Smith before she went to post, he was so interested in having the job. Things changed quite a bit after she and the new DCM got there, especially for my work in the consular section.

*Q: Yes, I've heard that this was- Well let's talk about it.*

CALLAHAN: Okay. As I say, things were pretty pleasant for my first year while the former ambassador and DCM were there. However, on the personal side, the school wasn't as good for my son as we would have hoped although it was adequate, and my daughter was displaying some learning disability problems of her own though not nearly as severe as Brian's. When Kennedy Smith came there and took up her position and the new DCM arrived they took a lot more interest in the visa process. Kennedy Smith definitely listened very closely to what the Irish government was saying. At about that time, the World Cup was coming up with the U.S. as host country and the Irish were in the playoffs. The Irish Foreign Minister told the Embassy that visas for Irish citizens to go to the World Cup games in the U.S. was a more important issue for the foreign ministry than Irish accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) which motivated the ambassador to do her best to make sure that we issued lots of NIVs. Unfortunately, I had consular officer in my section, I won't mention his name, who was head of the NIV unit and who was an American –Irish dual citizen. He was very much willing to do the bidding of the ambassador and the DCM in this case, so I was sort of being undermined from within on some of these visa issues because he would issue to people that clearly were going to be a problem and he was very attentive to the parliamentarians who interceded. We got a lot more pressure from the parliamentarians about visa cases now that they saw that they had the ear of the ambassador.

However, the big visa case for us at the time was Gerry Adam's visa application at the Dublin consular section. Adams was a resident of the Belfast consular district of the London Embassy and had applied previously for visas there without success. He needed a waiver of his terrorism-related ineligibility and Embassy London consistently declined to recommend a waiver because of his Provo connections before he became head of Sinn Fein.

*Q: Provo being-*

CALLAHAN: The Provisional Irish Republican Army. There was good information in the classified system showing that he had been an active member of the military wing of Sinn Fein, the IRA (Irish Republican Army).

*Q: The terrorists.*

CALLAHAN: Yes. He was active with the terrorists before becoming head of Sinn Fein, the so-called civilian wing or political wing. He had applied at the consulate in Belfast and the embassy in London, previously, several times. Of course, neither had ever recommended a waiver for him. However, Jean Kennedy Smith was influenced by Sinn Fein sympathizers in both the North and the Republic (not that there were many sympathizers in the Republic). She began to have contacts with Adams. During her first trip to Northern Ireland – which was outside her district - she met with him, which was a big headache for our consul in Belfast, who was another friend of mine because U.S. officials were prohibited from meeting with Adams because of his terrorist associations. The Consul was Valentino “Val” Martinez, who had been with me on the El Salvador desk and he was the consul up there in Belfast at that time. At the time, the IRA was also carrying out a bombing campaign in Northern Ireland and England. I believe the Ambassador assured Adams that she would recommend a waiver of his visa ineligibility. So, Kennedy Smith worked things out for Adams to travel down to Dublin and apply for his visa out-of-district at our embassy. As Consul General in Dublin, I conducted the visa interview with Adams. After I refused him on the grounds of his ineligibility, the Ambassador sent a cable to Washington recommending a temporary waiver of ineligibility for him. After her waiver recommendation, several of us at the embassy submitted a dissent channel cable to the Department saying that we did not believe it was appropriate to request a waiver for Adams because he had not renounced terrorism; he clearly had a terrorist background and that issuing a visa would send the wrong message. This was long before peace talks were launched between the U.K. and Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein, however, was desperate to reach a broader audience in the U.S., especially after bombings in the U.K that had killed children and turned off a lot of supporters in the U.S. Kennedy Smith reacted very negatively to that dissent channel cable; she didn’t understand the dissent channel and the DCM had failed to educate her on the process and meaning of the dissent channel. She considered it to be an act of disloyalty by those of us who had signed on to it: me, the public affairs officer, the political officer, and the DAO (defense attaché officer), all of whom are Irish-Americans.

*Q: Yes.*

CALLAHAN: We had all jointly signed the dissent channel cable and we had discussed it with the DCM before we did it, telling him we intended to do it, and he said at that time, because the ambassador was away from post, that he had briefed the ambassador on our position and that, she was perfectly aware of it and had no problem; it was no big deal. Well, he apparently had not briefed her on it or if he had it had been in very negative terms because when she came back and saw this cable had gone out she just was very upset; I wouldn’t say she “flipped out” because that was not her style but she was extremely angry about it. She called us in to ask us why we had done this and said that she felt it was an act of disloyalty and so on and so forth. I had not had close relationship

with the Ambassador previously but after this, she was very cold towards me and the others. And then, of course, the pressure over nonimmigrant visa refusals increased even more. I think she and the DCM felt that I would have to back down on visa refusals because I was in the doghouse with her over the dissent channel cable. I started getting a lot of negative feedback from the DCM on these issues and he gave me a very negative EER which was not substantiated in any way but certainly would have ruined my chances for promotion. In the meantime the dissent channel cable was, I think highly appreciated by a number of people in Washington including the FBI which also was very much opposed to a waiver for Adams. However, the Clinton administration was pretty much invested in seeing that he got his waiver, but said that Sinn Fein had to renounce violence before a waiver would be approved. This appeared to be a subterfuge cooked up between the Administration and Sinn Fein because subsequently there was a report in California of an IRA bomb threat, of all places, in California, which I'm sure was completely bogus; it was just a staged threat and there was never a bomb. But Adams dutifully condemned the "IRA" bomb threat in California so then the Administration could say look, he's renounced terrorism. This gave the Administration the fig leaf so they could grant him the waiver and we did issue him his visa and he went on and did his public appearances in the U.S. and I think he got another one subsequently. Eventually, you know, Sinn Fein did join a peace process and whether him getting a visa was a factor in that or not, I don't know. I mean, certainly, the ambassador would always claim that by giving him the visa and getting him some exposure in the U.S. that she had a lot to do with starting the peace process.

*Q: I've interviewed a lady who was there I think during that time in the consular section who served in, particularly in the Balkans and Bosnia and all that; do you recall her name?*

CALLAHAN: Ann Sides?

*Q: I think so.*

CALLAHAN: Yes. Ann replaced me in the consular section after I left in the summer of 1994.

*Q: Well, I mean, what about the World Cup things and all that? I mean-*

CALLAHAN: Yes, that went okay. We didn't have huge numbers of refusals; we had some refusals but not enough to raise an outcry. Ultimately, the World Cup thing was kind of a non-issue. We never expected we were going to be refusing hordes of these applicants; it was just something that the Irish feared might happen because they somehow felt we were refusing huge numbers even though we weren't refusing huge numbers, although the refusal rate – based on the overstay problem - was too high for them to get on the visa waiver program. After I left Dublin, though, Ireland got the visa waiver program through manipulation of the refusal rate by my former colleague in the NIV unit.

*Q: Were you having a problem that I guess existed for a long time of young Irish girls going to the United States either as au pair or to visit who ended up as receptionists and all that? Irish accent, you know, a lot of firms like to have one of these young ladies-*

CALLAHAN: Oh sure, yes.

*Q: -as a front person.*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: Nothing morally wrong it's just, I mean it's just they were-*

CALLAHAN: Yes, yes. I know when I come back to D.C. and go to restaurants around the area, you know, the Irish waitresses are there. A fair number of them were getting the work/study J-1 visas and then overstaying after the summer but also a lot of them would come to the U.S. on B-2 tourist visas and they'd overstay. There were plenty of overstays and of course they could blend in pretty easily so it wasn't like a Hispanic who would have a more difficult time.

*Q: Well how about sort of personal relations between you and the ambassador? Was she typical or not?*

CALLAHAN: I'd say she was atypical, even for a political appointee. She was very frosty, I would say. I had had very good relations with Ambassador Fitzgerald and previously with Elliott Abrams, both political appointees, but Ambassador Kennedy Smith just wasn't very friendly in the first place. I'd say she's extremely shy; she wasn't outgoing so there was just not much of a relationship there at all. I recall once that after the World Cup, she decided to have a reception for the consular section to thank us for all our work on the visas. But it turned out that because we were Embassy staff, she couldn't use Embassy representation funds. We thought, ah, great, it's very nice of her even though she was very wealthy and could certainly afford it. However, we discovered upon arrival at her residence that in order to avoid spending her own money for this reception she also invited a group of Irish from a disabled persons' home to the same reception. When we arrived we found a line of wheel-chairs in the reception area and we were sort of expected to chat with the people in wheelchairs and so it really was not a heartfelt expression of gratitude by the Ambassador but rather checking a box, I think. By inviting local people, she could use Embassy representation funds for the event.

*Q: I'm told, again I think by this other lady who I interviewed, that you had a- that the staff, when she had receptions, particularly for sort of the more extreme and not quite necessarily IRA types but of that ilk, that you kind of had to watch the silverware and all that.*

CALLAHAN: Probably. I wasn't invited to too many receptions after the Dissent Channel message, but it wouldn't surprise me. This whole thing with the Adams visa and



then the retaliation for using the Dissent Channel ultimately led to a big OIG (office of inspector general) inspection, after I had left post.

*Q: And what happened?*

CALLAHAN: Well by the time the OIG became involved, I had left Dublin. Because of the retaliation and the EER, Mary Ryan, who was the CA Assistant Secretary at the time, saw that my situation was untenable and wanted to get me out of Dublin. It just happened that, at Embassy London, one of the section heads had to leave abruptly on a medical evacuation and wasn't going to be able to come back; I recall that it was her husband who had the medical problem. So, Embassy London had an immediate opening at my grade level in the Consular Section. Ann Swift, who I had met, was head of the consular section there and Diane Dillard, a friend and colleague, was head of the Visa Office at that time. They put their heads together and worked out an arrangement that I would curtail in Dublin and go over to take the post in London. That's why I only stayed for the two years in Dublin when I would have had a three or four year tour.

*Q: I mean this was really sort of to protect you from the wrath of-?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, because the EER was a career-killer evaluation and also they could see that I was constantly under pressure to issue questionable visas, which I wasn't going to do. So, yes, it was basically to get me away from the wrath of both the DCM and the ambassador.

*Q: Well did you feel you got adequate support in this very difficult situation from the consular bureau?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, very much so. I would say that the support from CA was great. Mary Ryan even wrote an alternative EER for my file and arranged for the DCM's EER to be suspended. I wasn't the only one who suffered retaliation for using the Dissent Channel, though. There was retaliation against the PAO (public affairs officer), as well. He was a USIA (United States Information Agency) officer but I don't recall that he received as much support from the USIA as I did from CA. In regard to the other two, they couldn't do anything about the DAO since he was with the Department of Defense. They couldn't really retaliate against him in any way. The political officer managed to ingratiate himself with the Ambassador, or re-ingratiate himself with her, so it was just the PAO and I who were kind of out there, hung out to dry. He was having a lot of trouble with the DCM as well; same issue with EERs; and we felt that the Department overall wasn't being particularly responsive to the situation in Dublin. It was the CA Bureau alone that came in and helped me out. The fact that we were under retaliation for legitimate use of the dissent channel cable wasn't really wasn't being taken into account in the Department, in regard to our complaint about it.

I guess that this was, perhaps, the first time there had been that kind of retaliation because there wasn't really a system in place to handle the complaint. The Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) guidance was that, if there is some sort of retaliation for use of the

Dissent Channel, the aggrieved FSO should notify the Policy Planning Office (S/P), , which we did. We notified S/P about the retaliation and forms that it took, including the negative EERs, and then we didn't hear anything; heard nothing about it for some time. By then, I was in London, at the embassy there, and the PAO was still in Dublin dealing with the problem. Eventually, S/P did get back to us and they said that this wasn't something that the policy staff could actually deal with so they turned it over to the OIG, which shook things loose. The OIG launched an investigation into the issue that grew beyond our issue as they uncovered all sorts of other issues with what she'd been doing on the administrative side playing fast and loose with embassy funding for furnishings and equipment, unnecessary upgrades to the residence- bringing in relatives on U.S.-funded speaking engagements and a variety of other things that really weren't proper. It turned into a fairly big investigation but she was completely unrepentant, basically.

The inspectors came and talked to me in London. They were an ambassador and an agent on the OIG staff who had an FBI background. They interviewed me and they interviewed plenty of people at the embassy in Dublin. But, when they went to interview the ambassador she basically kicked them out of her office. That didn't really help her case very much and ultimately the OIG report was very critical of Embassy Dublin operations and the Ambassador. But, then the report was sort of buried; I mean, it seemed that nothing came out of it. Initially, it wasn't made public. We were told that Warren Christopher, who was the secretary of state then, had written a letter of admonition to Ambassador Kennedy Smith and that she just wrote a nasty letter back telling him too bad. The report was clearly finalized and we were supposed to see a copy of it, but never saw it at the time. However, the PAO then used his contacts on the Hill and he alerted Senator Jesse Helms' staff that this report existed but apparently was being covered up. Helms was definitely no friend of the Kennedys and demanded to see it. Of course, once he got a copy, he made sure everybody else in the world saw it too and then it got into the media.

I think the only thing that really happened to her that actually made her get some kind of comeuppance for all of this was the fact that it got into the media and it made her look pretty bad. There were articles in "The New York Times," "The Washington Post" and the Irish media as well. Of course they put a different spin on it so it wouldn't look quite so negative for her but definitely it got into "The Post" and "The Times" and ultimately the PAO and I were given the AFSA (American Foreign Service Association) William R. Rivkin award jointly for our dissent.

*Q: Well okay, I'm just looking at the time. This is probably a good place to stop and we'll pick this up when you're off to London.*

CALLAHAN: Okay.

*Q: And we'll pick it up from there.*

CALLAHAN: Okay.

*Q: Great.*

*Q: Today is the 8<sup>th</sup> of April, 2013 with Jim Callahan. And we've had sort of a fairly substantial hiatus, but we're back at it again. And Jim, we left last time, you were with a certain amount of I guess delight left Dublin and went to London.*

CALLAHAN: Ah, OK.

*Q: And when was this?*

CALLAHAN: This should have been in 1994.

*Q: OK, so it's 94. So having gone through that -- I hate to drag the Kennedy name in, but the Kennedy experience. What were you doing in London? And let's talk about it.*

CALLAHAN: OK. As I mentioned before, the Consular Affairs Bureau, had made arrangements to transfer me out of Dublin to the Embassy in London.

*Q: So what were you doing in the Consular Section?*

CALLAHAN: As in Toronto, the consular unit chiefs rotated through the Section. I started as chief of the Non-Immigrant Visa Unit and I also spent a little time in the Immigrant Visa Unit. Because of all the third-country national applicants, and American citizen tourism, London's consular section was a huge operation. I was fairly happy with what I was doing in London from a consular management standpoint, because we launched a lot of innovation there in terms of setting up the call-in system, the information lines, use of Machine Readable Visa fees, and so on.

*Q: That was sort of a push button thing, wasn't it?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, the sort of thing that drives people crazy when they have to get into it, but we did our best to refine it and make it user friendly. It cost people to call into the information lines and it generated a fair amount of income, which we had permission from CA and the Administrative Bureau to use to upgrade the Consular Section. We were able to put in moving information billboards that tell people, you know, what they need, what they should be doing, how to fill things out, and so no. We were able to redesign the waiting room and make it more comfortable, among other innovations. So –while the system generated quite a lot of income, we put it good use to try to improve the quality of the services.

*Q: Well, you were there from when to when?*

CALLAHAN: '94 to '98, I extended by one year.

*Q: What type of -- first place, let's talk a little bit about the section. I was in personnel at one point, was way back in the '60s I guess. And we began to get complaints because if we had anybody who had either a personality problem or a medical problem --*

CALLAHAN: *(laughs)*

*Q: -- we would send him to a Canadian post or to, to London, maybe a post along the Mexican border. And this meant that, at that time anyway, we had too many you might say problem consular officers assigned there, which is not a happy thing. How did you find it in your time?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, that was certainly a problem. We didn't have too many but there were enough, you know, to make it difficult at times. We also had a lot of newly minted junior officers who were full of ambition --

*Q: Yeah.*

CALLAHAN: -- sitting there on the visa line next to somebody who was a problem officer who --didn't take the work seriously. We had a mid-level administrative officer -- assigned to London for medical reasons - who had never done consular work. He was in his fifties and would not be promoted. He would issue visas to everyone, including applicants who said on their tourist visa application that they were going to go to the U.S. to work. So, this was a morale issue for the junior officers that were there not really doing what they wanted to be doing anyway, on the visa line.

*Q: How did you deal with that?*

CALLAHAN: I was fairly tough on people who were not pulling their weight. Of course, I ended up with grievances filed against me for giving them what I thought were honest evaluations; EER's (Employee Evaluation Report). They weren't very happy about it because previous supervisors, who wanted to avoid fighting grievances, gave them a pass. The fellow I just mentioned even charged that I was discriminating against him on the basis of his gender because he was a middle-aged white guy *(laughs)* and that I was treating the females in the section better, or something.

*Q: Well, how did the system react to these complaints?*

CALLAHAN: I think that, basically the "system" didn't pay much attention to these issues but it did have to react to the grievances through the normal process. I never really heard what happened to them because they took so long to work through the system.

*Q: It didn't tie you up particularly.*

CALLAHAN: Not too much, no. It's a fair amount of work when you get into that process, but I felt that it was worth doing.

*Q: Did you find that you were regaling people with the stories about Dublin?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, because the embassy staff in London was pretty familiar with what was going on in Dublin, especially because London was responsible for the Belfast Consulate. And so they were very much aware of what the ambassador was doing in Dublin, especially with the issue of inviting people from the Belfast Consular District down to Dublin to apply for their visas in Dublin, so they wouldn't have to go through the process in Belfast and possibly be refused visas.

*Q: Did you -- I mean I imagine you kept an eye on it. What happened to Ambassador Kennedy?*

CALLAHAN: Not very much.

*Q: Ambassador Smith.*

CALLAHAN: As I mentioned, Secretary Christopher issued a letter of reprimand to her for the retaliation over our use of the Dissent Channel. But she just wrote a nasty letter back to the secretary and went about her business. Nothing ever happened to her beyond that and she stayed in Dublin for five years, after the end of the Clinton Administration's first term. Some other people in the embassy that had been going along with what she was doing in regard to management ended up with problems from the OIG report because they didn't have the protection that she did. The DCM (deputy chief of mission) was forced to retire (he had been expecting to get an ambassadorship after Dublin because of the Kennedy connection). The head of the Administrative Section also had some problems. He had some disciplinary actions. He's still in the service, but he did feel some pain from that.

*Q: OK, let's talk about the Consular Section in London. Your prime responsibility for most of the time was non-immigrant.*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: You must have had -- I mean the world was your oyster, wasn't it?*

CALLAHAN: *(laughs)* Pretty much. We had some really interesting cases. We had, for instance the Sultan of Brunei who would always come through London on his way to the U.S. He owned several hotels in London, but he would never get his visas at the Embassy in Bandar Seri Begawan for his entourage, which usually would be about a hundred mostly Filipinos who were taking care of his many children or providing other services. His embassy in London would send over about 100 passports with visa applications. Of course, they always wanted them for the next day through our diplomatic visa section. Our diplomatic processing section would constantly get these kinds of things from all over the world, demanding next-day service. But, then, Sean Connery would come in for a visa and -he'd stand in line with all the other applicants.

*Q: Movie actor.*

CALLAHAN: Yes. We had a number of those. I think Edward Fox was in. He went through the process and he didn't ask for any special favors or anything. Some, you know, obviously did. We saw quite a, quite a few interesting people there. I think for the junior officers it was one thing that made their lives on the visa line a little less onerous. They would get to meet some interesting people. I, personally, had several phone conversations with Faye Dunaway who was adopting a child from the UK. I was the acting consul general at that time and she called me several times to discuss this case.

*Q: Was it easy to adopt a UK child?*

CALLAHAN: I think it probably was, yes. I don't remember that there were any big issues with that case, but I think she just wanted to know that it was moving.

*Q: Well, I would imagine that you'd have you might say a well-established bureaucracy on both sides, all of whom, who knew the rules and things. And so it could -- it might take time. But it would sort of work out.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, we worked very well with our counterparts with the Foreign Office and also with Scotland Yard on visa fraud issues. There were quite a few cases of West African visa fraud cases and passport fraud.

*Q: Nigerians.*

CALLAHAN: Nigerians, yes, and Ghanaians. We had an, anti-fraud unit and worked pretty closely with Scotland Yard.

*Q: How did the fraud section work? Where did they go? Where did they get their information?*

CALLAHAN: Basically it was run by a British staff member who had a law enforcement background and excellent contacts with British counterparts. We didn't really have any access to any kind of classified information, but the FBI Office, the legal attaché office, would also tip us off when they saw issues coming through, and we worked with them to provide information on visa applicants who they were interested in.

*Q: Were we concerned during this particular period -- this was from when to when now?*

CALLAHAN: '94 to '98.

*Q: '94 to '98. Were we particularly concerned with sort of terrorism and all at that time?*

CALLAHAN: Yes. That was certainly one of the issues but I don't recall that we had anyone come through who was a major hit on the Watch List. We did have a lot of issues with B1 visa applicants.

*Q: These are business --*

CALLAHAN: They're business applicants. Normally B1 would be to go to the U.S. and conduct business in the U.S. such as consulting with associates, attending meetings, negotiating contracts, etc., and then return home, without requiring the H1B visa needed when you're working for a U.S. company. But, a lot of British and other computer specialists, IT (information technology) experts, etc., were establishing themselves, as individuals, as limited liability corporations. They would essentially be hired by American companies to go and work in the U.S. for the companies. But, the payment would go to their "business," even though the business was one person, themselves. We had some issues with that in the NIV Unit. I remember that CA wasn't very happy that we were looking into this. Because at that time -- and this was, before 9/11 -- CA was really pushing the idea of visa issuance as an assembly line. Just get 'em in and get 'em out. Don't spend much time talking to them and do as much as you can, sight unseen, with the various mail-in systems and the drop box system, and don't interview anyone that you don't have to interview. If you do interview them, don't take much time doing it. So, the fact that we were spending more time with some of these B1 applicants annoyed the establishment at CA. I did get my hand slapped a couple times from the visa office about that issue, although I have to say that after September 11<sup>th</sup> I felt we had been on the right track in trying to do a little bit more thorough interviews. After 9/11, everyone ended up being interviewed.

*Q: Yeah. Did you find that there were sort of groups of itinerant Iranian students and that, wandering around, trying to get the hell out?*

CALLAHAN: Yes. We saw a lot of Iranians visa shopping. There are a lot of Iranians anyway living in, in England or staying with relatives in England. So they would be visiting the UK and take a chance in trying to get a visa at our Embassy.

*Q: What about some of the dominion types, like Pakistanis, Jamaicans, and all? Also have -- Indians who have well-established communities, both in England and in the United States. Was this a problem there?*

CALLAHAN: Not so much with the residents and citizens of the UK. It was a problem, though, when you'd get the relatives and tourists from India, Pakistan and other Commonwealth countries with high refusal rates visiting and then trying to get a visa in London. They didn't think they had a good chance of getting visas in New Delhi or in Islamabad, so they'd try us. We would also get those who had been turned down in their home countries, but that was pretty obvious in the system. Once they were settled in the UK, had their UK passports, they didn't need to come see us anyway.

*Q: Yeah. Who was your consul general?*

CALLAHAN: –Initially, it was Ann Swift when I first arrived there. She left within - I guess - six months to a year after I arrived in London, maybe a year. –She retired out of London, as I recall.

*Q: She was an Iranian hostage and was unfortunately killed in a horseback riding --*

CALLAHAN: Right. I was really sad to hear about that. It wasn't that long after she retired and moved to Middleburg, Virginia, where she kept horses. I remember that in London she rode regularly on the horse path in Hyde Park.

*Q: Yeah, I went to her funeral out there.*

CALLAHAN: And then after Ann Swift, Max Robinson arrived as Consul General.

*Q: Mm-hmm. Was there much in the way of protection of welfare, or?*

CALLAHAN: Yes (*laughs*), there was a lot of that. I never had responsibility directly for the American Citizen Services section, but it was a big section and the duty officers were always busy people. I don't know why but people constantly were losing their passports or, stumbling into some situation where they were getting ripped off. Soho was full of sleazy little bars where they invite you in and then entice you to buy drinks for the girls which end up costing you 300 pounds. American tourists had problems with that kind of thing; also arrest cases, deaths, and so on. With so much tourism inevitably there would be accidental deaths there. Sometimes, people would look the wrong way before trying to cross the street, and be hit by a car. So, it was a very busy section. We had a lot of passport cases with about 300,000 Americans living in the UK, plus the tourists. We would see American celebrities at times and once had Prince come in for a passport when he was going by the name, "The Artist Formally Known as Prince." Max Robinson, not long after taking over as the Consul General, developed a medical problem and had to be medevac'd out. I spent about the last two years of my time there, as the acting consul general. .

*Q: Mm-hmm. Who was the ambassador?*

CALLAHAN: Just about the time I got there it was Ambassador – Admiral William J. Crowe.

*Q: Crowe? Mm-hmm.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, Admiral Crowe arrived about the same time I did and was there the entire time I was at the Embassy. He was great.

*Q: Well, he was a Navy man who knew the system and --*

CALLAHAN: Yes.



*Q: Yeah, he was stationed in Naples when I was consul general.*

CALLAHAN: Ah, OK.

*Q: In Naples. And very nice, very nice.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, he was great. He would come down to the cafeteria for lunch; he was happy to talk to the maintenance guys; knew the names of people. He was really, really well liked.

*Q: Were there any -- during that period, I can't think of any particular reason, but were there any sort of collision of -- as far as policy goes with the Brits on areas?*

CALLAHAN: Not as far as I recall. There was, however, some friction over Northern Ireland issues because the Clinton administration was very much pushing for rapprochement essentially with the, with the Sinn Fein. But I wouldn't say it was very serious. I think our policy certainly in the UK and under Ambassador Crowe was pretty nuanced.

*Q: Yeah.*

CALLAHAN: They were pretty irritated with our ambassador in Dublin, but not with the embassy in London.

*Q: Yeah. With Northern Ireland, what happened with leakage down into Dublin? I mean of visa applicants. Could you do anything about that, or?*

CALLAHAN: Well, you know, before Ambassador Kennedy Smith, we didn't see too many in Dublin. Generally we would tell people, if they were living in the Belfast consular district to apply there. But once we were forced to take Jerry Adams' application in Dublin there were others, but they were all politically connected. They weren't your average person just trying to visa shop. They didn't need visas if they were residents of Northern Ireland because they had British passports if they were willing to travel on them under the visa waiver program. Jerry Adams wanted the visa in his Irish passport, of course.

*Q: I guess he was Irish.*

CALLAHAN: Yes. The Irish government would give passports to anyone living in Northern Ireland who wanted it, essentially.

*Q: (laughs)*

CALLAHAN: They didn't really require that you have a family relationship to somebody in the south. I mean, I guess they should.

*Q: Did you find that you had nests of Irish or other groups in parts of the States where there were -- you know, if somebody was going there who had raised the level of suspicion about how long they were going to stay and all?*

CALLAHAN: Yes. --You mean when I was in Dublin or London.

*Q: When you were in London.*

CALLAHAN: In London. To some extent. There was a big program for J1 visitors, the summer work-study program. There were a lot of British, and others from Ireland as well, who were going over on that program.

*Q: Kind of interns, weren't they?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, well in this work study program they can do just about anything. I noticed last year when I was in Ocean City, that at the amusement park there, basically all of the concessions were being run by Russians who were there on work-study J1 visas. So it doesn't require that you do any kind of professional work, or --

*Q: Were you hit -- you were there when sort of the Soviet Union fell apart.*

CALLAHAN: Yes

*Q: Were you hit by a flood of both tourists and potential immigrants from that area?*

CALLAHAN: Not really at that time. I think that they really hadn't gotten to the point yet that they were on the move so much. And again, the U.S. established pretty quickly embassies in all of the republics, so they had the ability to apply there. It also took a while of course for the governments themselves to issue their own national passports and so on. But I don't recall that we had many of that kind of applicant coming through London.

*Q: How was life in London?*

CALLAHAN: It was very nice. I enjoyed it. The problem with London is that it's an expensive place, so the junior officers were kind of suffering because their salaries were too low to enjoy all of the possibilities in London. And their housing wasn't very attractive. They basically were put in apartments in a nice area of town near Regent's Park. The units, though, were small and not in the greatest condition. By then I was an FS-01. I was promoted sometime around that period and we lived out in Surrey, in the village of Richmond, which is right on the Thames. Our townhouse community backed up onto Richmond Park, which had been one of the royal parks previously and Richmond Castle had been there although it no longer existed. The commute was a bit lengthy, but it was very pleasant area. I would have preferred to live closer into the city except my son, Brian, with his disability, needed a specialized school. The best one we could find was in Surrey, in the town of Guildford.

*Q: Oh yeah, well it makes good sense, yeah.*

CALLAHAN: Yeah.

*Q: Well then, you came back in '90 --*

CALLAHAN: '98, yeah.

*Q: '98. Where'd you go?*

CALLAHAN: Well, to digress, one of the more interesting things I did in London was to work on the advance team when President Clinton visited Northern Ireland and England. Because of my Ireland experience, the Embassy sent me over to work with the advanced team in Belfast.

*Q: Ah.*

CALLAHAN: I knew the lay of the land essentially and Embassy Dublin had sent a number of consular FSN's -- who had previously worked for me -- up from Dublin to help support and the visit. So I went over for that, for about two weeks in Belfast. I was assigned to work with sort of the "Friends of Bill" group, which was a group from various walks of life that had been brought along, I guess because of the interreligious issues in Northern Ireland. So they had some American-Indian leaders, labor leaders, some religious leaders in this group. I was basically kind of working as one of the control officers for them.

*Q: Well, I guess -- practically every president, I don't know if Obama's done it, but every other president's been able to find some Irish in them.*

CALLAHAN: *(laughs)* Well, Obama's mother --

*Q: I'm not -- you know, I have an Irish grandmother. I mean, you know, I mean this is -- you scratch anywhere and --*

CALLAHAN: Yes, yes.

*Q: And if not we become honorary.*

CALLAHAN: There was a book out when I was there about how the Irish saved the world or something *(laughs)*.

*Q: Yeah. How the Irish Saved Civilization.*

CALLAHAN: That's it.

*Q: But now, how did the trip go with Clinton and all?*

CALLAHAN: It went very well. I was impressed. This was the first time I'd seen him up close in that kind of setting. I was impressed with his charisma and his skills at bridging the gap and assuaging the wounds between these two communities, which were still pretty raw. He received lots of good publicity from both the Protestant and the Catholic communities.

*Q: Well, he's very -- I mean he certainly is a people person.*

CALLAHAN: Definitely.

*Q: Well then, its '98, you're back. And where'd you go?*

CALLAHAN: I went into the Senior Seminar, I guess one of the last few classes before it was shut down, which I think took place only a couple years after our class. It was quite interesting but I probably would have preferred the War College as more of an academic sort of setting.

*Q: Well, the Senior Seminar is not really very challenging.*

CALLAHAN: Right.

*Q: It's sort of being a sightseer, going around. I went there.*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: Way back, the 17<sup>th</sup>.*

CALLAHAN: Seventeenth, OK. I think ours was the forty-first.

*Q: There were still -- they were having a consular representative, but sort of -- you know, you had the feeling that you were put there because they really should have a consular.*

CALLAHAN: *(laughs)* I don't recall that aspect of it. I guess the best part of it was kind of in the friendships that I made in the Senior Seminar with some of the people who were kind of close to me in opinions and personality, and I've maintained those relationships ever since.

*Q: Were any of the trips that you made particularly memorable for you?*

CALLAHAN: Well, the Alaska trip, the first one that we took was certainly memorable; my not having been there before. We went up to Juneau for a few days and then up to Anchorage. We were supposed to up to Prudhoe Bay -- up to the oilfields -- but there was a problem with the D.C. National Guard aircraft and a part had to be flown in to replace a faulty one. So we were stuck for a few extra days in Juneau which was fine. As you may recall, after the Alaska trip, we had to decide where we wanted to go in the U.S. and plan

our own trips. A committee would be assigned to a region and we'd have to do all the planning and arranging meetings, etc. The Chicago trip was interesting. I had not been there before. We also did a trip to the South. I was on the group that planned the one to the South. We went to Memphis and to Cleveland, Mississippi, the birthplace of the blues. I think the trip to Mississippi was something that was little out of the ordinary for the group. We managed to stretch the geography of the South to Puerto Rico figuring that was also south. The Puerto Rico visit was certainly memorable to be able to talk to the Puerto Ricans, get into the issues of statehood versus nationhood, and the government system there.

*Q: Well, did you find yourself the resident expert on consular matters? Because it's brought from both the State Department and also the military and all. And each one sort of represents a different --*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: -- part. And you're the consular guy.*

CALLAHAN: Yes I'd say so, yes. To the extent that people needed information or wanted to know how to get things done, related to consular issues, or they had friends or relatives that needed some advice or wanted to bring in a domestic servant. They'd come to me.

*Q: Well, then after that what did you do?*

CALLAHAN: And then I went to --

*Q: It would be '89, wouldn't it?*

CALLAHAN: No, was the late summer of '98'99, and then in '99, the summer of '99, I went over to INL. I took over the job as office director for the Africa, Asia and Europe regions. This was basically everything that INL covered except for Latin America.

*Q: You might explain what INL is.*

CALLAHAN: It's the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. I wanted to do something other than consular work for a change. And the INL Bureau's mandate had appealed to me. I knew some people who'd gone through there who had found it interesting. It was a good out-of-cone tour for a consular officer. There is a lot of management and program work in it. I went for that and got the office director job.

*Q: The office is always memorable because it's known as --*

CALLAHAN: Of Drugs and Thugs.

*Q: (laughs)*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: Anyway, what were your duties and how did this work?*

CALLAHAN: We were responsible for providing support to governments in assisting them in dealing primarily through training and equipment support for combating narcotics trafficking, primarily. To some extent we also dealt with crime, organized crime and rule of law issues in those days. That area has now become a much bigger part of the INL portfolio now than it was then. We provided training support and other assistance to countries, especially in Southeast Asia; they probably were our biggest clients in that respect. We had some programming in Africa, some in South Asia, and were beginning to have some programming in Central Asia. I supervised a group of mostly civil servants who worked the various regions as program officers and developed the programs, did the budgeting, and drafted the letters of agreement with the governments to provide the assistance.

*Q: Well, particularly with the breakup of the Soviet Union, there was a very large group - - at least as I understand -- of young women who were sort of recruited often with false recruitment, but ended up sort of in white slavery or prostitution. And this became also a human rights problem. But for your part, you must have been involved in this.*

CALLAHAN: It was just starting to come on the radar at that time with INL, the trafficking in persons issues. There clearly were, Eastern European women, Ukrainians and Moldovans in particular who seemed to be the popular nationalities for trafficking. However, a fair number of them were also doing it voluntarily -- they weren't trafficked, they were doing it voluntarily because they didn't have any other way to make decent money essentially in the republics of the former Soviet Union. The economies in those places after the Soviet system ended, pretty much collapsed. The economies tended to fall apart and then the Russians devalued the ruble. So yes, there was a lot of movement of that sort. I even recall one of my TDY (temporary duty) trips as the office director to Burma where we were funding a fairly big alternative development project through the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, in the Shan States, in the area controlled by the United Wa State Army. Getting there was quite a challenge. I flew into Yangon (Rangoon) and then flew into a city further up. From there we had to go overland for 14 hours in a four-wheel drive vehicle on dirt roads to get to the site where this alternative development project was being run. On the way there, we stopped to overnight in a village on the Chinese border where there was a gigantic casino. It was run by a Chinese fellow from Macau who was dressed in black, had Elvis Presley style hair and carried a .45 semi-automatic pistol. Part of the entertainment there were a group of Ukrainian dancers just completely in the middle of nowhere. It was very difficult to get to the casino from the Burmese side, but from the Chinese side there was a good road coming in and they had busloads of Chinese tourists coming in to gamble. All in all, that was quite a trip and one of the more memorable events of that job.

But at the time as well - this is before 9/11 - the Taliban were controlling most of Afghanistan time and the opium poppy crop was increasing every year. Poppy was being cultivated throughout the country, in the areas controlled by the Taliban, and in the areas controlled by the Northern Alliance, but the Taliban controlled the more productive areas. INL was funding a project through Mercy Corps, an alternative development project, in Afghanistan. We eventually pulled the funding for that because the area was controlled by the Taliban and the project was having no impact on reducing poppy cultivation. However, the Taliban did, after a lot of pressure, enact a poppy cultivation ban on the farmers in the 2000 planting season. We thought it was just the usual hyperbole and that they were saying something that would not happen, as they had done in the past. But, in fact, satellite surveillance started to show that the farmers weren't planting poppy that year. The UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) organized a donor mission to visit Afghanistan to see what was happening on the ground, in addition to what the satellite imagery was showing. I went in with that group into the Taliban-controlled area of Afghanistan for about a week, in April 2001. It was a mixed group of U.N. officials, an Iranian, Canadians, British, Belgians, an American DEA officer and me. That was another fascinating experience from my time in INL.

*Q: Well, with the Taliban, what was your impression of the people you'd meet from --*

CALLAHAN: Well, it was very interesting. Afghanistan was then, and I suppose in many parts of the country, like a country in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, or earlier. We flew from Islamabad, Pakistan, into Kandahar on a UN flight and stayed at a UN guesthouse. The Taliban were quite solicitous of us. They didn't want anything to happen and they provided strong security, you'll remember that Al Qaeda was operating out of Afghanistan at that time. Initially in Kandahar, we met with a group from their "Ministry of Counternarcotics". They all dressed very simply, and I didn't see any Rolex watches under their sleeves. Later, in the country-side, we talked to a lot of farmers, and were able to do that without the Taliban standing right over us and listening in. A lot of the farmers said that while they weren't happy with some of the Taliban's policies and definitely not happy about the poppy ban because they were losing their livelihoods, but they noted that the Taliban provided security. This was something they didn't have during the warlord period after the Soviets pulled out. I didn't get the impression that there was a lot of discontent with the Taliban governance -- at least not in the areas where we were, which were pretty rural and pretty much Pashtun-oriented. People did not seem to be unhappy with the situation, except for the economic situation.

*Q: Well, where were sort of the major trouble spots as far as you were concerned, about -- both with crime and with drugs?*

CALLAHAN: Since I did not cover the Western Hemisphere in INL, I would say that our major focus was on Southeast Asia, the Golden Triangle, Thailand, Laos, and Burma. However, we were starting to focus a bit more on Central Asia, although outside of Afghanistan and Pakistan, we weren't doing much. Pakistan had done quite a bit with outside support to eradicate the poppy cultivation, although Pakistani traffickers were

quite involved in the production of heroin from opium poppies within Afghanistan. Afghanistan and Burma were the two hotspots for drugs.

*Q: Well, did we see any viable alternative to growing drug producing crops?*

CALLAHAN: I would say yes. In Afghanistan, they only started to produce poppy seriously after the Soviets left. Previously, they were growing wheat in those areas, and they were surviving. However, by 2000, they had become so reliant on poppies that there was kind of a reluctance to give it up. Plus, the traffickers would go in and provide credit and seeds to the farmers upfront and then the farmers would be obligated to do the cultivation and provide the product for the traffickers. I think, however, that because they had survived previously without poppy, it's something that could be done again. But, you would have to turn around an entire culture at this point, not to mention end the conflict with the Taliban.

*Q: What about Mainland China? I mean were you finding -- I mean was the government able to pretty well suppress drugs or?*

CALLAHAN: --The Chinese effectively suppressed cultivation. The satellite surveillance was quite startling. If you looked at the surveillance over China in Yunnan Province that bordered on Burma and Laos, there was absolutely no poppy growing there anymore. There used to be plenty of poppy in Yunnan, but there's nothing now or at that time, and I think still now. Just across the border into Burma, the surveillance imagery showed that the area was full of poppy.

*Q: What about on this satellite imagery? Do drug crops show up differently than other crops? Is that?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, they can, if you know what you're looking for. If you're, a specialist you can identify, the poppy fields versus something else. That's the case in some parts of the world. However, I think one of the issues in South America is that they could plant a coca among other crops and make it more difficult to spot with satellite imagery. But in the case of the poppies in Southeast Asia -- or both Afghanistan and Southeast Asia, it was pretty easy to, to see. You would get a pretty good picture of what the production is from that kind of surveillance.

*Q: Did you get involved with the mafia or is there essentially an international mafia?*

CALLAHAN: Mm. Not really. Transnational organized crime tends to be regionalized, localized in the case of drug trafficking. The production, the conversion of opium to heroin was done in labs in Afghanistan. They were primarily financed and run by Pakistanis in those days but I think more and more now are run by Afghans. From the labs in Afghanistan, the heroin would pass through different groups and different hands. Iranians were involved along the Balkan trafficking route getting the drugs from Afghanistan into Southeastern Europe. There was a big, big involvement of Albanians in the Balkan trafficking routes. Turks were also very much involved. In Southeast Asia,



ethnic Chinese would be in the trafficking, managing the trafficking organizations. In the parts of Burma where the cultivation was taking place, the Chinese had a huge influence because after the Chinese revolution, they had sent in Chinese Red Guards to occupy northeastern Burma. The area became a proxy battlefield between the Kuomintang of the Nationalists and the Red Guards of the People's Republic. The Red Guard contingent then stayed on and ended up as the leadership of the Wa – the United Wa State Army. The Wa are an indigenous tribe from that area but the political leadership are almost all Chinese who came out of the Red Guard structure.

*Q: Uh-huh.*

CALLAHAN: And, in that part of Burma, because it's so isolated also from the rest of the country, Chinese currency is what you use and you can quite easily get around if you speak Mandarin Chinese. The Burmese government had very little influence -- in that part of the country.

*Q: Well, looking at it from the sort of -- I mean it's hard I realize to remove the, sort of the thugs from the drugs.*

CALLAHAN: *(laughs)*

*Q: But were there any organizations in Europe that -- you know, I have spent some time in Naples and there of course you had the Camorra and the \_\_\_\_\_, which are equivalent to the mafia. Now were we concerned with this type of local organization?*

CALLAHAN: Not for INL; we were really more focused on the countries where we were providing assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act. Generally, in Europe, you know, other --

*Q: They were taken care of.*

CALLAHAN: Yes. I mean we had periodic meetings with the European Union and we certainly worked with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and sent delegations to the annual Commission on Narcotic Drug meetings in Vienna, Austria, where we met with likeminded friends in the UK and Europe who would have similar issues and concerns. But European drug issues were pretty much taken care of by the Europeans.

*Q: You know, something -- I mean you hear about drug development in Latin America and how traffic can -- I don't hear much about that sort of thing in Africa. But I would think rather there should be.*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: What was happening there?*

CALLAHAN: At that time, there wasn't a big issue with drug use and trafficking in Africa. In Africa, we were assisting more in addressing crime and law enforcement than specifically drug trafficking. One of the first things that I was confronted with when I arrived in INL was development of an international law enforcement training academy for southern Africa. INL is funding several international law enforcement academies, which generally focus much more on crime than on drugs. INL and U.S. law enforcement agencies wanted to place an International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in southern Africa. So when I arrived in INL, they were just in the process of starting to try to determine where to put an African ILEA. I spent much of my first year in INL traveling back and forth to Southern Africa to look at potential sites and to negotiate with governments about where to locate one. Eventually, we came to the decision to establish the new ILEA in Gaborone, Botswana, co-located with their own, new police academy. Although there was much more of a crime issue than a drug issue at that time in Africa, that has changed. Africa has become a transit area for cocaine from South America moving into Europe, including to the former Soviet Union. The hard drug issue has become a much bigger issue for our assistance to Africa. During my time, it was primarily marijuana and concerns about the social impact of having half your population smoking --

*Q: Well, as you looked at this in efforts to squelch it, what did you -- not the hard drugs, but say marijuana, what's your feeling about what you do with it?*

CALLAHAN: INL didn't really do much on marijuana. Our funding that tended to be focused on those countries that were producing the hard drugs; were producing either synthetic drugs, which became more and more of an issue, or producing heroin and cocaine. So there just really wasn't any funding available to do much of anything as it related to marijuana or hashish. Funding in general for our region was pretty limited. It was a constant irritant when I looked at the budget of the Latin American Office of INL. It dwarfed ours by an order of magnitude. It was huge. We had pretty limited funding in comparison.

*Q: Did you feel the funding that went to Latin America and the magnitude was justified compared to other places? Or was this -- it was sexy or whatever?*

CALLAHAN: I'd say in terms of the impact on the U.S., it was justified. Latin America is the source, is the primary source for both heroin -- heroin is produced in Mexico -- as well as cocaine, produced further south. So in terms of the impact on the U.S., there wasn't very much actually that was coming from my part of the world. Very little Afghan heroin was coming to the U.S. and even the Burmese heroin was primarily impacting Australia and Canada. If it got to Canada, though, then it would be moved south to the U.S.

*Q: What about your European countries, but also China and other major countries, how much cooperation was there with what we were doing?*

CALLAHAN: There was and is certainly a lot of cooperation with our traditional allies and with the Europeans, Australians and Canadians. That was never a problem. We had plenty of cooperation with them. With others, it varied quite a bit. The Chinese were definitely serious about drugs and they were concerned about the Burmese because they have a big addiction problem and their heroin was coming from Burma. So, we were able to collaborate to some extent with the Chinese on drug issues; on crime and rule of law, not, not so much; especially rule of law. But at that time, we had good relations with the Pakistanis, for instance. Not so much now, but at that time. In general, I think in our part of the world that I was covering the cooperation was pretty good. The South African Police, for instance, and other Southern African police organizations all had pretty good cooperation with the U.S. There were some problems on the Latin American side that I didn't have to deal with in the Caribbean countries, with some of the governments there.

*Q: How did you find your bureau integrated and worked with the geographic bureaus and all? I mean sometimes relations depend -- bureaucratic relations are as important as international relations.*

CALLAHAN: It depended on the country, but was relatively limited. We coordinated with the geographic bureaus certainly on memoranda and press guidance. I don't recall that we had any big issues with the geographic bureaus other than -- sometimes -- with the annual INCSR (International Narcotics Control Strategy Report that) goes country by country and how well they're complying with the UN drug conventions. There would sometimes be issues with that.

*Q: Basically you're saying Country X has got real problems and --*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: -- the Geographic Bureau would say, "Well, you know, Country X has had its problems, but it's really not that bad."*

CALLAHAN: Definitely, there were times when we had issues with the geographic bureaus over the INCSR. One issue was related to Hong Kong, which was on the "majors" list because it was clearly a transit area. They didn't like the fact that they were on the list. We would have issues with the desk on that one because the Hong Kong authorities were always complaining about that designation as one of the majors.

*Q: Well, was this at a time -- this is before Hong Kong became --*

CALLAHAN: This was about -- it was '99, 2000. It was '99 they became --

*Q: Something like that. But --*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: -- it was sort of betwixt and between.*

CALLAHAN: It was still in kind of a transition period, as I recall. I went out there with General Barry McCaffrey, who was director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). The ONDCP had planned a whirlwind trip for General McCaffrey out to China, Hong Kong, Vietnam and Thailand. I was asked – more or less at the last minute - to accompany him for INL because the INL Assistant Secretary, Rand Beers at the time, was ill and couldn't travel. So, he asked me to travel with the General. The relationship between INL and the ONDCP has always been strained and General McCaffrey was considered a bit of a loose cannon. I was sent along in part to try and keep him from telling the Hong Kong government – unilaterally - that we were going to take him off the majors list. But, he pretty much did it anyway. That was an interesting trip, especially given that McCaffrey had lost part of his arm during the Vietnam War. During our visit to Hanoi, we did a tour of their Vietnam War Museum. Of course, most Vietnamese are pretty young and have no real recollection of the war or any of the implications. We were treated quite well.

*Q: Right. Well, how would you say that the bureau fit sort of within the department? Did you find that you were sort of out in left field or something?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, I would say so, to some extent. It's an unusual bureau, although, to some extent I suppose INL would be similar in some ways to the refugee affairs bureau, with program funding to spend.

*Q: Yeah. I mean these bureaus do -- I mean if you're not in a geographic bureau, you're a little bit the oddball as far as the --*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: -- straight line State Department thinking.*

CALLAHAN: Yes. I had plenty of experience of that when I was in consular affairs, so I was used to it. But, yes, you were sort of out there kind of on your own to some extent. I would say too, that after September 11<sup>th</sup>, the funding for INL increased dramatically for the part of the world that my office covered. -

*Q: You were there during the --*

CALLAHAN: I --

*Q: -- September 11<sup>th</sup>?*

CALLAHAN: No, I had left INL in August 2001. I went to my next assignment in mid-August 2001, to Beijing where I was assigned to be Minister-Counselor for Consular Affairs, starting in September 2002. Initially, I was in language training in Beijing. , I was going to do a year of language training before taking over our consular operations for China.

*Q: OK, well let's take that. How did you find -- was this -- did you ask for this?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, in a way. I was due for a hardship assignment and at that point I was separating from my wife. So, I didn't have the constraint of having to find some place where our children - who were older anyway - could get special education. I had been interested in East Asia since my Peace Corps experience in South Korea so when the China post came up, I bid on it. However, I was also interested in DCM assignments as well and I bid on a couple of DCM assignments, one of which was in Vienna, Austria, at the U.N. Mission, the post that deals with the UNODC among other agencies. After INL, I thought that would be a good fit and interesting. I understand that I was seriously considered for that post, but I was told later that the CA Bureau really wanted me to take the Beijing assignment and pushed me for that instead of the DCM Vienna job. However, I very much enjoyed China, and I enjoyed the language training, but --

*Q: Enjoyed the -- let's just talk about the language training.*

CALLAHAN: *(laughs)*

*Q: I mean that sort of stops one cold when one thinks about all those ideographs and all.*

CALLAHAN: Well, yes. The good part about the training that I had, because I only did five months -- is that during the first part you're only beginning to start the ideographs and you're mostly using the what they call "pinyin," a Romanized version of Chinese -- because the initial focus is very much on the conversational aspect of it. Once you get kind of a rough understanding of the tones, then the spoken Chinese is not too bad because there's very little grammar. It's not like Russian or German that you have to learn cases, genders, and everything. As long as you're not immersed into the pure memorization of ideograms, language learning was interesting and relatively fun. It was also fun because it was nice to be in an academic setting again, after many years of working. We were doing the training in Beijing at a language institute there, so we were really immersed in the whole thing. I was living on my own so I didn't have anyone to come home to and with whom to speak English. We socialized with the teachers and would go out with them on outings some evenings or on the weekends. So, it was really a good experience and great way to learn Chinese.

*Q: You were in charge of the Consular Section?*

CALLAHAN: Well, I would have been if I had stayed. But when I was still with INL, I had applied for a couple of senior positions with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). They were going through a leadership crisis and they had a couple deputy positions that the U.S. and other donors to the organization decided that they needed to fill because the executive director was causing problems and didn't have anyone in these positions to try to bring some stability to the organization. I had applied for two of the deputy positions there and been interviewed for them before I went to China. I really didn't think I was going to get either of them, and the UN takes a long time to make these

personnel decisions. But, while I was in China, I think I'd been there for about three or four months, I got a call from the Executive Director of UNODC and he offered me one of the jobs. So, I sort of weighed the pros and cons. I had enough Federal time to retire from the Foreign Service at that point. I was in the process of getting a divorce and facing the prospect of child support, especially for my disabled son, and spousal support and so on -- and I didn't really have strong indications that I was going to do anything more in the Foreign Service than more consular jobs. I decided at that point to go with the UN position and went ahead and retired out of Beijing in February 2002. So, I never did spend any time running the Consular Section in Beijing.

*Q: All right. Well, you did this UN job.*

CALLAHAN: Yes.

*Q: You were essentially out of the Foreign Service at this point?*

CALLAHAN: Yes, I went ahead and --

*Q: And how long were you doing the UN job?*

CALLAHAN: I did that for eight years.

*Q: Oh --*

CALLAHAN: First I was a Division Director. The director position was kind of an odd position. It was head of the Division of Treaty Affairs and it was one of three directorships in the office. UNODC's a small agency based in Vienna, Austria, and the Division of Treaty Affairs was responsible for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs Secretariat, the administrative support to the International Narcotics Control Board, the global program against money laundering, and the legal advisory section that provided legal advisory services to foreign governments on implementation of the drug control treaties. However, oddly enough, it also had responsibility for the financial office that supported the field network of UNODC. This was basically the budget of the drug control program. I was in Vienna for about 20 months doing that. In the meantime, the, the former executive director who had been the problem, was essentially relieved of his duties by the UN Secretary General and a new executive director was appointed who came in maybe two-three months after I started. Unfortunately, he and I just didn't really hit it off although it was never clear to me exactly what his issues were.

*Q: Where was he from?*

CALLAHAN: He was from Italy. He was a sort of international civil servant. He worked for the UN before, worked for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, worked for the EU, and so on. At that time, Italy controlled the position at UNODC and the incoming executive director had connections with the Berlusconi government of Italy. He was a fairly difficult fellow. He was not someone who liked to hear other people's

opinions if they didn't match his own. I also found UN to be very highly politicized with people always looking for how they could get their next promotion. The system is like the Civil Service system. You're promoted moving to a higher level job, not by moving ahead in personal rank. So, in order to get promoted, everyone's looking for that next job up the ladder. I was in one of the three D2 jobs, which is the highest career rank that you can get to before the assistant secretary general rank, and those are all political appointments by the secretary general. So, there were people gunning for my job and not happy that an outsider got it.

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

CALLAHAN: I found that it was very difficult to tell who my friends in the organization were. There was clearly a lot of sort of backstabbing going on.. So, it came down to the executive director calling me in and saying he wasn't satisfied with my performance, but he could give me no reason as to why he wasn't happy. He suggested that I take a field assignment outside of Vienna. Initially we talked about my taking over the office in Bangkok, where UNODC has a big regional operation, which would have suited my interests in Southeast and East Asia. But then, sort of overnight, he changed his mind and decided I should go to the office in Tashkent in Central Asia. I'm sure he decided this because the U.S. at about that time -- again, after September 11<sup>th</sup>, the Department received a big supplemental appropriation from Congress and INL had a lot of money to spend in Central Asia and no real way to implement a program there-- they had no INL officers or sections in any of the embassies in Central Asia at that time. So, they went to UNODC to ask them to program the funding. The executive director decided, I think, that it would be useful for me to take on that position because I'd be managing the U.S. money, would make the U.S. happy, which it did. I was essentially dealing with the same people who I had worked with in INL previously. So, I went out to Tashkent in October 2003 and took over as the regional representative in Central Asia.

*Q: How long were you there?*

CALLAHAN: I was there for almost seven years, six and a half years essentially.

*Q: I must say, the idea of going to Tashkent seems to me to be beyond the beyond.*

CALLAHAN: *(laughs)* Yes, it did seem so to me at the time, too. --

*Q: You know, it's -- let's talk a bit about what was the country like, who was the president, and all that first. Then we'll --*

CALLAHAN: Well, yes. I was pleasantly surprised about Tashkent. I had sort of a vision of a desert. But Tashkent itself was built, around an oasis, originally. It's quite pleasant, quite green, with an agreeable climate similar to the southwestern U.S.

*Q: Like Palm Springs?*

CALLAHAN: Yes. They have very cold winters, but short winters, and sun most of the year, and hot, dry summers. The president at the time was -- and still is Islam Karimov, who had been -- as with I think virtually all of the leaders of those, the five republics, the Central Asian republics - the Communist Party secretary general. At the time that the Soviet Union fell, he turned that into being elected and reelected by vast majorities to the presidency. He may not last too much longer. I think he's about 76 now and he's said to be not in the best of health (Karimov died from a stroke in September 2016). The government is quite authoritarian. It's definitely on Human Rights Watch's blacklist and it's considered to be one of the most authoritarian countries in, in the world. --However, the governments of the other four republics are not much better. In the case of Turkmenistan, I'd say that it's probably worse. The Kazakh president and the Tajik president are all also carryovers from the Soviet period. And they're still there. They've had a couple changes of government in Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. Politically, the Uzbeks could be difficult to deal with, but I got along fairly well with them. They liked having the regional UNODC office in Tashkent and even though the U.S.-Uzbek relationship was on a downturn when I arrived and got very bad by 2005, I never really had any problems, related to my nationality, working with the Uzbeks. This was probably the most interesting job I've had and the most fun.

*Q: OK, well what were you doing? I mean --*

CALLAHAN: I was responsible for the UNODC programs, the projects and programs, which were focused on both drug and crime problems in the five countries, and to some extent we had some activities in Azerbaijan as well. We were basically developing and managing projects doing some very similar work to what I had done in INL. We were managing projects that provide training and assistance to the governments of the region to help fight drug trafficking. A lot of drugs were coming up through Central Asia from Afghanistan on the route to Russia, so it was a major transit area. We also worked on trafficking in persons; we worked in the areas of anti-corruption and promoting rule of law; promoting the implementation of the transnational organized crime conventions of the UN. Much of my job as the regional representative was dealing a lot with the governments of all five countries because they would have to agree to our projects. We'd have to negotiate the projects with them as well as with the donors. There was a fair amount of fundraising involved, talking to, meeting with representatives of the European Union and some of the other countries of Europe that funded some of our projects as well as, you know, annual trips to Vienna, as well.--

*Q: What was the role of the Russians in this period?*

CALLAHAN: They were very much present in varying degrees depending on the country. One of the issues we had to contend with early on was that the Russians in 2003 and 2004 were still providing most of the protection on the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. The Russian border guard service basically managed that border. They contracted Tajik citizens to serve as border guards while the Russians provided the non-commissioned officers and the officer staff, the equipment, food and everything for the border guards in Tajikistan. --The Russians were paying the Tajik government, as well,



for the privilege of being there. , When it was time to renew or renegotiate the contract, the Tajiks wanted more money. Ultimately, they couldn't come to an agreement; the Russians pulled their people out and the Tajiks had to take that over and were financially unprepared for it. So, working with the donor community, you know, UNODC tried to increase our support to the Tajik government on that border for the border guard services.

*Q: I would imagine that the rule of law would be rather dim.*

CALLAHAN: *(laughs)* Yes.

*Q: I mean certainly it's become the case in Russia.*

CALLAHAN: Yes. There was not very much happening in rule of law mostly where we were -- we did have a couple of projects -- mostly what we were doing though was providing implementation assistance on anti-corruption and trafficking persons. There was an interest on the part of some governments in doing something about corruption; although probably not enough interest to do it really seriously given that the governments themselves -- going up pretty high -- are generally pretty corrupt. A lot of drug money is flowing through there and making the corruption worse. We were doing a lot more on the law enforcement side. We were working with the governments -- trying to improve the capacities of law enforcement people to investigate drug cases, to detect drugs and to deal with trafficking. I think we were relatively successful with trafficking in persons; the human trafficking issue, because there had been very little interest by governments. -- There were a lot of people being exploited; women being trafficked out of the Central Asian countries for sex work, as well as labor trafficking: Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Kyrgyz, who were going to Russia and Kazakhstan to work and being exploited there. In 2003 there was very little concept or interest by the governments in that. By now, they have become much more engaged on the issue. The Uzbek government in particular has done quite a lot in that area, although they've got some other issues with forced labor during the cotton harvest when they mobilize government employees and students to go help pick cotton, which is something that's carried over from the Soviet period.

*Q: Well, of course that whole area was cursed by sort of -- I mean they destroyed what was it, the Caspian Sea or something?*

CALLAHAN: The Aral Sea.

*Q: The Aral Sea.*

CALLAHAN: Yeah.

*Q: What was happening there? Anything with -- was it coming back or were they disappearing?*

CALLAHAN: I think it's stabilized basically. There is a commission that meets on a regular basis to try to do something about that. And there are various projects, the Asia

Development Bank, the UN Development Program, for example, that are working on trying to bring it back. I don't know how successful it will be. I think they've had more success on the Kazakhstan side than on the Uzbekistan side, but it was basically the, cotton cultivation in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan that pretty much drained the sea.

*Q: Well, did you get involved in all with Turkmenistan? They sort of have a crazy ruler.*

CALLAHAN: Yes, I had Turkmenistan. We had some programs in Turkmenistan. I went over there several times. It was an interesting place; they had the statue of the Golden Boy, which was supposed to --

*Q: Revolved facing --*

CALLAHAN: Facing the sun, yes. It was quite a bizarre place. Before he died, there was a giant picture or mural of him on every government building. You could see his picture everywhere and the book that he wrote, The Ruhnama, was handed out all over. It was used as the basic textbook for school and was also translated into, I don't know, a hundred or so languages. It was pretty strange. The new fellow who replaced him, who's a dentist by training, seems to be less obsessed about a cult of personality, but not very much improved in terms of human rights and rule of law. There's never a dull moment in Central Asia between the various issues and personalities. --

*Q: Well, how -- you know, running a UN job in a place like that, I would think that there would be an awful lot of nepotism and, you know, favor. Or if not nepotism, I don't know what you'd call it, but nationalism as far as, you know, I'm from Uganda and I deserve six seats -- anyway, an awful lot of politicking around jobs.*

CALLAHAN: In Vienna, yes, definitely in Vienna there was but not so much out in Tashkent. I mean basically the international staff in my office was specialists. They were specialists usually in law enforcement or the legal area and they were from all over.

*Q: And they tended to be a little more straight arrow.*

CALLAHAN: Right. We had some very good people in those positions. --We had the Tashkent central office and we had country offices. The local staff was all nationals of that country. So we didn't have that problem. But in Vienna, yes, the issue was very evident. There are also geographic quotas in the regular budget jobs in Vienna and New York. Some governments were much more forceful than others about trying to insist that their national get the job.

*Q: Well, OK. You're out in the provinces as far as the UN is concerned. How heavily did the hand of New York or Vienna weigh on you?*

CALLAHAN: It wasn't bad. There is a Chinese saying that basically when you're in the field the sky is high and the emperor's far away. And that's pretty much the way it was in Central Asia for me, because the executive director didn't take a very strong interest in

Central Asia. He was very interested in Colombia, the Colombia program, and in Afghanistan. Even though I did apply for the Afghanistan UNODC representative job at one point, I probably would not have enjoyed it because executive director spent a lot of time focusing on what the Afghanistan program was doing. He didn't spend that much time on the Central Asia program. So, we weren't micromanaged in any way from there. We still had to deal with our Human Resources Office in Vienna to get people recruited and they could be very bureaucratic and annoying.

*Q: Well, in Central Asia did you see a diminution in drug production, or increase, or what?*

CALLAHAN: No. We certainly didn't see any decrease. There's nothing really being produced as far as we can tell in Central Asia. It's all traffic that's coming from Afghanistan and heading north to Russia and Russia has a huge addict population. So they consume quite a lot of what goes through Central Asia. We were seeing some increases in consumption in the transit countries as a result of the transit, and increases in HIV/AIDS because the injecting drug users were sharing needles, causing problems with the increase in HIV/AIDS. I'd say that we've seen improvements in professionalism in some of the counternarcotics agencies that the UN worked with and that INL works with as well now. But the seizure rate's much too low and most of it's coming through Tajikistan and then going onward.

*Q: Well, was there a discernable impact of drugs on the workforce or living conditions in Central Asia?*

CALLAHAN: Not really in Central Asia. I didn't really see that there was much of an impact in Central Asia. In part, this is because, I think, that even though they're certainly not fundamentalists, the majority religion by far in the region is Islam. There was kind of a stigma about using drugs. Most of the people who we saw who were addicts tended to be ethnic Russians or ethnicities other than the Uzbeks or Tajiks.

*Q: I spent a little time in Kyrgyzstan and was interested to see how the ethnic Russians took over a lot of the, you know, carpentry shops and sort of the specialty shops and all. Whereas the Kyrgyz had obviously been placed in the, in the bureaucracy running the government.*

CALLAHAN: Mm, mm.

*Q: What was the pattern that you saw of the ethnic Russians?*

CALLAHAN: The ethnic Russian community in general is still pretty substantial in Kazakhstan and not bad in Kyrgyzstan. However, the ethnic Russian population gone down quite a lot -- especially in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The ethnic Russians who were still there tended to be either professionals, doctors, dentists, other kinds of professionals, or they were in business. In Uzbekistan, they were not so much in

the craft areas, because Uzbeks are quite good in that area. Uzbek construction workers are pretty skilled. But I'd say in business and in professions the Russians were still there.

*Q: Well, did you see a change in -- I mean you hadn't been there before, but I mean just Soviets, the Soviet distribution system was God-awful. And you know, I mean most of these places they had probably done fairly well under the Soviet system. But the same time, as far as restaurants and you know, social services and all, pretty God-awful from my understanding, from my little observation. But things, things are certainly changing at least in Moscow. Did you see that happening in Tashkent?*

CALLAHAN: Yes. I didn't have experience in the Soviet Union previously, but definitely, the service was quite good in restaurants, the supermarkets and other service industries. They really seem to have taken on --the service ethic. There had been a good deal of Turkish penetration as well in these areas and the Turks too had certainly taken on the service ethic. So that definitely was noticeable. You got very good service, I would say, in most places. I also see big differences in --the region between 2003 and now. I go back, in my current job fairly often to these countries. I stayed in the Hotel Tajikistan my first trip to Dushanbe in 2003, which was the old Intourist hotel and it hadn't been renovated. Basically, it was really horrible (*laughs*). The furniture was falling apart and the bathroom was a shower curtain in the corner with everything altogether; the shower over the toilet and the whole works. I also stayed in the Hotel Kazakhstan, which again was the old Intourist hotel and the staff there, the babushkas (*laughs*), didn't want to do anything. But all that has really changed. Now they have first-class hotels in all these places, including Hyatts and Marriotts, and service is excellent. I really have seen huge changes there.

*Q: Did you have much contact with the American Embassy?*

CALLAHAN: Not a lot. I tried to not be identified too much with the embassy. I didn't go to a lot of embassy functions. I knew the ambassadors, particularly, in Tashkent and was quite friendly with them. I always went to the Fourth of July events. If the ambassador was having somebody visiting who was dealing with drug or crime related issues I'd be invited to their receptions for those people. But I didn't spend a lot of time with the embassy community. I almost never went to any of the homes of embassy staff, for instance. I didn't really socialize with the embassy staff.

*Q: What was social life like?*

CALLAHAN: There was a small expat community in Tashkent. I spent a lot of time with colleagues from the international staff who worked in my office, and with some of the local staff. There are decent restaurants. We'd go to people's houses for cookouts. There were nightclubs you could go to. So, social life was fine although somewhat limited. It was certainly sufficient.

*Q: Well, did you run across any sort of repercussions of our war in Afghanistan when you were there?*

CALLAHAN: Not so much repercussions. –Uzbekistan had been staging area for U.S. officials and troops supporting the fight against the Taliban – after September 11<sup>th</sup>. The Uzbeks were very forthcoming about allowing Tashkent to be used as a staging area and then allowing us to set up a base there for supplying troops in Afghanistan. But when the relationship went down the tubes pretty much over U.S. complaints about human rights to the Uzbeks in 2005/2006, they closed that base. The relationship has improved again now and it's much better than it was in that period. All the governments in the region are concerned about Afghanistan but there weren't any real repercussions at the time, except maybe in Tajikistan where they had had some incursions across the border from Afghanistan, as well as a big refugee problem, with people coming across from Afghanistan.

*Q: Well, let's talk about this human rights report situation with the United States and Uzbekistan. What was this all about?*

CALLAHAN: Well, all five of the countries were repressive. I would say that Turkmenistan was probably the most repressive. But Uzbekistan has been a target of the human rights community for some time. I think, in part, it was probably because the government had been so helpful to the U.S. and the Bush Administration in allowing its territory to be used as a staging ground for the assault against the Taliban after 9/11. The government was considered to be very close to the Bush administration during the first years. So I think that made the Uzbeks a target for the international human rights community, which has been focused much more on Uzbekistan than on the other four republics, which have plenty of human rights issues too. There had been several attempts by an Al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist movement called the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan to attack targets within Uzbekistan. Also, in 1999, even before 9/11, there was a series of bombings, allegedly, by the IMU (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan) and at that point the Uzbek government became probably more repressive than it had been, as a response to those attacks. There were some others while I was there. The U.S. embassy as well as the Israeli embassy -- which was right down the street from the UNODC office -- were attacked by suicide bombers. What really caused the major problem in the relationship was the arrest in Andijan of members of a kind of odd sect, an Islamic sect. The government was very suspicious of any Islamic group that was not part of the state-sanctioned Islam. Central Asians are generally Hanafi Muslims and they're quite tolerant of other religions. But the government is very much afraid of the Salafists and Wahabists. There was a big effort by these groups at penetration of Central Asia right after independence in 1991. The government reacted and basically threw them all out and arrested a lot of people. So, this sect, and it's kind of a strange, unique sect anyway; they were involved in Andijan. They had set up kind of a cooperative, a merchant cooperative. This came to the attention of the local government and I think probably also to some of the other merchants there who didn't like the competition. As a result, I think about 20 of them were arrested, and they were held for trial. I can't remember what the charges were, subversion I guess. They were held in the jail in Andijan. One night a group of their armed supporters were able to overrun a police headquarters, kill some police, take weapons, and then they went to the prison, killed some prison guards, opened up the

prison; let everyone out, not just the 20. It's not clear if they had any outside assistance. They moved to the town square in Andijan, took hostages, and then invited people, using loudspeakers, to come out in solidarity with them. So, it ended up with a large group of people in the town square, and by then the government had mobilized military forces and surrounded the square. There was a period of negotiation which eventually broke down. And then there was a firefight. Most of the people were most likely unarmed civilians who'd just been drawn to the square out of curiosity. It's not clear how many people were killed, but there was a huge outcry by the international human rights community. There were all sorts of unproven charges of thousands of people having been killed. I don't think the numbers were anything like that. The UN sent three UN officers to the city within a couple of days; the government allowed them to go in to see for themselves what the situation looked like. They did not find evidence of a huge massacre. Of course the human rights community claimed it had been whitewashed. As a result of this whole thing, the Administration came out pretty strongly and --

*Q: Our administration.*

CALLAHAN: Our Administration. We condemned the government and demanded that there be an independent evaluation -- investigation into it from outside. The Uzbek government basically just hunkered down and said no to everything.

*Q: Well, you were there and you were a UN employee. I mean did they use you in this?*

CALLAHAN: No. No, not really. They didn't.

*Q: Is that sort of the way the UN works? I mean they don't use their representatives such as you as the equivalent to -- well, to an ambassador?*

CALLAHAN: Well, yes. I actually had the rank essentially, the equivalency to an ambassador accredited to the government of Uzbekistan -- as the regional representative. But I wasn't involved in this particular aftermath of this thing. The head of the UN operation in any country is the resident coordinator who is usually a UN Development Program officer. So there's a separate resident coordinator who basically has the lead for all UN activities in the country. But each UN entity or agency has its own head of office.

*Q: Well, you left there when?*

CALLAHAN: I left in January 2010.

*Q: How were things going at that point? What was your impression of Central Asia and the places? Was it developing sort of a, a world separate from the old Soviet Union and all?*

CALLAHAN: I definitely would say so. Each country is fairly unique, but I think that's one of the things that the Uzbeks and Karimov, as the president then, had been trying to do. They consciously were trying to develop a nationality, you know, sort of a feeling of

statehood among the citizens separate from the old Soviet entity. In some ways, you know, they might be better off if they had a five-country federation of some sort in terms of trade. They'd save a huge amount of money with the borders, you know, without having customs agents and border guards at every border crossing. But, that runs against what they're trying to do to establish their own identity as nations. I'd say that effort is pretty far along. The Uzbeks are very suspicious of the Russians. They broke away from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) which Russia essentially manages. They pulled out of that because they see Russia as trying to reassert its authority in the region. They're very much opposed to that. On the other hand, the Kyrgyz are far more dependent on the Russians.

*Q: You know, in my -- three weeks in Kyrgyzstan, this is the mid-'90s, I was there, kind of a USIA grant to, but to tell them about how to set up a consular service. But at one point I went on a -- I hired a car and went with a couple local people to go see this big lake, Issyk Kul. And something that struck me at that time was we were stopped at least twice, maybe more times, by police. You know, and it was a shakedown. And this is usually a pretty good sign that the government hasn't really got good control. How stood it during your time there?*

CALLAHAN: It was pretty much the same. You'll see it in the city in Bishkek. You'll see that sort of thing happening a lot. Tajikistan is probably the worst, but Kyrgyzstan as well. I'd say that I think it's improving in Uzbekistan and in Kazakhstan they're paying decent salaries now, and in Turkmenistan I didn't see too much of it. But in some countries more than others, that sort of thing is improving. A lot of it's related to the lack of decent salaries.

*Q: Yeah. Well, that's it. When one thinks about way back when I was in Saigon, I was sort of surprised at the government, if you had to apply for something, you paid for the papers. We're so used -- but -- you know, I mean think about it. Well, so and so from the outside doesn't need that paper, why should he pay for it? Why shouldn't you, you know? I mean paying for services rendered. Anyway, in 2010, you left there. And did you leave for reasons, or did you -- why'd you leave? What'd you do?*

CALLAHAN: Well, the UN retirement age is 62. So, I basically hit 62 in January 2010, and it's almost impossible to get an extension and any extensions would be for no more than three to six months. So, I went ahead and retired from the UN and I came back here. By then I was remarried. My wife is from Uzbekistan and we have a child, a daughter. So we came back here and bought the house in Falls Church. We bought the house in the summer before, in 2009, when we were on home leave and moved into it in January 2010. I'd been talking to INL about coming back and doing WAE (when actually employed) work for INL when I came back --

*Q: When actually employed, part-time work.*

CALLAHAN: Yes. While actually employed. I started the security clearance process I think in September 2009 and that took a long time because I was married to a foreign

national and I had traveled all over to strange places for an American. When I was with UNODC, I had been to Iran twice as a UNODC representative and China several times and Russia. The security clearance finally came through in May 2010. In the meantime, I did some rehabilitation work on the house, renovated a bathroom and the basement and that sort of thing. After the security clearance came through, INL asked me in June 2010 to go out for a couple months to Moldova to the embassy in Chisinau to develop a more expansive INL program for Moldova. So I went out and did that, which was fun and very interesting. When I came back, INL asked me to stay on in the Washington office and do some work for them on Central Asian issues, which was a nice fit since I had been out there for so long. Initially, I did that as a WAE, but in the meantime Assistant Secretary Brownfield had decided on a Central Asian counternarcotics initiative and found some additional funding for that. INL wanted me to manage that and I started doing that as a WAE. However, when I ran out of hours, it caused problems because you can't just walk away from something and come back to it six months later. So, in August 2011, they put me on a personal services contract. So, that's what I'm doing, now.

*Q: When you visited Iran, what were your impressions? How were you treated?*

CALLAHAN: I was actually treated quite well in general. The first time I went to Iran, I was still working in Vienna and I went for an official meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs sub-commission on the Middle East that the Iranians were hosting. Iran, bordering Afghanistan, has a huge drug problem, and they have a lot of concerns. I was treated pretty well by the Iranians who were kind of interested that I was an American, but with a UN passport. They even had me do an interview on their radio station with the head of their drug control agency, in a kind of a back and forth exchange. Also, there was a student journalism group that wanted to interview me separately as an American; about what I thought about my time there. The other times that I went, I did not deal so much with officials. The other times, I was dealing with the UN office in Tehran. But the Iranian people who I met there and dealt with were generally favorable towards Americans. Our group went to one of the Shah's estates in Tehran which the government had preserved and you could go into each of the houses and look around. The minibus that took us up from the parking area stopped to pick up one of the young women who was working there. She asked where we were from and was very happy to hear I was from the U.S.

*Q: Yeah.*

CALLAHAN: One evening, two colleagues, an Englishman and a Belgian, and I, went out to dinner at a French restaurant near our hotel. When we finished, we were having trouble with the bill because all the Iranian currency notes look alike, with images of the Ayatollah Khomeini and difficult-to-decipher numbers. The manager of the restaurant, an Iranian woman, came over to us to help us count. She insisted, though, on turning the bills over because - she said out loud - she couldn't stand to look at the image of the Ayatollah. *(laughs)* So, I was kind of impressed that she wasn't afraid to say that out loud in a crowded restaurant.



*Q: Yeah. Well, on a personal note, how did you find one, marrying into an Uzbek family, and two, how did your wife find -- because you know, you just don't hear about Uzbeks colliding with the American culture and all that. Although I'm sure it's happened more than one thinks.*

CALLAHAN: It's not so unusual. --Ambassador John Purnell, who was ambassador when I first arrived, ended up marrying one of his interpreters before he left, although she's actually Tatar ethnically. It's been interesting. My wife's family is not a very traditional family, so that made it a bit easier. My wife's father died a long time before and her mother, who doesn't speak any English, is an accountant. Her sister, who's about three years younger, works for an import/export company. It's a very nice family. It's different but it's not a huge jump. I guess the biggest or some of the cultural things, although by then I'd been in the region for so long I was not surprised by anything.

*End of interview*