

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

AMBASSADOR NANCY ELY-RAPHEL

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INTERVIEW

Q: Nancy, let's start at the beginning. Could you tell me when and where you were born and talk a little bit about the background of your family?

ELY-RAPHEL: I was born in New York City on February 4, 1937. Went to public school in New York, in the Bronx, in a small area called Throggs Neck, which is on Long Island Sound. And graduated from high school in the Bronx, Evander Childs High School, and went on to Syracuse University.

Q: All right. Now I'm going to take you back. Let's start with your father's side. What was your family name?

ELY-RAPHEL: My maiden name is Halliday, which is Scottish. My grandfather, my father's father, was born in Scotland, but he was the only one in the family who was born outside this country. For many generations, on the other side, they're all Americans.

Q: But on your father's side, what did your grandfather and then your father do?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, my grandfather when he first came from Scotland, trained horses for Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

Q: Oh, wonderful. (laughs)

ELY-RAPHEL: And my father, who went to Stuyvesant High School, which is a very well-known high school in New York, after he graduated, went to work for the large crane and equipment company at which he had worked while in high school and married my mother just before the Depression hit. When they came back from their honeymoon, he didn't have a job and so he started his own business, which was a heavy equipment repair and construction business. Ultimately, he was quite successful but really struggled very much at the beginning.

Q: Well, now, on your mother's side—

ELY-RAPHEL: My mother actually was born in the house that I grew up in. That was the family homestead built by my grandfather . She went to Hunter College for two years and then married my father and dropped out.

Q: What were her parents' names?

ELY-RAPHEL: Her maiden name was Merritt, which is an old New England family. And her family came over, actually around the time of the Mayflower. They were really old New England, or Connecticut and upstate New York, or what we called upstate New York.

Q: The Merritt Parkway.

ELY-RAPHEL: The Merritt Parkway. Right, was part of the Merritts.

Q: Do you ever feel a certain sense of possession? (laughs)

ELY-RAPHEL: When I drive up that parkway, I always think of the family farm that was in Towners, New York.

Q: What was your grandfather on your mother's side doing?

ELY-RAPHEL: He was a broker and was into real estate. He actually moved to Long Island when my parents moved into the house he built.

Q: Well what happened to them during the Depression? Brokers and real estate were not exactly a growth industry.

ELY-RAPHEL: It wasn't, but he had a lot of property that he had acquired on Long Island, so he was in pretty good shape after the Depression.

Q: Well, then, you grew up in Throggs Neck?

ELY-RAPHEL: Throggs Neck, which is a very tiny community and was a residential community at the time. Actually, it still is to some extent. But it's in the Bronx.

Q: I'm not a New Yorker, but that area, was this a WASP [white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant] area, an ethnic area, mixed or what?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, it was WASP, well, Irish and some Italians in the community. I left elementary school in the sixth grade because they had selected me to go to this special junior high school which was on the other side of the city, or the other side of the Bronx. So, I went from that small, residential community into a large junior high school which was ethnically mixed, although I was in a class full of the really bright kids in that part of the city.

Q: Did you have brothers and sisters?

ELY-RAPHEL: I have a brother who is three years older than I who is a doctor now in Cape Cod. He went to medical school in New York.

Q: What was home life like?

ELY-RAPHEL: It was very nice and very supportive. Both of my parents were home all the time. My mother didn't work until after my brother went to medical school and she went back to college to get her degree. So she was an at-home mother and was very active in the Campfire Girls on my behalf. Both of my parents were very active in the church. It was a very nice childhood.

Q: Were you much of a reader? What were your interests? I'm speaking about when you were fairly young.

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, I read all the time. I spent all my time going to the library, taking out books from the library. But I also had lots of friends. Sailing, I did a lot of sailing at the time.

Q: Did you have a sailboat?

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes. My brother and I both spent a lot of time on the water.

Q: When they moved you to the junior high, what was this junior high? Was it a new junior high?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, it was a program, and I look back on it now and wonder how my life would have changed if I had—it was a program that was encouraging students to actually just not go to junior high school, but from that program to go on to the University of Chicago, and the two choices at the time were University of Chicago or Goucher College. Goucher College had these programs. And my parents were not very taken with sending their daughter off to Chicago, so I didn't do that, but I remember a lot of discussion about whether or not that was a worthwhile program. It was some kind of a program that New York City had, and as a result, they selected these students from various elementary schools, I don't know if it was the Bronx or across the city, and then put us into these classes in this junior high school. A lot of my friends came from all over the Bronx.

Q: What was the ethnic mix?

ELY-RAPHEL: Actually, I think there were more Jewish students than anything else. And this was my first exposure to the Jewish religion, other than what I had gotten in Sunday school and it was a wonderful, wonderful experience for me. In fact, I am still in communication with my junior high school classmate. She lives in New Jersey. But she went through my confirmation classes with me, and I went through her Bat Mitzvah

classes with her, and both our sets of parents shared that experience and went to the ceremonies. And that was really the first time I had ever spent any time in a Jewish family.

Q: And for that era that was—

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, it was a wonderful experience, and she's still a good friend.

Q: Did this program, I was wondering if it was all connected to the 100 books, Hutchins and all that?

ELY-RAPHEL: It may have. I don't know. But it certainly was the same time frame, so I wouldn't be surprised if that was so.

Q: What courses did you particularly like and didn't like?

ELY-RAPHEL: I loved social studies. And I loved English. And I had a wonderful teacher in junior high school for social studies. I recall many discussions at the dinner table when my father thought I was becoming a communist. So, I think I must have gotten into socialism. I think it was actually a very broadening experience for me.

Q: Was this very big, particularly in New York? Did international affairs intrude at all by junior high?

ELY-RAPHEL: Oh, very much so. And my parents were very much into keeping up with what was going on with the world. So there was a lot of discussion at home in the evenings. And the Yalta Agreement, I remember writing a paper about it and my father got very much involved in helping me do that. And I recall the Hungarian Revolution.

Q: Fifty-six, yes.

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, it was the earlier one—Benish, I think it was.

Q: Oh, it was '48.

ELY-RAPHEL: Forty-eight, yes.

Q: Because the Czechs lost.

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, in Czechoslovakia. Yes, and I remember long discussions about it at home, and I was pretty young at that point.

Q: Where did your parents fall on the political spectrum?

ELY-RAPHEL: My father was a real rock rib Republican. Although my grandfather, my mother's father, I remember having a poster of Roosevelt in his window, so we were a

mixed political family. Many years later when I had a picture taken with Ronald Reagan, I sent it to my father and he liked it.

Q: Were there any books or incidents that really “turned you on?”

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, one book I remember reading was by Anya Seton, and it was about John of Gaunt—that whole period really turned me on to British history and the War of the Roses. It was a remarkable book. It really got me into Shakespeare, at a later age, but I was always interested in the Lancasters and the Yorks.

Q: Well, it’s interesting what things—particularly people who are readers—all of a sudden they find themselves into something that really strikes a chord.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right. There was another book about the woman that Napoleon didn’t marry. I remember reading that. I don’t remember who wrote the book, but it really got me into—

Q: A Polish countess?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, she was a young woman who lived in Lyon and her father was a silk merchant, and I can’t remember the name of the book, but it got me interested in European history.

Q: I was wondering, at that time, because you sort of moved from one era to another; about women, how did you see yourself going?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, that’s an interesting question. I was in that generation when your great goal in life was to get married and have children. When I went away to college, I never questioned the fact that women had to be in by 9:15 pm and the men could stay out all night. And it still drives me nuts, but I never questioned that. I mean, I just accepted that. So I was not a real women’s liberate, but we didn’t really know what it was. It really didn’t affect me until I had read a couple of books many years later, and I actually had been married.

Q: Well, I think also to put it in its context, I think colleges with women in them, the administration felt in loco parentis and it was not an era of “anything goes,” so this made the parents feel much more comfortable.

ELY-RAPHEL: But you could have reversed it and locked the men up at 9:15 and let the women out! (laughs) It may have been better. But it was sort of the era of the man in the gray flannel suit.

Q: Very much so. Why Syracuse?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, it was a mistake in retrospect, I guess. I had been offered a scholarship to go to Mount Holyoke, which would have made a lot more sense for me

academically, I guess, but I had met somebody who was at Syracuse, and I was really into going to a school, a big university, with football and all of those things. And I spent a couple of weekends up there and decided that that's where I wanted to go, so I rejected Mount Holyoke and went to Syracuse, which probably was not a smart move academically at the time.

Q: I think people going to college are not always making, in retrospect, the right—they really don't know the game.

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, and I was sixteen. I had skipped through school.

Q: I take it you were a precocious kid.

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, I guess I was a precocious kid, although I was very lazy. When I was back in high school, I didn't spend as much time studying as I should have, but I did jump, skip classes; I skipped twice.

Q: Were you one of those nasty kids who could do well in spelling bees?

ELY-RAPHEL: I never got into spelling bees. (laughs)

Q: I remember those— (laughs)

ELY-RAPHEL: No. I never did that.

Q: You were at Syracuse from when to when?

ELY-RAPHEL: From 1953 to 1957. Graduated in 1957, with a year out. I went to Germany for a year.

Q: Well, this is very much the Eisenhower years.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right.

Q: What was school like at Syracuse at that time?

ELY-RAPHEL: It was a big football school. I was in class with Jimmy Brown, who was a big football hero. And it wasn't until I spent my junior year abroad at the University of Wurzburg that I really got serious about school and about studies. And then I took many, many courses thereafter in the Maxwell School at Syracuse and really got into international relations and Russian history and all of the courses that I now find satisfying. But I didn't know quite what I wanted to do when I first started in college.

Q: Are you at the University of Wurzburg at—

ELY-RAPHEL: Fifty-six, '55, '56.

Q: Fifty-six. How did you find that?

ELY-RAPHEL: It was fascinating. It was not that long after the war. It was still a very conservative place in which I was living. But it was a great experience for me to be thrown into a school with German students.

Q: I was just down the road a piece as a vice consul at Frankfurt and we were getting ready to evacuate when all hell broke loose. Did you find the students, what were their politics?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, it was hard to determine. In fact, I'm still in contact with one student who was a law student at the time when I was an undergraduate. The family I lived with actually brought out pictures of Hitler and was not happy that the war had turned out the way it did, which surprised me. But the students were pretty, not political, but very, very upset about what had happened, and very apologetic for what had happened in Germany, so it was a very liberal group.

Q: For us, this was the beginning of the cold war period. How did the Soviet Union look then, or did it come up?

ELY-RAPHEL: I don't think it really came up. I took a course in history about the French Revolution and three courses of English literature, so the students that I was dealing with were really not into politics. They were more into history and English. And I was pretty young then. We really didn't get into the politics of the cold war, I have to confess, when I look back on it.

Q: Well, still, one looks back on, you weren't a kid—

ELY-RAPHEL: I was eighteen.

Q: You were eighteen. Did you find yourself acting at all or telling about the United States, or at least from the perspective of Throggs Neck?

ELY-RAPHEL: There was a lot of support for the United States. I mean, I felt that, at least in Wurzburg. And only when I went up to Berlin and saw signs on the freeway that said, "Ami, go home," did I have any sense that the Germans were antagonistic to us at all. They just seemed very friendly and open. And I was taken in by a number of families that were very gracious, for Christmastime and Eastertime. It was a wonderful experience.

Q: And you had taken German before?

ELY-RAPHEL: I did. I had taken German at Syracuse University.

Q: When you came back, this brought you to Maxwell School of—

ELY-RAPHEL: Citizenship.

Q: Citizenship, which is, of course, their crown jewel.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right. And that I really got into in a big way, and then I was totally interested in international relations and had a wonderful professor there, Professor Kulski. And I really enjoyed the courses that I took there.

Q: Did you get any sense of where your professors were coming out? Was it liberal? Was it people who were exiled from Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union, and this meant that they didn't like things that were happening?

ELY-RAPHEL: I didn't really get that sense, I have to confess. Two courses I took—one on the history of the Soviet Union and one on their politics—and no, and in fact, I think I was probably more balanced than some of my colleagues or the other students. I was a little more sympathetic to what was going on in the Soviet Union than they were. I wasn't a Cold Warrior. And I really didn't detect that the professors that I had felt that.

Q: When you got back there it would have been '56.

ELY-RAPHEL: Fifty-seven. I came back in September of '56 and graduated in June of '57.

Q: So all hell broke loose in Hungary—

ELY-RAPHEL: That fall.

Q: Yes, fall of '56.

ELY-RAPHEL: And that I couldn't believe, watching that on the television. I mean, that was just stunning.

Q: Did that change things at all? I mean, this was not a passive group of people in Eastern Europe.

ELY-RAPHEL: I think that's right. And we got much more energized at school that fall as a result of that—that was Czechoslovakia. No, Hungary. And Lebanon at the same time.

Q: Hungary, and yes, and the Middle East. It was the Suez Crisis.

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, the Suez Crisis, all in the same month.

Q: Yes, that puts a lot of strain on people. In any of this, were you finding anybody questioning Israel or was Israel considered sort of the city on the hill?

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, I think it was. And I really didn't take any courses on the Middle East. I really wasn't focused on the Middle East. That came some time later. It was really the Soviet Union and Europe.

Q: You're coming out of Maxwell in '57. What were you pointed towards?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, I ended up teaching. First I went to work for General Electric [GE] as an editor, because I was married at the time.

Q: When did you get married?

ELY-RAPHEL: I got married in 1955.

Q: So how did you go to Germany?

ELY-RAPHEL: My husband was in the military. So that's what got me doing something in Germany. So I was not independent the way young women are today. So I needed to find employment where he was working. So I worked at GE for a year, then his job moved to Watertown, New York.

Q: Was he still in the military?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, he was working for IBM. And so I, then, went to Colgate and got teaching credentials so I could teach, and I taught history and English at Watertown High School.

Q: How did you find the students there?

ELY-RAPHEL: It was wonderful. I really enjoyed teaching. They were very good students, and very interesting. That was a good experience.

Q: What were you seeing as your goal? You were going to be a—

ELY-RAPHEL: A mother. I was married, I was going to be a mother. I had taken the Foreign Service exam when I was at Syracuse, but then I got married and moved to Germany.

Q: Had you passed it?

ELY-RAPHEL: I don't think I finished it, as a matter of fact. I mean, I never pursued the rest of whatever it was I needed to do at the time. And then my husband decided to go to medical school, and then was applying to medical school, and got into Georgetown and Albany. And I was hoping to go to Georgetown, because that was where the State Department was, but he went to Albany because he got a scholarship there. So, you know, I didn't pursue that. So, I was a mother.

Q: Now how many children?

ELY-RAPHEL: I have now two children. Two sons. And I really wasn't on a career track of any kind.

Q: Well, this was very typical for the time. But also, you represent a transitional thing, where you're starting to pick up the—who were the two authors who were starting to come out at the time? Simone de—

ELY-RAPHEL: Not Simone de Beauvoir, but Marilyn French was the one that wrote—I got a copy of her book. I can't remember the name of the book, but it woke me up a little bit.

Q: When did you move from the mother/teaching track?

ELY-RAPHEL: Actually, when I got divorced.

Q: When was that?

ELY-RAPHEL: That was in 1968, but before that I realized that at some point I may have to support myself and my children. And so that's when I went to law school. That was something I had always been interested in doing.

Q: Where did you go to law school?

ELY-RAPHEL: I went to the University of San Diego Law School.

Q: Why there?

ELY-RAPHEL: There again, because my husband was interning at the hospital in San Diego, so that's how I ended up in California. And that was the only law school in town.

Q: How did you find the study of law?

ELY-RAPHEL: Fabulous. That was a wonderful experience, but my two favorite courses in law school were constitutional law and international law, so I kept on the international area.

Q: At that time there probably weren't too many women—

ELY-RAPHEL: I was one of two in my class.

Q: Now I'm sure it is probably a majority.

ELY-RAPHEL: It's more than half, right. I was one of two in law school, and then when I graduated and went to work in the city attorney's office I was one of two, and then I was

offered a job in the U.S. Attorney's Office, and again, I was the first woman in that office.

Q: I'm just trying to pick up some social history while we're at it. Did you find yourself having problems with men? I'm talking about in the work, about being condescending, or not very receptive or not, or was there a problem there?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, the only problem that I saw was when I went to work at the city attorney's office. At the end of eight months we got notices of our raises, and I discovered to my chagrin that the men had gotten a 10 percent raise and the two women in the office had gotten a 7 percent raise. So I went in to the city attorney and I said, "Aren't you happy with what I'm doing? Am I doing a good job?" And he's telling me what a wonderful trial attorney I am, and so forth. So I said, "Well, then how come I didn't get the 10 percent raise?" and he said, "Well, you're a woman." Would you believe it? This is 1969. He's saying, "Well, they have families to support, and you don't." Well, actually I did, but after consulting with my colleague, the other woman in the office, and talking to the prior city attorney, who agreed to represent us in front of the Equal Employment Opportunity Board if we needed to, I went back to him and said that's what we were going to do, and we got our 10 percent raise. But, you know, it didn't even cross his mind that he was violating the law. So it's really quite astonishing.

Q: It takes a generation or so for these things to sort of get embedded into the minds of the older generation, I think. You said you did trials?

ELY-RAPHEL: I did trials. That was as a prosecutor.

Q: What sort of trials?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, I started off with drunk driving cases and child abuse cases, and they were all misdemeanors, because the felonies would be handled by the district attorney.

Q: How did you find the system in San Diego at that time? Were there small city corruption types of things?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, not at all. Actually, I think San Diego at that time was one of the cleanest cities. All of the lawyers knew each other. There was a network, but I didn't really see an old boy's network. A woman that I had met through a friend—she later became a judge—was a mentor, in a way. Very helpful. The older women who were lawyers in the city were very helpful. So, no, and I was very impressed with the efficiency of the court system.

Q: Did politics enter into it at all?

ELY-RAPHEL: Not at all. Not at that time.

Q: What was San Diego like at that time?

ELY-RAPHEL: It was a small town in many ways. Everybody knew everybody. In retrospect, it was a very Republican town, although I wasn't really into the politics of it. But I lived in an area north of San Diego, it was part of San Diego, called La Jolla. And it was a pretty fancy neighborhood, when I look back on it, because my older son went into the Head Start program, which was a wonderful opportunity for him because they didn't have enough kids available.

Q: Somehow having La Jolla kids go into Head Start seems—

ELY-RAPHEL: It's bizarre. But that's exactly what happened. It was that kind of community.

Q: Did the navy play much of a role in your work or not?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, not really. Although it's a navy town, I really didn't sense that in the cases, trials. I mean, we'd get navy people on juries, but I never really got into the navy part of things.

Q: Then you moved over, what, to the—

ELY-RAPHEL: Then the U.S. attorney offered me a job in the U.S. Attorney's Office. I guess they'd seen some of the trials that I'd handled in the city attorney's office, which was a great opportunity to move on, so I went there.

Q: How long were you doing that?

ELY-RAPHEL: I was in the U.S. Attorney's Office for almost two years.

Q: That was from when to when?

ELY-RAPHEL: From 1969 to 1971.

Q: What sort of work were you doing for the U.S. attorney?

ELY-RAPHEL: There, trying big drug cases. Marijuana cases. I had a bank robbery, postal robbery case. There were good-sized cases. It was a great experience.

Q: Was there a different atmosphere?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, the lawyers were much better. The judges were better. And I think the quality of the cases I handled were much more complicated.

Q: The crooks were fancier.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right! But I was pretty successful. It was a very good experience.

Q: Then what happened? How did you move on?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, I was divorced at the time and I met someone who was teaching at Yale Law School, so I got married and moved back east, and took my children to New Haven, Connecticut.

Q: And what did you do there?

ELY-RAPHEL: There I worked in a law firm. I had passed the California bar and I didn't want to take the Connecticut bar until I knew where I was going to be living, and he had visited at Harvard, and it was a case of whether he was going to return to Yale permanently or stay at Harvard, so I thought I would wait until he had made up his mind. So I worked at a law firm in New Haven. I was there for a year. And again, it was not terribly enlightening, because I remember going into the side door of the Quinnipiac Club, because women couldn't go in the front door.

Q: What sort of club is this?

ELY-RAPHEL: It's a men's dining club.

Q: On the Yale Campus?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, just a men's club. New Haven. And that's where the firm had their weekly lunches. I kick myself now for not objecting.

Q: You didn't have to wear a veil on the job or anything like that?

ELY-RAPHEL: It was preposterous. Absolutely preposterous. And that was 1971. I should say, when I was in San Diego I got very much involved in the anti-war movement.

Q: What sort of things were you doing in the anti-war movement?

ELY-RAPHEL: Helping them plan events like getting lots of small boats out to the harbor to keep the aircraft carriers from being able to come in.

Q: You were a government worker?

ELY-RAPHEL: I know. I look back and I'm a little shocked at my behavior. It's a wonder the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigations] didn't have me fired. There were a number of people in the U.S. Attorney's Office with me.

Q: Well, I'm sure, I mean, there was a very mixed bag thing, but—

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, looking back on it I'm a little surprised. Nobody complained.

Q: How long were you there [in New Haven]?

ELY-RAPHEL: I was there one year, and then moved to Cambridge, and then stayed in Cambridge in Boston.

Q: For how long?

ELY-RAPHEL: Until 1975, and then came to Washington.

Q: What were you doing at Cambridge?

ELY-RAPHEL: In Boston, I was the assistant, and then the associate dean of the Boston University Law School.

Q: I got my master's at Boston University [BU], way back in 1955. What was Boston Law School like at that time?

ELY-RAPHEL: It was an up-and-coming law school. It was difficult for Boston University, in many ways, because they had Harvard across the river, and they were always in competition, and since my husband was teaching at the Harvard Law School, I was always between both schools. It was the time when the law school was very involved in affirmative action, and it was also the time of the Bakke case, trying to get minority students enrolled in the law school. It was frustrating because Harvard would take students who really couldn't compete with the Harvard students but would have done very well at BU, but, you know, they'd go to Harvard, and the argument was always, you'd be better off with a Harvard degree than a BU degree.

Q: Were you working out of the Massachusetts community, mainly?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, I was traveling all over the country recruiting students. That was part of the job when I started there.

Q: Your emphasis, was it essentially on African Americans?

ELY-RAPHEL: Right. Primarily.

Q: Women, were they a part of the mix?

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, women were part of the mix, but the focus was much more on African Americans. It wasn't that much of a problem to get good women students.

Q: Well, were you seeing women moving onto the stage more and more?

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, but it was still very—it was not easy. There were only two women teaching at the law school when I got there. And they didn't get the plum appointments. I

don't know whether they were getting paid as well as the men. Still a real struggle. By the time I left there it was better, but, you know, it was a struggle.

Q: Who was the president of the college?

ELY-RAPHEL: John Silber was the president.

Q: Well he was quite a—

ELY-RAPHEL: He was a real activist.

Q: I was going to say—

ELY-RAPHEL: Bill Bennett was an assistant in the liberal arts school.

Q: I'm not quite sure—William Bennett? Who was a very pronounced conservative, who proclaims on all sorts of things still today?

ELY-RAPHEL: Right, right. He was active in the university at the time. I remember being annoyed by him then.

Q: How did you find your politics? Were you feeding into any particular thing?

ELY-RAPHEL: No. I went up and down. I mean, when I first lived in Watertown I was a Republican. I was vice president of the Women's Republican Club. And I was a great supporter of Rockefeller when he was running for governor. And then, in Massachusetts, I really wasn't into—and, of course, the war, I was very much opposed to that. And Kennedy spoke at my commencement from Syracuse—John Kennedy, when he was a senator, and really inspired me. And that was when I really, really wanted to someday work for the government and get into the government. That was the most inspiring thing I'd heard.

Q: He really changed the topography.

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, he did. He did.

Q: He made government work exciting, which it is.

ELY-RAPHEL: Exactly. And I would attribute a great deal of my enthusiasm for it to John Kennedy.

Q: Were there any great issues that you had to deal with at Boston University?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, not really. It was a good experience.

Q: Then what happened?

ELY-RAPHEL: Then I moved to Washington. My husband became the general counsel at the Department of Transportation.

Q: This was when?

ELY-RAPHEL: This was 1975. In the Ford administration. William Coleman was the secretary of Transportation. My husband had worked with him in the Warren Commission. So we moved to Washington, and my first inclination, of course, was to go to the Justice Department, because that's where my experience had been as an assistant U.S. attorney. And to my husband's credit, I have to say, he said, "Well, you've always been interested in foreign affairs, why don't you try the State Department?" So I did, and walked in the door of the Legal Advisor's Office, and they were looking for someone with a criminal law background to work on extradition cases and negotiate extradition treaties. And so they hired me right away, and I started working in the Legal Advisor's Office.

Q: How long did you do that?

ELY-RAPHEL: As an attorney advisor, I did that until the election, when Ford lost.

Q: Carter came in in '77.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right. And so then I moved back to Boston after Ford lost, because my husband gave up his job. Then I went to work for the Department of Justice in Boston, in the Organized Crime Strike Force. But I have to confess, I left my heart in the State Department, and really, really enjoyed that.

Q: Talk a bit about what you were doing while you were there?

ELY-RAPHEL: I was negotiating extradition treaties, and also extradition cases. These are cases that, when somebody commits a crime in a foreign country, and if we have a treaty with that country, there's a process set out in the treaty that has to be met. And if the process is met, and you can show prima facie case that the person committed the crime, then the person is either extradited to the United States to stand trial, or if it's a foreign request for extradition as a result of a treaty, then we would then extradite that person to that foreign country. It was fascinating.

Q: I was brought up to think that if I ever got in trouble to head to Brazil.

ELY-RAPHEL: I don't think you'd do that anymore! But there were some places where you could head for.

Q: I would think it would be a little hard to get the State Department to crank up to extradite somebody. This is sort of peripheral, and "Oh God," you know. I mean, did you find, was there a good response, or was this a slow process?

ELY-RAPHEL: Oh, no, it was a slow process, but it was delegated for the deputy secretary to make the determination whether to extradite somebody. There was only one other person doing extradition at the time. They now have a whole office in the Office of the Legal Advisor. I mean, I think there must be ten people working on it now. In those days it was just the two of us.

Q: What sorts of things were you working on?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, I remember we negotiated—one that came to completion during my tenure was the U.S.-UK [United Kingdom] extradition treaty. We had an old one, and this one was signed. The reason I remember that is that we had pictures of the deputy secretary and, I think it was the British ambassador, maybe it was a minister, signing the agreement.

Q: Gee, I would have thought we would have had one with them.

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, we did, but it was old, and it was way out of date. It was from 1812. So we needed to upgrade it.

Q: Did you work with the British embassy on this?

ELY-RAPHEL: To some extent. But we usually negotiated with somebody from the legal advisor in the countries that we were dealing with.

Q: Did you get any cases that you can think of that you got involved in?

ELY-RAPHEL: I can't remember the names of them, but we had one case that we spent a lot of time on; it was the Peltier case, which was an American Indian. I can't remember who it was that was requesting his extradition.

Q: This was from Wounded Knee or something like that?

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, exactly. Maybe he was somewhere else.

Q: Canada?

ELY-RAPHEL: Right, right.

Q: Did you get involved in that case—somebody, a big businessman that kept popping around Central America and Cuba?

ELY-RAPHEL: Oh, yes. I want to say Rotko, but that wasn't his name, but it was like that. Yes, that was one of them.

Q: There were some of those that really stirred up the headlines. When you came back to the District you were on a crime strike force?

ELY-RAPHEL: I moved back to Boston, and as a result of my extradition work, I had gotten to know a number of people in the Justice Department and worked with them, and sat on panels with them. So when I was moving back to Boston, the head of the organized crime section at the Department of Justice asked me if I would be interested in working for them up in Boston. So I said yes.

Q: This would be from '77 for how long?

ELY-RAPHEL: Right. I left there in—when was the election?

Q: The election was in '76, so you would have left in '77.

ELY-RAPHEL: I left right after the inauguration of Carter, and went to work for the strike force in Boston. And was there until '78, actually. The following year I got a phone call in my office in the strike force in Boston from the new legal advisor who was working for Jimmy Carter.

Q: Who was that?

ELY-RAPHEL: That was Herb Hansel.

Q: Ohm yes, Herb is one of the founding members of my organization. He was actually president of it for some time.

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, he called up and wanted to know if I was interested in returning to Washington, and would I be interested in being assistant legal advisor. And, I have to confess, I thought that was a wonderful idea. But I also suspect that they were also interested in finding more women to be assistant legal advisors.

Q: Well, this was the Carter administration, and they were, you know, I mean, it was sort of beginning to level the playing field.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right, right. So I spent a lot of time talking it over, and since I had been following my husband all over the place, I decided well, maybe, this time he could follow me. So, I was offered two different positions: was I interested in being assistant legal advisor for African Affairs [Bureau of African Affairs], or assistant legal advisor for Oceans, Environment, and Science [Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs]? And since I really didn't know anything about the latter, I thought I'd do African affairs. So that's what I ended up accepting and moving to Washington to do.

Q: So you came there, this was '78?

ELY-RAPHEL: That was 1978, then, that I moved back to Washington.

Q: Just before that, what was the crime strike force doing? What sort of things were you

getting involved in there?

ELY-RAPHEL: I was trying cases, putting together cases against the organized crime families in Massachusetts and in Rhode Island. They were very complicated cases, much more complicated than the ones I had dealt with in the U.S. Attorney's Office. And I had a number of tax cases as well. But the interesting thing about that office was I was the only woman in it. And it was really a more sexist environment than I really appreciated. Although I enjoyed some of my colleagues, some of them did not impress me at all. It wasn't a great experience. In retrospect, when I look back on it now, two of them were indicted. Two of my colleagues were indicted for corruption, and I think they're now in jail somewhere. So I think my perception was right on.

Q: Well, what were the families, the crime families—was this basically an Italian or—

ELY-RAPHEL: The Patriarca family out of Rhode Island and Boston. And it was unbelievable the things that these people were doing, listening to the recordings, the wiretaps of what they were planning to do and what they had done. It made the Godfather look not as bad as you would imagine.

Q: Well, actually, Boston, that area has always been a pretty rough area.

ELY-RAPHEL: It's a very rough area. Really very tough gangs. I think there has been success thereafter at nailing some of these people, but it really was not a good scene. And we were not very successful at that time in rounding up these people and prosecuting them.

Q: Well, I think this is probably a pretty good place to stop. So we'll pick this up in 1978 when Herb Hansel has called you back to be an assistant legal advisor for African affairs. And we haven't talked about that, so we'll talk about that.

Okay, today is the twenty-eighth of April 2004. Nineteen seventy-eight, Herb Hansel has brought you back for African Affairs. You were there doing that with African Affairs for how long?

ELY-RAPHEL: I actually did that from 1978 to I think it was 1983, maybe. It was the longest I did anything. Maybe '82. Because I left that office to go into the Senior Seminar for a year, and I think I was the first civil servant to actually go in the senior seminar. My husband had been on it, and that was a wonderful year, and so I did it. And I was in there, maybe, six months, and Crocker pulled me out of the senior seminar to go back on the negotiating team, so I didn't actually finish it.

Q: So, let's talk about, when you arrived in 1978, what was the title of the place where you were?

ELY-RAPHEL: I was assistant legal advisor for African Affairs, in the Office of the Legal Advisor.

Q: What does one do at that level when dealing with Africa?

ELY-RAPHEL: You're the advisor for the African Bureau. And Dick Moose was the assistant secretary at the time. Bill Harrop was his deputy. So I worked with them initially, until after the election.

Q: That would have been the election of '80.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right, when Reagan came in.

Q: What were the first things in your inbox?

ELY-RAPHEL: The first thing in my inbox was the Ogaden War, between Somalia and Ethiopia. They wanted our office to see if we could determine where the border was. I don't think we were ever successful at that, as I recall. That was one of my first experiences, and I really had never worked in Africa, so I had this big map of Africa on my wall with the capital cities with the stars, and when somebody from the bureau would call me up and say, "Well, we have this terrible problem in Ouagadougou," I would look up and try and figure out what country are we talking about. But we learned quickly.

Q: Doing my oral history, I've got a big map of Africa, and I try to casually glance over and figure out what the capital is of the country where the person was, and what are the bordering states, you know what I mean?

ELY-RAPHEL: My father gave me a poster, with all the pictures, the heads of all the African countries at the time that I started, all the African states. And I then, over the time that I was in AF [African Affairs], would put a line through the ones that changed. And most of them did not change as a result of elections, and it was kind of an amazing history of Africa by the end of it.

Q: All right, you were trying to define the borders of the Ogaden. At one point I was I&R [Bureau of Intelligence and Research] guy on the Horn of Africa. This was in 1960 or so. And nobody had any idea. It was just desert. I mean, was there anything to work with?

ELY-RAPHEL: Not really. I just remember grappling with this problem early on, trying to figure out how to do it. But then we got more involved in dealing with Somalia and Ethiopia and the change that was going on in that region at the time. I remember Dick Moose, as assistant secretary, went out to talk to Siad Barre in Somalia, and we had written down a number of things that he was going to say to him. These were talking points, and we had carefully negotiated these. And then when he came back from his trip, he said, "That was a non-paper, but he wanted me to sign it, so I signed it." So then we're grappling with what do we call this piece of paper.

Q: I'm interested in sort of the legal process of somebody dealing with a geographic bureau. Did you have much on, say, territorial law of Somalia and territorial law of

Ethiopia, and that sort of thing?

ELY-RAPHEL: Not really, no. That was a very minor task, actually, that we ultimately dealt with. But that was one of the first issues. But there wasn't much written. There wasn't a lot of research you could do.

Q: Say the problem of Zimbabwe.

ELY-RAPHEL: That was a more interesting issue, and really a very complicated and—we spent a tremendous amount of time, actually, on Rhodesia during that period of time, because that was when, was it Lord Owen?

Q: I think it was.

ELY-RAPHEL: I think it was, but that was when the British were negotiating a settlement with Rhodesia, before—Smith was still there, initially.

Q: Ian Smith, yes.

ELY-RAPHEL: I spent a lot of time reviewing sanctions and sanctions violations, because we had imposed sanctions on Rhodesia, and there were exceptions to the sanctions, so we got involved in that. But then we also got involved with negotiating with the British. Moose went with I guess it was David Owen, I think, was his British counterpart, in trying to negotiate a peaceful settlement in Rhodesia.

Q: Before these, when they're trying to negotiate something, are there American legal problems, or can a negotiator trying to help another country worry about the other country and not worry about American legal—

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, there are a lot of issues that you deal with. It was the sanctions on Rhodesia, and then when there was a settlement, we had to lift the sanctions, so there were whole legal, presidential, executive orders that had to be drafted to enable the sanctions to be lifted. So that was a whole legal process that we went through.

The more interesting legal issues that I dealt with, to give you an example of the things that one can do in that situation, was after the change of the administration, and we got into dealing with South Africa in Namibia, we were conducting two negotiations: one trying to negotiate the Cuban withdrawal from Angola, and also independence for Namibia. That was a much more involved negotiation, and actually I became a part of that team. Chet Crocker was the assistant secretary at the time.

Q: What was your team doing?

ELY-RAPHEL: It consisted of the Namibian desk officer, who was Bob Frazure, the international organization's representative, Doug McElhaney; myself; the director for the office of southern Africa, and that was Paul Hare. And we all were part of this team, with

the assistant secretary. We spent hours and hours and hours, and actually Chet Crocker wrote a whole book about the negotiation.

Q: Were you there in order to keep him in line with the law, or to make sure that, you know, whatever was being done, that we were agreeing to things that we could agree to?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, yes, there was some of that. There were Security Council resolutions that we had to make sure we were complying with in dealing with Namibia. But I also played a role in drafting documents that could be used in the negotiations, throughout the whole negotiation. Some of them were useful, some of them weren't useful. One document that we prepared—it actually turned out to be a whole list of constitutional principles—that actually formed the basis of the constitution that was adopted by the independent state of Namibia. I mean, they agreed to it beforehand as part of the negotiation, and it is now part of the constitution of Namibia. They're still using the principles that we set out in that negotiation. So, I mean, things like that.

Q: In these talks, the British and the Germans were quite important?

ELY-RAPHEL: There was a contact group, and we were part of the contact group. That was the Germans, the U.S., the French, the Canadians, and the British.

Q: Now, you know, some of you came from different legal systems. Was that a problem?

ELY-RAPHEL: Not really. I mean, it was pretty much the same basic principles of international law, which, you know, that's what makes international law. Everybody agrees with that as the law. Even in drafting constitutional principles, our legal systems are similar in that regard as well. So, no, that really wasn't a problem at all.

Q: How did you find the African Bureau? What was the sort of the spirit of the African Bureau at the time?

ELY-RAPHEL: I really enjoyed it. They tended to be people who were really interested in— After I moved to the European Bureau, I used to kid them and say, "Oh, you guys are all the ones that wear these fancy ties and get all dressed up," whereas in the African Bureau or the NEA Bureau [Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs] people were more laid back and don't take themselves so seriously. But it was a wonderful group of people, very committed, hardworking. I have great respect for the African Bureau. Particularly, I really enjoyed and learned a tremendous amount working with Chet Crocker. He was a really very stimulating team leader, and I think everybody on that team felt the same way about him. We'd all go into a meeting and discuss all the issues revolving around the negotiations, and then he'd ask all kinds of questions and we'd discuss it all, and then we'd walk out, and we would all be absolutely convinced that he had taken our position. And then when he wrote it up, it was really the consensus of the view. It was a really remarkable achievement, to be able to do that.

Q: Did you find that, from the legal aspect, often there's a feeling that, yes, you get a

good idea, and then the lawyers will tell you you can't do it, or something like that.

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, I think there may be some of that, but I've always looked at my role as being a facilitator. You know, once they decide they want to do something, I try to figure out a way enabling them to do it. I mean, I'm not going to let anybody violate the law, but be flexible, and also I think it's really important to actually do work. And I think an assistant legal advisor, or anybody from a functional bureau, gets in there and really does the work. I mean, I was happy to write cables, I was happy to write reports, I was happy to take notes, do all the things that a Foreign Service officer does, and if you do that, you become valuable to the team, and they want you around. But if you think you're too good to do all that kind of stuff, you know, you're not going to be much use other than being a legal advisor. And I think you need to do—mostly because they can't afford to have you if you can't do the work.

Q: While you were there, was there a good liaison with the Foreign Relations Committee and all that? In other words, to let Congress know what you were up to?

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes. I didn't do that much of it. I mean, we'd go up there when the assistant secretary would testify, and we'd help write the testimony and so forth, and we always had very good people who were the congressional relations person who was dealing with the African Bureau, and they were very good on the whole. So, yes, I think our relations were pretty good with Congress at that time. And Lugar was the chairman.

Q: This is Senator Lugar.

ELY-RAPHEL: Senator Lugar now, right, Indiana. He was the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at the time. No, maybe he was the head of the Africa subcommittee. But he was very helpful and very good. So we had a lot of good help from the Hill.

Q: While you were in the African Bureau, were there any other issues that sort of came up?

ELY-RAPHEL: It was primarily Namibia, and the Cubans in Angola. Early on I did some work on Nigeria and oil issues, but I really became very much involved with what the assistant secretary was working on, so it was mostly South Africa and Angola and Namibia. I did a lot of work on South Africa as well. We put together the first legal assistance programs inside South Africa, working through NGOs [non-governmental organizations], through the—of the church, Bishop Tutu's organizations.

Q: How would this work? At this time, this was still the apartheid government, and you know, empowering lawyers to go out and attack the government was not looked upon with great favor by the government in power.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right, right. There were marvelous, marvelous lawyers in Johannesburg, who were very much involved in legal defense work for ANC [African National

Congress] type people who were being prosecuted by the government. And the interesting thing about the South African government is they had a very good legal system. The only problem with it was, of course, that it didn't really pertain to the blacks, but when you had a black defendant charged by the government, and you could provide funding for a good lawyer, white lawyer, they would get their day in court. There were a lot of issues that these various lawyers got involved in in defense work, and they were wonderful. They were marvelous lawyers. And some of them volunteered their time.

They had all these pass laws. I mean, South Africa at the time was unbelievable. The hoops that blacks had to jump through to do anything, to go anywhere, to work. The pass laws were horrendous, hideous. And so we would provide support for lawyers, and for NGOs. I can't quite remember the name of the church organization, I think that we'd provide them the funding, and then they'd get the lawyers who would provide the assistance to the people. And it was very effective, and in fact, one of the lawyers that we worked with I think is now the chief justice of the South African supreme court. Another one was the one that represented—George Bizos—that represented Nelson Mandela in his case, when he was convicted and sent to Robben Island. But these people were there, and they were committed to the cause, and worked with us very effectively.

Q: In a way, it's sort of a peculiar situation, in that we're, through the State Department, supporting legal defenses of people who are against a government.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right, right, right, which is what we had to do. It certainly was the right thing to do. I wish we had done a lot more, but when I look back on it, to me it is absolutely amazing the change that did occur in South Africa.

Q: But it's also amazing that you were able to, in a way, what you're saying, get away with this official support.

ELY-RAPHEL: It wasn't really official support, but they turned a blind eye to it. I mean, they didn't really—I'm sure they knew what we were doing. And it was interesting, the two people who recognized what an important leader Nelson Mandela was, was this George Bizos who was this lawyer who represented him in his trial, and the other person who talked in the same way about him was the minister of justice from South Africa who put him away. But he was the only person in the government who could go to visit him, other than his lawyer George Bizos, and when he talked about Nelson Mandela, he really talked about him in an admiring way, which was always fascinating to me, that he recognized that. And he was the minister of justice for South Africa.

Q: You left the African Bureau in '82?

ELY-RAPHEL: I think it was '82, and I went to the seminar, and then I came back—maybe it was later. Maybe it was '85 or '86.

Q: You left the seminar and were brought back for what, the negotiations on Namibia?

ELY-RAPHEL: Still on Namibia, right. Still negotiating Namibian independence. So I went back, I guess that was '86, and stayed in the African Bureau until I went overseas the next year.

Q: Were there any other things after Namibia? This must have been a great boost to you.

ELY-RAPHEL: That was the most exciting part of the negotiations. I really enjoyed it. That was just phenomenal. We would go and call on President Nyerere and then call on President Kaunda and President Michel, meet with all of them. Because they were the frontline states in this whole negotiation. And then we'd go down to South Africa, and meet with P. W. [Botha] and Pik Botha, who was the foreign minister, and try to get the South Africans to buy into what we had worked out with the frontline states, and then we'd go back to the UN [United Nations] and talk to the secretary-general, and the special administrator for Namibia, Martti Ahtisaari, who subsequently became president of Finland. But it was absolutely fascinating.

Q: How did you find the Bothas, and the rest of the white government, vis-à-vis your group in trying to do things?

ELY-RAPHEL: The thing that fascinated me about P.W. Botha is that he'd only been out of South Africa once in his life, I think. And he told us that. He went off to buy weapons once in Argentina. But he'd never been—talk about isolation. He was totally isolated. His foreign minister, Pik, was more flexible, in a way. I think he saw the future and was a little more flexible than P. W. I was gone, so I never dealt with the president who followed P. W., F.W deKlerk. He's the one that really agreed to the negotiations, and actually enabled Nelson Mandela to get out of Robben Island.

Q: Had you felt while you were dealing with P. W. Botha that things weren't going anywhere?

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes. I didn't think any of it was going to go anywhere. They had such a totally distorted view of the world. They would show you slide shows and movies and what have you, of how they thought the Soviets were so totally focused on southern Africa, and this was a great onslaught of Communism that was going to sweep them away. They had a totally distorted view. And I think, for some time, Casey, our CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] director, was helping them out and doing all kinds of things. I mean, he was undercutting our negotiations for a good period of time.

Q: I was wondering, the Reagan administration was, like many administrations, conflicted. They've got people with their own agenda, and I would think the Reagan one, particularly in something like South Africa, you had Jesse Helms and other political leaders who thought, you know, this is a perfectly splendid place. They hated the Soviets and were sort of keeping the restive natives in their place, you know.

ELY-RAPHEL: Exactly. There is no doubt about it. I think that that was probably the viewpoint of Haig, when he came in. He certainly wasn't going to rock any boats. I

remember the first trip I took to South Africa, Judge Clark was the head of our delegation. He was the number two, and he didn't know anything about Africa.

Q: He had been national security advisor.

ELY-RAPHEL: Not yet. No, he was then the deputy secretary. That was our first excursion into South Africa. Elliot Abrams had just been confirmed as assistant secretary for international organizations, and Crocker had not yet been confirmed. And that was a nightmare in many ways, trying to keep Clark from putting on a military uniform of the South African military and flying in a helicopter to see what the South Africans were doing with UNITA [União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola]. It was just incredible. Actually, Elliot Abrams was helpful in keeping him down on a farm and keeping him from doing that, but that was a real problem, and keeping him from giving away Walvis Bay. There was a Security Council resolution which specified what was supposed to happen to Walvis Bay. Well, Judge Clark was ready to give that away as well, so it was difficult. However, once Shultz became secretary I think it was much better. He actually let the assistant secretary run Africa, which was what I think secretaries are supposed to do. And he backed him up, and we had problems with Casey, and we had problems with Jesse Helms, but Shultz was a fighter for things that he cared about in South Africa.

Q: Did you get at all involved in the congressional pressures that were pushing the sanctions, and then were trying to stop the sanctions, and all that?

ELY-RAPHEL: I did. Actually, it was really interesting. On election day, the year that Ronald Reagan won the election and beat Jimmy Carter, I was on a panel on sanctions, and the other person on the panel with me was Chet Crocker, and I didn't know he was going to become the assistant secretary. So I was for sanctions, and he was of course arguing against them, and made some really sarcastic remarks about my selling them. I was promoting sanctions like somebody would be promoting designer jeans, was what he said in this debate. And I walked out of there really annoyed at his sexist remarks. And lo and behold, I discovered the next day that Ronald Reagan had won the election, so that was a whole new ball game. I was still assistant legal advisor and this guy was—I don't know where he was at the time—and then I found out he was going to be the assistant secretary, and I thought, Oh, this is not going to work. But it did.

Q: Did the various problems in Liberia and other places rise up to hit you?

ELY-RAPHEL: Oh yes, oh yes. I had gone out to Liberia. Ed Perkins, I think, was then—I don't know if he was the ambassador or the DCM [deputy chief of mission], but we were having major problems in Liberia. We were having big problems in Nigeria. Where else? I think that was it.

Q: Did you get at all involved with the concern about Qadhafi of Libya messing around in the African countries?

ELY-RAPHEL: Not really. I don't ever recall working on it. I think Libya was in NEA at that point.

Q: Yes, but he was playing around in African affairs, subsidizing various groups.

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, well, a little bit. No, it was more Castro. We were counting baseball diamonds to figure out how many Cubans were in Angola.

Q: I'm told that this is the one real plus for intelligence, that you had baseball diamonds, and nobody else played baseball, because soccer fields you couldn't—

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, you would have been in real trouble. But that's how they determined how many Cubans were in the region, by counting the baseball diamonds. Right. But it was the Cubans, Castro. We never really got into Libya that much.

Q: Was there ever any effort, did you recall from the African Bureau, trying to talk to the Cubans?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, I don't think so. We did talk about it a lot. And we certainly met with the Angolans, but I can't remember—I have this vague recollection that somebody was going to talk to them, but, no.

Q: The sanctions—was there a continual battle to add more, to subtract some, and all that?

ELY-RAPHEL: Oh, it was an ongoing discussion, and I have to confess, I'm really not an advocate of sanctions. Because I think, when you look at South Africa, and even in Zimbabwe, I don't think sanctions really played that much of a role. I think the economy is what was driving what happened in South Africa, and the banks. I think they recognized the economic situation that they were confronted with.

Q: Well at this point, was the Soviet communist movement, other than Castro, a major factor?

ELY-RAPHEL: Not really. Not really. I mean, the structure—what they had done in Tanzania, what they had done with the economy was a disaster, but I'm not sure communism played a role in it, so much as what they chose.

Q: —was sort of on the Nyerere socialist side, wasn't he?

ELY-RAPHEL: Absolutely, and he was a total disaster. And it actually was more of a western creation than it was a Soviet creation, I think. I'm not sure you can hang it on anybody, except the—

Q: Well, the London School of Economics—

ELY-RAPHEL: And the British woman that was down there, giving them advice. I can't remember her name. I met her once. That was really bad. I mean, he's a fascinating man. I must say I really enjoyed meeting Nyrere, and I enjoyed meeting Samora Michel.

Q: He was the president of—

ELY-RAPHEL: He was the president of Mozambique. He was fantastic.

Q: Well tell me—this is an interesting relationship. Because he seemed to be really in the enemy camp—

ELY-RAPHEL: But he wasn't.

Q: But then, you were there at the time when all of a sudden we're discovering this guy was his own man.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right. And he definitely was his own man. I'll never forget, we went up to visit him at his summer place. I can't remember where it was. But he said, "I want you to look at this place very carefully. When you go down to Johannesburg and Pretoria, you tell the South Africans I'm taking good care of their property," which I thought was really funny. But he was a real hero, a real statesman. He really cared about Mozambique, and he really wanted to get out from under the disastrous war that the South Africans were supplying the—UNITA [National Union for the Total Independence of Angola] was in Angola, and this was—

Q: Well, we can add this.

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, I don't remember exactly. But it was just ridiculous what the South Africans were doing, and unfortunately for him, he was killed in a plane crash. I think he would have been the most successful—the war would have ended sooner if that had not happened, but he was killed in 1987 or something like that.

Q: What about the French territories?

ELY-RAPHEL: We really didn't get involved. The French were in the contact group, and they were helpful, but in my experience, I visited Senegal and visited the Ivory Coast, but we never really got involved in that many issues. They were much more involved.

Q: Was it sort of a feeling that, essentially, the Francophone Africa in collaboration with the French have got things fairly well in hand?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, I hesitate to hand anything over to the French, but—the son, one of the minister's sons, was very much involved in Africa, and we'd meet with him when we'd go through Paris.

Q: You mean in France? Mitterand's son.

ELY-RAPHEL: Mitterand's son. He was the one that really did the Africa policy to a great extent.

Q: Yes, he's had some problems since.

ELY-RAPHEL: Some serious problems since, right. And the other person that was interesting, that was really into Africa, was Boutros Boutros-Ghali. He was a professor at the time, teaching in Cairo, and once in a while we would go through and meet with him, to talk to him about Africa. That was before he was secretary-general.

Q: Did you get the feeling in the Africa Bureau that you were either almost independent, or that nobody in the rest of the State Department paid much attention to what was going on?

ELY-RAPHEL: I think to some extent, and I think it was really a good thing, because when you had a really good assistant secretary, you could get a lot of things done, and I think we did accomplish a great deal with Crocker negotiating with the South Africans, and Frank Wisner, who was the deputy, was the one that was handling the Angola account. And with Shultz there, you know, every now and then we would go up and explain to the secretary what we were doing and how we were doing it, and he'd say go ahead, and he'd run interference with the White House or with anybody who was causing trouble. So, yes, I think they were more independent.

Q: How did you find the hand of L [Office of the Legal Adviser]—Herb Hansel and then whoever replaced him—rested, or did you kind of feel out of sight out of mind?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, I'll tell you, I learned a lesson when I was working in L. I had initially shared a lot of what I was doing with the front office when I was working on Rhodesia, and then when we finally got a settlement in Rhodesia and were lifting the sanctions, all of a sudden there was a meeting at the White House, I think it was. And suddenly I found that the deputy legal advisor was going to this and I wasn't. So I said to myself, Hmm, there's something wrong here. I did all this work, but I'm not going to this meeting. So I decided that from then on, I would keep them briefed but not be as thorough with them—and it paid off, because I was part of the negotiating team and they didn't crowd me anymore.

Q: This is tape two, side one with Nancy Ely-Raphel. Is it Eli [pronunciation]?

ELY-RAPHEL: Elee [phonetic].

Q: I have a hard time with that.

ELY-RAPHEL: So does everybody.

Q: And when I get something like that, I always mispronounce it no matter what. I'm sure

to put the wrong accent, but anyway. You stayed really with the African Bureau. Is there anything else we should discuss with the African Bureau?

ELY-RAPHEL: I don't think so.

Q: Okay. If something else comes up, you can always add to this. Then what did you do and when?

ELY-RAPHEL: And then I left the African Bureau and got married and my husband had been confirmed as the ambassador to Pakistan. And so I left the States and went to Pakistan.

Q: How did you meet your husband?

ELY-RAPHEL: I met him in the cafeteria one Saturday morning when we were both working at the State Department. We met on the coffee line, where you buy coffee. We just chatted. He was at the time working for Secretary Vance and so I knew his name, but I didn't know who he was when we chatted in the line. And about two or three days later, he called and wanted to know if I wanted to have lunch with him. I thought he was somebody else until he walked into my office.

Q: Did you also go to the establishment of high cuisine—the cafeteria.

ELY-RAPHEL: Actually we went to that place across the street, what was it called?

Q: It was the Shepherd Hotel.

ELY-RAPHEL: It was a long time ago. (laughs)

Q: Tell me a little bit about his background.

ELY-RAPHEL: Sure. He grew up in upstate New York—in Troy, New York—and went to Hamilton College. And then he went to Syracuse and got a masters degree in public administration at Syracuse. He had taken a Foreign Service exam but didn't know whether he'd get in. He had actually been on his way to Duke Law School when they called him and told him that he'd been accepted into the Foreign Service. So he joined the Foreign Service and his first post was in Iran. But he had done a year of a masters program in Karachi when he was at Syracuse, so he had learned Urdu. And then when he went to Iran, he had learned Farsi, so he had both of those languages.

Q: So where had you been by the time you—

ELY-RAPHEL: And then he was in Pakistan again after Iran. He went to Pakistan as a political officer and was there two years, maybe three years, and came back just before the “Empty Bird”—

Q: In 1979.

ELY-RAPHEL: Seventy-nine, right. Because he was in the Operations Center at the time talking to David Welch who was in the embassy and Marc Grossman who had worked for him. He had been his deputy and was the political, no he wasn't actually the political consul, I think he was the deputy political consul and they never actually made him political consul. And then he came back and became special assistant to Secretary Vance. He was also, before that, when he was back in Washington, DC, special assistant for Joe Sisco when he was under secretary. When I met him, he was working for Mr. Vance as his special assistant.

Q: Well, now, this was before the Reagan administration?

ELY-RAPHEL: Right. This was the tail-end of the Carter administration.

Q: Before Vance had resigned.

ELY-RAPHEL: Before Vance had resigned, right. I remember going through that whole process.

Q: So when did you get married?

ELY-RAPHEL: We got married just before we went to Pakistan in May of '87, but I met him in January of '80.

Q: Well, wait a minute, because Vance left in '80.

ELY-RAPHEL: In '80.

Q: So, we have seven years to play with.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right. I met him in 1980—in January of 1980. And Vance was the secretary then and he resigned in that spring of '80, right after the—

Q: The rescue effort.

ELY-RAPHEL: And I'll never forget the evening of that rescue effort. He came home from the Operations Center and he got me out of bed and he said, "Sweetie. I've got to tell you what's going on, but I don't want to talk in the house." And we walked all over Georgetown while he described this hideous disaster and he said that the secretary was going to resign. And actually the first time that we had gone off on a trip was weeks before that. We had gone down to Ocracoke for the first weekend, because Mr. Vance had taken off and gone to Florida and there had been all of this discussion about what to do and what not to do—so I knew exactly when all that happened.

Q: But you've still got that period between 1980 and 1987.

ELY-RAPHEL: And that's when I was doing African Affairs and he was in the secretary's office, working for Mr. Vance. Then he worked for and was actually part of the hostage negotiating team with Warren Christopher after Mr. Vance resigned. Then he worked with Muskie, but Muskie had his own special assistant that he was bringing in, so he thought he'd go look for something else to do. So we took a vacation—we took a week's vacation and went to Ireland—after one of his meetings with Muskie and his new team. So we were gone for a week and when we got back Muskie asked him to stay on and said he couldn't get along without him. So he decided he would stay.

Q: I think in our oral history collection, we have the transcript of a talk, which I think I sent you—

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes!

Q: About how to operate in Washington, which for Foreign Service officers is very important, because it's a strange country. They don't really understand how to deal with the Pentagon and the White House and other places. I think it's in our collection.

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, it's marvelous. And I learned so much from Arnie, because he's a master.

Q: So, you went to Pakistan.

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes.

Q: And when was that?

ELY-RAPHEL: We went in '87, June of '87.

Q: What was the situation in Pakistan when you went out there?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, it was marvelous. When he had been in Pakistan before as a political officer, his counterpart in the military was President Zia, who turned out to be President Zia. But at that time he was General Zia. And he was the head of the army and Arnie was the pol-mil [political-military] officer, so they became good friends. So, it's really fascinating, and that's the one job he always wanted was to get back to Pakistan as ambassador (the other dream job for him was ambassador to Iran). And it was a battle royal to get him through and get him confirmed.

Q: What were the problems?

ELY-RAPHEL: Ah! The people on the Hill didn't want him. There was one fellow, I don't remember his name, hideously opposed to him. They asked all sorts of questions about PAC [political action committee] groups. It was a battle, but he got through.

Q: How did you find being an ambassador's wife?

ELY-RAPHEL: I loved it. It was wonderful. It was a great opportunity to be with your husband all the time, work together, eat all your meals together. And I worked for AID [U.S. Agency for International Development]. I had to resign from the State Department for legal reasons, and I ended up getting a job with AID.

Q: What were you doing with AID?

ELY-RAPHEL: I was in their program office. I learned a lot, in some ways that contribute to what I do now, and set up the first grants that we ever gave in AID to NGOs. And they were small grants. But AID didn't want to do it, because it's very expensive to monitor the small grants. It costs the same amount to monitor a million dollar grant as a hundred thousand dollar grant, so they were never particularly interested in doing that. But we had not provided any assistance to any NGOs at all, and I was really bound and determined to provide assistance to NGOs that were helping women, because they were very effective and I had gotten to know these women, and they were really doing a good job. And then we had problems getting the government to agree to it, and of course, all I had to do was ask the [Pakistani] president and he said, "All right." So, it got approved, and it was wonderful.

Q: Were you able to put any of your legal experience to use to try to figure out a way to cut some of the oversight for a hundred thousand dollar grant as opposed to a multi-million dollar grant?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, because I wasn't a lawyer in AID, and I wasn't working as a lawyer. No, I didn't really. It had to be done, because they needed to do these types of grants. But, no, I really didn't get into that.

Q: How did you find the status of women and children when you were there?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, in some ways—well, I don't know. I have a soft spot for all things Pakistani, so it's hard for me to be too critical. It was interesting to me that there was a women's meeting in Nairobi a number of years before I went to Pakistan and the government sent women there as representatives to the meeting, and all of the women were to do the report on the status of women in their own country. So, these women, who are very talented, wrote a report on the status of women in Pakistan. And the bloody report was classified! So, you know, we couldn't get it out into the public domain. So, I certainly made a lot of noise about that. Ultimately, we were able to use this report. And to tell you the truth, I think the president was a relatively liberated person. You could certainly have a conversation about that. He was more open to things than he's ever gotten credit for. And certainly the military was a very enlightened era in Pakistan. It had integrated schools, they had girls and boys together. It was very impressive. But the status of women was a challenge.

Q: Did you run across a couple of meetings, I think it was at this time, when Maureen

Reagan went to I think Kenya and I think maybe to Mexico too?

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes. She didn't come to Pakistan though.

Q: Were you ever on the circuit of not just women, but children's assistance—

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, I was very interested and very much involved in the women's movement in Pakistan. And there were a lot of really talented, energetic women. Two incredibly talented lawyers in Lahore who we finally got funding for, who have gone on to do really marvelous things since. Yes, very outspoken and very much involved in women's legal defense. There was another organization that was very much involved in working on the rights of children of brick kiln workers. I mean that was one of the worst things I've ever seen, and also the children making carpets, so there were a lot of things that we could do. And one of the things that made me most interested in working here is that I'm bound and determined to do something about the brick kiln workers' children.

Q: Well, what was the problem?

ELY-RAPHEL: They're indentured. They become indentured servants. Because these people who work in the brick kilns, and this is in South Asia are lent money by the owner of the factory, but they never get out of bondage, so that their children then become brick kiln workers—they never get to go to school, they never get out and live lives, and it goes on and on for generations. There are now programs in Pakistan where they provide schooling in the off-hours so that the children can work. So there are things that are being done that are making the situation better, but it's fifteen years later.

Q: When you were there, was Benazir Bhutto a figure at all?

ELY-RAPHEL: She was the leader of her party in Karachi. And she came to tea at the residence sometime after we'd gotten there, because it was in the fall. She is a real feudal landlord. She talks like she comes from Radcliffe and she acts like she's very western, but the more I talked to her and the more I heard her, the more I became convinced that she was really a feudal landlord and not really someone particularly interested in women's issues or women's rights or democratic government. And our first meeting she spent talking about the hero of her life—the man who'd been tortured and she went on and on and on—and she was talking about her father who was obviously very, very important and very influential in her life and she thought that he had been poorly treated. There was no reason to execute him at the end, but he was not the saint she was portraying.

Q: Did you find in the type of work you were doing at AID that you were running up against the religious establishment?

ELY-RAPHEL: No. And in fact, there was very little—well, on some of the holidays there were incidents in other areas, but no. And the Islamic parties were very small, and I don't think they had won many seats. And they were not active. They were not intimidating. There were madrasas being built at the time, but not that anybody noticed.

And, in fact, we were getting permission from the president to build a Christian church near the embassy, that they had been working on for a long time. So, no, I didn't sense that at all. It was very free flowing, even in Lahore, Quetta. We went all over the country. I didn't really feel that.

Q: How about up around Peshawar?

ELY-RAPHEL: Even in Peshawar.

Q: Would reflections of the Taliban or the Afghan—

ELY-RAPHEL: No.

Q: Were they a different type of cat?

ELY-RAPHEL: No. Not to me. Not that I could see. If anything, it might have been the beginning of that. But no, I really did not have any sense of that at all. And I never felt intimidated anywhere that I went, whether I was with my husband or with my friends, or my mother came to visit and we traveled around. My stepdaughter came to visit with her boyfriend and we traveled and I never felt any intimidation at all. We had the loya jirga, they would try to get all the Afghans together to come to the residence. But, no, Taliban, I never even heard that word at the time.

Q: Did the state of affairs between India and Pakistan impact on the work you were doing, not only as the ambassador's wife but also at AID?

ELY-RAPHEL: Not at AID, but that was always, whenever anything went wrong, that was always the foreign hand, what went on in India. And it was too bad, because you would talk to Indians who had gone, and you would talk to Pakistanis. I remember talking to a group of women who were going to their college reunion, and they'd all gone to school together, but this was before partition. They obviously had very close relations and they communicated with each other and they really cared about each other, and the old school ties were there, but they couldn't drive short distances across the border to see each other. So, it was very sad. I'm encouraged now that maybe things will improve between India and Pakistan. But I always thought that it had to improve before that generation was gone because then you wouldn't have those ties that people have who go to school together and grow up together and care about each other.

Q: It's sad.

ELY-RAPHEL: It is sad, and I hate to see that happen. We had very good relations with people who had lived in India and had moved to Pakistan and vice versa.

Q: Did you get over to New Delhi?

ELY-RAPHEL: Yep. We went over to India and went up to Kashmir and stayed with the

ambassador—

Q: Who was the ambassador?

ELY-RAPHEL: His name was John Gunther Dean.

Q: How did you find him?

ELY-RAPHEL: Oh, I enjoyed him actually—and his wife.

Q: I've interviewed him. You know, he has quite a reputation in all sorts of ways.

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes. And we brought my mother with us and he was delightful, as only he would have been.

Q: He was very much a gentleman of the old school.

ELY-RAPHEL: Absolutely, absolutely he was.

Q: Now, can you describe what happened with your husband?

ELY-RAPHEL: I'll tell you one thing that was always fascinating to me and it must be a result of the relationship that he had with President Zia before he got to Pakistan. The president used to actually come to the residence, and they would go into the study and shut the door and they would sit in there and talk. And I don't think that happened very often in other countries in the world. It was remarkable to me.

Q: With your contact with your husband and what you were getting from him, what was your impression of President Zia?

ELY-RAPHEL: That he was wonderful. That he was a wonderful man, that he really cared about his country, that he was a pragmatist, he knew what he could do and what he couldn't do. We used to go over and have dinner at Army House, and it was the most unassuming place. He was really down-to-earth. His wife was very nice and we'd meet his children. He was not, well you know, he had servants that served him, but it was a very ordinary—it wasn't as fancy as the residence when you went there for dinner—and I think he really planned [of course, maybe I'm just naïve], but I think he really did plan to see Pakistan, to carry on. I don't think he had any grand goal of turning it into an Islamic state in the way that, I think, people have portrayed it. And I think he was democratic, but I also think he knew how slow it would take for Pakistan to move in the direction that it should go. But I never felt like he was an intimidating kind of a person—nor the people around him.

Q: What was your impression of the advisor's cabinet people and all that?

ELY-RAPHEL: Some of them were very good and some of them weren't. I was certainly

impressed with the minister of—I can't remember his name now—but it was commerce and—

Q: Industry.

ELY-RAPHEL: Industry, yes. The foreign minister, he'd been around for a long time—Khan. And then he was replaced by—oh, I can't remember his name, but I can get it for you. I just think they were a very talented group of bureaucrats. And I was also very impressed with the military people that the president had around him.

Q: Was there lots of corruption?

ELY-RAPHEL: No. Absolutely none that I could ever detect. And I certainly don't think the president had an ounce of corrupt blood in him. I really, I wouldn't believe it.

Q: Of course, this is the major charge against both Bhuttos.

ELY-RAPHEL: And that I believe. And I certainly got that sense when we went up to visit Nawaz Sharif, who was the chief minister of the Punjab before he became prime minister. You know, he just surrounded himself with a coterie of “admirers”—but I never saw that with President Zia.

Q: Turning to the very unhappy events, how did all of that come about?

ELY-RAPHEL: We were getting ready to go home on vacation. It was the middle of August and we were going to go back to the States. So, he had been called to go up to these tank trials in Bahawalpur. So since he was going up there, I would go to Karachi, because I was negotiating a number of agreements with these women lawyers, with the Women's Lawyers Association of Karachi, and I wanted to finish that all up so that when he got back, we could leave and go to the States because we were supposed to go to the States the following week. So, we had had a house guest, a visiting ambassador, that morning, and I flew to Karachi and he flew to Bahawalpur with President Zia—he and his Brigadier General Wassom and that was always planned, or had been planned for a number of days, because I was there when they called him up. Because he was going to go up in a C-12 and I was there when the president's chief of staff called him up and wanted to know if he wanted to fly up with the president, and he said, “Of course.” I mean, why wouldn't he? And then they invited General Wassom to go along. So the two of them flew up with the president and the C-12 flew up behind them, so the C-12 was up there. And then they went to the tank trial.

Q: Tank trials meaning?

ELY-RAPHEL: They were looking at U.S. tanks that the Pakistani military was interested in buying, and that's why they wanted to go up there. And then when they got back on the plane, that's when it crashed. But I was in Karachi and I had spent the afternoon with the Women's Lawyers Association and went back to the consul general's residence and, oh

God. I was sitting there having tea with him, and the nurse came in. And I thought, Hmm? I was wondering if maybe they were friends or something, because I couldn't understand why—had met her and I talked to her, and then he came back in again. And that's when he told me what had happened, and I mean it, I couldn't believe it. Absolutely couldn't believe it.

Q: Who was the consul general?

ELY-RAPHEL: Joe. Joe Melrose was the consul general. And it was very hard for me to even believe it. And I said that I wanted to talk to someone in Washington and I talked to Mike Armacost and when I talked to Mike Armacost I realized, it sort of hit me, of what had really happened. Incredible to believe that that had happened. And then the ambassador's wife in Washington, the Pakistani ambassador's wife Arnaz, who's a very, very close friend of mine now, and at the time helped me. Arnie had a very good relationship with the ambassador here in Washington, Jamsheed Marker. And they had been very nice to me when I first arrived in Karachi, and had arranged for me to meet people. Well, she had a twin sister, and as soon as they had heard about what had happened, she called her twin sister in Karachi and asked her to find me, which was a very, very thoughtful thing, because I didn't know anybody. I mean, there I was in Karachi, just at my wit's end. And she came with her brother to the consul general's residence and it was very nice to see her. And then I flew right back to Islamabad that night.

Q: Starting to take your story now, and I'll want to come back to the plane crash. How did things work out for you? How were you treated?

ELY-RAPHEL: Oh, wonderful. I mean it was just incredible, throughout the whole thing. The State Department was wonderful, the secretary—they all arrived the next day, I think, I've lost track now. The secretary came in on the plane for President Zia's funeral of course and he asked me if I wanted to go. And I said that of course I would go with him. He never left my side—he held my hand through the whole thing. I mean, he was just wonderful. Marc Grossman, who is a very close friend, flew out on the plane as well, and flew back with me, which was wonderful. And at one point they told me that they wouldn't be able to bring the casket back on the secretary's plane, that it would be on another plane and so I said, "No, I'll go on the other plane," but I wasn't going to do that because Pat Kennedy, who was then SES [State Emergency Service], arranged the whole thing, so we all went back on the same plane. The secretary could not have been more wonderful.

Q: This is Shultz.

ELY-RAPHEL: Shultz and Mike Armacost came too. Everybody was wonderful. Just unbelievable.

Q: In your opinion, was there a definitive answer to—

ELY-RAPHEL: No. There never was—they think it was sabotage. The FBI never went to investigate. The decision was taken back in Washington by vocal units at the NSC not to let the FBI go out there. They didn't want to, I guess, second-guess the Pakistanis, which I think was a mistake. I think that we certainly should have had the FBI look at the plane. And I don't think anybody, any of our people, checked through everything there. The Pakistanis always said they thought it was the Russians. And a number of people that I've talked to—it's hard for me to know. In a way, it's easier for me to think that it was an accident, and I sort of do think that. Because they never were able—and I read through all the reports.

Q: You know, accidents do happen, but nobody will believe it when it's somebody prominent.

ELY-RAPHEL: And the whole army staff, the entire army staff except the chief of the army, was wiped out. Aslam Beg was the only one who flew back on his own plane. Everybody else—General Ahktar, the whole military—was gone. I was very suspicious of the fact that he wasn't on that plane, I have to confess. And he came to call on me when I was back in Georgetown and I expected that he probably had nothing to do with it, but I always wondered about him and I always wondered about a fellow that was the head of ISI [Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence].

Q: Was the ISI sort of a—I was just talking to Jim Dobbins today about Afghanistan somewhat later—but ISI, while you were there, were they sort of a power unto themselves?

ELY-RAPHEL: I don't think they really were so much. I had a very good relationship with the station chief and a very good relationship with General Ahktar, who was actually the head of the ISI for a very long time. He had been the head of ISI up until the time that we got there and we used to see him. I never particularly liked the fellow who replaced Ahktar. I really didn't trust that man. And he's since become very supportive of the Taliban. I always thought, when I have an initial reaction to somebody, I'm usually right. It's amazing to me. That was certainly my impression of him.

Q: Well, when did the accident happen?

ELY-RAPHEL: August 17, 1988.

Q: Eighty-eight. So what happened to you?

ELY-RAPHEL: I went back to Washington and then actually, I had to go back to Pakistan to pack up, because I couldn't do that then. I had a very good friend who went with me. And I'll tell you, the people in Pakistan were wonderful. Just marvelous. And then I went back to the State Department. I didn't go back to work for about three months. I was a mess. Truly a wreck. And I lost twenty pounds. But then I went back. Thank God I had my children and they were very supportive.

Q: And how old were they?

ELY-RAPHEL: They were all in college and only my step daughter had come to visit us. The other two were going to come the next year, and they never— And then I probably went back to work too soon, but I went back to the Legal Advisor's Office. I wasn't really ready to be doing anything, and that's when I was doing nuclear affairs. But fortunately for me, the young man had worked with me on African Affairs who was really talented—he is now the deputy legal advisor—was in that office as was another woman, and the two of them really carried the office for me and did the work, and helped me, and I really trusted them and they were very good. But I really wasn't up to doing anything. And I look back on it now, and I was probably crazy to even go back to work, but it got me out of the house.

Q: Sort of a technical question. I've kind of been dissecting grief and how one does this and all. How did you find all of these things? Did somebody try to put that in operation?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, not really. And I must say that after my experience, I really wanted the department to do more than they had, because they kept reinventing the wheel in a way, and the person who was really helpful to me was Sue Keogh whose husband had been killed in South Africa when a bomb exploded at a gas station. She was a friend anyway. And she was very helpful. There's nothing like having someone who's gone through it to be there for you. And I tried to do the same thing, I have to confess, for Bob Frasure's widow. And Bob was a very good friend of mine on top of it all.

Q: He was killed—

ELY-RAPHEL: In Bosnia. And also the same with the wife of the fellow that was on Brown's plane when it went down in—

Q: Secretary of commerce, went down in Croatia.

ELY-RAPHEL: Croatia, yes. But the department was wonderful, and the department was very supportive. But you know, it just takes a while.

Q: When all is said and done, you have to do it yourself, but what you have to hope for is that people will understand why you might do this.

ELY-RAPHEL: In the department, I mean, it's like a family. You know, the Foreign Service is like a family. And that's how they acted. So, I couldn't imagine—which is why it was very hard for me when all of this, 9/11—each person just has to deal with it, and I'm not sure there's an easy way to do it. And I'm not sure there's a mechanical way to do it.

Q: Well, we're Americans, so we try to figure out a way. (laughs)

ELY-RAPHEL: Everything. We have an answer for everything. (laughs)

Q: Don't say that. That's unpatriotic.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right.

Q: So then we're talking about moving to '89 or so.

ELY-RAPHEL: A very, very lucky thing happened to me that fall. I got a phone call, and I had decided I didn't want to do nuclear affairs any more. I was thinking maybe I would do human rights. And nuclear affairs was so wrapped up in Pakistan that I really didn't want to do it. So I had been talking to a legal advisor, and my phone rang one day and it was Dick Schifter, who was the assistant secretary for human rights. And he asked me if I would come up and talk to him about a job. And I assumed he was asking me if I was going to be the assistant legal advisor for human rights. And I went up there and he asked me if I wanted to be a deputy in the Bureau of Human Rights. And I thought, Oh, this sounds wonderful. And it was something that I really cared about. And I said that I had to think about it and, yes, I said I would. So I went back to the Legal Advisor's Office, and of course, I wouldn't have reappointment rights back in the Legal Advisor's Office after that. I was taking a political appointed job and it's sort of a Foreign Service job, so I was on my own at that point. But I just had it so great. And I have to tell you the honest truth, the office that they gave me was a window office overlooking Arlington Cemetery. And it was perfect for me. I was doing something good. And I used to go running every day during lunch time, and I used to run over there all the time.

Q: Your husband's buried there.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right. And I thought, well, this is my new life, and it was wonderful. And I really liked working with Dick Schifter, and it gave me a whole new lease on life.

Q: You did that from when to when?

ELY-RAPHEL: There was a change in the administration and John Shattuck became the assistant secretary and then he made me his principal deputy, so I stayed on. And I did that until '95, the summer of '95, when I had been thinking that I might be interested in going overseas or doing something else, because I had been doing human rights for five years at that point, and I wanted to do something else. So Dick Holbrooke was an old friend and I told him that maybe I'd be interested in a post or something in Europe. And then he said, "Ah, if you want a post, you have to come work for me first." So that November, when he went to—

Q: We're going to stop. You've done a brief summary of where you were going up to Bosnia, but we haven't talked about it, but let's talk about your time with human rights and what you were doing and the situation. You were there under both—

ELY-RAPHEL: Both Reagan and I know, Bush, and Clinton.

Q: We haven't talked about anything you really did except that Dick Schifter had asked you to come. Today is the twenty-first of July 2004. Nancy, when were you with human rights, what were the dates?

ELY-RAPHEL: It was the beginning of the Bush administration.

Q: So that would be '89.

ELY-RAPHEL: I started there in '90. No, wait a minute. Yes, '89, '90, and I started working for Dick Schifter as a deputy, in I think it was the spring of '90.

Q: Basically how did Dick Schifter operate?

ELY-RAPHEL: I think one of the fascinating things about Dick Schifter is he could see what was coming in the Soviet Union before a lot of other people did. I think he was very prescient. He had a very close relationship with a Soviet who was, I think he was doing human rights and I can't remember his name now, but he would visit the Schifters when he came to Washington. And I think Dick Schifter saw the change coming in the Soviet Union before anybody else did. And one of the programs that I was very much involved in was to put together a delegation to the Soviet Union on legal assistance, legal cooperation. The head of the delegation was the deputy attorney general and it was Dick Schifter who really put the whole thing together. It was the first time we had led a legal delegation to the Soviet Union to talk about legal assistance and human rights.

Q: When you arrived there in '89-'90, what were your responsibilities?

ELY-RAPHEL: My responsibilities were with the program area—the geographic bureaus—and the Human Rights Reports, as well as we also had some dealings with the Immigration and Naturalization Services at that time. I think that that position is no longer there, but we were just beginning, we were expanding the Human Rights Report.

Q: When you say expanding, what does this mean?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, one of the first things I did when I got to the Human Rights Bureau was to put women's issues into the Human Rights Report. They hadn't been covered in the Human Rights Report up to that point. Well, they had been peripherally, but not really. There wasn't all that much information, and we also included trafficking of persons and child issues as well.

Q: Well, listen, you got there at the time that the Soviet Union was collapsing and Eastern Europe, but all of a sudden there seemed to be a tremendous influx of young women who were lured into essentially the white slave traffic going into Western Europe and the Middle East.

ELY-RAPHEL: That was later. We reported some of it. Because I was working there when the wall was still up and it was the collapse of the Berlin Wall really, I think, and

the collapse of the social systems and the economic systems.

Q: Well the wall collapsed in November of '89. November, December, within there.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right, and this delegation that I put together for the Human Rights Bureau was the summer or the spring before that. So when we went there, it was still the Soviet Union.

Q: What were we looking at, I mean, what was the purpose of this?

ELY-RAPHEL: It was a group of judges and law professors to meet with Soviet judges and perhaps to provide some sort of judges' training. They had set up a training school for judges outside of Moscow. We went to Moscow and then on to Leningrad, but that was still very much the Soviet Union.

Q: Well, I'm wondering, the European system which is the Napoleonic Code is much more judge driven as opposed to the American system in which the judge acts as sort of an arbitrator or the referee. I wouldn't think there would be much of a match. The Soviet system, from what I understand, would look very much like the European system.

ELY-RAPHEL: It was very much like the European system and the chief prosecutor was partly a judge and partly a prosecutor. Some of it was just to get the judges to talk to each other and to get an understanding of the two systems and the whole idea of legal assistance for people who couldn't afford to have an attorney. Also, one of the issues that we were trying to get across, which didn't ring true in the Soviet Union, was the whole idea of judicial ethics and conflicts of interest. There didn't seem to be a sense there of what a conflict of interest was, that you couldn't sit in judgment on a case in which you had financial interests. And that was an area that we were very interested in exploring and discussing with them.

Q: Well, you were working on judicial matters—

ELY-RAPHEL: Legal assistance.

Q: Legal assistance, for about how long?

ELY-RAPHEL: We did that for about a year. And set up some programs that I think were expanded substantially after I left the Human Rights Bureau, because after the collapse of the Berlin Wall a lot of these were expanded into legal assistance projects for Eastern Europe and for what then became the former Soviet Union.

Q: Human Rights Report. Did you have problems, basically it was our embassies that put these together initially, to include women's issues in there?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, you had to really spell out for them what they had to do and what they had to include in the Human Rights Report. But we had it down to a pretty good

system, and we had retired Foreign Service officers—retired ambassadors—from the various regions who oversaw the editorial side of it, but also the substance. And that was very, very useful, because they were people who were very knowledgeable in the region. They came out of the regional bureaus. And they followed and worked on the Human Rights Reports every year for four, five—some of them worked there even longer. So you had some really very highly talented Foreign Service officers who were helping us in the WAE [retired Foreign Service annuitants], putting the Human Rights Reports out. And it was also very useful for the young officers who I had working in the office who handled the geographic bureaus, because they got an opportunity to work with these very experienced Foreign Service officers who could help them in putting together their report. So I thought it was a very good combination, sort of a mentoring process.

Q: How did you find the human rights relationship with the geographic bureaus? I've interviewed people at the time when Patt Derian was doing this and this was—not an easy relationship.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right, and I think it was. And I think in a lot of ways, you know I was there— Dick Schifter, was a good follow on to Patt. I mean, I think that Patt Derian needed to do what she did to get people and Jimmy Carter and Warren Christopher to even focus on human rights. And Eliot Abrams was the assistant secretary for human rights, I think, for a very short time and then he went to IO [Bureau of International Organization Affairs] and Dick Schifter, I think was—in many ways, I think very useful to have someone who was a neocon and more conservative than Patt Derian, but who had a lot of credibility. And he was very tough and I think it was a nice contrast to Patt Derian, and I think that Larry Eagleburger and people on the seventh floor paid attention to that.

Q: Well, what about—it seems like a perennial problem and maybe it's no longer a problem but the Human Rights Report on Israel, you know, you've got the Israelis beating up on the Palestinians and you've got the American-Israeli Political Action Committee [APAC] trouncing you if you try to say anything bad about Israel, and Congress of course essentially doesn't want to hear any of it.

ELY-RAPHEL: That was a very difficult issue to deal with, very trying. And I have to say that I never dealt with the Israeli Human Rights Report. Dick Schifter did that personally and did that himself which did not please me.

Q: Did you observe—

ELY-RAPHEL: There were a lot of issues that we raised questions. One of the more difficult issues was whether or not the Israelis were engaging in torture in their prison facilities, and to me it was pretty clear in reading the reports and the cables that that's what was going on. But that was one Human Rights Report that I didn't really play much of a role in, although I watched it and I think we should have been much harder on the Israelis.

Q: How about Turkey, was that a problem?

ELY-RAPHEL: Turkey was more of a problem later on. Turkey was one of the countries that I did deal with. I went to Turkey on a trip, this was when I was working for—I don't know if it was Dick Shifter or then John Shattuck—but I went to Turkey and one of the things that I wanted to do was to give a lecture at the police academy on human rights, and they set it up—they agreed to let me do that. So I went there, and it was a really, really interesting experience, as a former prosecutor who had prosecuted organized crime cases. I started off by telling them that I had been a prosecutor and I had worked in the Department of Justice and I had tried leaders of the mafia and I knew what it took to put a good case together, and I knew that you didn't have to torture people to put good cases together. It was a tough, hard-hitting speech and I think that maybe I insulted them, but by the time I got done, I think it was a very, very successful gathering. We went way over time. I spent a lot of time at the police academy answering questions, and I think you really need to talk to people one-on-one—prosecutor to prosecutor—and explain to them your position and listen to their position. And I think that by the time I left there, I had made a number of friends in the audience, and I think it was very, very useful. I then went and met with a number of people in the government: the attorney general's office and the Ministry of Justice. And when I look back on it, I think that Turkey has really made remarkable progress in the area of human rights, and at the time I would not have predicted it. But you really need to talk to them openly and not hide it under the bushel.

Q: How about Egypt?

ELY-RAPHEL: Egypt. I did not get involved in Egypt. I'm just trying to remember. They had a very difficult human rights record, and Saudi Arabia as well. I don't recall, to tell the truth, getting involved in the Egyptian Human Rights Report. It certainly didn't raise as many hackles as the Israeli one.

Q: Were there any other countries that were problems?

ELY-RAPHEL: Oh, there were always problems. And Turkey was a problem. The time the ambassador said he wasn't going to sign the report, he wasn't going to acknowledge what we were writing about. I said, "It doesn't really matter whether you acknowledge it or not. If you don't clear it, you don't clear it, but it's going out the way it is." And we had that experience in a number of countries, where the ambassador suffered from clientitis and didn't want the information out there, but it got there. And I think we put out very good reports on places like Saudi Arabia. The government didn't pay any attention to them, but at least we were candid.

Q: Did you find as you were doing these reports, things were coming in about conditions in American jails and different states having different methods and all, that what would crop up would sort of embarrass us?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, you would get these questions raised, but we didn't do a Human

Rights Report on the United States, because that wasn't part of the legislation.

Q: I know that—

ELY-RAPHEL: But yes, of course. And I remember going off to an OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] meeting right after the Rodney King case, in fact I learned about the Rodney King case at the airport.

Q: This was in Los Angeles. The police beat up a man on TV.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right. And I watched it on television as I was waiting at the airport as I was waiting for the plane to go to the OSCE meeting, and I used that as an example of why our criminal justice system works and what you need in the criminal justice system. And that is something you really need, when people have video pictures of events like that and you get them into court and you deal with the problem. After the Rodney King case, the state of California put together a commission to see what they could do to improve what was a horrendous problem in the Los Angeles Police Department. And the person who was the head of that commission was Warren Christopher who was, of course, secretary of state. I think it was a good demonstration that when terrible things like that happen, you can use that as an example at an OSCE meeting of what one should do to make criminal justice effective and work.

Q: Well, you did this until when?

ELY-RAPHEL: I did this until—I was interested in going overseas and I was talking to the European Bureau about an embassy, and instead of going out as an ambassador somewhere, Dick Holbrooke asked me if I would come and work in the European Bureau first. And so I left John Shattuck's office and moved into Dick Holbrooke's office while he went off to Dayton to negotiate the Dayton Accords—to have a meeting on the Dayton Accords. So I was the person in Washington that would coordinate and try to determine if all of the things they were agreeing to at Dayton were things that we could implement. So I was in contact with them.

Q: Well, this must have caused quite a back up. I mean, things were happening quickly there.

ELY-RAPHEL: It was exciting.

Q: It was exciting. But what sort of a team did we have in Washington?

ELY-RAPHEL: At that time? Well, we pulled people out of all the different offices. We had a team from the Legal Advisor's Office, we had a team from AID, we had a team from PRM [Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration], from all the different bureaus—all the functional bureaus—and EB [Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs] to figure out what could go into the Dayton Accords, what we could agree to, what we could implement, how we could do it.

Q: Were there questions of dealing with Milosevic at that time?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well Holbrooke was still meeting with Milosevic.

Q: Yes, I know.

ELY-RAPHEL: I mean, I learned many years ago that when you're conducting a negotiation, there has to be something in it for everyone and there has to be agreement among all the parties, and Milosevic was one of the parties, so you had to take into consideration what he wanted and you had to deal with Tudjman and what he wanted and the same with Izetbegovic, so Holbrooke does them all together in Dayton and put them all in separate rooms, and finally got them to reach an agreement.

Q: While this was going on, was there give and take from your office saying, Watch this. Maybe you'd better do this.

ELY-RAPHEL: Papers were coming back and forth between Dayton and Washington, and we had a group of lawyers who were going over all the various parts of the Dayton Agreement to determine whether or not—I don't have the documents in front of me anymore, but it was an actual constitution.

Q: Well, one of the things that has always struck me, and people always question this: why did you allow it or why was Republika Srpska allowed to be officially created? There wasn't a Republika Hrvatska, a Croatian Republic.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right. Well, I mean, that was the price of the agreement to get the Serbs on board. And the Croatians and the Bosnians agreed, finally agreed to—I can't remember what it was called anymore—the Bosnian-Croat Republic and the Republika Srpska and that's what they finally agreed to. And you needed all three parties. And they had an enormous structure of rotating the presidency where the president of the Republic of Srpska, I think it was three: the Bosnian, the Croat, and the Serb would rotate for the federation—it was the federation—as well as for Bosnia itself. I can't recall all of the terms that we used.

Q: Were you getting steeped in the ins and outs of Yugoslavia?

ELY-RAPHEL: Oh, absolutely, but I had been, we had been monitoring the human rights violations in Bosnia. I remember sitting in my office and having people—when we were doing the Human Rights Report and we were tracking what was going on in Bosnia, what the Serbs were doing to them, and the reports we were getting out of prison camps were just horrendous, so we knew what was going on in Srebrenica. I mean, it was just hideous. And we were writing all this up and providing this information and that was before I went to work in the European Bureau, so I knew a tremendous amount of what was going on and the horrible torture and ethnic cleansing that was going on in Bosnia before the war.

Q: Were your officers or you affected by what we were doing at the time? We had several officers who resigned over this.

ELY-RAPHEL: Not in the Human Rights Bureau. We were all very concerned, as was the assistant secretary. I remember Madeleine Albright saying, "What do you have the military for if you're not going to use it?" And we were working with her. She was at the UN at the time. We were working with her to try to get a more aggressive policy in dealing with Bosnia. I couldn't understand it from the Human Rights Bureau. I couldn't understand why our military wasn't in there and doing something about it. But we didn't. We really sat on our heels and didn't do anything early on, and it was perfectly clear. I remember going to the human rights meeting in Geneva and sitting at the table and having Izetbegovic and a number of others—his foreign minister—all came in. And here we are sitting in Geneva, Switzerland, at a meeting of the Human Rights Commission, and these people are being ethnically cleansed, and nobody is doing anything but talking about it.

Q: Did you get any feel of the European reaction on these things? Because, you know, initially when Yugoslavia started to fall apart, the Europeans said, "This is a European issue. We'll take care of it."

ELY-RAPHEL: But they didn't. And they couldn't. I don't think they were up to it. In my dealings with them, even after we went in there, if we hadn't done what we'd done, and I do think if Dick Holbrooke hadn't been in charge of the operation, it never would have been resolved. He really needed a forceful hand, and the Europeans weren't up to the job, and our military were the only ones that could do it. You needed NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] to go in there and do it.

Q: On human rights, while you were working in Holbrooke's office, was our military saying, Oh, we can't go in there, or not? Was this a problem?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, there was a problem early on in the suburbs of Bosnia with fires in apartment buildings, and our military didn't go right in. I think they were fires from bombs, and we didn't immediately act in the civic sense, and deal with this security situation of these civilians in these apartment houses. And that was a very difficult lesson that we learned. Thereafter, I think the military was much more effective. They were doing a military job and they were also doing a civic job, building schools and putting out fires and what have you, which was a lesson we learned in Bosnia. And I could never understand why the museums were sacked in Baghdad. All the lessons we learned in Bosnia, and we put them to good use in Kosovo, I think we did not make the same mistakes. Why no one listened, because we had had all that experience. The civilian side of the military, the reserve side of the military, really did a wonderful job in Bosnia, and really made a difference. I have great respect for those people. The people who were working as police chiefs in Chicago.

Q: These were essentially civil affairs units.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right, civil affairs guys. They were wonderful. They knew what needed to be done, and they did it. They were very effective in Bosnia, and would have been equally effective in the situation in Iraq. But nobody paid any attention to them, I guess. But it was insane, because I saw the same things happen in Iraq that we had taken care of in Bosnia and had learned the lesson. It was really sad. Let me be perfectly clear on Iraq. I was totally opposed to that aggressive action and violation of international law. Colin Powell should have resigned rather than make that statement at the Security Council. And everything that followed was a disaster for the United States and Iraq.

Q: After the Dayton Accords, what did you do?

ELY-RAPHEL: I stayed and worked as the coordinator for Bosnia, and actually got involved a little bit in Kosovo as well, but it was really the aftermath of the Dayton Accords—making sure that the agreements that were reached on refugee problems were addressed. And that following summer was when I went into language training to go to Slovenia. So I did that for about six months after, and then I went into language training for Slovenia.

Q: When you're dealing with Bosnian and somewhat Kosovar coordination, they had twenty different nationalities of troops there, but the predominant one I guess was the American and a fairly sizable British contingent. How did you find all these disparate outfits working? I mean, you saw Moroccan troops there, Ukrainian troops—

ELY-RAPHEL: That was before NATO went in. And they had real problems early on. But that was when the UN was in Bosnia, you had real problems putting together the forces. You had Pakistani soldiers who didn't have boots and heavy coats and so forth for the winter. The troops that we dealt with were NATO troops, and very effective. There were Eastern Europeans, and still some UN forces, but on the whole, I thought, very effective—the British and the Americans.

Q: Did you get involved with the elections? OSCE was running them.

ELY-RAPHEL: I didn't. I handled the elections that were held in Vukovar when they had the first elections. There were two separate agreements, one that dealt with Croatia and one that dealt with Bosnia. So when they had their first elections in Vukovar, I headed the delegation that went there for the OSCE. Once we'd butted heads with the Croats, and really had to lean on them to be more reasonable in their approach, but they finally—

Q: You went to Vukovar?

ELY-RAPHEL: I went to Vukovar, right.

Q: What were the Croats after?

ELY-RAPHEL: I don't want to say they were trying to rig the elections, but they were

trying to make sure that the Serbs didn't get— There were various parties, there were Serb parties and Croat parties, and they weren't being very fair to the Serbs. We really had to twist their arms to get them to be more reasonable in the coverage that they were permitting the Serbs—to compete fairly in the election, but they got it.

Q: I had to smile and say, "Welcome to the Balkans." I spent five years in Belgrade, way back, but still. The divisions between those—talking about stubborn, narrow-minded people—

ELY-RAPHEL: Very, very difficult. Very difficult. It's amazing to me that they're working together right now. It really is a success story when you think of what's happened in Serbia and you look at it today and you compare it to what it was like when Milosevic was in power.

Q: What were you getting from the Serb side in the Vukovar business?

ELY-RAPHEL: They were the underdog in that election, so we had to work very hard at making sure that they had some representation, that they had some ability to compete in the election with the Croats. And they did. I mean, they did well.

Q: Vukovar was pretty well leveled by that time?

ELY-RAPHEL: Oh, terrible. One of the worst trips I ever took—I took two trips. One was for the Vukovar elections and to go to the cathedral and to see these trees growing out of the—it was just awful. But the first trip I took into Bosnia after the war had stopped, we drove from Zagreb all the way across, and it was shocking to see that houses—the Croat houses—were still standing, and the Bosnian houses, some of them were right next door, were burned to the ground. It was just unbelievable. It was so obvious.

Q: I saw some of that. I was an election observer twice.

ELY-RAPHEL: In Bosnia?

Q: In Bosnia. And you know, you'd see these things.

ELY-RAPHEL: Oh, it was just so stark. And when I drove up through there, there was snow on the ground, so you looked at these houses, and there were clothes hanging on the line out in front of them, and snow on the roof, and then you realized that they were empty, and the roof was gone, somebody had bombed the roof. They left so quickly that they left the clothes on the line. It was just such a terrible, terrible sight.

Q: When you left to get ready for your Slovenian assignment, how did you see things working out in Bosnia and Croatia and Serbia?

ELY-RAPHEL: I think a lot of it in particular in Croatia, when Tudjman died, there was

so much concern at what was going to happen, and whether the HDZ [Croatian Democratic Union] would be the party that would take over and what have you. I had great admiration for the president, or was it the prime minister? I think it was the prime minister of Croatia, who had been in the prior Yugoslav government, and had resigned over what was going on in Croatia. I can't remember his name right now. But he became the prime minister, and I think he made a difference. I think so much of it is leadership. I know there was a lot of concern after Tadjman, and after the Dayton Accords, that the next chance Croatia would have an opportunity they'd elect somebody like Tadjman and go backwards. And they haven't. I also worried about Serbia, but even having Djindjic assassinated, Serbia seems to be on the right track now.

Q: Mladic and Karadzic, while you were dealing with that, how did we feel about them?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, we wanted to get them, and we wanted to get them to The Hague and try them. NATO tried to pick them up, and the Bosnians were going to try to pick them up. Everybody's always been trying to pick those two guys up. It's hard for me to believe that you couldn't get them if you really wanted to.

Q: Part of the thing was—accusations thrown out—that they were in the French sector.

ELY-RAPHEL: Oh, you mean back in the early days. I think everybody tried to get them at various times. You can only do so many things at once in that part of the world, and I was never that excited about picking those two guys up. I always thought that if things were working the way they were working, leave it alone for a while. I was amazed when they got Milosevic to The Hague, and I was amazed when they got general—there was another Croatian general that I never believed would have gotten there. And Mrs. Plavzic, she ended up there. So, they've done a fairly good job on the war criminal side. I think at some point they'll get Mladic and Karadzic. But I think they've done more than one could ever have expected, and I think you need to give people time to make the best of the situation that they're given. So I wouldn't push it too much. I know a lot of people are always pushing for Mladic and Karadzic, but I wouldn't.

Q: Sometimes withering on the vine— How did your appointment to Slovenia come up?

ELY-RAPHEL: I got a phone call, and asked if I wanted to be ambassador to Slovenia, and I said, "If the Senate deems fit to send me there, I'd be happy to go there." It was a marvelous experience.

Q: You took Slovenian?

ELY-RAPHEL: I studied Slovene. I was there two months, and got a phone call from Under Secretary Pickering's office, asking me to come up and see the powers that be. I ended up pulling out of Slovene language training and heading this reorganization program for the State Department. Pickering chaired this committee to reorganize the State Department.

Q: This was to bring USIA [United States Information Agency] into—

ELY-RAPHEL: Right, and there was legislation saying that that's what we were going to do. So I took off two months from my language training and worked for Tom Pickering and had a staff—Bill Burns was the executive secretary—and worked on the reorganization of the State Department, integrating USIA into the State Department. That was fascinating.

Q: I was wondering, how did you feel about this policy?

ELY-RAPHEL: I thought that what we came out with as a proposal made great sense. Of course then the new administration didn't do it all.

Q: When you say new administration you mean the Bush administration?

ELY-RAPHEL: Right. I thought it was a very good thing to put the European Bureau back together. I never thought it made a lot of sense. I never thought it made any sense at all to have a South Asian Bureau. I still don't, because South Asia got absolutely no attention, none whatsoever, from the time the Soviets pulled out of Afghanistan until just recently. And I think that would never have happened if you hadn't taken that South Asia Bureau out of the Near Eastern Bureau and had somebody with some clout who spoke up for that part of the world. And you know that the bureau that deals with Israel is always going to get—people are going to listen to them. So, you know, if they're dealing with Israel, they could talk about Pakistan and India at the same time. So I think that contributes to part of the mess that we're in today. But they didn't do that. That was one of the recommendations that we made, was to put those two back together, and to only have two PM [Political-Military Affairs] bureaus, and now I think there are four or five. The whole thing is huge.

Q: Chopping up the bureaus, and moving them around—the thing that concerned me, and I've been out of the State Department for a long time, but I've always found that the USIA representatives abroad were very strong, for the most part, because they'd had time to develop their trade and all. I was worried that they might become flacks, in other words people who were just repeating the party line or something like that, and not developing this great both managerial and political sense that they had by getting out and dealing with the people and the media and the academics and all that.

ELY-RAPHEL: I thought they were wonderful. I thought the USIS [United States Information Service] was a wonderful operation, but it really worked overseas. It worked so much better overseas. And AID works better overseas. They're the people who are out in the field and they really get to know the people on the ground, even more so than some of the political officers.

Q: Very much so.

ELY-RAPHEL: And I didn't think they should ever have closed down those libraries.

That's what we needed in Bosnia. That's what we needed in the Balkans. Places for people to go to.

Q: I've found in my oral histories, interviewing USIA people on their time abroad is great, but when they get back to Washington, they're sort of personnel people. Their jobs are quite humdrum.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right, right. I've always said you should just shut down USIS in Washington, and shut down AID in Washington. Just let them work overseas. I could never figure out what people were doing. It was paperwork!

Q: Did you have any problem getting confirmed for Slovenia?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, I didn't. It was very nice. My hearings went really well. I was really quite surprised. I think it was Senator Biden who said, "I'm really grateful that you're willing to go overseas again." They were very nice, Biden and Sarbanes.

Q: You were in Slovenia from when to when?

ELY-RAPHEL: I went to Slovenia in September, I was sworn in in August of '98, and came back in September 2001, right after 9/11.

Q: This is tape three, side one with Nancy Ely-Raphel. What was Slovenia like when you went out there?

ELY-RAPHEL: Slovenia was a little piece of heaven. It's a miniature United States in a way. It has a beautiful coastline. It has marvelous mountains and a city that's not too different from Boston and a very efficient government and the highest gross national product [GNP] in that part of the world. So I think it's a very successful place. And I had never been there, because they had never had the kind of problems that I dealt with. And I was so surprised when I got off the plane, because I really wasn't expecting it to be as nice as it turned out to be.

Q: Did they have any issues?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, they were hoping to join NATO and they're going into the EU [European Union], so those were two things that I spent a lot of time with.

Q: Well, what sort of government did they have?

ELY-RAPHEL: They have a parliamentary government. They have a directly elected president who is more of a figurehead, although the president that they had when I was there had been part of the government of Yugoslavia. So, he was a real statesman, a real leader. And I think one of the reasons Slovenia did so well and didn't have the same kinds of problems that Serbia and Croatia had is because they had a leader like Kucan, and they had a much freer press and a much better government than any of the other parts

of the former Yugoslavia. They had a peace movement and a human rights movement long before the rest of Yugoslavia.

Q: How were relations with Croatia?

ELY-RAPHEL: At that time, I think Tudjman was still alive. When the new government came in, the head of Croatia had been in the government in Yugoslavia with President Kucan who had resigned because of what was going on in Croatia. And he was a real human rights type of person. So when he came back into the government, things really turned around. So they had relatively good relations. They had concerns about the coastline and I think it's still in negotiation as to who owns the coast along the Adriatic.

Q: How about with Italy?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, the Italians were never very gracious to the Slovenes. I must say when I went to visit some friends in Italy and I asked them if they had ever been to Slovenia and they said, "Oh no, they'd never been to Slovenia. Why would they go there?" And I said, "Well, have you ever been to Vienna?" And they said, "No, they hadn't been to Vienna either." But they had problems along the border over language, but they resolved those problems.

Q: Well it used to be quite an issue about whether they would teach Slovenia in the schools in Italy.

ELY-RAPHEL: Exactly. But they've pretty much resolved it now. In Slovenia, all children after the third grade study English, so I don't mind studying Slovene. It was useful to go into the villages, but everybody speaks English.

Q: What about the Slovenian coast; is it pretty well defined? There are so many islands and all that.

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, the islands are primarily Croatia. And the coast is not defined and that is the issue that the Croats and the Slovenes have been spending a tremendous amount of time to negotiate. Former Defense Secretary Perry was being very helpful in helping them negotiate that. He was just sort of the third party.

Q: Were there a Peace Corps or anything like that?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, Peace Corps, they provided assistance to Bosnia and to Kosovo. So the Slovenes, they would provide a Peace Corps. And in fact they trained judges from Kosovo and from Bosnia and provided a lot of help to the former Yugoslavia. Very outstanding legal profession and judges and constitutional courts; they're very impressive.

Q: What was their economy?

ELY-RAPHEL: They were the traders. They really did provide the engine for trade in the former Yugoslavia. They also have pharmaceutical companies, but primarily it was trade. And 80 percent of their trade was with Yugoslavia, and when the war broke out, within a year 80 percent of their trade was with the European Union. They were just very efficient and very talented.

Q: Was Trieste at all an issue?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, but if you look at a map it should be part of Slovenia.

Q: In the late '40s, that was a major bone of contention.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right. That was an issue, but it isn't any more. And if you ever want a good advertisement for the Fulbright program, everyone except one member of the cabinet was a Fulbright scholar in Slovenia.

Q: Good heavens.

ELY-RAPHEL: Isn't that amazing?

Q: Was there not just Fulbright, but did you have a lot of students going to the United States?

ELY-RAPHEL: You did. And interestingly, you had American students who had studied in Yugoslavia like Laura Tyson who studied economics and came through Slovenia and was very close to the then dean of the economic faculty and the minister of economics. They were all classmates together. So it was really very interesting to see. Slovenia was so far and away ahead of the rest of the former Yugoslavia.

Q: How about relations with Austria?

ELY-RAPHEL: They were all right. Heider is from Slovene, Jorg Heider, is from that border, and he's a nationalist of the worst kind. In some ways they have very good relations with the Austrians, but the Austrians always are a bit superior. To me the Slovenes are more Calvinist in their outlook and they're mountain people, they're more like the Scots actually than the Austrians. People think of them as being "little Austria," but I think that's not fair to them at all.

Q: What about the native and the EU issues, were we pushing, were you pushing?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, sure, we were encouraging them to join the European Union and they are and they are now members. We had some issues making sure that we were not getting short shrift vis-à-vis the EU and we ended up, so that Americans can buy property in Slovenia, as can all members of the European Union, things like that. But the Slovenes were very friendly and very supportive of the United States as well.

Q: Well I would think that given these relationships and interests, that your lawyer skills were put to pretty good use, weren't they? Because we're talking about firming up relationships and making sure that we get a fair slice of the pie.

ELY-RAPHEL: Right, exactly. And they were, they were very fair. But you know, when you're the United States of America, you're the big, huge twenty ton gorilla in the room all the time. But we had President Clinton come to visit.

Q: How did that work out?

ELY-RAPHEL: Oh, that was wonderful. That was a marvelous event. It poured rain. I mean, it was the most incredible rainstorm you've ever seen in your life. And President Clinton gave a speech out in the square in the pouring rain and people were just packed into this square in the pouring rain. It was amazing. And the road in from the airport was lined with people, all the way in, cheering him. It was sort of my vision of John Kennedy going to Berlin. It was Clinton coming to Slovenia. It was just so wonderful. After that war, it just meant so much to the people.

Q: How about were there Slovenia Americans who played a role at all while you were there?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, yes, actually. Toward the end of my tenure there, they had another election. They had a Slovene American who ran for the parliament who ended up as the prime minister and who had never lived there. He lived in Argentina and worked for the Latin American Development Bank and lived in Washington. But it was short, it was about four months that he was prime minister and then he was out and somebody else was back in again. But it was kind of interesting. That was really the Slovene American—there's a large Slovene American community—

Q: Around Cleveland—

ELY-RAPHEL: Around Cleveland, right. And Senator Voinovich came out to visit and we had a number of congressional delegations, but he was a real favorite.

Q: Going way back, but in my time, it was Senator Loushe. Slovenes were a small area. He had quite a bit of clout.

ELY-RAPHEL: Indeed. And we also had Bush come to visit. He met with Putin. The Clinton visit was such a success that I kidded the secretary and asked him did he pick it because the security was so good, because the Secret Service people said that we learned some lessons from the Slovenes, they were so good at this, and he said, "No, they were meeting there, because that's where the Russians had agreed to meet."

Q: How did that go?

ELY-RAPHEL: It went very well. It was the first trip that Bush took overseas. So for

Clinton we had 750 people come out, with the president and his advance team. But with Bush it was a much smaller team. In fact, we only had one person come in before the visit.

Q: That was a delight.

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes, that was wonderful.

Q: Did you have any other issues?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, not really. It was just a very pleasant three-year stint for an ambassador.

Q: Well, what did you do after that?

ELY-RAPHEL: I came back and talked to the deputy secretary who asked me whether I wanted to work on Sudan or whether I wanted to run the Trafficking Office—trafficking of persons—which seemed to make more sense to me since, although I had a background in Africa, that whole question of human rights and trafficking intrigued me, so that’s what I did.

Q: How long did you do that?

ELY-RAPHEL: I did that for a year and a month, a year and three months. And that was a challenge.

Q: How was it a challenge?

ELY-RAPHEL: It was a challenge because it was a very, very political job in a bizarre way, and I had no idea when I took the job that it would be that political—

Q: It doesn’t sound like it would be—

ELY-RAPHEL: And I had hired a very good staff of people, a number of them who had worked for me before in the Human Rights Bureau. And I think I put together a really good office.

Q: When you say “political,” what do you mean?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, there was a hidden agenda in the whole trafficking issue that I hadn’t realized was so important to the administration—

Q: This would be the Bush administration—

ELY-RAPHEL: The Bush administration, right. And one of the driving forces behind it, which is very difficult for a lawyer, the view is that if you didn’t have prostitution

anywhere in the world, you wouldn't have trafficking.

Q: Yes, abstinence is the policy.

ELY-RAPHEL: And I was supposed to really go after the Dutch because they had legalized prostitution, although we have legalized prostitution in some counties in Nevada, so we really, legally, it's difficult to argue. And the Germans had legalized prostitution and I was supposed to go to the Germans and say, "You can't do it." We had grades for countries in our report and the thought was that the Germans should not be accorded a position that they deserved, because they had legalized prostitution. It was very difficult.

Q: Was there a demonstrable flow towards the Netherlands or towards Germany?

ELY-RAPHEL: No, and actually, they were doing a good job, both the Dutch government and the German government were doing a very good job in dealing with trafficking and prosecuting cases and what have you—probably better than we were at the time. I couldn't see where that got us, I certainly wasn't for prostitution, but it was very difficult.

Q: It was almost evangelical—

ELY-RAPHEL: Very much so.

Q: That's interesting. How did that play on you?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, they didn't think that I should have the job. I was described in the *National Review* as a "hold-over Clinton appointee." They really wanted somebody with their political credentials, I guess.

Q: This must have been quite uncomfortable.

ELY-RAPHEL: Very! It was the most unpleasant situation I could possibly—well, you know, I was certainly devoted to the cause, and I had a wonderful staff, and you know, I thought I was doing a good job, and the secretary and the deputy secretary and everybody else were very complimentary, but it was very hard to deal with.

Q: Were you up against people back-biting, sabotaging, that sort of thing?

ELY-RAPHEL: Yes. I had a political appointee as my deputy, who was imposed upon me, who didn't think I should be in the job. She thought she should be in the job, so it was very difficult. For example, when I would go to testify—and I testified I think four or five times in one year—she would email questions that could embarrass me to people in the House. But they didn't use them, which was nice.

Q: What was her background?

ELY-RAPHEL: She was a political appointee who, I don't know what qualified her for the position, quite frankly. She had been running an NGO or a "think tank," which had two people in the "think tank"—she and another person.

Q: Well, after this very uncomfortable episode, what happened?

ELY-RAPHEL: Well, I stayed there and then I became the counselor in international law in the Office of the Legal Advisor, which was a really wonderful position, and I was really happy to be back in the Legal Advisor's Office. I didn't want to go overseas, I didn't want another post, because I really didn't want to leave my children and my family. And while I was doing that and enjoying that, Save the Children offered me the position that I'm now in.

Q: What is Save the Children that you're working for now?

ELY-RAPHEL: Save the Children is a non-profit organization that works in over forty countries around the world. And the program that I'm responsible for is development programs—long-term development programs that we do in HIV/AIDS, education, health, and economic opportunities.

Q: Where are your major problems?

ELY-RAPHEL: Our major problems are everywhere, but our major programs—we have big programs in Pakistan and Bangladesh, in Burma [we work in Myanmar], Egypt, everywhere.

Q: Well, AIDS I imagine is a big problem—

ELY-RAPHEL: AIDS is an enormous problem, particularly in Africa. We're focused on orphans and vulnerable children and women, and mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS is just terrible.

Q: Oh, boy. Well, I think Nancy, that this is probably a good place to stop.

End of interview