The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project
Ralph J. Bunch Legacy: Minority Officers

HERWALD MORTON

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Decision to Retire

INTERVIEW

Q: I am at the home of Herwald Morton and this is Tape one Side one. Let's talk about your background, let's talk about who you are. Can you just tell me something about your family, where you were born, about your early childhood?

MORTON: OK, I was born the last of five children to Rachel and James Morton, James Morton Sr. because my oldest brother is James Morton also in Little Rock, Arkansas. We were at the depths of the depression at that time so we were poor like everybody else and I spent my childhood in Little Rock. It was a nice environment at that time because I knew everybody in town there, where I went people knew me because I had four siblings that came along ahead of me and fortunately, or unfortunately, we all look alike. It's the curse of the Morton's and my two sons who are carrying on the tradition, they look like me.

But I stayed in Little Rock until I was sixteen when I finished high school there. It was a very unusual high school, it still is in a sense. The high school opened in 1930 and it was the first high school in the State of Arkansas complete with our black kids, or we were Negroes in those days, for Negroes that went all the way through the twelfth grade and initially they wanted to make the school an industrial arts school and some of the leaders in the Negro community protested and had it made into an academic program. They got a grant from the Rosenwald Foundation and from another Foundation to enhance the program there and so it turned out to be one of the best schools in the Southern United States. It's very unusual in the sense that 95% of the graduates went on to college and not only did they go to college but they went into professions. We had doctors, lawyers, physicists, and judges. We still meet every two years. We just had a reunion in Los Angeles and we had seven hundred people there came from all over the country. So it was a very close knit school. The teachers were very well educated. They had Masters and PhDs because it was a matter of doing that, teaching school or working in the Post Office or being a doctor or a lawyer. When I finished my senior year in high school, I took a competitive examination. Pepsi Cola Company used to give two scholarships in each state and Arkansas, initially, would not let the black kids compete, so Pepsi Cola said they were not going to give the scholarships in Arkansas and in '48 unless they let us compete and so I won the one for the boys from the state of Arkansas. I had not planned to go to a nice school, I was going to go to either Philander Smith's College which was about three blocks from my home, or Talladega in Alabama where I had a scholarship. So once I won this I could go to any school in the country, The Pepsi Cola Company would pay my round trip transportation there and back every year, buy my books and give me a small subsidy every month of about $25. My Principal decided he would counsel me and he suggested I should go to New York University because he'd done some graduate work there.

So at age 16, never having been on a train in my life, I got on. I finished high school at 12:00 (noon), I think it was 10:30 p.m. and I caught the 12:01 a.m. train to New York. I had $200 and a Bull Durham sack around my neck, under my shirt.

Q: What was the Bull Durham sack?

MORTON: Bull Durham tobacco, you rolled your own tobacco. I had all my clothes in a little tin suitcase which I bought for two bucks at a pawn shop and was off to the big city. So I left Little Rock and went to Chicago, stayed in Chicago with my brother for a couple of days and then went on to New York. I knew two people in New York. I knew a fellow who had been raised up in my neighborhood. He was living in a boarding house in Harlem and he had made arrangements for me to get a room there. Then, I knew a girl who lived about four blocks away from him whose aunt lived near me in Little Rock and she had come and spent the summer there. So I was full of excitement in Ole New York University which in 1948 had 47 thousand students. It was the largest enrollment of any university in the country at that time and the interesting thing was in 1948, among those 47 thousand students, there were nine black students. Seven were on basketball scholarships up in the Bronx and me and another fellow down in Washington Square College. They had a few foreign students there, there was a Filipino student who ran around with the other black fellows and me. I'll go back to him later, but he did come back in m y life again years later. I stayed for a year and a half and managed to squeeze in the equivalent of two years of academic training because I went to summer schools. If I didn't go to school I wouldn't get money from Pepsi cola so I needed that to help me supplement the income I was getting from working in a restaurant.

But at the end of that time, when I got to be 18, I was not happy (although) I was not homesick. I didn't want to go to Little Rock. But I wanted to go somewhere else. So I joined the Air Force. I went into the Air Force, and went through basic training in Texas. Then I went to the control tower operator school in Mississippi and then was sent to Alaska. When I got to Alaska my squadron commander discovered that although I was eighteen, I had two years of college. So he was trying to get me a commission. But it turned out I was too young to get a commission in the Air Force, you had to be twenty-one. And he discovered that you could get a commission in the Army at nineteen and a half. So he worked with me and helped to fill out the necessary papers and I applied Officer Candidate School, and managed to get a transfer from the Air Force to the Army for the purpose of attending Officer Candidate School. I came back to the States went through leadership training at Fort Ord, California and then went through signal corps training at Fort Devens, New Jersey and graduated there as a Second Lieutenant and went into a signal construction battalion. The Air Force was completely integrated in those days but the army had these little pockets of segregated units. I think the Ordinance Corps was mostly black, Quartermaster, Transportation and Signal Construction units were mostly black. So I went to a signal construction battalion just outside of Boston in Cape Cod. All the enlisted men were black and all the officers were white. So the way they were integrating this one was bringing in black platoon sergeants, black officers, second lieutenants, and brining in master sergeants and white master sergeants. So this was the

army's idea of gradual integration. More or less it was a good experience. I got my initial training there and then went to Germany with a different signal construction battalion.

About three months after I got there they asked for volunteers to take a company to France to put in a telephone system there. And I thought this was great opportunity, I had a couple of semesters of French in high school, and I also didn't have any attachments, no family in Germany, so I volunteered for it. Then one of the smartest things I have ever done, I was given, as a Second Lieutenant, I was given a company to command. And then I lead this company through Germany and France. We set up our headquarters there, and I had men spread out all the way from Germany down to Bordeaux and between there putting in a telephone system. And so at age twenty, that was the biggest job I ever had in my life until I got to be almost 50. I also think I was one of the youngest people in this company and so they helped me grow up pretty fast.

Q: Let me, let me go back to Little Rock. First you were born in 1931?

MORTON: Yes.

Q: And you mentioned that the high school you went to was one of the outstanding high schools in not only that state, but in the region. What was the name of that high school?

MORTON: Dunbar

Q: Dunbar

MORTON: There is some confusion about this, because there are so many Dunbar schools in the United States. There is one here, there is one in Baltimore, there's one in Chicago, and they are all over the place. But I think ours was unique because of the organization. We have about 11 alumni chapters around the country. We have one here, we have 40 paid up members. These are people who went to the school between 1930 and 1955. Governor Faubus closed the school 1955 to avoid integration.

Q: That was during the Central High School episode.

MORTON: This is during that time.

Q: Now what was the, since this school was so well qualified with the, you mentioned had teachers with Masters and PhDs which is unusual for any high school.

MORTON: No.

Q: How would you have ranked in those days Dunbar with Central High School, which had the problems with in 1955?

MORTON: I think we used to get our books from Central High School. Central High School would get new text books and we would get the hand-me-downs. But our teachers, I think, were better qualified than the one from Central.

And then we had the money from these two foundations that I mentioned that gave special enrichment classes. When I was in the third grade, all third graders in the black school system were given an exam and the top twenty were taken out and put all together. These top twenty kids from the whole city were put together in one elementary school and got special enrichment classes because of this Foundation. And so I got special enrichment classes starting in the fourth grade through the sixth grade, fourth, fifth and sixth. And there were twenty of us in this group, and the twenty of us, when we got to Dunbar, in the seventh grade, we immediately took over the leadership positions in our class and we maintained that all the way through and until graduation.

It is interesting when I graduated in 1948, out of the twenty of us, I was the president of the student body and the president of the National Honor Society. I was manager and editor of the student paper, I was a valedictorian, the salutatorian was also one of the twenty, and the number three person in the class was also one of the twenty. We went on and I became member of the diplomatic service, the salutatorian became a pediatrician, and the number three fellow ended up with NASA. And at the time of his retiring from NASA, he was head of the landing facility in California where the space shuttles came down. So, the education we got there carried us through.

Q: Could one logically assume that this had a major impact on what we will be discussing on your successes, diplomatic service, leadership roles, being self confident in any task that you undertook. Was this a major impact as opposed to some forces in your social setup, I am thinking about other institutions, the church, the family, of course.

MORTON: I think, well the high school in a small city like this is the center of the social activity there and also the idea behind the contributions for the Rosenwald Foundation and the other Foundation, the name will come to me, I am getting senile, but the idea was to prove that black kids were given adequate education, they could compete on an equal footing. And so we learned this at an early age. We were not, well when I went to New York University, even though these kids had come from, some of them had come from fancy named prep schools, and I was not intimated by them. And throughout my academic career I was never intimidated.

When I got out of service, I went back to college in Chicago, by this time I was the same age as everybody else. When I went to NYU, I was 16 and my classmates were returning (WW II) veterans and all the guys were twenty-five, and thirty, and thirty-five. And when I was 16, I looked like I was 13. So nobody ever bothered learning my name, they used to call me “The Kid,” and even instructors did not learn my name. They would just say, young “fella” there.

Q: Did this have an adverse impact, the fact that the Rosenwald Foundation along with the other foundation that chose Dunbar to set up this special program, was there an adverse impact on the rest of the school systems for blacks in Little Rock at that time?

MORTON: No. Because it gave them pride and they knew that their kids, if and when they got to be in the third grade, they could compete and get this special enrichment training just like we did. And the foundations paid for leading black figures to come down and give us talks. For example, Langston Hughes came down with a draft of a book he was working on. He used us as guinea pigs, he gave us typewritten copies of the draft of some of the books and poems he had done. He made us to read them and do an evaluation and tell him what we thought of them.

And there were a number of other people like this. Paul Robeson came. They were coming under the sponsorship of these organizations. And not just black people, foreigners too. I remember I had never seen anyone from Yugoslavia. We had some Yugoslavia refugee come to talk to us about unity. He was a big guy, had really a strong deep voice, sort of like James Earl Jones, in White Face. But he said, he was talking about how they were trying to divide up the Yugoslavs, among the Serbians, Croatians, and whatever. How they were using this, the communists were using this as well as the Nazis, to weaken them. I remember very distinctly he said, you can easily break my fingers one at a time, but you can't break my fist. And he was telling how we should remember this and help each other and stick together.

Q: And you … went to New York University in 1948, although there were only 9 other blacks out of this students body of 47,000, did you feel that because of the education you had in Dunbar High, that you were as well prepared as the rest of your class mates?

MORTON: Actually, I think I was better prepared than the black kids who were there on sports scholarships. Their whole emphasis was on basketball rather than on reading and writing and mathematics and whatever. Also, I was the only one from out of town. Everybody else was from New York, and they went to their neighborhoods at night and they would not be involved at all in the life of the school. I was involved in the life at school, I had some interesting experiences because of this, to give you a good example: NYU in 1947 had passed a non-discrimination resolution, that there could be no discrimination for any reason. They no longer kept records of race and religion and so the different organizations could only guess by your name what you were. And so I was constantly, because my first name is Herwald and my last name is Morton, I was constantly getting invitations addressed to Morton Herwald to come to Jewish activities. Come to the Hilla Foundation, come to, there were a couple of Jewish, predominately Jewish fraternities there, they would invite me to the smokers. So I joined some of the clubs there. They were delighted to have me there, since they were at Washington Square College, there were two of us and they had one. I really enjoyed the Hilla Foundation, they had a great library, and it was my introduction to kosher food. And I learned a lot about Jewish culture, which has come in handy, because I have, most of my friends at my club that I belong to that I play tennis with, that I'd say probably 75% of them are Jewish

and so I'd know as much about their religion, in fact more than some of them do, which is interesting.

Q: Speaking of religion, did religion have any role in your upbringing?

MORTON: Oh! Definitely. I came from the Bible Belt. The Baptist Church was just right across the street and when the doors of church opened, my sister and I were the first ones in there and we were among the last ones out when they closed for the night. MY cousin was the sextant who did the cleaning up of the church on Saturdays and I would go up and help her clean, to make a little extra money. I sang in the choir, I went, I don't think I missed a single Sunday at Church until I was sixteen and left home -- and I didn't go at all for years until I met my wife. She and I, the reason why I started back to church was when I met her. Everyday I'd make a date for the next day, and that included Sundays too. I took her to a movie on a Saturday night on our first date. And I said how about a date tomorrow. And she said, I go to church on Sundays. So I said fine, let's go together and so she was a Baptist also.

Q; So your wife is from Little Rock also?

MORTON: No, my wife is from Chicago. I met her when I got out of service and started back to college in Chicago. She is five years younger than me. When I finished High School, she was a little runny-nosed little kid. I knew her in Chicago, I think our paths had crossed once but I didn't pay any attention to her, because she was too young at that time. We do know that we were staying in the same hotel in Boston when I was the Second Lieutenant, and she was in high school, because she swam competitively on a swimming team and they were in Boston for a meet and I was at that hotel on holiday at that time, and I saw these little scraggy, scrawny kids around there. My wife was a member of the only All-Black swimming team to win a city championship two years running.

Q: Which school did she go to?

MORTON: She went to DuSable (High School). But the swimming team was sponsored by the YWCA. They started the girls swimming team. It is interesting, the lady who was the coach is still alive, she must be 85 or 86 and she's still active and the members of the swimming team got together for a reunion about four years ago in Chicago. They've been close ever since. They are talking about having another reunion, sometime soon.

Q: You went to NYU in 1948 and after a couple of years you decided to go in the service, well did that also have anything to do with the fact that the Korean War was …

MORTON: The Korean War hadn't started. I was in

Q: No, when did you leave NYU?

MORTON: I left in 49,

Q: Oh 49, I thought it was 50, I am sorry

MORTON: NO, NO! I started summer school in 48 at NYU, I went to summer school, then I went to full academic year, then I went to summer school again and so that's how I managed to squeeze in the equivalent of two years of college. Then I went into the service in August of 49 and when the Korean war started in 1950, I was in Alaska. And that was one of the reasons why my squadron commander was trying to help me get a commission because they were opening up more positions for officers at that time

Q: Did you have any other contact with that squadron leader at any time?

MORTON: I have never seen him since. I don't know what happened to him. I wrote to him once or twice, he never responded. Our paths never crossed again.

Q: When you joined the Air Force, what did you find different as an institution from the university? You say you felt that you needed to mature, did you find the solutions when you got in the Air Force?

MORTON: Well the Air Force was very definitely set on the path to integration and so it was completely integrated throughout. The first week in basic training, the squad leader, our platoon leader, made me a squad leader because I had, although I was not the oldest there. I had two years of college. I had been in the band in the Boy Scouts and I already knew how to march and knew how to start off on my left foot, and I knew how to do a "column right" and "column left" and I think I was a little more mature than my colleagues who were of the same age.
Q: What instrument did you play?

MORTON: I played the Baritone horn in the school orchestra and I played the trombone in the Jazz band.

Q: You still play?

MORTON: I haven't touched either one of them since 1948.

Q: You took years of French while you were in High School.

MORTON: I took two semesters.

Q: Two semesters, I am sorry.

MORTON: I took two years of Spanish and two semesters of French.

Q: In high school?

MORTON: In high school.

Q: And did you?

MORTON: They had just started Spanish language training, so I signed up for that. It only went through two years and so at the end of that time I had this curiosity about languages. Well, when I was very young, when I learned how to read. I was three, because my older brothers and sisters used to come home from school and they would go over their lessons with me. We had a colored (Negro) branch of the public library and it was over in the colored neighborhood. And so the librarian, I was too young to get a library card, but the librarian would let me take books out on my sister's card. She had been a missionary in Africa and she spoke French. She would always greet me in French and taught me a few words, so I had this curiosity about the French language. So when they started the French language classes in college, I mean in high school, I signed up for it and managed to get two semesters out, based on her influence. This lady, she was a very elderly lady.

I guess when I was about eight, I had exhausted the potential for this library and so she got special permission from the main library for me to use it.. I could go in on Saturday mornings before it opened (the white library) and check out books that I wanted. I would give them to the clerk there. They wouldn't let me have them directly. What they would do was to send them to the colored library and then I could get them from her and then give them back to her and she would send them back downtown, then I could get some more.

Q: What did you like to read? What were the books that interested you?

MORTON: I read everything, I read adventure stories, read biographies, you couldn't tell by looking around here? This is just a sample around here (pointing to library shelves). There were book cases in the next room around there, book cases in that room (pointing), downstairs we got about three. My sons are worse than I am, at least I just have my books single stacked here but my oldest boy, if you pull a book out from his shelves, he's got other books behind them. So it's contagious but, I read everything.

Now I tend to read mostly non-fiction. I read biographies. I think I could be a frustrated doctor but you could see that those whole two shelves there are medical books. Over here, it's all on writing and grammar and the bottom shelf is on law. Then I've got history up there and over there. And then we got a couple of shelves of Black History in the other room in there and my American Indian collection too because I got into that., So I've got a couple of shelves on history of the American Indians and, you name it.

Q: I remember, at one point in your professional life, as I knew you then, you sent out a memorandum to everyone in USIA during the advent of our use of information technology, that there was no excuse for anyone being a poor writer when it comes to indiscriminate grammatical errors, if they would just use all the tools that were available in our word processing.

MORTON: I still shudder when I hear people saying "myself" instead of "me" I don't know what it is it just grates on me. Everybody says, Jim, John and "myself" went, nobody was there but "myself" and it just makes me shudder every time I hear that.

Q: When you studied your two semesters of French in your teens.

MORTON: Two years of Spanish,

Q: Two years of Spanish, did you find that you had an aptitude an early aptitude for languages?

MORTON: I was able to carry on some basic questions initially, which way is this? Is this the right highway? That sort of thing, but I was frustrated because I wanted more. I was living at a little pension because there was no facility for single officers at the (military) base. They were still rather primitive facilities there in France.

So, I used to sit near the school when the kids got out and I talked to the little kids to sort of improve my French. And I discovered that if you really want to learn a language talk to the little kids, because they don't know the worse parts of the language. They spoke little French, about the level of mine. And so they would correct my pronunciation, and they would help me out a lot. And then the teacher saw me sitting out there with these little kids. So she came out to make sure I was not a dirty old man molesting the kids. A Very attractive teacher, about 22 years-old and I was 22 years-old. So then I started getting my French lessons from the teacher instead of from the kids.

And this worked out quite well. But by the time I left France, I suppose on the FSI (Foreign Service Institute) standards I was probably about a 3 - 3 (rating) in French, based just on the two semesters of high school, and dealing with the little kids. I spoke French at every opportunity due to the fact that I didn't have a family there and I was living in the community, and the French teacher that I was dating didn't speak English. She would help considerably, because she felt it was easier to help me with my beginning French than for her to start trying to learn English. So that worked out quite well.

I had a chance to use French professionally after that although in the Foreign Service I have gone to French speaking countries and I find that once I am in one, after three or four days all a sudden its like a switch in the back of my head.

Initially, I try understanding what people are saying and then after about a day or so, I can start talking to them. This happened to us in 1980, we were on our way to Thailand and we stopped for a week in France. My wife, Chris, and my oldest boy Keith and I, spent this week traveling around France on the train. We were sitting in a compartment going from Paris to Nice. I was eavesdropping for about 2 hours on this very nice couple that was sitting across from us. I started talking to them. And my wife and my son didn't realize I knew any French at all. And my son asked, what's dad doing? And Chris said I think he is speaking French to those people. Ha, ha, ha.

Q: Since, since your wife has come up a couple of times, at what point did you get married?

MORTON: I got married in 1958. I met my wife strictly by accident. We both went to Roosevelt University, except that she was working days and going to school in the evenings, and I was working evenings and going to school during the day. In 1957, she belonged to a girls club and they gave a big affair to raise money for charity. And she was stuck with some tickets for this affair. There was a little tavern not to far from the school, where the guys used to hang out and drink, drink beer. And Chris had never been in a tavern in her life, but she and two other girls came in there to sell us tickets to the affair, and I was sitting at the door with two buddies of mine. She knew them and she came and tried to sell them tickets. I told her I would buy a ticket, if she went as my date. And she said she had a date, and she was sorry. And after she left, I asked these guys to introduce me to that girl. They said "we are not going to introduce you to that girl. If we introduce you that girl, you'll marry her". And I said I am not the marrying kind, I just want to meet her. And I kept my eye on her as she went around selling tickets. One of the girls with her said, I don't have a date, and I said, Oh! Maybe one of these guys will go with you. Ha, ha, ha, ha. But while we were sitting there, it started raining like mad. And so when they came back they looked out of the door, and saw it was raining. I told them, I had kept my car here and I would "give you young ladies a ride home." So they conferred, and they decided it was three of them and one of me, so why not.

So when I went to get my car and came back, and the one who said that she did not have a date, immediately jumped into the front seat with me, and Chris and the other girl got in the back seat. I asked each one of them where did they lived. I took the girl in the front seat home first. The interesting thing is that she and Chris lived in the same apartment complex, but she lived in one end and Chris at the other end. So I took her to her end first, and then instead taking Chris to her end, I took the other girl home who lived way out on the edge of town. I then came back to drop Chris off and it was really pouring down, so we sat in the car and chatted for a while. So I said lets go and get a cup of coffee instead of sitting in the car, so we went and sat in a little restaurant until it stopped raining and went back and sat in the car and chatted. Next thing we knew, the sun was coming up.

We had been sitting and talking all night. And she had agreed by this time that although she was going on this date that night, she would go to the movie with me on Saturday. And on Saturday I made a date with her to go church on Sunday. She was living with her aunt, and her aunt immediately took a liking to me. And so that really helped a lot. And so the aunt invited me back to the house for dinner after church and then I made a date on Sunday to meet for coffee that Monday. That Monday I made a date for Tuesday, and six months later we got paired, 43 years ago.

Q: So. You met her when you went back to school…

MORTON: I met her when I went back to university, Roosevelt University, Chicago

Q: Well when you went back to Roosevelt University, at this point you had completed your military service?

MORTON: I had completed five years total Military service. I don't respond well to regimentation. That's why the Foreign Service and I were a perfect match. I don't like people telling me constantly what to do. And I just felt that the military hierarchy was too constrictive for somebody with my personality.

To give you a good example, when I was stationed in Boston at Camp Edwards, right outside of Boston at Cape Cod, I was the only Officer in the company who had a newspaper subscription. I had a subscription to the New York Times, and I had one to the Boston Globe. And when I was not reading the paper, I was reading a book. And the company commander used to make snide comments about "the school boy," He decided to make me responsible for Officers Call on Tuesdays. I had to give a briefing on current events, and bring everybody up to date on what was going on. I took it very seriously, initially, but then I realized that nobody knew what was going on in the outside world. They knew what team had won some event, what boxer had beat somebody else, and there really wasn't anything much going on of interest right there. So I started making up news. And then I got their attention. We had the liveliest world during that final six months before I got transferred out of there. I mean there were all sorts of things going out in the world that these fellows were listening too. I was making that all up. But

Q: But you say you were making it up, I mean, you say these were not really events that were happening?

MORTON: No. I mean I was mixing this with some real events. And sometimes I would come up with some outrageous stuff. It was like stuff you read in the Eastern, Chinese newspapers about in some obscure village somebody can read by putting a book under her armpit. I would come up with a lot of stuff. They would sit on the edge of their seats waiting to see what was going on. Nobody ever got enough curiosity to go and check the paper to see if I was telling the truth. Ha, Ha, ha, ha. And I enjoyed it.

I offered to do this at my next assignment, but the company commander said it's something about everyone was an adult enough to read the paper.

Q: Now when you left the service what rank did you have?

MORTON: I was a first lieutenant and I was up for promotion to Captain. I didn't want to be tempted by getting promoted because I felt if I got promoted I'd probably stay and make it a career and so I got out and went back to college.

I went back to Chicago this time because I had a brother there as I had mentioned earlier and he had bought an apartment building. He had an apartment on the second floor, small apartment that was vacant, so he saved it for me and I had a place to stay. I initially registered in Northwestern University.

In my first day at Northwestern I went by the registrar's office to pay my tuition. The lady congratulated me because, she told me, I had just made the quota. And I said, the quota? And she said, yes, because after you register they would not take in any more colored students this semester and so I told her "you still have room for one" and she says why is that? I said because I am withdrawing my registration, so I left.

Q: What year was that?

MORTON: This was in 1954. I was highly insulted so I left. I had driven to Northwestern from the South Side along Lake Shore Drive which is the fastest way to get there. I was going back to the South Side Drive through town.

Q: That the same year of Brown versus Kansas?

MORTON: Yes.

Q: And they already had to stop at a quota that quickly?

MORTON: They'd had that quota quite some time at Northwestern. They had always registered minorities for years but they only accepted a limited number.

Q: So, it had nothing to do with Brown. It was just their own.

MORTON: It was just their own code system and so on the way back to the South Side, I was traveling down Michigan Avenue and I saw a sign saying Roosevelt University at the corner of Michigan and Congress Avenue. I had never heard of Roosevelt University and this was a big building standing there and so I found the parking meter and over in Grand Park you could part for three hours and so I had put three hours worth of money in it, went in and got brochures and sat in the Library and read enough and I en rolled there at that time, just that quickly and I think it was cured because then that time very good instructors at Roosevelt and it was called the school that prejudice built and they had no quota, in fact the school was probably about 55% Jewish and about 30, 35% Black., a large percentage of foreign students and the rest were our Caucasian gentile friends. And I fit right in after my experience with NYU and the instructors a lot of them were people who had gone out in the world and had made a living in their profession and came back and were teaching either full time or part time and some of them were professors from the University of Chicago who were also teaching at Roosevelt and I became good friends with some of the professors and I had decent grades and so after a semester and a half there one of the Deans made arrangements for me to get a scholarship so I didn't have to work as many hours I was getting the GI Bill so I could then devote more time to my studies, so I just worked on Fridays and Saturdays and my grade averages went up. I was getting almost straight As there. Now this helped me because then I got a fellowship to Graduate School. I got the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, went to University of Chicago on that.

Q: And you, what was your major when you were there at Roosevelt?

MORTON: I majored in Political Science. What I had gone to New York University, I'd, coming from Little Rock I didn't know what I wanted to be, so every body in Little Rock who was of any stature was either doctor or lawyer, a minister, social worker or school teacher and I didn't want to be most of those, I thought I'd want to be a lawyer so I was in a pre-law curriculum at New York University. When I went to Roosevelt I still was leaning towards law but I took political science, because I thought I could always go into something else, where as a pre-law degree is good for nothing. So I took a major in pre-law, I mean a major in political science and a minor in history, with a strong emphasis on accounting and bookkeeping just in case, ha, ha, ha, you always have a backup, and then I got a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship and I went to the University of Chicago and I took international law and diplomacy, because I could still use that background for law school. But I had really lost interest in law school by this time and I was thinking more in line of being a college professor.

Q: At what point in your studies did you start thinking of being a college professor?

MORTON: I think it was in my senior year at Roosevelt, I had become quite good friends with many of the professors there and I have got this type of curiosity that seemed to fit well in the academic environment. And the Woodrow Wilson Fellowships were really designed to train people towards being college professors and so this is what I had in mind when I started at the University of Chicago. I started there in 1960, but I got married in 1958 and my wife was pregnant when I started to go to the University of Chicago. In fact my, before classes start my oldest son was born, he was born in March of 60 and I started to Chicago in September and it worked out quite well, we moved into married student housing and very, right across the street from the school, and it was very convenient, very pleasant environment and then as I was going through this I suddenly realized, it dawned on me that you really need a Ph.D. and I had been in school all my life by this time and I also my wife was pregnant again. I thought maybe I'd get out and get a job in the real world and if I still want to be a college professor, then come back and get my Ph.D. In 1959 while I was still at Roosevelt I had taken the Foreign Service examination for the State Department Junior Officer class,

Q: In 1959?

MORTON: 1959. What I didn't realize in 1959, when I passed the written exam, what I didn't realize in 1959 was that State Department was not taking Black officers … of the written examination. I went for the oral exam and they were somewhat surprised to see me there, cause I had a fairly decent score on the written exam and I could tell when I went into the examination room almost immediately, that even if I died on Friday and rose from the dead on Sunday, I was not going to pass the oral. I mean you can sense it sometimes. They were very pleasant people, but you could sense it in the room. And I spent about half an hour in there with them and I think I answered all their questions satisfactorily. And in those days they would have you to wait outside, while they conferred and they'd come out and tell you whether you were in or out.

One of the panelists was from USIA. I had never heard of USIA, didn't know that it even existed. While I was sitting out there waiting while they were conferring, he came out to go to the men's room and he walked by me and he said, walk down the hall with me and as we walked down the hall towards the water fountain, he said you know, you know you are not going to pass this, I said yes, I know that right away. He says I could tell, I can tell you knew that you would not pass it, but you did a great job in there. And he gave me his card and he says that we could use you in USIA. And I said well, I don't know anything about USIA and I would like to have a job but I've got a fellowship I going to graduate school, so maybe at the end of that time I will think about it. And he says keep us in mind. And I didn't think anymore about it. When I had finished my masters program at the University of Chicago, in fact towards the end of it, I took the Civil Service exam and I took the Management Intern option and I got extreme high marks on that and I got offers, I must have gotten, within a week, seven job offers. You could get a GS-7 if you stayed out in the rest of the country. But if you came to Washington you could get a GS-9. And so I had an offer of a GS-9 from the Pentagon, and from USIA, and from Department of Commerce. And having had five years in the military, I told the Pentagon I would accept their offer. But again as a backup I remembered USIA. Pentagon had sent me a telegram, but USIA had called me and made their offer, which impressed me. And so I accepted their position too. And I had not given a definite note to Commerce, in case these other two did not work out. I came to Washington to be interviewed and I had been to Washington before, when I was in the Services, so I stayed at the Hotel up on Q Street, the Cairo Hotel, which I think is still standing. And I did drive along to the Pentagon on Sunday to make sure I knew where it was and where I had the layout of the land. What I wasn't counting on was Monday morning traffic. And to drive out to the Pentagon on Sunday is one thing. To go back on Monday when the whole world is out there is completely different. And I got out there and I could not find the off ramp to the Pentagon. I drove by going south, I would go as far I could, and I would turn around and finally found the place, and the parking lot, but I couldn't find a visitors parking lot. My appointment was for 9:30 and I had left the hotel at 7:30 and about 10:15 I finally found the visitors parking lot. And I went in to the information desk. And the lady in there started giving a little map and showing me the various rings and all this. And I thought to myself, it is pretty stupid of me to show up this late for the job, appointment job interview. So I thanked her. And I had made an appointment for 1:00 O'clock that afternoon with USIA. So I went over to USIA and parked in the little parking lot back of there and then had lunch. And at 12:30 I was there for my 1:00 O'clock appointment. And after I did my initial appointment there and got hired. Then I called the Pentagon and rejected the job. Called Commerce and declined their offer and that's how I ended up in USIA.

Q: Two questions. Number one – When did you first know about the possibility of a career, when were you aware of a possibility Foreign Service career? Then following that, did you know any other blacks in Foreign Service? Did you know any one in Foreign Service?

MORTON: I got interested in a Foreign Service career as a possibility when I was in class. I met a young woman who was a vice consul in Bordeaux. And she had, we met

quite causally, we were in a restaurant sitting in adjoining tables in Bordeaux. She heard me speaking to the waiter and she said she could, although I was speaking French, she could tell by my accent that I was an American, I was in uniform too, that helped. Ha, ha, ha. And she told me she was there with the American Consulate. And we became friends, and she introduced herself to me, and we were about the same age. And she introduced me to a lot of her friends, other foreign embassies in Bordeaux. And so I went to a lot of their social affairs and that opened a whole new world for me, and I had never seen another black person in the Foreign Service, I just assumed that it was like anything else, you probably get the job. When USIA made the telephone offer to me as a Civil Service management trainee, they did tell me that there was a possibility that I could serve overseas.

Q: As a Civil Service.

MORTON: Actually they would use a Civil Service employee to transfer ….. limited appointments to do executive officers administrative work. And often times they would give you limited employment and you stay there because USIA Foreign Service Officers did not get Congressional appointments as Foreign Service officers at that time, they got limited reserve appointments. I went into USIA as management trainee and spent a year in the training capacity, trained all over in the administrative apparatus of the Agency and then spent my first two years in personnel and after that, and then two years in budget as the Budget Officer for Africa and had a chance to travel around Africa and when I came back I told Chris that, you know Foreign Service looks like it might be a good experience for us. And she's a good trooper and she had never been out of the country in her life and had no idea of what it involved, bus she says sounds good to me. So I applied for the Foreign Service, and they needed an Executive Officer in Colombia. I didn't want to go to Africa because I had discovered when I was in personnel, I had cuff records on the careers of the black Foreign Service officers, I think we had 29 at USIA at that time, 27 were in Africa. One was in Indonesia, and the one was in, I think initially he was in Turkey and then he went to Japan, he was John Reinhardt. Sam Greenly, Sam Greenly was in…

Q: (Reinhardt) Former Director of the USIA, his last assignment at USIA was as director during the Carter administration.

MORTON: But I kept cuff records of their careers, I knew who they were and where they were and whenever they came back to Washington, I would meet them and find out about their careers. And I decided that I didn't want to follow their paths and go to Africa. I had seen the 20 or 21 countries in Africa by this time and I had seen conditions in other posts in other parts of the world, and I had thought that I did not want to take my children to that environment. I had never seen South America but I had seen pictures of it and it seemed interesting. And then I had this Spanish background, two years of high school Spanish which is probably equivalent to two months on the other side, but at least it was a leg up. And they gave me the language aptitude test and I scored fairly high on it. I was the first Executive Officer to get language training. They didn't give me Spanish language training at that time was four to six months, but only gave me thirteen weeks of

it. But at the end of thirteen weeks I had a 3.3 and so they sent me down to Bogotá and it worked out quite well. The Columbians and I were a match for each other.

Q: Before you went to Bogotá, now that you are in a Foreign Service position as a civil servant…

MORTON: When I went to Bogotá, I was given a Foreign Service appointment

Q: You were given a Foreign Service, but while you were in Washington you were still Civil Service appointment. Did you, did your curiosity continue as to why USIA was a more available repository of careers for minority officers as opposed to State Department? Did you seek out any more information on those differences?

MORTON: I was curious about this and I think it was the nature of the work that USIA did. USIA got out with the people in the communities that we were serving and we interfaced with. State Department people tend to be isolated in embassies and they don't interface much with the foreign community. And they had a tradition for years that the State Department Officers came from Ivy League schools. There were black officers who had gone up in State Department. The tentative people who started off in the Library, Clinton Knox comes to mind, and Terry Todman. Clinton Knox was a good friend of mine. He was made, I think Clinton served as ambassador to four or five different places. When Clinton first started going up in the Foreign Service, the State dining room was segregated. And so he had to sit in this segregated section while his subordinates could sit where they wanted to in the cafeteria and he served his early years in some of the worst places, Ouagadougou and places like that, which contributed to his early death, because his health was not too good, the last time I saw him. He died right after that. He was ambassador to Haiti while I was a PAO in Jamaica. He would come to Jamaica periodically and we would go to Haiti.

Clinton Knox was a very distinguished, elderly gentleman when I met him. When I was stationed in Jamaica as a Public Affairs Officer, he was the ambassador in Haiti and he came over several times. He invited Chris and I and the kids to come over. He loved my two sons and he invited us to come over and visit him. So we did. He was telling me stories about his early days in the State Department and the things he went through and how fortunate I was that I did not have to go through that same thing. He was saying how State Department had not raised any blacks from within their ranks. And whenever they had to tap people for ambassadorial assignments now they had to tap people from either AID or USIA, because all of the black ambassadors back in those days were either USIA Officers or AID Officers or they were academicians. There was one fellow with the Ford Foundation, Williams, who was given an ambassadorial assignment but no one came up through the ranks at the State Department.

Dick Fox was hired from the Urban League same time I came in. He came in as a lateral entry in State Department. They were going to assign Dick as an ambassador. They brought him in as a mid-level entry under the old system as class-3 which would be equivalent of a class-1 now. Dick stayed and sort of understudied special assistant type

jobs for several years. He was getting sort of frustrated before he finally got an administrative officer job in an ambassadorial assignment. I met Dick in 1963 and I think he had not been with the State Department too long then. Dick Fox, he and I were assigned to work together on a committee. There was going to be Century of Negro Progress Expositions in Chicago and State Department decided to rent a booth and use this as a chance to recruit minorities. But they did not know how to recruit minorities. So they decided the best thing to do is get some minorities to do it. So Dick and I and a young fellow from AID he had been a Major in the Army Reserves, I can't remember his name. Very, very articulate fellow. I was representing the USIA and I could speak for the USIA. This other fellow was representing AID and he could speak for AID and Dick and twelve people were representing the State Department, they had to go off and have committee meetings on every decision. This is another thing I liked about USIA, we could rapid turnaround. Someone would come in on a meeting and I would say USIA is in on this and not in on that. Where these people had to go off and search for their neighbor or confer and consult and come up with a collaborative agreement which held things up considerably. I have known Dick Fox, I guess for almost 30 years now. I got a chance to meet all of the senior officers, black officers at the State Department during that time. It was interesting in USIA, we had high ranking officers.

Q: Could you go through some of the black officers that you met, that you got to know at that time?

MORTON: I got to know Terry Todman, Clinton Knox, Ed Perkins; I am having a senior moment again. Ha Ha! They were not ambassadors at that time they were in political cone or admin cone or something. Jim Parker was one. But they were sort of being groomed for eventual senior officer assignments. The first black faces that showed up in the State Department they have these pictures of the Junior Officer classes going back to, I think 1920 or 22. You notice that the first black face shows up in 1963. And whoever that person is they didn't stay very long. I don't think in '65 he was around. And they have had gaps in their photographs since then. But now I notice, because I meet all of them when DACOR gives a reception for the new officers I notice that now there are more and more black faces in there although most of them tend to be female. But USIA has had black officers in senior positions since the 50's.

Q: Do you think, well of course you have given a response already, that USIA is more people oriented and recognizes the value of having ethnic diversity early on. Let's put it this way, they were more sensitive to ethnic diversity. Would that be a good assessment?

MORTON: Yes and there was a myth going around in the State Department that blacks are good in people to people relationship but they are not too good in conceptualization. So that when it came to economic theory blacks didn't do to well. But when it came to interpersonal relations, they made good personnel officers but not good economic officers. They would make a good general services officer but not a good political officer because there you had to do analysis and conceptualization. I have heard this expressed in different forms throughout the years but it all boiled down to that. I was at a meeting one time and someone was beating around the bush, and I was on the Inter-Agency Personnel

Committee around the time I met you around 1977-78 when I was Deputy Director of Personnel and I was on the Interagency Committee that served at State making policy, personnel policy. Someone was beating around the bush and trying to express this. So, I expressed it for them and the room got very quiet. Is this what you are trying to say? Ha! Ha! I though we should get it out in the open and examine this and see if this is what the issue is. It really was the issue but they were too embarrassed to say it out loud, which was interesting. Because once we started examining it, then we could see the fallacy of it.

Q: When you first joined USIA, who do you recall the director was and also who was the secretary of state?

MORTON: When I joined USIA, Edward R. Murrow, was the director of USIA. He came in under Kennedy. I don't remember who the secretary of state was. I think it was Douglass. I don't really remember. At my lowly GS-9 level, I didn't really look that high up in the clouds. But I knew Murrow, he was very widely known, from seeing him on television. But then when I was given my management intern assignment in personnel, I got to work with the front office and I got to know him personally. He was a very friendly person. No status about him whatsoever. He knew my name within six weeks of my working there. I talked to him in the halls. When he got sick with cancer the first time and he was in the Washington Hospital Center I went by and visited. And in fact, I went by there twice and visited him. First time I went by was because my wife was at the hospital also and I went to see her and I thought I would stop by and see how Murrow was and when I was leaving he said come back and see me some time so the next time, so when I went back to visit her, I visited him too. So when he got out of the hospital, I saw him in the hallway he put his arm around my shoulder and told me how much he enjoyed my visit.

Q: You must have had a feeling of awe in your own professional development, right here in Washington DC, the capitol of political power and now you are a part of the mechanism of the policy making apparatus. Did you get the feeling, were you aware, were you conscious of the fact, that what you did had an impact some impact on the policy formulation process?

MORTON: Not policy formation per se as far as intergovernmental relations. It had a small impact. To give you an example, when I was in graduate school in the University of Chicago one of the areas I was specializing in was problems of development areas where I was working on my Masters in International Law and Diplomacy. African countries were just sprouting up at that time and a lot of the African leaders were coming to the States and coming to the University of Chicago. Because a lot of the professors there had done research or they had done teaching in Africa and so I met a lot of them while I was in graduate school and had met a few in undergraduate school because Roosevelt University was seeking out African leaders and Roosevelt had one of the first African Studies Programs in the country. I think Harvard had the first one and then Roosevelt had one and sort of a fledgling thing and then the University of Chicago had a big one.

When I was at the University of Chicago, I was specializing; you had to take an area of specialization within International Law and Diplomacy. So I chose problems of developing areas which happened to be Africa at this time. Countries were becoming independent and coming out of the woodwork. But I started at USIA; I was one of the few people in USIA that knew the name of every country in Africa. And not only that, I knew the names of the heads of state in many of those countries and some of them I had met personally. So, when I was the Budget Officer, to give you an example and I went to Malawi. One of the members of the Royal family the traditional Royal family from Malawi had gone to graduate school with me, Emil Owewa. And (they) didn't want her back in the country because she was a potential threat. So they were just sending her to colleges, all over the place. She was going to graduate school everywhere. But she had told her family that I was coming to Malawi. Banda had gone to the University of Chicago back in '32 or '33. So while I was in Malawi the ambassador had been there about two months, I guess and still had not been able to present his credentials. Banda had sent word to the embassy that he wanted to meet me. And I went over to the Presidential Palace and spent the day with him. He was talking about; I really had no idea what to talk about. He went to the University of Chicago the year I was born. But he was talking about his fond memories of the school and what it was like now. We chatted about that. We had lunch together. And he had just bought a camera. A nice Japanese camera and didn't have the slightest idea how to work it. So we spent about an hour and a half while I showed him how to use this camera. I took pictures of him and he took pictures of me. When I got back to the embassy the Country Team was waiting to give me a debriefing on 'what did you talk about?' What is he like? And I was kind of embarrassed because I had no public policy statements to make. Ha-Ha! We talked about buildings that were added to the campus and buildings that were no longer there and how to use his camera. Then they wanted to know what his personality was like. I didn't have the heart to tell them that his personality towards me would not necessarily be the same towards you. I am a visitor.

The interesting thing was at that time there was only one black American at the embassy there. They had just made USIS Malawi into a two person post and so the second person was a black American. There were some black Peace Corp volunteers but there was no one from the State Department in a substitute position at that time. Banda was not exactly a pigmy but he was not much taller than pigmy's. And he was not very comfortable around very tall people. I sensed this so I always made sure that I did not sit up very straight and I didn't tower over him when we stood up. I would stand back and give him a little space so it didn't look like I was dominating him, physically. I think he appreciated this. So we got along quite well because of this. I had some difficulty with his English accent. His English had deteriorated considerably over the years since he was at the University of Chicago. But I think that helped me in my job as a Budget Officer in Africa but I never made any substantive input. I made some cultural inputs as far as because one of the things, I was doing when I was doing traveling around Africa in addition to getting information for our budget preparation and presentation to Congress I was giving a lot of suggestions to a lot of PAO's because most of them were first time Public Affairs Officers. I had never been a Public Affairs Officer but you accumulate a body of wisdom by seeing how other people do things. And also by being in Washington

at the other end and seeing the mistakes people make. So I could pass on this little body of wisdom as I went around. And it helped me in the future when I went out to become a Foreign Service officer.

I could avoid a lot of these gaffes. I could avoid some of the mistakes some of my white colleagues made in Africa by sticking too close to the British Club or English Club instead of getting out into the community. There was a fellow who was the Public Affairs Officer in Zambia who was trying to explain to me that the future of black Africa lay with South Africa and with the white Rhodesians and he identified so much with the white Rhodesians that he did not hear the clamor that was coming from the black Africans. This was just about the time that Rhodesia was going to make a general lateral declaration of independence from England and start to go off on its own. It eventually caused the decline of the economy in the country and it became Zimbabwe. And during this time when countries were seeking there identity and were constantly changing the names of cities. I arrived in one city, it was Elizabethville and by the time I left there it was Lubumbashi, that type of thing.

Q: So that was a positive experience for your later professional development as a Foreign Service officer, which when we get to it, will quite sure reflect positive contributions in bilateral circumstances depending on where you were assigned?

MORTON: I gained a perspective from this because when you are in a post you tend to get so focused on your own country that you don't realize often times that the issue you are facing is also being faced by the guy right across the border. And if you do a little cross fertilization with your colleagues, many times you can either collectively arrive at a decision that is applicable to all of you. Or at least, you can join resources and combine resources and solve the problem.

Q: You were the Executive Officer of the African Bureau in USIA when you were doing this travel?

MORTON: I was the budget officer. I was in the Budget Division of the Agency, not at the Regional Bureau. I worked very closely with the regional bureau because we sort of act as the ex officio member of the area director's team. So that when budget matters came up, I sat in on the meetings and made contributions to the meetings, substantive contributions. When they went for hearings on the Hill, I went and would sit behind the Area Director and I would oftentimes whisper the answers to the questions to him.

Q: Did the Area Directors show any interest in your observations outside of your strict budgetary functions in your travels such as what you have just recounted?

MORTON: Mark Lewis was the area director and Dan Alexei was the deputy area director and they were very interested in my observations. They took them very seriously. Dick Ernestine was the program coordinator which I guess was the same as their executive officer. He also took it very seriously. I made suggestions all across the board from suggesting Personnel Assignments or get that guy out of there sort of thing.

Q: So indirectly you were having an impact on policy execution, regionally.

MORTON: Yes. I went to Liberia which was part of the African Area at that time. Now, its part of the Near East. I was the first official USIA person from Washington to visit that post in about six years. And I made a lot of substantive comments and I took a lot of notes on everything, not just budget. To give an example, we had sent in a film team and they were headquartered there and they were doing a newsreel which was being played over television at Wheeler AFB. But it was being designed for spill-over effect to go out into the local community because the wealthy Liberians had television sets. But the only station they could get was from Wheeler and so our newsreel was pushing King Idris and trying to build him up as a worthy leader and the future of democracy and all of that. It was really just pissing off the Liberians. Ha! Ha! Ha! To be perfect blunt about it, I didn't think it was a positive step. And I said so. We were spending a lot of money on this. We had a full fledged motion picture production facility and we filmed it, we edited it, we developed it, we put it on television and then we would oftentimes make prints available to different institutions to show them. And it was very counterproductive in my opinion. It probably contributed to the eventual kicking out of Wheeler from Liberia. But it was really interfering in the internal affairs of the host country. The people who were making the motion pictures, they thought they were doing a good job. They were doing the good works of King Idris. I don't know that much about it one way or the other but evidently the Liberians did not think too much.

Q: Well! You have developed a rich background with your Civil Service appointment now you are up to the point where you are receiving a Foreign Service appointment to take you to South America.

MORTON: I had gotten a promotion in the Civil Service every year once I started there. So I started off as a GS-9 and then I went next year to GS-11, and then a GS-12 and a GS-13 and I didn't see much future ahead of me for a GS-14 for a long time. I thought this is a time to make a career move and also if I had gotten promoted to GS-14 it would have been more difficult to convert to the Foreign Service because I would have gone in at a higher rank and there were not nearly as many jobs in the administrative field, so this proved to be a very propitious time and also there was a position coming up in Bogotá so I went to the chief of, the deputy director of personnel, and told him I was thinking about leaving and I was going to be leaving a vacancy. He told me to see the chief of Foreign Service personnel who was delighted because I had helped him out a lot. He was happy that I was coming into the Foreign Service.

Q: Do you remember who that was?

MORTON: I don't remember. I remember what he looked like but I don't remember what his name is. He was the last chief of Foreign Service personnel who was a Civil Servant. All the area personnel officers were Foreign Service except the one for Latin America, Frank Corey who was also a Civil Servant and he was the last one. He was

succeeded by a Foreign Service officer. But we worked out a panel. It was interesting because Mort Smith was on the Panel and so was Dorothy Dillon.

Q: For the record who was Mort Smith?

MORTON: Mort Smith at that time, I had never seen him before, but he turned out later to be one of the senior officers in the Agency eventually. In fact, he was the DC representative for Singapore at one time. He retired I think at the level of Career Minister. Dorothy Dillon was a very senior Cultural Affairs officer in Guatemala and she eventually ended up being the Area Director for Latin America. The third person, that I can't remember his name, I can remember his face but not his name. But anyway they were on the panel and in those days your wife went in on the panel with you. So they paneled me and Chris together. We made a good impression on them. We stayed in touch with the panel members after that. We went to, as I said I was the first executive officer to get language training which was very convenient. I recommended it after I got to post that they give it to all executive officers because my predecessor had been robbed blind because he did not understand the language. The chief administrative local was working around him and getting kick-backs and doing all sorts of things that were illegal. Selling the scrap paper and putting the money in his pocket, selling excess property. He had to depend on this guy to interface with his subordinates. The executive officer in Bogotá had 56 people working for him. It was a large facility, none of whom spoke English except his chief administrative local and his secretary. So you find yourself completely dependent on these people. They hired a guy from outside who came in and gave some administrative training for a few weeks in Washington and went to Colombia and the books were screwed up and the records were terrible and nobody really knew the rules and regulations. My having had this administrative experience for five years, I knew if I didn't know the answer I knew where the book was that I could go and find the answer. And some sections of the book I had written. So it gave me a great deal of creditability. It was a good time in my career. I was still brash. The Public Affairs Officer was a very nice guy, but he was severely affected by the altitude.

Q: Who was this?

MORTON: Ed Murphy. This was back when people retired at age 60, mandatory retirement, which seemed pretty ancient to me and I thought you should retire at age 60. But now that I am 70 it looks like a kid. Ed was about 56 or 57 at the time and he really suffered with the altitude. He couldn't work a full day. He would work in the mornings and he would go home for lunch and he would come back after about 2 hours at home and he would close the door and lie down on the sofa. He basically left the running of the USIS Colombia to me. Because the Information Officer was only interested in his little section, the Cultural Affairs Officer was only interested in his and I was the only one besides the PAO who had an overall view of everything. And since I was noisy, I stuck my nose in everything.

Q: What grade did they bring you in? Did they bring you in lateral entry?

MORTON: I came in as a lateral entry. So I was a GS-13 and I came in as a Class 4 of the old system, which would be a Class 2 under the new system now.

Q: And the PAO was he a Class 2?

MORTON: He was a Class 2 under the old system which would be the OC.

Q: So you had the same grade?

MORTON: No! No! I was a Class 4. He was the PAO there under my first year there. Then Walter Bastian came in as PAO during my second year and Walter had asked in Washington just around the background of the different people there and people told him I was the person to see if he needed anything and that I had good judgment on things and so Walter when he got there, immediately took me aside and said I am going to depend on you to be my alter ego. We had an inspection coming up right after I got there and it was a huge inspection team and they were there forever. They were there for six weeks. Some people who were on the inspection team also turned out to be fairly senior in the Agency, but Walter depended on me to be the interface with the inspectors. And I coordinated the inspection and I made sure that they dotted their "Ts" and all of that. And the inspectors recommended in their report that I be considered for a PAO assignment afterwards. It was almost impossible to go from being an administrative officer to a PAO. The System just did not allow for it. But I applied for the University studies and so I got accepted for that. So from Colombia I went back to the University of Colorado. I spent a year in the Latin American Studies Department. Not working towards a degree, just taking courses that I felt would be useful to me in my job. I took economic courses devoted toward Latin America. I had geography courses; I took Spanish Literature courses that were taught in Spanish to help me improve my Spanish plus give me a rounding good background on Hispanic literature. In fact, I still have some of my textbooks over there. This was the history of South America so I knew the history of each of the countries there and how they related to each other.

At the end of my assignment there, I didn't get assigned to South America. Shows you how the Government works! They needed a PAO in Jamaica because the ambassador who was assigned there had high influence and political influence. He had made a major contribution to the political party in power. He got to Jamaica and discovered the post had been used as a sinecure. Almost everybody at the post was at their final assignment before retiring. In fact, he felt that some of them had already retired and were just waiting until their official day of retiring. So he told Washington that he did not want anybody assigned to his post who was over 40. Luckily I was 39. Ha! Ha! Not quite 39. So that they had three candidates he said he wanted to interview the candidates for the job. So they scrounged around and they plunk me out of the University of Colorado to fly back to Washington to be interviewed by the Ambassador. And had a Near Eastern Specialist that they brought in who was also 39 and there was a woman who was a Latin American specialist who was 39. The ambassador was very sexist and so she really didn't stand a chance. She was a very nice lady and she was given a PAO assignment in another country so it worked out quite well for her. She went to Guyana as a PAO. The

ambassador interviewed the Near Eastern specialist first who had done research on the ambassador. And discovered that he liked yachts and had a big one and he owned a stable of race horses and he was on the Racing Commission in New York. He walked in and started explaining to the ambassador that he was a sailor, that he had a yacht and that he was going to sail his boat down there. And the ambassador didn't like him at all and thought that he was pushy. And then I came in as a third one for the interview and the Ambassador was somewhat uncomfortable because he had never really dealt with a black American in that setting before. As he told me later, his exposure to black Americans or black people had been primarily when he got out of the Army in 1946 and was not sure what he was going to do and so his Father owned some tenements in Harlem. So his father gave him $15,000 a year salary for him to go collect the rents from these tenants. That is how he got to know black people. He thought they were good people. He liked them very much. And then one time he had gone to the Jamaica Inn, in Jamaica, for a couple of weeks with his Mother. She would go around and give all the head porters and every one a $100 apiece and said please take care of me and my son while we are here. So he got to know those people quite well, too. So he felt he was very well qualified to be the ambassador in Jamaica. And I said to myself, he chose me. But I said to myself I am not going to last. This is going to be my first and last PAO assignment in no time. So when I arrived in Jamaica my predecessor was being retired and he was very unhappy about it and so he was not going to give me any help whatsoever. In fact, he wouldn't even move out of the PAO house, even though he was retired. We had to stay in temporary quarters. So finally, I sent an urgent message to Washington telling them that I was unable to move into the Public Affairs Officers house but my first Country Team meeting with the ambassador my predecessor got me to the meeting late and the ambassador crawled all over me about this. So, I didn't say anything. I realized that you don't get to Country Team meetings late and then the next meeting I went to I got there early and on time but I didn't realize everyone had assigned seats because I had not been told. So I sat in the wrong seat. He gave me a hard time about this. So I just quietly moved over to the next. And then we started discussing issues around the table and I was the only dark face there. I was the first black American in a substantive position in Jamaica. There had been an Area AID Officer there at one time but he had been sort of an AID person there. I was the first one to head up a section to go to the Country Team meeting.

No one had any sensitivity about black issues or black people. They were treating them as though they were from Mars or someplace. And they expected reactions to certain activities one way and I sort of butted in and said, "That is ridiculous you can't do that, these people are too smart for that. They are not dummies, they will see right through that. That you have been patronizing them and I went off on my little protocol and I realized that the room was startled and the ambassador looked at me as though I had dropped down from out of space also. I found out later on that nobody had ever contradicted him or considered any of his suggestions. And just come flat out said it just didn't make sense. Nobody in his entire life had done this to him. And they all expected a bolt of lightening to come through the ceiling and strike me dead on the spot. Actually the ambassador loved it. And we got to be good friends after a fashion, while I was there. He was constantly putting his foot in his mouth. And I was constantly pulling it out again.

Polishing it up for him and trying to put it back on the floor. He took it in good fashion. Every now and then he would snap at me and I would take it, but he liked to give you an example. He would like to walk through the embassy and he would just walk toward people just to see them scatter. He felt like, I'm the ambassador and they scattered like Moses parted the Red Sea. One day he came walking through the embassy and I was walking through the embassy and he headed straight for me with this little half smile on his face and I headed straight toward him and we collided. Ha! Ha! He said you know Morton, you know, he called me Mr. Herwald, you know you are the only one in this embassy that won't get out of my way and step aside and let me by. He said, "Stand your ground!"

Q: Did this relationship that you came to enjoy with him, this professional relationship, have an impact, have an effect on your relationship with the other counselors in the Country Team?

MORTON: It did, because they would send memos to the ambassador, program proposals or something. Even though I was not physically, everyone was physically in the embassy except me; I was way up town in a much better part of town. He would oftentimes send their messages to me. He would send them up to me and say comment on them. I would comment on them and send them back and I would be frank about it. If I thought they were stupid, I said so. And he liked this and it annoyed people at first. But, then they got so that before they sent it into him, they sent it to me first. Which was a better way because they had never thought of including the Public Affairs Office in their proposals and they realized there was a role to be played there.

Q: That was probably both physical separation as well as not recognizing the importance of the Public Affairs activities?

MORTON: They thought the purpose of the Public Affairs Officer was to put out wireless file in the paper every now and then, and to write the speeches for the ambassador or correct the grammar if they had written one and to get the ambassador's picture in the paper. And, other than that to stay out here. What do you know about economics or politics or whatever? The Jamaicans on the other hand accepted me with wide open arms. So that within a month I was very friendly with the Prime Minister and I was very friendly with the leader of the opposition. Frank Shakespeare was the Director of the Agency at the time. He came down.

Q: Another Agency heavy weight and dinosaur.

MORTON: He was a hot shot political appointment. He came down to Jamaica and I had lunch for him. And invited the entire Supreme Court and they came. Then the next time he came down I invited all the media heads. The editor, the senior editor of the newspaper and the editor of the radio stations and the head of the television stations. I included the ambassador in all of these. The ambassador would always say that Mr. Herwald can get all these people in his house and I can't even get them in mine. Ha! Ha! In fact, when Michael Manley became the Prime Minister and he was coming to make his

maiden trip to New York to address the United Nations and whenever the leader comes to the United States the American Ambassador accompanies him and goes back with him. So, the ambassador told Manley that he could get him lunch in the White House if you come down to Washington. When we go to New York I will do this, that and the other. Manley said, "I don't want you to go with me I want Hal to go." And the ambassador called me up and was furious and I had no idea what it was all about. So I called Manley to find out what it was all about. He said I told him I didn't want him to come I wanted you to come. I said, "You are going to get me fired." So he went back to the ambassador and told him that the ambassador could come provided I came too. Ha! Ha!

Q: So did you come?

MORTON: So I came.

Q: This did not endear you with the other counselors?

MORTON: By this time they knew me and they liked me. I have a weird sense of humor. I harass everybody and I don't have much of a temper and I don't get angry very easily. So I was on good terms with everybody. There was a little bit of envy because the Ambassador had 35 mm USIS projectors installed in the residence and his family owned a theater chain in New York. He would get first run or pre-run movies and then he would invite people from the embassy by for dinner and a look at a movie. Chris and I were standard invitees of this. We were always there. So people knew we got that special treatment. Plus Chris and the ambassador's wife became very good friends. They used to play tennis together. We are still very good friends. He died years ago but she lives in New York. And whenever we go to New York we see her. We are the only people who were in Jamaica in those days that she keeps in touch with. She could buy and sell us about 50 times over again. We are very gallant Arian about it, we don't mind. Ha! Ha!

Q: You enjoyed good positive personal and professional relations with the Government of Jamaica. You enjoyed a good relationship with the ambassador and I am assuming also that your personality was such that it didn't rub the rest of the Country Team. Was this the same experience you had enjoyed when you were in Colombia before, even though you were not a PAO in Colombia? You did have contacts although you were not a program type officer.

MORTON: I was not a program type officer. But I was given program type assignments. When we went through reduction in force, the position of the Binational Center Coordinator, because we had seven Class A Binational Centers and about six Class B's, and the position was abolished and the PAO gave that to me as additional responsibility. The Book Translation Officer position was abolished and so I got that one too. And so all the branches regarded me as the person that they would come to. The Cultural Affairs Officer was a former college professor and he was extremely fluent in languages. He spoke about six languages and he was studying Russian. He had nothing to say in any of them. To all extent and purposes, I ran the cultural section. He was a very nice guy and he could babble away in German, French, Tai and Spanish with no accent whatsoever. He

had been a language professor. When it came to being a Cultural Affairs Officer he was completely lost. We got there about the same time. I think I got there about three weeks before him and I told him we would have to work out a budget so you tell me what your program plans are. He said, "How can I do that, I don't know what is going to happen." So I did his budget for him. I would talk to his staff and find out what their plans were and we would set up a budget. The following year when I would call them in and said, "now that you see how it is done, tell me what you want, put together your budget with your staff. He said, "I can't do it. I don't know where to start. You did such a good job last year. Do it again!"

Q: You touch on another interesting outlet of the mission and that was the cultural centers and in the case in Colombia you were the main conduit for there operations. How do you feel, how did you feel about the importance of the Cultural Centers as a part of the overall US mechanism in articulating US policy?

MORTON: We had two categories of Binational Centers as I mentioned. We were the Class A Binational Centers were headed by an American Officer. In fact, the larger ones had in Cali, Colombia we had two officers in Medellin, Bogotá we had three, but in Kenya we had one. Bucaramanga we had one. Cartagena we had one. So we had American Foreign Service officers running these and they answered to us. We had locally hired contract Americans running the others. And they were a mixed breed. They didn't have access to classified information. Oftentimes they had been school teachers or Peace Corps volunteers that had stayed on.

One of them had been married to a Colombian and been there for years and she was sort of an institution in the community and so we had to watch her carefully because instead of teaching English she might teach hair styling or something like that. We really didn't want her to teach English because that is how you can teach culture at the same time and open up different avenues to approaching people.

We had one in Bogotá who was a Colombian but she lived in the United States and her husband had political ambitions and so that is why she wanted to run the center there. In fact, she established the center and came to us for accreditation and we gave it to her. And then I had to go out there constantly to oversee it. Her husband owned a spaghetti or macaroni factory or something like that. But he wanted to get into politics. She wanted to use the center as a platform for him. Eventually, I decided we really shouldn't have this as an official American presence and so the PAO agreed. So I went out to Bogotá and closed it. Took the official US property and shipped it back by truck to Bucaramanga which was the nearest post for an American officer and for all intent and purposes I closed Bogotá. I found it interesting that a couple of years later when I was on my way to La Paz as PAO and I stopped off in Bogotá for a couple of days to brief and see how things were going and I went to the PAO's staff meeting and the item of discussion was how do we close the center in Bogotá. I closed it and took the stuff away and after I got transferred out, she reopened it, and put the American flag up, and was using locally inherited stuff and they gave her validation as an official and she was back in business again. Bob Chapman was the PAO at the time. Bob Chapman was trying to close Bogotá.

Some years later, I went through there and whoever the PAO was at the time was trying to close Bogotá. I would imagine that is probably the only center outside of Bogotá still around unless that lady died. She was determined. I mean you have to give her credit; she had a lot of moxie. She had a lot of energy and she was just determined to use us to further her purposes.

Q: So in all, we jump back to Colombia you did have influence on the execution of policy as far as those audiences were concerned. Because you had a broader band of contacts through these sub-branch post if you pleased, since you had American Foreign Service officers out there who were responding to you?

MORTON: Well also when I was in Bogotá as executive officer when the PAO was ill if he didn't want to go to the Country Team meeting I was not the next senior officer in the ranks. The PAO was the senior rank; he was a Class 2 under the old system. The Cultural Affairs Officer was a Class 3 under the old system. The Information Officer was a Class 4 but he was senior in rank to me. So I was the fourth ranking officer there. But I was the one that the PAO would send to the ambassador's Country Team meeting because I could speak overall about USIS rather than just narrow focuses and I could also make input into what was going on there based on my knowledge of the binational centers as well as information in the cultural programs.

Q: Do you recall any specific issues in which you as the USIS representative or as the principal USIS Officer in a particular program area made input?

MORTON: In Colombia there are a number of them. The Colombians established diplomatic relations with Russia, the Soviet Union, during the time I was there. So they opened up a big Russian Embassy. Our embassy people were very nervous about this because immediately there were people standing outside the doorways photographing us as we sort of came and went. There were a few terrorist's incidents that were not part of the usual pattern. So it was decided to get to know the people in the Russian Embassy better, we should establish a Diplomatic Club and each embassy in the country would have representatives up to a total number of three. And because our Embassy was by far the biggest and we did not want to overwhelm the thing. There were a lot of Latin American Embassies that had only one person and that was the ambassador. And the ambassador decided that I should be one of the three from the American Embassy who was a member of this Diplomatic Club. We met once a month. And we would get to know our colleagues. We would report back on things we talked about. I got to know the Russians quite well because they had never met a black American before and they thought I would be ripe for subversion or whatever. Plus they were just fascinated. And one of them, the Information Officer equivalent to who I think was the KGB would always seek me out. He was trying to explain there were so many similarities in our countries and in our culture and how he always found talking to me, it was easier to communicate because I did not have the hang ups a lot of my countrymen did. He was constantly prodding me for background about myself. I thought this was fascinating so I gave him all sorts of background about myself. All of it completely fictitious.

Q: You were sensitive to the fact that he was probably collecting information.

MORTON: And I was giving it to him. It obviously went into some system somewhere. This was in 1968 and I left Colombia in 1969. When I got to Bolivia in 1973, the Russian Ambassador had a movie showing at his residence and he invited me and he obviously had read the file on me, this file that I created. He came up with all these little tidbits from my fictitious background which was absolutely hilarious. And I loved it. It just showed that they get bad information the way we do. We probably get fed a bunch of garbage just like I was feeding this guy a bunch of garbage.

Q: This is interesting. Did you have any, well first of all let me go back, did the Russians or any of their satellite allies have missions in Jamaica and was there any or were you aware of any follow-up there?

MORTON: The Jamaicans, some of the leftist were trying to pressure Michael Manley into doing it but the Jamaicans were rather overconfident. There were some leanings toward Cuba because there are a lot of Cubans living in Jamaica. And a lot of Jamaicans were working over at Guantanamo and so there was a lot of sympathy there. Plus there had been strong ties with Cuba before Fidel Castro. There was this feeling but at the same time they didn't want the subversion from Cuba to get into Jamaica, because it would have been ripe for exploitation. And so there was no love there.

Q: How did the average Jamaican in your estimation feel about the United States and Americans, two different questions?

MORTON: The average Jamaican, if we had opened up visas and let every Jamaican who wanted a visa come to the United States, the country would have been deserted in two weeks. The ambassador wanted to control the immigration. For Jamaicans to get a tourist visa and they spoke English and all black people look alike and they can get on a plane and come to New York and disappear and live for the next 40 years and nobody would be the wiser or go to Miami. So he was trying to maintain very stiff controls on this.

He kept putting obstacles in the way of people applying for visas. One thing he did was he restricted the hours that they were open for accepting visas and then he stopped allowing them to come into the consulate and they had to stand outside in the sun to get in line. They put holes in the walls, three holes in the walls of the embassy. And the Visa Officer sat on a bar stool and talked to them through this hole in the wall. They had this chute that looked like a cattle chute and they would sort of feed down through there. They had an hour and one-half a day it was opened for Jamaicans. The line would come out and down the street and around the corner. People would pay somebody to stand in line for them. People who had money. Every Jamaican who had any influence would pester you about helping him get a visa. They wanted to give you their passports and you get the visa for them. I was lucky by being physically separated from the embassy and I could tell them with a straight conscience that I had nothing to do with them. You're talking to the Fire Department about mailing a letter. That was my favorite example. Or you are talking about the Post Office about putting out a fire at your house. That I am not

the person to see; I have nothing to do with visas. I can't recommend you to anybody. I don't know those people. I did know them but I was not about to get involved in that. All you had to do is do it for one and you were stuck. Even the ambassador would get pestered by people for visas when they would go somewhere.

Q: In our last conversation, we were in Jamaica and we were talking about the tight rules that the ambassador was placing on Jamaicans, because of his concern about insurgent infiltrators from the nearby island of Cuba, which could have had a devastating impact on the overall perception of our policies in Jamaica. How did you see that as a PAO?

MORTON: Well there were several things going on at that time. This is the time when the Black Power movement was gaining strength in the Caribbean area and so the ambassador was concerned about this. He really didn't understand Black Power because I kept trying to explain to him that naturally it would be because the blacks are in power, so what do you expect? But he was also concerned and he didn't understand that the blacks in the United States had less power than he thought they did. This was a common perception among people of his social class who felt that the black minority in the United States had more power and more opportunities than were readily available to them. And he didn't want more coming into the United States, either because they put a cut on our welfare rolls or having more babies and taking over our cities.

If you took the number of blacks in New York City and distributed them around the five boroughs you would have, in those days, far less of a problem than if, I think, they were concentrated primarily in certain parts of the Bronx, Bedford Stuyvesant, or in Harlem. So he was against this but, at the same time, I thought that my friendship with Michael Manley (Jamaican Prime Minister) would buffer some of his reactions.

Manley didn't trust the ambassador, because the ambassador had been too close to his predecessor Hugh Shearer. Hugh Shearer was with the Jamaican Labor Party, which was more conservative and Michael Manley was with the People's National Party which came, both parties came out of labor unions. But the people's National Party which Michael headed was more socialist. Since Michael had gone to school in England and in Canada, he had served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the war. He was more of a Fabian socialist and this was a big difference between socialism and communism that completely escaped the ambassador. They were all the same thing to him and there was no getting around it.

He (the ambassador) was trying to convince Manley to increase the American investment in the country. Manley wanted to reduce the amount of American investment in the country because it tended to be invested in all of the hotels on the northern coast and there were little havens of wealthy Americans there. The ambassador hosted the heads of Holiday Inn, Reynolds Aluminum, and, I can't remember his name, he was the governor of Texas and we thought he ran for… John Connelly, yea, Connelly… he got the three of them together to talk about how they could do some investment in Texas I mean in Jamaica.

I sat in on the meeting. We were at the ambassador's house and they were trying to decide what they could do and Reynolds said that he had already invested far more than he wanted to and he wanted to diversify. To follow, they were having labor problems at the Holiday Inn and he (Holiday Inn head) wasn't about to expand there. And Connelly said "well, all I know is Cattle, so why don't we get them involved in Cattle? We could see if they've got an island off the coast and we could use this as an isolation place and we could raise prime cattle and take them to the States and sell them at thirty-thousand dollars apiece for stud. This whole thing got cooked up in fifteen minutes, so then we all got in limousines, went over to the prime minister's residence who was waiting to talk to this group.

They let Connelly do the talking because it was his idea and the others didn't know beans about cattle and neither did I, nor the ambassador. Connelly was a great BS artist. He could take spider webs and make silk out of it and he spun this big vision about cattle investments. Neither the ambassador nor I knew anything about cattle and I'm sure Reynolds didn't, and I can't remember the owner of Holiday Inn, I can't remember his name, but he openly admitted he didn't know anything about it. But Connelly mentioned that in Dallas, a couple of weeks earlier, they had brought prime steer into the major hotel there and auctioned them off in the ballroom, anywhere from thirty thousand dollars apiece and up. And how much their sperm sold for, because they could use them for stud.

It all sounded great and so the Jamaican government said that they did have an island off coast that was uninhabited and he said fine, we could use those as a quarantine station. And we could raise the cattle off the by-product of newsprint and orange peals. (He explained) that you get the byproduct from the printing industry here and give them a little hay and they'll be perfect and the used pineapple would result in tender meat because that's the way you get the prime beef now, it works as a tenderizer. It all sounded wonderful and the Jamaicans said they would have people identify farmers who could participate in this program and Connelly said he would talk to his people about getting the other end started.

We went back to the ambassador's residence afterwards for recapitulation and lunch and everybody told Connelly "what a great job that was and said how long it would take you to get this started." And Connelly said "get it started? I didn't know you were serious about this." There was a whole series of promises got their hopes built up and then there was that sort of attitude.

We also had Leon Sullivan, Reverend Leon Sullivan, from Philadelphia down for a program with USIS, as a speaker. Manley wanted to meet him, because he'd heard so much about what Sullivan had done in the United States in the poor neighborhoods by creating local development opportunities along with industrialization centers. So I took Sullivan by there and Sullivan told him he could have one of his people come down and work with them, but they'd have to get some financing from either internally or from foreign assistance in order to get the program started. Then he would work with them to

get it started. The Jamaican government got all excited about this and Sullivan was true to his word, he had a man down there in a week. The ambassador wouldn't see the fellow.

The DCM was in charge of the economic assistance program in Jamaica and there was one person from AID there. They would not go along with this because they felt that Jamaicans should be raising parsnips and cabbages and trying to sell that, rather than getting involved in industrialization. So, here was another disappointment following right after the cattle flop. And there were about three of these and Manley was getting more and more inclined to go further left. He was talking about nationalizing the gasoline stations because there were Exxon, Shell and Texaco.

Bauxite was really the thing that stood out. People would go and they would see these ships leaving Jamaica, carrying red bauxite and they were saying "they're carrying our country away and leaving big holes in the ground," even though they were restoring it. In fact, they'd leave it in better shape than an advent before they strip mined it. But it's something about seeing your country leave as physical soil, leaving in huge transport ships and trains full over the rear. And it's going to take it away. This was one thing that really bugged Jamaicans and Reynolds had sort of a plantation attitude toward the Jamaicans. I think his father had been the one who got the bauxite started there and they also had some in Guyana and Arkansas and then West Africa. And he was very indifferent to the feelings of the Jamaicans about this. Alcoa was a lot more sympathetic and there were large contingencies of Jamaican's employed there but it's not really a labor intensive activity. You've got machines that do most of the work and the top people were Americans and then the Jamaicans did some of the middle level and the lower level work. But the Jamaicans were insistent on saying that they could do it themselves and Manley and I had a lot of conversations about this.

He used to come by my house because I had a fairly large collection of (music) records and tapes and our taste in music ran the same way. So he'd come by and we'd have a gin and tonic and listen to Diana Washington or Duke Ellington. In fact his mother and I are great friends too, she was still alive, Edna Manley. Edna Lowe was in musical theater and so whenever I went to the States, I'd come back and I'd bring her the sound track from different American music or theater productions. She was really fascinated when I brought her back a sound track from here, I guess, Edna must have been in her late seventies or early 80's at that time and she was determined then to go to New York to see Hair. This was for real a scandalous thing at that time with that boring nude new thing, but she thought this would be great. She was an artist and sort of, I guess she would have been the transversion of a hippie. It was now the seventies but she was a great lady. But anyway, Manley was listening to me on one side and he was resenting the ambassador's attitude on the other side. A second thing was the Ambassador always pretended he could never remember Michael Manley's name and he would call him Charlie. And this just really irritated him and I think there was one other minister of state, Dudley Thompson who, I think, is no longer alive…but Dudley was very much to the left, he was beyond socialism although he was openly socialistic but I think he was a closet type. He was really a communist and he had a lot of influence on Michael and he was really pushing

them to try and get closer to Castro and to the Cubans. Dudley spoke Spanish quite well. I don't know whether he learned it in Cuba or where.

After I left Jamaica, within two weeks the ambassador was kicked out and declared persona-non-grata. There were several things that brought this to a head. One of them was at a party in Jamaica, the ambassador thought that all of the members who were at the party were Caucasians, but there were several very fair skinned Jamaicans of African descent there. In the group and he made some derogatory remarks about the Prime Minister in a joking fashion, he called him a mongrel because his mother was white and his father had been a black Jamaican, a fair skinned black Jamaican. And this didn't sit well at all and it got back to Michael, probably within two hours. And then the ambassador was back in the States, testifying in what he thought was a closed hearing at Congress and he mentioned to the Congress, that he had Jamaica in his hip pocket, that they would go whichever way he wanted. The new ambassador from Jamaica to the United States was sitting in the room and immediately called back and Michael made the ambassador persona non-grata and said he couldn't come back. So the ambassador's wife had to go and close up their household effects and get them out. She was well loved there by the Jamaican people; she was a very gracious lady. She came from old money and her mother bought the New York Mets as a hobby. They were not hurting for cash but she was a very, very gracious lady and she did not flaunt her wealth, she still doesn't, we're good friends of hers and we never go to New York without seeing her.

Q: Let me interrupt you here. You have really developed a unique example of the role of the public affairs officer in articulating and in this case, executing US foreign policy in Jamaica during your assignment there. A lot of this was attributed to the relations that you enjoyed with Michael Manley. Well now, part one, I would like for you to go back and just tell me a little bit more about how you really got to know Michael Manley

MORTON: I met Manley I guess, about two months after I got there he was not the prime minister at that time, he was the head of the labor union and each labor union had a political party with which it was affiliated. I met Manley at a small gathering of labor leaders at a private residence and we got to talking and he was somewhat older than me but we had shared a lot of experiences in common and we both had similar personalities. I've been accused of being laid-back and Manley was very laid-back and we got to talking.

Jamaica is full of pretty women and Manley was single at that time. I think he and his third wife had broken up and he loved looking at attractive women and he would stop talking to you when one came in a room to give her the once over and immediately take a deep sigh when she left the room. Manley was influential in later years in getting me as one of the judges in the Ms. Jamaica contest. This was because I had told him when we first met, that Jamaicans were missing an opportunity as far as having a world class beauty selected for the competition in the Miss Universe contest. I would say this facetiously, because I had told him that I had traveled in many countries around the world and I was an international girl watcher and I'm highly credentialed in this respect. He thought it was funny, so when they had the preliminaries for Miss Jamaica the following

year, he had come to appoint me as one of the judges. I was the only foreign judge and we interviewed about twelve or fifteen gorgeous girls and put them in numerical order. It was interesting, because I was very vocal in supporting one of the candidates and less so in supporting another and these two ended up being Miss. Jamaica in the first runner-up. The one that I supported as Miss Jamaica ended up being one of the runners up in the Miss Universe contest, first time they had placed that highly. So he was telling everybody from then on, that we've got a world class girl-watcher here.

We had that sort of a relationship. When he was the labor leader, our house was in…well initially, when we got there we moved to a section of town called Cherry Garden, I mean from Cherry Garden to a section of town called Beverly Hills which was a hill right in the heart of town and you could look out all over the city. I lived about halfway up the hill and Michael was dating a woman who lived further up the hill. He would pass by my house and go and visit her. On his way back down, oftentimes he would stop in for a drink and listen to some music. We never knew when he was going to show up, he'd pull into the driveway and the cook or the maid would come running to tell us that Mr. Manley is there and she'd immediately go running to get a gin and tonic. She knew what he drank, so he would usually sit there for about 45 minutes to an hour and we'd have a drink and listen to music and talk about the affairs of the day.

Jamaicans are very friendly people and they were very accessible. I got to know everybody who was anybody while I was there because the Jamaican library services were very influential throughout the country. They have little provincial libraries all over and most of the top librarians have been educated in the United States. They would have programs, American cultural programs and have me as a speaker. I had spoken on almost every topic imaginable, American literature, American music. I put together a combination of tape and lecture, and I would go and do a lecture on American music and the influence of blues and contemporary music and the relationship between jazz and Gospel music. And so I got around the country to get to know the leaders, not only in Kingston, the capital, but in the other parts of the country. It's a small country; it's about the size of Connecticut. You could drive by, if you were ambitious enough, you could get up early in the morning and you could leave going east and you can drive completely around the island in fifteen hours, because my son and I did it one day to see if we could. It was kind of a stupid thing to do but I've done stupid things in my life and we enjoyed it, good father-son day. So, it's very easy to get to know them, I knew everybody who was anybody and I still see them, they come to town and they get in touch.

Q: How long after you met Manley, was it before he became Prime Minister?

MORTON: About a year. I also knew his predecessor, he was Shearer. I knew him quite well. I met him about three days after I arrived there and he was a very distinguished gentleman.

Q: Did anyone else in the country team enjoy a similar relationship with Manley after he became Prime Minister?

MORTON: The political officer did. The political officer had been close to Manley when he was a labor leader and he maintained this closeness. There was some friction between him and the ambassador because of this, because the ambassador felt that Manley should have been his contact and the fact that the political officer and Manley had this long standing relationship didn't sit well with him and so he encouraged the department to transfer the political officer out for that reason. He never worried about the relationship between Manley and me for some reason.

Q: But the ambassador was aware of your close relationship.

MORTON: He was.

Q: But yet he chose to curtail the political officer.

MORTON: Yes, I guess he assumed that our relationship was more social than anything else. When Manley was invited to the visit to the United Nations to make his maiden speech there and the ambassador told him that it's customary for the ambassador to accompany up a leader of the country, when he visits American soil, "I'll go back with you." Manley told him he didn't want him to go. He said that if somebody from the embassy went, he wanted me to go. The ambassador was very upset about this and so I called Manley and told him, that he was hurting my career, that I'll probably get fired unless he relented on this. So he went back to the ambassador and told him that it was okay for the ambassador to accompany him, but I had to be part of the group too. Manley wanted me there as a buffer, because I could divert the ambassador when he got to be too off track with Manley. I could usually divert him off to some other subject.

Q: What were some of the major bilateral issues with Jamaica and the U.S.? I know you've touched on them relating to some other things but just three, four or five major issues and how did and which of these issues did you focus on and why?

MORTON: One major issue was that Jamaicans felt that the United States had a paternalistic attitude toward them, which it did. At the same time they felt that the United States ignored them, which it did. Unemployment was and underemployment was very high in Jamaica. Unemployment was probably about 25 percent and with underemployment added to that it was about 40 percent and so there was a great deal of poverty. They also felt that there was a brain drain because one year, the entire graduating class of nurses left their graduation ceremonies, still wearing their graduation robes, and went and lined up at the embassy, to get visas to come to the United States because there was a shortage of nurses in the United States and becoming a nurse, was a one sure way of getting a visa. This did not sit too well.

The Jamaicans were hired on contract to come up and pick apples in the United States and pick fruit, the oranges in Florida. To pick cotton (visa jobs), that traditionally had been done by black Americans, but they had gone up on the economic scale and wouldn't do that kind of work anymore. S1o they would bring in hundreds of Jamaicans picking tobacco on contract and put them in really terrible living conditions. They were almost

treated as if they were prisoners; they were kept in guarded camps and that sort of thing. They would come back and talk about this. Haitians also were brought in under these conditions and then there was the whole Black Power thing.

When the British were in Jamaica, as it had been a British colony, the British would take their vacation and go to the mountains and the Jamaicans would take their vacations and go to the mountains, also as part of the British tradition. In the meantime, the Americans bought up all the beaches, so when the Jamaicans suddenly became aware that the beach property was much more valuable than mountain property and this is where the tourist were coming in, they could even have access to the beaches. They were all fenced. All the good ones were fenced off and they had armed guards, there was one huge enclave called Tryall, between Montego Bay and Negril. Very wealthy Americans had vacation homes there and there were signs posted around the place, that "No Jamaicans allowed" "Trespassers will be shot." and this was the sort of thing that really irritated, just terrible public relations. I met with the managing people and tried all tactics, explaining to them this was not a good idea. I was there along with the head of the Ministry of Labor, who had been refused service at the restaurant there. He had gone in his chauffeur-driven limousine and treaded his way to the restaurant, so I went back with him. I might add that he eventually became Prime Minister, P. J. Patterson, but he still remembers that, he said it was the most embarrassing thing that ever happened to him in his life.

Q: Did you have the occasion to include any of these opinion formers, these influential people both in the labor parties and other important institutions in some of your programs, such as exchange programs?

MORTON: Most of these people had been educated in the United States and an awful lot of them had green cards. Manley had a green card and they had been to the United States so many times, that they knew New York and they knew Florida and to a limited extent, they knew the Washington D.C area. An awful lot of them had graduated from Howard University and Columbia University. There was an American University Graduates Association, a sort of a fledgling thing which I worked with, to get it stronger. These are graduates from major universities in the United States. They've gone to Columbia and Chicago, Stanford, Harvard; a huge number had gone to Harvard, Hampton, and Talladega. There were hundreds of them. I got the ambassador's wife to hold a reception for them at the residence and this was very well attended. You could use this as a representational venue.

Q: And that one is about how you managed to integrate both your personal efforts, in a professional manner, towards the both articulation and execution of U.S. policy in Jamaica and being the head of USIS, how would you measure the importance of both of these?

MORTON: One advantage I think, physical advantage that I had in Jamaica, was that USIS was physically separate from the embassy. The embassy was downtown in the old deteriorating center city, and my office was uptown in what they called New Kingston, which was the part where the new hotels were going up and new residences. I was fairly

close to the university and people, everybody had to pass by where my office was, to get downtown to the embassy, and Jamaicans knew where my office was and they knew where the embassy was and mine was more accessible, had a huge parking lot out back.

You could walk in the front door or the backdoor, no guards and the fact that I was the first black officer in a substantive position, and both my wife and I were very high profile. I would imagine that an average week, there were at least two, maybe three pictures of one or the other of us, in the newspaper, the entire three years we were there. I have two scrapbooks full of newspaper clippings of just pictures of us. In fact, I finally asked the newspaper photographers if they would stop taking so many pictures of us, because I felt they should put more of the ambassador's pictures in the paper rather than mine and I didn't want this to become a cause of conflict between us, because I knew he was very sensitive about his role. Often, his pictures would be in the papers because of something negative he had done. To give you a good example, he had a beautiful dog that came up missing and he couldn't find the dog, so instead of just putting an ad in the classified, he called the editor-in-chief of the newspaper, to tell him that he wanted to run an ad in the paper and offered a reward for his dog, five-hundred dollars. And the editor said to him, "five-hundred dollars!" That's more than most Jamaicans make in a year and the ambassador said "my dog is worth more than most Jamaicans." So they ran the ad on the front page of the newspaper, with this direct quote from the ambassador and a picture of him holding a painting of his dog.

Q: How did that impact your life as a counselor for public affairs?

MORTON: The ambassador called me up and asked me what was wrong, why did they do that and I told him, it wasn't a very diplomatic thing to do. He did things like this on a regular basis, sometimes, I could cover it. I didn't even know about this one. I discovered when I was having breakfast and I opened up the paper at home and there it was, right in the front page and my first reaction was, oh no! He's done it again. But he was innocent, he didn't really mean anything by this, he was not a mean person, he was just out of touch. He had not been accustomed to the reaction he had. He came from a moneyed family and he married into a moneyed family. He'd been completely isolated from everyday people. He never got negative feedback from any of these things he done, he'd done things like this his entire life, but he never got any negative feedback.

I would go out of my way sometimes, to explain to him that 'you can't just do things like this,' he would make negative comments to me, that I'm not very thin skinned I'll give you a good example, one time he and I were going someplace, we left the embassy in the ambassador's car and we were driving through the market place to a meeting with the leader of the opposition party, I think it was Edward Seaga. The air-conditioning broke down in the limousine, so we had to open the windows and this stench from the market place just really came in and the ambassador started talking about "God, this place stinks,"! He said, but Jamaicans stink, why do they stink like that? And then he looked at me and said, "but you don't stink and you're black," and the driver of the car was black, a Jamaican, the bodyguard who was sitting in the front seat was a black Jamaican and I could see both of them just stiffening up. The ambassador said, you probably don't stink

because you probably have some white blood in you and I said no, it's not that so much, I said its access to soap and hot running water. That, you have it in your house and I have it in my house, so we both can bathe on a regular basis. But these people often don't have this and they have to bathe in a communal parlor in the center of the square there and bathe whenever they can out there. I said, you know, you go to Japan and the Japanese think that you stink. He said why, I said because you eat a lot of dairy foods and you eat cheese and milk and this gives you a body odor that's offensive to the Japanese because they don't eat this. And if you went to a public bath in Japan and jumped in the water, they'd all get out, because you stink and he says, I hadn't thought about that. So, we went off to another subject. But I could tell that these people in the front seat were not very happy with this thing. They relaxed a little bit when I sort of started putting it in perspective, but it was just these kinds of things that would just come out. And I didn't get angry about it or insulted even, I felt it was a chance to educate him.

Q: Now, you mentioned that you were one of the first black Foreign Service officers in a substantive position in the mission there

MORTON: There had been black marine guards and there had been a black AID officer there, but the AID officer was not very high profile. I forget what his name was, but he was very proper. He'd been there probably about four years before I got there. There were only two people involved with AID there, the DCM who was the State Department officer, who has nominally the developmental officer and then he'd have an assistant, who would be an AID officer. The AID officer really did the paper work and the DCM would make the decisions on it.

Q: Do you think that your blackness had any impact on how Jamaicans dealt with you?

MORTON: Yes, it gave me an instant entrée. When I first got there, before I even got off the ship, there was a photographer from the newspaper out there to cover somebody else who was arriving and he discovered that I was coming with the American Embassy to be the director of USIS. So he took pictures of me also, so my picture was in the paper, the second day after I got there. My wife and I and my two kids and this let people know what I looked like, because my predecessor didn't know that I was black. The ambassador hadn't told anybody in the embassy that he knew I was black. I had met him in Washington, the reason why he knew and he chose me as a lesser of three evils as he put it to me later on. When I got there, I didn't think, when I saw his attitude, I didn't think that I'd last very long, because I thought he'd kick me out. So because I felt this way about it, I didn't bite my tongue with him and I told him what I thought about things. I did it diplomatically, I just didn't blurt it out, or I didn't do it in public. But he liked this, nobody had ever done this to him before and he respected me, because I stood up for my opinion and I would go and tell him about things and put them in a different perspective that he could relate to. And so we became friends because of this. He was constantly saying things or doing things like this. I suppose, a lot of people would have flown off the handle, of course a lot of people would have flown off the handle, but you couldn't blame him for this, he didn't know any better. There was a very beautiful red head woman there who was married to a very wealthy black Jamaican. She'd been a

stewardess, Irish airlines or something and he had met her and he had fallen in love and got married and had a couple of kids and the ambassador just assumed that the reason why she married this fellow was because she only liked black men. Actually, he was the first one she had ever met. And then he made the usual sexual remarks to her and she was very insulted. She and my wife were good friends and she couldn't stand the ambassador, she would just stay out of his presence.

Q: You see, that was, I'm trying to remember, this is in the 70s, early 70s.

MORTON: I was there 1970 to 73.

Q: The president then was Nixon

MORTON: Nixon. The ambassador and his family had made a contribution over a quarter of a million dollars to the Nixon campaign and because of this, he got Jamaica. He really wanted Sweden and as he put it loudly at the dinner with the editor of the newspaper there that "I wanted Sweden, but Sweden was three-hundred thousand." And if they I told him that, "I would have given him three-hundred thousand." I was afraid, this was going to end up being in the newspaper next day too, so I got with the editor and we chatted and I explained to him how diplomats, ambassadors were chosen in the American system.

As we were leaving, my tour was coming to an end, the ambassador was being considered for Sweden because he had given another contribution. Haldeman was a childhood friend of his and that was his entree to the White House. In fact his parents had introduced Haldeman's parents to each other. But he wanted me to go with him as PAO of Sweden which I would have loved to have gone to Sweden as PAO but I wanted a different environment. And I told Personnel and I told the area office, that I really would prefer staying in Latin America. The ambassador was called by the director of the agency to ensure him that if he got Sweden, I would get Sweden. Frank Shakespeare was the director at that time and Shakespeare asked me what did I think about this. He thought it was great keeping a winning a team together. And I told him that sometimes it's best to let your quarterback go to the best team, so I ended up leaving, going to Bolivia and the ambassador never got Sweden because once he got PNGed (persona-non-grata) from Jamaica, that killed his chance to get another ambassadorial assignment.

Q: Before we go to La-Paz, this is been a very interesting segment on Jamaica. Is there anything else that you can think of during your assignment there where your contributions made a difference in our efforts and our relations in Jamaica?

MORTON: I think one thing that I thought was interesting, was one of the first times I had ever been on television. I was asked to appear on national television to explain the American electoral process. Something that although I had been a political science major in college and headed an advance degree from a major American university, like most Americans, I really did not understand the American electoral process. So I spent a lot of time cramming for this because I had no idea what questions were going to be asked of

me and there were certain things like whether it's two thirds or three fourths whatever, I just couldn't remember what it was and so I wrote little crib sheets for myself on little pieces of paper about this long and about this wide.

Q: You describe something about six inches, a little bit larger than an oversize index card.

MORTON: Well, they were about five inches long and about an inch and half wide and I numbered them in red numbers and blue numbers. I had the red numbers in the left cuff of my trousers and the blue numbers in the right cuff. And when I was sitting in front of the camera in an easy chair and occasionally I'd get asked a question where I had to refer to one of these, so I can get the figures straight. So, I would look at the ceiling and casually cross my legs and fish out whether there was a red with a blue with a particular cue on it so I could read it below camera level and put it back and go on talking. Halfway into the interview, my notes fell off my cuffs, and the cameraman almost went into hysterics but I kept a straight face and the cameraman fortunately switched to the interviewer to give me a chance to scramble around on the floor and get my notes together. But after that I was on television quite often to explain different things and different aspects of American culture. It was a very popular program, Jamaicans have a great sense of humor and so I would color some of my examples with spontaneous stream of consciousness, remarks that they thought were funny and this keeps them up.

There was a very small Jewish population in Jamaica. To give you an example, the rabbi headed up a synagogue that only had about 35 Jews in it, plus about 20 blacks who joined the Jewish faith. These were mostly Sephardic Jews, but he was a great comedian and he was so popular that he had a radio program on Saturday nights, "Tell the rabbi." And he would do a call in and people called in asking questions and he'd also tell funny stories and he was extremely popular and I saw from this that one way to get the Jamaicans' attention, was to tell them funny stories. In fact I sent back to the States and had the library service to get books of humor for me and I bought quite a bit myself. In fact, my bookcase over there, the next to the bottom shelf, I still have all sorts of jokes. We could go into certain categories and get something that's appropriate and it came in handy throughout my career wherever I was, because the same situation existed later on and when I was in the Philippines. I was on television a lot and the Filipinos loved humor to bring things to their attention. I think that was one way. The other was that we had a donated book program at that time and you could get English language books, both textbooks and regular books, all you had to do was pay ten cents a copy and that took care of a hell of a lot of books.

Jamaica was an English speaking country and there was an extreme shortage of books in Jamaica. And I set up a book review committee with members of my staff, I went to the American officer and I had a trained librarian on staff and we got the head of the Jamaican library. So we would review the books offered by the agency and we would get hundreds of thousands of books which would then go, some would go to the Jamaica library service to be distributed around the country and others would go to the school system. Jamaicans were so thirsty for knowledge that you could drive through these little

villages at night and you're seeing kids under the street lights reading because they didn't have electricity at home. And many times they were reading these books that we had given, because we had always put a stamp on the inside and also somewhere in the middle of the book. We had one of those little devices that you press it and put sort of a mark in there that showed that it had been contributed by USIS. I would often make a public presentation of large quantities of books or I would get the ambassador's wife to do it and she and I would go to different little provincial libraries and make major presentations of books.

When we got ready to leave the country I had been to one little school in the city of Kingston that probably had ten books and my kids at home had two bookshelves apiece of children's books. And they were packing them up to take with us to Bolivia and I told them "you've really outgrown those books and I'll get you more in Bolivia, why don't you give them to this school?" They didn't want to do it first and I took them over to the school and the principal said that she would have a special bookcase made, and she'd put their name on it and so they went over and represented the books. And sure enough, there were their names on a little plaque on top of it. They were so enthusiastic about this, that not only did they give their books, but they went around among their friends and gave more and we ended up giving about 700 books to this one school. And my kids were very proud of this. When we got to Bolivia they started doing the same thing.

Q: Speaking of Bolivia, tell us a little bit about your transition. How did you go there? Did you seek out Bolivia? Did you seek out the mission there? Did the new ambassador seek you out, or was this the USIA cold nomination? How did you get there?

MORTON: It was interesting when I got ready to leave to Bolivia, I was talking to my career counselor and my career counselor was talking to me in terms of being a binational center director in Santiago, Chile or assistant cultural affairs officer in Argentina or something like this. And I told him what I felt with my experience, as a successful public affairs officer, I should be considered for that and I was getting absolutely no where. The area director was appointed PAO of Mexico and he …

Q: Who was the area director?

MORTON: No, I want to say Darryl Dance but it wasn't Darryl Dance, it'll come to my memory just in a moment. He went to Mexico and eventually retired from there and started a business working for the Mexican government, I mean for the governor of Texas, doing work across the border, trade and things like that with Mexico. But I was really tempted I might say, because I had always wanted to go to Mexico. I love the place but at the same time, the PAO in Bolivia got ill. Alan Hanson had to come out, so they'd insist that I could get this PAO assignment, so I was torn, I wanted to be the big fish in a small pond in Bolivia, although I wanted to be a small fish in a big pond in Mexico. I decided I'd rather be my own boss, rather than work for Darryl, although we got along quite well. So I went to Bolivia and I think it was a vast decision. The ambassador absolutely knew nothing about me and I didn't know anything about him. The ambassador who was there at the time of my appointment left prior to my arrival.

Q: Who was that?

Morton: Siracusa, he left and went to Argentina I believe, and then he retired back to Arizona and died there a few years ago. His wife was still there to show you how recently he'd been gone. She was still there, packing up, because she had a welcoming dinner for us our second night in the country. And then Bill Stedman was appointed the ambassador, I guess, about two weeks after I arrived there. So I was at the airport to meet him when he came and that was the first time we had met each other. Bill and I hit it off right at the start. He's from this area, I think he's from Maryland; in fact he used to live not too far from here as a kid. His wife Jane, was just the perfect ambassador's wife, she was very motherly sort, if you got sick, she showed up at home with home baked chocolate chip cookies and the kids all loved her. It was a small embassy; there were about 38 Americans there, which is small by American embassy standards

Q: So you are in Bolivia, we have a brand new Ambassador, Bill Stedman, who has arrived, you didn't know him he didn't know you. How long had you been there before the new Ambassador arrived?

MORTON: Two or three weeks. The DCM Roger Brewer was basically an economic officer and he didn't really concern himself too much with anything that went on outside the economics' sphere. Stedman was very knowledgeable, he had worked in just about every position that you could work in the American Embassy. In fact, he had done one tour as a BNC director, so he knew USIS work. And he was not an ego type. It was very refreshing to go from a country where the ego was so big that you could hardly fit in a room with it, to working with a fellow who was very modest.

Q: Stedman was career?

MORTON: He was career. He started off as a junior officer, this is his first ambassadorial assignment, I think. He was very excited about making a go of it and we all liked him and we were excited about helping him make a go of it. And it was a complete change of environment. I went from a small country at sea level, that's relatively poor, but it was comparatively rich compared to the other countries in the Caribbean area to a country that was 12,200 ft in a capital city, and our residence was down in the valley at about 1100 ft but the office was about 12,200 and I think the airport was about 13,200. So you go down from the airport to the city and we went from a very green country to a very brown place. The first thing that struck me about Jamaica, when I arrived there was how green it was. And the green seemed to be just green, greener and greenest and when you get to Bolivia everything is brown. It takes you a while before you realize the succulence of the colors there, they really aren't just brown, there is gold and there is red, there is grey and silver, depends on the time of day and the angle of the sun. My predecessor had left several months before and the office had given up the lease for the PAO House, so the Cultural Affairs Officer, Graham French and I had been in communication, the Information Officer had been acting PAO but he had never responded to any of the letters I had sent to him so I finally started writing the Cultural Affairs Officer who responded right away.

And I asked him if he could find something suitable for us because I was coming there with two kids and school was going to be starting right after we arrived and we would like to be able to get settled in and get started in school and he agreed. He found us a great house, very convenient to everything. Right on the main street in a little suburban area called the "Obrajes". Now it was an interesting house because the front was right on the main street there and we had a high fence, metal fence, in front that was gray. Which turned out to be the perfect place for people to write political slogans. I didn't realize this at the time and we had not really focused on this. And there are constantly political slogans being written on our fence out front - none of them were really directed at me. They didn't know whose house it was; they just knew it was a great blackboard to write on (laugh). So our fence got painted at least once every three months. The embassy would send a team out and they would paint over it. So we had the prettiest fence along there that was tempting for the next group. I kept thinking about getting a Mural painted on it or something, but it would have made it too obvious who lived there. But we also went from a wide open, flourishing democracy to a dictatorship. The Bolivians gave lip-service to dictatorship during my tour they celebrated a 150th Anniversary of their independence. But the 161st President was in office. And there were ten attempted revolutions during the two years we were there. We arrived on a Wednesday and the first one was that Friday night. (Laugh)

Q: Was that Banzer?

MORTON: Colonel Banzer, who was a very kindly, fatherly looking fellow. I got to know him and his reputation of being a dictator was completed belied by his personal appearance. He was very gentle, soft-spoken, he was probably only 5ft 2' and the Presidential Palace was right around the corner practically from our office, we could always tell when there was an attempted revolution going on because if there were gun shots we were one of the first to hear them. We had metal shutters downstairs whoever hears the gunfire push the button and the shutters would come down. And we had a big generator in the back in the air shaft. We would turn that sucker on to keep the electricity going. So you would get this loud roar from the generator started up just in case the power was cut off.

Q: So the neighbors would listen for the announcement of the next coup when the PAO would turn on the generator?

MORTON: Well you would also get other signals, (laugh) marshal music or whatever program was on the radio would immediately go off and marshal music would immediately come on and if it was on in the evening when television was on they would go off with useless movies would come on - television station always had a bunch of movies they borrowed from us and had not returned and they would start showing these. So, if you wanted to know anything about science in America you could see the old science series that USIA used to produce, you might be looking at an old 10 year version of "I Love Lucy", and all of a sudden you were looking at science, which was a dead indication that there was an attempted coup going on. But it was a fascinating place. I used to tell somebody that I like to take long walks at lunchtime and I told them the only

bad thing about this in Bolivia was that when you took a long walk you either walk up hill or down hill, you couldn't -- it was only one street where you could walk on the level and the unfortunate thing there is I am 6ft tall and the people who trim the trees were 5ft tall and they would trim as high as they could reach which was at my eye level so I could not walk down the sidewalk, because I would be blinded, I would have to walk in the streets. So on rainy days when you took a walk you would have to keep looking up because the electrical wires would hang across the street just about at the top of my head and sometimes they did not have any insulation on them. We had a high school - a college basketball team come down and played a demonstration game during one of the few days it rained there and the center, who was about six feet, six inches got electrocuted walking into one of these wires. I had warned them constantly to be on the lookout for them and I always had little scars across my forehead because there was a circle of stairs going up to my office in USIS the steps for the next lair I had to walk stooped over. And if I would forget every now and again and straighten up, I would bang my head into one of those stairs going up. So I had the scars from the healing stairways. That was in a lot of buildings. The Bolivians didn't have windows manufactured to specific standards as they do in the States. They build a house they build a window. So no two windows were the same size in your house or in your office, whatever. We are accustomed to steps being a certain height when you go up and down them. There, they aren't. They sort of make them as they feel appropriate. And so you are tripping over steps because this one is six inches and the next one is eight inches. Little things like this make life pleasant. There had been black Americans in Bolivia prior to my time but we arrived at the time that black Americans were wearing "big heads of hair" and I had one, my wife had one and my two sons had one. And if we wanted to stop traffic, the four of us could walk down the street - Buses stopped, taxi's stopped, everybody stopped to look. Whereas, my sons got so self-conscience about it they did not want to go up to town anymore, they wanted to stay down in the suburbs. But, it was pleasant. It was a very limited social life there. I told somebody once that during our first three weeks in Bolivia we bought one of everything there was to buy, we ate at every restaurant you could eat in and we saw all the sights there were to see and we still had 101 weeks to go on our tour. (Laugh)

Q: You went there language proficient because you had studied Spanish for four years?

MORTON: I had Spanish in high school, four semesters and then I had gone FSI for Spanish. I went to FSI for Spanish before I went to Bogotá. I had two and a half years in Bogotá and then I went from Bogotá to the University of Colorado and then I took some courses in Spanish there. I took courses taught in Spanish there. It helped me keep my fluency there. The three years I spent in Jamaica I tried every opportunity to speak Spanish. My number two officer there - the first one didn't last too long, the Ambassador kicked him out of Jamaica, and he left about four months. The next one came from Colombia; he had been in Cali, Colombia when I was in Bogotá. He had been the Student Affairs officer in Cali so we would talk Spanish to each other, especially if we wanted to talk privately around the staff. It gave us an easy way to do this. And then when he left, the next one who came, I guess Shelley was there about a year, and then he got a better deal in Venezuela. So he left and his successor had been a - also came from Columbia -

he had been the Bi-National Center director in Cochabamba so we would keep our Spanish fluent by talking to each other. His was very good because he had been a Mormon missionary in Chili and so he like, Peace Corp. volunteers, Mormon missionaries really get immersed it. So my Spanish was probably about at the same level that it was when I was in Columbia, maybe a little better. My grammar was better. So I could read the newspapers and I would try to read a Spanish language book periodically just to keep my reading ability up. And the English capability in Bolivia was far less then it was in Columbia. Once you got away from a certain educated elite there was no English at all so that forced you to speak in Spanish. I did not want to just concentrate my efforts on the Capital City - So I spent a lot of time - we had a Bi-National Center in Cochabamba and in Santa Cruz and we were trying to get one set up in Trinidad but it just didn't work out. It did not seem worth the effort. And the ambassador, while I was there, wanted to visit all the provincial Capitals. So we made arrangements to rent the presidential train and in order to get enough money to pay for the train - it was a representational affair - so we put the ambassador and his wife and his secretary on travel orders. Me and my wife, the Political Officer and his wife and the Commercial Officer and his wife on travel orders. We were still just a bit shy so we put the Ambassador's House Boy on travel orders, too. That gave us enough money to rent the train. It was a great train! It had been made in England back in the 19th Century, I don't know if you ever saw it while you were there. It had a fireplace and a lounge car and came equipped with very heavy silverware and beautiful linen and a crystal chandelier and the little bedroom in it had a double bed and a bath tub of all things. Then there was a single room further down where the ambassador's secretary slept and it had a single bed in it and a shower. Then there was a dormitory car where the rest of us stayed, one end of it was a kitchen the railroad supplied the chef who really was "top notch". He was delighted with the chance to show off. So, the ambassador's two body guards and the rest of us stayed back in the dormitory car. We visited, we made a nine day trip around the provincial capitals and we sent two junior officers in advance in carryalls (vans) so that we would bicycle each other and we would have transportation when we arrived and they made arrangements with the provincial governors to meet us and give us the key to the city. It was a great trip, and a good way to see the country. Cold as the dickens! Fortunately, we took a gas stove out of the ambassadors' residence a gas heater that took bottled gas and we took several extra containers of gas along. We would get up in the morning and break up the ice into the sink in our little bedrooms and wash-up with the little pitchers of water and we would all rush to the club car where the heat was. The cook and houseboy would bring us breakfast, in there as well as lunch and dinner -- whatever meal you ate. And we would pull into these little capitals - I had given copies of the star spangle banner, the sheet music, to the junior officers so they could present to the host band at the provincial cities - most had never heard our national anthem - some could read music but they had no idea of the cadence it was supposed to be in. You never knew if the star spangle banner was going to sound like a funeral dirge or a German oompah band or what. (Laugh) We always had a difficult time keeping a straight face as we arrived as these bands would come out (boom, boom, boom, bab!). (Laugh) Oftentimes, the provincial governor was also the military commander. And he would have two separate places and there was one in Sucre, we met him first in his military role as the Commandant of the Military area and his headquarters there and he sat on a throne in his military

headquarters. We were there at 7:00 AM in the morning and he had a bottle of Johnny Walker Red Label and he poured us each a stiff drink and had us toast the flag of Bolivian and toast the American flag - we had also sent American flags along. (Laugh). So we toasted these with straight scotch at 7:00 in the morning. We really wanted coffee but we got scotch. And he welcomed us to the land of Carlos V. He gave us a very pretentious speech from his throne, sitting there. And we stayed about 15 minutes. And then he had military escort - escort us over to the provincial's governor's palace. And our briefing sheet didn't identify the fact that the same man was the provincial governor and nor did the directions show that the provincial governor's palace was right back of the military headquarters. So we went on this security route through town to give him a chance to go over to his other job. We pulled up and there he was sitting on an identical throne, the same flags behind him and the remains of the Johnny Walker that he had poured us another stiff drink and welcomed us to the land of Carlos V again. (Laugh) But, He was a very nice guy. We were able to chat with him and explain what we were doing there. We then spent the rest of the day doing our different roles; I would go visit the local university and the library or museums and cultural activities, whatever they were. The women folk would go visit the hospitals, schools and nurseries and we always carried a small supply of books from our book translation program and a few English speaking books, so that they could make book presentations at each one they went to and our photographer, he would take pictures to send them back to La Paz and the local photographers would take pictures which I am not sure they ever developed. (Laugh). It was a fascinating introduction to the country.

Q: You must have had an opportunity to really get to know the Ambassador on a one-to-one bases during this period and during your travels, since you didn't know each other before?

MORTON: We got to know each very well. In fact, we are still very good friends after all these years. We see each other quite often. His wife died, I guess about ten years ago and we were at the funeral. And he relied on us. He knew what USIS was for. He relied on us. I was a very central part of the Country-Team, because the basic issues between our two countries were public affairs issues. The Peace Corp had been kicked out some years earlier. They had nationalized most of the U.S. owned businesses there. Gulf oil had been one of the major ones. And the military dictatorship ran the country so there were no politicians in the traditional sense for the political officer and he did not have access to the military, the commanding officer of the military group was in essence the political officer although he didn't know beans about it. He was there to sell American weapons and train them in it, but he was the one who had access. And I had limited amount of access having been an officer in the US military which I pushed with the Bolivian military for all it was worth. This gave me a certain entrée and I got to know a lot of the young military officers, the majors and the colonels by going to a lot of the affairs at their officers clubs. I got to know the provincial governors because most of them were military officers, if they weren't, they had been. The provincial governor of Cochabamba had formerly been a foreign national employee of USIS. He was very proud; he had been a driver for the PAO at one time. His family had come from Yugoslavia and immigrated there and he was probably the biggest Bolivian in the country. He was about six feet, five

inches, the average Bolivian is about five feet tall and whenever I would go see him, all we would talk about is his days with USIS which were some of the happiest days of his life. Now he is the governor. He came to all of our cultural presentations at the Bi-National Center. He always wanted me to go around with him to different things. I wasn't really sure, if for my own personal security if this was a good idea because if the shooting started he would be a great target and then I would be the next great target right beside him. Because of carry-over fire. So I usually tried to get him to agree to meet me at places rather than I going along with him. Because whenever there was a ribbon-cutting event of any kind he always wanted to invite me for it. We loved Cochabamba, it was about down 9,000 ft, I guess or 8,000 ft, but you could breathe normally. So we were playing tennis in Bolivia but La Paz but we could really play in Cochabamba. We would go down often times on weekends just to have some personal time there. My kids loved it.

Q: Even though altitude might have been an inhibiting factor in La Paz, did you find that you were able to establish warm relations with opinion formers in La Paz? And did you have any personal social connections with the opinion farmers in La Paz? I am saying opinion farmers in difference to the military leaders because that was the traditional government at the time? The military juntas?

MORTON: I knew the directors of all the major universities. Whenever they were in La Paz we always had dinner for them at the house. And whenever I went to provincial areas, I would always pay courtesy calls on them. Bolivians aren't as warm and as friendly and easy to know as most of the people in Latin America. The Columbians were very easy to get to know but the Bolivians are a little different story, they are a little more stand-offish, more reserved. So I would get invited occasionally to the homes of some of those who had been around "Westerners" or North Americans - others I would meet in a restaurant and have lunch or dinner or whatever. The newspaper editors were a different story. We knew them all quite well. I could always depend, if I had a reception at my house and I wanted to fill it up with people I could always invite a lot of newspaper and radio people. I could get them all there. They never turn down a dinner or luncheon invitation. The information officer was a woman. First time they had a woman in that position and it was very difficult to have a woman. It was her first time ever as an information officer, she has been an assistant cultural affairs officer, she did not know from beans about being an information officer and the Agency was trying to get diversity in all of their positions. We had a Japanese-American; we had a mini United Nations there. I was a black American Public Affairs Officer; my secretary was an Italian-American. We had a handicapped Cultural Affairs Officer who had polio as a child and walked with two canes, we had a Japanese-American Junior Officer, we had an Italian-American Assistant Information Officer, we had a woman, Sephardic Jew as Information Officer and we had a real honest to goodness Wasp as the Bi-National Center director. I use to call him my minority employee. (Laugh) But, Victoria Kortavo was the Information Officer, but she didn't know anything about it but she was a hard worker. And she wanted but didn't know how to go about handling representational events. She was a single woman who wanted to give up this big house we had for the Information Officer. And I told her we don't do that. We have had this house for years. It's the

information officer's house. It's right in a prime location in town. It's great for representational events. You don't have to have dinner parties but you can have lunches. Because you are close enough so that the newspaper reporters and radio people, they can all come to your house and I would be the co-host whenever she had anything at her house. Because otherwise if she invited a male Bolivian to her house for lunch he would say, AHA! So by my being there this gave her a certain protection and a certain security and I would always stay until the last guest had left and that would insure that they did not sit and talk to me but they would treat her as the information officer, so she could get some creditability from them. She couldn't go to the press club because it was only for men. So I would go to the press club and I got the Cultural Affairs Officers credentials so he could go to the press club, too. Because, I did not want to go there all the time. That worked out quite well. We did great press placement. I not sure how effective the newspapers were as carriers of information to the populace because they -- you had this thin level of people who were literate but the literacy rate in Bolivia was quite high. But the educated elite who ran the country could read the newspapers quite well and they were big users of our Bi-National Centers and our English language programs. We did a lot of radio placement, both locally and indirectly through taping programs and sending back for rebroadcast via short-wave. We had a large input into the Agency's book translation program. Books are translated in Argentina and Mexico in limited number in Colombia and we were one of the big users of that. A side bar to that, I discovered there was no history of Bolivia and I thought it was interesting, here is an independent country, has been independent for 150 years and you can't go to a book store and buy a book called "A History of Bolivia". And there was an American researcher there working on his doctorate dissertation and he was doing a history of Bolivia and we bought the rights from him to have it printed through the book translation program. We paid him $425 to buy the rights to his PhD dissertation. The information section has spent a lot of time turning it into something that is readable because PhD dissertations are not readable documents. And so we made it a readable thing and we had it translated into Spanish and did a limited number of copies of it in Argentina and distributed them to the libraries and Bi-National Center libraries and to the universities throughout the country. I think we did about 1500 or 2000 copies of it.

Q: You sure the Argentineans didn't change it to their version of the Chaco War?

MORTON: That was more the Paraguayans

Q: I said that because the first Argentinean flag is in Sucre (Bolivia).

MORTON: One other interesting historical connection that was made with Bolivia when the Ambassador and I and this group made the trip to Sucre and I went to the National Museum there. The fellow who was the Director of the Museum was a frustrated Shakespearean actor, very dramatic, long hair, looked like a thespian and he used to love having school children come it and he would give them this briefing on the History of Bolivia. And the Bolivian Declaration of Independence was there, The Credo they would call it and he had this in a little plastic sheet protector like that which kids in elementary school would protect pieces of paper. He would wave this document and call it living

history. Then he would pass it around for each of these children to touch and the oil from their hands would be obliterating the document. You could not even see through this plastic sconce which was all cracked and the thing was deteriorating right there and you could see the edges of it were not readable at this time. So when the Bolivian's were getting ready to celebrate their sep-centennial, we thought that the ambassador said he wanted me to head up a team to determine what we could give them as a gift from the "People" of the United States to Bolivia - something that would be permanent and would be historical. He and I were kicking this around and I thought we ought to give them something to protect their Declaration of Independence. So I came back to Washington to see how much it would cost to get something on a smaller scale, like we have in the National Archives here. The exhibits people came back and said that this would be out of sight, millions and millions of dollars, but they could get something that would be appropriate for me for $25,000 and they wanted to know what my budget was. My budget was $2,000. (laugh) I couldn't touch that. So we started looking around for something else to do. But, one day I had gone up to the airport to see off Pat Newburg, the Deputy Area Director and on the way back down, you come back down the winding road and you pass by a couple of cemeteries. I saw a Stone Mason sitting in there making tombstones. So, I had the driver pull into the cemetery and I went over and I stood there and looked at this guy doing a beautiful job of carving tombstones and I thought that is what we could do. I went back down to the office and we had this very talented Bolivian in the cultural section named Raul Mariaca. And Raul was a real renaissance man and he could do the simultaneous translations for us, he could paint, he was very imaginative and he could sketch. He designed murals for us for the interior walls of the office. I told Raul we wanted something to protect this Declaration of Independence. I saw this guy in the cemetery cutting tombstones and maybe we could get him to carve something for us and keep us within our $2000 budget. Raul was immediately filled with enthusiasm with the project and he designed several things and we went back up there and he negotiated with the tombstone cutter for $80.00. This guy was going to carve out of granite a thing like a bookstand and it was going to have a rendition of the flag of Bolivia on one side and the flag of the United States on the other side and carved in the front in Spanish a gift from the People of the United States to the People of Bolivia in honor of their Sep-centennial. Hollow out the top of it and we would put the declaration in there and cover it with glass. I came back to the exhibits people and told them what we were going to do. It was about $80 it was going to cost us. They suggested that we should seal it inside and protect it. Put some kind of yellowish glass to cut out the ultra-violet light and seal it in there and exhausts the air out of it and put nitrogen in it to exhaust the air. Put the light outside so that you could change the bulb. They were going to send us down some special bulbs to use in this light, yellow bulbs. Can you assure us of a continuous supply? Because we are talking about forever here. We will give you the name of the manufacturers of them too. So we made this thing, it was really nice. All together it cost us about $120 by the time we got through. I even tipped the guy who made it, because I am a sport. Made this beautiful granite device. And we went down, I had one hell of a time convincing the museum director to accept it. Because he loved holding history in his hand. I told him he was destroying history. So he finally accepted it and there was a fellow from AID there who was one these "jack of all trades" kinds of people and he knew how to put the yellow glass in and exhaust the air out it. He did this for us and we put the light on the outside so

you could read it. Colonel Banzer and the ambassador went down there along with a whole contingent of us so we could get this thing dedicated. As far as I know it still there somewhere, I hope it is. We spent a whole lot of time and effort. We probably spent thousands of dollars in manpower dreaming it up. But, $120 to do it. It just shows you what you can do sometimes for nothing it you can use some imagination. It was hard making a splash in Bolivia. I have always been so high profile everywhere I have been because of the fact I am a minority in a fairly high level position. But I was never high profiled in Bolivia except in altitude. I was six feet tall and everyone else was five feet and two inches. (Laugh)

Q: Why do you think that was?

MORTON: Bolivian's are just inward people. The country is primarily Indian, very stoic. Most people have never been outside of their little village. If they have it has only been to the next village. I went to several villages around the country to give money from the ambassador's impress fund to little villages to put in a potable water system or something of that nature. You usually want to do it in a high-profile way so you can get some publicity out of it for what it is worth. You would have the town fathers gather together and you make a little speech to them as they sat there looking at you completely impassively and then this little ceremony you would give them the check and it was a self-help type of thing. I was at one little village, this was in 1972, so, I guess I must have been 41 at the time and I was looking at these little shriveled up old little men there and thought, these are really "town fathers". I assumed they were all in their 70's or 80's and so I started talking to them trying to find out how old they were. Most of them were younger than I was. But it was the type of life they led. Subsistence economy, on the rubbing edge of the economy. Living outside, many of them had skin cancers. The life expectancy of those people was 38 or 39. So if you got to live to 41 you were a real village elder. I did not have the heart to tell them that I was older than they were.

Q: So you were there during the period where Bolivia was a one product economy, tin?

MORTON: Primarily tin.

Q: Heavily subsidized?

MORTON: There were some minor minerals. We had a Minerals Economic Conference on minerals once. Brought in a fellow from the Minerals Exchange in New York. I didn't even know there was such a thing. We had local businessmen in and we talk to them about how they could market these other minerals because when you have tin you have other minerals that are present. Tungsten and all these other things I had never heard of. They had gold and silver because there was a South African mining company that had a contract to go into the mines that the Bolivian's had exhausted. The South Africans had developed new techniques so they could go in and continue to extract gold out of it. This was very heavily attended. We were trying to show them how they could expand. They were selling their materials their tin and all of it was being sold through a monopoly and it was not really going at world market prices. They weren't aware that they could use the

short-wave radio and get the market prices on a daily basis. We had several short-wave radios set up around the conference room and we tuned into the market. You just had to have some knowledge of English you could get the market rates of those persons who were interested in it. I could care less what the cost of tin is on the wholesale market rate. Tin is not a widespread metal but places like Malaysia who mines it very efficiently could just price Bolivia out of the market and so the United States had a quota, we would buy a certain amount of tin from this country and a certain amount from that. Bolivian's are constantly trying to get their quota increased. There was still oil there, but they had nationalized the oil and had no means of exporting it. So they were dependent on the nationalized gulf oil and so they were dependent on the market in Brazil and Argentina and getting it over to them. The oil wasn't refined very well, in fact, I think they had to send the oil out to get it refined in Argentina and buy it back for gasoline for their own vehicles. We were there during the time of the gas crisis in the United States when the gasoline was going up to $1.70 here and we were paying 31 cents a gallon for this God-awful gasoline. But your cars ran on it. The Agency sent me down a Chevrolet as a PAO car, a brand new Chevrolet and they had armored the thing. It was a six cylinder car and after they put this armor in the sides of it, but the windows weren't. So they could blow your head off! But, it wouldn't hurt a vital part, I guess. The extra weight meant that the cars top speed going up some of those hills was about 15 miles an hour. They were saying that my driver should get training in evasive tactics in driving. I told them it was a waste of time. To get from my house to the office is only two roads. If they wanted to, a pedestrian could catch up with us, so why waste time. Besides I don't think his brain worked fast enough to take evasive action. If we had evasive action taken with the car, then I would have to be the driver and let him be the passenger. My predecessor Alan Hanson had come from Argentina. The revolutionaries were very active and so he was always fighting for his own personal security. He would always take these very diversionary routes to get to the office but he still had to end up going up this one same main street eventually. So all they had to do is wait for him to finish his diversionary drives down through the valley and wait for him on the corner and get him. So I did not bother. I think everyone in La Paz knew what I looked like, so why waste time. They could step on the sidewalk out front of the office and get me. So my defense was to be a nice guy.

It was another interesting thing; there was a German, Hans Altman, that we had contracted with to maintain the vehicles. The embassy had a motor pool and they had a contract with some fellow who had maintained the motor pool in India. I found that Altman who had Hanson Motors and he did a very good job, he was one of the major car dealers there. He did a very good job of maintaining his own vehicles, so I got him to do the vehicle maintenance. He was doing a much better job than the embassy contractor did. He and I became fairly good friends.

Q: He stayed on and opened the Mercedes' dealership there?

MORTON: Well, Hans Altman got kidnapped out of there, you know. He was the "Butcher of Lyon" in France. His name was Klaus Barbie. I did not realize this, he was such a kindly old man. There were two groups of Germans in Bolivia. There were the

pre-war Germans who were primarily Jews who had escaped the pogrom of the Anti-Jewish activities (The Holocaust) and then there was the post-war Germans, who were the Nazi's who had come there to escape retribution from the Allies. There was a great deal of hostility between these groups and I was not aware of this. I was concentrating on the Bolivian's not the German community. There was a great little German delicatessen around the corner from where we lived. A woman named Hilda; she loved us and my kids. We use to get sausages and she would get a fresh shipment of cheeses in from Argentina and she would always send some by the house. You get great wines from Chile and Argentina from there. The Nazis, the other group of Germans had this great club, up in town, a German club, great restaurant and they also had a tennis court out in the edge of town. The only criterion for membership was to either be German, speak German or have a German name. Obviously, I am not German, I speak German but it was very, very, basic. But my first name is German, so Altman said he could get me a membership in the club. I thought this is great! I don't know if it was still like it when you were there, but when I was there, you go in the doorway, you start up these steps and there is a picture of John F. Kennedy. There was a picture of Martin Bormann and a picture of Adolph Hitler right at the end of the stairs. I don't know how Kennedy got in with Martin Bormann and Adolph Hitler.

Q: On the side of my military incarnation, because of the fact I was with the US Military I was also invited to that club and the very first thing I saw when I walked in the door and I looked up the stairways in those days, that was in the early 60's, it was just Adolph Hitler.

MORTON: They had expanded. They still thought that Martin Bormann was still around in Paraguay. But they liked Kennedy. So he was there. It was great food and I felt that was all ancient history. But, the word got out in the other German community that I had joined this club and I just did it as a luncheon club. The best place to eat lunch in town. My cheese supply got cut off and my sausages from the delicatessen. (Laugh) She would no longer sell to us. I could not make amends. I went in to tell her I was sorry and I had not thought about it and it was very insensitive of me and that I would resign but she would not even talk to me. My kids were very hurt because they loved her, she use to send them presents all the time.

Q: It is interesting that you mentioned Klaus Barbie, and the fact that you had a contract with him to maintain the vehicles of USIS. On another sector, did you attempt to gain an entrée with the Bolivian military?

MORTON: I had a limited entrée with the Bolivian military. I think I mentioned that I had gone to the different affairs at the Officer's Club and I knew the top brass and there is an interesting anecdote here - We normally on our exchange program do not send military officers up to the states. There was a young major he was up for Lieutenant Colonel, he was a strong leader and everybody in the MILGROUP said that one day this fellow is going to be President of the country. They got the political section all excited about him and we should really expose this person. Get him some indoctrination into democratic institutions, now. So that later on when he matures and becomes a Colonel or

something and starts running the country he will have this background. So I got an exception from Washington to send this fellow up to the states on an exchange program and we were going to do a lot of the training and the military was going to do special things for him also. I won't mention his name because he is probably still alive but it would be easy to track down who I am talking about. The Agency and the exchange people finally reluctantly agreed and we did this as a trial basis. The military was even going to set up something for him in Panama on the way back down to get some briefings there. And we sent him around the country for 30 days and then the military had him for about 3 weeks or so. Somebody, somewhere while he was up here people kept telling him that we expected him someday to be President of Bolivia. He got back to Bolivia and I guess he started thinking, why wait? So, he decided he should be President, now. So he roused up a battalion in the middle of the night on a Friday night. They started down into town to take over the Presidential Palace and the apparatus of government. Poor planning for a number of reasons 1) He evidently did not read the paper, because the President was out of the country - he was not out of the country - but down on the border meeting with the President of Chile in this railroad car that we had traveled around the country in. They were trying to settle some border disagreements there. The President never stayed in the Presidential Palace at night anyway. He had a private residence that he stayed in and his wife always stayed over there. She did not like the palace. These guys ran out of gas on the way down. They hadn't gassed up or motorized their armored vehicles, they were called tanks in the newspaper, but believe me they did not have tanks because there was not a bridge in the country that could support the weight of a tank. They ran out of gas so they had to break into a gas station by the airport to gas up the vehicles and then they came down and surrounded the palace and broke the door down with one of the vehicles and demanded that the President come out and surrender and they were declaring that he was the President in the name of the People of Bolivia. The Presidential guards, the few that were in there, they immediately surrendered because (They wanted to know what is this?). Then he realized that the President wasn't there. He left half of his forces there, which is one of the prime rules of military command, don't divide your forces. I remember that from tactics training. He left half his forces there and went over to Supreme Command Headquarters and surrounded them. He was lucky here because the Supreme Commander was there, the General and the head of the Air Force, the Navy Admiral and several other high ranking officers. They had a poker game going on. He got all of it in one felt swoop. He still didn't have the President. He was not comfortable. He further divided his forces and sent some to take over the radio station and he took the remaining ones and went over to the President's residence surrounding it. He hammered on the door and told the President to come out and surrender in the name of the People. The President's wife who was a formidable woman, she was a little thing but she was formidable, she came to the door in her hair curlers and her nightgown and she was furious and she hit him over head with a broom and chased him away in front of his men. He had lost face by this time. He went back to the headquarters and the senior officers there had talked his men into surrendering. So he only had the remainder of his troops at the Presidential Palace. He decided this was not the time to become President. So he went by my house to get political asylum. We were out of town. My wife and I and my kids were in Cochabamba to play tennis. My servants were under strict instructions that when we are not there no one gets in, I don't care who they are. If something breaks down and

they say they are from the embassy, they can't come in to fix it. Nobody gets in. So they wouldn't let him in. The Argentinean ambassador lived around the corner, so he went around to the Argentinean ambassador's house. And since the Argentinean ambassador had been a military officer who was part of a failed coup in Argentina he could sympathize, so he gave him political asylum. I knew nothing about any of this. I was having a great weekend. I got back on Monday and everyone was telling me all about this. They didn't know he had been in my house. The Argentinean ambassador called me at the office to tell me that my friend was at his house and he wanted me to come and get him. I asked him who? He told me and I told him two things we don't give asylum unless it is to save somebody's life who is being actively pursued and then it is only temporary but since he is not actively being pursued to save his life I can't give him asylum. You got him! He said, but he is eating me out of house and home. He wants steak for breakfast, and he is drinking all my wine supply and what am I going to do? Well, see if you can get him safe passage to Argentina or to Paraguay. It took him a few days but he eventually got him out of there to Paraguay and eventually to Argentina. The fellow ended up back at Paraguay. For all I know he is probably still in Paraguay.

Q: That must have been an interesting report, a post IV Report that you had to send back to Washington, How was that received?

MORTON: It came back as a political cable. (Laugh) Our responsibility had ended. But we never did send another military that I am aware of. It wasn't a good idea.

Q: AID has traditionally had a large mission in Bolivia for all of the obvious reasons. Did you find that your programs and AID programs were parallel, conflicted, did you enjoy a positive professional relationship with AID? How would you respond?

MORTON: Our relationship with AID in Bolivia was very close for a number of reasons. The AID Director, John Olson had been with us in Colombia, he was number two guy in AID there, the two and half years we were in Colombia and then he had gone to some other countries during the interim period. They were neighbors of ours, his wife and my wife were best friends, they used to play tennis together and go swimming together. And his kids, he had two boys and a girl and they were about the same age as my two kids. And my two boys were in classes with his kids. In fact we still are close friends of theirs. We went to their kids' weddings a few years ago and we have kept up with them ever since. John was very cooperative as far as being open with us in what he was doing. We kept him informed and he was interested in the things we could do for his ideas as far as doing public service activities that AID was doing.

Some AID directors don't want you involved in their business but John was very open about it and it made for a nice healthy relationship. We would do articles in the papers about projects they were doing. They would supply participants for seminars that we had that were on topics that were appropriate for AID to participate in. We worked together on several exhibits and it was a very healthy relationship. I've been lucky, I've had that sort of relationship with AID everywhere I've been.

Q: So you found that the mission priorities between AID and USIS were not in conflict.

MORTON: Yes, and we had a similar relationship with military advisory groups. I had been an officer in the Signal Corps and there was a Signal Corps major with the Mil Group and we immediately became good friends. The commanding officer of the military group and I were good friends too and so we worked together. They would introduce me to their military contacts and where possible fit me in. This gave me an entirely different perspective that I wouldn't have ordinarily. I met lots of military throughout the country because in my travels around their country I would usually pay a courtesy call on the right-hand military commander of the area. He was also the provincial governor in that region wearing two hats. And this was one layer of keeping your finger on the pulse and meeting people who had the potential to become the president of the country. Bolivian presidents tended to come from the dissatisfied colonels in the military.

Q: There was a very dynamic network of bi-national centers in Bolivia. Did you find that they enhanced your program activities in your articulation of U.S foreign policy throughout the country?

MORTON: Pretty much so because the bi-national centers had been in Bolivia for years and they had their own official presence in the community and people were proud of their bi-national centers. There was great participation in their programs. The major source of income for the bi-national centers in addition to the grants we gave them was from the English teaching activities. We had special classes in different cities for different types of people in business English in Cochabamba for example, for the business men there and for aspiring secretaries. We had the same thing in La-Paz. We even had a special class in English for a short period of time for the Bolivian taxi drivers who came and asked us if we would give them English teaching. I don't think there were an awful lot of Americans or foreigners coming and using Bolivian taxis but they were ambitious and we saw no reason why not. They were helping to pay our utility bills at the same time and the bi-national centers served as a venue for our speakers' programs and for exhibits that we had in the different communities. It gave us access to the opinion molders in each community because they were frequent participants in their bi-national centers and we used them as distribution outlets for our pamphlets and other materials that we were passing out.

When the local leaders in the community wanted to give a speech on some topic that involved the United States, and often times it didn't even involve the United States, they would depend on the bi-national center library as a reference tool because it tended to be far more complete than the local library. Our librarians, who we had trained years earlier, set up a training program for Latin-American librarians in Colombia in Medellin, Colombia. They had the best school of library science in Latin-America and we used to bring in librarians from all over South America for training there. When I got to La Paz, the chief librarian had been one of those I had met years ago when she came to Colombia for the training at Meiden and she remembered me and I remembered her. I didn't remember her name but it worked out very well. In fact it worked out so well for awhile there, I thought she and the cultural affairs officer were going to get married, but he

eventually married a teacher from the American school instead of the Bolivian teacher there and I was the Best Man at their wedding. They got married at the ambassador's residence and I was the Best Man at their wedding. They celebrated, I think, their 27th anniversary. They had a big dinner party for them. They lived here now.

But Bolivia was an interesting assignment because it was a very small foreign community there and so we were close to the other foreigners in the community, the German Embassy, the British embassy. There was a number of organizations there that were lacking in leadership capacity. I found that I wore a number of hats in Bolivia in addition to being the Public Affairs Officer. I was the Boy Scouts commissioner. I was the president of the school board and I was the vice president of the American Chamber of Commerce during my two years there. So I had a finger in a lot of pies and this came in handy because it gave me entrée entry into elements of society that I normally wouldn't have had access to. It made the public more conscious of the fact that I was there and this was highlighted by the fact that initially, I was the only black American in the embassy and in fact, the only black American anywhere remote than La-Paz. So my family and I were very easily recognizable wherever we were. So we didn't worry about security concerns like so many people in the embassy did because there would have been a security move question. So we had to depend on the good nature of the citizens of Bolivia for our protection and we never had any problems at all.

We lived on a main street in a little suburban community that had a big gray wall out front, metal wall, and I was surprised by third or fourth week there, to come home and I found this big sign "Political Activist" painted on my wall. I thought it was directed at me, but it really wasn't. It was that that wall was just an inviting target for the amateur artist and so we would get leftist signs painted on the wall, rightist signs painted on the wall, local elections signs painted there. We eventually had the best painted wall in La Paz, because whenever someone would come along and paint these slogans there on our wall the embassy would send a crew out the next day to paint over it. So the wall was constantly being freshly painted and as soon as the paint dried, somebody else would come along and do it.

Q: You mention two things of interest, number one, the fact that you have maintained contact over the years with, both, foreign national employees in the embassy and with some of the people in the local communities. Did you find that this relationship was carried because of your own outgoing personality, your position or because of your own personal interest in maintaining these contacts. Is this a normal thing that you found in the mission?

MORTON: I don't think so. I think it's probably because both my wife and I like people, and it probably shows. My first overseas assignment was in Bogotá, 1966 to '69. We still are in contact with people that were in Bogotá with us. We have seen their kids grow up through pictures they've sent us. We get letters from them and Christmas, we send out about two-hundred and fifty to three-hundred Christmas cards every year and we have long letters sort of bringing things up to date, we get back all these pictures from not only the people that worked for us there, the contacts in the community, but also from their

children who've grown up. This past Christmas, we got a picture from the daughter of my secretary in Bogotá, who now lives in London. She's married to an Englishman and she's been there for about ten or fifteen years and she sent pictures of her children. This daughter of my secretary, by the way, was named after my wife. She was born, I guess, about six months after we got there and my secretary named her Christina, after my wife Christine. We've had the children of the foreign nationals or people come and stay with us in the States.

When I was in Colorado a year back, in academic study, we had three different children from the embassy community and the Colombian community come and stay with us for a week or two while we were there. There's a sign now of one of my foreign national employees who works for Avianca Airlines. Whenever he gets around to New York, he gives us a call and he comes by periodically. We've kept in touch with people from every post we've been in.

Q: So in effect, there is an extension of the continued outreach and articulation of U.S. foreign policy, just through your continuing to enjoy personal relationship with people from the communities that you served in.

MORTON: Now to jump out of sequence, to give you an example, we took two weeks vacation in Thailand, earlier this year. I hadn't been back there since 1989 and my wife hadn't been there since 1986. The foreign nationals had three separate parties for us and welcoming us back home. I get a better reception when I go back to Bangkok than I do when I go back to my home town at Little Rock, Arkansas. I go back to Little Rock and people say, Hi, how you've been, I go back to Thailand and they say "welcome home, let's have a party, glad to see you." They sincerely, are glad to see you and I think it's reciprocated because we are glad to see them too. The internet has really helped in this regard, we get e-mails from the foreign nationals that we've worked with. Many of them have moved on to other countries, at least twenty of my former Filipino employees now live in the United States, in Chicago and Los Angeles. One married an American foreign service officer and she's presently in Rome and we hear from them constantly. That's nice, we've got an extended family.

Q: You've also mentioned that you were the only black counselor in the country team and also as far as the local community was concerned, high level black officer with the U.S. Mission, Diplomatic Mission. Now, did you have the same kinds of reactions that you had in your previous assignments in Jamaica where there was so much media attention there? Did you have the same kinds of media attention that might have been because of your ethnic difference in the rest of the team?

MORTON: I don't think the Bolivians were. It was interesting that you brought that up. A Bolivian called me a gringo once and I found this interesting because I had always thought of gringos as being somebody who looked like John Wayne or you know, blonde, blue eyes and white skin and he says no you a gringo, yes, you are gringos which is an interesting concept. But I think the Bolivians were a little more accustomed to seeing black people because Brazil is not too far away, not too many Americans, but there had

been black Americans at the embassy before. And then our time there, the number of black Americans in the embassy increased exponentially because a year, I guess, it's not quite a year, about eight months after we got there, I knew a DCM who arrived who was black. We didn't look a thing alike but a lot of the Bolivians had difficulty telling us apart. They could not remember which of us was Jim Park and which one was Hal Morton which I thought was funny.

I kept telling Jim that one of these days somebody is going to shoot you because you danced too much with his wife last night at a party or something. Jim was a very dignified person and he loved to party as much as I did and then we got a colonel into the military group who also was black and I, after a year, I got a black American secretary in and so we had, and then we had a sergeant of the Marine guards, it was a black person, so we had a large community there. I mean we could all fit in one taxi but it was large compared to the size of the mission, but the Bolivians took it all in stride, this was not one of those things they focussed on.

The discrimination in Bolivia was more against the Indian population. I joined a luncheon club, I think it was called the Executive club, it was a new club that opened up that was just for executives and was on the top floor of one of the new office buildings, had a new chef and was convenient too to go for lunch and take people for lunch or for drinks in the evening or for dinner. I immediately got elected to the board of governors and after I had been on the board of governors about three months, I suddenly realized that all of the members of this club, were either foreigners or Caucasian Bolivians and I mentioned one time that you don't have any native Bolivian Indians. I didn't use the word Indians because that's an insult, but native Bolivians are of Bolivian origin there.

It was an interesting thing, I was talking to the President over and he was very apologetic about it. He said well, we plan to, when they become people and it sounded so much like the things that I had heard as a kid come up in Arkansas when I was in the military stationed in Mississippi and other places in Southern United States and it reminded me of that and when I had visited South Africa back in the early '60s, the statements that the white South Africans had made and I didn't lecture him on it, but I was trying to give him a gentle understanding that this is not the way of the world. I don't think, it ever took because I've been back to Bolivia once, since then, couple of years after I left there and I went to the Executive Club, there still weren't (native) people yet.

Q: The other unusual thing is that you were the vice president of the Chamber of Commerce. How did that happen? Did you have a Commerce Counsel there?

MORTON: Normally, we had a commercial attaché there. He participated and he was accepted by the Chamber of Commerce, but he didn't take an activist role. He was an intellectual who liked to do things alone. For example, he always lunched alone at restaurants, separate, apart, where anybody else went, so he didn't really, he wasn't a high profile guy. I've always made it a point to be active in the American Chambers of Commerce wherever I was stationed because I found it useful for a number of reasons.

they could make or break your programs by the image that they created in the community.

They also had resources which if you played your cards right, you could tap into and we had contacts and they would do dinner parties for representational events, but you were confident that they would invite you and you got a chance to expand your level of contacts into the business community and oftentimes the social hierarchy. So I found it very useful and I was useful to them and they were useful to me, so it was a symbiotic relationship and I worked very closely with them and I got things from them that I wouldn't have gotten otherwise. In fact in other countries later on, I got a tremendous amount of things from the Chambers of Commerce by working closely with them.

Q: Now, while you were there, the U.S. Policy interest was I believe, was more towards democratic reform because of the systems of transition of government by way of coups rather than through traditional democratic methods, as opposed to trade and other regional issues. If this isn't a correct assumption, was there any particular role that you as a senior U.S. official in Bolivia, articulating and executing U.S. Policy, were there any examples that you consider, particularly outstanding as far as your contribution is concerned?

MORTON: There was some. I worked indirectly in a large sense in this area, because television was in its infancy in Bolivia and so we were supplying a lot of films to the television station to help fill out their programs. They came on I think, about 6.00 in the evening, went off about 10.00 and probably, about an hour where stuff was locally produced and everything else was canned and either films from us or the British or feeds that they got from other places. We tried to get the ambassador into their newscast periodically and we would do the excerpts in our studio.

We used to do, we didn't have a teleprompter, and we had sort of a homemade teleprompter. We'd buy big rolls of butcher paper and print his text in large letters on this butcher paper and have somebody stay out of camera range and hold up this butcher paper and another one who was lying on the floor would slowly pull it down so he could read it and we finally got it even sophisticated so we had two rolls of butcher paper, so he could do almost like the President does here with the telecopy, he can read two cards through some hand movement. Bill Stedman, the ambassador was very cooperative in this regard. Bill had stage fright the first time and we had a hard time with him, because he looked as if he had his head in one of those frames that they used to use in the old days to hold your head still while you were taking a picture and we were trying to get in a ...limber up. In fact one time, I stood just out of camera range and was making faces at him as he was seriously trying to give a speech just to get in the limber up and he was trying to keep a straight face, but he just couldn't, he had a smile and this really helped him considerably and once he saw this, he did it more often in the future although he said he was ready to kill me at the time I did, but it helped and we also had seminars at the bi-national centers on democratic institutions and we strengthened the collections in our libraries although the libraries tended to reach the leads in the community because the

literacy rate was probably about ten, twelve percent in Bolivia, but those who were literate did frequent our libraries.

The military were the ones that we really had difficulty getting to and they were the ones who made the decisions whether or not it was going to be a democratic society or not and this is very difficult to do in any society, because no country wants foreign governments to have too much access to their military, so it had to be done very delicately and had to be done on the basis of personal relationships rather than an institutional relationship. I did visit their military training camps periodically and would give them books and pamphlets, but mostly on cultural affairs, not anything that lit remotely propagandistic, so that I could maintain my entrée and I'd get a chance to meet the cadets and talk to them and give them a chance to practice their English with a native speaker cause all of them wanted to learn English so they could take advantage of some of the offsite training programs , they were offered by the military advisory group and some of the bright ones hoped to someday, become a general and get to some of the advanced training schools. Most of the colonels in the Bolivian military had been either to Panama or to Kansas or some place in military training programs and they spoke possible English.
We did an extension service for a short period of time at some of the military bases by sending English teachers there to supplement their English teaching programs. We did this for about a year but then they got sensitive about it and we closed this out of that, but it, I guess it's just like water dripping away on a stone. You wear it down eventually, because I'm not sure whether we could take credit for it or not, but eventually, they did start having democratic elections and having civilians run for office.

Q: You mentioned that you had this relationship with Ambassador Stedman and of course, up to now we have talked about all f the positive things of your relationship and your outreach to Bolivians and Bolivian institutions and of course, you talked quite a bit about your relationship with the ambassador and the country team in your previous assignment. How would you compare, how would you characterize your participation with the country team and with the ambassador, your relationship with the Ambassador Stedman in La Paz?

MORTON: He was a good professional relationship as well as a good personal relationship. We still are good friends, we're both on the Board of Government at DACOR, Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired, I'd nominated him. I've been on the Board of governors there for five years and last year, I nominated Bill to join me on the Board of governors and he's taken a very active role there, but he was a good professional relationship. He had been in the foreign service, he knew what the foreign service is like, he had worked in administration, and he had worked in bi-national center. He spoke Spanish well, he got along well with the Spanish, it was a completely different relationship from the political ambassador, very political ambassador that I had in Jamaica and it was refreshing for me to have this.

When I served in Colombia, we had a mixture of both, we had, the first ambassador there was a political appointee, but he had come from Academia and at the end of his time we had another political appointee, but he had been a foreign service officer early in his life

and in fact, he had been a bi-national Senor director in Peru and then he had been in the Peace Corps as a Peace Corps director and then he was an ambassador so that was a different relationship and then I had the very political ambassador in Jamaica and then a career in Bolivia. In fact, when I served in Jamaica that was the only time in my career that I served with a political ambassador. All the rest of posts I served in, that's posts because they were hardship posts, they all had career ambassadors.

Q: And the rest of the country team?

MORTON: Our country team was very small and we know, we know you served in Bolivia, you know it's twelve thousand two hundred feet above sea level. A lot of the country team was affected by the altitude, so they were conserving their energy, but there were a group; of us who, we used to call ourselves the hard-core group, we were very activist together that were about six families and we took an active roll in everything and embassy activities, official activities and social activities.

We were all together on the Boy-Scout Commission, all of us were on the commissary board. I kept trying to get them on, those who had children, tried to get them on the school board. We did lots of vacations together and so the Admin Officer who was a first time Admin Officer, he didn't come from the political corn this is out of corn assignment and I still good friends. The General Services Officer who left from being General Services officer there to be DCM and I've forgotten some Middle Eastern country and the number three guy at AID. We were in everything and we were neighbors in the community, we lived across the street sort of down the street from each other, but most of the people just sort of led a quiet life, they would do their work and go home.

Before we close out on Bolivia, I've got one interesting anecdote to tell you. Bolivia celebrates their independence day over a three day period and in 1974 there was a three day holiday, '74, '75, I don't remember, it was a three day holiday, it was Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, must have been '74, and then by taking two days annual leave, you could get 9 days vacation, so we worked out a deal the Embassy Admin Officer of the USIS Bi-national Center Director, good friend of mine in AID, the number three guy there, I think he was the chief accountant and the auditor from AID and my wife and I and all of our kids we were going to take an overland trip from La Paz up to the Altiplano around lake Titicaca and go to Cusco, leaving all our cars there, then take the train up to Machu Picchu and back. It was a great adventure, there were really venturing ...and we had to carry extra gas cans in some places along the way, you didn't buy gas by the gallon, you bought it by the buckets and they had some kids to siphon it up and get it started into your gas tank, and the trip was fine it was adventurous, but this was during the period of time that President Nixon resigned and President Ford took over as President of the United States.

We were completely incommunicado for these nine days we were not sure whether we could get a radio, we didn't think to carry a short wave radio with us and we couldn't get local radios anywhere and there was no newspaper, so we had no idea what was going on in the outside world for this nine day period of time. We were on our way back and we

stopped at little place in Peru on the border to gas up before going back into Bolivia and we bought a barrel of gasoline and they were, cause it was cheaper that way and even if we didn't use it all but we were in four cars, I think there were ten adults and twelve kids and the kids and the kids used to sort of move back and forth between cars every time we stopped so we'd have to do inventory every time to make sure we didn't leave a kid because you might have your own kids or somebody else's kids or mixture in your car, but we were gassing up and the kids were running back and forth to decide which cars they are ride in and the little boy who was busy dipping up the buckets of gasoline and getting it siphoned to put it into my car, looked at the license plate on my car and then he looked at me and he said to me in Spanish, I was surprised he spoke Spanish most of the guys up there didn't, but he said to me in Spanish "Bolivia isn't it?" I said yes, and then he looked at me again and he says what do you think of your new president?

So I thought that he thought mistakenly that I was a Bolivian and that there had been a revolution in Bolivia, so I said Oh! What's his name? and he said Ford and I thought I don't know a Bolivian named Ford, so I asked my colleagues, I said do any of you guys know a colonel named Ford? because he's now the President of Bolivia and we all started thinking about Ford, Ford and so finally, the admin officer who as a Fed been in the political concept he must be an air force colonel out in eastern part, because I don't know him.

So we all got back, we went on back home thinking there had been a revolution and I got back home and I asked my house boy how are things when I was away and he says pretty quiet, I said what about the revolution, he says there wasn't any revolution, so I thought well, he's not wired in politically any way so there could be a revolution, today and tomorrow, he wouldn't know it. Just then the phone rang and it was the admin officer and he says, "you know we're stupid, he knew you were an American, Ford is not president of Bolivia, he's president of the United States, President Nixon resigned and Gerald Ford is now the President and we had one heck of a laugh ...

Q: Well, we have gotten to some very interesting facets of your initial three foreign service assignments here, we're up to 1975 and you're about to leave Bolivia. One thing in your life, before we leave, I do want to touch a little bit on your family there, because foreign service careers are complete. Were there any unusual, both on a positive or adversely, experiences as far as your family was concerned?

MORTON: It was a very pleasant time for my kids, especially because democracy is a wonderful thing, but there's a certain amount of personal safety in a dictatorship where my kids were not accustomed to. We could not let our kids go out alone in Colombia because they'd get kidnapped and held for ransom so somebody had to be with them at all times.

Q: Even in those early days.

MORTON: Even in those early days. People were, ... foreign kids would get kidnapped for ransom and then in Jamaica, it was just the traffic and the uncertainty of the public

transportation system, so you had to carry them or ask somebody else to carry them and you'd have to bring them back.

Bolivia, it was perfectly safe for my kids to go anywhere they wanted to on public transportation and they were all over the place and they really loved it, this is the first time they had ever been able to go out by themselves and get a bus ...in lieu of... There were several types of public transportation there, there were these small busses that cost a little bit more than the large ones. I think in U.S. terms it's about five cents for the big bus and ten cents for the little bus, but the little busses because it did cost more were less crowded and those were the ones the foreigners tended to ride and so my kids would go up and get the ten cent bus with through fares and go all over the place and they loved it.

They had friends all over town, the American school was the center of activity for the kids there. There were three schools and one was an elementary school, middle school and high school and then we had an overall principal, who was a very good friend of mine, we had - when I took over as president of the school board, we had a very ineffectual school superintendent and I requested his resignation, because he was just off or he was coming to school in his own times and we'd send him on recruiting trips back to the States to get teachers and he couldn't do it. He couldn't even account for his expenses, so I requested his resignation and then the school superintendent in Cochabamba was a nice fellow, very ambitious, very well educated, had a very attractive wife who was expecting their first child and I talked him into La Paz and taking over and he'd been in Bolivia long enough. He spoke Spanish well and so did his wife and he did a great job there and the morale went up and he changed the whole recruiting system so that the kids had a great time and a tremendous environment and all of them were bringing in master teachers, so that most of the teachers had advanced degrees and we decided to concentrate on two school districts in the United States to recruit teachers.

This was Marion County in California, because they have a high level of literate good teachers and of all places Pulaski County Arkansas, where I came from because it also had a large number of well qualified teachers who wouldn't have had a chance otherwise, to go for two years in another country and they would've jumped at the chance. They all took a cut in pay, a lot of our school teachers were college teachers who were willing to take a cut in pay and work in a high school, just for the experience of living overseas, so the kids had a great time and my wife loved it even though it was twelve thousand two hundred fees, that would not deter my wife from playing tennis and so she gasped for breath a little bit at the beginning, but she would be interning tennis tournaments and winning against the Bolivians, because what she made up for in lack of oxygen, I mean what she lacked in oxygen, she could make up for in aggressiveness and the Bolivians used to get so frustrated that this gringo lady howling up in the tennis court, but they loved her for it, and she had a great time.

Q: What I like for us to do is near the end of the interview, is for you to give an assessment of the socialization, the experiences that your children had growing up in compartmented communities abroad and how this impacted on their re-insertion in U.S. culture in society, both as Blacks and as Americans and I make that distinction

purposely. And if at any point during this conversation there are some elements that you think would be useful in relating, please feel free to step in on it.

We are making 75 and would have just finished now your first three foreign, foreign service tours. What happened to the Morton's now?

MORTON: We're coming back to the States, we are coming back to a house that we had bought and never lived in that's cause when we were on home leave in '73 we decided ...We had sold the house that we owned in '66 when we were going to Colombia, so we came back in '73 and while we were on home leave we bought a house and we leased it back to the people back to the people we bought it from, so we would have a homestead and also so that we'd have a tax shelter because Bolivia was a 25% differential post than I would like to retain some of that differential instead of giving it to Internal Revenue Service and it was the first time my kids had left the States when my youngest boy was in pre-school and my oldest boy was in first grade and when we were coming back, my youngest boy was in middle school and my oldest boy was going to high school and so they really didn't remember living in the States too much except for that year we were in Boulder, Colorado and they were both in elementary school and that was more like an adventure to them than anything else. This time they were going to be at home in the community that they had grown up and in a fence. Chris was all excited about being able to decorate her own home instead of a rental home that belonged to some foreign landlord and we could decorate ourselves, so went through the usual excitement of buying furniture and painting and planting flowers and digging up weeds and digging up leaves and clinging with our neighbors. It was like another foreign assignment, you know we have to figure who the peon will design your community and where the power lies and how and who do you see and how you go about getting things done and on this case, often times we didn't have the buffers on it. It's a little harder because when you have a siege you got the buffers on in the embassy, they have a built in number of painters and plumbers and electricians, you can tap that, whereas we were starting from scratch, but our experience overseas served us well, we kept records and files on service people, we bought another house as rental property and we were doing a lot of work on it ourselves and using service people, so we were able to build a …on short order and while Chris was being busy on the domestic side, I was busy on the job site. I was assigned to the information ...SAT ...center service as an executive officer and this was sort of an amalgamation of things in Washington that didn't really have a place elsewhere so that you had the book production and publishing program in that. The exhibits program plus the international exhibits, which dealt with the huge exhibits I went to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, it had its own separate appropriation. The English teaching program and we had the program development was just getting started at that time and that was in ICS also. We had little bits and pieces of things like that made up the smallest element of the Agency as far as the media-units were concerned. I think there were less than three hundred employees in ICS. It was a good Washington assignment for me, because the Director of ICS was a cultural type and he was absolutely and completely disinterested in managerial and administrative matters. If you just went in to him with administrative management problems, you could see his eyes glaze over and so I realized after a week, that 'don't bother him with this' and the Deputy was a similar sort so I had a free reign,

which is what I love and it gave me a chance then whatever I wanted to do, whichever area that I wanted to poke into, they let me do it, so I was able to make a lot of changes which I think were for the better. We did the book procurement for all the libraries world wide and the book industry in the United States was one of the worst organized industries there is anywhere. I mean it gives our whole picture of a developed society a bad name. There were these little book publishers all over the place, you couldn't go to one place., we had contract s with God knows how many places and you never knew how long when you order the book, how long it would take to get the book, you might get it in two weeks or you might get it in two years by the time you got it. If you were at a post and you ordered a book when you got there for your library, you'd be very lucky if it came before your tour of duty was up, unless you paid special price and got air shipment, somebody actually got up from their desk and went down to the corner bookstore and went and bought it. If you ordered a three hour jobbers in New York, it would take forever. We had two separate places in New York where we could get the books. There was a small office in New York that dealt with the book publishers, because most of them at that time were in New York and then we had a big warehouse out in Brooklyn that belonged to the administrative services unit in admin, but a large part of their work was ...soliciting us. Nobody from here in reasonable memory, had even gone up there to look at this. By a good coincidence, early in my career, when I'd been in personnel, that had been one of the areas of my responsibility, those people in New York, so I knew a lot of them, and I went up there to our new acquaintanceship and to see how they did things and find out how it worked. At this time, a lot of the New York book publishing industry were moving out of New York because the telephone system being what it is, in the beginnings of automation, you didn't have to be there to do it. You can move out to Idaho or Ohio where labor was cheap and overhead was cheap, or move up to Connecticut and New Jersey and so it was beginning to get fragmented. We were also ordering newspapers and magazines for the libraries around the world the same way, and so I assigned the young fellow, who was a management intern, he'd been a captain in the army and decided that he was a third generation army brat or fourth generation. His father had been a general, his grandfather had been a general and I think his great-grandfather had been a colonel, but after he got to be captain, he decided this wasn't for him, so I assigned him to put some order into this thing and figure out how we could get it systematized and he'd been in the quarter master core and he'd been a supply officer and so he took after this and I gave him the reigns and his ...tea or the bitterness tea, one of those analogies. I am a city boy, but he took off after this and we started trying to see what pattern there was in it and how we could get it systematized and get it on a business like basis. We were losing money on this, because when you had a post that you order a book, you obligated part of your budget for this and that money can't be touched because you've got an outstanding obligation against it and you sit there and you leave and the book may never be delivered and the money is just sitting there, so we started looking into how we could straighten this out and we made a lot of progress on this in the two years that I was there and I think the post around the world appreciated the attention it was getting. It was different for them, because they had to start doing a different form and people resist change , but they felt that they were getting something out of this, at least someone was paying attention to their problems and as I mentioned earlier, the program development system was just getting ...go and this is why people would get speakers to participate in different

programs and we had five different program development officers, each run by a medieval king, who was running his own little fiefdom, and there was no uniformity. If you wanted a speaker on Arts America, you did one way, and if you wanted a speaker on economic topics, you did it a different way, and it was hell to pay for the director of this unit when it came time to try to put his budget together and ...course were tying their hair about it and this didn't make sense to me at all. I like things to go in straight lines and cross it down and add up at the bottom. So we took on this problem and started working with them and tried to get them organized and we were able to get everybody going with us except the arts. The head of the Arts America program was a concert pianist and he spent two hours every morning rehearsing, because periodically, he'd do it as a cultural attraction himself and put on concerts. He was a nice guy personally, but he was creative and creative people don't necessarily make good administrators. To show you what a poor administrator he was, he didn't even know the name of his entire staff and some of the speakers had been there a long time. So he was really a problem, but we were trying to get him to fit into this mould and he was resistant fitting into it, but we finally working through with the manager of tools at our disposal NICS and through the country plan process and bringing the two together and showing him how the money tied into the resources at his disposal, we were able to get everybody so that it could be part of the orderly system in the country plan program and you could decide if you wanted a speaker, an exhibit or books or whatever you wanted, you could get it all tied together into one program instead of ...it going all over the place. He would save time for everybody and energy.

Q: What was the process of your getting that assignment? Did you know ahead? Was that offered to you before you left Bolivia? Did you seek it out?

MORTON: I didn't really seek it out. I didn't really know I had been a civil servant in Washington before I went into the foreign service, I had been a management intern and I had worked in the training capacity for a year in every part of the administrative apparatus in Washington. Then when I was in personnel, the Information Center Service had been one of the areas that I was responsible for, so I had – I knew the organizational structure and I knew a lot of the people and I knew their position descriptions and what they did, some of it had changed but not an awful lot and I had worked in the Voice of America in personnel for a short while also and then I had been a Personnel Officer and I had got the Information Center Service for two years, so I knew it inside and out. I didn't want to go to the press service because I would have been succeeding the person who'd been there for umpteen up years, twenty-eight, five years and I felt that I'm only going to be here two or three years and I don't want that burden. I was trying to see where things were. So this seemed like a perfect fit, I had three different officers bidding for me and so the final decision was mine and I chose the Information Center Service, which was good because it gave me a chance to exercise freedom as I said and to do things the way I wanted to do them.

When I first went to the ICS, my predecessor was still there and she was good, I got there in August and she was retiring at the end of December, so there was this period of time where there would have been the two of us there, so the director of the agency took me

and two other fellows and put us in charge of doing extensive study of international exhibits program and we were supposed to do an analysis of it and see how it could be improved, how we could get more effect for our money, because we were spending millions of dollars on this. These exhibit budgets would run anywhere from forty to eighty million dollars and they were several years in the making and we had a big supply train and we owned sea containers to carry the exhibits there. We must have had about a hundred containers rented, we were renting. We had a support facility in Vienna, we would do tryouts in Austria, not Austria, in Yugoslavia and some of the other eastern European countries and then the exhibits would go around the Soviet Union for a year and we have for the floor exhibits card with them. Each group would be for half of the tour and another group for the other half because, they'd burn out. So the logistics of this were immense but we were spending all this money, we weren't sure we were getting our money's worth, where we were just supplying entertainment for the Eastern Europeans or were we doing purple trade but they gave us carte blanche, so we started from scratch, we, it was Phil Powell whom I had worked with when I was a budget officer, I'd been his deputy. Bob Perman, whom I never met before and Bob left after about a month and got assigned to London and then Phil left about two months and got assigned to Japan, so it really left me, but we went to different organizations in the United States first to see how they did exhibits, went to the Smithsonian, to the sights the Smithsonian Institute were traveling their exhibits. Went to General Services Administration because a lot of their headquarters are here and their work shops and everything were right here in this area, made it easy. Then I went to New York where a lot of our exhibits were fabricated and then I went to Vienna to the office there, the Regional Exhibits Service, we called it REX and then we had a regional program office there, which was a separate facility that did small paper exhibits for Eastern Europe to see how they were organized because they were two different things and they did window boxes and things like that for the, these would be large boxes with fluorescent lights and then they'd put color slides on it with text underneath it and put it inside the fence but close enough so people walking by the streets could read it and get the material that way.

Then I went to the Soviet Union, I went to Moscow, where the exhibits would come in and see the circumstances there and then we'd just open a big, I went up there and then we wrote a report for the director. By the time we came in with the finished report , there had been an election and the administration was changed and President Carter was coming into office and the director was leaving and he some of it had lost interest, the whole thing ended and he was out the door.

Q: Who was the director then?

MORTON: Jim Keogh and Gene Kopp was the Deputy Director, so Gene Kopp was the one who stayed on as the interim director to follow through on this. We recommended a number of things, one, we recommended that a professional exhibits person be put in charge of these exhibits so that they could have an air of professionalism about it. We recommended that more program freight be put into it to get more knowledge out of them rather than just entertainment, so that you could really do something with them, and we made specific recommendations as far as personnel was concerned because by doing this

traveling around we'd had a chance to see professionals in the Agency in the field who were working in this area and we knew who was capable of doing what.

Q: I have noticed that you have had a most dynamic early career development, I guess we are midway if not further in your career. You go from positions that you have described earlier to your second overseas assignment as Counselor for Public Affairs, your third overseas assignment as Counselor for Public Affairs and now you have a position as Executive Director with a whole bunch of responsibilities in the ICS Bureau in USIA. It is commonly attributed to government agencies that there is an "old boy's network" that favors the rise of potential stars early in their development regardless of their actual performance, more on their anticipated actual performance. To what do you attribute these successful career developing assignments with the amount of responsibilities that you have gained so early on and of course we are going to see this knowing your CV here later on. What do you attribute this? Do you think you were able to infiltrate the "old boy's network"? Was if because of observable standards of performance that you just naturally gravitated to these assignments?

MORTON: I think I had a fairly rapid rise in USIA for a number of reasons, I work hard. I have never been a 40 hours a week person. I study the jobs of the people over me and the people under me. Because, I don't want to have to be dependent on my subordinates to put paper in the copying machine if I am in there on a Saturday. I don't want to be helpless and can't put paper in a copying machine or open a file cabinet or know how to call "Mr. So-and-So on the telephone, I want to know how to do it myself. At the same time, I want to know what the person over me does, what his responsibilities are, so should they fall by the wayside, I can step in and take up the slack. I am quite willing to give them credit for things that I do that help them on their way because I feel that if I push them as they go up, they will drag me along with them. People like having somebody reliable behind them so that they don't have to keep looking over their shoulders to see who is stabbing them in the back. I tend to be open with my supervisors. I am not contentious about it, but if I disagree with them I tell them. I give them my rationale and if they decide of accept my advice, fine and if they decide not too, they are the boss, I go along with their ideas and I will work just as hard for the successful accomplishment of their objective as I would have, if they had taken my advice. At the same time I like to know who's in charge of things. Where are the movers and shakers in every organization? When I first started with USIA (United States Information Agency) I was a management intern at a fairly low level. I got to know everyone of any importance in the Agency within my first two years there. I got to know them on a first name basis. They knew me and I knew them. This helps. I also spent a lot of time trying to find out how the different parts of USIA meshed together. As a management intern you work in different parts of the Agency and often times your first couple of days there, they don't know what to do with you or what your capabilities or limitations are. They would give you an assignment, a nothing assignment and also tell you to read the manual that describes the operations of that particular section of the office. Most people would take this assignment and make a weeks work out it and in between they would be reading the manual. I would take the manual home and read it at night and then during the day I would do that job and maybe get back in a half-a-day or at the end of the day and ask for

another job. This let them know that I was not there on vacation. After I had been at a place long enough, while I was there, I started to look at the career patterns of other people to see how they managed to get where they are. Before I joined the Foreign Service, I kept track of certain "key people" that I noticed in the Agency who had fast rising careers and I set up a chart with these people on it. Where they had been assigned and the kinds of assignments they had and what they had done. I maintained this for years so that I could see that this kind of assignment you don't want, this geographical assignment you don't want, you don't want to work for this person - this sort of thing. So you don't get yourself caught in a place. I use to tell my sons, before you go into a room, see how many ways you can get out of that room. I did the same thing in my career path. I did it in the military and I did it in USIA. I always wanted to make sure that I worked as hard as anyone else there. I got to know everyone. I had friends in key places. You are going to make some enemies along the way. But one thing about it, I don't think you will find any woman in the Agency that ever said I made a pass at her, both foreign nationals, Americans, wives of my colleagues or anything. I think that is important.

Q: You alluded, a couple of times, to your military experience although you felt that the regimentation was not the atmosphere in which you wanted to develop a lifetime profession. But, do you, in retrospect or hindsight, do you feel that there were some elements of that experience that contributed to your success as a Foreign Service officer?

MORTON: There was a lot of it. I went into the military as a kid. I came out as a man. I went to a lot of different training programs because I discovered early on that training assignment in the military was good duty. You get the best food, you get good quarters and you don't have the regimentation and you learn a lot. You learn public speaking, you learn self discipline, you learn how to discipline other people, you learn how to plan things, how to execute things, how to follow up on things. Someone once told me that when you in the military you spend 10 percent of your time giving orders and 90 percent of your time making sure that they are carried out. I noticed that that was one of the shortcomings of some of the people that I worked with, there was no follow-up. When I get to my next assignment I will go into that in detail, what I tried to do I used to "toot" some institutionalization of follow-up in USIA. I don't know how successful I was. But, I tried anyway. I also believe you should have some theoretical framework for what you are doing. My wife says, "I over-plan vacations." If I am going to take a vacation in August, I start planning it in January. I map it out, I send off and get material on it and I look at the options and the pitfalls and that sort of thing. I plan it like a strategic command. I raised my sons the same way. I enjoy it! The planning of the operations oftentimes is as much fun as the execution. Be flexible about it, if you see you took the wrong turn somewhere don't keep going, backup and try another one. Above all be optimistic about it. My friends that play tennis with me at the club, I play tennis, its about 40 of us the "Old Fox Club" (laugh), we started out calling ourselves that and decided we should be more politically correct. We now call it the "Thundering 30". Now we are the "Thundering 40". The guys, we have known each other for quite some time, it's a physical fitness club not to far from here and most of the guys I play tennis with, in fact, and all of them are retired. We are all between 60 and 75. They all have, normally over the years, have never seen me lose my temper, but they lose their temper at me,

especially my partner, sometimes. Because, if I do something stupid, I laugh at it. This can really irritate somebody who takes life too seriously. But, I don't see any point in getting mad about it, just learn from that and don't do it again. I don't think my wife, we've been married 43 years, and I don't think she has seen me very angry during those 43 years. If she has, it's over in a minute or two. I don't carry grudges. The people who have kicked me on the way up, I might give them a hand up the next day. If I keep giving them a hand up they will either be so disgusted with me that they will go away or they will pretty soon give me a hand up. It works!

Q: Next assignment, another assignment of immense responsibility, we are in 1977.

MORTON: I had just gotten promoted to Class 2 under the old system which is OC under the current system. I was looking around; I had sort of exhausted the potentials for doing anything new in ICS. A lot of things in the air and they were moving with their own steam and I was ready to move on to something else. John Reinhardt came in as Director of the Agency, and John called me over to his office to tell me that he was going to reorganize personnel and he was considering appointing me as the Director of Personnel but then he had heard so many complains about it from the Civil Service employees and everything in the agency was directed toward the Civil Service. So he was going to get a civil servant to be the Director of Personnel and he wanted me to be the Deputy Director of Personnel.

Q: You mean everything was oriented towards the Civil Service or Foreign Service?

MORTON: I meant everything was being oriented toward the Foreign Service. I am sorry. The Civil Servants, although they outnumbered the Foreign Service felt that the Foreign Service controlled everything. So, he was going to make the Director of Personnel a career civil service person because for years it had been a Foreign Service officer. Mosley had been in there as the Director of Personnel, but he had been for a long time the Deputy to a lot of Foreign Service officers. Then Bill Carroll came in but he was from the outside. He was not really a government personnel person. Reinhardt ask me what did I think about that. Well! I told him it wasn't the issue whether I was Director or Deputy Director of Personnel; I really didn't want to be in Personnel because I had done personnel for two years earlier on in my career. He told me that I misunderstood, he was not asking me whether I wanted to be in personnel or not he was asking me if I had any objections to being a Deputy Director, because that's where he wanted me. If that is where you want me, then that is where I will go. But, I am due overseas in about two years and I would like to go. So, he says, "OK two years". You go in as Deputy Director of Personnel and in two years I will let you go overseas. I have decided on Angie Garcia as the Director of Personnel. Do you have any trouble working with a woman? I said no. I came from a matriarch; my mother was the boss in our house. Not only that Angie and I are good friends. We to worked together years ago, in fact we shared an office. We get along fine. We usually go have lunch together every Wednesday. He said, "That's fine that works out well". I said when it is supposed to take place. He said, "Monday". This was on a Thursday. Don't tell anybody because I am going to make the announcement about it. I left his office and went out of USIA which was at 18th and Pennsylvania

Avenue at that time and my office was over on H Street a block away. So I went out to cross over Pennsylvania Avenue, just coming out of the Director's office, and I got trapped by the traffic by the center line and there were two people from ICS coming from ICS going towards the headquarters who got trapped on the center line too. And they said, "congratulations on your new assignment" (laugh). I didn't know what they were talking about. But I was sure they didn't know about my assignment to personnel. So I said, "thank you." One of them said when are you leaving for personnel. I said, "how did you know about that?" What had happened was after Reinhardt talked to me, he talked to Bill Carroll and Carroll decided to pre-empt him making the announcement and it was all over the Agency in 10 minutes. Just that quick. It worked out quite well. Angie and I were friends. Angie knew absolutely nothing about the Foreign Service. Angie didn't know much about geography. She couldn't read a map, so she did not know where all these countries were. But, she was smart.

Q: What was Angie's background?

MORTON: Angie was a High School graduate who came in as a GS-4 Clerk-Stenographer. Back when she was hired, if you could only type you came in as a GS-3. If you took shorthand you came in as a GS-4 Clerk-Steno. Angie came in as one of our High School recruits. She was assigned to the Motion Picture Service. Angie came from a dirt poor background in Pennsylvania. Although her name is Angelina Garcia, she is really Ukrainian. Her father was a Spanish sailor who deserted ship in New York and made his way down to this little mining community in Pennsylvania. He didn't speak English and her mother was a widow with three young girls and here was this good looking Spaniard that didn't speak English and her mother, Ukrainian and the whole Ukrainian community there. So she met and married this Spanish guy and that's how Angelina Garcia got her name. Angie did not speak one word of Spanish then and her three older sisters looked very Ukrainian. Then her sister next to her, Pauline, and she looked like sisters and they looked more like their father.

Angie was a very, very hard working, workaholic. She took a room in a little apartment building about a block from the Agency and she was in there at 5AM to 7PM and all day on Saturday. She had no social life. The Executive Officer, she was the secretary to the Executive Officer in the Motion Picture Service, who would giver her more and more responsibility because she was doing his work. She moved up from when I first met her she was a GS-9 and I was a GS-9, I had just started with the Agency and we shared a little office with a little cubby-hole with a partition between it and I was a trainee. I was working for the Director of the Motion Picture Service and she was working for the Admin Officer. But she was doing GS-13 work then because the Deputy Administration Officer was giving her his work to do and the Administrative Officer was giving her his work. She would never complain. She would do it. She knew the ins and outs of it.

The only part of the Agency she really knew was the Motion Picture Service which was a handicap in a way, because when she first came into personnel, she sort of transferred this Motion Picture Television Service image to the other parts of the Agency. She had to learn what they did and where they did it. Then I had a hard time teaching her what a

Foreign Service officer did. Angie would not fly so therefore, she couldn't go overseas and see what they did at a post. She had this romantic idea of what they did at USIS posts. She thought what they did was show movies all the time and produce movies and distribute the movies. I told her that was a very minor part of your activity. Most of that was done by the Foreign Nationals. I did teach her how to read a map. I convinced her to get a big piece of glass for her desk and I got a map of the world which we put underneath it. Every PAO going out she would meet - she and I would meet with them before they went out. We would meet with returning PAOs in her Office. Before they came in, I would show her on the map where they were, where they were coming from and where they were going to and tell her something about it. Angie did not understand time zones. So that was another thing she had never been outside the eastern time zone. She had been to New York. She came from Pennsylvania to Washington and she had been up to New York on the train. She flew to Florida once and took the train back. That was her one time on a plane and never again. She wanted to learn and she did know Civil Service Rules and Regulations. She left the Foreign Service side of it up to me.

The senior officer assignments were made by Reinhardt although he would insist that was a senior officer assignment board that was anonymous. The anonymity was because he did all the assignments for PAOs and Assistant PAOs or Deputy PAOs and for Senior Cultural Affairs officers.

About a year after I was in personnel to show how much Angie knew about the world, one of us had to go around and visit posts around the world because nobody from senior level from personnel had been out there. We were contemplating a lot of changes in the system. I told Angie I was going to take a trip around the world and I was going to visit Madrid, Rome, Tehran, New Delhi, Bangkok, Jakarta, Manila and back. These are largely scattered posts around the world. So she counted off, those were seven countries. So she said, "When are you leaving?" I said, "Saturday". So she said, "Seven countries, so you will be back in ten days, won't you?" (Laugh). I said, "No! It will be about a month." She said, "A month, what are you going to do, you going to goof off." I said, "No! You know it takes 8 hours to get from some of these places to another. You cannot go when you want to go but when the planes go. Then when you arrive at the post, you have to get in the city and go through customs and immigration, so the shortest stay I was going was to start in Madrid. I was going to get into Madrid on Sunday night and spend Monday and Tuesday there and leave Tuesday night and go to Rome and spend two days there and then three days in Tehran. The longest stop I was going to have was going to be in Manila, no, Thailand because I was getting in on a weekend so I had to get there on Friday and have Saturday and Sunday and then I would do Monday on official business and then leave. We had a long discussion about this. She finally agreed but she never did really understand that it takes that long to go to that many places around the world. You can't just go there that quickly.

I was able to accomplish a lot while I was in personnel. One of the things that had always bugged me up until this time was when you went to a post there was no tour-of-duty policy. When you went to a post you had no idea, how long you were going to be there. You could be there a year, two years, three years, fifteen years, and it depended on the

vagaries of the area director the ambassador or your own inclination. The Chief of Training when I had first started at the Agency had been overseas fifteen years in two posts. He had been in Finland and Demark. There was another fellow who had spent his entire career going from London to Paris to Madrid. And some poor slob was stuck in Ouagadougou all those years because he could not find a place elsewhere. I felt we ought to know when you are coming out of the place. It would give you an orderly assignment system. Because if Joe Blow is going to post A for two years, that you got to have in personnel a successor at it two years from now to go there and that person should stay two years and then his successor. It gives some order to it. But it cost too much to have everybody to stay at a place two years. So we would have two, three, and four-year posts. This required a lot of negotiating with the Area Directors because for some post it's not a hardship post. People feel they don't like to move their kids and families that often. So you can let them stay there for four years, two years, home leave and another two years. And then some which are moderately hardship can be three years. So a person would not have to go from Ouagadougou to Katmandu to places like that. They would get a shot at Mexico City and Buenos Aires, Paris or someplace reasonably civilized. This took a lot of negotiating. State Department had a sort of a loose system, but they did not have a fixed one but we took every post and sat down and negotiated the tour of duty with every Area Director. It was interesting because the European Area Director wanted all his post four-years and so did the African Director and I kept trying to explain to them, you don't want to have your people stuck in Blank and Malawi for four years. But it is so hard to get people to go there. Once you get them there, you want to keep them there as long as possible. I said, "Yes, but once they get away, they are not going back." And so we finally got them to agree to two years for most places in Africa with some of the better places for three years. Latin America, most places for three years except for some of the real hardship posts like Bolivia and Guyana. This worked out quite well. It helped us in our planning program. It helped us in our training because then you could schedule people for language and another thing that always bugged me was the "old boy's network" that you referred to in assignments. You had to know somebody to know somebody to know somebody to get a decent post.

I had been subject to that, but I had been able to work it to my advantage but I did not feel that it was the way it should be done and I wanted it an open book. I felt that everybody should get a straight shot at every assignment. That is when we decided we would determine what the tour of duty policy is and if language training were involved in this assignment we would post the opening one year before language training started for that job so that people would get a chance to see what it was. They would get a chance to apply for language training and they could get everything in order to be eligible before going there. And we took the decision on the senior officer assignments away for the Area Directors and got them out of the personnel assignment process. That took a lot of fighting. Reinhardt had to really put his foot down; he had to fire a couple of Area Directors when he told them to pay attention to this to see that he meant business. In fact, one Area Director was in Singapore and he was making assignments while he was out there, telling people you are going to go here and you are going to go there and Reinhardt found out about it. He sent him a cable telling him to come back immediately (laugh). But it got their attention.

Q: Let me interrupt you and ask you during all these processes how much, first of all, was there any kind of relationship between USIA and State Department? What kind of relationship was it as far as personnel assignments and those kinds of things are concerned? The Ambassadors involvement in the assignments, did it exist and if so to what extent? Can you just expand on that a little bit?

MORTON: State Department regarded us as a small enough organization that we could experiment with different things. If it worked out then maybe they would maybe try it too. They didn't really get too involved in this. They didn't want us to get too far a field from them because it would cause some dissatisfaction in the ranks if at a real hardship post they had people there for three years and we kept taking ours out at the end of two years. Although they did not necessarily change it, State Department had some posts as three-year posts long after we had made them four-years for example. And they had some as three-years long after we had made them two year posts. But they gradually came around so that they were almost uniform.

We were trying to get the Ambassadors out of the assignment process. Some Ambassadors, if they came in from the outside and had some political clot, they wanted to bring in some person that they knew to be their Public Affairs Officer even though they had no idea that a Public Affairs Officer was really the manager of USIA Programs. They felt that the Public Affairs Officer was supposed to be their public relations person with the newspapers. If fact, some career people thought that's what the Public Affairs Officer was for, to be their public relations officer. I corrected several bastards who would change the name of the Public Affairs Officer and I told them that is not exactly it. We had to work with the Union because you cannot make these changes without the Union.

Q: The Union being the American Foreign Service Association?

MORTON: There were two Unions initially; AFSA was acting like a union.

Q: AFSA, American Foreign Service Association?

MORTON: The American Foreign Service Association, (AFSA) was acting as a Union and then you have The American Federation of Government Employees Association, (AFGE) that was the official blue collar union in a sense but, you really wouldn't call it blue collar because it represented white collar also. The American Foreign Service Association was acting as a Union to represent the Foreign Service officers but they weren't working very hard at it. When Kissinger was Secretary of State and wanted to make everybody who worked in the State Department and USIA subject to Foreign Service rules and we gave a lot of our civil service employees Foreign Service reserve ranks and they were not subject to going overseas but they were subject to Foreign Service retirement as a stop to them. This meant that all of a sudden there was this huge increase of Foreign Service people.

Kissinger had tried to put a stop to the civil servants who would give up some of the protections that they had as a civil service employee and get their Foreign Service retirement benefits. So it meant they could retire earlier with better pensions. In fact, a lot of civil servants did transfer into the Foreign Service reserve and immediately retired. And they did not have to go overseas but when we had elections for representation for a Union, these people all voted for AFGE to be their representative at USIA.

Q: Which was the Civil Service Union.

MORTON: So the Foreign Service officers all of a sudden found themselves represented by a Civil Service traditional labor Union oriented type of organization. Many of them retained their membership in the American Foreign Service Association because they felt that AFSA did a better job of representing the Foreign Service issues to Congress on the allowances, benefits, travel arrangements, overseas education allowance and things of that sort, which meant that you had to pay dues at two different unions. But it also meant it made it easier in a way to get some of these things through AFGE because they were not interested in it. They didn't understand it and it didn't really apply to their core membership. So they would go along with it. I think it worked out quite well because of some of them were former Foreign Service people who had become civil servants. Some Foreign Service people got active in the Union, so we weren't trying to put anything over on them. But they were more willing to listen to what we were talking about and learn something at the same time. We still had the case of political Ambassadors with clot bringing in an occasionally somebody to be their right hand person. Sometimes they would be on the USIS payroll, sometimes they would be on the State Department payroll, depends upon how much clot they had and how willing the Director was willing to stand up to them. But there were very, very few of these because once they got in or they talked to people they found out it wasn't really what they thought it was. Career bastards often, if it was somebody they knew, they would like to have them, but they didn't have as much weight to throw around, they would come over and lobby for it but they didn't fall on the floor and chew the rug if you didn't go along with them. Because, they understood that this is the way it worked in the Department, too.

Q: So you did have a relationship with State and I would assume that it was an ongoing relationship when it came to assignments and other personnel kinds of things such as - Well lets ask the question - How about benefits for instance for Foreign Service Nationals at post?

MORTON: There is the Board of The Foreign Service. This is the umbrella organization that makes the overall rules for the Foreign Service for all Foreign Affairs Agencies.

Q: That existed then in 1977?

MORTON: It existed then and it exists now. This was chaired by the Director General of Foreign Service. On the Board you have representatives from the various Foreign Service Agencies. You have the Department of Labor because they have labor attaches, Treasury, Peace Corp, as a non-voting member, Treasury, Agriculture because of the Foreign

Agricultural Officers, Commerce and we would meet on a regular basis. I was one of the representatives from USIA and there were two of us there. The Deputy Assistant Director for Administration was one and I was the other. We represented USIA. The State Department had four because of the proportional representation because of the size of your agency. USAID has three, State had four and we had two and everyone else had one representative.

Q: You are coming into a phase in which USIA started to make a concerted effort to bring in minority officers, 1977, 1978 and 1979. What percentage of the Foreign Service career officers, approximately, were minorities in USIA and do you know what percentage State Department had at that time and as a sub-part to this, detached assignments to State to include detached assignments of minority officers to State.

MORTON: I don't know what percentage it was. But I know in exact numbers. When I joined USIA in 1961 during my initial training year I made a list of all the black officers in Asia's Foreign Service. At that time, there were 29 of them. At that time we probably had about 1,000 officers in our Foreign Service. These 29 officers, 27 of them were in Africa and one was in Indonesia and one was in Japan. One of the ones came out of Africa and went to Germany and the one in Indonesia went to Greece and I kept track of them. In fact, that is one reason why I have never had an African assignment because I noticed it seemed to be the career path. In State Department and AID they had the same thing.

Years ago when State Department first started bringing in black officers there was a traditional triangle that they followed. It's almost like the old Rum and Slave triangle. They would go to Haiti, Sierra Leon, Liberia, Haiti, Sierra Leon, and Liberia and as the number of African countries expanded then the number of black officers expanded. So then they could get us a shot at Ouagadougou and Lagos and then they could get us shot outside of Haiti. You could go to Kingston, Jamaica or Port-of Spain, Trinidad. It was following the same path.

When I was in personnel, we had fifteen countries in East Asia and the Pacific. (In) the East Asia Area Director's bailiwick there was one black officer in East Asia. He was an assistant Branch PAO in Pusan (Korea). This was in the entire East Asia Area. This was in 1977. The Area Director came to me and said he had the perfect assignment for this black officer because we were just getting ready to open up a Post in Papua in New Guinea which is a black country and he wanted to transfer this black officer from Korea to Papua, New Guinea. He was Jewish and I told him I think it is a great idea and I think we should transfer all Jewish officers to Tel Aviv. And he got highly insulted. I said, "Well! Look at it from my point of view, you are talking about doing the same thing, that is the most discriminatory, patronizing remark I have ever heard." "But I thought he would be happy there." "What makes you think he's not happy in Korea?" "Well! It's not that so much as the Asian doesn't really accept blacks. They are uncomfortable with them and they discriminate." That's when I decided that my next assignment after personnel was going to be Asia so I could get a taste of some of this discrimination.

It's interesting because my next assignment was in Bangkok. I found that it was the exact opposite; the Asians went out of their way to get acquainted with me. My wife and I got invited to Thai homes more than anybody else in the embassy. Asians don't traditionally invite you to their homes. They will invite you out to lunch in a restaurant. They don't entertain people in their homes. But they entertained us in their homes. Asians don't drop by your house without an invitation. They would drop by our house. There were people that we knew that felt perfectly free to drop by on a Saturday afternoon or ringing the door bell and stopping by for a drink, a beer and a chat. This was just unheard of in the rest of the embassy. So that disproved that theory. I had visited Asia when I was in the military, I had gone to Japan and Korea and I knew a lot of people who had Asian wives. It may have been looked down upon but not because they were black but because they were foreigners. It didn't matter what ethnic persuasion they were. So, that was one thing.

The other thing was we had an officer who was in charge of minority recruitment, but it actually started prior to that time. We had several different names for it. John Gravely was hired specifically for minority recruiting. John Niles a State Department Officer was with USIA and then he quit and went to school and became a Baptist Minister and I guess he didn't make enough money at that so he is back with the State Department or he is retired and is a consultant for the State Department. But John had started a minority recruiting program which was carried on by Art Lewis after he came into the Agency. John had an acronym (for it); I can't remember (what t was).

We had set up a special training program, we were bringing minority officers in for five year or the needs for the service, whichever was less so they could get a feel for them and they could learn about Foreign Service and get training. This didn't really work out for a number of reasons. For one thing you would take somebody who was in a fast rising position in private industry. You take him out of that position and you put him in USIA for five years for a needs of the service, whichever is less. They would not have had the background in the Agency that their colleagues, with whom they were competing and who had been in since they had been junior officers. These people would be coming in the middle which caused resentment from people who were competing against promotions and assignments. They were not part of the Old-Boys network. Nobody would do them any favors. To give them a leg up or give them any advice or any assistance. They were just plunked out there. Many of them didn't make it and then they would be kicked out and they have lost their position that they had in private industry where they were in the fast rising positions. So we were not doing them any favors. And the word spread in the outside community that this is what was happening. State Department was doing the same thing. So it made it progressively harder and harder to recruit people in on our program.

Q: Your overall assessment is that program was not effective?

MORTON: It was very limited effective. Some people who came in under that managed to stay because of their own experience and background but a awful lot of them came in for one or two tours and out again. The majority of them did. It left a bad taste in their mouth. A number of them sued the Agency for this. We had not done the Agency a favor

and we had not done this employee a favor and we had not done any favors for the Foreign Service in the minority community.

We were doing it not just to black Americans but to Latinos, too. Latinos had a little better luck because there was a built in area we could send them to South America, they had the language and they could go into my national incentive programs. They had their colleagues there who were of the same cultural background and could give them a leg up. But we did not have that for the black Americans. Unless they went to Africa and oftentimes, there they were isolated because a number of the black officers who went to Africa didn't make it because they did not have any support system there. (They didn't really know what the Foreign Service was all about. Some of them would bring them in and give them three weeks training, six weeks training and send them out.

Q: This leads up to another question and I want to come back and finish developing that point, and that is training, overall training. The Foreign Service has been variously accused of inadequately training its officers to be fully proficient in their skills and you have mentioned the worst case scenarios which point this out in minority recruiting where they were thrown out without (getting) even the experience, let alone the training. What would be your observations on that, particularly since you were in a position of responsibility?

MORTON: I agree with that, in fact, I tried to do something about it. I felt that one of the basic skills missing in our mid-level and senior level Foreign Service officers was some training in their administrative management. As a matter of fact, being a manager was looked down on by the senior Foreign Service officers. They had this big discussion on whether you should be a good programmer or be a good manager. And my position was you can't be a good programmer if you're not a good manager because you have to manage your resources adequately to be a good programmer. And I got John Reinhardt to agree with me on this. I set up a system which was never fully accepted that we were going to set up a mid-level management training program. The Agency had tried something like this once before but it was not really teaching management techniques, it was sort of a psychological grid sort of thing where you evaluated your colleagues and did all sorts of spiffy types of ESP and whatever.

But I wanted management training, administration and how you do things, sort of a hands-on thing. And I wanted to tie it into the promotion and assignment system so that sometime before you got to the middle grade level you had to go through this training program to be considered for assignment as a PAO, an assistant PAO, or be considered for promotion and any higher assignment. With a great deal of reluctance everybody agreed to it. We set up the program with a great deal of resistance from some of the senior officers who felt we were destroying the creativity of some of our programmers by trying to make managers out of them. And we ran the program for about two years. At first we had a senior former administrative officer, executive officer to run it. And we did it in Washington, but there were too many distractions, so we did it off-site. We did it for a year on the Eastern Shore in Maryland at a motel there. So we sent the people out there to do it so they would have no distractions and it was far enough away that they couldn't

run in in the night and go to their desk and do things like that. By the same token people couldn't call them too easily on the telephone. And then that got too expensive. We tried doing it at Harpers' Ferry.

I think it lasted for about a year after I left personnel. Then for one reason or another, (there were) budget cuts and they eliminated the Deputy Director's position in personnel. There was nobody in that role after I left there. It just fell by the wayside. They gave lip service to it, but it never really worked. But I think that the people who graduated from this training program went on to become PAOs realized the value of it because then they knew how to husband their resources and to direct them toward the areas that were most in need.

Likewise in language training we made language required essentially at the 3 - 3 level in a raw language before you could go out to a post. Because before if you took your sixteen weeks of Spanish you went out to the post regardless of whether you were a 2 - 2 or a 4 – 4. FSI increased Spanish language from sixteen weeks to six months and State adopted the same system for a number of its languages. In order for a person to get assigned to post without having to reach this language qualification level, there had to be a waiver from the Director of Personnel. And we would giver very, very few of these. Because we felt that a USIS Officer couldn't really function effectively without the language capability. In the hard languages it had to be a 2 -2 and continue language training at post. We worked with the State Department to get the language incentive pay system installed.

There is also an interagency pay committee too that works with almost the same group that I mentioned earlier on the Board of the Foreign Service. With a few exceptions, we worked with the Office of Management and Budget. This was the group that I sat on, too. This was the one that got the pay levels pegged where, before the pay levels in the Civil Service GS-12 was pegged to the Foreign Service grade level 5. And, then the GS-7 and the Foreign Service level 8 were pegged together and the other grades were sort of in between there. We got the pegs changed so that instead of the GS-12 and the Foreign Service level 5, we got the Foreign Service grade 1 and the GS-15 pegged together which was a substantial increase for the Class 1 Officers. Then it gave us a chance to do increases down below. That made a significant difference then. These Class 3 Officers became the Class 1 under the present system.

Q: You were actually establishing the standards of the basis for the foundation of the 1980 Foreign Service Act by doing these innovative changes.

MORTON: We were working on the language for the 1980 Foreign Service Act at that time. Those changes required a lot of time, there was an interagency commission working on a lot of those languages and I was working on that one. This is also the time where the Bureau of Education and Cultural Exchange came over from the State Department and became, it was CU over there, and then became the E Bureau in USIA. I was on the committee, on the interagency committee that was working on how this was going to meld. Because the State Department wanted our people to go and become part of State

Department and we wanted them to come over and become a part of us. And the reason why it should all be in one place is because overseas the Exchange Program is run by USIS and in Washington it was run by the State Department. It was just screwed up. It made sure you had to do separate formats for budgets. You had to get excessive numbers of clearances on different things and the whole working environment was different. It made it very difficult for a Cultural Affairs officer. By getting it all in the same Agency it simplified a lot of things. So we had all these balls that we were juggling and it was a good time to be in personnel for someone who had a PAO background and had an administrative background and didn't have a personal ax to grind in any of these things.

Q: It is obvious, you have already explained another major contribution in the formulation of the institutionalization process forming foreign policy in this position with your experiences and without going too far from the central issues here the things you were talking about really went beyond your coordinating, your personal coordinating as one of the two representatives from USIA with State. But also with the Office of Personnel Management?

MORTON: And the Office of Management and Budget.

Q: And the Office of Management and Budge, I want to ask you a question. You became a Class 2 which was the equivalent of an OC which is the first grade in the Senior Foreign Service, Counselor, in 1977. Can we just step back on your other promotions?

MORTON: I came into the Agency in 1961 on the Management Intern Register as a GS-9. and then I got promoted in 1962 to a GS-11, then I got promoted in 1963 to a GS-12 and then I got promoted in 1966 to a GS-13 and at that grade level in 1966 I converted to Foreign Service at the equivalent rank which would have been the Foreign Service officer, Class 4 . The pay, I think was only a $100 or so difference in the step I went in. And then in 1971, I got promoted to Class 3 under that system which is equivalent to Class 1 now. Then in 1977 I got promoted to Class 2 which was the OC but in 1981 I got promoted to Minister Counselor and then 1989 I guess it was I got promoted to Career Minister.

Q: How about awards and other recognitions during this scale period?

MORTON: Well! As a civil servant I got a number of awards. In the Foreign Service I got the Agency's Meritorious Honor Award in 1968 when I was in Colombia. And then I got the Unit Superior Honor Award in the Philippines in 1986. It was a Unit award for everyone as a group. Then I got a personal Superior Honor Award in 1988 in Washington when I was the Area Director and then later in 1988 I got the Presidential Meritorious Service Award for sustained superior accomplishment and conduct of foreign policy of the United States Government and noteworthy achievement of quality and efficiency in the public service. That was signed by Ronald Reagan. I forgot I had it hanging on the wall back there. It was noteworthy, the Superior Honor award that I got in 1988. The individual one, I was nominated by my staff while I was Area Director. That was the first time in the Agency ever that had that happened that the subordinates nominated their boss

for an Honor Award. That was influential in helping me get a promotion. I was very flattered by that.

Q: Today's date is September 24th. I think we are up now to the point of your assignment as PAO in Bangkok, Thailand. I want you to tell me a little bit about how this assignment came about and when you transferred to Bangkok, who was the ambassador and what were your major accomplishments while you were there?

MORTON: Well, I had spent three tours in the Latin American area and I wanted an out of area assignment. When I went into personnel, I had asked John Reinhardt to just please promise me that I would only have to stay there for two years. He said, "Okay! Two years is it." So, just before I was due to be reassigned, I had to make a trip around the world on personnel matters. And, while I was on this trip I visited Bangkok. I fell in love with the country, almost immediately. So, I knew that is where I wanted to go. But, I also knew John Reinhardt and if I told John Reinhardt that is where I wanted to go, I would have gotten sent to India or to Turkey. John Reinhardt was the Director of the Agency. So I went into John and told him that where I really wanted to go was to Turkey. And he said well he knew he promised me a good assignment but he had someone else in mind for Turkey. Well, so my fall back would be India. I really didn't want to go to India. How about that? He said, "No, I've got someone in mind for India." So, I said, "Well, I guess Thailand is okay." He said, "I will see what I can do." So I got the assignment as Deputy PAO in Thailand. Then I had to go into 42 weeks of language training. Bob Chapman was the PAO in Bangkok when I went there. Bob didn't want to go to Thailand. He didn't want to get out of the Latin American area. So the whole time he was there, he was trying to get out. I guess about eight months after I arrived in Thailand as the Deputy PAO we had to do a reduction-in-force. Alan Carter was the Area Director at time and he was making unilateral cuts in the Area Office throughout East Asia and the Pacific. Bob eliminated my job as Deputy PAO and then he volunteered to leave. When he left, Reinhardt said he would wait until the new ambassador came. When I arrived there, Morton Abramowitz was the ambassador but Morton was leaving about the same time that Bob Chapman was leaving. Reinhardt said he would not assign anyone as PAO without the approval of the new ambassador. John Dean was in Beirut at the time and he was coming there as the ambassador. Reinhardt called Dean to see if he would give his approval and Dean said that if I had been Acting PAO for four months and he had heard good words about me, so why not? It turned out to be a fortuitous marriage for us. Dean and I were complete opposites in personalities but we got along fine. He never met a camera that he didn't like and to keep him happy we made sure that we took a picture of him doing something everyday and got his picture in the paper, at least once a week. He was very happy with this. He would go out and inaugurate something or go visit an AID project and we would always have a photographer along and we would get his picture in the paper. I remember after about two years of his picture in the paper on the front section, they put his picture on the back page of the paper and he called me in and he was absolutely furious and he asked me couldn't I do my job. Why wasn't his picture on the front page of the paper that he had done something noteworthy. This was in the Country Team meeting. I sat there and went into this elaborate story about how the most important place in the paper was on the front page because sixty percent of the people started

reading from the front but the other forty percent started reading from the back because they went to the sports section, the second most important place in the paper for the back page. In fact, I told him in newspaper parlance we called this the back-front page. He sat there looking at me and I looked at him. Everyone around the table was dying, trying to keep a straight face. And he said, "I don't believe you but it sounds plausible." (Laugh) I couldn't keep a straight face any longer either, so I started laughing. But I survived that.

Q: About that time, I guess we had some pretty major issues mainly with refugee problems; I don't want to call them problems, refugee issues, Cambodia, Vietnam?

MORTON: We had a lot of refugee problems. We had Vietnamese boat people coming in and being pushed off. We had Vietnamese refugees coming overland through Cambodia and through Laos. We had Cambodian refugees coming in and we had Laotian refugees coming down and the Hill Tribe People who had worked with the CIA. There were camps both in the North for the Laotian refugees and they are from the East side for the land refugees and then the Southern part of the country for the boat people. The Thais felt that this was a problem that the United States should help them with, because they were having this problem because of activities that we had participated in Southeast Asia. The newspapers were insisting that we were doing an off take of the refugees but we were only taking the crème of the crop. So we had to show them that we were not skimming off the crème of the crop but we could not take all these refugees. We were working with other countries to see if they would take some. And we did some videotapes showing the training programs that we had to help prepare the refugees for subsistence in the United States. Because we had a large facility in Palowa and in the Philippines where we were training refugees to work in fast-food restaurants, we were teaching English, we were teaching how to work in hotel/motels as waiters and waitresses, and maids, making up beds and things. And we also got footage from other posts to show how we were helping place refugees in other countries. We did several videotapes on this.

At the same time the Thai papers were insisting that we were only giving military assistance to them and that they had economic problems and that we were not supporting them in this. I had noticed in my travels around the country talking to the foreign nationals they would say, we would visit a university, and they would say that the United States helped build this university or the United States help build this airport. So, I thought that we should do a pamphlet and show what the non-military economic assistance to Thailand had been. Working with the press section, we had a very good information officer there, Dick Burton, at the time. Dick and I decided that we would just pick a date at random, the end of the Korean War, because Thailand had participated with us as an ally in the Korean War. We chose 1953. This was 1983 at the time. So we decided we had to do an analysis to see how much non-military economic assistance we had given Thailand between 1953 and 1983. It turned out to be a bigger task then we thought because, although most of the paved roads in the countryside were built with US economic assistance, practically all the airports and most of the major universities were built with our assistance. We had no records at post of these because AID, when they finished a project, they give it a number and they sent it back to Washington. There is nothing at the field post that lists this. The host government doesn't keep a record of it

either. So what we had to do to was get the cooperation first of the AID in Bangkok and then AID Washington. Then we got AID Washington to finance two interns to work full-time on going through the files in Washington and pulling out the records to see what it was that we had done in Thailand. And then we had summer interns doing the same thing in Thailand, in country. It took us about two years to put it together.

We started doing it in 1981 and then we finished it up in 1983. We discovered that we had given almost 5 billion dollars in non-military economic assistance to Thailand over this period of time. We put together this pamphlet to show this, with pictures. We put together a volume of material first that must have been about six inches tall. We put together a fifty-four page pamphlet and we printed it in English, Thai and Chinese (there was a large Chinese minority in Thailand) with lots of pictures showing many of the facilities that we had done - the bridges, the highways, the schools, the airports and the other social institutions. We printed at the Regional Service Center in Manila and we did 50,000 copies of this. We sent copies to every university, every military installation, to their libraries and to every school and government agencies. Then we did excerpts from it to put in local newspapers and this got the word out so that we didn't really have that as an issue anymore. This took care of that issue. We weren't trying to look for gratitude but we were trying to look for credit. Many of the people who were doing this talking were too young to know what had happen.

Q: Dick Burton was your Information Officer, who was your CAO and you must have been doing some other programs, complementary programs, outreaching through Cultural Centers in the country at the same time?

MORTON: Nelson Stevens was the Cultural Affairs Officer. We had a very active cultural program but most of it was done through the American University Alumni Association. Larry Daks who was the Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer was over there and Larry had two officers there with him. He had, I can't remember his name, Frank, English Teaching Officer and we had a Librarian that would come periodically and work there. We had a Thai Librarian with a degree from UCLA, who was very, very good. And we would get periodic visits from the Regional Librarian.

The American University Alumni Association was an independent institution that was founded in 1906 by the first group of Thai graduates who came back to Thailand after having attended schools in the United States. This included a member of the royal family. They were so happy about their education that they started the American University Alumni Association and then within this, over the years, they had various Alumni Chapters so that you would have a Columbia University Chapter, a Stanford University Chapter, a Harvard and even had a University of Chicago Alumni Chapter which I used to work with when I was there. Back in the early 1970's they had a library and USIS had a library and the decision was to combine the two, rather than have two separate ones. Then subsequently, the decision was to combine the two separate facilities, the American Bi-National Center and the American University Alumni Association and they had a beautiful building not to far from the embassy with a separate building that housed a library. We had an auditorium that seated 750 people and with standing room you could

get 900 people in it. It had a large cafeteria, a large courtyard, off-street parking and two tennis courts in the back. So it was a basically indigenous Thai institution but there was an American Director and there was a Thai Director. The Thai Director was a very distinguished MIT graduate. He had been an engineer and the longest street in Bangkok was named after him. He was a very distinguished gentleman who had a lot of prestige in the community. And we used to do all our cultural programs through them, either in Bangkok or they would sponsor it up-country through our other cultural institutions through our Branch Post and then once we had to close our Branch Post we had to establish branches of the American University Alumni Association in the buildings where the Branch Post had been and could continue on the same activities but with Thai's in charge of it.

We would funnel books and do library support through the Alumni Association throughout the country. It was probably the largest American cultural institution outside of the one that had been in Tirana before it had gotten overtaken. Once the one in Tirana was taken over it became the largest and was very active. We had, on an annual basis; we had between 17,000 and 20,000 students studying English there. Starting from early in the morning until late at night, it was open seven days a week. On Saturday's you couldn't get near the place. You had to park two or three blocks away.

And they cosponsored many of our seminars through that because it gave us an indigenous institution as a co-sponsor. We could either do it on site there or use them as a cosponsor and do it on campus at the universities. And we had them to sponsor American Studies seminars every year and we would bring speakers in from the United States plus get noted Thais who had specialized in American Literature or whatever to give lectures. Often times the Thai lecturers were as knowledgeable if not more so than the Americans we brought in to speak on these topics. We gave a big prestigious economic seminar every year because economics was a topic that was very much on the minds of the Thais and the Americans at this time during this period of stagflation. I suppose you remember that. Then we would bring in leading Thai government economists and people from the American Embassy and the American business community and from the academic community and we would go to an off-site location and we would have a three-day economic seminar. This gave us chance to mingle on a personal basis and get acquainted with the leading economic thinkers in the country. I remember one year we brought in a speaker who shall remain nameless and I was thinking that the least articulate person in English in the room was the American speaker that we brought in. (laugh) The Thais had gone to school in the United States and they had learned beautiful English, others had gone to school in Australia or in England or in Canada and had beautiful English without the verbal crutches that we often find our American colleagues have. The America academic came in and could not put a sentence together without saying, "uh, and-uh, and-um, we ah". It was just agonizing. I did a quick re-write of the program to reduce his exposure and then we reprinted it and passed it out without any comment whatsoever.

I think everyone was gratified, but these are some of the things you have to do sometimes because you get these speakers. You can see the curriculum vita but you really don't know how well they can perform until you hear them. We did lots of things on economics

but I think the economic seminars still goes on. I was in Thailand this year and they were just having their twenty-seventh annual economics seminar and it is one way of really cementing close ties with the people who sometimes go on to become high-level ministers or ambassadors to the United States. One of our participants became an ambassador to the United States. He had already established contact when he went to school in the United States and then during this economic seminar and people came out and then when he came to the United States he was able to capitalize on this.

Q: How did that tie in with - this is an interesting juncture - you had mentioned earlier about your interaction with the ambassador and the country team. These issues I take it were also very closely coordinated with the other counselors in the country team?

MORTON: It was very closely coordinated with the Economic Officer and with the American Chamber of Commerce. I was a member of the American Chamber of Commerce and was very active in their projects. In fact, I guess I don't have it in this room, but when I left Thailand, the American Chamber of Commerce had a big send-off for me and presented me with a nice plaque as one of the most active members of the Chamber which was very flattering. But it helped cement business relationships and helped increase - we were trying to improve American investment in Thailand, showing them that foreign investment is what makes countries great. That America was built on foreign investment, that the railroads and the major factories in this country, when we first got started, were foreign owned. They were not owned by Americans. But they give jobs, they subsidized the economy and they helped to build the economy. This helped lower some of the barriers to foreign investment because Thailand had a lot of barriers to foreign investment. Even though they liked Americans, they still did not want their country to become, as they put it, a colonial wing of the American economy. All the things we did, we coordinated very closely, with the other parts of the Embassy. The Political Officer, the Economic Officers, the Commercial Officer. We were always included in these. We acted as advisors to them. The Ambassador only gave three speeches a year. He gave one on economic topics. He would give one on relations between our two countries and then he did another one for the business community and the economic section or the political section would write these speeches and then they would always be vetted by USIS because often times Political Officers and Economical Officers can write very good substance speeches which would put everybody to sleep. So we would have to change it from a written document into a verbal document so it could be verbalized and have meat in it and the substantive parts that they had given all the statistics and things like that - we could use for press placement or for magazine placement. This would give us substantial follow-up or we would just pass it out as a supplement to the speech the ambassador had given. And we would do columns. There were sixteen newspapers, daily newspapers, in Bangkok at this time. There were about five English language dailies, there were about eight Thai language dailies and then all the rest were Chinese language dailies. Many people subscripted to two, three or four papers. I read all the English language papers and I would try to read at least two columns in a Thai paper everyday just to maintain my fluency with the language. Sometimes it was very agonizing and time consuming but it paid off because there were nuisances in the Thai version sometimes that were not in the English version. And there was a

nuisance that our translators didn't catch and by reading it you can catch it and go back and respond to it to put it in its proper perspective.

We had another issue too that I hadn't mentioned, narcotics, this was right at the Golden Triangle. Narcotics were being raised in the parts of Burma that were not under the control of the central government and they were being raised in Laos and also in parts of Vietnam and then they were being funneled through Thailand and Hong Kong into the United States. (They were) also raised in Northern Thailand by the Hill Tribes People. The Thai Government and the Thai people took a very laisser-faire attitude toward this because they felt it was not a Thai problem, it was an American problem. It was just that the Thai country was benefiting off of it because a lot of the drug smugglers were investing their capital gains in real estate and in businesses and the social infrastructure. We were trying to show how when the market gets tight they are going to start selling their drugs in country.

We were able to convince the head of the Office of Narcotics Control that this was a potential problem and it was already beginning to get into the universities. So we got him to assign a person to work closely with us. The Thai public is very oriented toward radio. Radio soap operas are very, very popular. So we did an anti-narcotics soap opera and it came out twice a week and it showed the various ways that the young people were getting involved in drugs and how this was affecting not just the poor Thai but the middle-class. We did things on marijuana because this is the drug of choice among the young people. We did some on glue sniffing because the young people in high schools were getting into glue sniffing and using other inhalants. We were showing how the hard drugs, the opium and heroin, were also getting into society. It was already affecting the Hills Tribes People. You could go into some of the villages up North and see the women out working in the fields and you would see the men in a drug stupor lying on the front of the houses with these long opium pipes in their hands. And it was killing off a whole generation of Hill Tribes People. We started off this soap opera and by the time I left Thailand we had placed this on 60 radio stations throughout the country. It was very popular. The universities were playing it on their internal radios station systems, replaying it for the benefit of the students who were listening on campus. This was very successful and it was done for practically nothing. We were using in house talent, FSNs. We were using employees from the Narcotics Control Board and we were using the children of our staff and they loved it, we didn't have to pay them. They loved doing it. It gave them some training in theatrics and in drama and radio production. It was very popular both in-house and as a production tool and out in the audience that we were trying to reach. It cost us practically nothing. It cost me a few beers because the fellow from the Narcotics Control Board was a Thai Moslem and he always liked to come by my house for consultation instead of coming by my office. Because I would always offer him lunch and with lunch he always wanted a beer which he could not drink out in public.

Q: I believe you also published a special anniversary book while you were there?

MORTON: Yes, we were coming up on the 150th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Thailand and this was going to be

followed right afterwards by the bicentennial of the Thai Dynasty. The present king who was king when I was there is still king. His family of that dynasty would be celebrating their 200th Anniversary. In anticipation of that, Thailand was the first country in Asia that the United States established diplomatic relations with. The American Government had sent a fleet to go to Japan and China to establish diplomatic relations and on the way the ship came by Thailand and stopped off there and established diplomatic relations with Thailand first. So, 1833 made that the beginning of our official relations with Asia. 1983 was going to be the 150th anniversary. We thought that we would do a pamphlet on U.S. - Thai relations with the history of US - Thai relations. We started gathering material and we discovered that there was a wealth of material including photographs and documents that the Thai Government had and Thai People had. Thai families who had sent their children to the United States to go to school starting in 1905 -1906 were the beginning of Thai relations in the United States. The present king, King Rama IX, was born in Boston and the nurse or midwife who was in the delivery room at the time of his birth was still alive, she was living in Virginia. We were able to track her down and get some remembrances from her and get pictures from her and the King had maintained contact with her over the years and he brought her back to Thailand for the 200th Anniversary of the founding of the Dynasty and this was a good time with our book. We discovered in going through the Royal Armory that there was a sword that had been sent by the President of the United States to the King of Thailand in the 19th Century. King Rama IV who had been a priest and then when he became the king he was very well read and he was fascinated with America and American society. He had sent a letter to the President of the United States who happened to be President Buchanan at the time, offering to send some elephants to help in the development of the United States. Mail being what it was in those days, it took about three or four months for the letter to get to you. The President of the United States, who by that time, was Abraham Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln sent back a nice letter telling him that he appreciated the offer but he felt that the elephants wouldn't be able to survive in the climate in the United States. The winters are pretty rough but as a gesture of friendship he sent a sword back, a beautiful, jewel encrusted sword. I saw it right there in the armory, a beautiful thing, a gold scabbard with jewels on it and the asp was a hand protector or the guard, whatever you call it, was an American eagle with out-stretched wings and the hilt of the sword was a Thai elephant and it was beautiful.

We had been trying to think of a name for our pamphlet. We still called it a pamphlet at the time. Although we had so much material we finally decided to make it a book. And I said that's the name of it, The Eagle and the Elephant. We did a book that was a coffee table sized book. Each page is English on one side and Thai on the other side. The captions under each picture, lots of pictures, are in both languages. Some are in color and some are in black and white. And we called the book, The Eagle and the Elephant. The first edition we did was 4000 copies. To get enough money for this I got pledges from different sections of the embassy that they would buy a few for representational presentations. I got a pledge from the American Chamber of Commerce, the businesses that they would buy some to give us presentation items. Then we used our budget for the balance of the cost and we were able to get a printer to print this and we were guaranteed that we would buy back a minimum of 500 copies which would cover his operating cost and he could sell the rest of them on the open market at whatever he felt the market could

bear. The book sold out in about four days. We did a full page spread in the local paper, the English language papers and the Thai papers. One of the papers made a broad sheet of the cover of the book and we did interviews, we placed book reviews on local radio stations. Some of the book reviews we wrote ourselves but others were spontaneous from people who read it. The book is now in its seventh printing. It's still being done and every PAO that comes to Thailand realizes that this is a valuable tool. They upgrade it and add a few more pictures, take some out. It looks like something that might go on forever. It's got a life of its own. We did it in 1983 so it's got 18 years history behind it now. I have no idea how many copies. The last edition of it was printed at the RSC in Manila which does a beautiful job on books.

Q: Did you receive recognition for this initiative from the Agency?

MORTON: I got a letter of appreciation, that's about all. The ambassador had written up something but I guess it just came at the wrong time; there were too many other things. I got meritorious pay which is always good to have.

Q: That was probably for your overall performance and not specifically for the book

MORTON: No. I got meritorious pay every year starting with the year it was instituted. Up until the time I went into the Deputy Associate Director for Management. Foreign Service agencies don't think that management is a major skill. They think its something an over-grade secretary can do. So that soon as I went into a management job, I no longer got incentive pay.

Q: You mentioned a while ago, the fact that as a part of your professional duty, you read Thai newspapers. But in connection with that, you had a greater proficiency in the Thai language. Let me ask you, first of all, was that unique in the Country Team, were there other Country Team officers who had skills in the Thai language?

MORTON: It was not unique. Many of the Country Team had language proficiency because some of them had served there several times. The Political Officer had served as a Branch Public Affairs Officer in Songkhla. English was not spoken at all there and his Thai proficiency was very good. Jim was his first name. He eventually ended up as ambassador to East Germany and one of our members of the United Nations group. It will come to me. I am having a senior moment. The Army Attaché had been there as a kid because his father had been an Army Attaché and so he had learned Thai as a kid. And he was practically bi-lingual. The Commander of JUSMAG (The Joint United States Military Advisory Group) was completely bi-lingual because he was on about his ninth or tenth year in Thailand over his career. He had been detailed to the Thai Army early on in his career. Larry Daks, our Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer at the American University Alumni Association had been a Peace Corps volunteer in Thailand and he had a Thai wife. Larry has a talent for Asia languages. Larry was probably a 5 - 5 in Thai and a 4 - 4 in Laos and a 4 - 4 in Chinese, which is not bad for a kid from Chicago. Dick Burton, my Information Officer, was on his second tour there. He had served there as a junior officer and his Thai language capability was very good. All our Branch Public Affairs Officers

had very good Thai because they were in society where they had to use it on a continuous basis. Mine wasn't nearly in the same category as theirs but I had enough that I could go out into the countryside by myself without having to carry along a translator and even those Thai who had been educated in the United States and could speak English as well if not better than I can appreciated the fact that I would always start off a conversation with them in Thai and then we would switch to English. I used to read Thai poetry which is a very, very difficult thing to read because the rhyme and schemes are not the same as it in the English language poetry. Not only do you - since Thai is an internal language you have internal rhyming within sentences as well as at the ends of sentences. The beauty of the poetry is not just from the words but the sounds of it. And so I would memorize little quotes from Thai poetry and give it to them. I still have a couple of books in Thai poetry; I can't read Thai poetry anymore. My reading capability has gone completely. I can still speak it, I discovered when we went back there on vacation this pass March and spent two week in Thailand. It was my first time back there since 1989. I listened to a few language tapes before I went back. But as soon as I got back there my memories came flooding back and the memories came back in both Thai and English. At the end of two weeks there I found that I could just carry on a conversation with the man on the street or anybody I wanted too and it was just fascinating because the Thai never expects an American or foreigner to speak their language. And they really don't expect a black American to do it.

Q: Speaking of that, how ethnically diverse was the Country Team and what reactions did you feel within the Country Team and with the Thai to your being a black diplomat?

MORTON: It is interesting. When I first got to Thailand there were two other black Americans in the embassy. There was an Air Force Major in the JUSMAG but he was in an administrative job and didn't do much with the Thai or with the Thai military. The Economic section had a black officer in there but he was basically working with the American business community so he did not much interplay and he didn't have the Thai language. So I was the only one that had a public persona. Because of my job, I had a high profile in the society and I discovered that wherever I went, any official function, and especially if my wife was with me, the TV camera's immediately zoomed in on us. The cameramen would make a bee-line for us. The photographers would also, and I always had to made sure that I went back and got pictures of the ambassador too because I had problems in Jamaica when I got my picture taken more than the ambassador and I did not want that to happen.

I had an entrée that other people in the embassy didn't. The Area Office had been reluctant to send a black officer to Thailand because they had felt that Asians were very race conscious and very color conscious. And they are, among themselves as well as foreigners but to them they looked at me as an American first and as a black American second, whereas, many of my white colleagues look at me as a black person first and as an American second. And this has always puzzled me especially since many of them are second generation Americans and my family goes back many generations in this country. My wife and I got invited to the homes of more Thai people than anybody else in the embassy. Thai's normally don't entertain foreigners in their homes, they entertain in

restaurants. We were very unique in that regard. We did a lot of entertainment in our house both officially and unofficially. We were invited to many Thai homes. Many Thai's have country homes also where they go for weekends and holidays. You can't do anything official on Saturday or Sunday because nobody would show up. We got invited to many of their country homes for the weekend. This gave us an entrée into the Thai customs and Thai society that we would not have gotten any other way. We formed some very, very close friendships, there. When we went back this past March, it was flattering, we had three different parties. We were there with a tour group and we had to break away from the tour group three times to go to parties that our Thai friends were having, welcoming us home. I get e-mail from them all the time. Once e-mail came into existence, Thai's love electronic things and once they found out what my e-mail address was, I probably get about ten e-mail messages a week from people I met while I was stationed in Thailand. And, if any of them come to the United States even if it's just to Los Angeles, I usually get a phone call from them. They are really warm people. I get a better reception when I go back to Thailand then I do when I go back to my hometown in Arkansas.

Q: You mentioned that the Agency at one point felt that it would not be a positive attribute to assign black diplomats to Asian assignments because of their fear of Asian reactions. Did this change?

MORTON: This changed. In fact, by the time I left Bangkok, we had a number of black officers there. One of our junior officer trainees was there, a black officer, and they intended to send her there for junior officer training and then she was going to come back to Washington and do Thai language training. I convinced the Agency to let her do Thai language training in country because the American University Alumni Association had Thai language classes. The head of the Thai language classes there was an American woman married to a Thai official and she had gone there with the first group of Peace Corps volunteers in the early 60's and she had stayed on and her Thai was even acknowledged by the Thai's themselves as better than some of theirs'. So the Agency agreed, it was actually cheaper for the Agency to let her stay there and study Thai then it was to bring her back and her husband and children. She was in Thai language class 24 hours a day in essence. She just finished her third tour in Thailand. She has also served as Public Affairs Officer in Laos because the Laotians and Thai are similar languages. I could never speak Laotian but I could recognize some of the characters when I saw it written. When I went to Northeast Thailand where there are a lot of Laotians, they knew what I was saying but I didn't know what they were saying. It is almost like in South America, if you are a native speaker of Portuguese or Spanish you can communicate on a rough basis with the other. Whenever I went to Brazil, many of the Brazilians knew what I was saying but I didn't have the foggiest idea what they were saying.

Q: How about other minorities, Asian-Americans and Latin-Americans?

MORTON: There were no Latin-Americans that I am aware of in the embassy. There were several Asian-Americans. We had had Pat Ohada who had served as Branch Public Affairs Officer in Songkhla prior to my coming there. Then when I was in Thailand, Pat

was the desk officer and he would come out periodically. Pat is a Japanese-American from Hawaii but he looks very Japanese. We had another Asian-American who was in USIS while I was there, John Otta who had been in Japan. John was born in Seattle, I believe and John did not speak Japanese. John had low language aptitude for learning Japanese. His wife, who is from Memphis, is of Russian descent, I think she is third generation American but she had a high language aptitude. She picked up more Japanese in Japan than John did. Then he got direct transfer from Japan to Thailand without any Thai language at all. John has sort of an Asian face. When he is in China they think he is Chinese. When he is in Japan they think he is Japanese and then when he is in Thailand, everyone assumed that he was Thai. John and I used to go to lunch together about once a week to a great restaurant that was about a block and a half from USIS. We would sit down and we would get the menu and then the waiter would come over and look at John and ask John "What did we want?" And, I would tell him. And, then he would ask John, "What did he want to drink?" And, I would tell him what John wanted to drink. And, then he would ask John, "What did the black American want to drink? And, I would tell him what I wanted to drink. And this went on for about six months. Then one day the waiter just happened to look at me as I was speaking, he realized that it was my lips that were moving, not John's. He said, "You speak in Thai" and I said, "Yes! I have been talking to you for six months" and he turned to the other waiters and said, "He speaks in Thai." So they all came over all excited and they said, "Say, something" and I said, "What do you want me to say" and we stayed there chatting for a while as our lunch hour was passing. The cook came out of the kitchen and he got all involved in this and finally I said, "We really have to get back to work can't you bring us our food." and so they brought us the food, we got really great food, great service from then on when we went there, except the downside was that they always treated John as if he was retarded after that.

Q: Well, I was going to ask the question, how was the Thai's reaction to other Asians and to Asian-Americans?

MORTON: They did the same as they did me. They looked at them as an American first and then as an Asian. There is discrimination within Thai society. My first exposure to this was even before I got to Thailand. When I was with FSI in language training, we had a young boy who was a student here and he was working part-time as an instructor to help us to practice our conversation and I saw him looking very melancholy one day. I asked him, "What's wrong!" He said, "I like this country, but I don't know my place." And, I said, "What do you mean your place?" He said, "I don't know where I fit in." So I said, "Well, our concept is everyone is equal and so you fit as an equal like the rest of us." He said, "That's what makes me uncomfortable, because in Thailand, nobody is equal. You have a place and you know where it is and this determines all sorts of things. And here, I don't know what to do." I discovered this when I went to Thailand, that there is a pecking order. The young people give certain respect to seniors. People of high rank get deferred to over people with low rank. You inherit a certain status. You acquire a certain status by your education, by your profession, by your color if you are fair skin as opposed to being very dark. By your height, if you are very tall. Chris and I took a one week cross cultural communications course while we were. There were two anthropologists who were giving this course, it was an American anthropologist who had

been trained at Harvard and he was married to a Thai anthropologist who had been trained in Thailand but she had also done some work at some American college, one of the seven sisters' colleges. They decided to start a Residential Inter-cultural Communications course and they started off the first course, we were in it. They had 12 Thais who were going to be working with foreigners and they had 12 foreigners. Some of who had been in Thailand quite some time and others who had just arrived. Chris and I were the only Americans. There were English, Swiss, Germans and a couple of French. We spent a week off at a motel to learn each others culture. The Westerners all had a very basic similar culture. This included such things as shaking hands, Thai's don't shake hands. They do a very respectful bow. And, the bows were a form of... The Americans go into a room and they just shoot a bow around. But, this is not what you do. There is a very formalistic (act). The lower-ranking person initiates the bow first to the higher-ranking person and depending on their status they make sure that their head is lower than the other person. Their eyes are down. You don't look straight in the eye of a person of a higher ranking (person). And it you are very low ranking and you are greeting a very high-ranking person, to assure that the status is kept, you bend your knees slightly and you bend your head and you look down at their feet. So we went through a whole session on this. Then we had to show them how you shake hands. You don't shake hands by turning your head away and just sort of sticking a wet fish out there. You have to get it, get a firm clasp, shake it and let it go. We had to go through, when you shake hands, who initiates it, that sort of thing. Gift exchanges, Thai 's are very good a giving you a gift, but they are very embarrassed if you do as most American's do immediately grab it and rip the paper off it and say, "Oh, Isn't this wonderful!" You give a Thai a gift and they will thank you and they will set it aside and they won't mention it. They will then open it in private. Then they will reciprocate this gift. They are very embarrassed when a Westerner gets a gift and immediately tears it open. So we had to go through this procedure. Learn how to do this. We learned how to eat. American's, especially people who just visited them briefly assume that Thai's eat with chop sticks. And so, they would go into a Thai restaurant, Chris and I were in a Thai restaurant for dinner last Friday night and all the American's were eating there with chop sticks. And the Thai's were eating with a spoon and a fork. And the idea was that you take the fork and push the food into the spoon and then you eat with the spoon. When they go out to very formal restaurant, they go out to a Chinese Restaurant and at that time they will eat with chop sticks. Little things like this, this helped us to make Thai comfortable with us and so that they didn't feel as though we were aliens in their society.

Q: We have made a lot of coverage of your assignment in Bangkok. Are there any other significant areas before we move on to your next assignment that you think would be of use at this point?

MORTON: No, just one little side bar, we had three branch posts in Thailand when I first got there. We had one in the south in Songkhla, one in the north in Chiang Mai, and one in the northeast in Khon Kaen. And one of my first official acts when I got there was to finish the closing of the one in Khon Kaen because of Agency's reductions and then my second act before I left there was to close the one in Songkhla. What I did to compensate for these closures was I put a Foreign Service National on the staff of the consulates in

Khon Kaen and Songkhla to do USIS types of work and to report directly, initially, to the Cultural Affairs Officer and then finally to the AUA Director because he had more contact with them and more need for contact with them to support their library and their reading room programs and that sort of thing. The AUA Director was a much more active person, out of country. The one in Chiang Mai was one of the more prestigious ones in the country. We eventually, I regret to say, when I was back there this time, I noticed, it too had been closed. But it has become a full fledged branch of the American University Alumni Association and it still functions essentially as a USIS Branch Post. I went by there, it is in the same building, the same activities are going on, same American flag except that it has an Italian Director and at one time it had a local-hire American who was running it. But to all intents and purposes it flows along just as well as when it was a branch post. Business was booming which was good. I spent, I guess, about an hour there visiting the English language classes and just talking to the students just to given them a chance to speak to another native speaker. I left Thailand after four years there. I hated to go. I loved the country it was my most pleasant assignment in my entire career.

We went direct transfer from Bangkok to Manila. It was interesting; I was in the office in Bangkok in the morning finishing up loose ends. A lot of the staff went to the airport to see us off. It's a very short flight from Bangkok to Manila. We arrived there in the afternoon and some of the Deputy PAOs were at the airport to meet me and we went straight to the office and I was seated at my desk in the office of Manila that afternoon, no transition whatsoever. It took me a couple a days before I stopped speaking to my Philippi no secretary in Thai. She would always laugh and tell me, "different country, different country."

Q: Who was the Ambassador there when you arrived?

MORTON: When I first got to Manila, it will come to me, very tall. He eventually ended up as the ambassador to Japan and he was also the under secretary for political affairs. I can see his face but I can't think of his name, very tall fellow, brilliant. It will come to me, another one of those senior moments. He left about two months after I got there. Bosworth came in as the ambassador, who was also very tall and very brilliant. Michael Armacost was the ambassador when I first came there.

Q: Was he instrumental in giving his concurrence on your assignment or did he defer to Ambassador Bosworth?

MORTON: No he had met me. I had been to Manila several times while he was ambassador there. I had gone there once on R&R instead of going to Hong Kong which was our R&R point. We went to Manila and then I was subsequently there at a PAO conference and then I was back there this time as his Public Affairs Officer. He had been to Thailand also. So we knew each other quite well. We were very compatible and I was sorry to see him go but then once Bosworth came in, it was a welcomed change because he and I were very compatible also. They were both very articulate people. Bosworth could come up with a formal speech off the top of his head that you would think that he had been up all night preparing it and it just flowed. We would do prepared speeches for

him or the economic section would and then they would vent it through us so that we could put it, as I said before, in a conversational tone. Bosworth could get up to give it and he had good intentions of giving it but he would see some quote on the wall that reminded him of something and he would give a completely different speech. He would work in some of the strains from the prepared speech. He would give a speech better than all the agonizing ones that we had prepared for him. So we always had to make sure when he did a formal presentation that we sent someone along with a tape recorder so we could get an official transcript. Because I am sure that he did not know in advance himself what he was going to say. But it came out beautifully. And when given on television he was very personable, very low key.

Armacost knew he was leaving and he left a month or two months after I got there. And then Steve Bosworth came and Steve was there during the rest of my tour. We were there during the People's Revolution which overthrew the regime that was in power.

Q: Marcos?

MORTON: Ferdinand Marcos, and put in Cora Aquino. And so, we were there during this time. It was an exciting time to be in the Philippines, interesting times. This was after Nino Aquino had been assassinated. Nino had been assassinated the year prior to this while I was still in Thailand and the country was in a big state of flux. Right after I got there they were having one of their first elections that was considered open in years because Marcos had controlled the elections very tightly. The year that the revolution occurred was precipitated because Marcos decided to run for re-election himself. He had been in power for twenty-eight years. He didn't expect the opposition that he got. When they started to stack the ballot boxes and not bring the ballot boxes in for counting that precipitated the revolution that eventually overthrew him.

But, I am getting ahead of myself. When I got to the Philippines we had several issues that were facing us, one of them was the huge American military presence. We still had the huge naval facility at Subic Bay; it was our largest naval repair facility outside the continental United States. And Subic had been a naval base for centuries because the Spaniards had used it as a naval base prior to the Americans taking over the Philippines as a colony. And even after the Philippines became an independent country we still used it and the Japanese had used it during their occupation. Subic has a huge natural harbor that is large enough so that aircraft carrier can turn around within the harbor itself and with float and dry-dock facilities. There were recreational facilities there for the Seventh Fleet. So they could come in and the troops could have, if they really wanted to, they could stay on base without going into the community. There were lighted baseball diamonds that were open 24 hours, bowling alleys and horseback riding and golf course and there was a little island off the coast. They could go out swimming and scuba-diving or whatever. It was really a great place. They had several PXs and commissaries and it was a self contained city. It had its own potable water supply. Not only did it supply the water for the base but it supplied potable drinking water for the ships of the Seventh Fleet. And they had these huge containers that they would fill with water and tote to Diego Garcia to pre-position for the Navy there. So, the capacity for the water filtration

system was tremendous. The housing was great. It was a beautiful base. And then we had Clark Air Force Base which was 50 miles from Manila. And Subic was probably about 65 miles but in a slightly different direction. And they were close enough to each other to be supportive. The aviation fuel could come in through Subic and they had a pipe that would then send it by pipeline over to Clark.

There were other US military facilities. There was a gunnery range so that the planes from Japan could come down and gunnery practice. And from Guam and other military facilities, the Marines could come down from Okinawa and do guerilla training and storm the beaches. Back in the 20's the Philippines was probably one of the most densely forested countries in Asia. But the Forest and the Jungle have practically all been denuded. The largest forestry, virgin forest, still alive was around on the military base at Subic and around Clark. This was very good for the U.S. military to use for maneuvers although they had some of the biggest snakes in the world there. You could find pythons or members of the pythons family 16 or 17 feet long that could swallow a small goat or calf, whole. They were big. There was one maneuver while we were there. You know a snake can rise up one-third of its body length and these marines were on maneuvers and one marine got bitten on the top of his head by one that was that big so it had to be at least 18 or 19 feet long to get on top of his head like that. Fortunately, he survived because his colleagues were nearby. But as I said, we had several issues while we were there. One of them was the bases, the presence of the bases; they formed a large presence right in the Philippine economy and to the Philippines society at large. This was a vestige of colonialism. And it just rankled them. They liked the fact that they were there, they provided tremendous employment and the best paying jobs in the country were on the military facilities. But it was foreign military presence.

There was a security issue because the Marcos' had established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. And Imelda especially liked to try to play off the United States and the Soviets to see which one they could get the biggest favor from. They would periodically threaten to kick us out and lease the bases to the Soviets. We paid what we called economic assistance in compensation for utilization of the bases and we called it economic assistance, the Filipinos called it rent. So, there was this dichotomy in our thinking right there. This was a big issue and the Soviets were – their presences were throughout the area. You would run into Russians all over the place. Almost immediately after I got there, they got a new press officer in the Russian Embassy. He put out a phony survey. When we changed our name from the U.S. Information Agency and USIS oversea in 1980 to International Communication Agency or USICA and we changed our stationary and changed the color of the stationary and then in 1984, we went back to being USIA and we were all told to dispose of the old stationary and whatever. Some enterprising Philippi no, Foreign Service National employee didn't want to destroy the paper so he sold it as scrap, all the letterhead stationary that we had. And the Soviets bought the scrap paper and they put together a survey because they knew that we did surveys periodically and they sent out this questionnaire to, I have no idea how many people. It was very similar to the surveys that we would do except that within the surveys were questions that would antagonize the Filipinos. There were some, Filipinos are a very Catholic country, there were some questions in there that looked as if it were trying to

drive a wedge between the Catholic majority and Moslem minority. There was a separatist movement in the southern part of the Philippines. There were basic Christian communities who were also under Liberation Theology. (There were) questions in there that would incite these people. There were questions that could be simply read as anti-Marcos or anti-Imelda depending on your perspective. I found out about this survey quite accidentally. There was a very elderly Philippi no gentleman who loved America. He had served in the U.S. military during the war and he was a veteran and he was getting a pension from us and he got one of these questionnaires. He filled it out and he heard that I was new there so he decided to hand-deliver his questionnaire instead of sending it back to the post office box he was suppose to deliver it to. He was going to hand-deliver it and get acquainted with me at the same time. So he came in and the secretary brought him in to meet me and we sat and chatted for a few minutes and he gave me this USICA questionnaire with a date on it of about a month earlier. I asked him where he got it. He told me it was mailed to him It was a post office where he was supposed to send it back. We chatted for awhile and then I looked at it more carefully after he left and I immediately knew that this was not good. I made copies of it and distributed it to the various elements in the embassy and sent it back to Washington (so that it) could it be analyzed by the intelligence community. The intelligence community immediately recognized the work of this particular individual in the Russian Embassy because he had been in other countries in Asia and he had done things like this in other places. I had never heard of it before but supposedly he is the one who did the counterfeit will of Mao Zedong and he did other things like this in Singapore.

Q: He was accredited as the Information or Press Officer at the Soviet Embassy?

MORTON: He was transferred out almost immediately, but it was a welcomed opened up wake-up call to let me know the type of things I would be facing.

Q: Did the Mission publicize this?

MORTON: I went on radio and television to show the types of questionnaires we had put out. And to show that this is not the kind of thing we do. (I) showed the stationery that we used as opposed to this. (I) gave a history of the name change, explained that we had been doing surveys around the world and we never did this kind of survey. It was very well received. It was my public introduction to the Philippine society. I was on television many times after that. During the elections I was always on television explaining the American electoral procedures, something I hadn't done too much of since I had served in Jamaica. I had been on Bolivian television a couple of times but I was on Jamaican television quite a bit and I was on Philippine television quite a bit explaining different aspects of American society and also on Philippine radio.

Q: Besides the fact or perception of colonialism of the many military installations, was there a problem with the large military personnel presence in the Philippines? Was there an adverse reaction?

MORTON: There was and there wasn't. The American military presence was felt mostly by the towns right outside the gates because the American military tend to not leave their immediate surroundings. They would come to Subic and they would go out the gates to a strip of bars right outside the gates there. And they would do the same thing at Clark. They would come out to Angeles. The people with families, many of them lived out in the community. The produce and the Philippines brought lots of fresh meat and produce and dairy products for the navy which was a big boost for the Philippine economy. The families that were living there were having furniture made and they were buying artifacts and handicrafts and clothing on the local market and so this was a big boost to them.

Q: This was a positive image?

MORTON: There was a very positive contribution economically. And the military would bring in medications, (and conduct) Civic Action programs. They would (provide) medications that were almost at their expiration date but it still had the potency there. They were passing this out as a freebie to the surrounding communities. The leftist groups and the anti-American groups would prey on these types of good-will activities. They would collect some of these medicines and burn them, saying "that we were trying to kill the Filipinos by giving them out of date medicines" and those types of things. They would get good play (out) of it.

Q: I am going to ask you the same question before we continue with the issues, the same question that I have asked about some of your other assignments, if there was an accurate reflection of the diversity of the United States in the Country Team. The reaction of the Country Team members to minority diplomats and the reaction of host country people to minority diplomats?

MORTON: One of my predecessors had been a black American. Horace Dawson had been the Public Affairs Officer there. I think he was the first black senior official in the embassy. Horace had gone there in 1978 and I think he stayed two years and then he was replaced by Cliff Southern in 1980 and then I replaced Cliff in 1984. So Horace was very well known and Lulu Dawson, Horace's wife was very (well) known. Lulu was one of those American Club women type who charge in and organize a local community. Lulu organized The Friends of the Cultural Center, sort of like the Friends of the Kennedy Center, and they started raising money to support (the Center). These were Philippi no women she organized and they still exist and they raise money to support the Cultural Center. The security officer at the VOA relay facility up in Clark was Howard Hicks and his wife was same type and she was very active. She started a day-care center for the children of the Filipino employees on the base and she expanded this to include the people in the surrounding community and she would run fund drives and things like this. So they were very well known in the community. Howard and Camille stayed there for about five or six years. Howard was known as Camille's husband. Nobody knew who he was. They didn't know his name.

The Filipinos were familiar with black Americans. After the Spanish-American War, (Although there were black military) the United States didn't want black American

military stationed in the Philippines and the American Government didn't want to bring the soldiers with guns back to the segregated United States of 1900-1902. They left them in the Philippines. The 92nd infantry was there. The Philippines military band and their symphony tradition were started by a black American officer who was there back in the 30's and he developed the western musical tradition in the Philippines. He stayed on there; in fact, he was killed by the Japanese when they invaded the Philippines. He was beheaded by Japanese Army Officer with his sword. We did a motion picture based on his life which we put on Philippine television. But if you go to Mindanao, the largest Island in the south of the Philippines, which is where the black military had been permanently stationed and you go to the cemeteries, you see the people who were buried there in 1900, 1905, 1910 and 1914 the Johnson's, the Smith's and the Williams' and Joshua Johnson. And you could go into some of the little small communities and you can look at the children or some of the second and third generation children, you see where the ancestry came from.

Whenever I went around Mindanao I was really welcomed there because a lot of people looked like me. It was very pleasant. There was lot of black military who had married Filipinos and had, after they retired from the military, had gone back there to live because they could live much better on their pensions on the Philippi no economy. And there were lot of Filipinos who had gone to work in Hawaii and worked under Social Security and then they had gone back for the same reason. They had formed Lions Clubs and Guanos Clubs and they would always invite me to come and give a talk at their luncheons all over the place and you would find that many of them had ancestry in the black American military dated back to this period. So that there was a great deal of acceptance, in fact, a lot of the Filipinos used to call me their "brown brother." It gave me a special entrée. The Filipinos are also very color conscious, the same as all Asians are. Their gradations of color, you could tell the upper ranks of society tend to tell you I am not an Asian I am an occidental or I am of European descent. White Americans look at all of them as Filipinos whereas they and we black Americans can see the difference. But I think they were more willing to accept me, would give me more the benefit of the doubt then they would some of our colleagues there. This was very convenient, very useful to have.

At the same token I could make friends more easily among the Philippino community. They felt more relaxed when they come to my house as opposed to going to someone else's house. They didn't have to be as formal. This was good. When the revolution began, it began as an incident at the headquarters of the Philippine Army when General Vara decided to arrest General Ramos. General Ramos was a distant cousin of Ferdinand Marcos but he sympathized with Cory Aquino in a sense. My house was the first house at the embassy to get a telephone call to tell them that this was taking place. We had gone to the theater; the Philippines have great live theater. Chris and I loved to go to plays. We had gone to the theater, I had gone by the military camp earlier that afternoon to get a case of beer from the small commissary that the military had up at the north of the city and I had seen the activity going on around the military base but I just thought that it was some military parade or something or some activity that I just wasn't aware of. When I got back from the play I had about thirty telephone messages from different Filipinos. Then I started returning these calls and they were all telling me what was going on. In

between calls I got a call from the ambassador telling me he had just found out about it. He wanted me to come by his house quickly. He lived about five blocks up the street. I think that was the night before that was the last full night I got for the next four days. Getting back to what I was talking about. We had the security issue with the Russians there. We had the American military presence and there were economic issues. The Philippi no leftist groups were pushing against American or foreign investment in the country. Our position had always been that foreign investment is one of the paths to development. The American Chamber of Commerce is very large in the Philippines and some of the members, however, have been there since the end of the war and some have been there since before the war. They were all over the place. I was very active with the Chamber.

I suggested to the Chamber of Commerce that they should do a survey and using the tools that USIS use find out what the image of American business and foreign investors was in the Philippines. We worked closely with them to help them develop the test under the survey. The Chamber of Commerce used the same firm that we used when we did our surveys. They incorporated it into a regular survey that was being done - market research - by their respective businesses. So mixed in with the questions about whether you prefer Tide or Oxydol or Pepsodent or Colgate, were questions about the image of the business. The results were very interesting because we also did a survey of the companies at the same time to see what they thought themselves and to do a catalog of the civic action programs and the good neighbor programs that they were doing, just so we would know so that we could expand upon it. Well we made several interesting discoveries. One of them is that some businesses have a very strong image there and some have a very poor image. A lot of the practices that the Filipinos were attributing to American businesses were done by foreign businesses but not by the Americans. They were done by the Japanese businesses there, the destruction to the ecology, the low paying jobs, the sweat shop type working environment, that sort of thing. Americans on average were good neighbors and so we decided we would stretch this and work on this.

One of the things that I didn't mention when I was in Thailand, one of the things that we did in Thailand working with the Chamber of Commerce to build their image up, I talked them into adopting one of the provinces, one of the poorest provinces in Thailand. Then all the businesses would concentrate on economic development in that province rather then shot-gun throughout the country. This way you could get greater publicity for it. We started a number of things in that particular community, Peace Corps volunteer heavily in that part of Thailand and so we got them - it's a dry part of the country- we got them to work with the businesses to show people how to build "catch-rain basin" using their houses as rain gathering facilities to run the water through our filter systems that the Peace Corps volunteers and AID showed them how to make out of rice husks to filter the water and store it in barrels and then the Peace Corps volunteers could come around and put chemicals in them so that the water would not spoil. Then they could use this during the time of the dry season to water their crops. The AID brought in the techniques on doing dry land fish ponds and the American businesses would help stock these so that they could get a different source of proteins to subsidize the small amount that they had. We started a buffalo bank. We bought a number of water buffalos which is a beast of

burden and we painted on the side of them in indelible paint, "Buffalo Bank from the United States Chamber of Commerce". You would rent these out to the farmers that were too poor to have their own. Rent them out for a nominal fee or payment in kind, maybe some of their products, which you would then give to the schools and they would be a visible advertisement for the Chamber of Commerce. It showed something being done. Times magazine had just printed their nature series in Thailand where the publisher of it gave a number of these books in Thai language to Science series to put in all the schools out there. It did a lot of things.

Using that idea in the Philippines we started a piggy-bank. We adopted a province X, we worked with the local university and the Chamber of Commerce and my office with the local university. We would sell a pregnant pig to a farmer from the piggy-bank and then the way he would pay for this is once the pig gave birth he would have to give two pigs back to the bank which would be used as stock for more. And we would paint on the side of these, the American Chamber of Commerce piggy-bank. Although one of the initial problems was that the farmers couldn't wait and so they would eat the pregnant pig. But the ones that did began to see the wisdom of it. So this spread. I don't know if they still do it or not, but it was still going strong when I left there in '86. We got them to working on their image. In doing so, we started giving public speaking classes to the American businessman so that they could go out and talk to universities and schools and participate in seminars and make presentations about what their businesses were doing in terms of a good neighbor project, because before they would go out and they would just have these flip charts and start showing they produced so much prosperous. And so much whatever and nobody really cared and everybody would go to sleep. This way you could show how it benefited the community and how much they were contributing.

Well those were the major issues and one of the things that we realized immediately was that Filipinos used to, in the 30s and in the 20s, had a lot of personal contact with Americans. But because of the retrenchment over the years, and that caused by the war, there wasn't as much. We were not out in the provinces. The American teachers were no longer out in the provinces like they had been. We didn't have branch posts, we had one in Cebu which was in the central part of the country in the Visayas Islands, and we had one in Davao which was in Mindanao. But we had no branch post elsewhere and Luzon, the main island of the country; we were only in the capital city, Manila. And you know that there are about 700 different languages spoken in the Philippines in various dialects and different ethnic groups among the Filipinos. There is not an awful lot of interchange among these groups. The Philippine Government wanted to change the official language to "Tagalog." They immediately discovered two problems with this, one was most of them didn't speak it. That's why they had been doing their official dialogue in their parliament in English. Two, there weren't hardly any books in "Tagalog," they were written in English. So this was one of the problems. What I wanted to do to combat this, we set up what we call American Studies Resource Centers. We got local universities to be the host for this. They would make a section of their library or a classroom adjacent to the library available to us. We would work through our Thomas Jefferson Cultural Center which had a separate identity from the USIS although it really was a part of us. The Thomas Jefferson Cultural Center, the USIS and the Asia Foundation, we were the co-

sponsoring organizations of the American Centers (that) sat along with the host university. We would set up a reading room on the university campus either in their library or in this facility. We would give them 30 subscriptions to periodicals and this would usually include USA Today for the simple reason that it was cheap, it was in color, and the stories tend to start in on the same page you don't have to flip from one section to another, so several people could read one copy of the paper at a time. It would give them a news magazine either Times or Newsweek or US News World Report we did an equal number of subscriptions or sometimes to all three of them, then to users' periodicals that we had available and we would make up the rest with cultural magazines. We would give 30 magazine subscriptions. We would give a small collection of books (250) books initially and then we would supplement these at about 50 periodically. Some of these were books we had taken off the shelf at our libraries and some were from the Donate-a-Book program that the Asia Foundation had. They had a huge warehouse. And others were from the donated book program that the USIA was able to get for us and the Navy would bring out through "Operation Hand Clasp" and so we could set up an initial co-library of 250 books. Then we would give them a video-cassette player and we would promise them a total of 25 cassettes that had USIS programs on them. We would have another ten in reserve identified for each one of these. Periodically we would put new programs on these tapes and then somebody from my office would go out. Some American would go out and participate in a seminar or something and he would change and take some of the old tapes and replace them with new tapes and take some extra books out.

This would also be used as a venue for people from the embassy if they were traveling in that area, we would encourage them to go by and participate in whatever was going on, the political section, the economic section the commercial section. We encouraged the American Chamber of Commerce people and their wives. We did an inventory of the talents because there were a lot of talents available in the wife community. Some of them had been school teachers, some of them were amateur butterfly collectors or whatever and they could give lectures on these topics but at the same time they could have a social interaction with the Filipinos. We started off with just a few of these and by the time I left there we had eight of them around the country. They were widely scattered, all the way from the northern part of Luzon all the way to the southern part of Mindanao. They cost us very little, we got a lot of mileage out of them and we got a presence. If there was anything of any magnitude going on in the local community we could see to it that somebody was there at the American Studies Resource Center making a presentation or a seminar. To give you a good example, Galliano, where we had one, a university there, and there was also a very prestigious high school that had been in existence 75 years and the students were all over the world and they were going to celebrate their diamond jubilee. Some of their prominent students, former students who lived in the United States and in England and in other places were coming back for this. I thought this would be a good time to have a program at the American Studies Resource Center to coincide with this diamond jubilee. Chris and I went down there along with the Branch PAO from Cebu, who was an Asian-American at the time; he was a Laotian-American, Duan Svetc, which gives you a good mixture of America. Duan and his wife Moll, John and Chris and I went there for three days for a seminar and to make presentations and talk about

different things. I did a presentation on American Literature; Duan did one on radio production. He had started off with USIA in Washington with a service with VOA. He graduated from Columbia University and his wife was also a graduate of Columbia University. They had not met each other in Laos; they met each other in Columbia. They were very well versed in America society. Chris had been a champion swimmer in her youth. She had won the city s spring board diving and free-style and backstroke in Chicago. She did demonstrations and lectures at the swimming pool there. This gave all four of us something to do for three days. We had a big turnout. In fact we were stealing audiences away from the diamond jubilee so we went over there so they wouldn't get their nose out of joint. It worked out fine.

One of the things we wanted to do is show the economic benefits of the military bases. So I took the Assistant Cultural Affairs Officers who is in charge of the Thomas Jefferson Center, (he) was one of those rarities as an American He had spent his childhood in the Philippines. He was Frank Jenester. His parents had been missionaries in the Philippines. Frank had a PhD in Philippine studies from the University of Michigan and he had done his dissertation on Philippine history as the outpost. The American cowboys who had come there after the war - after the Spanish American War - we call it the Spanish American War the Filipinos called it the Philippi no American War. Frank had this background in Philippine history and in research. He spoke some of the local dialects. I took Frank off his job as TJC Director for about two months and had him do research on the economic benefits of the bases, like what the pay scale was, the various occupations there, compared similarly occupations paid on the local economy, what the side benefits were, some of the subsidiary benefits, how much lettuce was brought by the bases, not only for their own use but for the supplying of the Seventh Fleet. The dairy in the Philippines was started by Subic so that it could get milk for the military as well as for the ships that sailed out of there. How much the furniture industry was developed because of the presence of the bases. How many medical doctors got their training working in the hospital there and then trained in the United States using the initial skills that got them there. We came up with a tremendous amount of material and it was just a matter of putting it into a format so it wouldn't look like a piece of PhD to the station. We did this in about 50,000 copies again because RPC (USIA Regional Printing) was right there and we could have good technical advice from their people on the layout and the format and we could run over there and do editorial changes at the last minute. They did a beautiful job of this and we flooded the place. Frank went on television. I went on television. The ambassador went on television. We went on radio using the excerpts from this pamphlet explaining the economic benefits of the bases. This stifled a lot of the criticism although much of it came up again, subsequently because these things you don't really put them out completely you just put the flames down but the coals are still smoldering. So periodically you have to come back out and douse them again. But it helped a lot the military Public Affairs Officers were using them in their Civic Action programs, passing these out in the surrounding communities. The American Chamber of Commerce was helping to distribute them because they were getting a side benefit from this also. This was really a heavy hitting thing that we did. A lot of this came to a climax because the revolution occurred.

This was one of the more exciting times that happened. I touched on it briefly, earlier. We had just had the presidential elections in the Philippines and a lot of journalists had come from all over the world to see it. We had Americans there as part of the observation group and these high-level people had left and gone back to the States. They had been there from other countries also as observers. The journalists were still there so when the revolution started they were covering it for their whole country media. But the Philippine media was not covering it at all. We discovered where a lot of our unreturned films from the USIS library were. They were still at the television station because that is all they showed was old USIS science reports and other American culture programs. That was all that was on television. A lot of our music programs were on all the radio stations or either marshal music.

In the United States you could see what was going on in the Philippines because the journalists were all over and they still had their satellite transmitters and so they were satelliting back to the United States what was going on in the Philippines whereas we were there right in the heart of it and we couldn't see it. But then in talking to the officer, the captain in charge of the television facility in Clark Armed Forces Television, he told me they were getting it in and they were re-broadcasting it at the base. Well, the base was too far away for us to get the signal in Manila but we worked out a deal. They were going to strengthen the signal a little bit and focus it as far as possible towards where I lived because there were no tall buildings or obstructions between my house and Clark. Most of the houses, you had the tall buildings from Manicotti in the way, the business district uptown. So then I got the communicators from the embassy and I got up on my roof and with chicken wire and copper tubing we made a large television relay antenna. And we could get the television signals from Clark and then we set up two video tape recorders on the second floor at my house and my wife would sit there and when they got ready to broadcast the news, they would call us and Chris would sit there and she would tape it. We would send one copy to the ambassador's residence and the other down to the office to duplicate it so that we could show it in the embassy so the people in the embassy could find out what was going on. We had an open line between the embassy and Washington the entire time. There was somebody sitting there with just an open line in case anything happened, they could talk. Initially we were all somewhat apprehensive about getting out on the streets because we didn't know what could happen. But I was going out, going from my house to the embassy and going from my house to the ambassador's residence. People would stop on the street and sort of tell me what was going on. I kept going further and further a field. Finally, I found out I could go anywhere I wanted to in the country. Nobody was going to bother me. I was all over town. People recognized me and they would start talking to me and tell me what was going on, people on each side of the fence so to speak. I knew each side. I remember we had a senior staff meeting, a Country Team meeting at the ambassador's residence and everyone was very tense and nervous and the ambassador asked me how could I stay so calm at a time like this. I told him, well, I had served many years in Latin America and this was my thirteenth revolution and on a scale from one to ten, I only gave this one about a five and a half, maybe a six. This sort of lightened up the room.

I don't know if you are aware of the 1981 attempted revolution in Thailand. The April Fool's Day Revolution they called it. It didn't get very much publicity in the United States it only lasted about a day or so. It was just a minor thing and it didn't last long at all. One of the things that I did in the Philippines when I first got there which came in very, very handy, I think I mentioned about my connection with the captain in charge of the Armed Forces Radio and Television there. I started having a monthly meeting with the Public Affairs Officers from the various military bases. Initially they would come into Manila and we would do it in my office. I thought this was patronizing. I am putting myself in a sort of a big boss position and they really don't work for me. We're equals. So then, I thought we should rotate this and include in addition to Public Affairs Officers, we should include the Officer-in-Charge of the Armed Forces Radio and Television because he has access to the spill over effect of the radio/television programs for the bases, spill over into the surrounding communities and they would be very useful for us. So we would then rotate the meetings. Sometimes I would go to Clark, sometimes I would go to Subic, and sometimes I would go up to some of the other little military installations and sometimes they would come into Manila. This worked out very well. The relationship between us improved. We could collaborate. One of the things I did I went into the Public Affairs Office just to look at their handout materials that they had on the shelf in there and these looked like they had all been prepared by somebody in Washington who had a textbook on the Philippines in front of them. It was the type of stuff you would see at a military Public Affairs Office in Kaiserslautern, Germany. Just change Kaiserslautern and make it Manila or whatever. So we went through a lot of these things and got them to make changes in it and reproduce it again. They had an account at the RPC in Manila so they could reproduce it right there, they didn't have to go back to Washington or anything else. They just had to get approval of it. This gave us a little more focus plus we could tie them together. Because Subic was doing things and Clark was doing things and they really didn't coincide but we could focus our efforts on things. We could all concentrate on the various Civic Action programs that went along with the military maneuvers and when their civic action teams came in we could work on that together. This tied us all together very neatly. It helped out when things really got bad.

My successor continued that during his tour. I got pulled out. I was supposed to be in the Philippines for four years but at the end of two years, right after the revolution, Wick was the Director of the Agency at the time and he decided he wanted me to come back to Washington to be the Director for all of East Asia and the Pacific. I really didn't want to leave I was enjoying myself in the Philippines. I had hoped to stay overseas until I retired. But I got the understanding that if I didn't take the job they were going to bring in an outside political appointee. I decided I couldn't do that to my colleagues. I came back to Washington to be the Area Director.

Q: Had you met Charlie Wick?

MORTON: I had met him a number of times. Charlie Wick was the Director of USIA. I had met him at PAO conferences. The first one he held as Director of the Agency was held in Manila. I met him then for the first time. I met him at subsequent ones in Australia and then he came to Thailand and spent a week while I was there. I took him

out to see the border with Cambodia and I took him to meet the King. I rented the big fancy barge that the Hotel Oriental used for dinner cruises and we had a dinner press conference. We invited all the foreign media and domestic media and we had a press conference on this barge.

Q: Did you put a baby grand piano on the barge?

MORTON: We put a baby grand piano on there and I had taped the sound effects. All we had was big band music. And some of it he had arranged. He said "Boy that sounds great!"

Q: We have you now coming back in 1986 to the position of Director of the Office of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Can you tell me a little bit about what led up to this assignment how this came about and some of your experiences there?

MORTON: I think Charlie Wick was the Director at the time was impressed with the way we handled things in the Philippines during the revolution and the aftermath that overthrew President Marcos. I had known President Marcos and his wife Imelda quite well as most PAO's did who were stationed in the Philippines. Imelda particularly liked Chris and me because I would dance with her at her parties and she loved to dance. Whenever she had a party she would always invite me and Chris. I guess it was a mixed blessing; you got a chance to meet people you would not ordinarily meet. But the parties started after the regular receptions or parties they had, so, it means they did not start until 10 o'clock at night. I not sure that Imelda ever slept so they (receptions/parties) would last until the wee small hours of the morning. I had to be at the office at 8:00. We survived it. Anyway I think Charlie Wick liked the way we handled the events there. Yes, Manila got a Superior Honor Unit Award which I was very happy to share because we had very good staff which had done yeoman work at that time. So I went back as the Area Director for East-Asian and Pacific. I had visited most of the countries in East Asia during the time I was PAO either in Bangkok or in Manila. The main ones I had not visited, I had not been to China so in leaving the Philippines we came back to the United States through China. Spent some time in Shanghai and then Beijing just to get a feel for what the circumstances were in Beijing. I had not visited Fuji because it was a little out of the way and there is no reason to go there. But all the other posts in the region I had visited. I had not gone to Papua, New Guinea either. So I had a leg up on the job. I knew all the PAO's through the various PAO conferences and from previous incarnations in the Agency. I was in a good working relationship with them.

I did not know most of the staff in Washington. I did not know any of the civil service employees at all. The few times I had been back there for consultation I had just been in and out. It was a very well run office, but morale was low, especially among the civil service employees. They felt sort of left out of things. And also I discovered that the civil service employees in the main didn't know geography. They didn't realize that when it was 3 o'clock in the afternoon in Washington it was 3 o'clock in the morning in Bangkok. That explained to me why I used to get these strange telephone calls in the middle of the night asking me things that could have easily been handled by a telegram or

a letter or a penny postcard. So one of the things I instituted just to get the morale up and make them feel like they were participating, I instituted this almost immediately, was that anyone who came in from the field for briefings or for whatever or just for a visit, the desk officer that they were going to be dealing with would take them around and introduce them to all of the civil service employees in the office so that they could put a face on this name. Then we started once a month having a lunchtime class for the clerical staff and the other civil service employees there on the area, just briefings to let them know what was going on and to give them geography lessons in a very subtotal way. I have a globe that I have had for years and I brought in my globe and I brought a flash light in and I was explaining time-zones to them, using the flash light as the sun going around, so that they could see that you just can't do that kind of thing. Most of them were from this immediate geographical area. They had never been to California much less to Hawaii or anywhere else. They knew time zones as an abstraction but they didn't know time zones as a reality. The other thing was that they didn't understand the seasons of the year. They couldn't understand that when it is summer here it's winter in some other parts of the world. It gave them a greater sense of participation and it was amazing how the level of performance in the clerical and support staff improved once they felt a part of the team.

There had been a tremendous turnover in the staff prior to my arrival there. Once I got on board and started making them part of the team, nobody wanted to leave. And so we had absolutely no turnover at all, hardly among the civil service employees during my tenure. They were apprehensive at first when I came in because this dichotomy you have in Washington all of the officers were Caucasian and all the clerical and support staff were African-Americans. They were treated as a secondary staff, it wasn't segregation and it wasn't discrimination, there was a mental separation between the staffs.

Q: Was that in addition to the manifestation of the animosity between Foreign Service and Civil Service?

MORTON: This was the other part of that. The Foreign Service officers would call the Washington staff, the Washington locals. They knew that they were called this. In fact, they called themselves this in a derogatory sense. I felt we were all a part of the same team. Since I was a senior officer who had come in and I wasn't from this area geographically, I was suspect on the part of the staff.

Q: Do you think that was also manifestation of deep feelings between Foreign Service and Civil Service?

MORTON: I think that was the icing on the cake. The Foreign Service officers called the Civil Service employees the "Washington Locals" and the civil servants were aware of this. They referred to themselves as this in a derogatory sense. I didn't want this division in the office staff; I felt that we were all a part of the same team and that we should be equals in this regard. At the same time I felt some of the clerical staff had potential to go up themselves if they had a little incentive or they could see there was a possibility for this. I made it a point to include them, to make sure they were introduced to people, that

they were briefed; we had classes for them on geography. I took a globe in; I took a flash light in. I showed them time zones around the world. And I made them aware of what was going on in a political sense. We would bring in the desk officers would brief them on things that was going on in the area on a monthly bases. If we had a PAO from an area coming in, that would be of particular interest, like a PAO from China came in. I would have him brief the staff including the clerical staff. They appreciated this attention. So because of this they got more involved in their work. They had gotten used to lots of turnovers in the office. People stop leaving, they didn't want to go. They were enjoying where they worked. I also made it a point on my Foreign Service staff that any award that the Agency offered for Foreign Service employees at any time of the year we always made sure we had somebody from East Asian Pacific (office) nominated for this. One year, it was almost embarrassing because when we had the awards ceremony almost all the awards went to people from East Asia and the Pacific because we were the only area that had taken the time to nominate people. Most of them were so busy with day-to-day things that they didn't think about rewarding the people on the other side of the world who were really the reason for them being there. This paid off in great dividends. The morale throughout the area, I think, was particularly high during this period. I would have other elements of the Agency come in and brief the staff. The Office of Security was right next door to us and they shared our conference room and this was always a suspect area. I had the Director of Security come in and brief the staff to explain to them what the whole security thing was. Not the kind of briefing you get when you first start working for the Agency. What security could mean in a global sense so that they are aware of why they did some of these things. It really helped a lot. The American staff appreciated it too because they got more support from their clerical staff once they were part of the team. It was an interesting time while I was there.

When I first came back in that job, Charlie Wick was the Director of the Agency. He was a difficult man to work for in many instances. He was the only Director of the Agency that I doubted anybody in the Agency called by his first name. They called him Mr. Director. When I started at USIA Edward R. Murrow was the Director and I was a GS-9 employee and when I saw Edward R. Murrow in the hall I called him Ed. When Carl Rowan came in as his successor, I called him Carl. This was the way all the way through. But when Wick came in he let it be known almost immediately that he was not Charles or Charlie. He was Mr. Wick or Mr. Director. So this gave us a sense of where we stood in the pecking order there. Wick was able to do things for the Agency. He got money for us. Although most of the money went to television and we resented it at the time, later on he proved prophetic because television was very important to the whole public diplomacy effort. Unfortunately, I don't believe at this time, it's under the control of the public affairs people anymore. It's off under a different wing although they still work closely together. But this was at the time when WorldNet was expanding and for a while it was the tail wagging the dog. But I think it finally got into proper perspective once he left. But because of his interest in this we were able to get satellites rented around the world. This satellite time proved very beneficial and subsequently when I went into the Office of Management we were able to take advantage of these and used them for other things in addition to television.

Q: Let me ask you about some of your key PAO's during this period?

MORTON: During this period we had McKinney Russell going into China. He got there shortly prior to the Tiananmen Square. I guess almost about six or eight months before the Tiananmen Square incident. He had been there long enough to polish up his Chinese language capabilities. McKinney was an unusual officer. When he came into the Agency in '62, I believe it was - I met him on his first tour - when he was Assistant Information Officer in what was then the Congo, Leopoldville. McKinney had been the only non-native German broadcaster on Radio Liberty. His German was just that good. And he also spoke Finnish and Italian. McKinney could soak up a language like a sponge. By the time he got sent to China he was already fluent in Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, German, Italian, French and Finnish. So he went from zero, his first Asian language his first oriental language and McKinney went from 0 to a 3 in Chinese in about a year, which is absolutely unheard of.

Q: What role did you play as the Area Director in his assignment?

MORTON: McKinney had been a friend of mine and I was consulted by the Personnel Office for the various candidates and when I saw he was eligible and he was interested in going, I pushed very hard for his assignment there. I had also pushed very hard for Larry Daks to go there as the Deputy PAO. Larry Daks had been with me in Thailand and I knew that Larry had Asian language capability because Larry was almost bi-lingual in Thai and his Lao language capability was so good that he had been used by the Ambassador when he was in Laos as official interpreter. Larry had studied Chinese but because of family problems he couldn't go to China so he stayed on in Thailand for about 5 years but while he was there he studied Chinese to improve it. There are a lot of Chinese speakers in Thailand. Chinese told me that when Larry got to Beijing that Chinese employees thought when they talked to Larry on the telephone they thought they were speaking to another Chinese, just to show you how good his language was. We had George Beasley there and George Beasley had been the Deputy PAO and George was a black American and George had been the Director of the Language School in Taiwan for about ten years prior to coming with the Agency. He was a civil servant with the State Department at that time and when he came back they had no place for him and so he came to the Agency and was into the Voice of America for awhile. Then he went to the Area Office and then he went to China. George's Chinese was impeccable also; I remember from when I went to China on my briefing trip enroute from the Philippines back to the States. George and I had gone around in the countryside and it was just mind-boggling to the Chinese when George would stop the car and go over to some Chinese farmer working in the field to ask him what road to take to go somewhere. Usually the person was so dumbfounded that this Chinese speaking black American that he couldn't answer initially. And then finally if I went over too and since George spoke Chinese they assumed I did too and they would start babbling away at me and I had no idea what they were talking about. When George left and he was replaced by Larry Daks the embassy had a number of USIS Chinese language officers, some of whom had spent almost their entire career in that part of the world between Hong Kong, Taiwan and Beijing. So we

were very lucky in this regard, compared to the other parts of the embassy where the language capability wasn‘t nearly as good.

We had in Korea, good Korean language officers. In Japan the PAO didn’t speak, he had taken Japanese language training but when he went to meet with people he’d have the staff do little cards for him with certain greetings and he would then read these cards and they would sit there politely and listen. Then the rest of the conversation would be between the Deputy PAO or the Information Officer and the guest whoever they were. Japanese is a difficult language but we had a number of senior officers with Japanese language capability. The Deputy PAO in Japan was very good. In Hong Kong and Taiwan we had Chinese language officers and so we were eventually able to get these people rotated up to China and to Japan because some had Japanese and Chinese. We had in Indonesia we had Bahasa speaking officers, the same thing in Malaysia. The language in both Malaysia and Indonesia speak Bahasa. It’s a little different but you can adapt with a short transition. Three or four weeks the people can cross over from one to the other. This worked out fine. The other parts of the area, the Philippines, were English language. Although I was trying to get to Tagalog (which was) taught on a limited basis, I took some of the Tagalog classes while I was in the Philippines because I felt I should know a few words, at least. At first, I just bought a book and first started trying to teach myself and I realized this will never do. So, I just hired somebody to come into the office a couple times a week and give me lessons in Tagalog. I was never able to really carry on a conversation but neither were a lot of Filipinos. That was the only society that I ever served in where people would switch from one language to another with no warning. But very few Filipinos in the educated elite could carry on a conversation in Tagalog at that time. Maybe they can now. They would talk to you in English and throw in a Tagalog expression or they would throw in a sentence in Tagalog. If I could do the same thing it would show that I was one of the boys, too. Papua in New Guinea was English speaking because it had been a protected (territory) of Australia and New Zealand after WW I. Singapore was English although it was useful to have a Chinese language officer there. You can get by with English in Hong Kong but it is also preferable to have a Chinese language officer there and this could be used as a stepping stone for somebody to go to Beijing or somebody from Beijing to have a change of venue.

We had Burmese language officers in Burma although the educated elite, except for the military, tended to speak English because of the British tradition. I had been to Burma a couple of times on holiday when I was in Thailand and I went all over the country where they let foreigners go and I had no difficulty not speaking Burmese. There had been a black American Ambassador in Burma about six of seven years earlier and although he didn’t get around to places as much as he probably would have liked to he was well known in Burma that there was a black American ambassador there. So even though he had been gone for years, people assumed that because you don’t get black American tourists in Burma, so when I showed up, people assumed that’s who I was.

Q: Was he political or was he career? What was his name?

MORTON: He was career. He was an AID Officer. Maurice Bean, I have a list of AID Officers who had been permanent and made ambassadors. State Department had very few minority officers at senior levels so when the push came for greater integration they tended to tap USIS and AID Officers for Ambassadorial positions.

Q: Were there many other minority officers except George Beasley from USIA in East Asian Pacific Affairs?

MORTON: Don Q. Washington was the Branch PAO in Pusan. He now is the Public Affairs Officer in Australia. I had met Don right after he finished his Junior Officer Training in West Africa and he was on R&R in Germany. I met him during one of my trips through Germany at an early stage in his career and I sort of kept an eye on him. He was a very promising officer. He went from Pusan and then he served in Indonesia as the Cultural Affairs Officer. Now, he the Public Affairs Officer in Australia. He is a very bright young man. Although he is no longer a young man, he is probably in his fifties now but at my age that's a young man. When I was PAO in the Philippines the Agency loaded the post with black officers. When I came back and I asked was there a method to this, they claimed that it wasn't. But I had Barbara Scarlet as Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer, Bill Parker as Branch Public Affairs Officer in Davao and a Laotian-American Officer Duan as the Branch Public Affairs Officer in Cebu. Duan and I were old friends because he had served in Latin America during my time there and I had met him when he was a Laotian Language Officer in VOA. And then we had Bruce Brown to come as the Deputy Director of the Thomas Jefferson Cultural Center. There was another officer who came just before I left; I can't remember his name now, to replace Frank Jenester as the Director of the Thomas Jefferson Cultural Center.

Q: Even though the Agency said that there was no method to their madness that all the black officers were with you in the Philippines, what was your impression, why do you think that happened?

MORTON: Well, I think that the personnel system is open and fair and it was all a coincident. (Laugh) The fact that the same thing happened in Thailand was just a coincidence there too.

Q: How about Asian-American Officers?

MORTON: We had Asian American officers in China, Japan, Korea and Thailand and there was one in Hong Kong. Just before I got to the Philippines, there had been one there. I think part of this fits the old pattern when I first joined USIA early on in my career, I was budget officer in the African Area and I had a chance to visit 22 countries in Africa and almost all the black Foreign Service officers in USIA were in Africa at that time. Practically all of the State Department Officers and AID Officers were in Africa. The AID Officers that were not in Africa were in the Caribbean or in India. I think one or two were in Egypt but that was part of Africa area. You go to South America and all the Hispanic-Americans are in South America with a few lucky ones who managed to escape and get to Spain. Many of the Mormons are in South America because they had served as

missionaries there during their missionary stint with the church and so they had Spanish language proficiency. Some of them had gone back as Peace Corps volunteers and so most of the Mormons were in South America. It's this type of assignments in personnel that always bothered me. When I was in personnel I called in the officer in charge of assigning the junior officers and I asked her why was it all the black junior officers were being assigned to Africa. She said, "Oh, it's because of their MLAT scores. I said, "Their what?" She said, "Their language capability scores." They score lower on the language capability scores so they can't be assigned to hard language posts and so most of our English language posts are in Africa." So I said, "That is interested, because most of them are going to French speaking countries. So if you can learn French you can learn Spanish and Italian and other romance languages (i.e.,) Portuguese." She said, "We will look into this." I said, "Not only that you have to have a language to get off of language probation, so that means before they get to go overseas they have taken some language training in a world language and they have language qualification." She admitted this was so and she said, "But, they are more comfortable there. This is where they ask to be assigned." And I said, "Are they aware that there are other parts of the world." But, she says, "They all ask to be assigned there." I asked, "Do the Irish officers ask to be assigned to Ireland and do the Jewish officers ask to be assigned to Israel and do the Finnish officers ask to be assigned to Finland. She said, "Well there are assignments in the process." And so I then asked to see all list of junior officer assignments before it went into effect. I started sprinkling them around the world.

Then, after I left personnel they went back to their traditional assignment pattern, so that it was not institutionalized. I notice to a large extent now its still that way because I am on the Board of Governors at DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired) and we have a reception for all junior officers after they have finished their training and they have gotten their on-going assignment before they actually go into it. They all walk around with their little tags on showing where they are going to be assigned. It's all a part of the State Department now. But I notice the preponderance of black officers is still being assigned to Africa. Since these tend to be officers now who have graduated from Dartmouth, Columbia and Stanford and the University of Chicago and major universities, they are not coming from the historically black colleges and universities as they had in the past. I think their English language capabilities are quite good. I also think that some of them have other languages that they have picked up as Peace Corps volunteers or whatever.

Q: Have you had an opportunity to question any of the young officers that are coming in now as to whether that was their first preference of assignment?

MORTON: I have asked them if it was their first preference and it was one of their preferences not necessarily their first. Because they make a list of preferences and so they are happy often times because it is one of those on there list.

Q: They are probably also just happy with the fact that they have managed to get in the Foreign Service.

MORTON: They are ready to go anywhere at that time.

I made it a point during my entire career not to be assigned to Africa. Primarily, because I had seen earlier on before I even went into the Foreign Service I had seen this segregated pattern of assignments and I did not want to fall into that. The opportunities to get promotions and to rise up in the career service are just as good in Africa if not better except that the resources available to you aren't as great as they are in other parts of the world. So, you don't get the rich variety of experience serving in an African Post as you would in other countries. South Africa is a developed country and to a certain extent Nigeria is now although once you get out of Lagos I don't know how developed it is. I went to five cities in Nigeria back when I was a civil servant and once I left Lagos it was like going back in time. This is not to say that other countries have a greater amount of resources per se then all countries in Africa but the richness and the variety of it is different. The emphasis placed in the American Foreign policy community is different. There is less emphasis, less concern about what happens in Africa because there is less impact on the United States. We do not have nearly as much trade. We have very little tourism other then black Americans going there or others going on animal safaris in East Africa. There is a great interest in South Africa now.

But just the importance of this in the world scene told me that I should not fall into this pattern. It paid off in the long run although probably because of this I was never appointed to an ambassadorial position. When I was a career minister, and was serving as Deputy Associate Director for Management the Associate Director, who was a political appointee, had very good connections (and) kept pushing me for an ambassadorial assignment. The feedback I got back from persons in the Department was that probably I could be considered for Togo or one time I was mentioned at South Africa but I was only a Minister Counselor at that time. Ed Perkins did get the job and did a very good job there so I understand. I was considered for Guyana which is an all black country, very small country on the left arm pit of South America. The position in Burma was vacant at the time; in fact, it was vacant for almost two years. And since I had served in East Asia, I had been to Burma many times, I didn't speak Burmese but I felt I could learn the language quite easily. I did mention this and I got the run-around. There was shuffling of feet and exchange of glances but I was never even considered for this. I had been a Public Affairs Officers in two major countries in East Asia and I had been the Director for East Asia in the Pacific and I wasn't even considered for Papua, New Guinea which is the only black country and Fuji also. I wasn't even considered for those places. Fuji always goes to a political appointee. It annoyed me and then by this time I had almost 40 years service counting military service and Foreign Service experience. My wife and I have now been married 43 years. During these 43 years we moved 17 times. We sat down and talked about it, I think about this time, it was almost 8 years ago, we had been married 35 years. But we decided do we really want to move again and we decided we didn't. So I decided just to go ahead and retire when my time was up. So I retired with 39 years 10months and 29 days of Government service.

Q: Before we leave your position as the Director of the Office of Asian-Pacific Affairs and having had all these assignment you just mentioned as PAO in very important

countries in the Bureau, you also had some very close working relationships with other agencies, so obviously State Department being the first one, but also with the U.S military because of your experiences with the large military presence in the Philippines and also with the Voice of America, the broadcasting arm of USIA then because of several transmittal sites in the Philippines, how did this translate into your effectiveness as Area Director and were you able to continue the coordination and communication with these Agencies?

MORTON: There were also large Voice of America transmittal facilities in Thailand too. There was a medium wave broadcast facility at that time in Thailand, a large receiver facility and a large transmittal facility. The Voice wanted to expand and build a tremendous site in Northeast Thailand. I was part of the negotiating team. Washington sent some representatives out and I was part of the negotiating team. My final year in Thailand meant negotiating with the Thai government for a site with the reciprocity arrangements and financial arrangements and training capabilities of the site to be built in Northeast Thailand. I spent a lot of time on that. When I got to the Philippines, although the Voice of America facility there was not under my jurisdiction, the Ambassador regarded it as such, since I was the senior officer, the USIS Officer in Thailand. He held me accountable for the activities of the Voice of America facility in Thailand. So, we had a huge receiver site and the transmittal facility there and we also had medium wave broadcast facility that went into China from there. The facility in Thailand broadcasted into China and from Burma all the way over to Vietnam. The one in the medium wave in the Philippines broadcasted into Vietnam also but also into China. There were attempts to get a facility in Korea at this time. I was involved in that as the Area Director. My job as the Area Director included coordinating activities with the Commander-in-Chief, CINCPAC, the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet. Whenever I was in Hawaii which was quite often, I would always pay a courtesy call on CINCPAC and we would discuss different matters. I had an officer a USIS Officer assigned to his staff as a Public Affairs Advisor to the Commander-in-Chief, CINCPAC. We also had in Hawaii an office, Pacific Affairs Office, there with two American officers and a secretary to cover the ten independent states in the Pacific Island States. It was called PIPO (Pacific Island Provost Office). We had the Foreign Service Reception Center in Honolulu. So I usually got to Hawaii about four or five times a year for one reason or another either going to Asia or coming back from there. In my high visibility role as the Area Director I was invited to speak to American audiences on a wide variety of topics concerning East Asia and the Pacific. Because of the broad geographical region I talked to the World Affairs Counsel in Hawaii several times. I participated in panel discussions at the University of Hawaii and the East-West Center. I addressed the World Affairs Counsel in San Diego and San Francisco and Los Angeles. I talked to the Chicago Counsel on Foreign Affairs, to Chambers of Commerce in Cincinnati and in Cleveland. I Addressed university groups in New Mexico, Texas and the Thunder Bird School of International Management in Phoenix several times. University of Florida and the University of South Florida, I covered the gambit to cover the areas of East Asia and the Pacific.

It was very interesting when I was talking to the University of South Florida, I started explaining what was going on in East Asia and the Pacific and I was addressing the

different countries and I had a big map behind me and I was addressing the different countries out there and I could see this blank look on the part of the audience. It was at night, so you had students as well as faculty and citizens from the community there. I guess there must have been about a 100 people. I asked, "Are you all familiar with this part of the world?" It turned out that they were not familiar at all. I digressed from explaining the political situation to give a geography lesson first. I explained the ethnic makeup and composition of the countries and some of their traditions; the relationship between the United States and them. They had no idea that there were black people in the Pacific region. I explained the difference between the Micronesians the Melanesians and the Polynesians and went off into this tangent. I never did get around to discussing - because there was so much interest in this - all the questions and answers afterwards concerned the geography lesson that I had just given. I also went up to Boston a couple of times to address the audiences up there and to Chicago because I spent a lot of time in Chicago before I started with the Agency and also because my wife is from there and we would go back there to visit her family. I would usually do something at Roosevelt University my former alma mater or at the University of Chicago and occasionally at the University of Chicago in the Navy Pier.

So I did a lot of public speaking in those days. And when I went to Arkansas I did a lot there with the Kiwanis Clubs and the school systems. In fact, when Clinton was Governor I got that certificate up there from Clinton as an "Arkansas Traveler." The Arkansas Traveler was a folklore bit from the 1930s. In fact, there was a radio character called the "Arkansas Traveler", when I was a kid coming up; I used to listen to him. So President Clinton, although Governor Clinton at the time, had a little ceremony and gave me that. So I got to know him quite well during that time when he was Governor of Arkansas.

Then I went to the White House to brief the Vice President when he was getting ready to make his first trip to East Asia and the Pacific. (I got a picture of it. I will show you a picture of Vice President Quayle as I was briefing him). It was interesting, he had never been to that part of the world. The State Department had prepared an itinerary for him and I had asked if I could see it. They told me it was all set and I would have to ask him. We got a call from the Vice President's Office because they noticed that no one from USIA had cleared off on this itinerary. They asked if we could send someone over to brief the Vice President. So I went over to brief him. Very pleasant. We sat down in the Vice President's office and he says, "What do you think of this schedule, this program they have set up for me?" I said, "I have no thoughts on it whatsoever, because they would not let me see it." He said, "That is ridiculous! Take a look at this". They gave me the schedule and I said, "Well it really doesn't serve the Public Affairs needs the way I see it. He was going to go to Australia as the guest of the Australian Government and the Australian People in commemoration of the "Battle of the Coral Seas" and they always want some high level American dignitary. The Vice President was a very young man and they would have had him spending his entire time there with veterans from WW II who were all in their 70's and 80's by this time. They had him spending no time with the people or with the media or with the young people who were going to count and so I suggested to him that there is a museum that is being built by the Australians in honor of their (we call it our bicentennial here) but the Australians call it bicentenary. We had

given five million dollars to this museum for a wing on it. We had also contributed to the whaling boat because the early boats they had used in Australia for going whaling were built in the United States. I thought it might be useful for him to go over and take a look at this museum. And it would make a great photo opportunity. While he was in there, the Australian like the common man, they don't like this feeling of "I am somebody and you are just a lowly peasant". It comes from their historical colonization of Australia. One of the worst mistakes you can make in Australia as far as I could tell was to hail a taxi and when it comes up to jump in the back seat. The cab driver would think you were rather "cheeky." If it is just you and the cab driver you sit in the front seat with him and then you would become mates. I told him, what you should really do, there is an area down not too far from where the museum is and it's called the Rocks and there is a great bar there called "Philip's Foot." And I think what you should do is belly on up to the bar and have a beer and tell everyone to call me "Dan." Australians like to cut off the top poppy. He said, "What's that mean?" I said when you are out in the fields and you walk across there and you have a riding crop and if one poppy sticks up higher than the others then they take their whipping. They cut their head off so they are all level. It is a "leveling field" field and he liked this. Nassau, his secretary wrote this down.

I saw the press clippings when he came back. While he was there actually, I saw him quoting me. He went to the bar at Philip's Foot, he bellied up to the bar and had a beer and they were so gratified and pleased or flattered with it that, the bar has its own brewery, they named a beer after him called Quayle Ale. The couple of jokes I had told him, he told there. He was quoted as saying, "I understand the Australians like to cut off the top of the tall poppy." It was a very successful trip for him. It was probably one of the more popular trips that the Vice President made. He also went to Thailand and to Japan. I had briefed him on his part in Thailand but I didn't get a chance to brief him too much on his role to play in Japan and he committed a serious faux pas there. He was invited to have tea with the Emperor and he regretted at the last minute and went and played golf. And you just don't do that in Japan. I didn't get a chance to get to him to give him the proper protocol to follow there. It was funny because a couple of days after my visit to the White House I was over at the Department and I was talking to the people in the Bureau. They were very upset. They said they didn't know what happened, they prepared this good program for the Vice President and someone got to him and screwed the whole thing up. He wants to go to some bar called "Philip's Foot" down in the Rock's area, he wants to go to this museum, where is this museum. I kept my mouth shut. I didn't want to destroy my close relationship with my colleagues.

Q: Speaking of your close relationship with your colleagues, the last part of that question leading to that as the Area Director, did State Department Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs coordinate with you? Did you attend their weekly meetings etc., etc.?

MORTON: I was invited to their weekly meeting. I went twice because the State Department people sat at a big table and they would go around the room and they would do whatever they did. All the rest of us outsiders sat against the wall in chairs and if they had time they would see if there was anybody in the bleachers who had comments to make. Since I knew all these people at the table and I had worked with them at different

places in my career in East Asia and I was senior to all of them, I sent my deputy after the first meeting. I went to the first meeting to say hello and get acquainted and three years later I went to my last meeting to say goodbye to say I'm no longer there.

Q: Who was your deputy?

MORTON: When I first went into the Office, Bill Lenderking was my deputy. And then after a year, Bill went to New York for a short while with the United Nations. West Stewart became my Deputy. West had been the Public Affairs Officer in Australia and I had known West for 30 years. His first Public Affairs Officer assignment was in the Caribbean at the same time I had been in the Caribbean. We had spent a lot of time in Latin America. He had gone to Denmark and then to Australia. I had a lot of confidence in West. West died about two years ago. But I am still good friends with his widow and we see her periodically. But I had a lot of confidence in West and I could depend on West and he could depend on me.

We had a good working relationship. I was also the Area Director during the Tiananmen Square incident. This was a very interesting time, Bruce Gelb was the Director of USIA at the time. He had know President Bush when they were (that's President Bush the first) in prep school. He used to tell us how much they physically resembled each other. They were the same height. He went into a panic when the Tiananmen Square incident happened. He liked to ask hypothetical questions which oftentimes I felt they had no basis in reality. This "what if" sort of questions were not meaningful. I preferred to give him scenarios of what would happen in the real world but he did not want that, he wanted what would happen in this hypothetical situation and you could give him a hypothetical answer. But it seems that it would be a waste of both of our times. "What would happen if I go to the President's Security Council meeting and Lee Pong goes on national television and said we just bulldozed thousands of bodies in Tiananmen Square. What do I tell the President to say?" I said Lee Pong will not do this. "But suppose he does say this, what do I tell the President to say?" This type of question. We were going on a 24 hr shift in the office at the time. We were dealing with the American media. We were also trying to get information into China and we were trying to get information out of China. We were trying to get information in through Hong Kong. The Voice of America was getting through fine and there were television satellite receivers in China. We knew all military facilities had satellite receivers. They could receive television signals and television service did not have broadcast capability in Chinese language. We worked out an arrangement whereby we would put a television camera in the Chinese language section of VOA. It would be on the person who was doing the language broadcasting. Spoken Chinese differs between Mandarin and Cantonese but written Chinese is the same. What we would do then would have the top one third of the screen showing the Chinese language broadcaster, then scroll the script over the bottom two thirds of the screen. Universities all had TVRC's (Television Receiver Capability) so the universities and military facilities had this. Wall newspapers are very common in China. People get news from television or from radio and they write it out in script and post it on walls throughout the country. What we were trying to do was get information in there about the international communities reaction to what was going on in China. Get information back

to China in this regard. And we had the only correspondent there who could come out and tell us what was going on from their limited prospective, also, we had Chinese who were sending messages into Hong Kong which were coming back here. So we were able to piece together quite a bit. This worked fine, we were able to get in this information and our people in China were telling us that wall newspapers were coming up and they were copying the information right off their television screens and putting them in wall newspapers throughout the country.

At the same time we had to get Director Gelb briefed. He wanted me to brief him every morning at 8:00am, every morning, about what was going on. He had no foreign policy background whatsoever. He had come from a pharmaceutical firm. I had met him years before when I was in the Philippines. I didn't remember him but he remembered me because the head of IBM had hosted a dinner party for a group of American businessmen and it was a dinner party on the lawn. Gelb and I sat at the same table. I spent the whole evening telling the people at my table what was going on in the Philippines and then what was going on in East Asia. He remembered that vividly. So he wanted me to come in every morning and brief him on what was going on. He also didn't understand numbers. You couldn't talk to him in terms of numbers. You had a severe case of "mego" (my eyes glazed over). So you had to use hand gestures. I would talk to him about numbers at this level and numbers at this level and then this comes down here and this goes up there. By doing these hand and arm signals we could communicate about the size of things. We survived and he went on to other things.

Gelb was still the Director when I finished my three years as Area Director and was looking for another assignment in Washington. The Deputy Associate Director for Management was going to retire and Henry Hockheimer, the Associate Director for Management and I had known each other quite well because whenever Director Wick traveled around Asia during my tour as Area Director Hockheimer, as the head of television had gone with him because he had come from the world of business and he and Wick could relate. Hockheimer was delighted that I was interested in coming in to be his Deputy and Gelb thought it was a good idea also because of my knowledge of the Agency having worked in Latin America and worked in Asia and had dealt extensively with Africa and had spent time in Europe in the military so the only part of the world I hadn't served in was the Near East and I had visited many countries there. Plus, I had this managerial experience.

The only disadvantage to the job while Gelb was there was that his office was between my office and the elevator and my office and the stairs. I had to go by his office to get there and he would always catch me in the hallway and want me to ride down in the elevator with him and he would give me some assignment. I dutifully would make notes of this and would start doing it. Then I would send a report to his office and he had completely forgotten about it and he would send it out to his staff wanting to know what is this all about. After a few months of this, I realized this was his way of making conversation. So my precaution was first before I went to the men's room, I went to the elevator or the stairway and peeked out to make sure the hall was clear. If I got trapped, I would ride down in the elevator with him and he would give me an assignment and I

would nod and tell him I would take care of it and I would walk to the door with him as he went out to get in his car and then he would go on about his business and I would go on about mine. To give you an example, he wanted me to take two percent of our personnel budget and assign it to training. I told him that we already had more than that. So he then said, "two percent of the Agencies budget." I told him it was a very good idea, I have people working on what we could do with two percent of the Agency's budget. Then I realized there was no way in the world we were going to get two percent of the Agency's budget for training. So I dropped that. He never remembered it anyway. Another time he caught me in the elevator and he talked to somebody in the State Department and found out they were building a new Foreign Affairs Institute and he felt they should dedicate a building for the exclusive use of USIA and he told me to work on that. I assured him I would, so I had lunch with the ambassador who was the head of it at the time. We talked about what kind of training could be useful for USIA there. But it was so much more convenient having our training facility across the street because most of our training for our civil service employees were on a part-time basis and it was either a week or two weeks or half days or something like that and they could run across the street and do.

Q: We are in 1989 and you are the Deputy Associate Director of USIA for Management and you have just related how you came into the position. You must have had at this point some interesting experiences in coordinating in more detail with other Agencies in OMB in preparing Congressional presentations for an Agency that was in a state of transition? What were some of them?

MORTON: The new administration hadn't come in yet. This was prior to the elections which brought President Clinton in. So we still had Bruce Gelb for about a year after I was into the management area. I spent a lot of my time on information technology because things were really opening up for us there. We had a large technology staff and computers were becoming more wide-spread and we were trying to get more and more of them into our offices overseas. Satellite telephone capability was coming up. The Soviet Union had fallen apart and we had all the independent countries popping up from the Soviet Union.

There was interest in establishing American Centers instead of a USIS to establish an American Center. The question was, what type of center would it be? The feeling was the White House wanted us to have our American Centers as a source that the American business community which would go out there and have working space and have access to telephones. We would have room for other agencies and there was a lot of kicking around "pie in the sky" ideas. We had a regular intra-agency task force that met on this, with all parts of the Agency, the design staff, the policy and program people the media staff and we would meet on a regular basis trying to come up with concepts. See how much budget we would need for this and what type of equipment.

We spent a lot of time trying to miniaturize things and increase the international communications capability of our computer systems using satellite technology. During this time, the Agency had discovered how to use the Carrier Waves that sent out

television programs and used it to send out other things at the same time. You could send out a FM quality radio signal using the Television Carrier Wave, and then you could use the same Carrier Wave at the same time to send out the Wireless File which is now called the Washington File, the printed word. You send out two or three language tracks for your television program, so that if you were in South America you could see the program and you could get a Spanish language track and if you were in the English-speaking Caribbean you could get the same program and get the English language track. This had wide-spread capabilities plus it reduced a lot of our cost. It also reduced and eventually eliminated the need for our domestic relay facilities that VOA had all over because you could use these satellites for this and get a much clearer signal into places that had either been inaccessible or undependable when you were using the relay facilities. So we had so many different things going on and we had expanded our technology staff. We were doing a lot of training for people and we were trying to computerize even more.

One of the things that I wanted to get computerized was the Financial Management of our posts because there had always been this discussion in the Agency about whether our Public Affairs Officers should be programmers or whether they should be managers. My feeling was that they should be both. That you can't be a programmer if you can't manage your resources. If you can manage your resources but can't program what purpose do you serve. But there were certain ones in the Agency who looked down on people with administrative skills. About six months later after we had sent out the technicians to train their foreign national staff which sent out all the material to them, there was a Public Affairs Officers Conference. We did a satellite telephone hook-up with them to talk to them about different things. One of the things I asked them was, "What do you think of the financial management package that we sent out and that we trained your staff to use?" I could tell immediately by their answers that they hadn't even looked at it. The Public Affairs Officer in Israel who was sort of the key person because he was from the biggest post said, "Well I think its good for you people back in Washington but we out in the field, you know, but you people back in Washington can play with that thing, but we don't have time for that, we are programmers." So I said, "I won't use his full name, Chris, do you have the slightest idea what I am talking about. As it turned out he didn't. So I suggested after the conference was over he go talk to his administrative Foreign Service National employee and get acquainted with it because we were going to be sending out more and more of this. He should learn how to use the computer. He didn't even know how to use a computer. And we were going to be depending more and more on this because at the same time we were developing a computerized system so he could keep in touch with his contacts.

This was another thing that I always felt was a serious deficiency. You develop a lot of contacts and the Agency tried over the years with an addressograph machine and little three by five cards with everything for people to keep track of it. But when a PAO arrived at a post usually, there was no record of whom his predecessor had known and had met. My predecessor in the Philippines had a drawer set aside for keeping his contact list he had all these 3 by 5 cards in there I understood. When I arrived there all I found was sand in the bottom of his drawer that he used this drawer for his seashell collection. The three by five cards were completely unused. In the bottom of the drawer was a shoe box full of

business cards. No fashion, just sort of thrown in there at random. I gave these to the Foreign Service National staff and asked them if they could take these and put them in alphabetical order and staple them to cards and I could use these as a beginning to at least try to build up what he had. But this seems like such a waste of time. You go to a country, you spend three years there, your first six months you are just finding out who are the people that pull the strings. And then you can work with them for two years and then you start phasing out and you leave nothing for your successor to work on. So you got all this valuable history that's lost. I always tried to keep records to pass on my successor, unclassified records. So at least they can pick up somewhere where I left off, if they had the interest. But if we had to send the computer, you could have a very good record of it; and we spent a lot of time and money developing this system. There was a young fellow, he wasn't in our computer staff, but he had a talent for this. He was in one of the area offices and he eventually got sent to South Africa and was working in one of the branch post there. But he continued working on it and developed the system for us and we sent it back and then we sent the software he had done instead of an amateur, a very skillful amateur fashion. We sent it to Bombay where we had a contract with an Indian firm and they polished it up and sent it back and we did trial runs at a couple of posts and it worked good. Then we started sending it out on a world-wide basis and getting feedback from them and polished it up. I hope it is still useful because I have developed a similar system that I use in my personal computer to keep track of my contacts. My former colleagues in the Foreign Service, my friends, the people in organizations that I belong to and I find it very useful. I have about 500 names in it. I know when I last had contact with them and everything. But this was a major thing.

Another area that I spent a lot of time on was in security. Bruce Gelb, when he was the Director of the Agency was very lax in security and he went to an Eastern European country and they gave him a classified briefing book and he took it to his hotel room and then he read it in his hotel room and then he left to go to a meeting and left it in his hotel room. Then he suddenly realized, when he was halfway to where he was going, that he had left it there. He used the two-way radio in the car to call back to the USIS office to ask the Information Officer to go to his hotel and get this classified material that he had left on the bed there. The Embassy Security Officer was immediately aware of this because he was on the same radio frequency. He heard the conversation. He was close to the hotel and so he got there first, fortunately. He collected the material. We don't know if it was compromised or not. It wasn't highly classified anyway. The Security Officer did not want to have a confrontation with the Director of the Agency so he sent a classified message back to our Director of Security and asked him to re-brief the Director on security affairs. When he went in to brief the Director on it, Gelb went through the ceiling. "What are you trying to do! You want to arrest me! Here! Put the handcuffs on me! Take me away!" He just really went through the ceiling. So the Director of Security came into my office, he was practically trembling, he was shaking. He didn't know whether his career had gone down the drain or what. I told him I would take care of it. So I gave the Director a couple of days to sort of cool down then I went in to put the whole thing into perspective. He had cooled down somewhat by that time. This at times is some of the unpleasant sides of your duties as the Deputy Associate Director.

Q: This was a very senior position and although there had been political appointments to senior positions, this was probably one of the first if not the first senior position held by a minority USIA career officer?

MORTON: When we first set up the system of Associate Directors they were all career officers for the first four or five months and then they were all succeeded by political appointees. In fact, I think that may have been one of the reasons why it was set up that way. The Deputies were uniformly senior Agency officers but none of the Deputy Associate Directors had been a minority officer. In fact, I don't think before or since that time. I was a career minister at that time. I was the second black Career Minister in the USIA the first was John Reinhardt and he was not assigned to the Agency at the time he made career minister. He was assigned to the Department of State.

Q: Was he Department of State CU, Cultural?

MORTON: He had been the Public Affairs Officer in Nigeria. Then he came back and he was assigned to the Department of State. I not sure exactly where he was assigned and then he made Career Minister. Then he went out as ambassador to Nigeria.

Q: He left the USIA career track?

MORTON: So in the USIA contacts I think I was the only minority officer that was the Deputy Associate Director because Henry Hockheimer knew management in the business world but not in the government world so that he depended on me to vent a lot of the things. Because people always want to go to he head honcho, so that people would try to go straight into Henry to get something done and not go through the channel of command. He would always send them back to me to vent it out. A lot of time it would have been a waste of his time. I had been in the Agency long enough to know how many times particular wheels had been invented. There was no point in wasting his time to try to invent the same wheel again. Other times I knew the individuals well enough to know they had a personal ax they were trying to grind and so there was no point in getting him involved in personal vendettas or personal desires to climb a career ladder a little faster and we could keep the thing in the program context. It was useful having a person with his stature there because he had been in business and he knew how businesses operated. He brought an approach that was very good and refreshing to the Agency.

We had the Seville World's Fair come up during this time too and President Reagan had agreed that we would have the largest facility at the Seville World's Fair but then no money was appropriated for it. The initial idea was that the Department of Commerce and State Department and USIA would come up with the money. Once President Reagan left office so did the interest in these other Agencies in participating. And we were stuck with this huge area and no money. So we had to cut a lot of our regular programs in order to come up with some and we got a pittance from Congress. We manage to put together a very serviceable exhibit. It was not exactly one that you would have thought that the leader of the free world would have put on and I am not sure that World Fairs will ever have the importance again in the present world situation. I am not sure that people will

want to go to a World's Fair considering the potential for terrorist activities. Ours was a very good concept considering the limited resources we had. We also had the World's Fair in Italy at the same time, drawing on our meager resources. Fortunately, this one was in Genoa and a lot of the expense for this was borne by the political appointee who was assigned to it. He was the head of a business that was sort of world-wide so that helped considerably. It didn't get nearly as much publicity, but I think it was the 500th Anniversary of the founding of the New World. But we had all sorts of administrative and budgetary hoops we had to jump through to come up with the money and design capability and the money to pay the designers, because it was done outside on contract. We kept shrinking and shrinking and improvising and assigning people to work on this. I had seen some of the participation that the Agency had done in other World Fairs and I must say this was probably the sorriest that we had ever done anywhere. I had seen the one in Osaka and I had seen the exhibit that we had put on for the Australian Bi-Centenary and we had seen some of the others we did in other parts of the world. It was really an embarrassment but it was all we could do.

That's probably the highlight of it. Let's see if there is anything else I can think of. The American Center in the form of Soviet Republics we did not do them at the scale we original envisioned because we had to deal with the availability of space and facilities on the ground. So whereas in Washington people kept coming up with these grand designs of buildings and facilities, whatever we eventually moved into was leased space and sometime there was very, very much less than we had anticipated. I think its working out quite well.

Q: So then after that you made the decision to retire?

MORTON: I retired. I had come up with my time-in-class as a Career Minister, you have five years time-in-class. I did not want to request an extension. I had always wanted to retire early, in fact, when I first started government I said I was going to retire at age 55 when I had thirty years of service. But when I got to be 55 I was having such a good time, I thought, why should I retire. Then I kept getting good assignments but by this time I was also coming up on eight years in Washington and I would have had to consider another overseas assignment. I didn't want to move again. I didn't really see an assignment that appealed to me. I had been working since I was ten years old. I came from a very poor family. When I was ten I put my age up and I got a job working at the local movie theater. This was right after the war started. I spent the war working at this movie theatre. I got fired on VJ Day. The Manager of the theatre called me in.

Q: Was that Victory in Japan Day.

MORTON: Victory in Japan Day. The manager of the theater called me in and said you have done a good job you have been here all these years but you know it is illegal for me to have someone your age working here. I knew you were underage when you told me you were fourteen; I knew you weren't. But I needed somebody and I took a chance on you and you worked out fine. But I can get a grown man to do what you are doing now. And he was right. I was fourteen by that time and he had already hired a twenty-seven

year old veteran to replace me. I started work when I was ten and I had never been without a job since then. In fact, often times I had two jobs so I thought it would be nice to have a childhood. So that's what I doing now, I am in my second childhood. I signed up this year, I turned 70 this past July and I was talking to my wife and she said do you want a birthday party to celebrate your three score and ten. I said, I think I will do something different. I saw a circular that said sign up and participate in this 111 mile bicycle ride and raise money for leukemia and we have a training program and we will train you how to do it. The furthest I have even ridden a bike was about three miles, maybe four miles. I thought I can do that so I signed up for it. I set a goal we have to raise a minimum of $3,600 per person in this so I set a personal goal of $4,000. I raised $6,000 in two months, I have been getting incentive awards from the foundation because I was the first person to raise the minimum amount and the first person to do this, that, and the other. I have gotten a pair of bike gloves, I got a pair of bike shorts coming, then I got a shirt and then I am getting a fleece line jacket, the bike jacket. But I did it basically by using my contact list I have got in my computer here and my USIS experience in writing. I put together a good letter and sent it out to my friends and colleagues and family. The checks are still coming in even though I ended my fund raising three weeks ago. I still get checks coming in. So I will eventually end up with more than $6,000. I rode in the Bike DC this past Sunday, this 35 mile ride but it got reduced to 12 miles but then I rode 46 miles with my training group the Saturday before and this coming Saturday we are going to do 60 miles This past Sunday was September 23, 2001.

Q: You haven't just been having a lot of fun and having a second childhood here in your retirement?

MORTON: I am the coordinator for building a twelve million dollar church for my church. I never realized how involved it is to build a church. So we are coordinating the church construction in the City of Rockville. We have to coordinate with the city planners which involve run-off controls, storm water management, and any tree you cut down you have to replant one somewhere else; you have reforestation program. We have to deal with the Citizen Associations in the neighborhoods who don't want us to enlarge our parking facilities in their neighborhood. We can enlarge it somewhere else. The church is coming up onto its 100th Anniversary next year and we wanted to start the construction to coincide with that and we just might barely make that deadline. That's almost a full time job. Plus, I was the President for five years after I retired, of the USIA Alumni Association. We had over 600 members, 300 of them in the Washington Area. The other 350 are scattered around the United States and in various foreign countries. We try to keep in touch with them and do regular programs about five times a year and do a five times a year newsletter. And I am on the Board of Governors of the Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired association and serve on several of the committees there. So I am not exactly sitting around. I also manage to squeeze in tennis three times a week.

I am the President of the Local Chapter of my High School Alumni Association. My High School is unique in the respect that the school opened in 1929 and Governor Faubus closed it in 1956 to avoid integration. The alumni banded together around the country and started an Alumni Association and we now have about 2000 Alumni still living who are

active and we have 11 Chapters and we meet every other year in different cities where we have alumni chapters. This past July 2001 we met in Los Angeles. In July of 2003 we are going to meet here so I am in the preliminary preparation stage for this. I have organized my chapter and I have set up committees and we have leased a hotel and we have now taken care of all the other activities. We anticipate about 700 people coming for the reunion. So we have to do a week-long program for them.

In between my wife and I travel a lot. Since I have retired we usually take a month and do a foreign country every year. We take one week in the interim period. Since I have retired we have taken a month in South Africa. We did a month in Central Europe. We visited Germany, Budapest, Hungary, Czech Republic and Austria. We did a month in Turkey; covered the place. We loved Turkey. We did Egypt and Israel. We did Spain. This year we did Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. We have done Costa Rico; been to Mexico on a couple of short vacations. We did Greece including an eight-day cruise on a small sailing boat in the Greek Islands. We did a bus tour visiting far Western United States visiting historical national monuments and historical sites; that was a lot of fun. We are thinking about taking a train ride through Mexico. This coming February we are going to do three weeks in New Zealand. We are going to rent a recreation vehicle and travel both North and South Island and camp out. We got a lot of friends in New Zealand. One of my daughters-in-law is from there, her father is a Maori and her mother is Scotch-Irish and so we should be able to get involved in the Maori community, it should be fun. It keeps me young and out of trouble.

Q: As we come to the end of this interview and we have about a minute and a half, is there any special reflection?

MORTON: I enjoyed my career, I think USIA Foreign Service officer positions were specially designed for people like me. If I had it to do all over again, I would. I am not sure the working conditions are the same as they were when I was in there but I loved every minute of it. I can't recall any bad times even during revolutions, attempted coups or whatever. We were very healthy the entire time, thank goodness. A few minor digestive upsets but that is par for the course

Q: Thanks, very much, this is the end of oral history interview with Harold Morton.

End of interview